

3. Birth Of Sri Krishna

Tyaja Durjana Samsargam

Bhaja Sadhu Samaagamam

Kuru Punyam Ahoraatram

Smara Nityam Anityataam

Renounce the company of the wicked.

Seek the company of the pious.

Perform good actions day and night.

Discriminate between the temporary and the permanent.

Students!

To understand the nature of God requires eligibility. *Bhaagavatah Idam Bhagavatham* —*Bhagavatham* speaks of God and His Divine sports. It is also said, *Bhaagavataanaam Idam Bhagavatham* —*Bhagavatham* describes the lives of devotees. Scholars have interpreted this scripture based on their individual outlooks. Truly, the *Bhagavatham* illustrates the intimate relation between God and His devotees. It is the bridge between the Lord and devotees. Four requisites are absolutely essential to understand and practice the message of the *Bhagavatham*.

Tyaja Durjana Samsargam

First, give up bad company. Bad company is not just bad people. Bad thoughts must also be abandoned. Feelings acquire form as actions. There should be no hesitation in renouncing bad company. Why? Bad company can cause even a devotee to become an atheist and a renunciant to become attached. “Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are.” The *Bhagavatham* states that a poisonous snake is much more desirable than bad company! Why? A snake bites once and leaves; but a wicked person bites repeatedly, day and

night. The joy of malicious people lies in violence, in making others cry. They cannot even sleep peacefully without criticizing or harming someone! The human mind is impressionable and assumes the attitudes of one's associates. In the *Mahabharatha*, the characters Duryodhana, Dussashana, Sakuni, and Karna are called *dushta chatushtayam*—four wicked ones. Karna was inherently noble but was corrupted by the other three. Hence, the sooner we distance ourselves from negative people, the sooner we will perceive Divinity within our hearts.

Bhaja Sadhu Samaagamam

It is not enough to merely leave bad company. The company of the wise and pious is necessary. We must cultivate friendship with people of compassion and integrity and follow their example to realize the value of human life. But even these two are not enough.

Kuru Punyam Ahoraatram

Third, perform sacred deeds day and night, ceaselessly. Vyasa said, *Paropakarah Punyaya Paapaaya Parapedanam*—helping others is merit, harming others is sin. What is paropakaram? People take it to mean *para* (others) + *upakaram* (favor) = helping others. But this limited, worldly meaning is not what Vyasa had in mind. *Para* (principle beyond the world) + *upa* (near) + *kara* (to go) = *Paropakara*. Therefore, true merit is to be in proximity to the *Atma*. To develop nearness to the *Bhagavatham*, to devotees, and to the Lord is the highest merit. This must be followed day and night.

Smara Nityam Anityaam

Discriminate between the ephemeral and the eternal. Discrimination is essential in every action. “Is it good or bad, right or wrong?” Such inquiry must be exercised to the limit of our intellectual capacity. First discriminate, then follow what is good. What is meant by “good”? Good means eternal. Give up the transient.

It is only when we cultivate these four attributes that we can understand the significance and secrets of the *Bhagavatham*.

Devaki and Vasudeva

Soora was the Lord of the Yadava dynasty. The term “Yadava” is derived from Yadu, the son of King Yayati, who was Soora’s ancestor. “Yadava” means “descendant of Yadu.” Soora divided his kingdom into two parts: Mathura and Soorasena. His older son, Ugrasena, ruled Mathura. Kamsa was Ugrasena’s son. Soora’s second son, Devaka, ruled Soorasena. Devaki was his daughter.

Kamsa did not have any siblings, so he considered Devaki as his own little sister. Kamsa’s affection for Devaki was truly boundless. To him, she was his second life. In due course, the marriage of Devaki was finalized with Vasudeva, the son of Soora. Kamsa took active part in the marriage arrangements and offered many ornaments, horses and elephants to the couple with love.

This affectionate Kamsa later turned into a cruel hater. Why? Only due to selfishness. There are such demons even today who would harm their own mother, father, brother, or

friend for the fulfillment of their desires! If possible, we should teach wisdom to such people. We should dissociate from such sinners who hold self-interest highest.

Kamsa placed the couple in a chariot and started guiding it towards the village of Vasudeva. It was a long and joyous procession. Suddenly they heard a voice from the sky: “Kamsa, you fool! The woman in your chariot will cause your death! Her eighth son will be your destroyer.” Kamsa immediately jumped down, caught hold of Devaki’s hair, and dragged her down. He lifted his sword with his right hand. Everyone was terrified. Vasudeva intervened, “Kamsa, you have taken birth in a great dynasty. You will stain its glory by this ignoble act. You will incur the heinous sin of killing a woman. How can you do this to your dearest sister who you loved more than yourself? Calm down. Inquire. Death follows birth like night follows day. Everyone is bound to die one day or the other. Not even an hour has passed since our marriage! Why kill this pure lady for what is inevitable?”

Kamsa was harsh, “My life is in danger due to her. She cannot go free!” Vasudeva quickly thought of a strategy to save Devaki till the birth of her children. He said, “Devaki herself poses no danger to you, it is only her eighth child. I will deliver every child to you as it is born. Leave her alone.” Kamsa considered the proposal and was satisfied. He let go of Devaki and walked back to his palace.

The newly-weds, who were supposed to reach home in joy, were drowned in tears. From the very first day of their marriage they were immersed in grief! Why? It was the direct

result of associating with bad company in the form of Kamsa. Evil in a person is not always visible. It is seen only when it manifests in actions.

Kamsa's cruelty

In due course the first child, a girl, was born. Noble and virtuous souls never break their promises, no matter what the price. They alone qualify to be called true humans. Kamsa was a demon. People of his category must be avoided. And true men like Vasudeva should be befriended. Only vile people make promises in time of need and conveniently forget them later. There is no sin greater than reneging on your word. This is what Emperor Bali also told his guru, Sukracharya.¹ The one who forgets promises is a great sinner.

Vasudeva was definitely not such a person. To him truth was the highest penance. He carried his child to Kamsa. He upheld his word. Kamsa was struck by Vasudeva's nobility. He thought, "My brother-in-law kept his word even in such an extreme situation. Such purity and adherence to truth are absent in me." Vasudeva's integrity changed the cruel mind of Kamsa. He told Vasudeva, "Your truthfulness will always protect you" and returned the baby. Why? Kamsa knew that his enemy was the eighth child, not the first. Vasudeva retraced his steps with the child in his arms.

Then Sage Narada, the son of Brahma, arrived at Kamsa's palace. He asked Kamsa, "How are you, your subjects, and kingdom?" as per formality. Then he began talking about the issue at hand. "Kamsa! Don't you know the reality of the Yadavas? They are divine beings born on Earth to herald

the Avatar. The Lord is destined to be your killer. You returned the first child to Vasudeva without grasping the situation in its entirety. No one can fathom the intentions of God. What is meant by the eighth child? The first becomes the eighth if you count backward starting at eight! If counting begins with two, the second becomes the eighth. In this manner, all eight births can qualify as the eighth! This is a Divine mystery.”

After sowing this doubt in Kamsa’s mind, Narada calmly departed. The spark ignited by Narada grew into a raging fire in Kamsa’s heart. His eyes crimson with fury, Kamsa ran to Vasudeva’s house. Devaki was feeding her child. Kamsa wrenched the baby away by its leg and beheaded it with his sword.

There is no limit to the wretchedness of demonic people! They have no trace of compassion! They cultivate all inhuman traits and display them in cruelty. Six children were done away with in this manner. Devaki and Vasudeva witnessed these horrific crimes and suffered terribly. But so did Kamsa. Ever since Kamsa paid heed to Narada’s words, he lost interest in food and sleep. He became weaker and weaker.

In this situation, Jarasandha, the King of Magadha, came to Mathura and gave his daughters in marriage to Kamsa. After his marriage, Kamsa grew stronger owing to the support of Jarasandha and his allies. He used his new-found strength in acts of greater cruelty. Narada had said that the Yadavas were heavenly beings in human form. Kamsa began harassing the Yadavas. Not able to bear his crimes, people fled to neighboring

kingdoms as refugees. Some people continued to stay and act as per Kamsa's wishes, having no other option.

We must try to understand the nature of Divinity. God always assumes human forms. Why? Only for the upliftment of mankind. Only then can men feel intimate kinship with Him. Therefore, an *Avatar* has both Divine and Human traits. When in human form, the Divine sometimes behaves like an ordinary man and acts as if He knows nothing. Devotees get misled by His acting and think, "He seems quite plain. How can He be God?" People concentrate on His human qualities and forget His Divinity. "He eats with us, walks with us, talks with us. What is special about Him?" they say. That is why they are surprised by miracles. This happens in the case of every *Avatar*.

Many sages of the forest worshipped Rama as Lord Narayana and welcomed him to their hermitages. But Rama always feigned ignorance by saying, "Am I Narayana? I did not know that. I am only Rama, the son of Dasharatha. I am an ordinary man. Please don't embarrass me." Even great sages were deceived by His pretense! No one can comprehend God's nature.

Sri Krishna Avatar

As time passed God summoned *Maya Shakthi*.² Devaki had conceived her seventh child. God ensured that everything was progressing according to His master plan. Vasudeva had a wife, Rohini, prior to Devaki. She was at Nanda's place temporarily, for fear of Kamsa. The Lord instructed Maya to transfer Devaki's seventh child into the womb of Rohini. And Maya

Herself entered into the womb of Yasoda, the wife of Nanda. This seventh child, the incarnation of Adisesha,³ was named Balarama. That is why Balarama is also called *Sankarshana*, meaning “transferred”. The Lord told Maya, “I will Myself enter Devaki’s womb as her eighth child.”

Whenever cruelty and unrighteousness reach intolerable proportions, God incarnates on Earth and destroys wrongdoers. God Himself steps into the world. Why? Couldn’t He send His deputies to complete the task? If two people are quarreling on the road, a constable is enough to separate them. When the crowd builds, the sub-inspector arrives. But if a major riot begins, the inspector-general himself is required to control it. The remedy must suit the severity of the situation. Today the world is boiling in gross unrighteousness. People suffered likewise under Kamsa’s policies. Everyone felt as if he was in the midst of a fire. “What will happen next? Will I live to see tomorrow?” Such were the constant fears in people’s minds.

God decided to incarnate to destroy the cruel and selfish Kamsa. Every *Avatar* has two causes: prayers of devotees and atrocities of wicked people. The unity of these two is essential for an *Avatar*. An example. Prahlada remembered the name of Hari without interruption. But Hiranya Kashyapa, his father, was a hater of Hari. Prahlada’s love and Hiranya Kashyapa’s hatred combined to result in *Narasimha Avatar*. As long as Prahlada chanted *Om Namo Narayanaya*, the Lord protected him. In what situations was he protected? When he could not endure the atrocities of his father. Thus, Hiranya’s crimes became Prahlada’s protection! Hiranya’s hatred made it

possible for Prahlada to acquire proximity to the Lord. These two factors must be present for every *Avatar's* advent: wickedness and devotion. In this way, Divine plans conceal subtle secrets.

The *Avatar* manifested. The Divine effulgence of the child illuminated the surroundings. Vasudeva and Devaki bowed to the child. How did they know? They were told earlier that God would incarnate as their son. The Lord had appeared to them in a dream the previous night and said, "I will take birth from your womb at dawn." They knew He was God. Yet they worried for His safety if Kamsa stormed in! This is Maya, delusion! If the baby was God, does His protection lie in their hands? They were God's parents and yet, full of fear. See, the games which Maya plays on people's minds!

They were in a jail. Their hands and feet were shackled with chains. The doors to the jail were made of heavy iron. The guards were ferocious demons. The Lord had instructed Vasudeva to take Him out. How was this to be done? Vasudeva placed the Lord in a small basket and wondered how to fulfill the command. In a trice, the chains came loose. The doors flew open. It was three o'clock in the morning. The gatekeepers were fast asleep. No one else was around. Vasudeva quietly walked out of the dungeon. As he proceeded, there was a tremendous downpour of rain—a sign of the intense joy and purity of the occasion. Even the clouds were ecstatic at the Divine Advent.

Balancing the basket on his head, Vasudeva walked in the direction of Gokula. But River Yamuna flowed across his

path. When God Himself walks, what can obstruct Him? Adishesha also came there and the river parted for them to proceed. At that moment Maya was born to Yasoda. Everyone was asleep at Gokula also. Vasudeva switched the babies and returned. It was all done according to Divine instructions. But nobody believes this today. Nobody can understand God's plans. The sports of God are beyond all comprehension.

Even the *gopikas*⁴ tried to fathom Krishna in various ways, only to meet with failure. Then they told Him, "Krishna! You are smaller than an atom, vaster than the universe. You are present as the witness in all 8,400,000 species of living beings. How, then, can it be possible to know You?" There is nothing God's Will cannot accomplish. He can turn mud into diamonds and diamonds into mud, earth into sky and sky into Earth. We must place full trust in Divine power. To those with such faith, God reveals the Truth about Himself.

In keeping with God's command, Vasudeva placed the Lord next to Yashoda's sleeping form and returned to Mathura with the girl. God's ways are so mysterious! Only after Vasudeva returned and placed the girl in Devaki's arms did the jail guards wake up. The baby girl cried out loudly. Kamsa was informed of the EIGHTH BIRTH! Kamsa was not sleeping, anyway. He was in constant torment, eager for news from the jail. Sinners always suffer for their actions in this manner. Kamsa stormed in and, as usual, attempted to behead the baby girl. But the baby slipped out of his grasp and flew upward, transformed and shone in Her full glory as Yoga Maya. She exclaimed, "Fool! You don't know God's Will! Your vanquisher survives elsewhere. It is impossible to harm Him. Recognize

this truth. *Vinaasha Kaale Vipareeta Buddhi*—a contorted intellect is a sign of approaching doom. You cannot escape your destiny. God is an embodiment of *kaarya-kaarana* —cause and effect. You haven't understood the laws of cause and effect." So saying, Yoga Maya disappeared.

Thence began Kamsa's obsessive search for the Divine child. Unable to limit his feelings of "I" and "Mine", Kamsa initiated a massacre of all infants in his kingdom. Thousands of people were treated with immeasurable cruelty. You may ask, why should innocent children be slaughtered? What sins have these babies done? Why should God treat them so heartlessly? Such doubts may arise. Firstly, it was the basis for the destruction of demonic persons. Secondly, it is only the body that dies, not the *Atma*. You cannot escape death. Thirdly, the Lord created them and destroyed them, both as acts of His Will. It is not easy to comprehend God's Will.

Sri Krishna's childhood

Gradually, Kamsa trained his eyes on Gokula. He sent many demons there, all of whom were destroyed by the child Krishna. Not even one miscreant returned alive. At this time, Yasoda worried intensely about Krishna's safety, although she perceived Divine signs in Him. Then came Putana, an ogress. She took the form of a beautiful lady and approached Yasoda, "Sister, I heard that you gave birth to a son after many years. I am surprised and delighted. May I see him?" There was nothing untoward in this request. In fact, people often came in this manner. Yasoda took Putana inside unsuspectingly, since Putana had assumed the form of one of her friends. Then Putana insisted that she be allowed to nurse the baby. An argument

ensued between the two of them, at which time Krishna began drinking Putana's milk. Not just her milk, but her life-force was also sucked out. Putana fell down dead. Everyone in Gokula was astounded at the infant's superhuman powers.

Krishna showed many *leelas* in this manner. In every *Avatar's* life the first sixteen years are *leelas*, sports. From sixteen to thirty-five years of age are *mahatmyas*, miracles. From thirty-five to seventy-five years is the period of teaching. Every *Avatar* passes through these three stages. Till His sixteenth year, Krishna showed many *leelas* to the world. It is impossible to limit these *leelas*. He displayed innumerable *leelas* to the *gopikas* and *gopalas*. But they could not grasp them.

Once, Balarama and Krishna were playing. Krishna starting eating mud. Balarama complained to Yasoda, who came running. People in Gokula were in constant dread of Kamsa. Yasoda imagined that the mud may also be poisoned by Kamsa! She asked, "So, you ate mud, did you?" By His replies Krishna gave her glimpses into His reality. "Mother! Am I a small boy to eat mud? Am I mad? No, no. It is not even hunger. I am not a boy." What did Krishna mean? By denying what He wasn't, Krishna meant "I am God." But bound in the feelings of motherly affection related to the body, Yasoda could not recognize Krishna's Divinity. She said sternly, "Open your mouth! I want to look inside." Krishna complied. Yasoda saw the entire universe inside His mouth! "Is it a dream, an illusion... what is happening? Am I Yasoda?" she wondered. She was totally confused. In this way Krishna gave glimpses of His Divinity to His parents and friends.

Balarama was very mischievous. He used to ridicule Krishna or rather, make a pretense of it, so that Krishna's miracles may be known to all. He told Krishna, "Hey Krishna! You are not the son of mother Yasoda! Mother and father are fair in complexion but you are dark! How can you explain that?" This was the truth—Krishna wasn't their son! Krishna ran to Yasoda and asked most innocently, "Mother! They say I'm not your son because I'm dark. Please tell me the truth." He insisted and did not let go. Yasoda didn't know the truth and said, "My dear son! You are really my son, my own son," and hugged Him tightly. Then Krishna ate his food and went away. Krishna lived as an ordinary boy, behaved as if He knew nothing, displayed endless powers, and gave hints about His Divinity constantly.

The name Krishna is much sweeter than names like Hari, Narayana and Vishnu. Similarly, Radha is sweeter than Lakshmi, Durga, Saraswati, Sathyabhama, and Rukmini. What words are easiest to say and sweetest as well? Krishna-Radha! Who are Krishna and Radha? Krishna is Purusha, God. Radha is Prakruthi, Nature. Everyone loves Nature and worships it. Nature is God's base or *dhara*, which is the same as Radha. The *Bhagavatham* was written to reveal these divine concepts.

A stalk of sugarcane is sweet, no doubt, but it also has hard joints in between. Can you demand that a sugarcane be sweet through and through? Similarly, when speaking of God we experience unpleasantness also. You find bad inside good. The actions of God are the combination of good and bad. Happiness has no value without sorrow. For this reason, the advent of an Avatar is preceded by loss, misery and hardship in the

world. These apply not just to God but to humans also. Every person has good and bad in his life. Even a millionaire has some woes stealing his peace of mind.

Mystery of Avatars

Why, even renunciants have worries! Vashishta was a divine sage. He was the epitome of greatness, master of all divine powers. Even this divine sage sometimes failed to recognize Divinity. He knew that Rama was the incarnation of Lord Narayana. Once upon a time he told Dasharatha, “King Dasharatha! I do not desire anything from you. I really have no need to come to your kingdom and stay here as your Royal Priest. But I know that Lord Narayana will incarnate in your house. I want to see Him, serve Him. That is the only desire that makes me stay here. I have not come for fame, respect, wealth or comfort.” Vashishta himself was competent to acquire all worldly prosperity by mere willing. Such a great sage later taught Sri Rama the collection of teachings known as *Yoga Vashishtam*! Why did Vashishta fall into delusion? It was because Rama behaved like a normal man, showing His Divinity only occasionally.

The outer form donned by *Avatars* misleads everyone. Another example. Scholars determine *mahurtas*, or auspicious moments, for important occasions such as marriages and inaugurations of projects. Vashishta made a *mahurta* for Sri Rama’s coronation. After much study and meditation, Vashishta decided that 7:00 a.m. on a particular day would be most appropriate to install Rama as King. This *mahurta* was meant for coronation but resulted in exile! So what was its efficacy? Remember, this was no ordinary *mahurta* set by some ordinary

Brahmin. Vashishta was a *Brahmarishi*.⁵ A *mahurta* set by him cannot be invalid. Yet, did the coronation take place? No. Not just that, but Rama was exiled to the forest! How did this happen? The reason is that NOTHING CAN STOP DIVINE WILL, not even the will of a *Brahmarishi*. Rama planned these events to show His Divinity to the world.

Remember: Only God's Will succeeds, no one else's. God is *sarva sanga parityagi*—One who has renounced all attachment. But there is one bond that God cannot renounce: the bond of pure love between Him and His devotee. God changes His Own Will such that the will of His devotee may be upheld. Markandeya was born by Lord Shiva's blessing and was allotted only sixteen years of life. He told himself, "I have only sixteen years. These years should not be wasted. I will offer every moment to God. Let me acquire a good reputation for myself and my parents." He contemplated on the Lord incessantly. Pleased by Markandeya's purity and Love, the Lord mollified His own condition by blessing him to stay sixteen years old forever! God is *Bhakta paraadheena* —One who submits to His devotees. Such is the mighty efficacy of devotion! None can limit the power of devotees.

But modern devotees are part-time devotees. One moment they are devotees (*bhakta*) and the next moment, seekers of worldly pleasures (*bhuktas*). They are devious and cunning. They display piety and humility in Swami's physical presence but become different persons when they are away. This cannot be called devotion. It is hypocrisy. You are cheating only yourself, no one else, much less, God! Who can cheat Me? *Yat Bhavam Thath Bhavati*—as you act, so is the reflection and re-

sound. I am not harmed by anyone. I do not hate anyone. Devotees might imagine that I dislike certain persons. That is your hatred, not Mine.

There is no blemish of any sort in Divinity. It is immaculate, sacred and supremely pure. Your hearts must become that pure also. But that is not the case with devotees today. Devotees should concentrate on the *Avatar*'s Divinity. Do not be misled by His vesture. You think "He is human" one moment and "He is God" the next moment. This humanness of the *Avatar* is false. This is *maya*.

What is *maya*? To see what is not real is *maya*. To forget what really exists is *maya*. You forget what you see and understand and instead, harbor unknown doubts! Concentrate on the true essence of the *Avatar*, which is present in you also. That is what Sanjay Sahni said earlier: When you question, "Swami, are you God?" the answer is, "Yes, I am God, and you are, too." Everybody is a form of God. However, there is a difference. Here [in Swami] the Divinity appears without obstruction but in you, it is hidden.

Before the Mahabharatha war, Krishna questioned Arjuna, "Why are you so dejected?" Arjuna replied, "Lord! A colossal war is imminent. Scores of my friends and relatives may perish." Krishna said, "Foolish fellow! These people are not here for the first time. They have undergone countless births and deaths like us, since time immemorial. You are not the killer and they cannot be killed. Your attachment is veiling the Truth from you. You can neither kill them nor grant them life." Arjuna asked, "Lord, why is it that You know this truth

and I do not? I know only the present but not the distant past
You speak of. What is the reason?"

Then Krishna said, "Listen carefully to Me. How old
are you?"

"84 years," Arjuna said.

Krishna continued, "You were alive ten years ago,
weren't you?"

"Obviously, my Lord, because I am alive now!"

"Fine. And when did you get married?"

Arjuna gave the exact date, which was sixty years ear-
lier.

"When were you born?" was the next question.

"84 years ago on such-and-such day," replied Arjuna.

"Fine. Now, tell me what you were doing three years
ago on the full moon day of *Karthika*?"⁶

"I cannot recollect."

"But were you not alive then?"

"Of course I was alive, Lord. But I cannot remember
the details."

"Take note, Arjuna! You remember your marriage from
sixty years ago. But you have forgotten what hap-
pened only three years ago. Why? Because the for-
mer is important to you."

In the same way, people forget Divinity because it is
not important to them. You remember worldly details of your
life because that is important to you. Your goal is the world
and hence, you build worldly bonds. You do not aim for Di-
vinity, so you cannot recognize it, although it is your true na-
ture. It is confusing to understand the *Avatar*'s Divinity which

is clouded by His humanness. Is His humanness true or His superhuman power? Both are false! Ignore the covering and focus on the Divinity—that is true.

Another example. King Janaka⁷ was resting after supper one day. His queen was by his side. Janaka felt sleepy. The queen dismissed the attendants. Janaka had a vivid dream in which neighboring kings had invaded his kingdom and driven him into the forest. He was wandering as a destitute in the forest. He was overwhelmed with dejection and hunger. He began shouting, “I am hungry! I am hungry!” Some tribals were nearby, eating rice. He ran to them. The tribals gave him a leaf as a plate and shared their rice with him. All of a sudden an eagle swooped down upon the leaf and scattered the rice on the ground. Janaka screamed in anguish.

At this point Janaka really started screaming in his sleep. His queen shook him, “Lord, why are you shouting?” Janaka woke up and saw his queen, his soft bed and the opulent surroundings. But in his dream, he was exhausted, hungry, and forlorn. He saw this, he saw that. Which was true—this or that? Janaka started questioning aloud, “Is this true or that true?” The queen was baffled, “My Lord, what strange words are these?” But Janaka repeated the question many times—“Is this true or that true?”

The queen panicked, fearing Janaka had gone insane. She sent for Sage Vashishta. Janaka was oblivious to Vashishta’s entry and continued to ask, “Is this true or that true?” Vashishta grasped the situation with his divine vision. He told Janaka, “O King, neither this is true nor that. You alone are

true. You are present in the waking state and in the dream state. This is a daydream, and that was a night-dream. Neither of them is present in the other, but you are present in both. You are the Truth.”

Likewise, devotees perceive the *Avatar*'s Divinity and humanness and then doubt, “Is Divinity true or is that humanness true?” The divinity that you think you see is not true; neither is the humanness. Underlying both is the sanctity of the *Avatar*. When your vision is pure, you perceive the *Avatar*'s sanctity. Divinity attracts sacredness.

Body-consciousness causes attachment

All the *gopikas* came to Yasoda and complained. “Mother! Your son Krishna comes stealthily into our houses, breaks our pots and steals butter and milk.” This was a daily occurrence! Yasoda caught Krishna and scolded, “You don't eat what I serve. You go to other houses and steal. You are ruining our reputation. Why don't you eat the butter I give? Is the butter in our house not tasty?”

What is the inner significance of this incident? The mother serves with motherly affection. But the *gopikas* served the same food with pure love, divine feelings! It was not the butter that attracted Krishna but the purity of their hearts. Butter symbolizes the hearts of the *gopikas*, which were filled with purity, one-pointedness, and selflessness. Yashoda's butter was attachment, while the *gopikas*' was *prema*. This is the difference between love and attachment.

Attachment is born of body-consciousness. That which is related to the heart is Love. *Gopikas* were full of love. Whether their mother-in-laws screamed or their husbands shouted, they wouldn't answer back or fight. They never had any fear. The form of Krishna was imprinted in their hearts like words on paper. It is not possible to separate letters from the paper, is it? This is the principle of divine love, which we must make a sincere attempt to recognize. True love only gives and gives, never receives. Worldly love involves giving and receiving. This is the difference between worldly and divine Love. God never desires or receives anything, only gives, like one-way traffic. But you give and receive, come and go. That is why Sankaracharya said,

*Punarapi Jananam, Punarapi Maranam,
Punarapi Janani Jathare Shayanam.*
You are born again, you die again,
And you lie in the mother's womb, yet again.

*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam
Govindam Bhaja, Moodha Mate.
Sampraapte Sannihite Kaale
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrunkarane.*
Sing the glory of Govinda.
Sing His glory, O fool!
When your death approaches,
The rules of grammar will not save you.

Sing the glory of God without interruption. Don't limit yourself to "rules of grammar," meaning identification with the body. That is true worship, true faith. If the body is your goal

but you merely repeat “God, God” like a parrot, you will achieve only the body, not Divinity. There are many “confusions” of this sort in the *Avatar* principle. In no *Avatar*’s time were there persons who had unbroken vision of His Reality. Even the *Sapta Rishis* were no exception! They recognized Rama, but fell into doubts from time to time. Why? After all, they had some traces of body-identification also.

Identification with the body is the root cause of delusion. Forget the body and look inward. Why did our ancient sages shun cities and choose to live alone in forests? Because they followed *Tyaja Durjana Samsargam*—the first qualification for understanding *Bhagavatham*. They went away from people who were steeped in identification with the body. Devotion is the same whether living in your house or in the forest. But bad company is definitely avoidable in the forest. With this pure objective, our sages went away to forests.

To reach Divinity, renounce bad company. Then cultivate good company. Perform good acts day and night. Lastly, discriminate between the evanescent and the eternal. If students keep these four injunctions in mind, they can accomplish whatever they want!

The *Bhagavatham* is not just an account of the Krishna Avatar. The deeds of sacred devotees such as Dhruva and Prahlada stand out as glorious examples in this scripture. If we pay attention to these devotees, we will come to know everything there is to know. These devotees had absolute faith in God. In those ancient times, their unwavering faith earned them glorious experiences with God. We don’t have such faith today;

and if we do, it is not steadfast. We should quell the wavering of the mind and remain steady under all circumstances.

Vasudeva is a shining example of steadfastness. He surrendered his first child to Kamsa, just to uphold his word! Will any father do that today? Never! Harischandra worked in a cremation ground and even sold his wife just to uphold truth. His son died and he lost his kingdom. Still he did not yield to untruth. *Sathyam Naasti Paro Dharmah*—there is no dharma higher than truth. Never go back on your word. All worship, meditation and sacrifice are a waste if you renege on your word. God does not go by your external actions but only by your heart. God is *Bhaava Priya*. He delights in the internal feeling. You are *Baahya Priya*. You crave for the external.

Origin of Bhagavatham

Students! Youth is a period characterized by unsteadiness. Youth can become prey to various kinds of confusion. But it is also the golden period of life. It is a sacred stage of life. You must achieve steadiness right now. Develop unwavering faith in God and remove the restlessness of your mind. Then life will have been well spent. There is nothing permanent in this world. This world is called *Jagat*. Why? *Ja* (going) + *Gat* (coming) is the nature of the world—birth and rebirth, creation and destruction, joy and sorrow. But Divinity neither comes nor goes. This divine principle was given a written form by Vyasa in this scripture, the *Bhagavatham*.

Vyasa composed both the *Mahabharatha* and the *Bhagavatham*. For his greatness he is called *sloka daata*—giver of divine verses. God is *Loka Daata*—Giver of the world itself. In

spite of writing so many slokas, Vyasa's *soka* (sorrow) did not come to an end. Why? When he wrote the *Mahabharatha*, he described the fight between good and bad forces. As you think, so you become. In visualizing Duryodhana and Dussashana, Vyasa himself became tainted. Whatever "actor" you contemplate on, his action enters your mind. That is why Narada advised Vyasa, "Till now you wrote the *Mahabharatha*. You composed this epic but sullied your heart in the process. You thought about both good and bad characters. Now write only good."

The Vedas say, *Thath Thwam Asi* (You are That). *Yat bhavam Thath bhavati*. (You become whatever you think). When you constantly think of others' faults, that bad enters you. How? When you have a camera in your hand, whichever direction you turn and click, that is the picture you will capture. Your body is like a camera. Your vision is the lens, your heart is the film and your thoughts form the scene. Your intellect is the shutter. With your intellect, absorb only those impressions into your heart, which are spiritual. If you think bad, it imprints on your heart. So do not encourage bad thoughts.

Narada continued, "As long you talked of the Kauravas' bad deeds, how they troubled and cheated the Pandavas. Let go of the Kauravas' sin. Let go of the Pandavas' virtue as well. *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*—think of the Lord and you will become Him. When you wrote the *Mahabharatha*, you thought of *Prakruthi* (Nature, Creation) and not *Purusha* (God). So the restlessness of God's Creation entered you. From tomorrow, describe only the Lord, His sports and

His qualities. You will achieve tranquility without a doubt.” Thus, the *Bhagavatham* came to be written.

We must experience at least a fraction of Vyasa’s pure feelings. Purification of the mind must come first. A pure mind results in God’s vision easily. The *Bhagavatham* is an account of devotees’ experiences, their bliss and the close relations they had with the Lord—all of which we must absorb.

What relation should we desire with God? What attitude results in what relation? What spiritual effort yields what goal? Inquire into these issues. You will repent later if such questions are not answered now. Make an effort to know everything. Awareness is life. You must know what is good and what is bad. Then take the good to heart and renounce the bad.

¹. The Lord took the Vamana (dwarf) *Avatar* to destroy Bali, the king of demons. Bali was doing mass charity as part of a *Vedic* ritual. Vamana approached him and asked for land measuring 3 lengths of His Feet. Bali laughed at this request and told Vamana that He could have a whole continent if He wanted. But when Vamana stuck to His strange demand, Bali promised to grant it. Meanwhile Bali’s guru recognized Vamana to be Lord Vishnu and advised Bali to save himself by retracting the promise. Bali refused to go back on his word. Vamana grew to gargantuan proportions and with His Feet, enveloped all of Creation, thereby ridding Bali of his kingdom as well as his ego. For his truthfulness, the Lord blessed the now-reformed Bali with future kingship of heaven as well as proximity to Himself.

². The Lord’s power of delusion, also known as *Yoga Maya* or simply, *Maya*.

³. The thousand-hooded serpent on which Lord Vishnu reclines.

⁴. Cowherd women of Brindavanam, considered the greatest devotees of Lord Krishna.

⁵. “One established in Brahman (Self)” - A sage of the highest caliber.

⁶. Eighth month of the Hindu calendar.

⁷. King of ancient India who became a Jivan-Mukta (liberated while alive) by performing his royal duties with detachment. He was also the father-in-law of Lord Rama.