



# ŚRĪ MAHĀNET



*Since the beginning of the Millennium*

DECEMBER 2007



Srila A.C.  
Bhaktivedanta  
Swami Prabhupada

Anyone who quits his body in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is at once transferred to the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is the purest of the pure. Therefore anyone who is constantly Kṛṣṇa conscious is also the purest of the pure. The word *smaran* ("remembering") is important.

Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is not possible for the impure soul who has not practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness in devotional service. Therefore one should practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the very beginning of life. If one wants to achieve success at the end of his life, the process of remembering Kṛṣṇa is essential. Therefore one should constantly, incessantly chant the maha-mantra.

## ŚRĪ ŚRĪ PRAPANNA-JĪVANĀMṚTAM

*"Positive and Progressive Immortality"*

by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣhaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

Chapter Ten: *Avasesamṛtam* – Divine Remnants of Nectar



### 10.7

*atmaramas ca munayo, nirgrantha apy urukrame*

*kurvanty ahaitukim bhaktim, ittham-bhuta-guno hariḥ*

*Srimad Bhagavatam 1.7.10*



" Those sages who, being merged in the bliss of the spirit soul, are totally free from the binding knot of mental images – they too engage in the unmotivated service of Sri Kṛṣṇa, the performer of marvelous deeds. This is but one of the qualities of the Supreme Lord Hari, who charms the entire world."

# WORDS OF OUR GUARDIANS

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

from *Loving Search for the Lost Servant*



Srila Sridhar Maharaja :

" Our attitude should be one of humility, and if we think that we are being done wrong, still we should be patient, and under no circumstances should we work for our own position and prestige; that should not be our aim."

Mahaprabhu said "Whoever you come across, talk of Kṛṣṇa (*yare dekha, tare kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadesa*)." Give them the food of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, *kṛṣṇa katha*. The world is filled with famine-stricken people. We must distribute food, give the life and breath of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to whomever we meet by speaking about Kṛṣṇa.

That was the feeling of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, and Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja carried that out in the West. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta used to say, "I do not admit any other conception of famine. The only famine is that of *kṛṣṇa katha, kṛṣṇa smṛti*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness." With such seriousness he conceived of our

distributed that vitality all over the world. It is by their grace and by the grace of Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself that so many have come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Haridasa Thakura once told Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "By Your chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, both the animate and inanimate world has been supplied with the food of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever position they may occupy, their life is fulfilled. I heard of how, when You traveled through the jungle and chanted and danced, the elephants and tigers also danced and chanted the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. What wonder, then, should there be if I say that the stones and trees have also attained their highest end – Kṛṣṇa consciousness – when You are chanting. What an intense degree of Kṛṣṇa consciousness has been produced here by Your chanting!"

But in order to chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, something is required from our side also. *Amanina manadena kirtaniyah*

necessity for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa is of vital importance to our existence. Only Kṛṣṇa can give us vitality. And as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Kṛṣṇa Himself distributes Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Vasudeva Ghosh says, therefore, "Sri Gaurāṅga is my life and soul, my only vitality. If Gaurāṅga had not come, how could I live? (*yadi gaurā na ha'ta tabe ki haita kemane dharitam de*.) By His grace I have tasted such valuable food that without this, my life would be completely impossible."

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the vitality of vitality. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada did his best to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the people of India, and Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja

*sada harih*. We should resort to kirtana always, but our attitude should be as Mahaprabhu recommends: *Trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna amanina manadena*. Our attitude should be one of humility, and if we think that we are being done wrong, still we should be patient, and under no circumstances should we work for our own position and prestige; that should not be our aim.

When the lower stands against the higher, offense arises. That tendency should be shunned. Primary education is also education, but that should not compete with higher education; we must be careful about that. At the same time, the differentiation between higher education and lower education must be genuine. Still, primary education must not be thought of as the highest education. That will be dangerous. There is a saying in Bengali – *alpavidya bhayamkori* – "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." We must be careful

about that, otherwise our attitude will be suicidal. The question of offense arises whenever primary education stands against higher education. That sort of assertion is offensive.

Slow and steady wins the race. Our march towards the infinite is a long journey, not a journey to be finished within a few hours, a few days, or a few years. And we have to adjust accordingly. It is not that we shall run quickly to make progress and then stop and sleep. It is a long way we shall have to go. We will only be successful if we develop humility – *trnad api sunicena*. We should not create any circumstance that invites resistance. Still, if any resistance unexpectedly approaches us, we should try our best to forbear. And we must always be conscious that our guardian's eye is always over us, eager to help us in our campaign. We are not alone. We may go on confidently: there is a person above us to redress the wrong that may be shown to us, so we

should not take the initiative.

We must not allow any ulterior purpose or temptation to induce us to give up our search for Sri Krsna. Let the satisfaction of guru, Gauranga, Krsna, and the Vaisnavas be our only objective. Let no other element enter upon our path. Our purity of purpose must always be very scrupulously maintained. We should think, "Alone I shall go on with my duty. I won't be always searching for someone to come and help me. Let them do their own duty. This is my duty."

With this attitude we shall go on. With this sort of adjustment our concentration may become more intense, our confidence in Krsna will be increased, and our duty will be pure and clear. We should be conscious that hindrances and obstacles are almost sure to attack us, but we must deal with them with humility and forbearance. So this life is not a life of comfort.

But in order to develop this kind of humility and forbearance, we must learn to see the Lord's hand in everything. And therefore the Vedas tell us to remember that the glance of the Lord is always upon us. *Om tad visno paramam padam sada pasyanti suraya*: We are asked to see the holy feet of Narayana as we see the sun in the sky. Why the sun? The sun is described as *pradarsaka*: the seer, the witness. Apparently we see the sun, but really the sun helps us to see. The holy feet of Visnu means the lowest part of Visnu – *yoge vidhayam yasya vidyate kvacit*. His lower part to us is the beginning of realization for us. The beginning of realization is to think that God is always seeing us. As the sun helps us to see, Visnu's holy feet are like the sun. So we should try to always see everything by the rays of the holy feet of Visnu.

## DIVINE GUIDANCE

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

(from *Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration* – lecture at Mauritius college)

Honorable teachers, respectable Vaishnavas, and my beloved students: I feel very fortunate that you have given me this chance to speak about Krishna consciousness. I am especially indebted to the authorities of this college: because of their kindness it is possible for me to meet with you all today.

When I first came here to Mauritius, I noticed some very auspicious symptoms. I noticed that

the trees bear so much fruit, the earth is very fertile, and all the people are very conscious of religion. I was surprised to see that this country is like a heaven on earth! I also saw that many mangoes had fallen from the trees, and many other trees bore ripe papayas and other fruit, yet nobody collected that fruit. Seeing these symptoms immediately inspired me to remember Sri Vrindavan Dham. There we find ripe fruit on the

trees everywhere, and the souls residing there are full of the mood of service. They are all eternally engaged in the divine service of the Supreme Lord. We find such descriptions of Goloka-Vrindavan, the holy abode of Lord Krishna, in Sri Brahma Samhita. This holy book was brought by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu from South India, and it is widely accepted by religious authorities as the authentic treatise depicting the teachings of Srīman Mahaprabhu.



Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda  
Deva Goswami Maharaja

*isvarah paramah krsnah  
sac-cid-ananda-vigrahah  
anadir adir govindah  
sarva-karana-karanam*

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead – the Embodiment of Truth, Consciousness, and Joy – is Govinda, or Krishna. He is beginningless, the origin of all that be, and the cause of all causes." [Sri Brahma Samhitha 5:1] That is, the actual form of each one of us originates from the *sac-cid-ananda-vigraha* of Krishna.

All the Vedic scriptures teach us that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Other 'gods' also have their own abodes and full powers, but only as expansions of the power of the infinite Personality of Godhead, Krishna. If you subtract infinite power from infinite power, you still have infinite power, just as zero minus zero equals zero.

*om purnam adah purnam idam  
purnat purnam udacyate  
purnasya purnam adaya*

ancient Vedas we will find all knowledge given in a living way. The knowledge given by the Vedas is that behind everything is the living soul, and if we study the Vedas we will find this out.

The property of the living soul is thinking, feeling, and willing. One who has these properties must necessarily need to do something. He can do good, or he can do bad. If he does good, he will get a good reaction; if he does bad, he will get a bad reaction. Every action has a reaction. Newton's third law states that "every action has an equal and opposite reaction." We should therefore try to do good things, otherwise we shall not receive a good reaction. And to get relief from all reaction, we must become Krishna conscious. If we surrender fully to Krishna, everything will go directly into His account. If all our actions are done in Krishna consciousness, no reaction will come to us. This process has been given in *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*.

In this gathering you are all students and you all wish to know something about religion, specifically something about Krishna consciousness. If you try to read *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, you will be benefitted. Everyone has the chance to improve his future by reading this book – whether he is a *karmi*, or a fruitive

A proper examination of the Vedic Scriptures will leave us with no doubt that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Throughout the whole world people are chanting the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra, and through that we can also have some understanding. In all the scriptures – the Vedanta, the Upanisads, the eighteen Puranas – we find that the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, are chanted. Still the question arises: "What is Krishna consciousness, and why should we worship Krishna?"

Love, Beauty, Charm, Ecstasy We are in want. We are not fulfilled within ourselves – for that fulfillment we must worship Krishna. What is our want? We need love, we need beauty, we need charm, we need ecstasy, and so on. These are essential for our soul, which is always in a state of living, and has the properties of thinking, feeling, and willing. The soul can move, and the *jada*, or the material, cannot move; but even within matter, there are living souls. Within a tree is living a soul – this has also been proved by scientists such as Jagadish Bose. This knowledge is not new: in the

worker, a *jnani*, or a seeker of knowledge, a yogi, wanting power to conquer the environment, or a bhakta, who is always surrendered and fully dependant upon the knowledge of Krishna consciousness. Everyone can gain some good future prospect from reading *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*.

*anasaktasya visayan  
yatharham upayunjatah  
nirbandhah krsna-sambandhe  
yuktam vairagyam ucyate*

The real benefit to be gained is that without mundane attachment we are to engage in service to Krishna. [*Bhakti Rasamrtasindhu* 1:2:255]

*asocyam anvasocas tvam  
prajna-vadams ca bhasase  
gatasun agatasums ca  
nanusocanti panditah*

Krishna said to Arjuna: "You speak like a wise man, yet you are suffering from material happiness and sadness. You show yourself to be knowledgeable in the Vedas [pandit] but you are not actually following that line." [*Bhagavad Gita* 2:11]



## LINKS TO ONLINE NECTAR

Home page of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Navadwip Dham

<http://www.scsmath.com>

Pictorial updates of projects, news, programs

<http://scsmath.com/new.htm>

Audio Index of talks by Srila Govinda Maharaja

<http://www.scsmath.org/audio/>

List of SCSSMath International Centers

<http://www.scsmath.com/centers.html>

Credit card contributions to the Math

<http://scsmath.com/events/creditcardontations.html>

California Math Web page in honor of Srila Govinda Maharaja

<http://california.scsmath.org>

Veranda Views - Topical photos from the Math

<http://verandaviews.com>

from Srimati Jamuna Priya devi dasi

Sri Guru Vandana

<http://www.vaisnava.com/>

SCSSMath Bookstore/purchase with credit card

<http://vaisnava.com/bookstore>

from Sripad Premavatar Prabhu

Sri Chaitanya Shridhara Govinda Mission

<http://krsna.cc>

Audio Discourses by Srila Govinda Maharaja

from Spd. Madhusudana Prabhu, Hawaii

Sri Vaishnava Tosani

<http://www.toshani.com>

from Spd. Srutasrava Prabhu

Weblog of an Itinerant Monk

<http://www.imonk.net>

from H.H. Bhakti Lalita Akinchan Maharaja

Sacred Cybertemple of The Beautiful Goldenlord

<http://www.mahaprabhu.net>

from H.H. Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja

New Subscribers to Sri Mahanet

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mahanet/join>



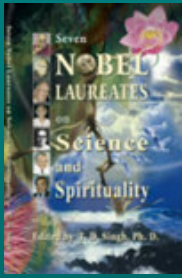
**All religions point toward  
the same direction.**

*"Everything is determined,  
the beginning as well as the  
end, by forces over which  
we have no control. It is  
determined for the insect, as  
well as for the star. Human  
beings, vegetables, or  
cosmic dust, we all dance to  
a mysterious tune, intoned in  
the distance by an invisible  
piper."*

*Albert Einstein*

# FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

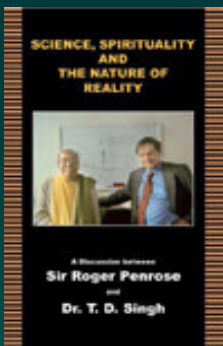
## Synthesis of Science and Spirit



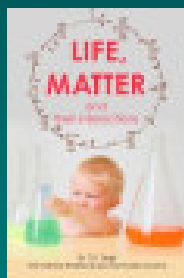
Seven Nobel Laureates on Science and Spirituality



Essays on Science and Religion



Science, Spirituality and the Nature of Reality



Life, Matter and Their Interactions

## Knowledge Falsely So-called: The Theological Case Against Scientific Realism

by Justin S. Holcomb

Since the "Enlightenment," anti-theistic polemicists have characteristically leaned to science to deliver their challenge against faith. In both popular culture and scholarly circles, the spirit of Voltaire lives on, reassuring the faithful that science and religion apply to different and incommensurable spheres of knowledge, and then mocking the believer for treating their sacred texts as trustworthy in philosophical and scientific matters. An example of this approach is found in A. D. White's *The History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*. White's book seems to agree with the contemporary affirmation that Christians have the epistemic right to believe what they wish; however, so long as they understand the Biblical narratives in a general straightforward manner, they ought not to claim or vainly pretend that they hold justified and true beliefs since they conflict with well-established scientific claims. Such restrictions derive from the notion of science as the paradigm of rationality.

A theological response [1] to this challenge is two-fold. Considering the first response (part 1), it is important to note that those making the above claims, or

---

claims similar to them, adopt a philosophy of science, commonly called "scientific realism," which ascribes to science the accurate portrayal of the natural world as it actually is. The work of Thomas Kuhn and the historical account of science show that science ("scientific realism") is unable to provide a true (or even approximately true) account of the natural world- for the simple reason that it is inherently impotent to do so. The second response (part 2) is the philosophical and biblical/theological claim that the Christian faith, as described in Scripture, provides the necessary preconditions for the intelligibility of the scientific enterprise. In other words, without the theological and philosophical views of the Bible, the scientific discipline is at best arbitrary and at worse undermined. The non-theological scientist obviously does do science, but that scientist can not give account for the very science being done. This second response will require both a philosophical and a biblical/theological description of the Christian worldview and the assistance of David Hume and Bertrand Russell to argue for the necessity of the Christian worldview for science.

### Scientific Realism

Historically, scientists have maintained an important distinction between the theory one might propose and the observational evidence that might count either in favor of the theory (verification) or against the theory (falsification). This observation-theory distinction, the hallmark of "scientific objectivity," has fallen on hard times since the publication of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn argues that one can not observe data in an epistemological vacuum. In other words, the claim that one is neutral in regard to "facts" is a myth. Nietzsche called this "the myth of the immaculate perception." All "facts" are theory-laden. That is, the very process of selecting certain data (and not others) for scientific investigation betrays a whole host of metaphysical, ethical, and epistemological pre-commitments collectively known as a

"paradigm." Kuhn suggests that the "priority of the paradigm" directs one's thinking in interpreting the evidence for or against a theory. Scientists do not merely see objects and phenomena, but they see them as something in light of their respective paradigm. [2] Historical analysis of the way scientists have treated data seems to many philosophers of science at the very least to have blurred the line between theory and observation, a line whose existence is doubted by Kuhn. Moreover, Kuhn has offered the provocative suggestion that different paradigms are incommensurable, that they suggest their own epistemic virtues and differ on such questions inherently so that no neutral discrimination between them is possible in principle. If Kuhn is correct, he has refuted "scientific realism" by making it impossible for scientists to adjudicate between theories without appealing to some extra-scientific criterion.

The historical record creates additional problems for the "scientific realist." J. P. Moreland notes that the history of science offers numerous examples of "empirically equivalent" theories. Moreland explains that the scientific realist makes at least two claims, an ontological one and an epistemological one. Moreland writes:

The ontological claim is that the theoretical entities referred to by the theory exist and the theory describes those entities in a true (or approximately true) way. The epistemological claim is that science is objectively rational in such a way that it is possible in principle to have good reasons for thinking one of a rival pair of theories to be more approximately true than others.

But the history of science shows a large number of theories that have been empirically equivalent for a long time (Copernicus versus Ptolemy) or that are empirically equivalent in principle (relative or relational theories of space versus absolutist, alternative geometries of space); that is, two or more rival theories entail all the same observational consequences. In this case the theories are undermined by the data; data cannot settle the issue between the rivals in question. In these cases, the rational realist cannot satisfy both his ontological and epistemological assumptions. If he/she agrees that one of the rivals is true and the other is false, then he/she must admit that there is no way to tell which is which. On the other hand, if he/she denies that one is true and one or false, he gives up realism altogether. [3]

Moreland anticipates the appeal to epistemic "virtues" the realist might enjoin to resolve the dilemma by pointing out the fact that some theories have these characteristics does not necessitate the veracity of

---

the theory in question, only its usefulness. Also, different theories often possess different (but very significant) epistemic virtues, leaving in the end only a scientist's arbitrary preference to discern which virtues ought to obtain priority. In his *Analysis of Matter*, Bertrand Russell inadvertently offered the grandest example of empirically identical puzzles for the realist. Russell invites his reader to imagine that "the universe sprang into being five minutes ago, exactly as it then was, with a population that 'remembered,' and physical structures that 'recorded,' a wholly unreal past." [4] In such a case, all solutions that appeal to evidence merely beg a very large question. Malcolm Acock maintains that no one has yet proposed a satisfactory solution to this "trivial-but-maddening" enigma.

Adding problem upon problem, prominent anti-realist philosopher of science, Larry Laudan, has chronicled numerous theories of the past that scientists (generally) considered false for quite some time, theories the scientific community now holds to be true. [5] Also having combed the annals of the history of science, Laudan has collected a lengthy list of past successful theories that the scientific community presently considers to have been falsified. These theories often possessed various and significant epistemic virtues. That is, they provided a theoretical basis for making accurate predictions and for controlling the environment, proved fruitful for future research, and managed to convince the majority of scientists of their veracity. Yet, by contemporary standards, they contained entities that Laudan politely dubs "non-referring," meaning that they have no counterpart in the real world. These useful fictions included aether, phlogiston, mysterious "affinities," and others. [6] Laudan's parade of "unsuccessful-but-true" and "successful-but-false" theories greatly weakens the link between the success of a theory and its truth-value, thereby casting grave doubts upon the putative veracity of all currently successful scientific theories. In light of the history science, then, what guarantee could one offer that today's scientific "truisms" will not fall by the way or that some obsolete hypothesis will not make a surprising comeback? However useful a theory might be, its success apparently can not serve to indicate either

the epistemological status of its claims or whatever its ontology names real entities.

To the troublesome pedigree the history of science has bequeathed the scientific realist, one can add the argument that while realism entails a cumulative-refinement model of the advance of scientific knowledge, history tells of many examples of "revolutions" in science, episodes of one paradigm overthrowing and replacing another. The abundance of such examples strains the credibility of the cumulative-refinement model. After citing several examples, Kuhn insists that

This need to change the meaning of established and familiar concepts is central to the revolutionary impact. Though subtler than the changes from geocentrism to heliocentrism, from phlogiston to oxygen, or from corpuscles to waves, the resulting conceptual transformation is no less decisively destructive of a previously established paradigm. Just because it did not involve the introduction of additional objects or concepts, the transition from Newtonian to Einsteinian mechanics illustrates with particular clarity the scientific revolution as a displacement of the conceptual network through which scientists view the world. [7]

Often times, in light of their many difficulties, realists opt for the weaker claim known as "approximate" realism or verisimilitude, the idea that successful theories only approximate the real world with varying degree of precision. Not only does this ad hoc modification fail to avoid many of the obstacles to a realism already noted, but it adds a few of its own. To begin with, just like "exact realism," the idea of approximation presupposes a correspondence theory of truth, a conception that has yet to attain an adequate definition. No one seems to know how it should appear when theory x "corresponds" to state of affairs y. Second, no matter the semantic trickery one may employ to cover up the fact, an "almost-true" theory remains a false theory, even when it works better than the more false (?!) theory it supposedly refines. Consequently, it appears that arguing the weaker claim offers no aid to the realist cause.

Do the conceptual entities postulated by a theory actually refer to an entity in the real world, as realism mandates? It does not seem so. Moreland has noted that often times theoretical entities like specific gravity can be eliminated from a larger theoretical framework without affecting the meaning of scientific claims. [8] Perhaps, then, such concepts merely represent a kind of scientific shorthand, symbols that do not genuinely refer.

Moreland also makes the fascinating observation that, as philosophers of science, realism and anti-realism represent incommensurable second-order theories about science, meta-theories which are themselves empirically equivalent. [9] Therefore, one must invoke something other than mere data in order to choose between them. The present debate between eminent philosophers of science on both sides of the issues underscores this profound verity. If not by reference to the hard data science and the history of the sciences, how then ought one to decide whether or not scientific realism is indeed true?

What is the significance of the downfall of scientific realism? If anti-theistic polemicists are making claims against the faith which are grounded in a faulty understanding of science, those very claims can be discarded as antiquated and as no longer a challenge to the faith. If science is not merely data collection (scientific realism), how is science to be done? This question will be answered in the following section.

(To be continued in next issue.)