



"I recited all these verses like the blowing wind, how could you remember even one of them"
The Lord replied "By the grace of the Lord someone may become a great poet and similarly by his grace someone may become a great sruti dhara, who can memorise anything immediately".

So in this connection sruti dhara is a very important word. Sruti means hearing and dhara means one who can capture. Formerly at the start of kali yuga, almost everyone, especially intelligent men, the brahmans, were sruti dharas. As soon as the student heard any of the Vedic wisdom from his teacher, he would remember it forever. There was no need to refer to books, therefore in those days there were no written books.

So the spiritual master delivered the Vedic hymns, along with their explanations, and the student remembered them forever. To become a sruti dhara, one who can remember by hearing is a great achievement for a student. In Bhagavad Gita Krsna says "Note that all opulent, beautiful and glorious creations spring from but a spark of my splendour". As soon as we find anything extraordinary, we should know this is the special grace of the Lord.



Keshava Kashmiri pandit has many descendents nowadays, scholars, intellectuals, puffed up by their academic achievements. Now of course there are two extremes. One is to be proud of ones learning, and another extreme, which is sometimes popular in religious circles, is to be proud of ones ignorance. In other words those who are proud of not being educated, as everyone takes pride in something. Because we are conditioned souls, its like if you are hungry you will always find something to eat. If we have that craving for pride we will find something to be proud of. You can go to skid row where drunks are lying on park benches, but they have their social hierarchy, their pecking order. Someone is the leader, someones the follower, someone gets the good bench, someone the middle bench, someone is under the bench, just like amongst animals who are very hierarchical.

There was a Christian philosophical position called fideism. Fideism is a position held by people like Pascal, one of the great thinkers of the seventeenth century, a great philosopher, mathematician and inventor. The idea was that because human beings tend to be proud of their intelligence and their education, God humbled them by giving them an irrational revelation. There are many irrational claims, imagine if in the middle of the night there was a knock on the door and somebody dragged you off to jail, because it turned out that geneologists had discovered that thousands of years ago one of your ancestors had comitted a crime, and not been punished, and so now, thousands of years later, you are being punished for it. We would consider that to be wildly unjust and crazy.

Yet this claim was made for God, that God does crazy things like that. This is called original sin, we are all suffering and we have to be punished for something one of our ancestors did thousands of years ago, its a very nutty idea. Actually John Stuart Mill, the great english philosopher of the 19th century said "I cannot worship a God who is morally inferior to human beings". Or lets say at the weekend you give your child a list of things to do and if the child refuses or does it imperfectly, then the only reasonable thing to do is kill it. What else would a good parent do? After all, this is Pauls argument in a letter to the Romans.

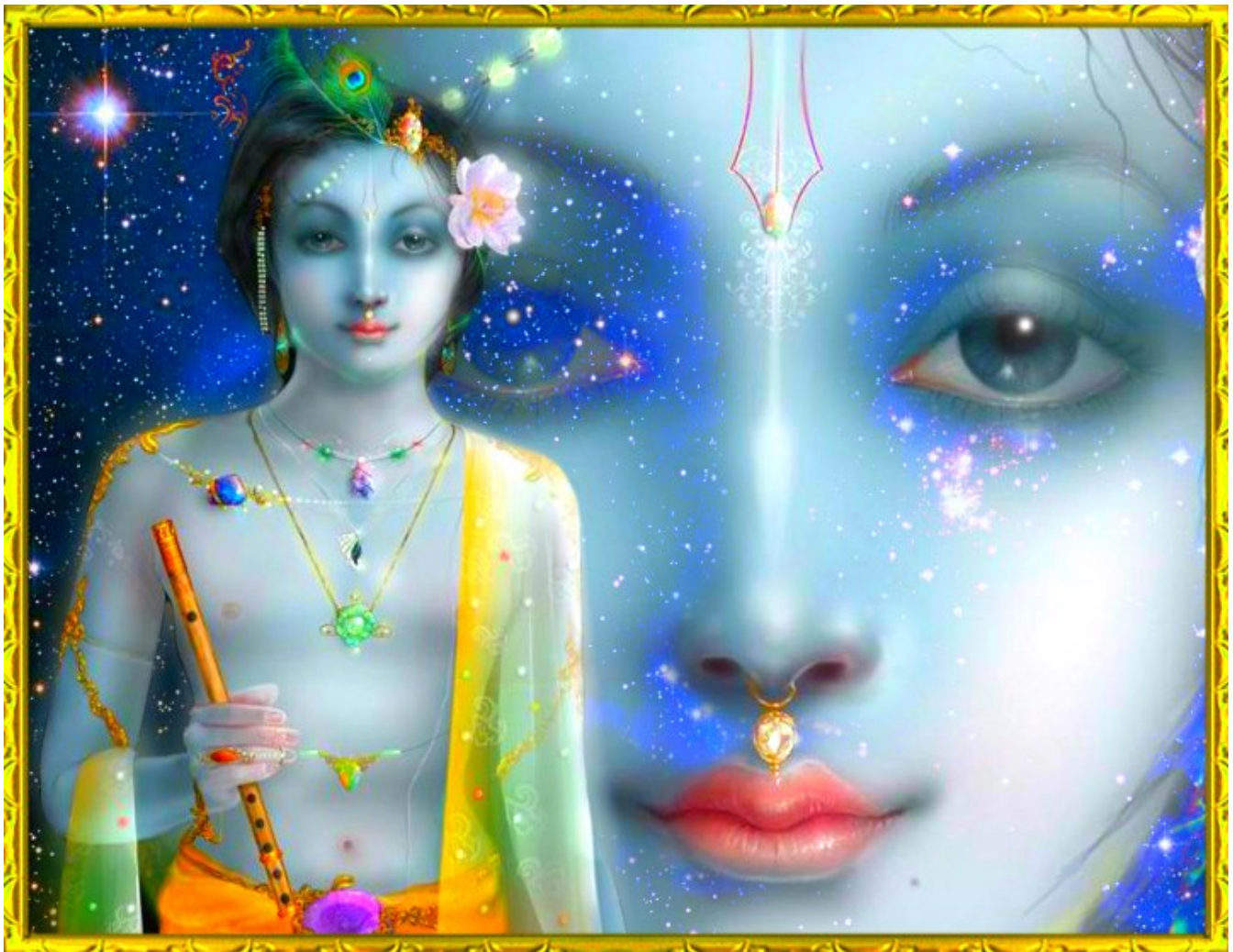


If you have ever seen the film Narnia, this is one of the basic arguments, we all deserve to be killed. Even if you are a good person, pay your taxes, smile at your neighbours, love your children and mow your lawn. Even if you do all of these things you still deserve to be killed, obviously, because your supreme, all loving, infinitely compassionate father believes you have imperfectly followed him. And so what else would a loving father do? However, because your supreme loving father is so kind that instead of killing you, he has decided to kill himself. And so he sends his good son and according to the church, that good son is fully God as well as fully man.

What would you think if your parents came to you when you was a child and said that you are not perfectly obedient and therefore as your loving parents we have no choice but to kill you. However, because we love you so much we have decided to kill ourselves instead, to prove our love for you, for we so loved our children we decided to kill ourselves. It occurred to more than one person that this is grossly nutty. In many of the religious traditions there are many examples of people who gave their lives to help other people, however you can only follow one of these people and the rest are going to hell. There are so many irrational examples, and living here in America, where these things are very prominent, devotees should be educated about this.

There are good and pious elements, but there is also a lot of poisonous theology. Actually one

thousand years ago, the philosopher Ancell gave what became a very famous argument to prove the existence of God. It is called the ontological proof for the existence of God. He argues that God is that being whom no greater being can be conceived. If you say God does not exist, then i can conceive of a greater being namely one that has all the attributes of God and does exist. As you probably notice this is a kind of philosophically tricky argument, and yet one thousand years later atheists still get disturbed by it. Now Ancell was simply trying to prove the existence of God, but in doing so he opens up other philosophical possibilities.



About 500 years after Ancell, Rupa Gosvami, a great Vaisnava saint, gave basically the same argument, which is found in the Bhaktirasamritasindhu. In that book which Srila Prabhupada translated as the nectar of devotion, Rupa Gosvami argues that if you study all the different candidates for God, such as Siva or Narayana or Visnu, Krsna is the most likely candidate. Outside of Bharata there are not that many candidates, almost like faceless, anonymous candidates. In the sense that you cannot really know God. In the jewish tradition it was widely believed that God is so holy you cannot even speak his name, what to speak of carving deities.

In Christianity, we have the non scriptural belief that God is very similar to an elderly person and dresses like a palestinian, wearing robes, even though the Bible does not state that. So basically you have Vedic candidates and you have anonymous candidates from other parts of the world. Rupa Gosvami concerned himself with the known ones. So Rupa Gosvamis argument is that Krsna is the original form of God. Krsna is Svayam Bhagavan because he has the most glorious qualities. So in abstract philosophical terms, Rupa Gosvamis argument is that the highest conception of God is the truest, that is what he is saying philosophically. God is infinitely great and therefore the greatest conception is the closest and therefore the truest, therefore Krsna is God.

Written by Hridayananda Das Gosvami

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