

The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. Mark

with Shri Guru Toshani Tika

bh. Jan Mareš

Dedicated to Shri Shrimad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and his dear disciple Shri Shrimad Bhakti Ananda Goswami Maharaja who opened my eyes to the real purport of Bhakti-shastra, and to Lord Jesus, Supporter of the Universe, Savior Avatar and the Mercy in Person.

Invocation

om ajnana timirandhasya jnananjana salakaya  
caksur unmilitam yena tasmai sri gurave namah

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him. (Guru Gita from Skanda Purana, verse 34, Gautamiya tantra 7.10-11)

Foreword

This commentary which I chose to name Shri Guru Toshani Tika ("Commentary pleasing Shri Guru") is probably the first Vaishnava commentary on any of the Gospels. How is it possible that after so many hundreds of years of existence of these two great Bhakti traditions - Christianity and Vaishnavism - no one attempted to write such commentary? The only answer seems to be that their interaction was very limited. Christianity made a significant presence in India (if we don't consider the early arriving Malabar community with mainly local impact) only some four hundred years ago and like other religious traditions, it was welcomed by its generally spiritually inclined inhabitants. However, the Christian missionaries came to convert, not to understand. To my knowledge no Vaishnava Acharya engaged in debate with them, nor wrote extensively on the Bible and Christian theology. One exception was Shri Bhaktivinoda Thakura in 19th century who studied Christian theology to some extent and mentioned it in his writings.

After Shri Shrimad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada brought Gaudiya Vaishnavism to the USA in 1965, Christian churches often saw Vaishnava missionaries as competitors and even members of a dangerous cult. Shrila Prabhupada, however, viewed Christianity as a Bhakti tradition. He never criticized Lord Jesus or His teachings - contrary to those who claim to be His followers but only in words. Jesus did the same (Matthew 5:48, 7:3-6, 21-24, 12:48-50, 15:8-9, 19:17, Mark 7:6, Luke 6:46-49, 12:47, 13:25-27, John 5:14, 8:51, 12:26, 14:15, 21, 23-24, 15:10, 14, etc.).

Some disciples of Shrila Prabhupada took up an extensive study of Christian theology. One prominent among them is Shri Shrimad Bhakti Ananda Goswami Maharaja, also known as Brother David Sherman of Catholic Ecumenical Order of the Holy Name (EOHN). Because of his deep and extensive knowledge I (and others) suggested to him that he should write a tika on some Gospel. His poor health unfortunately did not allow him to do so but he encouraged me to do it instead. Thus I took a courage to start this arduous task on St. Mark's, the oldest of the canonical Gospels (usually dated circa 72-75 AD, i.e. about 10 years after author's demise), and he mercifully reviewed it, expressing his pleasure. Thus the commentary's goal got fulfilled.

I have mainly chosen relevant quotes from major Vaishnava shastras like Bhagavad-gita, Shrimad Bhagavatam, Chaitanya Charitamrta (the main biography of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, which could be also categorized as a Gospel genre), Brahma-samhita, etc. translated by Shri Shrimad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. To better understand the context of quotes given one should refer to these works. This commenting style was previously used for example by Shri Madhva Acharya in his commentary on Shrimad Bhagavatam. The result is a concordance.

I hope that this work will help in spiritual search and mutual Christian-Vaishnava understanding which could open the way to a wider understanding of all monotheistic traditions. I pray to the lotus feet of Shri Guru parampara to enlighten me and to be pleased with my efforts.

Hare Krishna

Jan Mareš

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The Bible version used is Douay-Rheims-Challoner (DR).  
(<http://www.bible-network.com/douay/NT/mark.html>)

Church Fathers about the author

"Mark," says Papias (according to the testimony of Eusebius, [Ecclesiastical History, 3.39]), "becoming the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately, though not in order, whatever he remembered of what was either said or done by Christ; for he was neither a hearer of the Lord nor a follower of Him, but afterwards, as I said, [he was a follower] of Peter, who arranged the discourses for use, but not according to the order in which they were uttered by the Lord."

Irenaeus [Against Heresies, 3.1]: "Matthew published a Gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the Church at Rome; and after their departure (or decease), Mark, the

disciple and interpreter of Peter, he also gave forth to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter."

Clement of Alexandria is still more specific, in a passage preserved by Eusebius [Ecclesiastical History, 6.14]: "Peter having publicly preached the word at Rome, and spoken forth the Gospel by the Spirit, many of those present exhorted Mark, as having long been a follower of his, and remembering what he had said, to write what had been spoken; and that having prepared the Gospel, he delivered it to those who had asked him for it; which, when Peter came to the knowledge of, he neither decidedly forbade nor encouraged him."

Eusebius' own testimony, however, from other accounts, is rather different: that Peter's hearers were so penetrated by his preaching that they gave Mark, as being a follower of Peter, no rest till he consented to write his Gospel, as a memorial of his oral teaching; and "that the apostle, when he knew by the revelation of the Spirit what had been done, was delighted with the zeal of those men, and sanctioned the reading of the writing (that is, of this Gospel of Mark) in the churches" [Ecclesiastical History, 2.15].

"Mark, disciple and interpreter of Peter according to what he heard Peter relate, wrote a brief Gospel as requested by the brothers in Rome. When Peter heard, he approved and ordained it on his authority for reading in the churches, just as Clement wrote in the sixth book of the Hypotyposes, and Papias the Hierapolitan bishop. Peter also mentioned this Mark in the first epistle, under the name of Babylon figuratively signifying Rome: she who is in Babylon chosen together with you, sends you greetings and so does Mark my son [1 Pet. 5:13].

"And so, he took the gospel which he put together and proceeded to Egypt. First proclaiming Christ in Alexandria, he founded a church with such teaching and self-control in life that she compels all followers of Christ to her example. Further, Philo, the most brilliant of the Jews, upon seeing the first church of Alexandria when it was still Jewish, wrote a book about their dealings as if in praise of his own people, and he handed down a remembrance of what he saw was done in Alexandria under the instructor Mark in the same manner that Luke relates that the believers of Jerusalem had everything in common.

"Mark died in the eighth year of Nero [emperor 54-68] and was buried in Alexandria, Annianus succeeding him." [Jerome, De Viris Illustribus 8]

St. Mark, the disciple and interpreter of St. Peter, (saith St. Jerome,) according to what he heard from Peter himself, wrote at Rome a brief Gospel at the request of the Brethren, about ten years after our Lord's Ascension; which when Peter had heard, he approved of it, and with his authority published it to the church to be read. Baronius and others say, that the original was written in Latin: but the more general opinion is that the Evangelist wrote it in Greek.

The preaching of John the Baptist. Christ is baptized by him. He calls his disciples, and works many miracles.

1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Commentary: The ontological position (tattva) of Lord Jesus is described in short in John 1:1-4: "In the beginning was the Word [logos], and the Word was with God [as His associate], and the Word was God [Gr. theos, i.e. vyuha of God]. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." which is paralleled in Shrimad Bhagavatam 8.7.25: "O lord, you are the original source of Vedic literature [sabda-yoni, logos]. You are the original cause of material creation, the life force, the senses, the five elements, the three modes and the mahat-tattva. You are eternal time, determination and the two religious systems called truth [satya] and truthfulness [rta]. You are the shelter of the syllable om, which consists of three letters a-u-m."

Srila Prabhupada said about Jesus: "Similarly, in the Christian world, the Bible is worshiped. It is a fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is present by His words. Krishna is also present by His words. These personalities, either God or the son of God, who come from the transcendental world, keep their transcendental identities without being contaminated by the material world." (Krishna, The Reservoir of pleasure)

Bhaktijana: Does Jesus Christ reside in the Vaikunthas or Brahmaloaka?

Prabhupada: No, Vaikuntha. He's person. Brahmaloaka, Brahmaloaka is within this material world, and Vaikuntha, in the spiritual world. (Boston Dec 23, 1969)

Lord Shiva prays: "My dear Lord, You are the origin of the subtle material ingredients, the master of all integration as well as the master of all disintegration, the predominating Deity named Sankarshana, and the master of all intelligence, known as the predominating Deity Pradyumna. Therefore, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You." (SB 4.24.35)

"My dear King, in former days Lord Shiva and other demigods took shelter of the lotus feet of Sankarshana. Thus they immediately got free from the illusion of duality and achieved unequaled and unsurpassed glories in spiritual life. You will very soon attain that very same position." (SB 6.15.28)

"O Lord, whose glories are covered by Your own energy, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are Sankarshana, the origin of creation, and You are Vasudeva, the origin of the chaturvyuha. Because You are everything and are therefore the Supreme Brahman, we simply offer our respectful obeisances unto You." (SB 10.10.33)

[Vasudeva said:] "O Krishna, best of yogis, O eternal Sankarshana! I know that You two are personally the source of universal creation and the ingredients of creation as well." (SB 10.85.3)

"The light of one candle being communicated to other candles, although it burns separately in them, is the same in its quality. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda who exhibits Himself equally in the same mobile manner in His various manifestations." (Brahma Samhita 5.46)

"When from one candle many others are lit, I consider that one the original." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.2.89)

"Lord Balarama is the original Sankarshana. He assumes five other forms to serve Lord Krishna." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.8)

"There is one marginal potency, known as the jiva. Maha-sankarshana is the shelter of all jivas." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.45)

"These two brothers [Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda], I told him, 'are like one body; They are identical manifestations. If you do not believe in Lord Nityananda, you will fall down.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.175)

John 5:23: "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

"Because Maha-sankarshana is the ingredient and efficient cause of the cosmic manifestation, He is present in every detail of it. Lord Chaitanya therefore called Him His elder brother. The two brothers are known as Krishna and Balarama in the spiritual world, but at the present moment they are Chaitanya and Nitai. Therefore the conclusion is that Nityananda Prabhu is the original Sankarshana, Baladeva." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.13.78)

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself who advented 500 years ago in Bengal together with Lord Nityananda who is Lord Sankarshana Balarama. They spread the yuga-dharma of harinama-sankirtana, chanting of the holy names of the Lord, especially Hare Krishna mahamantra. Their pastimes are much more resembling in form those of Lord Jesus - preaching.

"Lord Sankarshana is Lord Balarama. Being the predominator of the creative energy, He creates both the material and the spiritual world." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.255)

Lord Sankarshana's glories are further described in SB 5.25, Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5, etc. They are endless. There is more support to Lord Jesus being the purna avatar of Lord Sankarshana Balarama, rather than a mere shaktyavesha avatar. At the same time, Ananta Shesha is also considered a shaktyavesha avatar so there is no contradiction.

"Lord Shesha in the spiritual world of Vaikuntha and, in the material world, Lord Ananta, who carries innumerable planets on His hoods, are two primary empowered incarnations. There is no need to count the others, for they are unlimited." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.370)

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead invested the power of personal service in Lord Shesha."  
(Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.372)

In a discussion between Lord Chaitanya and Sanatana Gosvami the Lord described how to recognize a real avatara.

"Sanatana Gosvami said, 'I am a very insignificant living entity. I am low and poorly behaved. How can I understand who is the incarnation for this Age of Kali?' (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.351)

"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu replied, 'As in other ages an incarnation is accepted according to the directions of the shastras, in this Age of Kali an incarnation of God should be accepted in that way.' (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.352)

"An actual incarnation of God never says 'I am God' or 'I am an incarnation of God.' The great sage Vyasadeva, knowing all, has already recorded the characteristics of the avatars in the shastras." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.354)

"The Lord does not have a material body, yet He descends among human beings in His transcendental body as an incarnation. Therefore it is very difficult for us to understand who is an incarnation. Only by His extraordinary prowess and uncommon activities, which are impossible for embodied living entities, can one partially understand the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.355)

"By two symptoms - personal characteristics and marginal characteristics - the great sages can understand an object." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.356)

"My transcendental body [sac-cid-ananda-vigraha, Brahma-samhita 5.1] looks exactly like a human form, but it is not a material human body. It is inconceivable. I am not forced by nature to accept a particular type of body; I take on a body by My own sweet will. My heart is also spiritual, and I always think of the welfare of My devotees. Therefore within My heart can be found the process of devotional service, which is meant for the devotees. Far from My heart have I abandoned irreligion [adharmā] and nondevotional activities. They do not appeal to Me. Due to all these transcendental qualities, people generally pray to Me as Rshabhadeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the best of all living entities." (SB 5.5.19)

"Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be." (BG 9.11)

"At the time of Their appearance, the incarnations of the Lord are known in the world because people can consult the shastras to understand an incarnation's chief characteristics, known as svarupa and tatastha. In this way the incarnations become known to great saintly persons." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.363)

Lord Jesus therefore never claimed to be God, although several times He did not refute His disciples when they made such claim. He always humbly presented Himself as God's servant as seen in Matthew 10:24 and John 13:16 ("a disciple or servant is not greater than his master nor messenger greater than the one who sent him"), Matthew 19:17 and Mark 10:18 ("no one is good but God alone"), Matthew 24:35-36 ("day of judgement is known only to the Father, not to the son"), John 7:16 ("My doctrine is not mine but my Father's"), John 14:28 ("my Father is greater than I").

When in John 10:30 He states that "I and my Father are one", the Greek original does not suggest physical or numerical oneness (Greek "heis") but "hein" ("we are together"). Their real oneness is of interest and mission.

Another often controversial issue is Jesus as the "only way".

Opponents claim that this is a proof of bigotry and intolerance of Christianity. It is, however, a misunderstanding. One can be God conscious in various non-personal ways (pantheism, monism, etc.) but if one wants to enter into personal relationship with God, Krishna, one must approach His most intimate servant Lord Jesus (Nityananda Balarama) and be initiated by His genuine representative in genuine succession of spiritual masters (guru parampara).

He is said to appear repeatedly as various avatars (lit. "one who descends"), preaching in essence the same message:

"But give heed to my first discourse of the truth. If any one do not allow the man fashioned by the hands of God to have had the Holy Spirit of Christ, how is he not guilty of the greatest impiety in allowing another born of an impure stock to have it? But he would act most piously, if he should not allow to another to have it, but should say that he alone has it, who has changed his forms and his names from the beginning of the world, and so reappeared again and again in the world, until coming upon his own times, and being anointed with mercy for the works of God, he shall enjoy rest forever. His honour it is to bear rule and lordship over all things, in air, earth, and waters. But in addition to these, himself having made man, he had breath, the indescribable garment of the soul, that he might be able to be immortal." (Clement of Alexandria, Homily 3, Chapter XX. Christ the Only Prophet Has Appeared in Different Ages, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/080803.htm>)

This tallies well with the last words in John, otherwise difficult to understand:

John 21:25: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

With His thousands of mouths He sings the glories of Lord Krsna, but although He always sings in that way, He does not find an end to the qualities of the Lord. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.121)

The pastimes of Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are wonderful and unlimited. Even personalities like Lord Brahma, Lord Siva and Sesa Naga cannot find their end. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.331)

To say nothing of Anantadeva, even Lord Krsna Himself cannot find an end to His own transcendental qualities. Indeed, He Himself is always eager to know them. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.21.14)

John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

"Shri Shukadeva Gosvami continued: After thus instructing Chitraketu and assuring him of perfection in this way, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme spiritual master, the supreme soul, Sankarshana, disappeared from that place as Chitraketu looked on." (SB 6.16.65)

"All glory, all glory to the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda, by whose mercy I have attained Shri Radha-Govinda!" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.204)

"He indiscriminately delivers all those who simply fall down before Him. Therefore He has delivered such a sinful and fallen person as me." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.209)

"No one can attain the shelter of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu without Your mercy, but if You are merciful, even the lowest of men can attain shelter at His lotus feet. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.6.131)

This term "lotus feet" may sound strange but it is frequently used in the Vaishnava scriptures to describe the beauty of Lord's and sadhu's feet.

Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" See also Nahum 1:15, Romans 10:15.

2 As it is written in Isaias the prophet: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee.

3 The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.

Commentary: "The foremost manifestation of Krishna is Sankarshana, who is known as Ananta. He is the origin of all incarnations within this material world. Previous to the appearance of Lord Krishna, this original Sankarshana will appear as Baladeva, just to please the Supreme Lord Krishna in His transcendental pastimes." (SB 10.1.24)



4 John was in the desert baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance, unto remission of sins.

5 And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Commentary: "If persons who are very serious about being liberated from material life hear the glories of Anantadeva from the mouth of a spiritual master in the chain of disciplic succession, and if they always meditate upon Sankarshana, the Lord enters the cores of their hearts, vanquishes all the dirty contamination of the material modes of nature, and cuts to pieces the hard knot within the heart, which has been tied tightly since time immemorial by the desire to dominate material nature through fruitive activities. Narada Muni, the son of Lord Brahma, always glorifies Anantadeva in his father's assembly. There he sings blissful verses of his own composition, accompanied by his stringed instrument [or a celestial singer] known as Tumburu." (SB 5.25.8)

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Commentary: "Locusts" refers to locust beans (carob), not insects.

7 And he preached, saying: There cometh after me one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.

Commentary: This is how disciple speaks about one's spiritual master.

8 I have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

Commentary: The initiation process is described here: "Shri Krishna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramatma [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted." (SB 1.2.17)

"In this way, being purified by ritualistic sacrifices, the heart of Maharaja Bharata was completely uncontaminated. His devotional service unto Vasudeva, Lord Krishna, increased day after day. Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, is the original Personality of Godhead manifest as the Supersoul [Paramatma] as well as the impersonal Brahman. Yogis meditate upon the localized Paramatma situated in the heart, jnanis worship the impersonal Brahman as the Supreme Absolute Truth, and devotees worship Vasudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose transcendental body is described in the shastras. His body is decorated with the Shrivatsa, the Kaustubha jewel and a flower garland, and His hands hold a conchshell, disc, club and lotus flower. Devotees like Narada always think of Him within their hearts." (SB 5.7.7)

"What, then, is the ultimate truth? The answer is that nondual knowledge is the ultimate truth. It is devoid of the contamination of material qualities. It gives us liberation. It is the one without a second, all-pervading and beyond imagination. The first realization of that knowledge is Brahman. Then Paramatma, the Supersoul, is realized by the yogis who try to see Him without grievance. This is the second stage of realization. Finally, full realization of the same supreme knowledge is realized in the Supreme Person. All learned scholars describe the Supreme Person as Vasudeva, the cause of Brahman, Paramatma and others." (SB 5.12.11)

"...Great yogis meditate upon the Lord, who is situated as the Supersoul, Paramatma, within the core of the heart. May that Supersoul be pleased with me. The Supersoul is realized when one is eager for liberation from the unlimited varieties of material life. One actually attains such liberation when he engages in the transcendental loving service of the Lord and realizes the Lord because of his attitude of service. The Lord may be addressed by various spiritual names, which are inconceivable to the material senses. When will that Supreme Personality of Godhead be pleased with me?" (SB 6.4.27-28)

"The Paramatma, the Supersoul feature, is a plenary portion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the original soul of all living entities. Krishna is the source of the Paramatma." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.161)

"The one Supreme Lord lives hidden inside all created things. He pervades all matter and sits within the hearts of all living beings. As the indwelling Supersoul, He supervises their material activities. Thus, while having no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness." (Shvetashvatara Upanishad 6.11, Gopala Tapani Upanishad - Uttara 97, Brahma Upanishad 4.1)

Thus in the Holy Trinity the Father is Lord Krishna, the Son is Lord Sankarshana Balarama and the Holy Spirit is Lord Paramatma. All are Vishnu-tattva.

9 And it came to pass, in those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Commentary: Enter the Lord. This Gospel skips the narration of His appearance in Bethlehem (in ancient times known as Ephrata) predicted by Micah (5:2) and other Prophets. It was accompanied by at least two events which show the Vedic nature of His lila. In Luke 2:13-14 He is saluted by heavenly host praising God. These are demigods (devas) who attend every appearance of the Lord. SB 3.24.7, 8.18.8 and 10.3.6 give similar descriptions of Lord Kapila's, Lord Vamana's and Lord Krishna's advent. Luke 2:16 (coming of shepherds to Lord Jesus) corresponds to SB 10.5.10.

Another event is the killing of babies by King Herod. Historicity of this killing is doubted because there seems to be no record of it in non-biblical sources like Jewish historian Josephus Flavius who paid attention to much less important issues. However, the same atrocity arranged by King Kamsa accompanied the appearance of Lord Krishna and Lord Balarama (SB 10.4.31).

Just as Lord Jesus was brought from Bethlehem to Egypt by His parents (Matthew 2:12-20) when Herod's servants performed their atrocity, Lord Krishna was brought from Mathura to Gokula for protection by His father. Luke 2:22, however, tells that the Lord was brought to the temple to be presented before the Lord. Although this is also a Vedic custom, it would mean that He was brought right into the midst of Herod's atrocities.

"Concealing Their innately perfect knowledge by Their humanlike activities, those two omniscient Lords of the universe, Themselves the origin of all branches of knowledge, next desired to reside at the school of a spiritual master. Thus They approached Sandipani Muni, a native of Kashi living in the city of Avanti." (SB 10.45.30-31)

"Humanlike activities" (nara-lila) means that some of the Lord's acts resemble those of ordinary humans. This bewilders the materialists who then consider the Lord a mere mortal. Materialism is a worship of one of the Shaktis of the Lord called Prakriti, Maya etc. manifested as a material nature, the whole material universe. She is associated with Shiva, the expansion of the Lord representing material time. Matter and material time are typical features of this world and science tries to uncover their mysteries to be able to manipulate them for the benefit of humans. This is the basis of samsara because they should be employed in the service of the Lord instead.

"Sandipani thought very highly of these two self-controlled disciples, whom he had obtained so fortuitously. By serving him as devotedly as one would serve the Supreme Lord Himself, They showed others an irreproachable example of how to worship the spiritual master." (SB 10.45.32)

"That best of brahmanas, the spiritual master Sandipani, was satisfied with Their submissive behavior, and thus he taught Them the entire Vedas, together with their six corollaries and the Upanishads." (SB 10.45.33)

10 And forthwith coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit as a dove descending, and remaining on him.

Commentary: Dove is one of the representations of the Holy Spirit. Another are breath, wind, etc. The word "spirit" itself comes from Latin spirare, to breathe. In Sanskrit the breath or life air is called prana and Lord Paramatma is called Praneshvara (Lord of prana) or Prana-sharira (One whose body is enveloped in prana). This is more elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad.

"All living entities, moving and nonmoving, receive their vital force, their bodily strength and their very lives from the air. All of us follow the air for our vital force, exactly as servants follow an emperor. The vital force of air is generated from the original vital force of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. May that Supreme Lord be pleased with us." (SB 8.5.37)

The prana itself, however, is material energy and the jiva must get disentangled from it.

"Although the false ego has no factual basis, it is perceived in many forms - as the functions of the mind, speech, life air and bodily faculties. But with the sword of transcendental knowledge, sharpened by worship of a bona fide spiritual master, a sober sage will cut off this false identification and live in this world free from all material attachment." (SB 11.28.17)

11 And there came a voice from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Commentary: In the Puranas and other scriptures there is frequently mentioned a voice from the sky speaking on some important occasion. This voice belongs to Lord Vishnu, Lord Brahma or other main demigods.

"Just then a voice from the sky declared, 'Balarama has fairly won this wager. Rukmi is surely lying.'" (SB 10.61.33)

12 And immediately the Spirit drove him out into the desert.

Commentary: Paramatma is the mover of the body in the heart (1 John 4:4: "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world").

"The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy." (BG 18.61)

"In the cycle of material activities, the material body resembles the wheel of a mental chariot. The ten senses [five for working and five for gathering knowledge] and the five life airs within the body form the fifteen spokes of the chariot's wheel. The three modes of nature [goodness, passion and ignorance] are its center of activities, and the eight ingredients of nature [earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, intelligence and false ego] comprise the rim of the wheel. The external, material energy moves this wheel like electrical energy. Thus the wheel revolves very quickly around its hub or central support, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul and the ultimate truth. We offer our respectful obeisances unto Him." (SB 8.5.28)

"One who places his consciousness on Vishnu, the Supersoul, the prime mover and Supreme Lord of the external energy consisting of three modes, obtains the mystic perfection of controlling other conditioned souls, their material bodies and their bodily designations." (SB 11.15.15)

13 And he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan; and he was with beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

Commentary: Spiritual practice is inherently connected with temptation. This is an experience of everyone who underwent any spiritual process demanding regulation of sensory gratification. One similarly famous example is from the life of Siddhartha Gautama who became Buddha. He

was tempted by a host of beings lead by demon Mara but succeeded in his determination.  
Christianity-from-Buddhism theory: <http://www.jesusisbuddha.com/>

God creates and controls everything, evil included:

1 Kings 18:10 "And the day after, the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of his house. And David played with his hand as at other times. And Saul held a spear in his hand,"

3 Kings 22:23, 2 Paralipomenon 18:22: "Now, therefore, behold the Lord hath given a lying spirit in the mouth of all thy prophets that are here, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee."

Isaiah 45:7: I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord that do all these things."

Evil: ra' in Hebrew, the possible basis of Rahu

14 And after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying: The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel.

Commentary: In the Bhagavad-gita the Lord elaborates on His appearance in this world.

"Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all living entities, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form." (BG 4.6)

"Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion - at that time I descend Myself." (BG 4.7)

"To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium." (BG 4.8)

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." (BG 4.9)

This last quote resembles the Gospel of Thomas 1: "And he said, 'Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death.'" Similar passage is also in John 8:51: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

"Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me - and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me." (BG 4.10)

"For two purposes - to spread the cult of bhakti and to defeat and subdue the atheists - Lord Nityananda, the most dedicated devotee of the Lord, moved throughout the country." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.149)

Repentance is very important to begin spiritual life.

"I, the pure soul, appearing now bound by my activities, am lying in the womb of my mother by the arrangement of maya. I offer my respectful obeisances unto Him who is also here with me but who is unaffected and changeless. He is unlimited, but He is perceived in the repentant heart. To Him I offer my respectful obeisances." (SB 3.31.13)

"No one other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as the localized Paramatma, the partial representation of the Lord, is directing all inanimate and animate objects. He is present in the three phases of time - past, present and future. Therefore, the conditioned soul is engaged in different activities by His direction, and in order to get free from the threefold miseries of this conditional life, we have to surrender unto Him only." (SB 3.31.16)

"Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories, being disgusted with all material activities, knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery, but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment, My devotee should remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction. Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment, My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result, and he sincerely repents such activities." (SB 11.20.27-28)

Kingdom of God is the spiritual world of Vaikuntha, an anxiety-free zone. It also refers to the state of God consciousness which brings one to Vaikuntha. This earth is the best place to cultivate this consciousness.

"A short life in the land of Bharata-varsha is preferable to a life achieved in Brahmaloka for millions and billions of years because even if one is elevated to Brahmaloka, he must return to repeated birth and death. Although life in Bharata-varsha, in a lower planetary system, is very short, one who lives there can elevate himself to full Krishna consciousness and achieve the highest perfection, even in this short life, by fully surrendering unto the lotus feet of the Lord. Thus one attains Vaikunthaloka, where there is neither anxiety nor repeated birth in a material body." (SB 5.19.23)

Bharata-varsha refers to India and Brahmaloka to the abode of Lord Brahma, the topmost dimension in this universe.

16 And passing by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea (for they were fishermen).

17 And Jesus said to them: Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And immediately leaving their nets, they followed him.

19 And going on from thence a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship:

20 And forthwith he called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed him.

Commentary: Lord is gathering future apostles. They are eternal servants of the Lord (nitya parshadas) in His eternal pastimes (nitya-lila). This means they serve Him life after life, taking part in His lila in material worlds.

John 15:19: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

John 17:6: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."

John 17:9: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

John 17:14: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

John 17:16: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

"The Personality of Godhead said: 'Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O subduer of the enemy!'" (BG 4.5)

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is inconceivably opulent, who is devoid of all material names, forms and pastimes, and who is all-pervading, is especially merciful to the devotees who worship His lotus feet. Thus He exhibits transcendental forms and names with His different pastimes. May that Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, be merciful to me." (SB 6.4.43)

"The glories of Lord Nityananda's transcendental attributes are unfathomable. Even Lord Shesha, with His thousands of mouths, cannot find their limit." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.234)

"The selfsame Lord Krishna advented Himself as Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with all His eternal associates, who are also equally glorious." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.7.9)

"The internal devotees or potencies are all eternal associates in the pastimes of the Lord. Only with them does the Lord advent to propound the sankirtana movement, only with them does the Lord taste the mellow of conjugal love, and only with them does He distribute this love of God to people in general." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.7.18-19)

"If Shesha Naga Ananta personally were to make the pastimes of Lord Chaitanya into sutras, even with His thousands of mouths there is no possibility that He could find their limit." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.13.45)

"It is not at all possible to describe the unlimited pastimes of Shri Krishna, even though He Himself describes them in His incarnation of Sahasra-vadana, the thousand-mouthed Shesha Naga." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.14.202, similar: 2.16.289)

"Descriptions of Krishna's eternal pastimes are in all the revealed scriptures. But one cannot understand how they are continuing eternally. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.385)

"Since all Krishna's pastimes are taking place continuously, at every moment some pastime is existing in one universe or another. Consequently these pastimes are called eternal by the Vedas and Puranas." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.20.395)

Lord Nityananda has as eternal associates twelve gopalas (cowherd boys). In Krishna and Chaitanya-lila their names are:

Shridama (Ramadasa Abhirama of Khanakul-Krishnanagar in Hooghly), Sudama (Sundarananda Thakura, brahmana ascetic), Vasudama (Dhananjaya), Subala (Gauridasa Pandita), Mahabala (Kamalakara Pipalai), Subahu (Uddharana Datta), Mahabahu (Mahesa Pandita), Stokakrishna (Purushottama), Arjuna (Parameshvara Dasa), Dama (Purushottama Nagara), Labanga (Kala Krishnadasa), Madhumangala, or Kusumasava (Shridhara). (from Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.11.13 on, Steven Rosen, "Panca-tattva" 3.40)

Countless other such pastimes were performed by mighty Balarama, the unlimited and immeasurable Supreme Lord, whose mystic Yogamaya power makes Him appear to be a human being. (SB 11.79.33)

John 21:25: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

21 And they entered into Capharnaum, and forthwith upon the sabbath days going into the synagogue, he taught them.



Commentary: The word "synagogue" comes from Greek "synagoge", or "synaxis" (assembly) stemming from Sanskrit "sanga".

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes.

Commentary: As quoted above, the Lord is the original spiritual master, adi-guru (thus Shri Guru Toshani Tika). Who could speak with more authority than Him?

Scribes were professional teachers of the Moses' Law. By their excessive reliance on its form without grasping the essence they resembled smarta brahmanas.

23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying: What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus threatened him, saying: Speak no more, and go out of the man.

26 And the unclean spirit tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice, went out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying: What thing is this? what is this new doctrine? for with power he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.

Commentary: Holy name of the Lord is very effective in exorcising evil spirits. They immediately recognize the Lord and flee because they cannot tolerate His presence. This is a way to test the spirits (John I 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.")

"I wander alone at night killing fish in solitary places, but because I remember the hymn to Lord Nrsimha, ghosts do not touch me." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.18.57)

Vaishnavas use especially Lord Nrsimha's name, e.g. in the form of Shri Nrsimha maha-mantra:

om hrim kshraum ugram viram maha-vishnum jvalantam sarvato mukham  
nrsimham bhishanam bhadram mrtyur mrtyum namamy aham

"I bow down to Lord Nrsimhadeva who is ferocious and heroic like Lord Visnu. He is burning from every side. He is terrific, auspicious and the death of death personified."

28 And the fame of him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee.

29 And immediately going out of the synagogue they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 And Simon's wife's mother lay in a fit of a fever: and forthwith they tell him of her.

31 And coming to her, he lifted her up, taking her by the hand; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Commentary: "When Vasudeva, the leper brahmana, was lamenting due to not being able to see Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord immediately returned to that spot and embraced him." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.7.140)

"When Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu touched him, both the leprosy and his distress went to a distant place. Indeed, Vasudeva's body became very beautiful, to his great happiness." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.7.141)

32 And when it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all that were ill and that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and he cast out many devils, and he suffered them not to speak, because they knew him.

Commentary: Great crowds gathered wherever the Lord went, both in Palestine and India. The difference was that in Palestine they were mainly interested in healing and exorcising and in India in chanting the holy names (sankirtana). Lord's healing of the leper Vasudeva was actually quite a rare case.

"Whenever the crowds were too great, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stood up, raised His hands and chanted, 'Hari! Hari!' to which all the people responded, filling both the land and sky with the vibration." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.7.159)

"Chaitanya Mahaprabhu walked with the Deity of Gopala, and He chanted and danced. A large and jubilant crowd of people also chanted the transcendental name of Krishna, 'Hari! Hari!'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.18.40)

"After circumambulating the tomb of Haridasa Thakura, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to the Simha-dvara gate of the Jagannatha temple. The whole city chanted in congregation, and the tumultuous sound vibrated all over the city." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.11.72)

Lord is always present among His devotees chanting in kirtana.

Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Luke 24:53: "And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen."

"The Supreme Lord, Narayana, is present among devotees who are engaged in hearing and chanting the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Narayana is the ultimate goal of sannyasis, those in the renounced order of life, and Narayana is worshiped through this sankirtana movement by those who are liberated from material contamination. Indeed, they recite the holy name again and again." (SB 4.30.36)

"The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them." (SB 9.4.68)

"I do not stay in Vaikuntha-loka, the spiritual world, or within the hearts of the yogis. I stay where My devotees chant My glories" (Padma Purana).

35 And rising very early, going out, he went into a desert place: and there he prayed.

Commentary: "All the people who lived near Akrura-tirtha came to see Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and due to the large crowds, the Lord could not peacefully chant the holy name." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.18.79)

"Therefore Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would go to Vrndavana and sit in a solitary place, where He would chant the holy name until noon." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.18.80)

36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said to him: All seek for thee.

Commentary: Lord attracts everyone (SB 10.65.16). The names Krishna and Sankarshana come from the Sanskrit root "krish", to draw or to attract.

John 12:32: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

38 And he saith to them: Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come.

Commentary: Shri Chaitanya proclaimed:

prthivi-parjanta jata ache desa-grama  
sarvatra sancara hoibek mora nama

"In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be preached." (Chaitanya Bhagavata 3.4.126)

"I offer innumerable obeisances unto the lotus feet of Shri Nityananda Prabhu, who is so kind that He spread the service of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu all over the world." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.1.26)

39 And he was preaching in their synagogues, and in all Galilee, and casting out devils.

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down said to him: If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus having compassion on him, stretched forth his hand; and touching him, saith to him: I will. Be thou made clean.

42 And when he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean.

43 And he strictly charged him, and forthwith sent him away.

44 And he saith to him: See thou tell no one; but go, shew thyself to the high priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.

Commentary: "Being meek and humble, the brahmana Vasudeva worried that he would become proud after being cured by the grace of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.7.146)

"To protect the brahmana, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu advised him to chant the Hare Krishna mantra incessantly. By doing so, he would never become unnecessarily proud." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.7.147)

"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also advised Vasudeva to preach about Krishna and thus liberate living entities. As a result, Krishna would very soon accept him as His devotee." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.7.148)

45 But he being gone out, began to publish and to blaze abroad the word: so that he could not openly go into the city, but was without in desert places: and they flocked to him from all sides.

Commentary: Chaitanya Charitamrta has many verses about great crowds gathering where Lord Chaitanya came and chanting Hare Krishna: Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.1.152,164, 2.4.145, 2.7.106, 2.9.40,89,326, 2.16.207-9, 2.25.173-6, 3.9.11-12, etc.

Mark

Christ heals the sick of the palsy: calls Matthew; and excuses his disciples.

2:1 AND again he entered into Capharnaum after some days.

2 And it was heard that he was in the house, and many came together, so that there was no room; no, not even at the door; and he spoke to them the word.

Commentary: "In every yuga, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, assumes the form of Siddhas such as Sanaka to preach transcendental knowledge, He assumes the form of great saintly persons such as Yajnavalkya to teach the way of karma, and He assumes the form of great yogis such as Dattatreya to teach the system of mystic yoga." (SB 8.14.8)

"Thus I have surely determined the meaning of the fourth verse. Lord Gauranga [Lord Chaitanya] appeared as an incarnation to preach unalloyed love of God." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.3.113)

Similar verses: Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.7.3, 2.11.98, 3.1.219, etc.

"As Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami were sent toward Mathura, so Nityananda Prabhu was sent to Bengal to preach extensively the cult of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.7.165)

Similar verses: Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.10.117, Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.1.262, 3.3.149, etc.

3 And they came to him, bringing one sick of the palsy, who was carried by four.

4 And when they could not offer him unto him for the multitude, they uncovered the roof where he was; and opening it, they let down the bed wherein the man sick of the palsy lay.

5 And when Jesus had seen their faith, he saith to the sick of the palsy: Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Commentary: According to the law of karma sins manifest in the form of diseases, handicaps and other punishments. This is a form of impurity described in 3 Moses 21:17-23 which prevents one from coming near the Lord's altar to offer bread of God. But they "shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy" (22). "Most holy" and "holy" may well refer to mahaprasada and prasada. In Leviticus 2:3,10 the mahaprasada is reserved for the priests (who may give it to others): "And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire."

Genesis 9:5: "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man."

Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

Job 4:8: "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same."

Proverbs 5:21-3: "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray."

Ezekiel 18:20-21: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

Matthew 7:1-2: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Matthew 12:35: "A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

Matthew 23:34-35: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

Luke 12:58-59: "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite."

Luke 18:14: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

John 5:14: "Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

2 Corinthians 9:6: "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

2 Corinthians 11:14-15: "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Galatians 6:5-9: "For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Ephesians 6:8: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

2 Thessalonians 1:6: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;"

"There is no work that affects Me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action. One who understands this truth about Me also does not become entangled in the fruitive reactions of work." (BG 4.14)

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (BG 18.66)

"The Personality of Godhead said: 'Under the supervision of the Supreme Lord and according to the result of his work, the living entity, the soul, is made to enter into the womb of a woman through the particle of male semen to assume a particular type of body.'" (SB 3.31.1)

"When a person considers sense gratification the aim of life, he certainly becomes mad after materialistic living and engages in all kinds of sinful activity. He does not know that due to his past misdeeds he has already received a body which, although temporary, is the cause of his misery. Actually the living entity should not have taken on a material body, but he has been awarded the material body for sense gratification. Therefore I think it not befitting an intelligent man to involve himself again in the activities of sense gratification by which he perpetually gets material bodies one after another." (SB 5.5.4)

"As long as one does not inquire about the spiritual values of life, one is defeated and subjected to miseries arising from ignorance. Be it sinful or pious, karma has its resultant actions. If a person is engaged in any kind of karma, his mind is called karmatmaka, colored with fruitive activity. As long as the mind is impure, consciousness is unclear, and as long as one is absorbed in fruitive activity, he has to accept a material body." (SB 5.5.5)

"The King of the pitas is Yamaraja, the very powerful son of the sun-god. He resides in Pitrloka with his personal assistants and, while abiding by the rules and regulations set down by the Supreme Lord, has his agents, the Yamadutas, bring all the sinful men to him immediately upon their death. After bringing them within his jurisdiction, he properly judges them according to their

specific sinful activities and sends them to one of the many hellish planets for suitable punishments." (SB 5.26.6)

"My dear Lord, You are always transcendently situated on the other side of the river of death, but because of the reactions of our own activities, we are suffering on this side. Indeed, we have fallen into this river and are repeatedly suffering the pains of birth and death and eating horrible things. Now kindly look upon us - not only upon me but also upon all others who are suffering - and by Your causeless mercy and compassion, deliver us and maintain us." (SB 7.9.41)

"As a tree before dying produces the seed of a future tree, the dying body manifests the seed of one's next material body in the form of one's accumulated karma. Thus assuring the continuation of material existence, the material body sinks down and dies." (SB 11.9.26)

6 And there were some of the scribes sitting there, and thinking in their hearts:

Commentary: Thinking actually happens in the heart, not in the head.

"(...) Devotees like Narada always think of Him within their hearts." (SB 5.7.7)

Luke 24:38: "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?"

"Although the false ego has no factual basis, it is perceived in many forms - as the functions of the mind, speech, life air and bodily faculties. But with the sword of transcendental knowledge, sharpened by worship of a bona fide spiritual master, a sober sage will cut off this false identification and live in this world free from all material attachment." (SB 11.28.17)

7 Why doth this man speak thus? he blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but God only?

Commentary: Those scribes were watching every Lord's word to find evidence that He is a heretic so they could punish Him and keep their religious monopoly. For them Jesus was a mere mendicant whose growing following represented a potential threat. The last thing they would accept was His Godhood.

8 Which Jesus presently knowing in his spirit, that they so thought within themselves, saith to them: Why think you these things in your hearts?

Commentary: Lord resides in His form of Paramatma in the hearts of all beings and knows what they think.

9 Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise, take up thy bed, and walk?



10 But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

Commentary: Although Lord Jesus is the source of all power, it all comes from Lord Krishna. Thus He humbly speaks of being empowered.

"Son of man" is the translation of one Hebrew and one Aramaic phrase used in the Hebrew Bible. In Hebrew, the term is ben-adam, while in Aramaic its equivalent bar-adam or bar-enash is used. In Sanskrit it is purusha-putra. If Man/Purusha (i.e. God, of esp. Rgveda Purusha sukta fame) is used, then it makes a complete sense - this "Son" is an expansion of Purusha, or one appearing through Purusha (Ksirodakasayi Visnu, through whom all avataras come).

This term appears also in Daniel: "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, 1on the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. (Daniel 7:13, NASB Amplified 2015)

"Ancient of Days" is "purana purusha" ("the old/est person") in Sanskrit. Some references: Bhagavad Gita 11.38, Svetasvatara Upanisad 3.19, Bhagavata Purana 1.5.6, 3.1.26, 3.5.50, 3.9.25, 3.31.19, 3.32.10, 4.24.42, 5.4.4, 5.6.14, 5.11.13, 6.3.30, 6.13.21, 7.3.33, 8.12.44, 9.8.24, 10.14.23, 10.16.30, 10.44.13, 10.56.26, Brahma samhita 5.33.

11 I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.

12 And immediately he arose; and taking up his bed, went his way in the sight of all; so that all wondered and glorified God, saying: We never saw the like.

13 And he went forth again to the sea side; and all the multitude came to him, and he taught them.

14 And when he was passing by, he saw Levi the son of Alpheus sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith to him: Follow me. And rising up, he followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that as he sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat down together with Jesus and his disciples. For they were many, who also followed him.

Commentary: The English is a bit archaic. Thus "meat" refers to food in general, not to flesh. There is no evidence that Jesus ate flesh. Even during the Passover feast He ate only bread. From the Gospels it looks as if He did not even drink wine at that time. As far as eating fish, some scholars suggest that "fish" refers to a type of bread made from algae which was common food in this area. In case of mass distribution of bread and fish, if it would be a real fish it is hard to understand how it would not rot in the hot sun. In Luke 24:42 He was given a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. Next text (24:43) says: "And he took it, and did eat before them." He took only one of these items as singular shows and we may guess which one.

16 And the scribes and the Pharisees, seeing that he ate with publicans and sinners, said to his disciples: Why doth your master eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Commentary: Scriptures lay down strict rules of social contact. Garuda Purana 1.115.6 states that any personal contact involves the transfer of karma to some degree: "Sin (karma) spreads from a man to man slowly by conversation, mutual touch, frequent association, taking food together, sitting together, lying together and traveling together."

2 Corinthians 6:14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

"A Vaishnava should always avoid the association of ordinary people (asat-sanga-tyaga). Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaishnavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Krishna." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.22.87)

Lord disregarded these rules, so crucial for scribes, and this had to create a stir. In His lila as Shri Nityananda Avadhuta, one who breaks norms of common behavior, He showed more examples of not caring for social behavior because of His mercy to the fallen souls. See commentary to 11:14.

17 Jesus hearing this, saith to them: They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. For I came not to call the just, but sinners.

Commentary: Jesus was giving His mercy to the lowest. This is exactly His mood in His later Bengal preaching in 15th century, especially in the pastime of liberating two rogues Jagai and Madhai (Chaitanya Bhagavata 2.13.31-234).

Actually everyone in the material world is sick with sin of leaving Lord's association and thus needs to hear Lord's message and follow Him.

18 And the disciples of John and the Pharisees used to fast; and they come and say to him: Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast; but thy disciples do not fast?

19 And Jesus saith to them: Can the children of the marriage fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; and then they shall fast in those days.

Commentary: Fasting, meditation as well as other practices are ultimately meant to realize Lord Krishna. Since the Lord was present, there was no need for the disciples to fast.

21 No man seweth a piece of raw cloth to an old garment: otherwise the new piecing taketh away from the old, and there is made a greater rent.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: otherwise the wine will burst the bottles, and both the wine will be spilled, and the bottles will be lost. But new wine must be put into new bottles.

Commentary: Old garment and old bottles are the Old Testament rules. They gradually bring one to God realization but this time Lord came personally and showed the direct path of bhakti, the para-dharma.

23 And it came to pass again, as the Lord walked through the corn fields on the sabbath, that his disciples began to go forward, and to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said to him: Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

Commentary: Pharisees, or the smartas, are always finding some faults. Disciples might have broken the Sabbath rules but the Lord was with them and did not punish them. So how could the Pharisees find fault with them? In this way they tried to be better than the Lord.

"Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination." (BG 9.30)

25 And he said to them: Have you never read what David did when he had need, and was hungry himself, and they that were with him?

26 How he went into the house of God, under Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the loaves of proposition, which was not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave to them who were with him?

Commentary: Showbread, or shewbread, means bread offered in sacrifice to the Lord (in Sanskrit prasada, "Lord's mercy"). It becomes spiritualized (BG 3.13) and a form of the Lord (Mark 14:22, John 6:51-58). In old times this bread was eaten only by priests. The question is if it was so ordered by the Lord or the priests made up such rule. In Vedic culture the prasada is freely distributed to everyone. In fact, Vaishnavas do not take anything which is not a prasada.

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform—do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering to Me." (BG 9.27)

1 Cor. 10:31: "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God."

27 And he said to them: The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

Commentary: Rules are there to help us, not to bind us.

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath also.

Mark

Christ heals the withered hand: he chooses the twelve: he confutes the blasphemy of the Pharisees.

3:1 And he entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there who had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him whether he would heal on the sabbath days; that they might accuse him.

3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand: Stand up in the midst.

4 And he saith to them: Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy? But they held their peace.

Commentary: Lord wants to open their eyes to obvious truths: the rules should serve us, not that we should serve them.

5 And looking round about on them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, he saith to the man: Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored unto him.

6 And the Pharisees going out, immediately made a consultation with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

7 But Jesus retired with his disciples to the sea; and a great multitude followed him from Galilee and Judea,

Commentary: "Thus I went to Bengal, but thousands of devotees began to follow Me."  
(Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.16.257)

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan. And they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing the things which he did, came to him.

9 And he spoke to his disciples that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he healed many, so that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had evils.

11 And the unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him: and they cried, saying:

12 Thou art the Son of God. And he strictly charged them that they should not make him known.

Commentary: Although the evils spirits are prone to lie they would not lie in such case. They were afraid of Lord's power.

13 And going up into a mountain, he called unto him whom he would himself: and they came to him.

Commentary: Jesus went to pray alone to Lord Krishna.

"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, 'I shall leave early in the morning and go incognito, taking the road through the forest. I shall go alone - I shall not take anyone with Me.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.17.5)

14 And he made that twelve should be with him, and that he might send them to preach.

15 And he gave them power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

16 And to Simon he gave the name Peter:

Commentary: Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he named them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

18 And Andrew and Philip, and Bartholomew and Matthew, and Thomas and James of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Cananean:

19 And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

20 And they come to a house, and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And when his friends had heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him. For they said: He is become mad.

Commentary: Sudden transformation of Lord's mood convinced His friends He must be crazy. Spiritual ecstasy is not understood by people influenced by matter.

"Shri Nityananda, the wandering mendicant, is the foremost of all the associates of Lord Chaitanya. He became mad in the ecstasy of service to Lord Chaitanya." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.6.48)

See also Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.6.105-106, 1.11.33,34, 3.7.20.

"In Gaya, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was initiated by Ishvara Puri, and immediately afterwards He exhibited signs of love of Godhead. He again displayed such symptoms after returning home." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.9)

"After this incident, the Lord remained in an ecstatic position for twenty-one hours, and all the devotees saw His specific pastimes." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.18)

"The last twelve years of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were passed in this transcendental craziness. Thus He executed His last pastimes in three ways." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.1.88)

Such incidents are known throughout the religious history and with progressing Kali-yuga they become more frequent. So-called anticult movement (notorious for its so-called deprogramming) in seventies in USA was a recent manifestation of this phenomena. Totalitarian regimes even put believers into jails and lunatic asylums. From the quotes below it is clear that He Himself would be their prime target for His uncompromising preaching and exposing their demoniac agenda.

Matthew 10:21: "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death."

Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Matthew 10:23: "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

Matthew 10:34: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Matthew 10:35: "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."

Matthew 10:36: "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Matthew 19:29: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Luke 9:60: "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:61: "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house."

Luke 9:62: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Luke 14:26: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:33: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Luke 18:29: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,"

22 And the scribes who were come down from Jerusalem, said: He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils he casteth out devils.

23 And after he had called them together, he said to them in parables: How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan be risen up against himself, he is divided, and cannot stand, but hath an end.

Commentary: This is a very good argument to refute claims that someone's power to heal and exorcise comes from Satan, the Accuser (equated by Bhakti Ananda Maharaja with demon Rahu). By this are known Christian missionaries who were fighting against all other spiritual traditions including Vaishnavism without understanding them.

In Deuteronomy 12:1-3 Lord orders to destroy worship places of various gods in Israel. Immediately after, in text 4, He warns \_not to do the same to Lord's places\_. So there were Lord's places of worship from previous times before the Israelites arrived there and they had to properly discriminate among them. One may not be aware of opposing one and true God but that does not diminish the offensive nature of one's actions.

Acts 5:33-40 tell about Gamaliel, a Jewish wise man who discouraged suppression of first Jesus' disciples by Sanhedrin. He said that if it was a man-made teaching, it would die off itself

but if it was God's message Sanhedrin could not stop them and it would be dangerous to oppose God.

27 No man can enter into the house of a strong man and rob him of his goods, unless he first bind the strong man, and then shall he plunder his house.

28 Amen I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme:

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin.

30 Because they said: He hath an unclean spirit.

31 And his mother and his brethren came; and standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

Commentary: Some are of an opinion that the Lord had brothers and sisters. They quote the following texts:

Mark 6:3: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him." see also Matthew 13:55-6

Psalms 69:8: "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children."

This Psalm describes King David's lamentation over his sins and foolishness. Parts of this Psalm were quoted by Jesus but they cannot be taken as His personal confession.

32 And the multitude sat about him; and they say to him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And answering them, he said: Who is my mother and my brethren?

34 And looking round about on them who sat about him, he saith: Behold my mother and my brethren.

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

Commentary: Our real - eternal - relatives are devotees of the Lord. Others may play the role of relatives in one life but in the next life they are gone. See Luke 8:21.



"Many planks and sticks, unable to stay together, are carried away by the force of a river's waves. Similarly, although we are intimately related with friends and family members, we are unable to stay together because of our varied past deeds and the waves of time." (SB 10.5.25)

"The association of children, wife, relatives and friends is just like the brief meeting of travelers. With each change of body one is separated from all such associates, just as one loses the objects one possesses in a dream when the dream is over." (SB 11.17.53)

"Since pure devotees give up their homes, wives, children, relatives, riches and even their lives simply to serve Me, without any desire for material improvement in this life or in the next, how can I give up such devotees at any time?" (SB 9.4.65)

"My dear Partha, one who claims to be My devotee is not so. Only a person who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee." (Adi Purana)

Mark

The parable of the sower. Christ stills the tempest at sea.

3:1 AND again he began to teach by the sea side; and a great multitude was gathered together unto him, so that he went up into a ship, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude was upon the land by the sea side.

2 And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his doctrine:

3 Hear ye: Behold, the sower went out to sow.

4 And whilst he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the birds of the air came and ate it up.

5 And other some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth; and it shot up immediately, because it had no depth of earth.

6 And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And some fell upon good ground; and brought forth fruit that grew up, and increased and yielded, one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred.

9 And he said: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Commentary: Sower is the Lord who sows (preaches) the glorious service to God (bhakti) in the form of seeds to various listeners (soil). According to the listeners' qualification the seeds die, grow a bit and then wither away or grow into a bhakti creeper (bhakti-lata).

Lord Chaitanya elaborated on this parable in his talk with Rupa Gosvami (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.19.151-162) beginning with famous "brahmada bhramite" verse.

10 And when he was alone, the twelve that were with him asked him the parable.

11 And he said to them: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to them that are without, all things are done in parables:

12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand: lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Commentary: The time was still not ripe to fully reveal the love of God which eradicates all sins to everyone. This happened only with the advent of Lord Chaitanya. Thus Lord Jesus kept the meaning of His words hidden in parables which only few could understand at that time.

"By cultivating philosophical knowledge one can understand his spiritual position and thus be liberated, and by performing sacrifices and pious activities one can achieve sense gratification in a higher planetary system, but the devotional service of the Lord is so rare that even by executing hundreds and thousands of such sacrifices one cannot obtain it." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.8.17)

"If a devotee wants liberation or material sense gratification from the Lord, Krishna immediately delivers it, but pure devotional service He keeps hidden." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.8.18)

[The great sage Narada said:] "My dear Maharaja Yudhishtira, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna is always ready to help you. He is your master, guru, God, very dear friend and head of your family. Yet sometimes He agrees to act as your servant or order-carrier. You are greatly fortunate because this relationship is possible only by bhakti-yoga. The Lord can give liberation [mukti] very easily, but He does not very easily give one bhakti-yoga, because by that process He is bound to the devotee." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.8.19, quote from SB 5.6.18)

"Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has freely given this love of Krishna everywhere and anywhere, even to the most fallen, such as Jagai and Madhai. What then to speak of those who are already pious and elevated?" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.8.20)

"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, is fully independent. Therefore, although it is the most confidentially stored benediction, He can distribute love of Godhead to anyone and everyone without consideration." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.8.21)

13 And he saith to them: Are you ignorant of this parable? and how shall you know all parables?

Commentary: John 3:12: "If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not: how will you believe, if I shall speak to you heavenly things?"

John 16:12: "I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now."

14 He that soweth, soweth the word.

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown, and as soon as they have heard, immediately Satan cometh and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

Commentary: "Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, who are lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons do not surrender unto Me." (BG 7.15)

"Taking shelter of insatiable lust and absorbed in the conceit of pride and false prestige, the demoniac, thus illusioned, are always sworn to unclean work, attracted by the impermanent." (BG 16.10)

"The living entity is eternal and imperishable because he actually has no beginning and no end. He never takes birth or dies. He is the basic principle of all types of bodies, yet he does not belong to the bodily category. The living being is so sublime that he is equal in quality to the Supreme Lord. Nonetheless, because he is extremely small, he is prone to be illusioned by the external energy, and thus he creates various bodies for himself according to his different desires." (SB 6.16.9)

16 And these likewise are they that are sown on the stony ground: who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy.

17 And they have no root in themselves, but are only for a time: and then when tribulation and persecution ariseth for the word they are presently scandalized.

18 And others there are who are sown among thorns: these are they that hear the word,

Commentary: Many do not have strong tendency for cultivating bhakti and give up the process after some time.

19 And the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts after other things entering in choke the word, and it is made fruitless.

20 And these are they who are sown upon the good ground, who hear the word, and receive it, and yield fruit, the one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred.

Commentary: Hearing the word has purifying effect.

John 15:3: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

"As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy." (SB 1.2.19)

"With your heart cleansed by properly carrying out My command, resigning to Me the fruits of all your acts, you will finally attain to Me." (SB 3.21.30)

"King Parikshit asked Shukadeva Gosvami: 'My dear Lord, for those who are completely pure in heart, knowledge is attained by the practice of bhakti-yoga, and attachment for fruitive activity is completely burned to ashes. For such people, the powers of mystic yoga automatically arise. They do not cause distress. Why, then, did Rshabhadeva neglect them?' (SB 5.6.1)

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme, the Supersoul, the master of all mystic yoga, who is seen in the core of the heart by perfect mystics when they are completely purified and freed from the reactions of fruitive activity by practicing bhakti-yoga." (SB 8.3.27)

"In hopes of becoming happy in this material world, the foolish conditioned soul performs fruitive activities that result only in suffering. But by rendering service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one becomes free from such false desires for happiness. May my supreme spiritual master cut the knot of false desires from the core of my heart." (SB 8.24.47)

"When one seriously engages in the devotional service of the Personality of Godhead, fixing the Lord's lotus feet within one's heart as the only goal of life, one can destroy the innumerable impure desires lodged within the heart as a result of one's previous fruitive work within the three modes of material nature. When the heart is thus purified one can directly perceive both the Supreme Lord and one's self as transcendental entities. Thus one becomes perfect in spiritual understanding through direct experience, just as one can directly experience the sunshine through normal, healthy vision." (SB 11.3.40)

"Because he is very pleasing to all the devotees, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami easily became like the fertile earth of good fortune in which it was suitable for the seed of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to be sown. At the same time that the seed was sown, it grew into a matchless tree of the love of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and produced fruit." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.6.264)

This tree of love analogy is a significant common feature of Gospel of St. John and Chaitanya Charitamrta.

John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

John 15:2: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

John 15:3: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

John 15:4: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

John 15:5: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

John 15:6: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

John 15:7: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

John 15:8: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

"As pouring water on the root of a tree energizes the trunk, branches, twigs and everything else, and as supplying food to the stomach enlivens the senses and limbs of the body, simply worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead through devotional service automatically satisfies the demigods, who are parts of that Supreme Personality." (SB 4.31.14)

"I take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who Himself is the tree of transcendental love of Krishna, its gardener and also the bestower and enjoyer of its fruits. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.9.6)

"Lord Chaitanya thought, 'My name is Vishvambhara, one who maintains the entire universe. Its meaning will be actualized if I can fill the whole universe with love of Godhead.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.9.7)

"Thinking in this way, He accepted the duty of a planter and began to grow a garden in Navadvipa." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.9.8)

"Thus the Lord brought the desire tree of devotional service to this earth and became its gardener. He sowed the seed and sprinkled upon it the water of His will." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.9.9)

"All glories to Shri Madhavendra Puri, the storehouse of all devotional service unto Krishna! He is a desire tree of devotional service, and it is in him that the seed of devotional service first fructified." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.9.10)

"The seed of devotional service next fructified in the form of Shri Ishvara Puri, and then the gardener Himself, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, became the main trunk of the tree of devotional service." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.9.11)

21 And he said to them: Doth a candle come in to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be made manifest: neither was it made secret, but that it may come abroad.

23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Commentary: Light of knowledge (jnana-dipa) must be available to all. If they accept it or not is their choice. The full knowledge of bhakti was revealed by Lord Chaitanya and His followers.

Vedic injunction says: "tamaso ma jyotir gama - Don't try to remain in this darkness. You go to the kingdom of light."

I Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:"

"To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance." (BG 10.11)

"For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me." (BG 18.68)

"In this way King Malayadhvaja attained perfect knowledge because in his pure state he was directly instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By means of such enlightening transcendental knowledge, he could understand everything from all angles of vision." (SB 4.28.41)

"One who liberally disseminates this knowledge among My devotees is the bestower of the Absolute Truth, and to him I give My very own self." (SB 11.29.26)

"He who loudly recites this supreme knowledge, which is the most lucid and purifying, becomes purified day by day, for he reveals Me to others with the lamp of transcendental knowledge." (SB 11.29.27)

24 And he said to them: Take heed what you hear. In what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again, and more shall be given to you.

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, that also which he hath shall be taken away from him.

Commentary: One who has no spiritual credits, will lose all material possession he has, latest at death. On the spiritual path, however, there is no loss. The accumulation of spiritual credits increases life after life.

"In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most fearful danger." (BG 2.40)

26 And he said: So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth,

27 And should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up whilst he knoweth not.

28 For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear.

29 And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Commentary: This and following passages about mustard seed again refer to the bhakti-lata. The spiritual growth is very subtle and difficult to perceive. When the fruit of love of Krishna appears, it becomes obvious to everyone. This is what the Lord awaits because He wants our association in the spiritual world.

30 And he said: To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? or to what parable shall we compare it?

31 It is as a grain of mustard seed: which when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that are in the earth:

32 And when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof.

33 And with many such parables, he spoke to them the word, according as they were able to hear.

34 And without parable he did not speak unto them; but apart, he explained all things to his disciples.

Commentary: Obviously the listeners' abilities to understand Lord's words were limited. To His disciples in private He revealed everything they needed to know.

35 And he saith to them that day, when evening was come: Let us pass over to the other side.

36 And sending away the multitude, they take him even as he was in the ship: and there were other ships with him.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that the ship was filled.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow; and they awake him, and say to him: Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish?

39 And rising up, he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: Peace, be still. And the wind ceased: and there was made a great calm.

40 And he said to them: Why are you fearful? have you not faith yet? And they feared exceedingly: and they said one to another: Who is this (thinkest thou) that both wind and sea obey him?

Commentary: Disciples were afraid even though the Lord was with them. It means their faith (sraddha) was on the level of beginners. But they were even more frightened by Lord's power over nature. They did not understand His position of Lord over everything, including wind and ocean.

"Nanda Maharaja had been astonished to see for the first time the great opulence of Varuna, the ruler of the ocean, and also to see how Varuna and his servants had offered such humble respect to Krishna. Nanda described all this to his fellow cowherd men." (SB 10.28.10)

"Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them!" (Psalm 89:9)

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea!" (Psalm 93:4)

Mark

Christ casts out a legion of devils: he heals the issue of blood, and raises the daughter of Jairus to life.

5:1 And they came over the strait of the sea into the country of the Gerasens.

2 And as he went out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the monuments a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man now could bind him, not even with chains.



4 For having been often bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains, and broken the fetters in pieces, and no one could tame him.

5 And he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones.

6 And seeing Jesus afar off, he ran and adored him.

7 And crying with a loud voice, he said: What have I to do with thee, Jesus the Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him: Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

Commentary: The man worshiped the Lord but the evil spirits in him cried out in pain to be in His presence.

9 And he asked him: What is thy name? And he saith to him: My name is Legion, for we are many.

10 And he besought him much, that he would not drive him away out of the country.

11 And there was there near the mountain a great herd of swine, feeding.

12 And the spirits besought him, saying: Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

Commentary: The evil spirits suffer having no material bodies to satisfy their desires. Thus they try to control others who are prone to such possession because they are sinful, unclean, etc. Exorcism is best done with the help of chanting the Lord's names.

13 And Jesus immediately gave them leave. And the unclean spirits going out, entered into the swine: and the herd with great violence was carried headlong into the sea, being about two thousand, and were stifled in the sea.

14 And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what was done:

15 And they came to Jesus, and they see him that was troubled with the devil, sitting, clothed, and well in his wits, and they were afraid.

16 And they that had seen it, told them, in what manner he had been dealt with who had the devil; and concerning the swine.

17 And they began to pray him that he would depart from their coasts.

18 And when he went up into the ship, he that had been troubled with the devil, began to beseech him that he might be with him.

19 And he admitted him not, but saith to him: Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had mercy on thee.

Commentary: The man was not qualified enough to join disciples of Jesus. He could serve the Lord in the place he was.

The same plan the Lord had for brahmana Kurma and most of people Hemet on His pilgrimage:

In one village there was a Vedic brahmana named Kurma. He invited Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to his home with great respect and devotion.

This brahmana brought Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to his home, washed His lotus feet and, with his family members, drank that water.

With great affection and respect, that Kurma brahmana made Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu eat all kinds of food. After that, the remnants were shared by all the members of the family.

The brahmana then began to pray, “O my Lord, Your lotus feet are meditated upon by Lord Brahma, and these very lotus feet have come into my home.

“My dear Lord, there is no limit to my great fortune. It cannot be described. Today my family, birth and riches have all been glorified.”

The brahmana begged Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, “My dear Lord, kindly show me favor and let me go with You. I can no longer tolerate the waves of misery caused by materialistic life.”

## PURPORT

This statement is applicable for everyone, regardless of how rich or prosperous one may be. Narottama dasa Thakura has confirmed this statement: *samsara-vishanale, diva-nisi hiya jvale*. He states that the materialistic way of life causes a burning in the heart. One cannot make any provisions for the troublesome life of the material world. It is a fact that one may be very happy as far as riches are concerned and one may be very opulent in every respect, yet one has to manage the *vishayas* to meet the demands of the body and of so many family members and subordinates. One has to take so much trouble to minister to others. Narottama dasa Thakura therefore prays: *vishaya chadiya kabe suddha ha'be mana*. Thus one must become freed from the materialistic way of life. One has to merge himself in the ocean of transcendental bliss. In other words, one cannot relish transcendental bliss without being freed from the materialistic way of life. It appears that the brahmana named Kurma was materially very happy, for he expressed his family tradition as *janma-kula-dhana*. Now, being glorious, he wanted to leave all these material opulences. He wanted to travel with Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. According to

the Vedic way of civilization, one should leave his family after attaining fifty years of age and go to the forest of Vrindavana to devote the rest of his life to the service of the Lord.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu replied, “Don’t speak like that again. Better to remain at home and chant the holy name of Krishna always.

#### PURPORT

It is not advisable in this Age of Kali to leave one’s family suddenly, for people are not trained as proper brahmacaris and grihasthas. Therefore Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu advised the brahmana not to be too eager to give up family life. It would be better to remain with his family and try to become purified by chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra regularly under the direction of a spiritual master. This is the instruction of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. If this principle is followed by everyone, there is no need to accept sannyasa. In the next verse Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu advises everyone to become an ideal householder by offenselessly chanting the Hare Krishna mantra and teaching the same principle to everyone he meets.

“Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Sri Krishna as they are given in the Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land.”

#### PURPORT

This is the sublime mission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Many people come and inquire whether they have to give up family life to join the Society, but that is not our mission. One can remain comfortably in his residence. We simply request everyone to chant the maha-mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. If one is a little literate and can read Bhagavad-gita As It Is and Srimad-Bhagavatam, that is so much the better. These works are now available in an English translation and are done very authoritatively to appeal to all classes of men. Instead of living engrossed in material activities, people throughout the world should take advantage of this movement and chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra at home with their families. One should also refrain from sinful activities—illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling and intoxication. Out of these four items, illicit sex is very sinful. Every person must get married. Every woman especially must get married. If the women outnumber the men, some men can accept more than one wife. In that way there will be no prostitution in society. If men can marry more than one wife, illicit sex life will be stopped. One can also produce many nice preparations to offer Krishna—grain, fruit, flowers and milk. Why should one indulge in unnecessary meat-eating and maintain horrible slaughterhouses? What is the use of smoking and drinking tea and coffee? People are already intoxicated by material enjoyment, and if they indulge in further intoxication, what chance is there for self-realization? Similarly, one should not partake in gambling and unnecessarily agitate the mind. The real purpose of human life is to attain the spiritual platform and return to Godhead. That is the summum bonum of spiritual realization. The Krishna consciousness movement is trying to elevate human society to the perfection of life by pursuing the method described by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in His advice to the brahmana Kurma. That is, one

should stay at home, chant the Hare Krishna mantra and preach the instructions of Krishna as they are given in the Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu further advised the brahmana Kurma, "If you follow this instruction, your materialistic life at home will not obstruct your spiritual advancement. Indeed, if you follow these regulative principles, we will again meet here, or, rather, you will never lose My company."

#### PURPORT

This is an opportunity for everyone. If one simply follows the instructions of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, under the guidance of His representative, and chants the Hare Krishna mantra, teaching everyone as far as possible the same principle, the contamination of the materialistic way of life will not even touch him. It does not matter whether one lives in a holy place like Vrindavana, Navadvipa or Jagannatha Puri or in the midst of European cities, where the materialistic way of life is very prominent. If a devotee follows the instructions of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he lives in the company of the Lord. Wherever he lives, he converts that place into Vrindavana and Navadvipa. This means that materialism cannot touch him. This is the secret of success for one advancing in Krishna consciousness.

At whosever house Shri Chaitanya accepted His alms by taking prasadam, He would convert the dwellers to His sankirtana movement and advise them just as He advised the brahmana named Kurma.

While on His tour, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would spend the night at a temple by the road. Whenever He accepted food from a person, He would give him the same advice He gave the brahmana named Kurma. He adopted this process until He returned to Jagannatha Puri from His South Indian tour.

Thus I have described the Lord's behavior elaborately in the case of Kurma. In this way, you will know Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's dealings throughout South India.

Thus Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would remain at night in one place, and the next morning, after bathing, He would start again.

When Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu left, the brahmana Kurma followed Him a great distance, but eventually Lord Chaitanya took care to send him back home. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.7.121-135)

20 And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men wondered.

21 And when Jesus had passed again in the ship over the strait, a great multitude assembled together unto him, and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue named Jairus: and seeing him, falleth down at his feet.

23 And he besought him much, saying: My daughter is at the point of death, come, lay thy hand upon her, that she may be safe, and may live.

24 And he went with him, and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.

25 And a woman who was under an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things from many physicians; and had spent all that she had, and was nothing the better, but rather worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the crowd behind him, and touched his garment.

28 For she said: If I shall touch but his garment, I shall be whole.

29 And forthwith the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the evil.

30 And immediately Jesus knowing in himself the virtue that had proceeded from him, turning to the multitude, said: Who hath touched my garments?

31 And his disciples said to him: Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou who hath touched me?

32 And he looked about to see her who had done this.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said to her: Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be thou whole of thy disease.

Commentary: The woman had great faith in Jesus' healing power and by touching Him she was cured even without His knowledge. In the Mahabharata there is a story of Ekalavya who approached Drona, teacher of martial arts, to learn from him but was rejected due to his lack of noble qualities. Despite it Ekalavya decided to make a statue of Drona and worship it to become a proficient warrior. He was successful but later Drona discovered him in the forest and deprived him of his archery abilities - as a gift for being his teacher (dakshina) he asked for his right thumb. This shows that even indirect surrender to the teacher principle (guru-tattva) bears fruit. The proper etiquette, however, is to approach the guru in person and follow his instructions.

35 While he was yet speaking, some come from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying: Thy daughter is dead: why dost thou trouble the master any further?

36 But Jesus having heard the word that was spoken, saith to the ruler of the synagogue: Fear not, only believe.

Commentary: John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (BG 18.66)

"Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. This bewildering, fearful condition is effected by the potency for illusion, called maya. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul." (SB 11.2.37)

37 And he admitted not any man to follow him, but Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

Commentary: That these three were His most confidential disciples is confirmed also by their exclusive witnessing to the Lord's transfiguration on the mountain (in 9:1-13).

38 And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue; and he seeth a tumult, and people weeping and wailing much.

39 And going in, he saith to them: Why make you this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

Commentary: Sleep (passive state of life air, prana) is often compared to death when prana leaves the body.

"When the living entity is in deep sleep, when he faints, when there is some great shock on account of severe loss, at the time of death, or when the body temperature is very high, the movement of the life air is arrested. At that time the living entity loses knowledge of identifying the body with the self." (SB 4.29.71)

"Shukadeva Gosvami continued speaking to Maharaja Parikshit: 'My dear King, sleep is exactly like a python. Those who wander in the forest of material life are always devoured by the python of sleep. Being bitten by this python, they always remain in the darkness of ignorance. They are

like dead bodies thrown in a distant forest. Thus the conditioned souls cannot understand what is going on in life." (SB 5.14.20)

"Just as the embodied spirit soul loses external consciousness when his senses are overcome by the illusion of dreaming or the deathlike state of deep sleep, so a person experiencing material duality must encounter illusion and death." (SB 11.28.3)

"The world has been seized and swallowed by the python of darkness in its horrible mouth and has become unconscious, as if dead. But mercifully glancing upon the sleeping people of the world, you raise them up with the gift of sight. Thus you are most magnanimous. At the three sacred junctures of each day, you engage the pious in the path of ultimate good, inducing them to perform religious duties that situate them in their spiritual position." (SB 12.6.70)

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But he having put them all out, taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And taking the damsel by the hand, he saith to her: Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted: Damsel (I say to thee) arise.

42 And immediately the damsel rose up, and walked: and she was twelve years old: and they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them strictly that no man should know it: and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Commentary: Lord Jesus tried to conceal His powers lest even more people would come to be healed which was not the real purpose of His appearance.

There is a very similar incident in Lord Chaitanya's lila, fully described in Chaitanya Bhagavata 2.25.

"One day the two brothers Lord Nityananda Prabhu and Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were dancing in the holy house of Shrivasa Thakura." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.227)

"At that time a calamity took place - Shrivasa Thakura's son died. Yet Shrivasa Thakura was not at all sorry." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.228)

"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu caused the dead son to speak about knowledge, and then the two brothers personally became the sons of Shrivasa Thakura." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.229)

Mark

Christ teaches at Nazareth: he sends forth the twelve apostles: he feeds five thousand with five loaves; and walks upon the sea.

6:1 And going out from thence, he went into his own country; and his disciples followed him.

2 And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were in admiration at his doctrine, saying: How came this man by all these things? and what wisdom is this that is given to him, and such mighty works as are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon? are not also his sisters here with us? And they were scandalized in regard of him.

4 And Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred.

5 And he could not do any miracles there, only that he cured a few that were sick, laying his hands upon them.

Commentary: The people knew the Lord before He started His mission and thus considered Him an ordinary man. Due to their offensive mentality Lord Jesus did not show His full power to prevent their further offenses.

6 And he wondered because of their unbelief, and he went through the villages round about teaching.

7 And he called the twelve; and began to send them two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

8 And he commanded them that they should take nothing for the way, but a staff only: no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse,

9 But to be shod with sandals, and that they should not put on two coats.

10 And he said to them: Whosoever you shall enter into an house, there abide till you depart from that place.

11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you; going forth from thence, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony to them.

Commentary: Lord sent His disciples to preach like sannyasis, keeping only the absolute minimum. Whoever would reject their mercy, he would be deprived of means of salvation.

Matthew 11:6: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

12 And going forth they preached that men should do penance:



13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

14 And king Herod heard, (for his name was made manifest,) and he said: John the Baptist is risen again from the dead, and therefore mighty works shew forth themselves in him.

15 And others said: It is Elias. But others said: It is a prophet, as one of the prophets.

16 Which Herod hearing, said: John whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead.

Commentary: Herod and others considered Jesus a resurrected John the Baptist, Elias or another prophet. The Lord can surely resurrect anyone He wants, either directly or indirectly.

Isaiah 26:19 "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

Ezekiel 37:5-6: "Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD."

Job 10:11: "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews."

"Shri Shukadeva Gosvami said: 'My dear King Parikshit, by his mystic power the great sage Narada brought the dead son into the vision of all the lamenting relatives and then spoke as follows.'" (SB 6.16.1)

"Observing that most of the demons and the demigods had been crushed by the falling of the mountain, the Lord glanced over them and brought them back to life. Thus they became free from grief, and they even had no bruises on their bodies." (SB 8.6.37)

"Shukadeva Gosvami said: 'Thereafter, by the supreme grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Shri Hari, all the demigods, headed by Indra and Vayu, were brought back to life. Being enlivened, the demigods began severely beating the very same demons who had defeated them before.'" (SB 8.11.1)

"There, on that hill, Shukracarya brought to life all the dead demoniac soldiers who had not lost their heads, trunks and limbs. He achieved this by his own mantra, known as Sanjivani." (SB 8.11.47)

"Shukadeva Gosvami said: 'O King, when Bali Maharaja lost all his opulence and died in the fight, Shukracarya, a descendant of Bhrgu Muni, brought him back to life. Because of this, the

great soul Bali Maharaja became a disciple of Shukracarya and began to serve him with great faith, offering everything he had." (SB 8.15.3)

"Thus Jamadagni, being worshiped by Lord Parashurama, was brought back to life with full remembrance, and he became one of the seven sages in the group of seven stars." (SB 9.16.24)

17 For Herod himself had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her.

18 For John said to Herod: It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Now Herodias laid snares for him: and was desirous to put him to death, and could not.

20 For Herod feared John, knowing him to be a just and holy man: and kept him, and when he heard him, did many things: and he heard him willingly.

Commentary: Great saints and sages have power to curse and are feared for it. But their curses are actually blessings in disguise.

"Because Nahusha, the father of Yayati, molested Indra's wife, Shaci, who then complained to Agastya and other brahmanas, these saintly brahmanas cursed Nahusha to fall from the heavenly planets and be degraded to the status of a python. Consequently, Yayati became the king." (SB 9.18.3)

"King Parikshit inquired from Shukadeva Gosvami: 'O great and powerful saint, what was the cause of Nalakuvara's and Manigriva's having been cursed by Narada Muni? What did they do that was so abominable that even Narada, the great sage, became angry at them? Kindly describe this to me.'" (SB 10.10.1)

21 And when a convenient day was come, Herod made a supper for his birthday, for the princes, and tribunes, and chief men of Galilee.

22 And when the daughter of the same Herodias had come in, and had danced, and pleased Herod, and them that were at table with him, the king said to the damsel: Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

23 And he swore to her: Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom.

24 Who when she was gone out, said to her mother, What shall I ask? But she said: The head of John the Baptist.

25 And when she was come in immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying: I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish, the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and because of them that were with him at table, he would not displease her:

27 But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish.

28 And he beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a dish: and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 Which his disciples hearing came, and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

30 And the apostles coming together unto Jesus, related to him all things that they had done and taught.

31 And he said to them: Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little. For there were many coming and going: and they had not so much as time to eat.

32 And going up into a ship, they went into a desert place apart.

33 And they saw them going away, and many knew: and they ran flocking thither on foot from all the cities, and were there before them.

34 And Jesus going out saw a great multitude: and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.

Commentary: "Oh, it is our good luck that we have come again today under Your protection by Your presence, for Your Lordship rarely visits even the denizens of heaven. Now it is possible for us to look into Your smiling face, which is full of affectionate glances. We can now see Your transcendental form, full of all auspiciousness." (SB 1.11.8)

35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him, saying: This is a desert place, and the hour is now past:

36 Send them away, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat.

37 And he answering said to them: Give you them to eat. And they said to him: Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence, and we will give them to eat.

38 And he saith to them: How many loaves have you? go and see. And when they knew, they say: Five, and two fishes

39 And he commanded them that they should make them all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.

Commentary: This is the Vedic way of eating - everyone sits down in rows and the food is distributed by servants.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes: looking up to heaven, he blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave to his disciples to set before them: and the two fishes he divided among them all.

Commentary: One of the yogic powers is called prapti-siddhi, ability to transport anything from a distant place. Lord is the source of all of them.

"Among the eight primary mystic perfections, the three by which one transforms one's own body are anima, becoming smaller than the smallest; mahima, becoming greater than the greatest; and laghima, becoming lighter than the lightest. Through the perfection of prapti one acquires whatever one desires, and through prakamya-siddhi one experiences any enjoyable object, either in this world or the next. Through ishita-siddhi one can manipulate the subpotencies of maya, and through the controlling potency called vashita-siddhi one is unimpeded by the three modes of nature. One who has acquired kamavasayita-siddhi can obtain anything from anywhere, to the highest possible limit. My dear gentle Uddhava, these eight mystic perfections are considered to be naturally existing and unexcelled within this world." (SB 11.15.4-5)

42 And they all did eat, and had their fill.

43 And they took up the leavings, twelve full baskets of fragments, and of the fishes.

44 And they that did eat, were five thousand men.

45 And immediately he obliged his disciples to go up into the ship, that they might go before him over the water to Bethsaida, whilst he dismissed the people.

46 And when he had dismissed them, he went up to the mountain to pray.

Commentary: Matthew 6:6: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

47 And when it was late, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and himself alone on the land.

48 And seeing them labouring in rowing, (for the wind was against them,) and about the fourth watch of the night, he cometh to them walking upon the sea, and he would have passed by them.

Commentary: Lord Jesus knew that His disciples are in trouble because He knows hearts of all. Making oneself light is the result of laghima-siddhi, the power of antigravitation.

49 But they seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it was an apparition, and they cried out.

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he spoke with them, and said to them: Have a good heart, it is I, fear ye not.

51 And he went up to them into the ship, and the wind ceased: and they were far more astonished within themselves:

52 For they understood not concerning the loaves; for their heart was blinded.

Commentary: Hard heart prevents one to accept the Lord's message.

"At that time King Puranjana was very much influenced by demoniac propensities. Because of this, his heart became very hard and merciless, and with sharp arrows he killed many innocent animals in the forest, taking no consideration." (SB 4.26.5)

"If one's heart does not change, tears do not flow from his eyes, his body does not shiver, and his bodily hairs do not stand on end as he chants the Hare Krishna maha-mantra, it should be understood that his heart is as hard as iron. This is due to his offenses at the lotus feet of the Lord's holy name." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.8.25, quote from SB 2.3.24)

"Gopinatha Acarya continued, 'There is certainly an incarnation in every age, and such an incarnation is called the yuga-avatara. But your heart has become so hardened by logic and argument that you cannot consider all these facts.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.6.100)

53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Genezareth, and set to the shore.

54 And when they were gone out of the ship, immediately they knew him:

55 And running through that whole country, they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into towns or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

Commentary: People in bodily consciousness could not appreciate Lord's spiritual identity. They were interested only in healing the temporary material body.

Mark

Christ rebukes the Pharisees. He heals the daughter of the woman of Chanaan; and the man that was deaf and dumb.

7:1 And there assembled together unto him the Pharisees and some of the scribes, coming from Jerusalem.

2 And when they had seen some of his disciples eat bread with common, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews eat not without often washing their hands, holding the tradition of the ancients:

4 And when they come from the market, unless they be washed, they eat not: and many other things there are that have been delivered to them to observe, the washings of cups and of pots, and of brazen vessels, and of beds.

5 And the Pharisees and scribes asked him: Why do not thy disciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients, but they eat bread with common hands?

Commentary: Pharisees and even more Sadducees considered rules, even man-made, to be all in all. Talmud is a collection of such rules and some Rabbis consider it even more important than Moses' laws (Pentateuch). Following the rules, however, is only a by-product of bhakti.

6 But he answering, said to them: Well did Isaia's prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Commentary: Lip service is a form of hypocrisy when one cannot understand and follow the essence and thus sticks to the form but only in words.

7 And in vain to they worship me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men.

8 For leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pots and of cups: and many other things you do like to these.

9 And he said to them: Well do you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said: Honor thy father and thy mother; and He that shall curse father or mother, dying let him die.

11 But you say: If a man shall say to his father or mother, Corban, (which is a gift,) whatsoever is from me, shall profit thee.

12 And further you suffer him not to do any thing for his father or mother,

13 Making void the word of God by your own tradition, which you have given forth. And many other such like things you do.

Commentary: Shruti-shastra-nindanam (mistreating the scripture) is the fourth offense against the holy name of the Lord.

"Those who undergo severe austerities and penances not recommended in the scriptures, performing them out of pride and egoism, who are impelled by lust and attachment, who are foolish and who torture the material elements of the body as well as the Supersoul dwelling within, are to be known as demons." (BG 17.5-6)

14 And calling again the multitude unto him, he said to them: Hear ye me all, and understand.

15 There is nothing from without a man that entering into him, can defile him. But the things which come from a man, those are they that defile a man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was come into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked him the parable.

18 And he saith to them: So are you also without knowledge? understand you not that every thing from without, entering into a man cannot defile him:

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but goeth into the belly, and goeth out into the privy, purging all meats?

20 But he said that the things which come out from a man, they defile a man.

21 For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile a man.

Commentary: Pollution of character is much more lasting and harmful than temporary pollution by food or drink. This surprised the Pharisees who dwelled on the strict dietary and other rules of Old Testament. Jesus, however, tried to open their eyes to higher level of dharma.

"Shukadeva Gosvami, the son of Vedavyasa, answered: 'My dear King, since acts meant to neutralize impious actions are also fruitive, they will not release one from the tendency to act fruitively. Persons who subject themselves to the rules and regulations of atonement are not at all intelligent. Indeed, they are in the mode of darkness. Unless one is freed from the mode of ignorance, trying to counteract one action through another is useless because this will not uproot one's desires. Thus even though one may superficially seem pious, he will undoubtedly be prone to act impiously. Therefore real atonement is enlightenment in perfect knowledge, Vedanta, by which one understands the Supreme Absolute Truth.'" (SB 6.1.11)

Real atonement is a change of mind (Greek "metanoia", new mind).

John 5:14: "Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, 'Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.'"

24 And rising from thence he went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon: and entering into a house, he would that no man should know it, and he could not be hid.

25 For a woman as soon as she heard of him, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, came in and fell down at his feet.

26 For the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician born. And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 Who said to her: Suffer first the children to be filled: for it is not good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs.

28 But she answered and said to him: Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat under the table of the crumbs of the children.

Commentary: Lord Jesus knew the real situation and tested the woman's truthfulness.

29 And he said to her: For this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come into her house, she found the girl lying upon the bed, and that the devil was gone out.

31 And again going out of the coasts of Tyre, he came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.



32 And they bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him.

33 And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue:

34 And looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened.

35 And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it.

Commentary: 38. Abba John the Dwarf said, 'There was a spiritual old man who lived a secluded life. He was held in high estimation in the city and enjoyed a great reputation. He was told that a certain old man, at the point of death, was calling for him, to embrace him before he fell asleep. He thought to himself, if I go by day, men will run after me, giving me great honour, and I shall not be at peace in all that. So I will go in the evening in the darkness and I shall escape everyone's notice. But lo, two angels were sent by God with lamps to give him light. Then the whole city came out to see his glory. The more he wished to flee from the glory, the more he was glorified. In this was accomplished that which is written: "He who humbles himself will be exalted.'" (Luke 14.11) (from The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, or Apophthegmata Patrum, translated by Sister Benedicta Ward SLG, ISBN 0-264-66350-0)

37 And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Commentary: Lord rules also over man's abilities permitting the body to act.

"Yet in this body there is another, a transcendental enjoyer, who is the Lord, the supreme proprietor, who exists as the overseer and permitter, and who is known as the Supersoul." (BG 13.23)

Exodus 4:11: "And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?"

Isaiah 29:18: "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness."

Isaiah 35:5: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."

Mark

Christ feeds four thousand. He gives sight to a blind man. He foretells his passion.

8:1 In those days again, when there was a great multitude, and had nothing to eat; calling his disciples together, he saith to them:

2 I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat.

3 And if I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; for some of them came from afar off.

4 And his disciples answered him: From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? Who said: Seven.

6 And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples for to set before them; and they set them before the people.

7 And they had a few little fishes; and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them.

8 And they did eat and were filled; and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand; and he sent them away.

Commentary: This is a repetition of the bread miracle from Mark 6:37-44.

10 And immediately going up into a ship with his disciples, he came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, asking him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And sighing deeply in spirit, he saith: Why doth this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, a sign shall not be given to this generation.

Commentary: They were not qualified to see more than was already before their eyes.

13 And leaving them, he went up again into the ship, and passed to the other side of the water.

14 And they forgot to take bread; and they had but one loaf with them in the ship.

15 And he charged them, saying: Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying: Because we have no bread.

17 Which Jesus knowing, saith to them: Why do you reason, because you have no bread? do you not yet know nor understand? have you still your heart blinded?

18 Having eyes, see you not? and having ears, hear you not? neither do you remember.

19 When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up? They say to him, Twelve.

20 When also the seven loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took you up? And they say to him, Seven.

21 And he said to them: How do you not yet understand?

Commentary: Matthew 16:11: "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?"

Matthew 16:12: "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

Earlier the Lord compared the Kingdom of God to leaven (Matthew 13:33). This refers to God consciousness free from ego. Here, however, the leaven refers to the perverted consciousness of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

22 And they came to Bethsaida; and they bring to him a blind man, and they besought him that he would touch him.

23 And taking the blind man by the hand, he led him out of the town; and spitting upon his eyes, laying his hands on him, he asked him if he saw any thing.

24 And looking up, he said: I see men as it were trees, walking.

25 After that again he laid his hands upon his eyes, and he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly.

26 And he sent him into his house, saying: Go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody.

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi. And in the way, he asked his disciples, saying to them: Whom do men say that I am?

28 Who answered him, saying: John the Baptist; but some Elias, and others as one of the prophets.

Commentary: Disciples answer as the rabbis to Herod in Mark 6:15.

29 Then he saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Peter answering said to him: Thou art the Christ.

Commentary: Christ means "anointed one". Kings were anointed as a confirmation of their being authorized God's representatives. Jesus played the same role on earth, concealing His Godhood.

30 And he strictly charged them that they should not tell any man of him.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients and by the high priests, and the scribes, and be killed: and after three days rise again.

32 And he spoke the word openly. And Peter taking him, began to rebuke him.

33 Who turning about and seeing his disciples, threatened Peter, saying: Go behind me, Satan, because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but that are of men.

Commentary: Jesus revealed the God's plan for Him to His disciples but they did not understand its importance. They thought it was madness not to avoid such suffering.

34 And calling the multitude together with his disciples, he said to them: If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Commentary: Real following means to follow the instructions (vani).

John 8:51: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

John 12:26: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

John 15:10: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

John 15:14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

"Those who follow this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engage themselves with faith, making Me the supreme goal, are very, very dear to Me." (BG 12.20)

"My dear mother, those who are actually transcendentalists certainly follow My instructions, as I have given them to you. You may rest assured that if you traverse this path of self-realization perfectly, surely you shall be freed from fearful material contamination and shall ultimately reach Me. Mother, persons who are not conversant with this method of devotional service certainly cannot get out of the cycle of birth and death." (SB 3.33.11)

"A yogi who has faith in Me, absorbing his mind in Me and knowing that My purpose is always fulfilled, will always achieve his purpose by the very means he has determined to follow." (SB 11.15.26)

"Persons who seriously follow these methods of achieving Me, which I have personally taught, attain freedom from illusion, and upon reaching My personal abode they perfectly understand the Absolute Truth." (SB 11.20.37)

John 7:17: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

"When He is glorified, the Lord swiftly reveals Himself to His devotees and allows them to know Him as He is." (Narada Bhakti Sutra 80)

35 For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, shall save it.

Commentary: To suffer and die in Lord's service is the topmost sacrifice. There are numerous martyrs who followed this instruction. Some of them, like Prahlada Maharaja, were personally saved by the Lord.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Commentary: Manu-samhita 7.212-214 similarly compares the value of the soul to other things and considers it the most valuable.

38 For he that shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation: the Son of man also will be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

39 And he said to them: Amen I say to you, that there are some of them that stand here, who shall not taste death, till they see the kingdom of God coming in power.

Commentary: Three of Jesus' disciples will soon see the Kingdom of God coming with power on the mountain. The kingdom of God came with full power at the time of Lord Chaitanya's advent. Then all the living beings were liberated because of Lord's presence and desire and service of His devotees Vasudeva Datta and Haridasa Thakura.

"My Lord, my heart breaks to see the sufferings of all the conditioned souls; therefore I request You to transfer the karma of their sinful lives upon my head." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.15.162)

"My dear Lord, let me suffer perpetually in a hellish condition, accepting all the sinful reactions of all living entities. Please finish their diseased material life." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.15.163)

"If you desire the deliverance of all living entities within the universe, then all of them can be delivered even without your undergoing the tribulations of sinful activity." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.15.167)

"Krishna is not incapable, for He has all potencies. Why would He induce you to suffer the sinful reactions of other living entities?" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.15.168)

"Because of your honest desire, all living entities within the universe will be delivered, for Krishna does not have to do anything to deliver all the living entities of the universe." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.15.171)

"In the same way, if one universe is vacated due to the living entities' having been liberated, that is a very little thing for Krishna. He does not take it very seriously." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.15.174)

"When Your devotee Vasudeva Datta submitted his plea at Your lotus feet for the deliverance of all living entities, You accepted that request." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.74)

"My dear Lord, You have accepted the form of a devotee just to deliver all the fallen souls of this world." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.75)

"You have preached the loud chanting of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and in this way freed all moving and nonmoving living entities from material bondage." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.76)

"Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu replied, 'If all living entities are liberated, the entire universe will be devoid of living beings.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.77)

"Haridasa said, 'My Lord, as long as You are situated within the material world, You will send to the spiritual sky all the developed moving and nonmoving living entities in different species. Then again You will awaken the living entities who are not yet developed and engage them in activities.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.78-79)

"In this way all moving and nonmoving living entities will come into existence, and the entire universe will be filled as it was previously." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.80)

"Previously, when Lord Ramacandra left this world, He took with Him all the living entities of Ayodhya. Then He filled Ayodhya again with other living entities." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.81)

"Formerly, when Lord Krishna descended in Vrndavana, He freed all living entities in the universe from material existence in the same way." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.83)

"By descending as an incarnation at Navadvipa, You, just like Krishna, have already delivered all the living entities of the universe." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.86)

Guru's desire is to liberate as many fallen souls as possible. At the time of initiation (diksa) he actually even takes their karma:

"Just as a king accepts the faults of his minister and a husband the sins of his wife, similarly a spiritual master receives the sins of his disciples." (Hari-bhakti-vilasa 1.77)

Mark

Christ is transfigured. He casts out the dumb spirit. He teaches humility and to avoid scandal.

9:1 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them.

2 And his garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white.

3 And there appeared to them Elias with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

Commentary: Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples in His spiritual form.

4 And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 For he knew not what he said: for they were struck with fear.

6 And there was a cloud overshadowing them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying: This is my most beloved son; hear ye him.

Commentary: The God's heavenly voice confirms what He already said during Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:11).

7 And immediately looking about, they saw no man any more, but Jesus only with them.

8 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of man shall be risen again from the dead.

Commentary: The Lord is not interested in attracting crowds but those who will sincerely hear His message.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then taught the brahmana very thoroughly and requested him not to disclose the fact that He was Lord Krsna Himself. (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.9.106)

9 And they kept the word to themselves; questioning together what that should mean, when he shall be risen from the dead.

10 And they asked him, saying: Why then do the Pharisees and scribes say that Elias must come first?

11 Who answering, said to them: Elias, when he shall come first, shall restore all things; and as it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be despised.

12 But I say to you, that Elias also is come, (and they have done to him whatsoever they would,) as it is written of him.

Commentary: Matthew 17:12-13: "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

Luke 1:17: "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

13 And coming to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes disputing with them.

14 And presently all the people seeing Jesus, were astonished and struck with fear; and running to him, they saluted him.



15 And he asked them: What do you question about among you?

16 And one of the multitude, answering, said: Master, I have brought my son to thee, having a dumb spirit.

17 Who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away; and I spoke to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.

18 Who answering them, said: O incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

Commentary: Lord was healing the people to create faith in them but they did not understand who He was and were not open to His message.

19 And they brought him. And when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming.

20 And he asked his father: How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy:

21 And oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do any thing, help us, having compassion on us.

22 And Jesus saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Commentary: Belief (sraddha) is the basis of everything which Lord's servants do.

23 And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears said: I do believe, Lord: help my unbelief.

24 And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him; and enter not any more into him.

25 And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead.

26 But Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose.

27 And when he was come into the house, his disciples secretly asked him: Why could not we cast him out?

28 And he said to them: This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Commentary: Prayer in the form of chanting the holy names of God and fasting in the form of Ekadasi are the crucial Vaishnava practices, especially in this Kali age. They are very effective in exorcism, too.

29 And departing from thence, they passed through Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it.

30 And he taught his disciple, and said to them: The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise again the third day.

31 But they understood not the word, and they were afraid to ask him.

Commentary: Manu-samhita 2.218. gives an analogy of a man digging with a spade to get water who is like a student getting knowledge from teacher. Who asks may look as a fool once but who does not, will be fool forever.

32 And they came to Capharnaum. And when they were in the house, he asked them: What did you treat of in the way?

33 But they held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves, which of them should be the greatest.

Commentary: Due to false ego (ahankara) the living being wants to be greater than others. Essence of Vaishnavism, on the other hand, is humility.

11. A brother questioned Abba Matoes saying, 'Give me a word.' He said to him, 'Go, and pray God to put compunction in your heart, and give you humility; be aware of your faults; do not judge others but put yourself below everyone; do not be friendly with a boy nor with an heretical friend; put freedom of speech far from you; control your tongue and your belly; drink only a small quantity of wine, and if someone speaks about some topic, do not argue with him but if he is right, say, "Yes"; if he is wrong, say, "You know what are you saying," and do not argue with him about what he has said. That is humility. (from The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, or Apophthegmata Patrum, translated by Sister Benedicta Ward SLG, ISBN 0-264-66350-0)

34 And sitting down, he called the twelve, and saith to them: If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all.

35 And taking a child, he set him in the midst of them. Whom when he had embraced, he saith to them:

36 Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in my name, receiveth me. And whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Commentary: Child is dependent on his parents and other elders. Similarly Lord Jesus depends on Lord Krishna and His followers depend on Him.

Matthew 10:40: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."

John 7:16: "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

John 8:19: "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

John 14:7: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him."

John 13:20: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

John 15:21: "But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

John 16:3: "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

37 John answered him, saying: Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him.

38 But Jesus said: Do not forbid him. For there is no man that doth a miracle in my name, and can soon speak ill of me.

39 For he that is not against you, is for you.

Commentary: All power ultimately comes from the Lord. One may worship Him in different ways, according to three gunas, and get various results. One who exorcises in the name of the Lord, cannot be Lord's enemy.

John 9:33: "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

40 For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ: amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.

Commentary: "In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most fearful type of danger." (BG 2.40)

[Lord Shiva told the goddess Durga:] 'My dear Devi, although the Vedas recommend worship of demigods, the worship of Lord Vishnu is topmost. However, above the worship of Lord Vishnu is the rendering of service to Vaishnavas, who are related to Lord Vishnu.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.11.31, quote from Padma Purana)

41 And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

Commentary: Offense (aparadha) against Lord's servants is the worst thing one can do. One will suffer terribly for a long time.

Matthew 18:7: "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

"Ramacandra Khan was naturally a nondevotee. Now, having offended the lotus feet of Haridasa Thakura, he became just like a demoniac atheist." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.146)

"Because of blaspheming the cult of Vaishnavism and insulting the devotees for a long time, he now received the results of his offensive activities." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.147)

42 And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire:

43 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.

44 And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire:

45 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.

46 And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire:

47 Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.

Commentary: Better is to forcibly remove the cause of one's offenses, than to suffer for them in hell. The texts about worms come from Isaiah 66:24. Worms serve as one of many forms of punishment in hell.

"By the arrangement of the Supreme Lord, low-grade living beings like bugs and mosquitoes suck the blood of human beings and other animals. Such insignificant creatures are unaware

that their bites are painful to the human being. However, first-class human beings - brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas - are developed in consciousness, and therefore they know how painful it is to be killed. A human being endowed with knowledge certainly commits sin if he kills or torments insignificant creatures, who have no discrimination. The Supreme Lord punishes such a man by putting him into the hell known as Andhakupa, where he is attacked by all the birds and beasts, reptiles, mosquitoes, lice, worms, flies, and any other creatures he tormented during his life. They attack him from all sides, robbing him of the pleasure of sleep. Unable to rest, he constantly wanders about in the darkness. Thus in Andhakupa his suffering is just like that of a creature in the lower species." (SB 5.26.17)

"A person is considered no better than a crow if after receiving some food, he does not divide it among guests, old men and children, but simply eats it himself, or if he eats it without performing the five kinds of sacrifice. After death he is put into the most abominable hell, known as Krmibhojana. In that hell is a lake 100,000 yojanas [800,000 miles] wide and filled with worms. He becomes a worm in that lake and feeds on the other worms there, who also feed on him. Unless he atones for his actions before his death, such a sinful man remains in the hellish lake of Krmibhojana for as many years as there are yojanas in the width of the lake." (SB 5.26.18)

"My dear King Parikshit, in the province of Yamaraja there are hundreds and thousands of hellish planets. The impious people I have mentioned - and also those I have not mentioned - must all enter these various planets according to the degree of their impiety. Those who are pious, however, enter other planetary systems, namely the planets of the demigods. Nevertheless, both the pious and impious are again brought to earth after the results of their pious or impious acts are exhausted." (SB 5.26.37)

"You will certainly be unable to fulfill your promise, and I think that because of this inability your eternal residence will be in hell." (SB 8.19.35)

"O my Lord, O supreme controller, without knowledge of Your unlimited prowess I have offended Your most dear devotee. Very kindly save me from the reaction of this offense. You can do everything, for even if a person is fit for going to hell, You can deliver him simply by awakening within his heart the holy name of Your Lordship." (SB 9.4.62)

"The conditioned souls become completely bound in affection to their own corpse-like material bodies and their relatives and paraphernalia. In such a proud and foolish condition, the conditioned souls envy other living entities as well as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, who resides in the heart of all beings. Thus enviously offending others, the conditioned souls gradually fall down into hell." (SB 11.5.15)

"For that offense, he cannot be liberated. Rather, he will fall into a terrible hellish condition. What more should I say?" (Chaitanya Charitamṛta 1.5.226)

"You have made Shrivasa Thakura appear to have been worshiping the goddess Bhavani. Simply for this offense, you will have to fall down into hellish life for ten million births." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.52)

"Svarupa Damodara continued, 'Because you have committed an offense to Lord Jagannatha and Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, you will attain a hellish destination. You do not know how to describe the Absolute Truth, but nevertheless you have tried to do so. Therefore you must be condemned.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.5.120)

48 For every one shall be salted with fire: and every victim shall be salted with salt.

49 Salt is good. But if the salt became unsavory; wherewith will you season it? Have salt in you, and have peace among you.

Commentary: Dharma to the soul is as saltiness to salt. Dharma is the testing criteria for punishment. Life in harmony with dharma is peaceful but deviation from dharma - sins - is unsavory. Sins and smell are related.

"Indra saw personified sinful reaction chasing him, appearing like a candala woman, a woman of the lowest class. She seemed very old, and all the limbs of her body trembled. Because she was afflicted with tuberculosis, her body and garments were covered with blood. Breathing an unbearable fishy odor that polluted the entire street, she called to Indra, 'Wait! Wait!'" (SB 6.13.12-13)

"If the smell of the garland which was offered to the Deity in the temple enters into a person's nostrils, immediately his bondage to sinful activities becomes cleared. And even if one has no sinful activities, still, by smelling such remnants of flowers, one can advance from Mayavadi [impersonalist] to devotee." (Tantra-shastra)

Mark

Marriage is not to be dissolved. The danger of riches. The ambition of the sons of Zebedee. A blind man is restored to his sight.

10:1 And rising up from thence, he cometh into the coasts of Judea beyond the Jordan: and the multitudes flock to him again. And as he was accustomed, he taught them again.

2 And the Pharisees coming to him asked him: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

3 But he answering, saith to them: What did Moses command you?

4 Who said: Moses permitted to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away.

5 To whom Jesus answering, said: Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you that precept.

6 But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.

7 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother; and shall cleave to his wife.

8 And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Commentary: Another similar concession refers to meat-eating. Here is a rundown of related texts:

Genesis 1:29-30 and 3:18: an explicit prescription of a vegetarian diet (Genesis 1:28: 'rule over animals' etc. - it does not imply eating them but simply taking care, stewardship. Ruler is obviously not supposed to kill his subjects.)

Genesis 9:2-6: a concession for Noah to eat meat after the Flood when no vegetation survived. This is not a current situation.

Exodus 12:8: the Passover (lamb and unleavened bread with herbs) as a special sacrifice

Exodus 20:13: "Thou shall not kill." (quoted in Matthew 5:21, Romans 13:9) Hebrew "lo tirtzach" according to Dr Reuben Alcalay's Hebrew dictionary refers to any killing in general, not only to a murder as often interpreted.

Leviticus 3:17, 7:26-27: eat neither fat nor blood This, together with Genesis 9:3-6, is the basis of kosher cooking. It is practically impossible to drain all blood from the flesh so the only real kosher food is vegetarian.

Leviticus 11: a concession - not a recommendation! - to eat certain animals for those who cannot stick to the ideal diet. Jesus sets the ideal example.

Leviticus 17:5,8-9: all meat requires sacrifice

Sacrifice is a way of restraining meat consumption:

"In this material world the conditioned soul is always inclined to sex, meat-eating and intoxication. Therefore religious scriptures never actually encourage such activities. Although the scriptural injunctions provide for sex through sacred marriage, for meat-eating through sacrificial offerings and for intoxication through the acceptance of ritual cups of wine, such ceremonies are meant for the ultimate purpose of renunciation." (SB 11.5.11)

"According to the Vedic injunctions, when wine is offered in sacrificial ceremonies it is later to be consumed by smelling, and not by drinking. Similarly, the sacrificial offering of animals is permitted, but there is no provision for wide-scale animal slaughter. Religious sex life is also permitted, but only in marriage for begetting children, and not for sensuous exploitation of the body. Unfortunately, however, the less intelligent materialists cannot understand that their duties in life should be performed purely on the spiritual platform." (SB 11.5.13)

Bhakti Ananda Goswami says: "If one studies ancient Vedic traditions, they will come across animal sacrificial systems. Some of these forms of sacrifice were historically related to the Israelite attempt to revive the Purusha-sukta based Vedic animal sacrifices, after their escape from Egypt. The sacrifices performed at the Israelite's Yishma-Yahu (Vishnu-Vasu) tabernacle, and later temple, were of two kinds.

"One was sattvic. This was called a praise or thanks offering and involved no animal sacrifice. It used only things like oil and unleavened bread.

"The other kind of sacrifice was a sin, guilt or trespass offering, and involved animal sacrifice. Only the Levitical priesthood and their flocks were to be involved in this system, which had very strict rules. They alone could eat of the victims, and had to do it in a certain location, all at once, leaving nothing left, without any other persons transporting or partaking of the flesh! The reason given was that they alone were to partake of the sins associated with the offering!

"The detailed rules for these sacrifices provide interesting connections to Vedic tradition. At the same time, those Jews of the Naharaim / Nazarean / Narayana vow refrained from any form of animal sacrifice, and thus flesh eating. The flesh-less diet of the Israelites' Exodus itself also seems to have prohibited leavened bread, onions, leeks and garlic. The Nazarites also abstained from 'old' wine, which 'moved in the glass by itself'. Thus we see Jewish ascetical connections to both Heliopolitan asceticism, and the Vaishnava and Pure Land Buddhist diets of no flesh, or leavened bread, onions, leeks, garlic or alcohol.

"Both the Eastern and Western Vedic / Yedic (Hebrew) / Oidic (Greek) traditions had sattvic or ascetic ideals, but made accommodations for citizens more in the modes of passion and ignorance.

"In our tradition we practice a flesh-less ahimsa diet and abstain from intoxication. The fact that there are some sanctions for some flesh eating in the Vedic tradition, does not mean that these apply to us. We are part of a sattvic lineage. So while it may appear contradictory to some, there is a place for both sattvic and other life-styles in the Vedic tradition. As with many things it is not a simplistic either-or situation. Both systems of sacrifice, the sattvic and the animal sacrifices, were performed in Vedic civilizations. In both cases these were connected to a doctrine of prasadam and the sacramental social body of the self-sacrificed cosmic Purusha Yupa Dhvaja. The sattvic sacrificial system was associated with blood-less offerings, as in our temples. The



rajasic and some tamasic persons sacrificed animals, and other tamasic persons performed animal and human sacrifices which were forbidden in the shastras.

"'Wine' does not always mean 'old wine'. Wine that 'moved in the cup by itself' was not to be consumed. In fact, old wine was often used in the Mediterranean and elsewhere in the ancient world like chlorine in very small amounts to kill the germs in possibly dangerous ground water. If there was so much fermented 'old' wine (vino just means grape juice) in the mix that it moved by itself (bubbles could be seen) it was not to be taken. The sacramental wine itself consumed in Jewish rites and the eucharistic sacrifice was also not at all like modern wines. Its alcoholic content was not great before offering and during offering it was frequently mixed with water, becoming negligible. In fact, the Catholic eucharistic wine is always mixed with water, which renders it no more alcoholic than the juice of a very ripe piece of fruit. The incorruptible wine represented Christ's divinity and the water represented his humanity, both of which were united completely in the incarnate body of the Lord. Then too, once offered, this mixture was believed to be the 'blood' of the sacrificed cosmic Purusha (soma, ambrosia, the nectar of the gods, the nectar of immortality, amrta etc.). At the beginning of Vishnu sutra, in Bhumi's prayers to Vishnu, Soma (as in the Vedic sacrifices), is referred to as the 'blood' of the Purusha. I saw this in an English side-by-side text of the Vishnu sutra while I was in India, and asked people about it. Those I asked explained that the Rig-vedic Purusha sukta-based Vedic sacrifices of the Fire and Soma priests transformed the food and drink they offered into the body and blood of Purusha Yupa Dhvaja! Thus prasadam was the Purusha-ida or 'remnants of the sacrifice of Purusha'. Soma was also apparently a potentially intoxicating drink, and strictly regulated through sacramental use."

This was true in all cultures regarding drugs. They were used in specific ceremonies by qualified persons, never for indulgence.

Numbers 11:18-20,31-33: punishment for eating quails

Deuteronomy 12:32: follow the law without adding or subtracting from it

Deuteronomy 14:3: do not eat any abominable thing

Deuteronomy 14:4-20: see Leviticus 11.\* (a concession)

Isaiah 66:3: killing an ox is like killing a man

Isaiah 1:11,15-16: God does not accept meat in sacrifice

Isaiah 11:6-9: the perfect peace in the future (no killing even among the animals)

Psalms 50:13-17: God eats no flesh and blood

Psalms 145:9: God is good to all and has mercy on everyone (including animals)

Proverbs 6:17: God hates hands shedding innocent blood

Proverbs 23:20: do not be a winebibber and meat-eater

Ezekiel 4:14: my soul had not been polluted... neither I ate the abominable flesh

Ezekiel 18:20-21: everyone pays for his own sins, if one gives up sins, he will live and not die

Hosea 2:18: a future covenant with animals (see Isaiah 11:6-9)

Those who claim to be Jesus' followers should stick to the personal example of Jesus and his followers:

Matthew 5:17: I (Jesus) did not come to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfill them. (Does it refer to sin?... It does not say "sin" but "law".)

Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31: do unto others as you would like them to do unto you ('the golden rule')

Matthew 14:25: what you have done to one of the least of My brethren you have done to Me

Mark 12:30-31: two greatest commandments - love God and the neighbor (animals as our neighbors: see above Psalms 145:9)

Jesus rebuked strongly the Pharisees: "...and if you had known what it means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ...you would not condemn the innocent," (Matt 9:13, 12:7) which clearly disapproves of the killing of animals, as this is a verse taken from Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy instead of sacrifice, the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings..." (The second part of the sentence is omitted in Matt 12:7.).

He strongly opposed the custom of temple animal sacrifices, violently driving those who were selling oxen, sheep and pigeons and the money-changers out of the temple (John 2:14-16): "...you shall not make my father's house a house of trade (which in earlier translations was always translated as "murders' den").

The Greek word for flesh is *kreas*, and it is never used in connection with Jesus. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any direct reference to Jesus eating meat. In KJV the word "meat" (Greek *trophe*, *brome*) means simply "meal" in modern English. Greek words *sarx* and *soma* - translated as "flesh" - refer to the body.

In Luke 24:41-43 the disciples offered him fish and a honeycomb and he took it (singular, we can guess which one).

The following two fish references may look inconsistent with Jesus' preaching.

In John 21:10,13 he gave His disciples fish but Himself did not eat it. There are different opinions on this. One says that one Gospel mentions a 'fish plant', a kind of algae commonly eaten in that region. Another suggests the fish (ichtys) has a symbolic meaning.

It is hard to believe that Jesus served raw fish to his audience (Matt 14:15-21 - feeding 5,000) as there is no mention of any arrangement to cook the fish.

And even if Jesus ate the fish it does not mean we should imitate him. The point is not to imitate great personalities but rather follow their instructions - and there are no instructions for meat- or fish-eating given by Jesus. Another point is why to pick out this so-called fish-eating? Jesus did so many other things, why not imitate this too? Why not give up all possessions and become a wandering preacher too? We should not pick out what suits us best to justify our sense gratification. Jesus should not serve us as a conscience soother and a justification of our sense enjoyment.

Seven of the twelve apostles were vegetarians:

1. Peter, "...whose food was bread, olives and herbs..." (Clem. Hom. XII,6)

2. James: Church Father Eusebius, quoting the Churchfather Hegesippus (about 160 AD) is stating:

"...But Hegesippus, who lived immediately after the apostles, gives the most accurate account in the fifth book of his memoirs.

He writes as follow: '...James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to the government of the Church in conjunction with the apostles. He has been called the Just by all from the time of our savior to the present day; for there were many that bore the name James.

'He was holy from his mother's womb; he drank no wine, nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh. No razor came upon his head, he did not anoint himself with oil and he did not use the bath. He alone was permitted to enter the holy place; for he wore no woolen but linen garments. And he was in the habit of entering alone into the temple, and was frequently found upon his knees begging forgiveness for the people, so that his knees became hard like those of a camel in consequence of constantly bending them on his worship of God..." (Eusebius, Church History II, Ch. XXIII,5-7, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Oxford, N.Y., 1890, Vol I, p.125)

It is interesting that Hegesippus is saying that James, the brother of Jesus, was holy from his mother's womb on which would apply that Mary was not eating meat either and that she never fed him meat as a child. That being the case one would think it to be clear that the whole family of Jesus and naturally he himself was vegetarian. In that sense the statement of Churchfather

Eusebius "he was holy from his mother's womb" is most indicative pointing towards the vegetarianism of Jesus.

3. Thomas: The apocryphal gnostic Acts of Thomas (ch. 20) depict this disciple of Jesus as ascetic: "He continually fasts and prays, and abstaining from eating of flesh and drinking wine, he eats only bread, with salt and drink and water, and wears the same garment in fine weather and winter, and accepts nothing from anyone, and gives whatever he has to others."

4. Matthew: "It is far better to be happy than to have a demon dwelling with us. And happiness is found in the practice of virtue. Accordingly, the apostle Matthew partook of seeds and nuts, fruits and vegetables without of flesh. And John, who carried temperance to the extreme, ate locusts and wild honey..." (Clement of Alexandria, The Instructor, II.I,16: On Eating) (Note here the strong hint of Clement towards the vegetarianism of John the Baptist.)

5. Matthias (who filled the place of Judas - Acts 1:21-26). His food as told by Church Father Clement of Alexandria was the same as Matthew's. (Clement/Stromata III,4,26)

6. Andrew and 7. Jude: Andrew (Peter's brother in both flesh and faith) and Jude of Bethsaida, originally two of John the Baptists' followers, must have followed the Baptist's austere diet. (See above under Matthew)

In the same way the early Churchfathers and many important saints abstained from flesh eating (St Filipo Neri, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Andrew, St. Columban, etc.).

Bhakti Ananda Goswami says: "In previous times, abstaining was associated with asceticism and fasting. One will never find any references to any word akin to 'vegetarian' in ancient sources. It is a modern concept and term. Rules of orders like St. Benedict's, the Nazareans/Nazarite vows, etc. prescribe avoiding flesh. To be an ascetic in the Mediterranean region meant no flesh eating, no intoxication, no illicit sex and no gaming/gambling."

10 And in the house again his disciples asked him concerning the same thing.

11 And he saith to them: Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13 And they brought to him young children, that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them that brought them.

14 Whom when Jesus saw, he was much displeased, and saith to them: Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it.

Commentary: Children are seen as innocent but more importantly they are fully dependent on their elders. This dependence is a model for Lord's servants. They are also straightforward and open. This is the way to receive God's rule.

Bhakti Ananda Goswami says: "'Of such is the Kingdom of heaven' has clear and direct meaning. When Mayavadis and Gnostics rejected children as little other than animals, here Jesus states that heaven is 'of' them.

"In the ancient Mediterranean region the monotheistic worshipers of Helios Kouros (Krishna) and His feminine Kore-Rhoda (Radha) always celebrated Meghistos Kouros and Kore along with Their constant associates, the cowherd boy Kouroi and maiden Korae. Helios, His 'Brother' Baal-Dionysos (Balarama), and His Kouroi tended Their 365 sacred white cows on the Pink Lotus Blossom Isle of Rhoda-Nymphia. Kouros and His Kouroi pals were worshiped as the origin of all the Forms of God and the gods. Rhoda-Kore and Her Korae expansions were the origin of all the forms of God ess and the goddesses. All of Heliopolitan society ultimately revolved around the transcendental romantic idealism of the worship of the original and greatest Youth and Maiden, Meghistos Kouros and Rhoda-Kore. The entire liturgical year revolved around the love-play, and Kouroi-Korae sport of Kouros, Kore and Their Friends.

"The hours of the day and night and the seasons were a continual pageant of the divine love play of Kouros and Kore. With and through Their friends, either in Their pastoral Paradise or Their sacred cities (Pur = Pol), Radha-Krishna/ Rhoda-Kouros ruled the ancient heart of humanity. This is the socio-religious origin of the European tradition of self-governing peer-group fraternities and sororities. The 'hierogamos' sacred wedding of the chosen (anointed) 'Kouros' and 'Kore', as the 'Prom King and Queen', once a year, in the great festival of the dance of divine love, was derived from the worship of Radha and Krishna. From the pastoral 'king and queen of the May' to the royal courts of the anointed Kings and Queens, ancient bucolic Kouros centered Heliopolitan civilization was a continual re-enactment of the lilas of Goloka Vrindavan and Vaikuntha."

16 And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them.

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, a certain man running up and kneeling before him, asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?

18 And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good? None is good but one, that is God.

Commentary: This is an exemplary humility. There are similar texts like this one.

Matthew 10:24: "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord."

Matthew 19:17: "And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

Matthew 24:35-36: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

John 7:16: "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

John 13:16: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

John 14:28: "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

Yet Lord Jesus urges us to be not only good but "perfect as our Father" (Matt 5:48).

In His lila as Lord Baladeva He says: "What is the value of a throne to Lord Krishna? The masters of the various planetary systems accept the dust of His lotus feet on their crowned heads. That dust makes the holy places sacred, and even Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Lakshmi and I Myself, who are all portions of His plenary portion, eternally carry that dust on our heads." (SB 10.68.37)

19 Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, bear not false witness, do no fraud, honour thy father and mother.

20 But he answering, said to him: Master, all these things I have observed from my youth.

21 And Jesus looking on him, loved him, and said to him: One thing is wanting unto thee: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.

22 Who being struck sad at that saying, went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus looking round about, saith to his disciples: How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God!

Commentary: The real problem is attachment to wealth, not the wealth itself. Devotee of the Lord sees himself as a custodian of Lord's wealth, not its owner.

"O Lord who have a lotus navel, if a person happens to associate with a devotee whose heart always hankers after Your lotus feet, seeking always their fragrance, he is never attached to the material body or, in a bodily relationship, to offspring, friends, home, wealth and wife, which are very, very dear to materialistic persons. Indeed, he does not care for them." (SB 4.9.12)

"Materialists are generally very attached to their present bodily comforts and to the bodily comforts they expect in the future. Therefore they are always absorbed in thoughts of their wives, children and wealth and are afraid of giving up their bodies, which are full of stool and urine. If a person engaged in Krishna consciousness, however, is also afraid of giving up his body, what is the use of his having labored to study the shastras? It was simply a waste of time." (SB 5.9.14)

"It is by our great fortune, Janardana, that You are now visible to us, for even the masters of yoga and the foremost demigods can achieve this goal only with great difficulty. Please quickly cut the ropes of our illusory attachment for children, wife, wealth, influential friends, home and body. All such attachment is simply the effect of Your illusory material energy." (SB 10.48.27)

"Firm faith in the blissful narration of My pastimes, constant chanting of My glories, unwavering attachment to ceremonial worship of Me, praising Me through beautiful hymns, great respect for My devotional service, offering obeisances with the entire body, performing first-class worship of My devotees, consciousness of Me in all living entities, offering of ordinary, bodily activities in My devotional service, use of words to describe My qualities, offering the mind to Me, rejection of all material desires, giving up wealth for My devotional service, renouncing material sense gratification and happiness, and performing all desirable activities such as charity, sacrifice, chanting, vows and austerities with the purpose of achieving Me - these constitute actual religious principles, by which those human beings who have actually surrendered themselves to Me automatically develop love for Me. What other purpose or goal could remain for My devotee?" (SB 11.19.20-34)

"Haridasa Thakura replied, 'Immediately go home and distribute to the brahmanas whatever property you have. Then come back to this room and stay here forever in Krishna consciousness.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.3.136)

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus again answering, saith to them: Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God?

25 It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 Who wondered the more, saying among themselves: Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking on them, saith: With men it is impossible; but not with God: for all things are possible with God.

Commentary: God can easily remove all our attachments to matter if we wish to be His pure servants.

28 And Peter began to say unto him: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee.

29 Jesus answering, said: Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,

30 Who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come life everlasting.

Commentary: "My dear girls, understanding that simply for My sake you had rejected the authority of worldly opinion, of the Vedas and of your relatives, I acted as I did only to increase your attachment to Me. Even when I removed Myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never stopped loving you. Therefore, My beloved gopis, please do not harbor any bad feelings toward Me, your beloved." (SB 10.32.21)

"I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahma. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation." (SB 10.32.22)

The Lord's servants are innumerable and are one great family. However, they also have many enemies who persecute them. In one sense, this opposition is needed because it indicates the potency of one's preaching in this material world where generally everyone is against the Lord and His service.

Luke 6:26: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

31 But many that are first, shall be last: and the last, first.

Commentary: One's present position in material society does not necessarily correspond to one's future position in Lord's kingdom. They may be very different.

32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem: and Jesus went before them, and they were astonished; and following were afraid. And taking again the twelve, he began to tell them the things that should befall him.

33 Saying: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles.

34 And they shall mock him, and spit on him, and scourge him, and kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.



35 And James and John the sons of Zebedee, come to him, saying: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, thou wouldst do it for us:

36 But he said to them: What would you that I should do for you?

37 And they said: Grant to us, that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

Commentary: Two of the three most confidential disciples of the Lord wanted to have a prominent position in His association. This is, however, not very compatible with the attitude of humble servants and the Lord rebukes them.

38 And Jesus said to them: You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of: or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?

39 But they said to him: We can. And Jesus saith to them: You shall indeed drink of the chalice that I drink of: and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized, you shall be baptized.

Commentary: Jesus asks if they are ready to do anything on His behalf and then reveals the price they will pay in the form of martyrdom.

40 But to sit on my right hand, or on my left, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared.

Commentary: The most confidential positions in the Lord's assembly are already occupied by His eternal associates (nitya-parshadas) in His lila.

John 15:27: "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

"The Personality of Godhead said: 'Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O subduer of the enemy!'" (BG 4.5)

41 And the ten hearing it, began to be much displeased at James and John.

42 But Jesus calling them, saith to them: You know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them: and their princes have power over them.

43 But it is not so among you: but whosoever will be greater, shall be your minister.

44 And whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all.

Commentary: This is the actual position of a Vaishnava.

"The King will respect all women as if they were his own mother, and he will treat his own wife as the other half of his body. He will be just like an affectionate father to his citizens, and he will treat himself as the most obedient servant of the devotees, who always preach the glories of the Lord." (SB 4.16.17)

"O my Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, will I again be able to be a servant of Your eternal servants who find shelter only at Your lotus feet? O Lord of my life, may I again become their servant so that my mind may always think of Your transcendental attributes, my words always glorify those attributes, and my body always engage in the loving service of Your Lordship?" (SB 6.11.24)

"My dear Partha, one who claims to be My devotee is not so. Only a person who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee." (Adi Purana)

"I am a servant of Lord Chaitanya, a servant of Lord Chaitanya. I am a servant of Lord Chaitanya, and a servant of His servants." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.6.86)

"Everyone respected Govinda as the dearest servant of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and Govinda served all the Vaishnavas and saw to their needs." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.10.148)

"The King replied, 'My Lord, I am the most obedient servant of Your servants. It is my ambition that You will accept me as the servant of Your servants.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.14.18)

"My dear Lord, You are the Supreme Lord, and although You consider Yourself the Lord's servant, You are nonetheless worshipable. You are much greater than I am; therefore all my spiritual achievements have been lost because I have blasphemed You." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.25.82)

"If one becomes a servant of the servants of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Lord Nityananda Prabhu and is favored by Them, he can believe in all these discourses." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 3.19.109)

45 For the Son of man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many.

Commentary: "Although Nityananda Prabhu is none other than Balarama Himself, He nonetheless always thinks of Himself as the eternal servant of Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.1.28)

"Nityananda Prabhu requested everyone to serve Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, chant His glories and utter His name. Nityananda Prabhu claimed that person to be His life and soul who rendered devotional service unto Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.1.29)

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho, with his disciples, and a very great multitude, Bartimeus the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the way side begging.

47 Who when he had heard, that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out, and to say: Jesus son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many rebuked him, that he might hold his peace; but he cried a great deal the more: Son of David, have mercy on me.

Commentary: "Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" is a prayer used in Orthodox Church. This prayer was popularized by the book "The Way of a Pilgrim". It is repeated over and over again on a rosary as a *japa*. It very soon brings advanced spiritual realizations. Jesus confirms in John 14:14 and 16:24 that the Father will give one anything he asks for in Jesus' name. Related texts: Matthew 7:21, 15:8 (inattentive prayer), Acts 2:21 (whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved), Romans 8:26 (Spirit helps us in our weakness when we do not know how to pray), Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thes. 5:17, 1 Tim 2:8 (pray without ceasing, everywhere, with raised hands), Hebrews 13:15 (continual sacrifice of praise to God, giving thank to His name), James 4:2 (you do not have because you do not ask for it), 5:16 (pray for each other to be healed), etc.

49 And Jesus, standing still, commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him: Be of better comfort: arise, he calleth thee.

50 Who casting off his garment leaped up, and came to him.

51 And Jesus answering, said to him: What wilt thou that I should do to thee? And the blind man said to him: Rabboni, that I may see.

Commentary: Jesus asks the man what he wants from Him although He knows he is blind. He must be giving him a chance to ask for something more than a mere material sight - spiritual sight in the form of instruction and blessing of service.

52 And Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him in the way.

Mark

Christ enters into Jerusalem upon an ass: curses the barren fig tree: and drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple.

11:1 And when they were drawing near to Jerusalem and to Bethania at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples,

2 And saith to them: Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately at your coming in thither, you shall find a colt tied, upon which no man yet hath sat: loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any man shall say to you, What are you doing? say ye that the Lord hath need of him: and immediately he will let him come hither.

4 And going their way, they found the colt tied before the gate without, in the meeting of two ways: and they loose him.

5 And some of them that stood there, said to them: What do you loosing the colt?

6 Who said to them as Jesus had commanded them; and they let him go with them.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus; and they lay their garments on him, and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way.

Commentary: These trees were palms (John 12:13). Bhakti Ananda Goswami writes: "The cities of Salem and Jericho were devoted to Eli / Heri and Baal (Balarama, Shukla Bala, Bala Bhadra, Bala Deva, etc.) respectively. The symbol of Baal (Bel, Balu, B'el, etc.) at Jericho, one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites on earth, was the palm - Baladeva's palm flag or dhvaja. Later these became the international symbols for both Jerusalem and Jericho, and then still later, all of Israel and Judah. The tradition of the descending Savior of Jericho lasted all the way into the time of Jesus, Who chose to encamp with His disciples in Jericho. Thus He clearly identified Himself with the ancient Baal-Yahu savior-god messiah of that city. That Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph, worshiped by the masses with palm fronds, shows that they recognized Him as the promised Messiah Baal-Yahu of Jericho."

Revelation 7:9 describes the same palm welcome to the Lord who is Baal-tamar, the master of the palm tree.

9 And they that went before and they that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh: Hosanna in the highest.

11 And he entered into Jerusalem, into the temple: and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, he went out to Bethania with the twelve.

Commentary: Lord was spending the night out of the town as befits a sannyasi. See also 11:19.

12 And the next day when they came out from Bethania, he was hungry.

13 And when he had seen afar off a fig tree having leaves, he came if perhaps he might find any thing on it. And when he was come to it, he found nothing but leaves. For it was not the time for figs.

14 And answering he said to it: May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more for ever. And his disciples heard it.

Commentary: This incident is explained in a discussion called "The Barren Fig Tree" published by W. M. Christie, a Church of Scotland minister in Palestine under the British mandatory regime. He pointed out first the time of year at which the incident is said to have occurred (if, as is probable, Jesus was crucified on April 6th, A.D. 30, the incident occurred during the first days of April). "Now, the facts connected with the fig tree are these. Toward the end of March the leaves begin to appear, and in about a week the foliage coating is complete. Coincident with [this], and sometimes even before, there appears quite a crop of small knobs, not the real figs, but a kind of early forerunner. They grown to the size of green almonds, in which condition they are eaten by peasants and others when hungry. When they come to their own indefinite maturity they drop off." These precursors of the true fig are called taqsh in Palestinian Arabic. Their appearance is a harbinger of the fully formed appearance of the true fig some six weeks later. So the time for figs had not yet come. But if the leaves appear without any taqsh, that is a sign that there will be no figs. Since Jesus found "nothing but leaves" - leaves without any taqsh - he knew that "it was an absolutely hopeless, fruitless fig tree".

15 And they came to Jerusalem. And when he was entered into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the chairs of them that sold doves.

16 And he suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the temple;

17 And he taught, saying to them: Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations? But you have made it a den of thieves.

Commentary: Merchants with sacrifice animals and money changers made the whole temple complex impure. Bhakti Ananda Gosvami mentions that the money changed was the one used for blood sacrifices for the one which was not tainted this way. In other words, there's such a thing as dirty money.

"Oh brahmana, one should perform meritorious activities such as giving charity, performing sacrifices, and worshipping the Supreme Lord with properly earned money. If it is not done so, if a person does such activities with money which was not earned properly, he goes to the lower planetary system and into the lower species. Therefore, such people are advised that they should earn money by proper means and worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If somebody is unable to do so, he should just watch the worship of the Supreme Lord or else give some ingredients, according to his means, for the worship of the Supreme Lord." (Hari Bhakti Vilasa 11.50,51, from Agastya Samhita)

nyAyopArjita-vittena kartavyaM hy Atma-rakSaNam  
anyAyena tu yo jlvat sarva-karma-bahiS-kRtaH

One should earn money by just means to preserve one's atma (soul/body). All pious karmas of one who earns his livelihood otherwise (i.e. by unjust means) are in vain. (Parasara smriti 12.46)

18 Which when the chief priests and the scribes had heard, they sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him, because the whole multitude was in admiration at his doctrine.

19 And when evening was come, he went forth out of the city.

20 And when they passed by in the morning they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter remembering, said to him: Rabbi, behold the fig tree, which thou didst curse, is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering, saith to them: Have the faith of God.

23 Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe, that whatsoever he saith shall be done; it shall be done unto him.

24 Therefore I say unto you, all things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you.

Commentary: Vak-shakti, or power of speech, is based on faith and truthfulness and comes from the Lord. Such person's words will always come true.

"Shri Markandeya said: 'O Almighty Lord, how can I possibly describe You? You awaken the vital air, which then impels the mind, senses and power of speech to act. This is true for all ordinary conditioned souls and even for great demigods like Brahma and Shiva. So it is certainly true for me. Nevertheless, You become the intimate friend of those who worship You.'" (SB 12.8.41)

25 And when you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have aught against any man; that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your sins.

26 But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father that is in heaven, forgive you your sins.

Commentary: Forgiveness is another characteristics of spiritual advancement.

"Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from doubt and delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control of the senses, control of the mind, happiness and distress, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, nonviolence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame and infamy - all these various qualities of living beings are created by Me alone." (BG 10.4-5)

"My dear son, we are all brahmanas and have become worshipable for the people in general because of our quality of forgiveness. It is because of this quality that Lord Brahma, the supreme spiritual master of this universe, has achieved his post. The duty of a brahmana is to culture the quality of forgiveness, which is illuminating like the sun. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is pleased with those who are forgiving." (SB 9.15.39-40)

Similar verses are BG 13.8-12, 16.1-3, SB 7.11.21, 11.19.33-35, etc.

27 And they come again to Jerusalem. And when he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests and the scribes and the ancients,

28 And they say to him: By what authority dost thou these things? and who hath given thee this authority that thou shouldst do these things?

29 And Jesus answering, said to them: I will also ask you one word, and answer you me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? Answer me.

31 But they thought with themselves, saying: If we say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did you not believe him?

32 If we say, From men, we fear the people. For all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answering, say to Jesus: We know not. And Jesus answering, saith to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Commentary: Priests and scribes wanted to expose the Lord but instead were exposed themselves.

Mark

The parable of the vineyard and husbandmen. Caesar's right to tribute. The Sadducees are confuted. The first commandment. The widow's mite.

12:1 And he began to speak to them in parables: A certain man planted a vineyard and made a hedge about it, and dug a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen; and went into a far country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant to receive of the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 Who having laid hands on him, beat him, and sent him away empty.

4 And again he sent to them another servant; and him they wounded in the head, and used him reproachfully.

Commentary: Two Lord Chaitanya's associates were persecuted in these ways. Haridasa Thakura was beaten in twenty-two marketplaces and Lord Nityananda was violently attacked by Jagai and Madhai. Many others suffered at the hands of unbelievers.

5 And again he sent another, and him they killed: and many others, of whom some they beat, and others they killed.

6 Therefore having yet one son, most dear to him; he also sent him unto them last of all, saying: They will reverence my son.

7 But the husbandmen said one to another: This is the heir; come let us kill him; and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And laying hold on him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

9 What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those husbandmen; and will give the vineyard to others.

10 And have you not read this scripture, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner:

11 By the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

12 And they sought to lay hands on him, but they feared the people. For they knew that he spoke this parable to them. And leaving him, they went their way.

13 And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians; that they should catch him in his words.

14 Who coming, say to him: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and carest not for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar; or shall we not give it?

15 Who knowing their wiliness, saith to them: Why tempt you me? bring me a penny that I may see it.

16 And they brought it him. And he saith to them: Whose is this image and inscription? They say to him, Caesar's.



17 And Jesus answering, said to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

Commentary: King in Vedic society and other ancient societies was a representative of God, human God on earth. This concept survived in some places into modern times (Nepal, Japan). Only later the authority was separated into state and church.

18 And there came to him the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying:

Commentary: According to the Gospels and the Book of Acts, the Sadducees, one of the Jewish sects, rejected the doctrine of resurrection, immortality, hell, heaven, and afterlife. (Matthew 22:23; Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 23:6-8)

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, that if any man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother.

Commentary: This was an usual custom in Vedic civilization but in Kali-yuga it is forbidden.

"In this Age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of sannyasa, the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man's begetting children in his brother's wife." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.17.164, quote from Brahma-vaivarta Purana 4.185.180)

20 Now there were seven brethren; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no issue.

21 And the second took her, and died: and neither did he leave any issue. And the third in like manner.

22 And the seven all took her in like manner; and did not leave issue. Last of all the woman also died.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise again, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering, saith to them: Do ye not therefore err, because you know not the scriptures, nor the power of God?

Commentary: In other words, ignorance of the law (dharma) is no excuse.

Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

25 For when they shall rise again from the dead, they shall neither marry, nor be married, but are as the angels in heaven.

Commentary: That "heaven" here does not pertain to svarga, is seen from the quotes below. It must refer to Vaikuntha.

"After observing this brave act performed by the chaste wife Arci, the wife of the great King Prthu, many thousands of the wives of the demigods, along with their husbands, offered prayers to the Queen, for they were very much satisfied." (SB 4.23.23)

"Krishna's beauty and character create a festival for all women. Indeed, when the demigods' wives flying in airplanes with their husbands catch sight of Him and hear His resonant flute-song, their hearts are shaken by Cupid, and they become so bewildered that the flowers fall out of their hair and their belts loosen." (SB 10.21.12)

However, those who were married in this world may continue to live in Vaikuntha.

"The woman who engages in the service of her husband, following strictly in the footsteps of the goddess of fortune, surely returns home, back to Godhead, with her devotee husband, and lives very happily in the Vaikuntha planets." (SB 7.11.29)

26 And as concerning the dead that they rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke to him, saying: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You therefore do greatly err.

28 And there came one of the scribes that had heard them reasoning together, and seeing that he had answered them well, asked him which was the first commandment of all.

29 And Jesus answered him: The first commandment of all is, Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God is one God.

Commentary: There are many quotes that God is only one (eka brahma dvitiya nasti).

"O conqueror of wealth, there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread." (BG 7.7)

"After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare." (BG 7.19)

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts." (BG 10.8)

"Arjuna said: 'You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest, the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn, the greatest. All the great sages such as Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa confirm this truth about You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me.'" (BG 10.12-13)

"All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Shri Krishna is the original Personality of Godhead. All of them appear on planets whenever there is a disturbance created by the atheists. The Lord incarnates to protect the theists." (SB 1.3.28)

"Lord Krishna alone is the supreme controller, and all others are His servants. They dance as He makes them do so." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.142)

"Krishna who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin and He is the prime cause of all causes." (Brahma Samhita 5.1)

The Lord is both immanent and transcendent:

"By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them." (BG 9.4)

"Just as the illumination of a fire, which is situated in one place, is spread all over, the energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Parabrahman, are spread all over this universe." (Vishnu Purana 1.22.53)

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said to him: Well, Master, thou hast said in truth, that there is one God, and there is no other besides him.

33 And that he should be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength; and to love one's neighbour as one's self, is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices.

Commentary: Love of God is the essence and goal of religion (reconnection of living being with God).

Matthew 22:40: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 15:12: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

John 15:17: "These things I command you, that ye love one another."

"O most eminent of brahmanas, you are all indeed extremely fortunate, since you have already placed within your hearts Lord Shri Narayana - the Personality of Godhead, the supreme controller and the ultimate Soul of all existence - beyond whom there is no other god. You have undeviating love for Him, and thus I request you to worship Him." (SB 12.12.56)

"Religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation are known as the four goals of life, but before love of Godhead, the fifth and highest goal, these appear as insignificant as straw in the street." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.7.84)

"It is very good, my dear child, that You have attained the supreme goal of life by developing love of Godhead. Thus You have pleased me very much, and I am very much obliged to You." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.7.91)

"One's relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, activities in terms of that relationship, and the ultimate goal of life [to develop love of God] - these three subjects are explained in every aphorism of the Vedanta-sutra, for they form the culmination of the entire Vedanta philosophy." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.7.146)

"In every revealed scripture there is condemnation of fruitive activities. It is advised everywhere to give up engagement in fruitive activities, for no one can attain the highest goal of life, love of Godhead, by executing them." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.9.263)

"No conditioned soul can get out of material bondage without serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Love at His lotus feet is the ultimate goal of life." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.18.194)

smartavyah satatam visnur vismartavyo na jatucit  
sarve vidhi-nisedhah syur etayor eva kinkarah

"Lord Vishnu should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the shastras should be the servants of these two principles." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.22.113, quote from Padma Purana)

There are many other texts confirming that love of Krishna, God, is the ultimate goal of life. Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.6.178, 2.20.125,142,143, 2.23.3,13,101,125, 2.25.104,124,131, 3.7.24, 3.16.61,63 etc.

34 And Jesus seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Commentary: In Matthew 22:34-40 the exchange is much more gladiatorial with the lawyers seemingly trying to catch Jesus out and being routed by his counter-question to them. Since the anti-Pharisee bent increases in successively written gospels, one assumes that pro-Pharisee passages are early.

35 And Jesus answering, said, teaching in the temple: How do the scribes say, that Christ is the son of David?

36 For David himself saith by the Holy Ghost: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool.

Commentary: God and His Son are simultaneously different and one (bheda-abheda). This relationship is inconceivable (acintya) and its understanding puts an end to endless disputations.

"The light of one candle being communicated to other candles, although it burns separately in them, is the same in its quality. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda who exhibits Himself equally in the same mobile manner in His various manifestations." (Brahma Samhita 5.46)

"When from one candle many others are lit, I consider that one the original." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.2.89)

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord, and whence is he then his son? And a great multitude heard him gladly.

38 And he said to them in his doctrine: Beware of the scribes, who love to walk in long robes, and to be saluted in the marketplace,

39 And to sit in the first chairs, in the synagogues, and to have the highest places at suppers:

40 Who devour the houses of widows under the pretence of long prayer: these shall receive greater judgment.

Commentary: Matthew 23:13: "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

Luke 12:47: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Luke 12:48: "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

John 9:41: "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

John 12:49: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."

John 15:22-24: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

2 Timothy 3:13: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Pharisees are hypocritic cheaters and others are cheated.

Manu Samhita 8.337-338 also says that the punishment for theft should be greater for those who know better the nature of their guilt. Brahmana is considered the most intelligent among four varnas and his punishment is therefore the longest.

2 Peter 2:20: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

2 Peter 2:21: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

2 Peter 2:22: "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

"Sometimes one who is very alert so as not to commit sinful acts is victimized by sinful life again. I therefore consider this process of repeated sinning and atoning to be useless. It is like the bathing of an elephant, for an elephant cleanses itself by taking a full bath, but then throws dust over its head and body as soon as it returns to the land." (SB 6.1.10)

"One who accepts the sannyasa order gives up the three principles of materialistic activities in which one indulges in the field of household life - namely religion, economic development and sense gratification. One who first accepts sannyasa but then returns to such materialistic

activities is to be called a vantashi, or one who eats his own vomit. He is indeed a shameless person." (SB 7.15.36)

"All glories to Lord Narayana! Without remembrance of His lotus feet, recitation of scripture is merely crying in the wilderness, regular observance of severe vows enjoined in the Vedas is no more than a way to lose weight, execution of prescribed pious duties is like pouring oblations onto ashes, and bathing at various holy sites is no better than an elephant's bath." (Mukunda Mala Stotra 21)

To atone and then to commit sins again is compared to a bath of an elephant (hasti-snana).

41 And Jesus sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And calling his disciples together, he saith to them: Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury.

44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living.

Commentary: Similar story is known from Buddha's life.

Mark

Christ foretells the destruction of the temple, and the signs that shall forerun the day of judgment.

13:1 And as he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him: Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here.

2 And Jesus answering, said to him: Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down.

Commentary: Nothing in material world is permanent and however great the building may be, it will crumble. Here Jesus seems to be predicting the destruction of Jerusalem by Roman army in 70 AD.

3 And as he sat on the mount of Olivet over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him apart:

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall begin to be fulfilled?

5 And Jesus answering, began to say to them, Take heed lest any man deceive you.

6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am he; and they shall deceive many.

Commentary: Kali-yuga is full of false Christs, prophets and avatars. Some started new religious organizations with great following. Usually they claim that membership in their group is the only way to salvation and they try to discredit the scriptures and genuine holy persons.

2 Peter 2:1: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

"It is not wonderful for persons who have accepted the transient material body as the self to engage always in deriding great souls. Such envy on the part of materialistic persons is very good because that is the way they fall down. They are diminished by the dust of the feet of great personalities." (SB 4.4.13)

7 And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, fear ye not. For such things must needs be, but the end is not yet.

Commentary: Rumours of wars and catastrophes are common even nowadays.

8 For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and famines. These things are the beginning of sorrows.

Commentary: This happens more and more as time progresses but mainly at the end of Kali-yuga.

"Harassed by famine and excessive taxes, people will resort to eating leaves, roots, flesh, wild honey, fruits, flowers and seeds. Struck by drought, they will become completely ruined." (SB 12.2.9)

"In the age of Kali, people's minds will always be agitated. They will become emaciated by famine and taxation, my dear King, and will always be disturbed by fear of drought. They will lack adequate clothing, food and drink, will be unable to properly rest, have sex or bathe themselves, and will have no ornaments to decorate their bodies. In fact, the people of Kali-yuga will gradually come to appear like ghostly, haunted creatures." (SB 12.3.39-40)

9 But look to yourselves. For they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues you shall be beaten, and you shall stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony unto them.



Commentary: The basis of degradation is the growing atheism. Situation of believers in Kali-yuga is getting worse day after day. In secular systems they are ignored or ridiculed and their influence on society is kept at minimum while atheistic values are widely proclaimed by educative institutes and media. Totalitarian regimes arrest them, torture them and kill them.

One of the features of secularism spreading in Kali-yuga is relativism.

2 Timothy 3:7: [Evil people are] "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

"Post-modernism is a variety of ways has made inroads into the thinking even of non-intellectuals. It is no longer politically correct to assert the unqualified reality of anything, or to assume that one can know truth." (Klaus Klostermaier, theologian, Oxford)

10 And unto all nations the gospel must first be preached.

Commentary:

prthivi-parjanta jata ache desa-grama

sarvatra sancara hoibek mora nama

"In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be preached." (Chaitanya Bhagavata 4.4.126)

"I offer innumerable obeisances unto the lotus feet of Shri Nityananda Prabhu, who is so kind that He spread the service of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu all over the world." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.1.26)

11 And when they shall lead you and deliver you up, be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

Commentary: Devotee of the Lord surrenders his mind and speech to Him.

Luke 24:38: "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?"

"Although the false ego has no factual basis, it is perceived in many forms - as the functions of the mind, speech, life air and bodily faculties. But with the sword of transcendental knowledge, sharpened by worship of a bona fide spiritual master, a sober sage will cut off this false identification and live in this world free from all material attachment." (SB 11.28.17)

"In the body the most important substance is the life air, but that also is neither the listener nor the speaker. Beyond even the life air, the soul also can do nothing, for the Supersoul is actually the director, in cooperation with the individual soul. The Supersoul conducting the activities of the body is different from the body and living force." (SB 7.2.45)

"You inspire me within the heart and make me speak with the tongue. I do not know whether I am speaking well or badly." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.8.123)

"Ramananda Raya continued, 'The Supersoul within everyone's heart speaks not externally but from within. He instructs the devotees in all respects, and that is His way of instruction.'" (Chaitanya Charitamrta 2.8.265)

12 And the brother shall betray his brother unto death, and the father his son; and children shall rise up against the parents, and shall work their death.

Commentary: King Yudhisthira observed the coming of the Kali-yuga: "All ordinary transactions and dealings became polluted with cheating, even between friends. And in familial affairs, there was always misunderstanding between fathers, mothers and sons, between well-wishers, and between brothers. Even between husband and wife there was always strain and quarrel." (SB 1.14.4)

"Men will no longer protect their elderly parents, their children or their respectable wives. Thoroughly degraded, they will care only to satisfy their own bellies and genitals." (SB 12.3.42)

13 And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake. But he that shall endure unto the end, he shall be saved.

Commentary: Avowed atheists hate even hearing the Lord's name and cannot stand it.

Luke 21:16: "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death."

Luke 21:17: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."

Luke 21:18: "But there shall not an hair of your head perish."

14 And when you shall see the abomination of desolation, standing where it ought not: he that readeth let him understand: then let them that are in Judea, flee unto the mountains:

Commentary: This refers to Daniel 9:24-27. The ecclesiastical historian Eusebius early in the fourth century tells us that the Christians fled to Pella, at the northern extremity of Perea. Escape to the mountains will also happen at the end of Kali-yuga.

"Losing their wives and properties to such avaricious and merciless rulers, who will behave no better than ordinary thieves, the citizens will flee to the mountains and forests." (SB 12.2.8)

15 And let him that is on the housetop, not go down into the house, nor enter therein to take any thing out of the house:

16 And let him that shall be in the field, not turn back to take up his garment.

17 And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days.

18 But pray ye, that these things happen not in winter.

19 For in those days shall be such tribulations, as were not from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be.

20 And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect which he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; lo, he is here: do not believe.

22 For there will rise up false Christs and false prophets, and they shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce (if it were possible) even the elect.

Commentary: Times of emergency are taken advantage by unscrupulous persons who cheat confused people.

23 Take you heed therefore; behold I have foretold you all things.

24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

25 And the stars of heaven shall be falling down, and the powers that are in heaven, shall be moved.

26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory.

27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Commentary: This description as well as the one in Book of Revelation resembles the advent of Kalki avatara at the end of Kali-yuga when the degradation and resultant suffering of people will become unbearable.

"By the time the age of Kali ends, the bodies of all creatures will be greatly reduced in size, and the religious principles of followers of varnashrama will be ruined. The path of the Vedas will be completely forgotten in human society, and so-called religion will be mostly atheistic. The kings will mostly be thieves, the occupations of men will be stealing, lying and needless violence, and all the social classes will be reduced to the lowest level of shudras. Cows will be like goats, spiritual hermitages will be no different from mundane houses, and family ties will extend no

further than the immediate bonds of marriage. Most plants and herbs will be tiny, and all trees will appear like dwarf shami trees. Clouds will be full of lightning, homes will be devoid of piety, and all human beings will have become like asses. At that time, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will appear on the earth. Acting with the power of pure spiritual goodness, He will rescue eternal religion." (SB 12.2.12-16)

"Lord Kalki, the Lord of the universe, will mount His swift horse Devadatta and, sword in hand, travel over the earth exhibiting His eight mystic opulences and eight special qualities of Godhead. Displaying His unequaled effulgence and riding with great speed, He will kill by the millions those thieves who have dared dress as kings." (SB 12.2.19-20)

"When Lord Vasudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appears in their hearts in His transcendental form of goodness, the remaining citizens will abundantly repopulate the earth." (SB 12.2.22)

"When the Supreme Lord has appeared on earth as Kalki, the maintainer of religion, Satya-yuga will begin, and human society will bring forth progeny in the mode of goodness." (SB 12.2.23)

28 Now of the fig tree learn ye a parable. When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves are come forth, you know that summer is very near.

29 So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is very nigh, even at the doors.

30 Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, until all these things be done.

Commentary: This text offers two interpretations of what "this generation" means. To apply it to the time of destruction of Jerusalem would fulfill the conventional meaning of "this generation", i.e. persons present. But the Lord did not appear in the clouds at that time. If it refers to the end of Kali-yuga, as the description suggests, then it may refer to all people living throughout Kali-yuga. In case of reincarnation, "this generation" would refer to human beings in their present bodies who will continue to be reincarnated on the earth till the end of the age. The Lord, however, liberated everyone during His advent as Lord Chaitanya.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.

Commentary: Lord's law is eternal (sanatana-dharma).

"The Vedas give the eternal regulative principles for auspicious advancement in human civilization which have been rigidly followed in the past. The strong evidence of this principle is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is called Janardana, the well-wisher of all living entities." (SB 4.2.31)

"Suta Gosvami said: 'Offering my obeisances to the supreme religious principle, devotional service; to Lord Krishna, the supreme creator; and to all the brahmanas, I shall now describe the eternal principles of religion.'" (SB 12.12.1)

32 But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray. For ye know not when the time is.

34 Even as a man who going into a far country, left his house; and gave authority to his servants over every work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35 Watch ye therefor, (for you know not when the lord of the house cometh: at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning,)

36 Lest coming on a sudden, he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch.

Commentary: The Father, however, gives this information in the Puranas.

"Maitreya said: 'O Vidura, the four millenniums are called the Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali yugas. The aggregate number of years of all of these combined is equal to twelve thousand years of the demigods.'" (SB 3.11.18)

"The duration of the Satya millennium equals 4,800 years of the years of the demigods; the duration of Treta millennium equals to 3,600 years; the duration of the Dvapara millennium equals 2,400 years; and that of the Kali millennium is 1,200 years of the demigods." (SB 3.11.19)

The year of the demigods equals to 360 human years. One human year equals to day and night of demigods. The duration of the Satya-yuga is therefore  $4,800 \times 360$ , or 1,728,000 years. The duration of the Treta-yuga is  $3,600 \times 360$ , or 1,296,000 years. The duration of the Dvapara-yuga is  $2,400 \times 360$ , or 864,000 years. And the last, the Kali-yuga, is  $1,200 \times 360$ , or 432,000 years. Over 5,100 years of Kali-yuga already passed (since its beginning on February 18, 3102 BC). Thus the end of Kali-yuga will come after 427,000 years.

"Thereafter, at the conjunction of two yugas, the Lord of the creation will take His birth as the Kalki incarnation and become the son of Vishnu Yasha. At this time the rulers of the earth will have degenerated into plunderers." (SB 1.3.25)

Mark

The first part of the history of the passion of Christ.

14:1 Now the feast of the pasch, and of the Azymes was after two days; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might by some wile lay hold on him, and kill him.

2 But they said: Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people.

3 And when he was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, and was at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of precious spikenard: and breaking the alabaster box, she poured it out upon his head.

4 Now there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said: Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 But Jesus said: Let her alone, why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon me.

7 For the poor you have always with you: and whensoever you will, you may do them good: but me you have not always.

Commentary: Deuteronomy 15:11: "For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land."

Equating the service to the poor with the service to God, the basis of a mistaken concept of mundane charity "mAnava sevA - MAdhava sevA" or "daridra-NARAyana-sevA", is done by mAyAvadIs and most charitable organizations. It comes from a misinterpretation of the Gospel of Matthew 25:31-46 where "these my least brethren" are in fact devotees, not materialists. This is supported e.g. by Parama samhita 25.33-34:

ye narAs tyakta sarvas vA mundAH kASaYa vAsasaH  
vicaranti mahIM kRtsnaM te mama priya sattamAH 33  
tasmAt teSveva zuzrUSAH kuryAd bhAgavataH sadA  
teSAm api kRtA pUjA devasyaiva kRtA bhavet 34

33 Whatever men give up everything and with a shaven head and dyed robes travel the earth without home (sannyAsIs) are dearest to Me (the Lord).

34 Therefore a Bhagavata should always serve them only. Service to them is service to God.

Personal service (vapu-seva) is possible only in the Vaishnava's presence. In his absence remains only vani-seva, service to his instructions.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint my body for burial.

9 Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her.

10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests, to betray him to them.

11 Who hearing it were glad; and they promised him they would give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

12 Now on the first day of the unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the pasch, the disciples say to him: Whither wilt thou that we go, and prepare for thee to eat the pasch?

13 And he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith to them: Go ye into the city; and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water, follow him;

14 And whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house, The master saith, Where is my refectory, where I may eat the pasch with my disciples?

15 And he will shew you a large dining room furnished; and there prepare ye for us.

16 And his disciples went their way, and came into the city; and they found as he had told them, and they prepared the pasch.

17 And when evening was come, he cometh with the twelve.

18 And when they were at table and eating, Jesus saith: Amen I say to you, one of you that eateth with me shall betray me.

19 But they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one by one: Is it I?

20 Who saith to them: One of the twelve, who dippeth with me his hand in the dish.

Commentary: Psalm 41:9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

21 And the Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him, if that man had not been born.

Commentary: This passage reveals how the reactions for sinful acts work. In the lila taking place in the material world there must also be negative personages - they are actually Lord's

devotees acting out these roles - whose natures are incorporated into the lila without forcing anyone to act wrongly (against dharma). Offenses against greatly elevated persons are extremely hardly punished.

22 And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread; and blessing, broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye. This is my body.

Commentary: Body of the Lord Himself is prasada, sacrificial offering. This is described in the Rig Veda where the Cosmic Purusha is sacrificed for the well-being of the world. Therefore the Lord is called the Lamb of God, being Himself the original sacrificial offering.

John 1:29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

"Suta said: 'In the beginning of the creation, the Lord first expanded Himself in the universal form of the purusha incarnation and manifested all the ingredients for the material creation. And thus at first there was the creation of the sixteen principles of material action. This was for the purpose of creating the material universe.'" (SB 1.3.1)

"When I was born from the abdominal lotus flower of the Lord [Maha-Vishnu], the great person, I had no ingredients for sacrificial performances except the bodily limbs of the great Personality of Godhead." (SB 2.6.23)

"Thus I had to arrange all these necessary ingredients and paraphernalia of sacrifice from the personal bodily parts of the Personality of Godhead. By invocation of the demigods' names, the ultimate goal, Vishnu, was gradually attained, and thus compensation and ultimate offering were complete." (SB 2.6.27)

"Thus I created the ingredients and paraphernalia for offering sacrifice out of the parts of the body of the Supreme Lord, the enjoyer of the sacrifice, and I performed the sacrifice to satisfy the Lord." (SB 2.6.28)

"O Lord, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You as the gigantic person. Simply by chanting mantras, we shall be able to understand You fully. You are yajna [sacrifice], and You are the kratu [ritual]. Therefore all the ritualistic ceremonies of sacrifice are part of Your transcendental body, and You are the only enjoyer of all sacrifices. Your form is composed of transcendental goodness. You are known as tri-yuga because in Kali-yuga You appeared as a concealed incarnation and because You always fully possess the three pairs of opulences." (SB 5.18.35)



"Lord Baladeva is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who hears and chants about Him is purified. Because He is always the well-wisher of all living entities, He has descended with all His paraphernalia to purify the entire world and lessen its burden." (SB 9.3.34)

"The brahmanas, the cows, Vedic knowledge, austerity, truthfulness, control of the mind and senses, faith, mercy, tolerance and sacrifice are the different parts of the body of Lord Vishnu, and they are the paraphernalia for a godly civilization." (SB 10.4.41)

"Although the ingredients of sacrificial performance - the place, time, particular paraphernalia, mantras, rituals, priests, fires, demigods, performer, offering and the as yet unseen beneficial results - are all simply aspects of His opulences, the brahmanas saw Lord Krishna as an ordinary human because of their perverted intelligence. They failed to recognize that He is the Supreme Absolute Truth, the directly manifest Personality of Godhead, whom the material senses cannot ordinarily perceive. Thus bewildered by their false identification with the mortal body, they did not show Him proper respect." (SB 10.23.10-11)

"Balarama's own expansion is called Maha-sankarshana, and His fragment, the purusha, is counted as a kala, or a part of a plenary portion." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.74)

23 And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave it to them. And they all drank of it.

24 And he said to them: This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many.

25 Amen I say to you, that I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 And when they had said an hymn, they went forth to the mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus saith to them: You will all be scandalized in my regard this night; for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed.

Commentary: Zechariah 13:7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."

28 But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 But Peter saith to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, yet not I.

30 And Jesus saith to him: Amen I say to thee, to day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shall deny me thrice.

31 But he spoke the more vehemently: Although I should die together with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner also said they all.

32 And they came to a farm called Gethsemani. And he saith to his disciples: Sit you here, while I pray.

33 And he taketh Peter and James and John with him; and he began to fear and to be heavy.

34 And he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here, and watch.

35 And when he was gone forward a little, he fell flat on the ground; and he prayed, that if it might be, the hour might pass from him.

Commentary: Prostration (dandavat-pranama), lying flat on the ground while praying, is the most respectful type of obeisance.

36 And he saith: Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee: remove this chalice from me; but not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping. And he saith to Peter: Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour?

38 Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Commentary: Some theologians claim that the spirit and the body are one. But they are also different.

John 6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

"The material body of the indestructible, immeasurable and eternal living entity is sure to come to an end; therefore, fight, O descendant of Bharata." (BG 2.18)

39 A going away again, he prayed, saying the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them again asleep, (for their eyes were heavy,) and they knew not what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith to them: Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough: the hour is come: behold the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is at hand.

43 And while he was yet speaking, cometh Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve: and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the ancients.

44 And he that betrayed him, had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully.

45 And when he was come, immediately going up to him, he saith: Hail, Rabbi; and he kissed him.

46 But they laid hands on him, and held him.

47 An one of them that stood by, drawing a sword, struck a servant of the chief priest, and cut off his ear.

Commentary: Matthew 26:52: "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The karma is suggested.

48 And Jesus answering, said to them: Are you come out as to a robber, with swords and staves to apprehend me?

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not lay hands on me. But that the scriptures may be fulfilled.

50 Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away.

51 And a certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and they laid hold on him.

52 But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked.

53 And they brought Jesus to the high priest; and all the priests and the scribes and the ancients assembled together.

54 And Peter followed him from afar off, even into the court of the high priest; and he sat with the servants at the fire, and warmed himself.

55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for evidence against Jesus, that they might put him to death, and found none.

56 For many bore false witness against him, and their evidences were not agreeing.

57 And some rising up, bore false witness against him, saying:

58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another not made with hands.

Commentary: John 2:19-21 says the temple refers to the body.

1 Corinthians 3:16: "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

1 Corinthians 6:19: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is situated as the Supersoul within the cores of the hearts of all living entities, whether moving or nonmoving, including men, birds, animals, trees and, indeed, all living entities. Therefore you should consider every body a residence or temple of the Lord. By such vision you will satisfy the Lord. You should not angrily kill these living entities in the forms of trees." (SB 6.4.13)

59 And their witness did not agree.

60 And the high priest rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Answerest thou nothing to the things that are laid to thy charge by these men?

61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said to him: Art thou the Christ the Son of the blessed God?

62 And Jesus said to him: I am. And you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

Commentary: See under Mark 16:19.

63 Then the high priest rending his garments, saith: What need we any further witnesses?

64 You have heard the blasphemy. What think you? Who all condemned him to be guilty of death.

65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him: Prophecy: and the servants struck him with the palms of their hands.

Commentary: Isaiah 50:6: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

66 Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maidservants of the high priest.

67 And when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, saying: I neither know nor understand what thou sayest. And he went forth before the court; and the cock crew.

69 And again a maidservant seeing him, began to say to the standers by: This is one of them.

70 But he denied again. And after a while they that stood by said again to Peter: Surely thou art one of them; for thou art also a Galilean.

71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying; I know not this man of whom you speak.

72 And immediately the cock crew again. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said unto him: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny me. And he began to weep.

Commentary: Luke 22:31: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."

Luke 22:32: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Through Peter the Lord showed a lesson to everyone who professes to be His follower. The fact that he wept means he deeply regretted his accidental falldown and this qualified him to remain the Lord's disciple.

"Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination." (BG 9.30)

Mark

The continuation of the history of the passion.

15:1 And straightway in the morning, the chief priests holding a consultation with the ancients and the scribes and the whole council, binding Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

2 And Pilate asked him: Art thou the king of the Jews? But he answering, saith to him: Thou sayest it.

3 And the chief priests accused him in many things.

4 And Pilate again asked him, saying: Answerest thou nothing? behold in how many things they accuse thee.

5 But Jesus still answered nothing; so that Pilate wondered.

6 Now on the festival day he was wont to release unto them one of the prisoners, whomsoever they demanded.

7 And there was one called Barabbas, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder.

Commentary: The name Barabbas means Bar Abba, son of the Father (God).

8 And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire that he would do, as he had ever done unto them.

9 And Pilate answered them, and said: Will you that I release to you the king of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him up out of envy.

11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

Commentary: Mass manipulation is nothing new - it was used in remote past to force irrational things. Nowadays it is a domain of the media.

12 And Pilate again answering, saith to them: What will you then that I do to the king of the Jews?

13 But they again cried out: Crucify him.

14 And Pilate saith to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more: Crucify him.

15 And so Pilate being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

16 And the soldiers led him away into the court of the palace, and they called together the whole band:

17 And they clothe him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him.

18 And they began to salute him: Hail, king of the Jews.

19 And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him. And bowing their knees, they adored him.

20 And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him, and they led him out to crucify him.

21 And they forced one Simon a Cyrenian who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up his cross.

22 And they bring him into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is, The place of Calvary.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but he took it not.

Commentary: He did so in accordance with the Vedic sattvic standard.

"According to the Vedic injunctions, when wine is offered in sacrificial ceremonies it is later to be consumed by smelling, and not by drinking. (...)" (SB 11.5.13)

24 And crucifying him, they divided his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And the inscription of his cause was written over: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith: And with the wicked he was reputed.

29 And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again;

30 Save thyself, coming down from the cross.

31 In like manner also the chief priests mocking, said with the scribes one to another: He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the king of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Commentary: This is the beginning of Psalm 22. Jesus is glorifying the Father, not accusing Him of forsaking Him. Even the people present did not understand what He means though.

There are other versions in other Gospels. According to Luke:

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." (Luke 23:46) Possibly this is taken from "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth." (Psalm 31:5)

John 19:28-30 says: "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, 'I thirst.' Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. (Which seems to correspond with Psalm 69:21: "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.") When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished:' and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

"Ghost" refers to the subtle body. Lord acted out leaving His body which is actually nondifferent from Him. Similar occasion was the departure of Krishna and Balarama who also left Their bodies behind. (SB 11.30-31)

"Without employing the mystic agneyi meditation to burn up His transcendental body, which is the all-attractive resting place of all the worlds and the object of all contemplation and meditation, Lord Krishna entered into His own abode." (SB 11.31.6)

"My dear King, you should understand that the Supreme Lord's appearance and disappearance, which resemble those of embodied conditioned souls, are actually a show enacted by His illusory energy, just like the performance of an actor. After creating this universe He enters into it, plays within it for some time, and at last winds it up. Then the Lord remains situated in His own transcendental glory, having ceased from the functions of cosmic manifestation." (SB 11.31.11)

"The wives of Lord Balarama also entered the fire and embraced His body, and Vasudeva's wives entered his fire and embraced his body. The daughters-in-law of Lord Hari entered the funeral fires of their respective husbands, headed by Pradyumna. And Rukmini and the other wives of Lord Krishna - whose hearts were completely absorbed in Him - entered His fire." (SB 11.31.20)

Purport:

It is understood that the anguished scene described here is a display of the Lord's illusory potency, adding a final dramatic note to Lord Krishna's pastimes on the earth. In reality, Lord Krishna returned to His eternal abode in His original body, and His eternal associates returned with Him. This final heartbreaking scene of the Lord's pastimes is a creation of the Lord's internal potency that brings the Lord's manifest pastimes to a perfect dramatic end.

35 And some of the standers by hearing, said: Behold he calleth Elias.



36 And one running and filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon a reed, gave him to drink, saying: Stay, let us see if Elias come to take him down.

37 And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.

Commentary: What happens at death is a perennial question. First one must understand the difference between the body and the soul.

Genesis 35:18: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin."

3 Kings 17:21: "And he stretched, and measured himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord, my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return into his body.

17:22: And the Lord heard the voice of Elias: and the soul of the child returned into him, and he revived."

Psalms 143:3: "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead."

Ecclesiastes 12:7: "And the dust return into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God, who gave it."

Ecclesiasticus 6:4: "For a wicked soul shall destroy him that hath it, and maketh him to be a joy to his enemies, and shall lead him into the lot of the wicked."

Matthew 10:28: "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

Man is sometimes considered as body-soul unit which obviously dies only once. This is both against the above quotes and it does not refute the preexistence and reincarnation accepted in the Jewish tradition and called 'gilgalim,' literally "revolving" in Hebrew.

Psalms 104:29-30: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."

Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Proverbs 8:22: "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old."

Proverbs 8:23: "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."

Ephesians 1:4: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"

"In principle there is an idea that there are three levels of the soul. Part closest to the physical body stays with it or in its proximity, in the grove. Higher level can get into the paradise where it remains until the time of resurrection. In its highest level the soul returns to God. If, however, she is not qualified for this union, there are problems. From this come reincarnations." (Prague and Czech Head Rabbi Karol Sidon in: Eva Pavlatova: *Bojite se smrti?* [Are you afraid of death?], Prague, Olympia 2001, ISBN 80-7033-061-9, pg 36)

Jesus went to Paradise as per Luke 23:43 (his promise to take there one of the crucified criminals).

Theologians have no consensus as to where Paradise actually is since there are only three mentions of it in the whole Bible - Luke 23:43, 2 Cor. 12:4 (there are things beyond human expression), and Rev. 2:7 (there is a tree of life).

The word Paradise comes from Avestan *pairidaeza* and Sanskrit *para-desha*, lit. the supreme country. God's own realm of Gokula (in Japanese Amida Buddhism Gokura-ku).

On Fra Angelico's 'Last Judgement' painting (<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/a/angelico/03/index.html>) is the Paradise pictured on the left. There is a tree of life (with another tree) and a circle dance of liberated souls. In the middle is a hole. In Muslim art it similarly indicates the presence of the Prophet or divine beings. It visually says, 'Those here cannot be depicted.' In other words, the plants and hole indicate a divine presence, which is considered too sacred to depict.

Vaishnavas immediately recognize Lord's *rasa lila*, His most confidential pastime. This circle dance is known also from other traditions though (Helios and Rhoda, Apollo, etc.) which suggests wide connections among devotional monotheistic traditions.

Lord Yeshua (Sankarshana, John 12:32) is the one who enables us to enter it. The only way is thru Him (John 14:6).

"In the Skanda Purana, in the Ayodhya-mahatmya chapter, the demigod Indra requested Lord Sesa, who was standing before him as Laksmana, "Please go to Your eternal abode, Visnuloka, where Your expansion Sesa, with His serpentine hoods, is also present." After thus dispatching Laksmana to the regions of Patala, Lord Indra returned to his abode. This quotation indicates that the Sankarsana of the quadruple form descends with Lord Rama as Laksmana. When Lord Rama disappears, Sesa again separates Himself from the personality of Laksmana. Sesa then returns to His own abode in the Patala regions, and Laksmana returns to His abode in Vaikuntha." (Chaitanya Charitamrta 1.5.120 purport)

Similarly, "when Balabhadhrarama went to Patala after His death, Vasuki had gone there to receive Him." (Mahabharata, Mausala Parva 4.15, quoted in Puranic Encyclopedia, entry Vasuki)

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top to the bottom.

Commentary: Such important incidents are accompanied by various portents.

39 And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this man was the son of God.

40 And there were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph, and Salome:

Commentary: Women stood far away because the rules of Vedic social conduct prescribe that a woman should not stand in the group of men but keep a distance.

41 Who also when he was in Galilee followed him, and ministered to him, and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem.

42 And when evening was now come, (because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the sabbath,)

43 Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

44 But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead. And sending for the centurion, he asked him if he were already dead.

45 And when he had understood it by the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking him down, wrapped him up in the fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewed out of a rock. And he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre.

47 And Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of Joseph, beheld where he was laid.

Commentary: They watched where the Lord was put to remember the place. They wanted to come immediately after the sabbath.

Mark

Christ's resurrection and ascension.

16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus.

2 And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen.

Commentary: The Lord rose on the third day; having lain in the grave part of Friday, the whole of Saturday, and part of the following first day. The famous Turin Shroud seems to be an authentic artifact due to its so-called Vignon Markings (one of them being a Vaishnava tilak), among other features.

3 And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished.

6 Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here, behold the place where they laid him.

Commentary: Acts 2:24: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

See also Acts 2:30-32, 3:15,26, 4:10, 5:30, 10:40, 13:30,33,37, 26:8, Romans 7:4, 10:9, 1 Corinthians 6:14, 15:15, 2 Corinthians 1:9, Colossians 2:12, Hebrews 11:19, 1 Peter 1:21.

"Lord Krishna brought the son of His guru back from the planet of the lord of death in the boy's selfsame body, and as the ultimate giver of protection He saved you also when you were burned by the brahmastra of Ashvatthama. He conquered in battle even Lord Shiva, who deals death to the agents of death, and He sent the hunter Jara directly to Vaikuntha in his human body. How could such a personality be unable to protect His own Self?" (SB 11.31.12)

Purport:

To mitigate his own and Parikshit Maharaja's distress at the narration of Lord Krishna's departure from this world, Shri Shukadeva Gosvami here gives several clear examples proving that Lord Krishna is far beyond the influence of death. Although the son of Lord Krishna's spiritual master (Sandipani Muni) had been taken by death, the Lord brought him back in his same body. Similarly, the power of Brahman cannot touch Lord Krishna, since Parikshit Maharaja, though burned by the brahmastra weapon, was easily saved by the Lord. Lord Shiva was clearly defeated by Lord Krishna in the battle with Banasura, and the hunter Jara was sent to a Vaikuntha planet in his same human body. Death is an insignificant expansion of Lord Krishna's external potency and cannot possibly act upon the Lord Himself. Those who actually

understand the transcendental nature of Lord Krishna's activities will find convincing evidence in these examples.

7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him, as he told you.

8 But they going out, fled from the sepulchre. For a trembling and fear had seized them: and they said nothing to any man; for they were afraid.

9 But he rising early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Commentary: The authenticity of texts 9-20 is disputed. It is omitted in two of the earliest complete copies of the Bible known as the Codex Vaticanus (350 AD) and Codex Sinaiticus (375 AD). Clement of Alexandria (150-215 A.D.) and Origen (185-254 A.D.) show no knowledge of the existence of these verses; furthermore Eusebius (260-340 A.D.) and Jerome (342-420 A.D.) confirm that the passage was absent from almost all Greek copies of Mark known to them. Not a few manuscripts that contain the passage have scribal notes stating that older Greek copies lack it, and in other witnesses the passage is marked with asterisks or obeli, the conventional signs used by copyists to indicate a spurious addition to a document. The longer ending, though current in a variety of witnesses, some of them ancient, must also be judged by internal evidence to be secondary. (a) The vocabulary and style of verses 9-20 are non-Markan. (b) The connection between v. 8 and verses 9-20 is so awkward that it is difficult to believe that the evangelist intended the section to be a continuation of the Gospel. The earliest patristic witnesses to part or all of the long ending are Irenaeus (130-200 A.D.) and Diatessaron (Tatian's compilation of the four Gospels sometime between 150-160 AD).

There is also another ending to Mark in some old manuscripts that is substituted for 9-20:

"But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after these things Jesus Himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation."

The long ending is, however, cross-referenced to other three canonical Gospels:

\* Mar 16:9-11 - Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

John 20:14-16

\* Mar 16:12-13 - Jesus appears to two disciples

Luke 24:13-43

John 20:19-23

\* Mar 16:14-18 - Jesus commissions the disciples

Matt 28:16-20

Luke 24.44-49

John 20:19-23

Acts 1:6-8

\* Mar 16:19-20 - The Ascension of Jesus

Luke 24:50-53

John 20:14-18:

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

It is interesting that the honor to be the first to see the risen Redeemer had Mary of Magdala and not His mother.

Bhakti Ananda Goswami comments: "In the ancient Proto Catholic Heliopolitan traditions, Bala-Yahu, the Messiah was most commonly worshiped in two forms, His familiar mature bearded 'Great Physician mendicant healer' form (Balarama as Charaka, commonly recognizable as Jesus Christ) and His divine form of youth and beauty as Kouros Dionysos. There is a rich tradition in Catholicism of worshiping Jesus in His Lover or Bridegroom form. In this form as the Plowholder He was called Arator which is the same as Balarama's name Haladhara. In fact, Catholic tradition retains the idea that Jesus appeared as Arator in the burial garden after His resurrection and His devotees could not recognize Him and thought Him to be the gardener, due to the hand plow He was carrying!"

10 She went and told them that had been with him, who were mourning and weeping.

11 And they hearing that he was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe.

12 And after that he appeared in another shape to two of them walking, as they were going into the country.

Commentary: This "another shape" is a point of contention because Jesus was supposed to raise in His own body. Luke 24:16 says He appeared in a concealed form so they did not recognize Him. It should be remembered that the whole departure pastime was mysteriously conducted by Lord's yogamaya energy.

13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Commentary: This is another point of contention because salvation should depend only on belief in God's grace (John 3:15-16, 8:24, 16:9). Baptism, like initiation, is the external sign of the inner faith of the heart.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Commentary: These are signs of divine empowerment. The control over serpents and the protection from poisons is peculiar for Lord Balarama whose prominent form is Ananta Shesha, the divine serpent.

Hiranyakasipu could not kill his son by throwing him beneath the feet of big elephants, throwing him among huge, fearful snakes, employing destructive spells, hurling him from the top of a hill, conjuring up illusory tricks, administering poison, starving him, exposing him to severe cold, winds, fire and water, or throwing heavy stones to crush him. When Hiranyakasipu found that he could not in any way harm Prahlada, who was completely sinless, he was in great anxiety about what to do next. (SB 7.5.43-44)

Chaitanya Bhagavata 3.5:

417 Fire, snakes, and tigers cannot harm a person who is truly absorbed in Krsna consciousness.

426 The body of Shri Chaitanya dasa displayed no sign of external consciousness. He would chase tigers through the forest.

427 Sometimes he would jump on a tiger's back, yet by the mercy of Krsna the tiger would not harm him.

428 Sometimes Chaitanya dasa would fearlessly take a large python on his lap and play with it.

429 He would fearlessly play with tigers. All this was possible by the mercy of Avadhuta Nityananda.

725 Murari Chaitanya dasa was a renowned associate who sported with large snakes and tigers.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Commentary: Jesus sitting on the right hand of God is mentioned in Mark 14:62, 16:19, Luke 22:69, Acts 2:33, 7:55-56, Romans 8:34, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 10:12, 12:2, 1 Peter 3:22. As Lord Balarama He stands on the right hand of Lord Krishna.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Commentary: In the Padma Purana Lord Krishna says, mad-bhakta yatra gayanti tatra tisthami narada: "O Narada, I am present wherever My devotees are chanting." When the devotees chant the holy name of Krishna - Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare - Lord Krishna is immediately present.

All glories to the sankirtana of Shri Krishna-Balarama (Shri Gauranga-Nityananda)! Amen - Aum.