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Hinduism: Monotheism or Polytheism?

राम कृष्ण दोनों को गोविन्द राधे । व्यास ने लिखा है भगवान् क्यों बता दे ॥
Ram Krishna Dono Ko Govinda Radhey | Vyas Ne Likha Hai Bhagwaan Kyon Bata De ||

The Shrimad Bhagavat Mahapuram asserts both Lord Ram (Balram) and Lord Krishna are God, whereas from the Vedas to the Ramayana all the scriptures and all the Saints unanimously say there is only one Supreme God. Not only that, the word 'Bhagwaan' or God is used to refer to many more divine personalities such as God Brahma, God Shankar, God Vishnu and so on. Moreover, the spiritual master is also addressed as God in the scriptures. So, if there is only one God, who are all these others who are being referred to as "God"?

First, God has three aspects –

वदन्ति तत्त्वविदस्शब्दते ॥ भाग.१.२.११

There is one Supreme God known as Lord Krishna. He eternally reveals Himself in three different forms. As *Sachhidanand Brahm*, the all-pervading almighty impersonal aspect of God, He does nothing. He has no name, form, pastimes, abode or attributes. Only eternal knowledge and bliss are revealed in this form.

The second aspect of God is *Paramatma*, the Super Soul. He has a name, form, and attributes, but He doesn't have pastimes or divine associates. He is known as Maha Vishnu. Another aspect of Maha Vishnu is *Karanarnavashayee*. A part of *Karanarnavashayee* Maha Vishnu is *Garbhodashayee* Maha Vishnu. And a part of *Garbhodashayee* Maha Vishnu is the *Kchheerodashayi* Maha Vishnu. They are also known as the first *purusha*, second *purusha* and third *purusha* respectively. These are the three aspects of one Supreme God.

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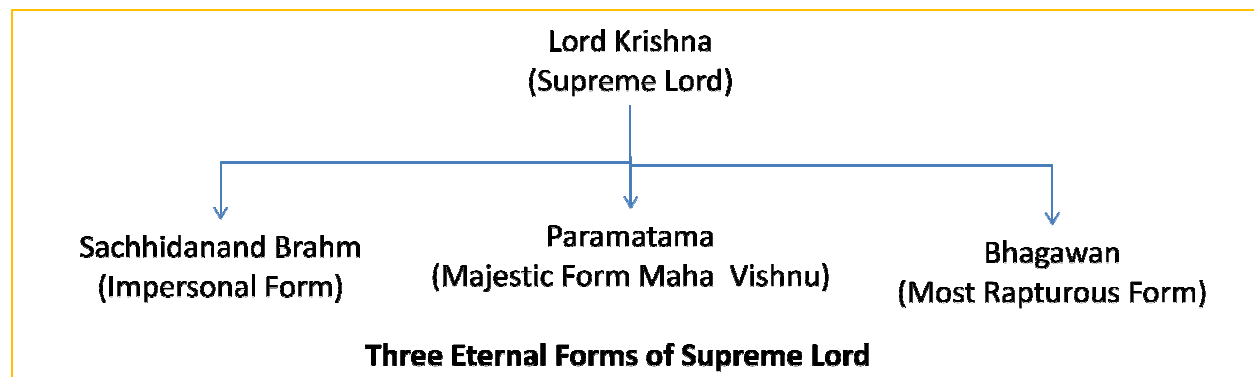


Table 1

The third aspect of God is called *Bhagwan*, the One who descends with name, form, attributes, pastimes and associates to please His devotees Saints through His rapturous pastimes (refer to Table 3 below to see a pictorial representation).



All the rest of these are also God. God means *Bhagwaan* or the One who is endowed with six kinds of *bhag* (unlimited divine majesties). The Sankrit word *Bhagwaan* means ‘one who possesses these six opulences’. Moreover, God has a personal power called *yogamaya* (aka *swaroop shakti* or *para shakti*). God is the governor of *yogamaya*. He has numerous personal expansions. “Personal expansions” means those who are direct parts of the Supreme God. They are also Governors of *yogamaya*. Hence, they too are also known as

God.

God means –

ऐश्वर्यस्य समग्रस्य धर्मस्य यशसः श्रियः । ज्ञानवैराग्ययोश्चैव षण्णां भग इतीरणा ॥

They are Governors of *swaroop shakti*.

The parts of *jiva shakti vishisht* Lord Krishna are also of two types. One part encompasses all the eternally liberated souls who are the divine associates of the Lord. Even so, they belong to the class of *jiva*, the individual soul. They are not God. They are not the personal expansions of God, and hence they are not the Governors of *para shakti*. They are instead governed by *para shakti*. Nevertheless they have never been under the control of *maya*.

A second type of individual soul is known as *maya baddha* (under control of *maya*). We belong

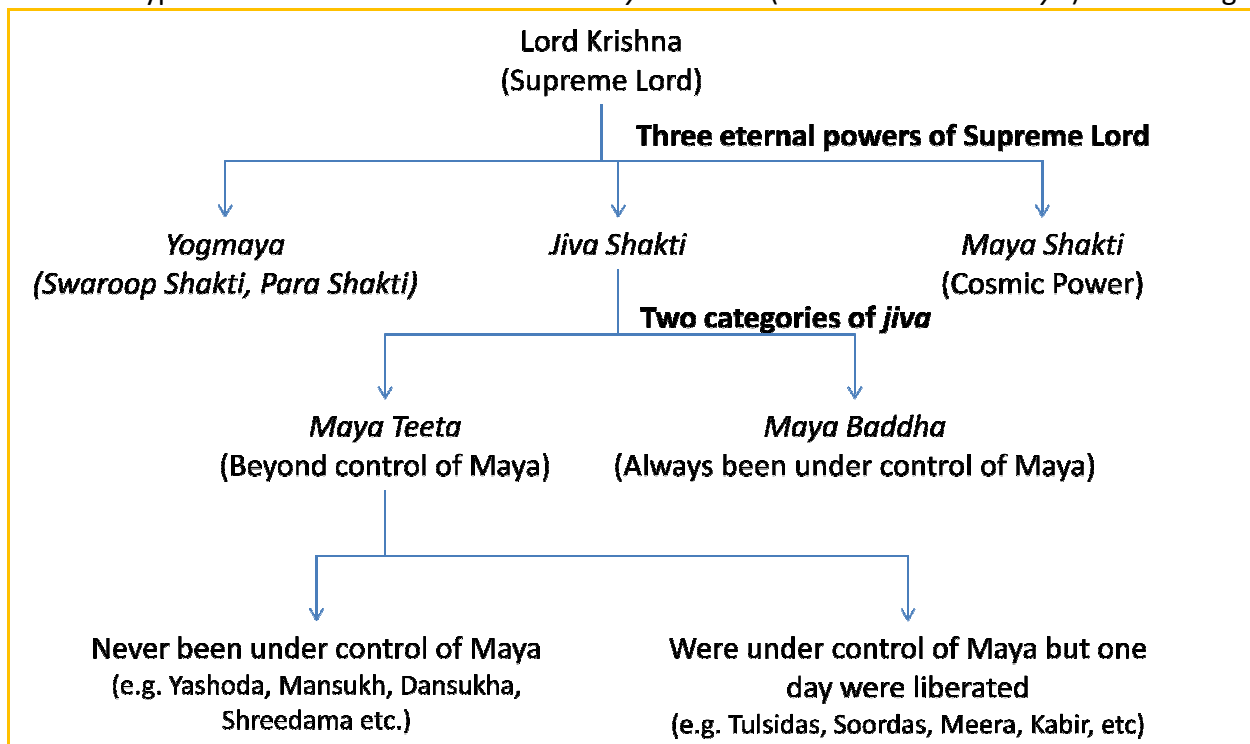


Table 2

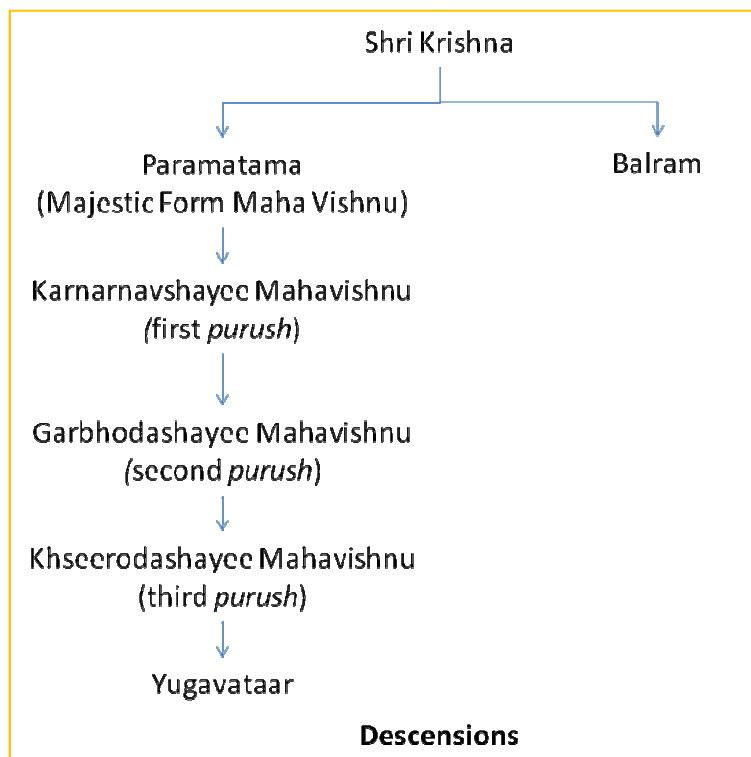


Table 3

Purusha. Srimad Bhagavatam, 1/3/5

to this class and we have been under the control of *maya* since time immemorial. We are also parts of *jeev shakti vishisht* Lord Krishna. We are also not God. We are governed not by *yogamaya* instead by *maya*. Although after God-realization, we will be governed by *yogamaya* and will be freed from the clutches of *maya*.

So, all the personal expansions of God are referred to as God. The 10 *avataars*, 20 *avataars*, 24 *avataars* that are mentioned in the scriptures descend from the third *purusha*, Kshirodashayee Vishnu. These descensions are also called as *purushavatar*.

An aspect of God is known as

एन्नानाराणां निधानं बीजमव्ययं ।

यस्यांशांशेन सृज्यन्ते देवतिर्यङ्गरादया। भाग.१.३.५

Purusha Kshirodashayee Vishnu is the primal cause of all the descensions, except for two descensions: Lord Balram and Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna is Supreme God. All the other descensions (*purushavatar*) are descensions of His parts (*purusha*). Lord Balram is the direct descension of Lord Krishna. He is not the descension of *purusha*. So both Lord Krishna and Lord Balram are referred to as one.

For this reason in Braj, even until now, Balram is addressed as '*Bade Thakur*' (older Lord) and Lord Krishna is addressed as '*Chhote Thakur*' (younger Lord). So Lord Balram is not the descension of *purusha*. Rather, He is the direct descension of Lord Krishna. Lord Balram and Lord Krishna descend on our earth once every *kalpa*. One *kalpa* is one day (12 hours) of Lord Brahma's life. One day of Lord Brahma is calculated to be 4,294,080,000 human years. Lord Brahma's night is of the same duration. Brahma lives for 100 celestial years.

Lord Krishna himself descends on this earth once every *kalpa* (in 7th Manvantar, Dwapar of 28th Chaturyug). Shri Krishna descends in every Dwapar in between but those are *yugavatars*, who are the descension of *purusha* and are not the descension of Supreme God. 5,000 years ago Supreme Lord Krishna descended here on this earth. It is our good fortune that we are able to hear His pastimes. So, this is the secret of God.

God is only one. There cannot be 10-20 Gods!

Reason for increasing corruption

The question is often raised in all parts of India that despite so many temples, rituals, prayers, saints and religious activities happening in so many forms, why there is so much corruption in India?

This is a genuine question because divinity may or may not be apparent in all these religious activities, but at least human qualities such as honesty, compassion, truthfulness, etc. should develop as a result of practicing them.

The answer to this is very simple. We perform all our devotion, prayer, chanting, pilgrimages and so on only with our bodies and senses, and we keep our minds engaged in the material world due to a lack of firm understanding of who is



the actual performer of all these devotional activities. We keep our minds well-fixed in material thoughts and the benefits that satisfy our self-interest. We forget that the cause of bondage and liberation is the MIND alone.

Second, generally people go to big festivals like the Kumbh Mela to bathe in a holy river like the Ganges or go to famous religious places like Kashi, Badrinath, Makka Madina, Bala Ji and so on with an unyielding belief that visiting these places will provide them material wealth, power and control over others and that will ultimately make them happy. For this reason everyone is striving hard to become a millionaire or billionaire. Where is their faith and love for God? Our scriptures assert

यस्याहमनुगृह्णामि हरिष्ये तद्धनं शनैः । ततोऽधनं त्यजन्त्यस्य स्वजना दुःख दुःखितम् ॥

भाग.१०.८८.८

Lord Krishna says, “When I bestow my grace upon someone, I first take away his wealth so that he will be free from its pride and intoxicating effects, and he will surrender himself totally unto Me alone.”

How many people are there who feel poverty or material deprivation is the sign of divine grace? Bad and good actions are only the manifestation of the mind. We miss this point. We often sing before God in almost all the temples:

त्वमेव माता, च पिता त्वमेव, त्वमेव बंधुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।

“You **alone** are my only mother, father, brother and friend...” This is apparently a false statement because our minds instead remain positively attached to our material parents, relatives and friends.

So, the machinery where ideas and thoughts originate is the mind. If we do not focus on God or the aim of our human life, how can we expect to stop corruption? Performing worship to God while one's mind is attached to the material world is like multiplying a huge number by zero. The result is always zero.

There are two different areas – the area of divine God and the area of Maya. Due to misunderstanding that our happiness comes from attaining the sense objects of this attracting world of Maya, we are blindly rushing towards them because we do indeed attain some limited pleasure from them. Yet this happiness does not pacify our desires. Instead it is like adding fuel to a fire. Your desires wouldn't stop even if you attained the position of the creator, Brahma, because we can get everything we choose that is pleasurable through wealth and power except for the happiness that is unceasing and ever-increasing. An ordinary police officer wishes to be S.P., an S.P. wants have the position of a D.I.G, and a D.I.G wants to be an I.G. Even the emperor of the celestial abodes, Indra, longs to have the superior position of Brahma.

सुरपतिर्ब्राह्मं पदं याचते ।

This disease of ambition of attaining the ultimate pleasure goes on even up to that level because our true desire is not being fulfilled through these means.

The cause of this misconception is the ignorant understanding that we are the body. So what gives happiness to the body is what we consider happiness. In reality, we are not the body. The body is “mine” not “me”. We have to understand we want our happiness, that is, the happiness of “me” or the self, the *atma*. But instead we are constantly striving to attain the happiness of the body.

We generally say, “This is my body.” This means “I” am some other entity. Everyone realizes this fact at the time of another's death. This is why we say, “I am going to have the last visitation of the body of my friend, who is now gone forever.” This sentence proves that you know the body and soul are not the same entities. This misconception causes differences that rise up to the level that we start thinking, “I am a man,” “I am a woman,” and then, “I am a Hindu,” “I am Punjabi,” “I am Christian,” and we then we start fighting in the name of different religions.

Thus, our first mistake was to accept the body as the “I”. This made us forget about God. Otherwise, we could have understood that this body is mine and “I” am a divine soul. The *atma* (soul) only belongs to God and this material world has been made to fulfill the necessities of the body. The body and soul are complimentary. No ascetic could challenge this by saying this world is unreal and unnecessary. Who could survive without milk after birth or without various kind of food thereafter? Where can an ascetic live that is without the earth, space, water, air and heat?

So, we have to firmly keep in our mind that the cause of all good and bad results is the mind alone. This same mind has become grossly contaminated in billions of lifetimes. We have to purify it now by focusing on divinely pure God. All the matters of the world or Maya's area are contaminating. Scriptures propagate this same knowledge.

First, understand that you are the soul and second, purify your mind. If you reorient your mind, you will have nothing to worry about. To reorient your mind, connect it with the intellect of the pure mind of a true Saint and follow the spiritual path he describes and with his guidance. Our contaminated mind cannot guide us properly. An illiterate man knows nothing about the law. But when he connects his mind with the intellect of his lawyer, even the most competent prosecutor fails to confuse him and thus a completely uneducated man could win his case. If we also connect our mind with the all-knowing saint and follow his advice, there would be no chance of corruption in society and no need of any government or police agencies, and so on. Otherwise, it is impossible to control corruption in this world. The criminals find ways to circumvent the laws before committing a crime. We have never attained real happiness in this world and we will never attain it in the future. The only real peace we have ever experienced is given by God at the time we enter sound dreamless sleep. There is nothing else in the world

that compares to that peace. Even the happiness experienced by billionaires, presidents or prime ministers cannot beat it.

Conclusion: God is omnipresent and omniscient. If this philosophy is propagated all over the world and we trust it only then will we stop doing wrong things and only then will corruption be curtailed. Otherwise, there is no way. Physical acts of worship are futile.

God - Our Real father

सब जीव भाई भाई गोविन्द राधे । सबका पिता है एक कृष्ण बता दे ।

Sab jeev bhai bhai, govind radhey, Sab ka pita hai ek, krishn bate de

In the Tatriyopanishad of the Vedas, Bhrigu asked his father, who was a *brahma-gyani* (one who has attained formless God thru the path of knowledge), "Please teach me who is *brahm*."

भृगुर्वैवारुणिः वरुणंआनदं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । तैत्तरीयोप.

Is He grain, the breath, the eyes, the ears, the mind or the tongue?

अन्नं प्राणं चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनोवाचमिति ।

His father, Varuna, replied,

तद् होवाच । यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते, येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । तद् विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्ब्रह्मेति । स तपो तप्यत ।

"*Brahm* is the one in whom all the individual souls originate, *brahm* is the one by whom they are sustained, and it is into *brahm* that all the individual souls ultimately merge. You have to know Him. He cannot be known by any other means except practices of austerity. So practice severe austerities." Bhrigu left and after some time he came back and said to his father, "Now I know who is *brahm*."

अन्नं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । अन्नाद्भूयेव खलु इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
अन्नेन जातानि जीवन्ति । अन्नं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ।

"Grain is *brahm*, because grain is the source of birth and survival, and eventually all the bodies merge into the soil from which grain grows." His father smiled and told him to again practice more austerities to know the real answer.

The disciples of Ved Vyas asked him the same question.

अथातो ब्रह्म जिज्ञासा । वेदान्त १.१.१

The quest of knowing God starts from here.

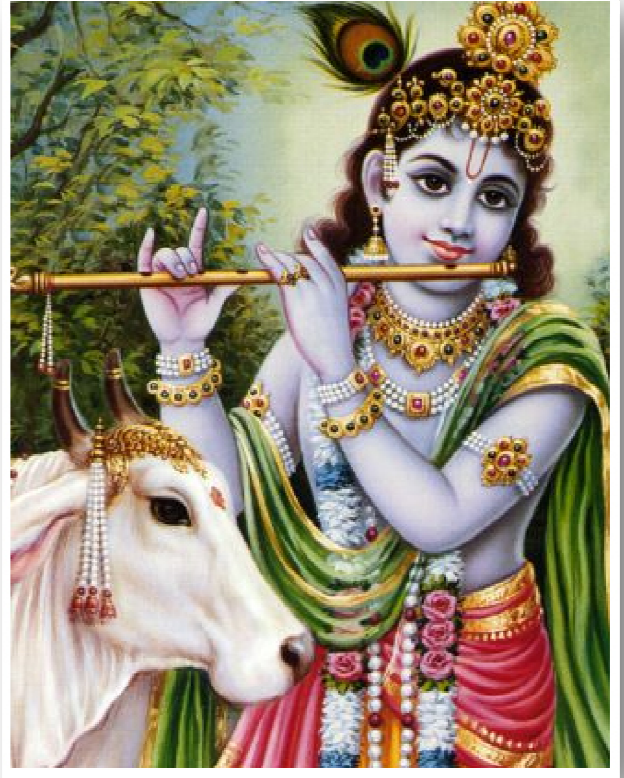
जन्माद्यस्य यतः । वेदान्त १.१.२

It means that God is the one from whom the world originates, the one by whom the world is protected and the one through whom the world enters into dissolution.

Shankaracharya elaborated on this verse. Shankaracharya's Guru was Govindacharya, his Guru was Gaurpad-acharya, his Guru was Shukdev Paramhans, and his Guru was Ved Vyas. Ved Vyas wrote 18 Puranas and the Mahabharat. He divided the Veda in 4 Vedas, and he wrote the Vedanta and the Gita. Shankaracharya, the first Jagadguru of this *kaliyug*, elaborated on this verse.

अस्य जगतो जन्मस्थिति.....

“Lord Krishna, God, is the father of all the living beings”. Living being can be classified in 2 major categories; ones which can move around like humans, animals, birds etc and immobile ones like trees and plants).” The final writing of Ved Vyas is the Shrimad Bhaagawat. In the first verse of Bhaagawat, He wrote, “I am going to write about Shri Krishn.”



Lord Krishna, Supreme God, is the father of all living beings

जन्माद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादि तरतश्चार्थेष्वभिज्ञः स्वराट् तेने ब्रह्महृदा य आदि कवये मुह्यन्ति यत्सुरयः ॥

भाग. १.१.१

“Lord Krishna is the cause of all creation, He is the one who maintains it, and the one into which it will merge. He is the father of all.” The Padam Puran says,

चेतनस्त्रिधाप्रोक्ता.....

There are 2 types of sentient entities – those who are mobile and those who are immobile. Mobile beings can walk, see, listen, smell, taste, touch and think, like humans, animals, birds and so on. They are mobile. Souls can get immobile bodies also like that of trees, grass, shrubs etc.

So Padma Puran says that all souls are sentient and the “Atma” (God) is supremely sentient (The word *atma* is in the Vedas in many places is used not to refer to the individual soul but to God.)

या आत्मनि तिष्ठति

जीवाबद्धादयाः प्रोक्ता आत्मैकस्तु जनारदनः ।

This means that except for Lord Krishna, everyone, even the celestial gods, are *jiva* (souls). There are two types of souls. Some are *swansh* (स्वांश) and others are *vibhinansh* (विभिन्नांश). *Swansh* are endowed with the inner potency of Shri Krishna directly, like Shankar, Durga etc. And *vibhinansh* are part of the *jiva shakti* (soul power) of Lord Krishna. In these, too, there are 2 divisions - those who have never been under the control of Maya (who are *parikar* or eternal associates of God) and those who are like us, who have been under the control of Maya since beginningless time. These, too, can be divided into 2 categories - those who have realized God and those who are still aspiring to this.

We all are the children of God.

Starting from Vedas all scriptures unanimously declare that God is the Father of all. Understand by an example given by Shankaracharya,

सत्यपि भेदापगमे नाथ तवाहं न मामकीनस्त्वम् ।
सामुद्रो हि तरङ्गो क्वचन समुद्रो न तारङ्गः ॥ शंकरा.

“O Shri Krishna! You and I are not different. Both of us are sentient, but still there is a difference. Waves originate from the ocean, but the ocean does not originate from the waves. Means we are born from You, but You are not born from us, this is the difference.”

So each wave is related and their father is the ocean. They originated from the ocean, they are water from the ocean, and they will merge back into the ocean. In this world you call somebody your father or mother or brother or son. These souls are all siblings. Your current physical father was once your wife, husband, son and brother numerous times in past lives. Since beginningless time every soul has had every relationship with every other soul. Then how can we call someone our father? All these relationships belong to the ever-changing and perishable body, not the soul. If the body of a person is your father, then why during a father's cremation ceremony does a son break his father's skull (*kapal kriya*)? Why does a son burn his father's body? He does so because he knows that his father has already left that body. He is not dwelling in that body any more. Only at that time do we consider the soul as mine and not the body.

This body is transitory. Just like the passengers traveling on a train. Every passenger has a different destination. When they arrive at their destination, passengers get down from the train. Sometimes another passenger who may have respectfully addressed you as 'father' gets down before you. You may ask, "Why are leaving me, my son?" "Well, this is how it is. My stop has come and I have to go." First the father should go and then the son. There is no logic that works here. Every soul leaves their body at their pre-destined time. The time of death is determined by God according to the deeds of the soul in his past lives. God says, "You are being given this human body for a certain length of time. During that time, attain Me, or else the human body will be snatched away, and based upon what actions you performed during your life, you receive consequences you must undergo. You cannot bribe your way out of this." In this world a lot of bribery happens, but nothing like this works there.



Passengers traveling on a train alight at their own destination. Similarly every soul leaves their body at their pre-destined time.

So God is the father of all souls. The meaning of celebrating father's day is to decide to attain your divine Father. In order to attain your divine Father, the most important and the only entity who can help you is the Guru. That is why both God and Guru are considered the father.

The Final Message

Bhakti Bhavan, November 11, 2013

"O mind! Lovingly meditate on the lotus feet of Shri Radha Rani."

The one with true spiritual knowledge is speaking to his mind: "Oh mind! Lovingly remember Radha Rani!"

Speaking is the work of the tongue, hearing is the work of the ears, seeing is the work of the eyes, smelling is the work of the nose touching is the work of the skin, and loving remembrance is the work of the mind.

But this devotee is asking his mind to listen. He is telling his mind, not his ears. If someone were to say to his eyes, "Listen carefully to what I'm saying,". Really, how could his eyes ear? So the mind is being told to lovingly meditate. How will it hear? The mind's work is only loving remembrance and not the hearing, seeing, and so on (of the other senses). Each sense has its



O mind! Lovingly meditate on the lotus feet of Shri Radha Rani.

own respective work. One sense can't perform the work of another sense. No matter how sophisticated an instrument you may create it won't be able to make the eyes or nose capable of hearing.

Yes, it may seem quite obvious. However, it is not so. The mind is such a sense that it performs the work of all the other senses. All the senses are incorporated in the mind. Do you all see your dreams? Yes. But your physical senses remain on your bed. Yes. There isn't any sense that is working at that time. But you see in your dreams the same way you see from your eyes when you are awake. You hear the same way. You eat tasty sweets the same way,

you experience happiness the same way, you experience sorrow the same way, you experience fear the same way you do when you are awake.

Does anyone realize when they are dreaming that, "I am seeing a dream"? No, they don't. They believe, "I am actually seeing (because) I am awake and my eyes are wide open." So how does this happen? All our physical body is lying there unconscious. If a theft were taking place in our home we would be completely unaware. And yet we are seeing, hearing and smelling (in our

dreams) but remain completely unaware of the outside world. So if the senses were not incorporated in the mind the mind would only be able to think. How does the mind grasp sense objects through seeing, hearing, smelling and so on while one is dreaming? This proves that all subtle senses are embedded in the mind.

Understand this in even simpler terms.

In the world everyone says, "I saw with my own eyes." "I saw with my eyes." "I heard with my own ears." However, if someone's mind is wandering elsewhere then whatever he hears remains unheard, and whatever he sees remains unseen.

Just a few years ago the Jagannath Ratha Yatra (chariot procession) was celebrated. In Orissa, a crowd of hundreds of thousands walks in the Rath Yatra while loudly singing and playing instruments. Once Ramakrishna Paramhansa was going to join that procession but he was delayed. He came upon an artist who was working on an intricate drawing. Ramakrishna Paramhansa asked him, "Has any procession passed by here?" The artist replied, "Of course not." A nearby shopkeeper said to the artist, "You fool!" "Don't you recognize him? This is Ramakrishna Paramhansa!" "Are you lying to him?" The artist said, "No, I am not lying." Ramkrishna Paramhans sat down right there. He went into a meditative trance and saw that indeed the artist was not lying. Rather his mind was so engrossed in his work that he neither saw nor heard anything of the procession. He hadn't even lifted his gaze.

You experience this every day. If a wife adds too much salt to the food for a couple days, the husband will ask his wife, "Where is your mind wandering off to these days? You are adding too much salt to the food every day!"

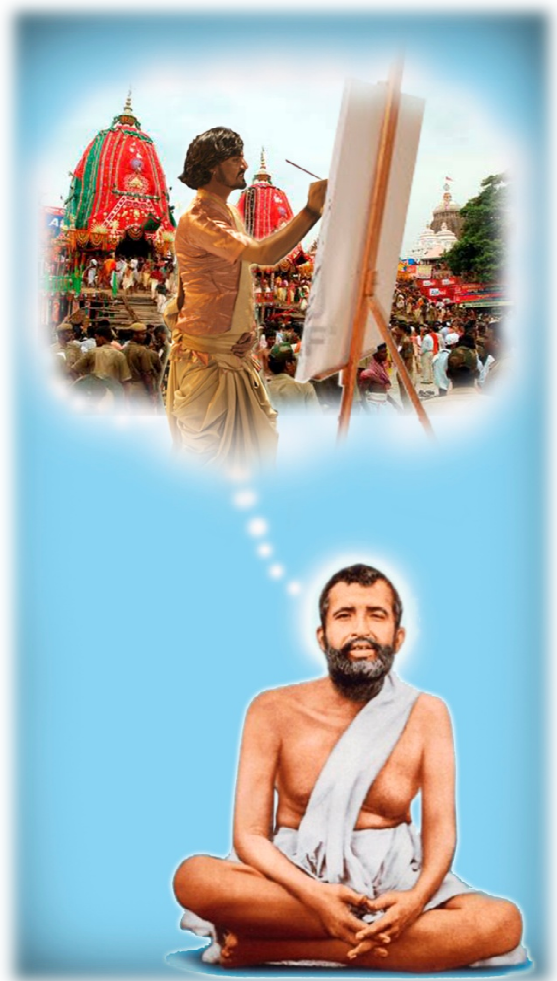
In other words, if the mind wanders elsewhere then the physical senses don't work even though one is fully awake. Each of the senses relies on the mind in order to function. They don't function alone by themselves. In other words, without the mind the physical senses don't function. The mind, even without the senses, performs its respective work. This is why we shouldn't be surprised at how the mind could see and hear or wonder why this devotee is saying, "O mind! Listen!" "Lovingly remember Radha Rani!" So the mind heard and then chose to ignore it aka rebels, "Come on, why I should keep on saying 'Radha Rani, Radha Rani' all day long?" "Should I ignore my children and all my other work and just sit and meditate on Radha Rani?"

Take note; there is absolutely no action that can be performed without the mind. The mind governs all the senses - all ten of them.

मनसैव कीर्तनम् ।

"*indriyebhyaḥ paraṃ manaḥ*" Kaṭhopaniṣad 1-3-10

The most important point is that in the spiritual world, in God's realm, only the actions performed



Ram Krishna Paramhansa saw that the painter was so engrossed that he did not see the procession pass by

by the mind are considered *karma*. Let's understand this philosophy. Once Lord Rama went to his guru, Vashishtha, and asked him for spiritual instruction. Vashishtha said,

"mana saiva kṛtām rāma na śarīra kṛtām kṛtam" Valimiki Ramayan

"Actions performed by the body (physical actions) are not referred to as *karma*." They also don't create binding future consequences. When physical action isn't truly *karma* then how could it produce binding consequences? Only the actions of the mind (mental action) is truly *karma*. Mental action is not outwardly visible and physical action naturally is visible. This is why people ordinarily consider physical action to be *karma*. When they aren't aware of the mind's actions, how could they accept them as such?

A man invites an enemy into his home thinking I'll make him drink poisoned milk and kill him." Outwardly he greets his enemy warmly, "Welcome, welcome!" "You never come visit me." He puts on a great act as he serves him the poisoned milk and then his enemy dies. If that enemy had known his host's intentions he would not have drunk the milk.

We have read again and again in our histories about instances that happened long ago where great Saints and even God Himself were seen to be performing actions. However, they didn't receive consequences for those actions. This very question was asked by Arjun at the beginning



of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna then gave the long lecture of the Gita, as you all know. Lord Krishna explained to Arjun several times,

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युद्ध्य च ॥
tasmat sarveṣu kāleṣu mamanusmara
yuddhya ca Bhagavad Gītā 8-7

"Lovingly remember Me and fight the war."

In other words, "Arjuna, if your mind is not attached lovingly or repulsively; both are the same so both are called *karma*; to the (outcome) of the war and is attached only to Me, then you will not reap the fruits of your (physical) actions, because those are not *karma* at all." That is just acting. Those actions which have a mental motivation whether those motivations are good or bad are called *karma*. Only for those one has to undergo

consequences.

Look, on April 1 everyone in the world puts on an act. We call these practical jokes or pranks that we play on someone on April Fools Day. Now, suppose the mischief of one prankster caused the victim to file a lawsuit. Pleading his case in court, the defendant says, "Your Honor, yesterday was April 1st, right? So I just played a joke on him." "Oh! Of course, I see. The judge would say, "You are free to go. This case is dismissed." It is customary for everyone to play practical jokes on each other on April Fools Day. All kinds of jokes are played around the world among friends and close relatives. Brothers-in-law often exchange abusive words with each other. However, no one gets upset because everyone knows. The mind is certainly involved but it is not emotionally attached.

Let's say your wife, mother or sister is preparing your meal. While cooking the mother thinks, "My son is going to eat this so I will make it delicious!" She is emotionally attached to you. She is emotionally attached to you. On the other hand, if you have hired a cook, he also prepares your food, but apprehensively. "This food must be perfectly seasoned or else the boss will get upset and fire me!" There is no love (in this relationship). He merely performs his work, just as all of you do your jobs.

So there may be attachment, that is, affection or animosity. Both are the same so both are called *karma* (action). This is why the activity of the senses is ignored such as chanting God's name with your mouth or going to the temple to physically worship Radha Rani. No, don't do anything. All the work of the senses is completely ignored. Why? God has said, "Look, in My realm only actions performed by the mind are considered *karma*."

Furthermore, someone may be blind, like Surdas was from birth. Someone may be deaf. How could he listen to spiritual teachings? There are many people who are blind, deaf or physically disabled. Those who are disabled in some way could demand, "We should be made God realized for free because for our senses don't work properly." The laws established by God and the teachings that Saints have given all stress the importance of the mind alone in the performance of *karma*. Whether one practices devotion, knowledge or detachment, it must be done by the mind.

In reality, there are only two actions to perform, there are not so many things involved in this: Become neutral towards the world and attached to God. All spiritual teachings end here. Whether you study the Gita, the Vedas or the Puranas, they will all end up here. Become neutral towards the world. Who should become neutral? Your mind, not your hands and feet! Do not become merely outwardly neutral while inwardly harboring worldly attachment. Don't do it like this. This will not work. Plenty of people do this as you know. Everyone behaves in the world according to their own ability. People deceive one another through their physical actions. And the poor soul bound by *maya*, is incapable of knowing the mental intentions of

others. He is helpless. He believes that physical actions reflect a person's thinking and is deceived. So only mental action is regarded as *karma* in God's realm.

Which action is considered to be the most heinous? Murder. For which crime does our government hand out the most severe penalty? For murder. It is punishable by death. All other punishments are subordinate to the penalty of murder whether it be life imprisonment or 10-20 years behind bars. But a murderer will be executed.

A person is murdering someone at a busy intersection in plain sight of everyone just as Arjuna did. Everyone witnessed him committing many murders. Hundreds were killed with just one of his arrows. In those days the arrows were empowered with special *mantras*. A singled arrow split to become thousands of arrows along its trajectory and thousands of people were killed. But the Supreme Lord didn't register a single murder for Arjuna. What to say of even a single murder, before any action one thinks of performing action. That, too, Arjuna did not do. Arjuna was just lovingly remembering Lord Krishna. This seems like it would be extremely difficult. Yes, it is difficult - not impossible.



Hundreds were killed with just one of Arjun's arrows. But Shri Krishna did not take note of a single action, since Arjun's mind was absorbed in Shri Krishna

Look, take a simple example. You all ride a bicycle or drive a car or motorcycle. There are a few things involved in doing this. People even fly airplanes. How many switches are there in the cockpit? If you ever have a chance to sit inside a helicopter and watch what the pilot does. He quickly presses scores of buttons and switches and then the helicopter will fly. Look how people use both hands to type and how quickly they do it. You know how to ride a bicycle, don't you? Yes. Your legs are moving, your hands carefully grip the handlebars to steer and you are also remembering where you have to go. A car is coming from this side, another is coming from that side, the car behind you is honking, you are observing all of this while your feet continue to peddle, your hands continue to steer. You do all this work simultaneously. Even in heavy traffic you ride your bike or drive your car and safely reach your destination. This is accomplished through practice.

Other great feats - a rope is tied at a great height and see how a circus tightrope walker with a balancing pole walks it. If you say, "Even I can do that. I'm very athletic." You are not capable of doing this. That circus performer spent a lot of time practicing. Similarly, Lord Krishna told Arjuna,

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय ! वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥

"abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagye?a ca g?hyate" Bhagavad Gita 6.35

Yogis perform great feats by practicing. They achieve great yogic powers through practice. They do it with this very mind. Their minds are not imported from elsewhere. The very same kind of fickle and impure mind that we possess, they also possessed at one time, no matter if they were Tulsidas, Surdas, Meera, Shankaracharya, Nimbarkacharya or any other Saint. In my opinion there could be no one as shameful as Tulsidas. Why? Think for a moment. He went to his in-laws to meet his wife. He was so anxious to meet her that he mistook a snake for a rope



(while trying to climb into her house). Didn't Tulsidas know that if there is a house, there must also be a door? He could have shouted, "Hey! Open up!" It is not a crime (to meet one's wife) nor is it immoral. Tulsidas, who was so obsessed with his wife, that upon hearing just one statement from her, "If you had this much love for God you would have attained Him," immediately turned away from the world. Not half-heartedly! He turned completely towards God. And he did indeed attain Lord Rama. Neither from among all of you nor even in the entire world could there be as such an emotionally attached man.

So practice makes perfect. Because of the practice you have done, you have come and are sitting here. Why haven't others come? (Because they think,) "All this talk of God is nonsense!" "These people are all insane." "My mind is fine." "Divine abode, sins, pious deeds - what is all this nonsense?" When such people are punished for their sins after death, then they realize, "Oh! I

was convinced all that talk about God was rubbish." "If only I could receive a human body just once then just see what I'd do... When he was granted a human body, he again called it rubbish. This is exactly what we are doing. The few who believe in the Shastras, Vedas and other scriptures and who develop some faith develop it further in their next human birth, and then even more in the one after that. Those kinds of people are the ones sitting here. This is accomplished through a lot of practice. So only through practice was Arjuna able to shoot his bow with so much precision. If we shot an arrow at a target that was 600 feet away from here and if there were a miscalculation of a fraction of an inch then we would miss the target by four feet over there. Archery is very precise.

But Arjuna was shooting with perfect accuracy and he was not feeling angry. Before a person commits murder, first he gets angry. He would grind his teeth; his eyes would become red; he would verbally assault the other person. All this happens first and after that he would commit murder. Murder- this is the final step. Arjuna wasn't killing one or two, but hundreds of thousands. When Arjuna saw them, he trembled with fear. "Oh ! Am I supposed to kill all these people?" "Oh God! I won't kill them." "I won't fight in this war. I'll go to hell instead." While the same Arjuna was killing them, the Supreme Lord observed him and He did not note any of Arjuna's actions (to be *karma*). Arjuna did not perform any *karma*. *Karma* - this means that action from which receives a consequence and which is done with feelings of love or hate. Arjuna did not perform *karma*. A person may say, "The whole world bore witness to this and I also saw it!" You don't know anything! This is why only the mind is being told to lovingly remember Radha Rani. This very point is what is not understood by everyone in the world nowadays.

People talk about doing extensive practices of devotion and other related things, and they allocate time for doing them. There are great practitioners who practice sincerely and with great effort. But they still have not yet understood that only mental remembrance is considered to be true devotion. No matter if you call it devotion, worship or anything else. Reciting scriptures, worshiping deities and going on pilgrimages; they consider these actions of the physical senses to be devotional practice. Those who recite the scriptures this many times, repeat God's names that many times... are just counting and nothing else. "There is some stone deity on a mountain top - let's go there!" And the deity that's in the neighborhood temple? "That one is alright, it's God, but it's nothing special." "But that God, that one in Badrinarayan, is great." Nowadays everyone has the means to travel. They can go on pilgrimage for 10 days and come back. In the old days, people used to go on foot and 10, 20, even 100 people used to die there.

So devotion is only mental remembrance. Inclusion of physical senses is optional. Through loving remembrance of God with the mind alone, one will attain God realization. It does not

matter if one is blind, deaf, mute or anything else. This is why we, too, should carefully practice devotion - but we don't. That same mind forgets. We chant the names of God - that's fine. Something is better than nothing. If we chant "Radhey Radhey" instead of engaging in useless talk we will at least develop some devotional feelings. But this is being lax about our spiritual growth. When we are making time for devotion, we should practice properly so we may progress quickly. Then you should look for milestones, "Yes, I have made some progress. Earlier I used to get upset with a single abusive word. Now I don't get as upset when someone insults me".

The faults we possess don't let us go towards God. We know very well that even if we had committed only one sin in one lifetime we still would have committed countless sins (as we have lived countless lifetimes). These are called *sanchit karma* (repository of deeds). Yet we are so prideful that we get upset when someone insults us. What is an insult? Your body is just made from earth – that is what was insulted. How can someone insult the soul when he isn't even aware of it? Whether the body is insulted or praised it's all the same. Today a child is born, tomorrow he grows up. 20-25 years are spent in studying. After this he enters family life or becomes a criminal. This also goes on for some time and after this he dies. At least the bodies of animals provide skins which are sold! What are insult and praise? They are only products of the mind. Consider this too - how much difference is produced in these through practice. Insult a bum all day long - in any case, that is what people do. He will keep on laughing "Today a girl threw her shoe at me, but I ducked and it missed me." He is happily narrating this to his friend. He doesn't feel bad about it at all. A prostitute gets accustomed to her life through practice.

We have practiced telling lies. When we told a lie the very first time, our inner conscience spoke to us. A mother told her young child, "If the neighbor lady comes, tell her I'm not at home." The child kept thinking, "My mommy is at home, and she told me she's not, and to say it like this." The neighbor lady came, "Where's your mommy?" "My mommy is at home but she said when the neighbor lady comes, tell her that mommy went out." The neighbor smiled and left, but Mommy overheard this. After the neighbor left, she slapped the child. What does this mean? This is the mother's first lesson to her child in lying. "You aren't supposed to say that Mommy is at home!" After this the child grew up and became an adult and kept on telling lies again and again. Eventually it became second nature. It's the same with drinking alcohol. Whatever addiction you may develop becomes natural through practice and you stop feeling bad about it.

This why when I talk about practicing loving remembrance with your mind, you should pay careful attention to my words and practice it. It is understandable that at first it won't be easy to imagine God's form. But after practicing again and again you will naturally start to conceive

God's form and then you will start to experience devotional bliss. Then the mundane happiness you were receiving from the world will become insignificant. While walking, sitting or standing you will naturally remember God. This happens through practice. Just as when your feelings of worldly affection or worldly animosity greatly increase you are absorbed in them all the time regardless of your physical activity. In the same way, your mind will become absorbed in Radha Rani and Lord Krishna. After all, they are the ocean of divine bliss. These mundane attachments that fill the mind don't come out. But if you caught even a glimpse of Radha Krishna you would be experience unfathomable divine bliss. Even if you do devotional remembrance for two hours, you should practice carefully so that in the following two hours your devotional feelings will grow. "Yes, I am benefitting from practicing devotion," "and I will practice like this more and more." This is why the one with true spiritual knowledge is saying, "Oh, mind!" "Lovingly remember Shri Radha Rani's lotus feet."

Sunahu Sadhak Pyare - 17

Loving remembrance, meditation, affectionate thinking, *rupadhyan*, this is the essence of all devotion. All other ways of worship are helpers to real devotion. Why?

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बंध मोक्षयोः । ना.पु., पंचदशी, ब्रह्मबिन्दु पु.



The mind is the reason for either being controlled by Maya or being freed from Maya. If you don't engage your mind in remembering God, then what will your mind do when your body engages in physical worship? Your mind will remember someone or something of this world and whatever the mind meditates upon that is the object of its worship. And you get the fruit according to that. You are saying "Radhey Radhey" and assuming that is the name of your mother, wife or daughter, then you will not get the fruit of remembering Radha Rani. You will get the fruit of the personality you were remembering. So when taking God's name, mentally remember that personality. Memorize it by heart. Keep on thinking on this point. This statement will help you till you realize

God. That is why apart from remembering God, every other form of devotion is like multiplying with zero.

There are two forms of devotion. One includes the remembrance of God (*sasang bhakti*) and the other is without the remembrance of God (*anaasang bhakti*). Listening or chanting the chapters and verses of the Bhagavat, Geeta and Ramayan etc. or visiting holy places are virtually useless since the degree and extent of your material attachment is what is noted in the spiritual realm, not the physical worship that you perform.

मनेर स्मरण प्राण

Remembrance is the essential part of devotion. As a lifeless body is meaningless, so meditation on the divine form of God is the most essential part of devotion.

When we start to learn the ABCs of devotion, the first lesson is to mentally conceive the Divine form of your Lord, and then take His name. Even in this world, when we wish to call out to someone, we first remember him (his form) and then we call his name. Without having a mental image of the person, even in this world we don't call out to anyone. Hence,

तज्जपस्तदर्थं भावनात् । योगदर्शन

Yogdarshan has an aphorism saying that one should chant God's divine name feeling that the name of God and God Himself are one.

So even if you perform thousands of different types of devotion, remembering His Divine form is foremost. You don't have to take the name of Ram and Shyam even a single time. If someone is deaf, how will he listen to devotional music? If someone is mute, how will chant Radhe Radhe? He will protest and say, "I should receive God realization without the requirement of exerting any effort because I can't perform this kind of devotion." So God says, "I don't want the devotion performed by your ears, eyes or your tongue. I want the devotion practiced by your mind." Everyone possesses a mind, even trees, birds, animals, bugs all have a mind. God says, "Remember Me even if you don't utter My name."

The name is chanted in order to facilitate attaching the mind to God. When you sing His *leelas* and attributes then your mind gets attached to God. Lovingly attaching the mind to God is the goal. The senses are helpers to the mind. While you are loudly chanting God's name and singing with the accompaniment of instruments, even if there is a massive accident outside, you won't be able to hear it over the sound of the *satsang* and thus your devotion remains undisturbed.

Another reason is that some devotees may have less spiritual power while others may have more. When all these devotees sing together, then cumulative spiritual power in the breaths of all devotees helps spiritually elevate all the devotees. But Remembering God's Divine form is compulsory. Without that, devotion cannot be called devotion. You might find statements like there is no need for devotional sentiments and to only take God's name because that is

enough. Before taking God's name, a mental image of God's form has to be brought into the mind. Otherwise, if you didn't do this, did you really take God's name? So remember God mentally and along with that listen to or chant God's name, whatever you prefer.

येन केन प्रकारेण मनः कृष्णे निवेदयेत् ॥ भ.र.सिं.

तस्मात् केनाप्युपायेन मनः कृष्णे निवेदयेत् ॥ भाग. ७.१.३१

By whatever means your mind gets attached to Him, that is what you should do. That is the aim.

जप तप नियम योग निज धर्मा । श्रुति संभव नाना शुभ कर्मा ॥
आगम निगम पुरान अनेका । पढ़े सुने कर फल प्रभु एका ॥
तव पद पंकज प्रीति निरन्तर । सब साधन कर फल यह सुन्दर ॥

However much you love God is the indication of how much devotion you have. And love will automatically cultivate through loving remembrance. That is why it is being said,

श्रवण कीर्तन स्मरण ही है प्रमुख साधन प्यारे ।

स्मरण ही को साधना का प्राण मानो ॥

shravan kirtan smaran he hai pramukh sadhan pyare

smaran hi ko sadhna ka pran mano pyare

Listening, singing and remembrance, these three are primary ways of practicing devotion. But remembrance is the life breath of that practice.



Kid's Section

Why does God descend?

One day Akbar, the Mughal emperor of India, asked his wise prime minister Birbal, "In Islam we say God sent his servants like Muhammad Saheb to save people. That was sufficient to do the job. But in Hinduism it is said that God Himself descends. Why does God go to all the trouble of descending?"

Birbal replied, "Oh Emperor, I don't really know. That is just how it is." Thus Birbal deferred the question. Birbal got made a wax replica of little Salim, Akbar's son in a sitting posture. When the replica was ready, one fine day Birbal suggested Akbar and Salim go for a boat ride. Birbal arranged for a maid who was in his confidence to accompany Salim. Akbar, Birbal and an entire



entourage of servants embarked in the boat. Akbar and Birbal sat together in the front of the boat. In the back Salim's replica sat with a maid. The real prince stayed home with his other attendants. The maid kept caressing the little Salim. After sometime Birbal signaled the maid to carefully throw Salim overboard and pretend like he accidentally fell in the river.

Seeing Salim bobbing in the river, Akbar jumped in the river to save his son. No sooner did he touch the wax model that he figured out it was one of Birbal's pranks. Akbar was furious. He asked Birbal what kind of the practical joke this was.

Birbal replied, "O my emperor! You wanted to know why God descends on earth and does not send his servants to save the people. See when your son fell in the river you yourself jumped in the water and you did not ask any of your servants to save him. Similarly, we are God's children and He loves us. Hence He Himself descends on earth to save us".