



***COMING
BACK***

***REINCARNATION
AND
THE CYCLE OF BIRTH
AND DEATH***

Name: _____

Class: _____

Coming Back
Reincarnation
and
The Cycle of Birth and Death

Compiled by:
Sangita devi dasi

Hare Krishna Sunday School Program
Sponsored by:
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*This book is dedicated to
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
who taught us how to end the cycle of birth and death by the process of
devotional service to Lord Krishna.*



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Introduction

In the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, Lord Krishna instructed His devotee and dearest friend, Arjuna, while on the battlefield of Kuruksetra. It was here, 5,000 years ago, that the Lord imparted great transcendental knowledge to Arjuna in order to teach the world about Krishna consciousness.

While instructing Arjuna about the Supreme Absolute Truth, Krishna said, "For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." Lord Krishna teaches many wonderful truths in the *Bhagavad-gita*, including the science of reincarnation.

What is reincarnation? Simply stated, it is the passage of the individual soul at the time of death from one material body to another. Sometimes as a demigod, sometimes as a human, sometimes as a plant, or sometimes as an animal, the tiny soul is transferred into one body after another at the time of death according to his desires. Because the soul is part and parcel of Lord Krishna, and Lord Krishna is eternal and never dies, neither does the soul. But, it is because the soul is eternal and part of the Lord that

he can never find true happiness within this material world no matter what kind of material body he enters. The soul is not truly happy until he is serving Lord Krishna.

In this session, we will explore the subject of reincarnation and the cycle of birth and death. We will learn how reincarnation has influenced many of the world's greatest poets, writers, teachers and philosophers. We will also learn what is written about reincarnation in the Vedic literature and what Srila Prabhupada has taught us. We will discuss questions such as, "Do we reincarnate forever, or does it end somewhere? Can we control our future incarnations? Can we be reborn on other planets or in other universes? In this session, we will learn about where you have been and how to end the cycle of birth and death within this material world.





Session Verse

*dehino smin yatha dehe
kaumaram yauvanam jara
tatha dehantara-praptir
dhiras tatra na muhyati*

Translation:

As the embodied soul continually passes,
in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age,
the soul similarly passes into another body at
death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered
by such a change.

(*Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, Chapter 2, Text 13)

Maya's Illusion

Maya's illusion is like the foam

Which mixes again with the sea.

No one is mother, father, or relative;

Like the sea foam, they remain a short while only.

And, as the sea foam merges into the sea,

This precious body of five elements disappears.

Who can say how many ephemeral forms

The embodied soul has taken?

Bengali poem by:

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Lesson One

Let's take a look at some of history's greatest thinkers and what they said about reincarnation:

“Finding myself to exist in the world,
I believe I shall, in some shape or other,
always exist.”---Benjamin Franklin



“I know I am deathless...
We have thus far exhausted
trillions of winters and summers,
There are trillions ahead, and
trillions ahead of them.”---Walt Whitman, Poet

“...and believing as I do in the theory
of rebirth, I live in the hope that if not
in this birth, in some other birth I shall
be able to hug all of humanity in friendly
embrace.”---Mahatma Gandhi



“I am confident that there truly is such a thing as living again, that the living spring from the dead, and that the souls of the dead are in existence.”---Socrates



“The soul comes from without into the human body, as into a temporary abode, and it goes out of it anew... It passes into other habitations, for the soul is immortal.”---Ralph Waldo Emerson

“There is no death. How can there be death if everything is part of the Godhead? The soul never dies and the body is never really alive.”---Isaac Bashevis Singer, Nobel laureate

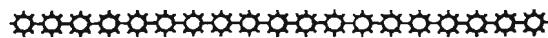
Reincarnation and the Bhagavad-gita

It is impossible to understand reincarnation unless one understands the difference between the actual self (the soul) and the material body. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna, "As the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness."

How do we know the soul is present within the body?

Consciousness is evidence of the presence of the soul. Consider this analogy often given by Srila Prabhupada:

On a cloudy day, the sun may not be visible, but we know it is there in the sky by the presence of sunlight. Similarly, we may not be able to directly perceive the soul, but we may conclude it is there by the presence of consciousness. In the absence of consciousness, the body is simply a lump of dead matter. Only the presence of consciousness makes this lump of dead matter breathe, speak, love, and fear.



The dictionary definition of consciousness is: _____

In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Srila Prabhupada explains that consciousness is thinking, "I am." But, what are you? When we are thinking with false, material consciousness, we may think, "I am a great looking guy." Or, "How pretty I am." The "I" you are referring to is not your true self. It is only your material body. This is called false ego, or thinking you are your material body.

But, when we wake up from this dream-like state and remember who we really are, we think, "I am not this material body. I am a spirit soul and am a servant of Lord Krishna." This is called purified consciousness.

What is material consciousness? _____

What is purified consciousness? _____

How can we purify our consciousness? _____

Hint: Chant Hare Krishna
and your life will be sublime.



The Body Is Like a Dream

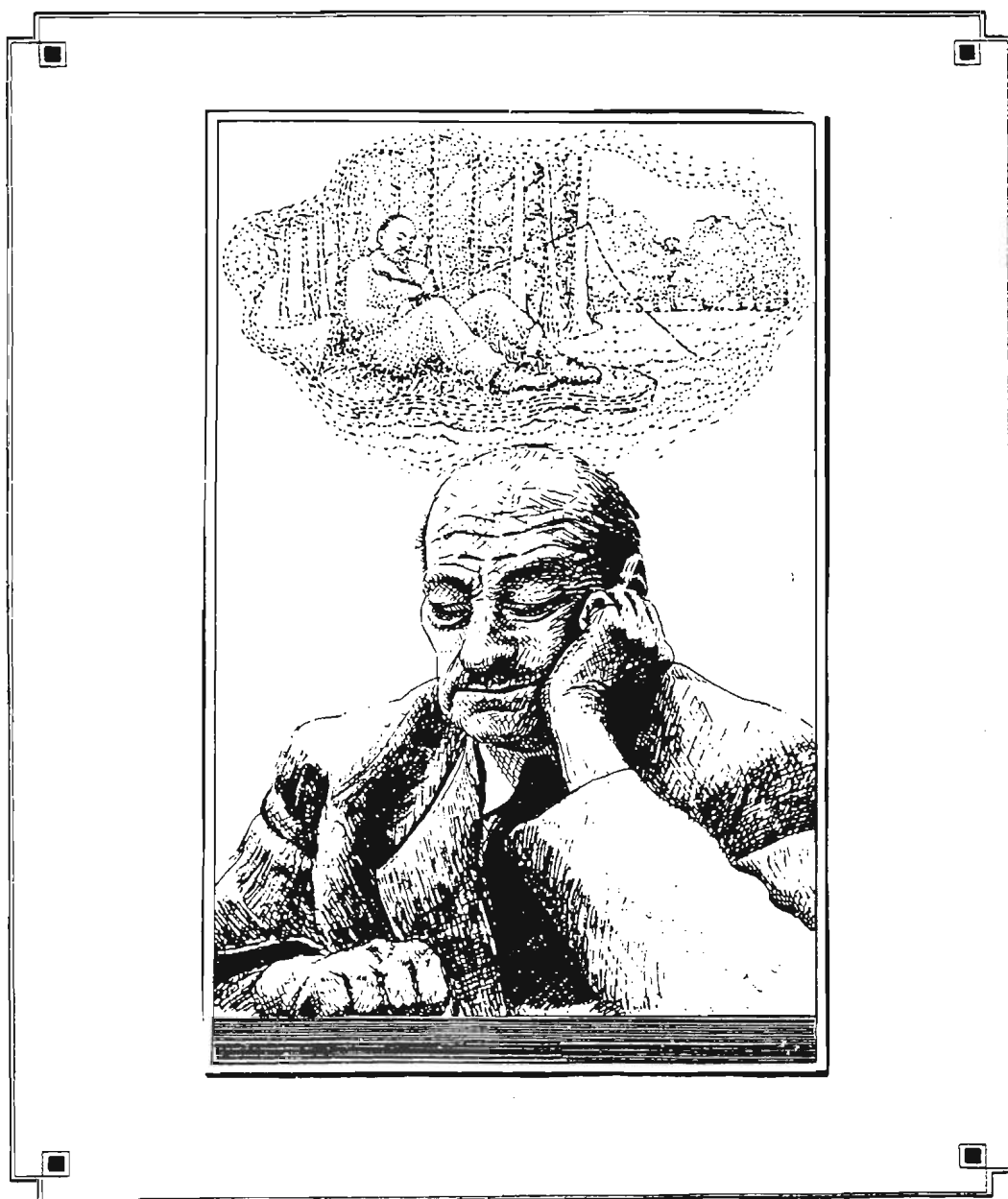


Srila Prabhupada said, “We can experience that every night, when we dream, our body lies on the bed, but we go somewhere else. In this way we all experience that our real identity is separate from this body. When we dream we forget the body lying on the bed. We act in different bodies and in different places. Perhaps, in our dream bodies, we flew in the sky. At night we forget our waking body, and in the daytime we forget our dream body. But, our conscious self, the soul, still exists, and we remain aware of our existence in both bodies. Therefore, the conclusion is that we are not any of these bodies. For some time we exist in a certain body, then at death we forget it. So the material body is somewhat like a dream, but the true self (the soul) is different from all of these dreams. That is self-realization.”

Something to think about and discuss: 😊

- * Can you remember a dream you had that seemed so real to you?
- * How does having a material body compare to that dream?

*When you dream, you forget the present body,
but you still remain conscious. Your true self,
the soul, is what remains conscious.*



On the battlefield of Kuruksetra, Lord Krishna instructed His friend and devotee, Arjuna, about the science of self-realization. Consider the following verses from the *Bhagavad-gita*:

For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.

(Chapter 2, Text 20)



As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

(Chapter 2, Text 22)



The soul can never be cut into pieces by any weapon, nor can he be burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind.

(Chapter 2, Text 23)



Some look on the soul as amazing, some describe him as amazing, and some hear of him as amazing, while others, even after hearing about him, cannot understand him at all.

(Chapter 2, Text 29)



Check for Understanding

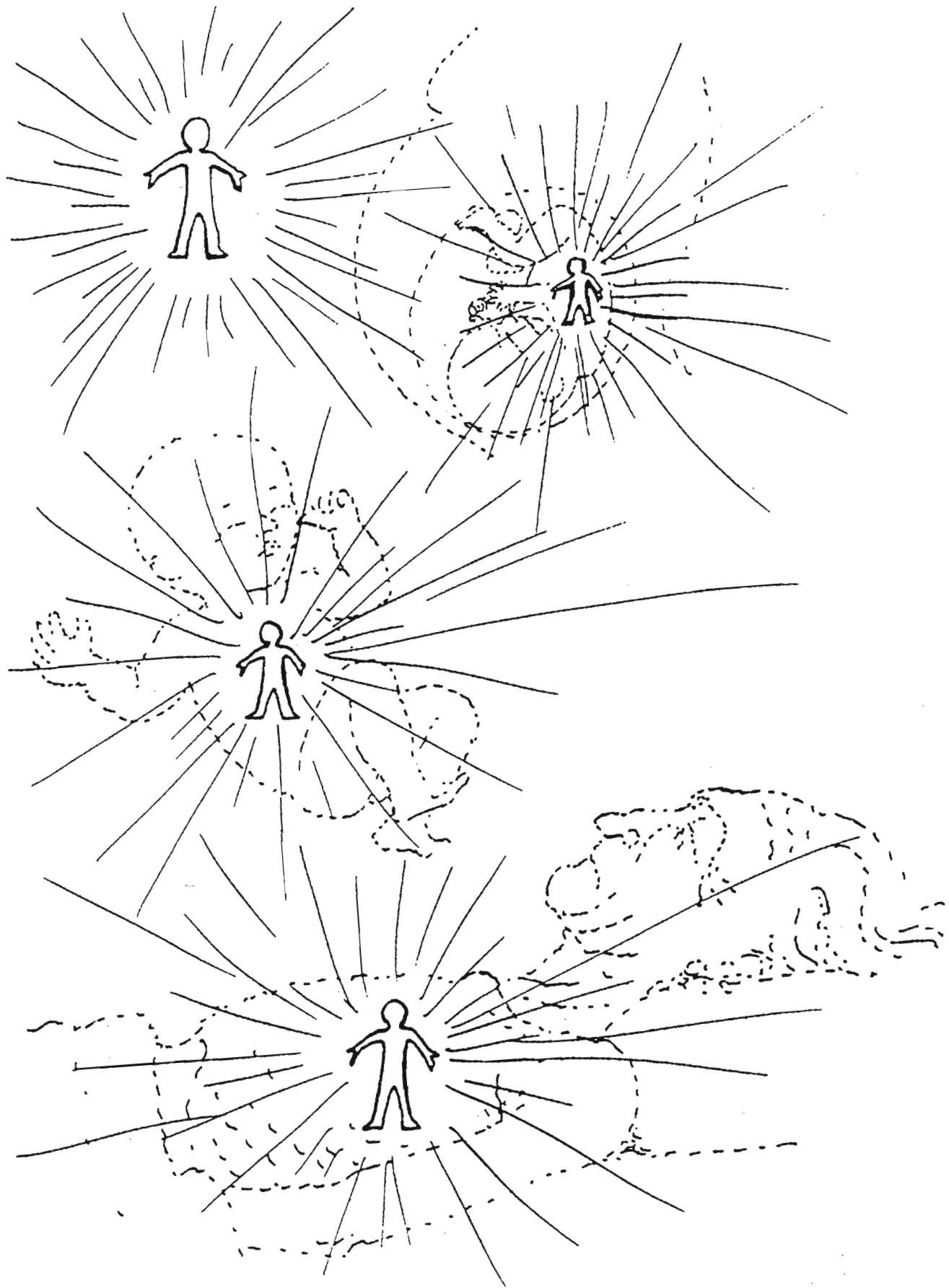
Briefly answer the following questions: 

1. What is false ego? _____

2. How can chanting the Hare Krishna mantra purify our consciousness? _____

3. Copy one verse from the *Bhagavad-gita* (not already discussed in this lesson) that tells about the soul. _____





Although the body is born and dies, the soul never changes.

Review the picture on the previous page and then read the translation to your session verse: “As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change.”

Your body is changing at every moment. It is difficult to remember, but perhaps you have seen photos of when you were in a tiny baby body. You could not speak, walk or feed yourself. You were dependent on your parents to help you at every moment. Then your body grew and became a toddler. You began to walk and were able to play simple games. Gradually, your body changed into a preschooler. You could run, jump, and climb. You learned about colors and shapes. You learned how to count and sing songs. Now, your body has grown into a child. You attend school, are able to read and write and do many things you were not able to do before.

Someday, your body will change again. You will grow taller and stronger and will be a teenager. Then, as your body grows older into an adult, you will graduate from school, maybe get a job or get married and be a parent. As the years go by your body will change again and again as it grows older.

What has stayed the same?



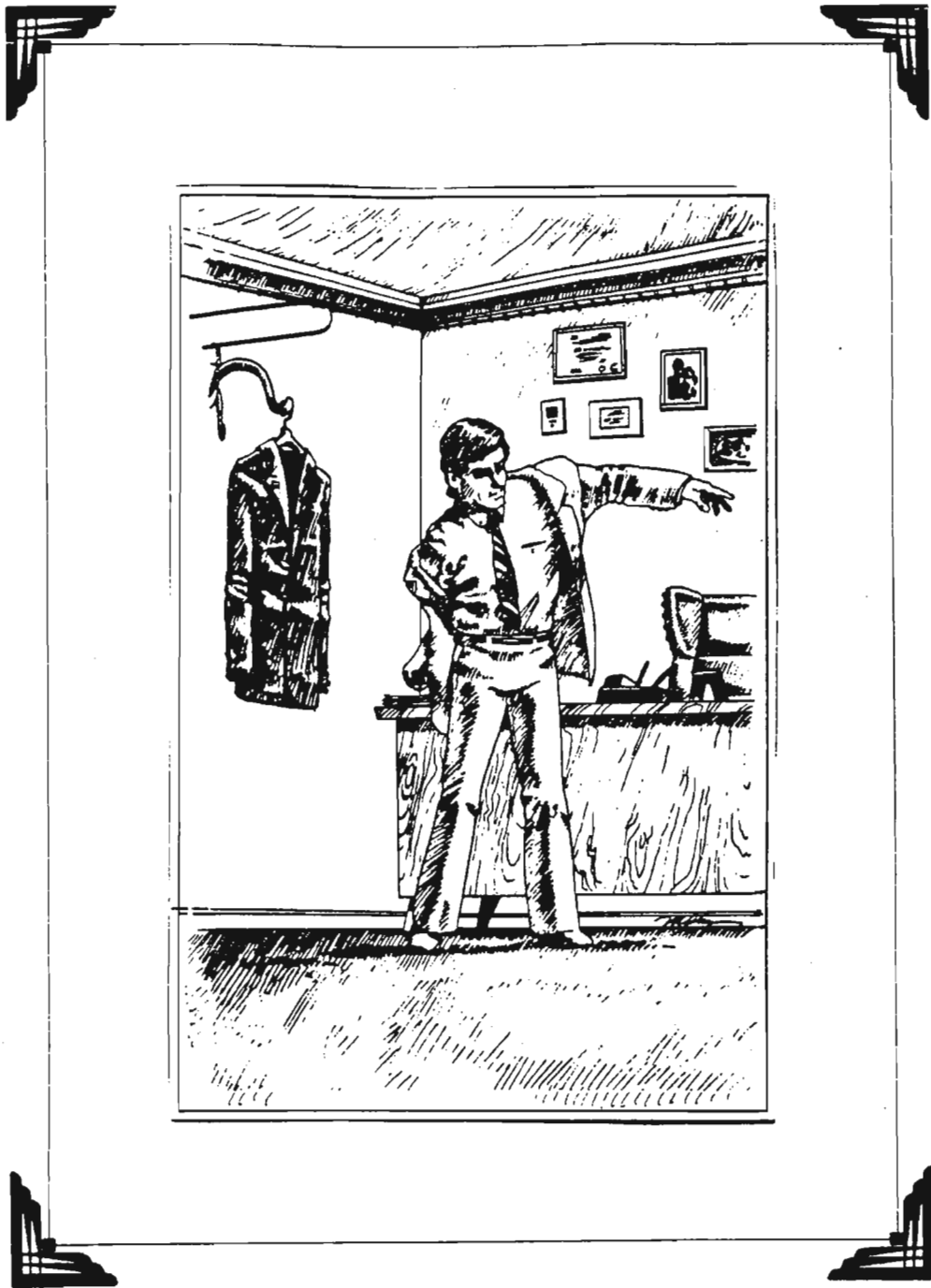
THE SOUL

We have transmigrated from a baby body to a toddler body to a child's body. Yet all the while, the soul who is the real self, has stayed the same. Similarly, at the time of death, the body will change again. REMEMBER! The body is material and temporary, but the soul is spiritual and eternal.

aham brahmasmi means "I am spirit soul."



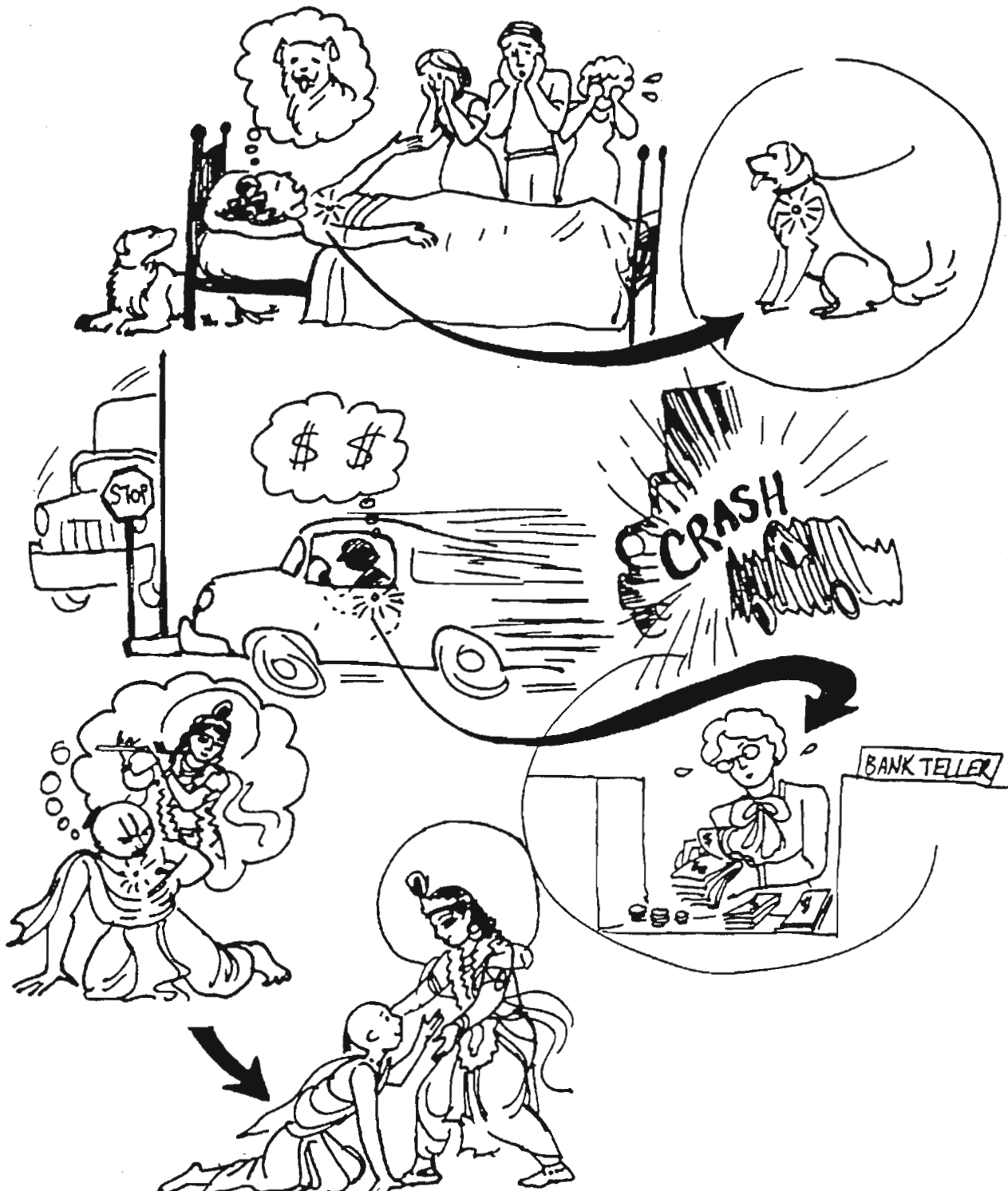
Srila Prabhupada said, "...You have put on a black coat. The next moment you may put on a white coat. But, you are not that black or white coat; you have simply changed coats. If I call you, "Mr. Black Coat," that is my foolishness. Similarly, in my lifetime I have changed bodies many times, but I am not any of these bodies. This is real knowledge."



Now this gentleman is putting on a white coat.

Would you call him, "Mr. White Coat?"

*If someone thinks of a dog at the time of death, he will take birth as a dog.
If he thinks of money, he may work with money in his next life.
In the same way, if someone thinks of Krishna at the time of death,
he will go to Krishna.
Therefore, we must serve Krishna throughout our lives
so we can remember Him always.*



Check for Understanding

Fill in the blanks below: 

1. The material body may change, but the _____, the real self, stays the same.
2. *Aham brahmasmi* means “_____.”
3. Only in a _____ birth can we understand the soul.
4. The law of _____ states, “For every _____ there is a _____.”
5. If we remember Krishna our entire lives, we can think of Him at the time of _____. Then we will go _____ to _____.
6. There are _____ species of life within the material world.

Something to think about and discuss: 

In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Chapter 15, Text 9, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, “*The living entity, thus taking another gross body, obtains a certain type of ear, tongue, and nose and sense of touch, which are grouped about the mind. He thus enjoys a particular set of sense objects.*” What does this mean?

Fill in the missing letters below.

__ E I N __ A __ N A __ I __ N

__ A R __ A

S __ I R __ T __ O __ __

M __ T __ __ I __ L B __ __ Y

B __ C __

T __

G __ __ H __ __ D

Lesson Three

A Victim of Affection--The Story of King Bharata

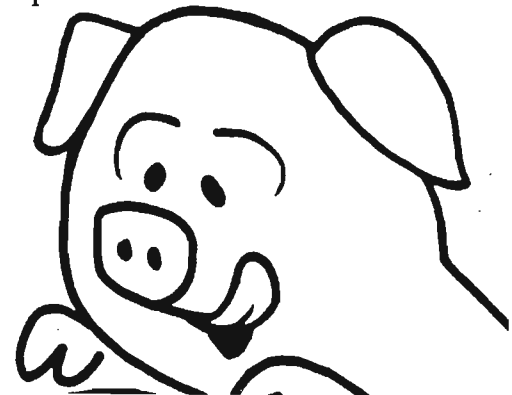
As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul
accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

Bhagavad-gita, 2.22

In the first century B.C., the Roman poet Ovid wrote the following
poem:

**I am ashamed to tell you, but I will tell--
I had bristles sprouting on me.
I could not speak, but only grunting sounds
Came out instead of words.
I felt my mouth grow harder.
I had a snout instead of a nose,
And my face bent over to see the ground.
My neck swelled up with great muscles,
And the hand that lifted the cup to my lips
Made footprints on the ground.**

--Metamorphoses



Ovid was attempting to describe the reincarnation of an unfortunate soul who had fallen from a human birth to an animal birth due to his previous actions. Approximately three thousand years before Ovid's time, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* told the following story of King Bharata, India's great and pious king, who had to spend a lifetime in a deer's body due to his attachment to a baby deer.

King Bharata was a wise and experienced ruler who was to rule for many long years. But, while still a young man, he gave up everything--his queen, family and enormous empire--and went to the forest.

Being wise, the king, understood that his position as a great monarch was not permanent; therefore, he did not try to keep the royal throne until his death. He knew that ultimately he was a soul within the body of a king and that even the body of a king must die. King Bharata understood that the soul was eternal and that the real purpose of life was to free oneself from the cycle of birth and death.

King Bharata journeyed to a sacred place of pilgrimage called Pulaha ashrama, in the foothills of the Himalayas. There, he lived alone in the forest along the bank of the Gandaki River. He wore simple clothes. His hair and beard grew long and matted.

Every morning, King Bharata worshiped Lord Krishna by chanting prayers. Later in the day he collected various fruits and flowers and offered them to the Lord. By living this simple life, all of his desires for material enjoyment vanished and he felt a strong love for the Lord. Out of transcendental happiness, tears flowed from his eyes.

One day while King Bharata was meditating near the bank of the river, a doe came there to drink. While she drank, a lion in the forest nearby roared loudly. The doe was pregnant, and as she jumped in great fear and ran from the river, a baby deer fell from her into the swiftly flowing water. The doe, shivering in fright and very weak from having her baby, entered a cave, where she soon died.

King Bharata watched as the fawn floated down the river. He felt great compassion for the animal. Bharata lifted the fawn from the water and, knowing it to be motherless, brought it to his home in the forest. There, he fed the baby deer fresh green grass everyday and tried very hard to make the poor animal comfortable. Soon, the king became very attached to the deer. Always thinking of the animal, Bharata lay down with it, walked with it, bathed with it and even ate with it. When the king wanted to enter the forest to gather fruits and flowers, he would take the deer with him, fearing that if he left it behind, it would be killed by dogs, jackals or tigers. Bharata took great pleasure in seeing the deer leap and play in the forest just like a child. Sometimes he would carry the deer on his shoulders. He felt so much love for the deer that he would keep it on his lap during the day, and when he slept, the deer would rest upon his chest. He was always petting the animal and would sometimes even kiss it. Bharata's heart became bound to the deer in affection.



Being attached to the deer, Bharata meditated on the Supreme Lord less and less. He forgot the real purpose of human life. This material world is sometimes compared to an ocean of birth and death, and the human body is compared to a solid boat designed to cross this ocean. The spiritual master is compared to the expert boatman who can guide us across the material ocean of birth and death. If someone does not take advantage of this opportunity to utilize his life for self-realization, then he risks taking birth once again in the material world.

Being aware of this, Bharata thought, "Because this deer has taken shelter of me, how can I neglect it? Even though it is disturbing to my spiritual life, I cannot ignore it."



One day, as Bharata sat down to meditate, he began, as usual, to think of the deer instead of the Lord. Opening his eyes to see the deer, his mind became agitated when it was nowhere to be found. He got up and searched the area, but the animal was gone.

“When will my deer return?” he thought. “When shall I again see it wandering in my garden?”

As the day went on and the deer still did not return, Bharata became very anxious. He remembered how the deer would play with him, touching him with the points of his soft, fuzzy horns.

“My deer is just like a little prince,” Bharata thought. “When will he again return? When will he again pacify my wounded heart?”

Bharata became filled with so much anxiety that he set out after the deer, following its tiny hoofprints in the moonlight.

“I feel as though I have lost my own son,” Bharata cried. “Due to the burning fever of separation, I feel as if I were in the middle of a blazing forest fire. My heart is burning with unhappiness.”

While searching for the lost deer along the dangerous forest paths, Bharata suddenly fell and was fatally injured. Lying there at the point of death, he saw that the deer had suddenly appeared and was sitting at his side, watching over him just like a loving son. Thus, at the moment of death, the king’s mind was focused on the deer.

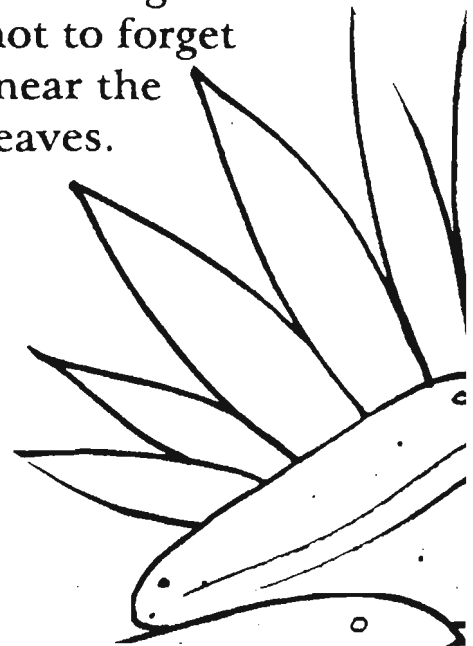
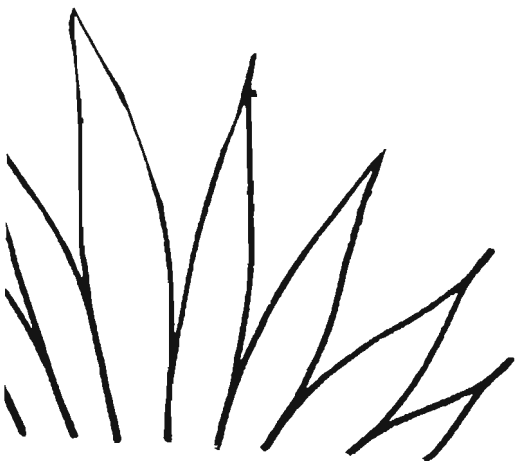
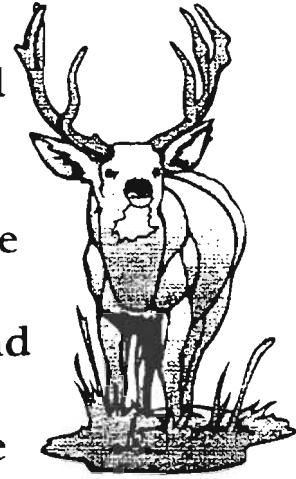
In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Lord Krishna instructs, “Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail.”

King Bharata Becomes a Deer

In his next life, King Bharata entered the body of a deer. Most living entities are not able to remember their past lives, but because of the spiritual progress the king had made in his previous life, he could, even though in the body of a deer, understand why he had taken birth in that body.

“What a fool I was!” he thought. “I gave up my family and kingdom and went to the forest to meditate on Lord Krishna. Due to my foolishness, I let my mind become attached to a deer. Now I have taken birth in a deer body. No one is to blame but myself.”

Having learned a valuable lesson, Bharata was able to continue his progress in self-realization, even in a deer body. He became detached from all material desires. He did not care for the sweet, green grass. He did not think about how long his antlers were growing. He gave up the association of all other deer in the forest. Instead, he returned to the Pulaha ashrama where he had practiced meditation in his last life as King Bharata. This time, though, he was very careful not to forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He stayed near the homes of saintly persons. He ate only hard, dry leaves.

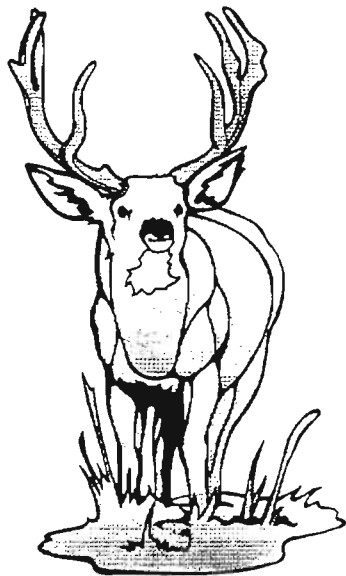


When the time of death came and Bharata was leaving the body of the deer, he loudly said the following prayer:

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the source of all knowledge, the controller of the entire creation, and the Supersoul within the heart of every living being. He is beautiful and attractive. I am quitting this body offering obeisances unto Him and hoping that I may be engaged in His transcendental loving service.”



*The Supreme Personality of Godhead
is the source of all knowledge, the controller of the entire creation,
and the Supersoul within the heart of every living being. He is beautiful
and attractive. I am quitting this body offering obeisances unto Him
and hoping that I may be engaged in His transcendental loving service.*



The Life of Jada Bharata

In his next life, King Bharata took birth in the family of a pure, saintly *brahmana* priest and was known as Jada Bharata. By the mercy of the Lord, he again remembered his past lives.

Lord Krishna states in the Bhagavad-gita: "From Me come remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness."

As he grew up, Jada Bharata became very afraid of his friends and relatives because they were materialistic and not at all interested in spiritual life. He was in constant fear of their bad influence. He feared that he would again fall down into animal life. Therefore, although he was very intelligent, he pretended to be deaf, mute and blind, so that materialistic people would not speak to him. Within himself, though, he was always thinking of the Lord and chanting His glories, which can save one from repeated birth and death.

Jada Bharata's father was filled with affection for his son and hoped that someday the boy would become a learned teacher. Therefore, he taught Jada Bharata the knowledge contained in the *Vedas*. But, Jada Bharata purposely behaved like a fool so that his father would give up the idea of instructing him. His father never gave up trying, until the time of his death, to teach his son the wisdom contained in the *Vedic* literatures.

Jada Bharata's nine step-brothers considered him dull and foolish. When their father died, they gave up the idea of teaching Jada Bharata. They did not understand that he was actually an devotee of the Lord. Jada Bharata tolerated their mistreatment. Whatever food came his way, he would accept it. He was not disturbed by heat or cold. He was transcendental to the wind and rain. Because his body was always dirty, his spiritual effulgence was covered, just like a valuable gem covered by mud. Every day he was insulted by people who thought of him as a useless fool.

His cruel step-brothers made Jada Bharata work like a slave in the fields. For food, they gave him broken rice, oil cakes, worm-eaten grains and burned grains that had stuck to the bottom of the cooking pots. Jada Bharata accepted them as if they were nectar without holding any grudges toward his step-brothers.

Jada Bharata Instructs King Rahugana

One day while Jada Bharata was wandering about, King Rahugana of Sauvira was being carried through the district on a palanquin resting on the shoulders of several servants. The men, who were fatigued, began to fall down. They realized they would need another man to help them cross the Iksumati River. They began searching for someone strong enough to carry the king. Soon they spotted Jada Bharata who appeared as strong as an ox. But, because Jada Bharata saw all living beings as spirit souls, he could not perform this task very well.

As he walked, he kept stopping to be sure that he was not stepping on any ants. Unaware of what was causing the delay, King Rahugana shouted, “What is going on? Can’t you carry this palanquin properly?”

The frightened servants replied that the disturbance was being caused by Jada Bharata. The angry king chastised Jada Bharata and accused him of carrying the palanquin like a weak, skinny, tired man. But, Jada Bharata understood his true spiritual identity. He knew he was a spirit soul, part and parcel of Krishna. He understood he was not the material body. Therefore, Jada Bharata remained unaffected by the king’s criticism.

“My dear King,” said Jada Bharata, “whatever you have said about me is true. You seem to think that I have not labored hard enough to carry your palanquin. That is true, because actually I am not carrying your palanquin at all! My body is carrying it, but I am not my body. You think you are lord and master, and you are trying to command me, but this is also incorrect. Today you are a king and I am your servant. In our next lives our positions may be reversed; you may be my servant and I your master. Just as the waves of the ocean bring pieces of straw together and then break them apart, the force of eternal time brings living entities together in temporary relationships, such as master and servant, and then breaks them apart and rearranges them.”

After explaining all this to King Rahugana, Jada Bharata said, “If you still think that you are the master and that I am the servant, I shall accept this. Please order me.”

Recognizing Jada Bharata to be a saintly person, the king quickly got down from his palanquin and offered his obeisances to him.

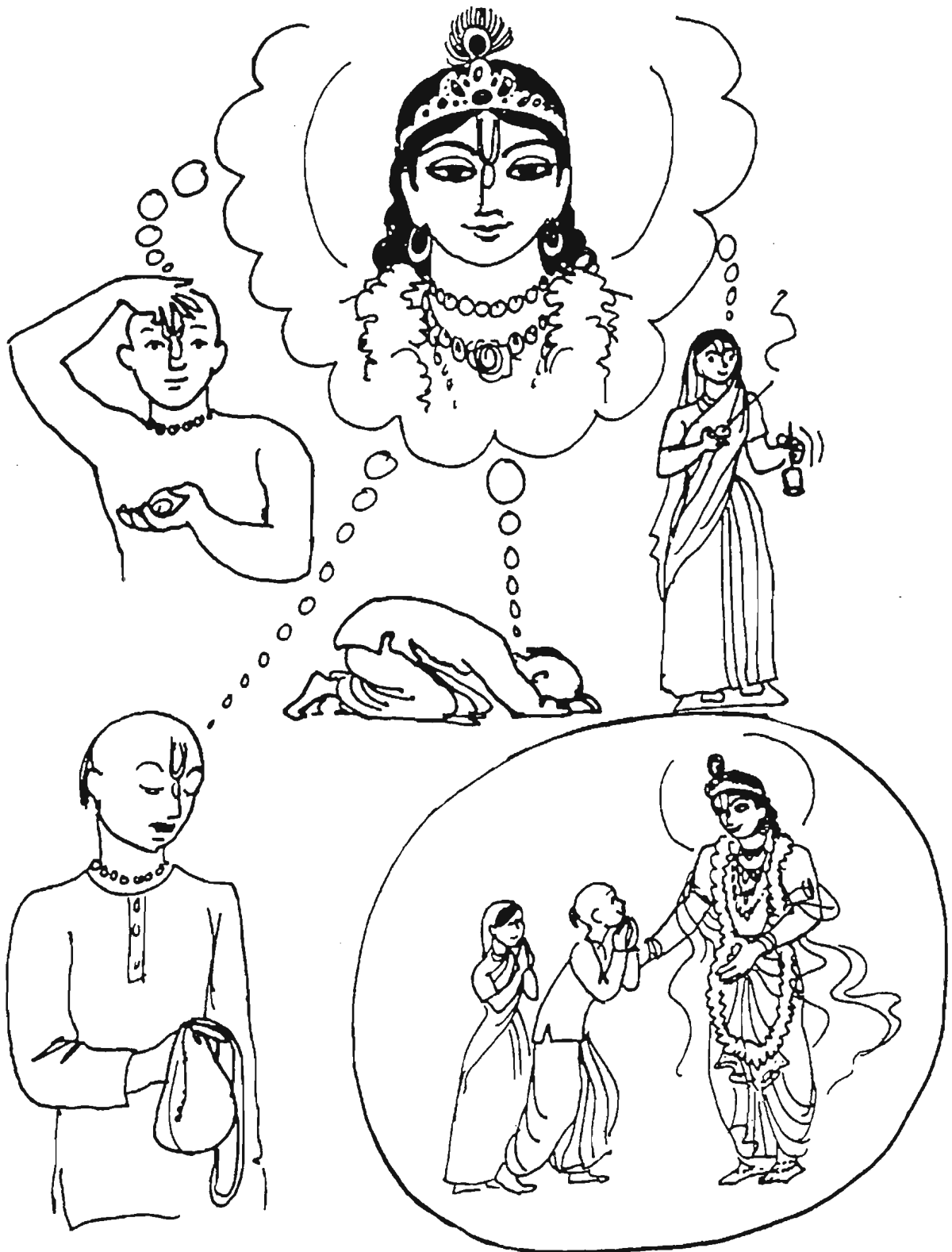
“O, saintly person, why are you moving through the world unknown to others?” the king asked. “Who are you? Where do you live? O, spiritual master, I am blind to spiritual knowledge. Please tell me how I may advance in spiritual life?”

Jada Bharata replied, “Because his mind is full of material desire, the living being takes on different bodies in this material world, to enjoy and suffer the pleasures and pains brought about by material life. Whatever one thinks of at the time of death causes birth in different types of bodies. As long as one identifies with the material body, one must wander throughout the material world in different species of life.”

Then Jada Bharata revealed his own past lives. “In a previous life, I was known as King Bharata. I was fully engaged in the service of the Lord, but I foolishly became attached to a deer and neglected my spiritual life. At the time of death I could think of nothing but this deer. In my next life I had to accept the body of a deer.”

After receiving lessons from the great devotee Jada Bharata, King Rahugana became fully aware of the real position of the soul. He gave up the bodily conception of life which chains the pure souls to the endless cycle of birth and death in the material world. The king understood that only in the human form of life does one have the intelligence to understand the eternal position of the soul. Only in the human form of life does one have the opportunity to end the cycle of reincarnation by serving Lord Krishna always, and thus, remember Him at the time of death.

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me. --Bhagavad-gita, 9.34



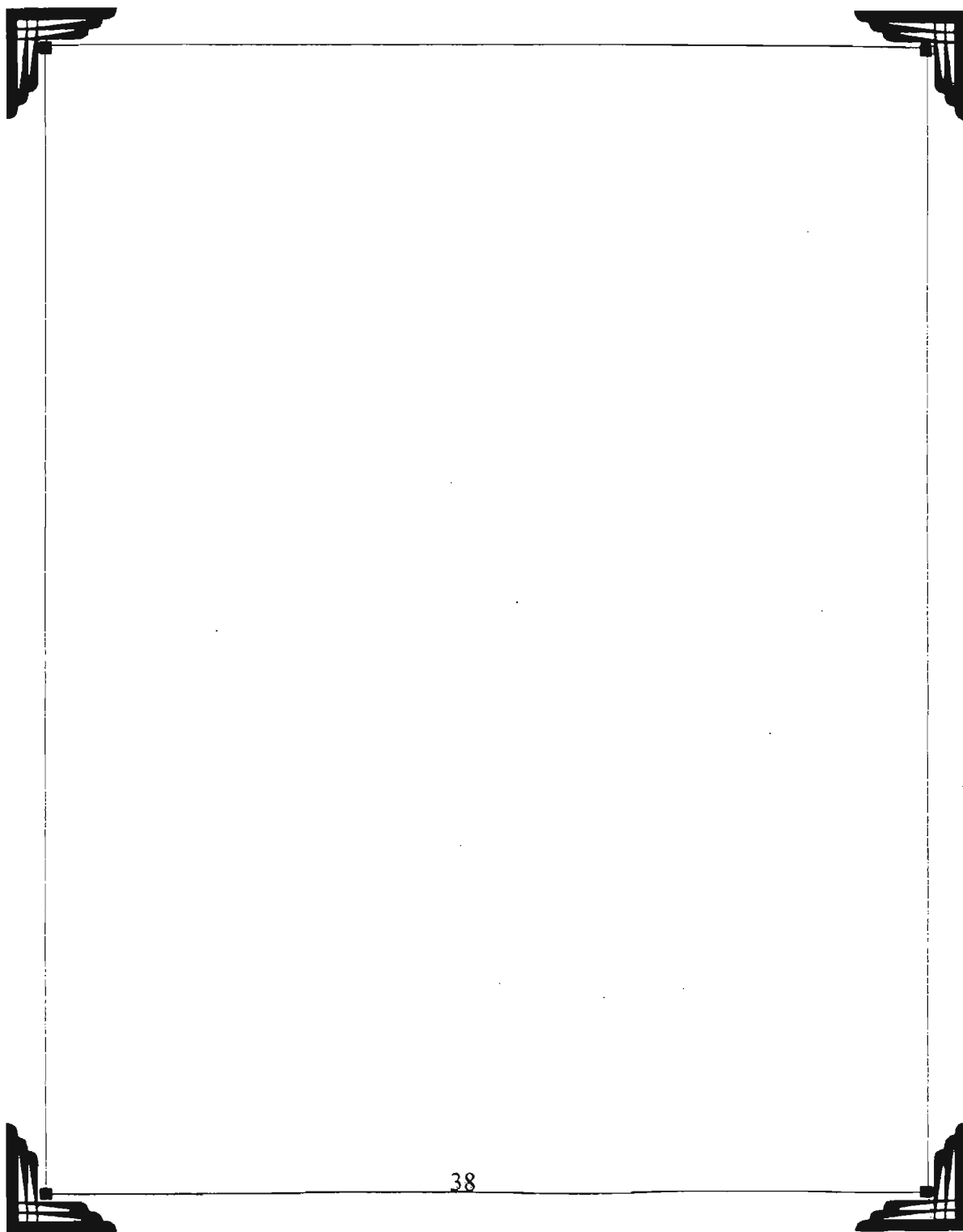
Check for Understanding



Fill in the blanks below: 

1. King _____ gave up his kingdom and moved to Pulaha ashrama.
2. While meditating on the Lord, Bharata began to think about the young _____.
3. At the time of _____, Bharata could think of nothing but the _____. Therefore, he entered the _____ of a deer.
4. Krishna allowed Bharata to remember his last _____ while in the body of a deer.
5. When Bharata left his deer body, he took birth as _____.
6. Jada Bharata pretended to be _____, _____ and _____ so materialistic people would not speak to him.
7. Jada Bharata was afraid of taking birth again in an _____ body.
8. Jada Bharata taught King _____ that he was not the material _____, but spirit _____.
9. The king offered his _____ to Jada Bharata, understanding that he was a _____ person.

Draw a picture of Jada Bharata teaching King
Rahugana about the Supreme Personality of
Godhead.



Lesson Four

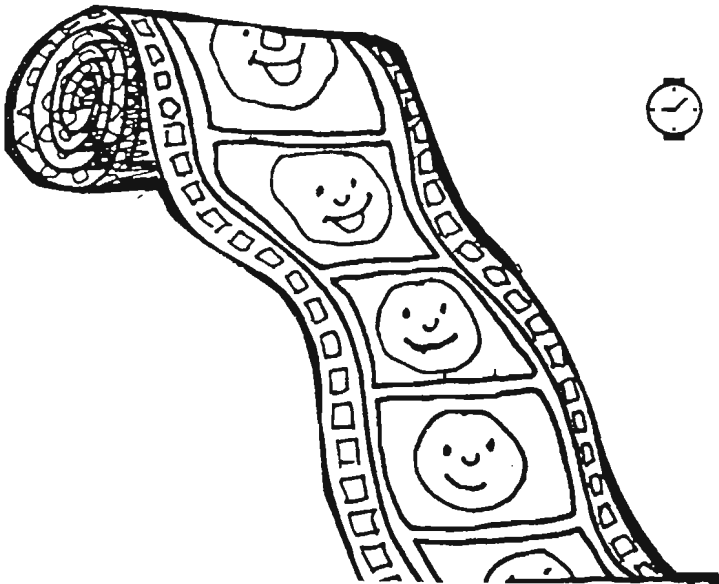
Srila Prabhupada Said...

In Lesson Four you will read excerpts from the writings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada on the subject of reincarnation. You will learn more about the soul's journey through the material world. Be sure to ask your teacher about any words that may not be familiar.

One Life is Just a Flash of Time

From time immemorial the living entity travels in the different species of life and the different planets, almost perpetually. This process is explained in *Bhagavad-gita*: under the spell of *maya*, everyone is wandering throughout the universe on the carriage of the body offered by the material energy. Materialistic life involves a series of actions and reactions. It is a long film spool of actions and reactions, and one life span is just a flash in such a reactionary show. When a child is born, it is understood that his particular type of body is the beginning of another set of activities, and when an old man dies, it is to be understood that one set of reactionary activities is finished.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.31.44)



What does "time immemorial" mean?

What does it mean to be "under the spell of maya?"

You get the Body of Your Choice

The living entity creates his own body by his personal desires, and the external energy of the Lord supplies him with the exact form by which he can enjoy his desires to the fullest extent. The tiger wanted to enjoy the blood of another animal, therefore, by the grace of the Lord, the material energy supplied him the body of the tiger, with facilities for enjoying blood from another animal.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.9.2)



Explain the “external energy of the Lord.”

How has the tiger, as well as all living beings, been given a set of senses in which to enjoy the material body?

Death Means Forgetting Your Last Life

After death one forgets everything about the present bodily relationships; we have a little experience of this at night when we go to sleep. While sleeping, we forget everything about this body and bodily relations, although this forgetfulness is a temporary situation for only a few hours. Death is nothing but sleeping for a few months in order to develop another term of bodily encagement, which we are awarded by the law of nature according to our aspiration. Therefore, one has only to change the aspiration during the course of this present body, and for this there is need of training

in the current duration of human life. This training can be begun at any stage of life, or even a few seconds before death, but the usual procedure is for one to get the training from very early life.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.1.15)



What does it mean to “change the aspiration in this present body?”

As devotees, what should we aspire for? How can we get it?

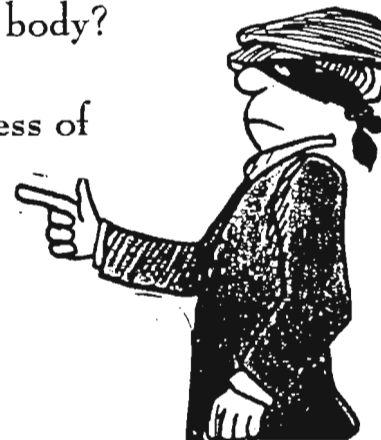
The Soul Takes a Human Form First

Originally, the living entity is a spiritual being, but when he desires to enjoy this material world, he comes down. We can understand that the living entity first accepts a body that is human in form, but gradually, due to his degraded activities, he falls into lower forms of life--into the animal, plant, and aquatic forms. By the gradual process of evolution, the living entity again attains the body of a human being and is given another chance to get out of the process of transmigration. If he again misses his chance in the human form to understand his position, he is again placed in the cycle of birth and death in various types of bodies.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.29.4)

What types of degraded activities would cause a soul to go from a human body to an animal body?

What is the “gradual process of evolution?”



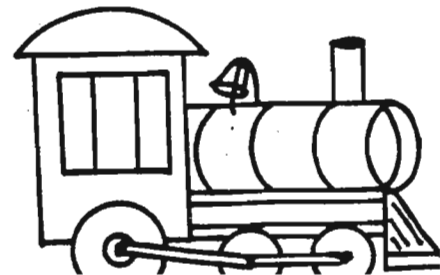
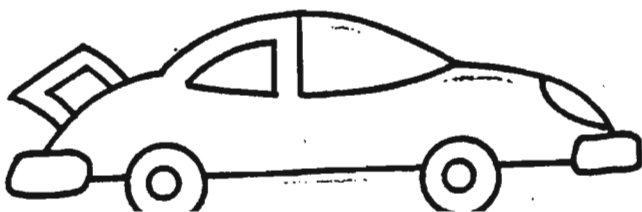
Just a Few More Years!

Karma is the fruitive activities conducted to make this body comfortable or uncomfortable. We have actually seen that when one man was about to die he requested his physician to give him a chance to live four more years so that he could finish his plans. This means that while dying he was thinking of his plans. After his body was destroyed, he doubtlessly carried his plans with him by means of the subtle body, composed of mind, intelligence, and ego. Thus, he would get another chance by the grace of the Supreme Lord, the Supersoul, who is always within the heart. In the next birth, one acquires remembrance from the Supersoul and begins to execute plans begun in the previous life. Situated on the vehicle given by material nature and reminded by the Supersoul within the heart, the living entity struggles all over the universe to fulfill his plans.

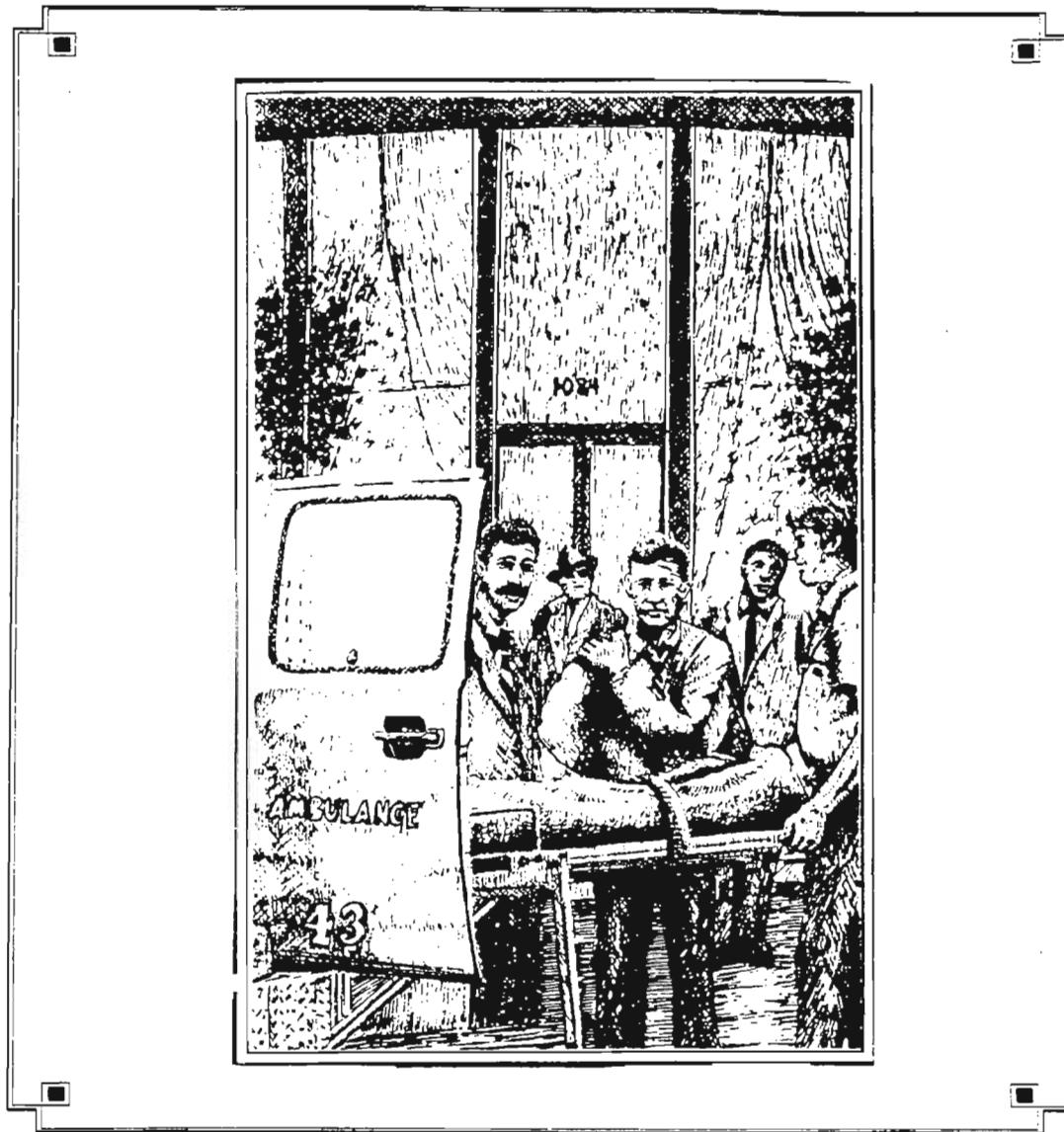
Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.29.62)

What is the subtle body?

What is the “vehicle” Srila Prabhupada is referring to in the last sentence?



Discuss the picture and caption below.



Bound by hallucinations, materialistic men prepare various plans for a still more comfortable life, but suddenly cruel death comes without mercy and takes away the great planmaker against his desire.

Take This Challenge!

Research Srila Prabhupada's books (Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, and others) and find a quote not already discussed in Lesson Four describing the cycle of birth and death within the material world.



This quote is written by Srila Prabhupada.

Name of Book: _____

Chapter and verse number: _____

Lesson Five

Soul Research

In Lesson Five you will read excerpts from a newspaper article published in the Montreal Gazette. It is about a world-famous heart surgeon named Dr. Wilfred G. Bigelow who suggested research be done to determine what the soul is and where it comes from. After reading the article, you will read Srila Prabhupada's letter sent to Dr. Bigelow in response to the article.

Heart Surgeon Wants to Know What a Soul Is

WINDSOR--A world-famous Canadian heart surgeon says he believes the body has a soul which departs at death and says theologians ought to try to find out more about it.

Dr. Wilfred G. Bigelow, head of the cardiovascular surgery unit at Toronto General Hospital, said that "as a person who believes there is a soul," he thought the time had come "to take the mystery out of this and find out what it is."

"There are certain cases where you happen to be present at the moment when people pass from a living state to death," Dr. Bigelow said, "and some mysterious changes take place.

"One of the most noticeable is the sudden lack of life or luster to the eyes. They become opaque and literally lifeless."

This question of the soul has become very important in the age of heart transplants. The central question, said Bigelow, is "where is the soul and where does it come from?"



“There are certain cases,” Dr. Bigelow said, “where you happen to be present at the moment when people pass from a living state to death, and some mysterious changes take place.”





Srila Prabhupada Presents

Vedic Evidence

My dear Dr. Bigelow,

Please accept my greetings. I recently read an article in the Gazette entitled, "Heart Surgeon Wants to Know What a Soul Is" and found it very interesting. Your comments show great insight, so I thought to write you on this matter. Perhaps you may know that I am the founder-*acarya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. I have several temples in Canada--Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Hamilton. This Krishna consciousness movement is specifically meant to teach every soul his original, spiritual position.

Undoubtedly, the soul is present in the heart of the living entity, and it is the source of all the energies which maintain the body. The energy of the soul is spread all over the body, and this is known as consciousness. Since this consciousness spreads the energy of the soul all over the body, one feels pains and pleasures in every part of the body. The soul is individual, and he transmigrates from one body to another, just as a person transmigrates from boyhood to youth, and then to advanced old age. Death takes place when we change to a new body, just as we change from our old dress to a new dress. This is called transmigration of the soul.

When a soul wants to enjoy this material world, forgetting his real home in the spiritual world, he takes this life of hard struggle for existence. This unnatural life of repeated birth, death, disease and old age can be stopped when his consciousness is dovetailed with the supreme consciousness of God. That is the basic principle of the Krishna consciousness movement.



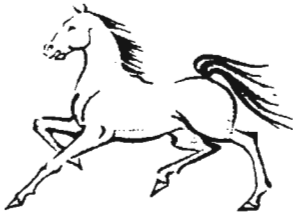
As far as heart transplants are concerned, there is no question of success, unless the recipient's soul enters into the transplanted heart. So the presence of the soul must be accepted.

As soon as one understands the existence of the soul, he can immediately understand the existence of God. The difference between God and the soul is that God is a very great soul, and the living entity is a very small soul, but qualitatively they are equal. The nature and quality are the same.

You asked, "Where is the soul and where does it come from?" That is not difficult to understand. The soul is living within the heart of the living entity and it takes shelter in another body after death. The soul comes from God. Just as a spark that comes from a fire appears to be extinguished when it falls away from the fire, the spark of soul originally comes from the spiritual world to the material world.

If the doctors and scientists of the world can help man understand the science of the soul, this will be a great contribution.

Sincerely yours,
A. C. Bhaktivendanta Swami



Play the Reincarnation Game!

In this game you will act out the soul's transmigration through various animal species up to the human body.

1. The chosen leader announces the names of animals in the order of elevation from lower to higher species. After saying the name of the animal, the leader chants one Hare Krishna mantra, during which time the players act out the activity of that particular animal.

2. Between each reincarnation the leader says, "Now leave your body!" Everyone lays down on the floor, pretending to be dead.

3. Here is a list of animals that can be acted out;

worms

fish

birds

snakes

cats

pigs

dogs

goats

deer

bears

elephants



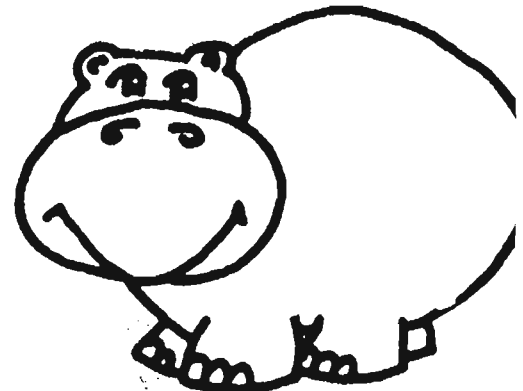
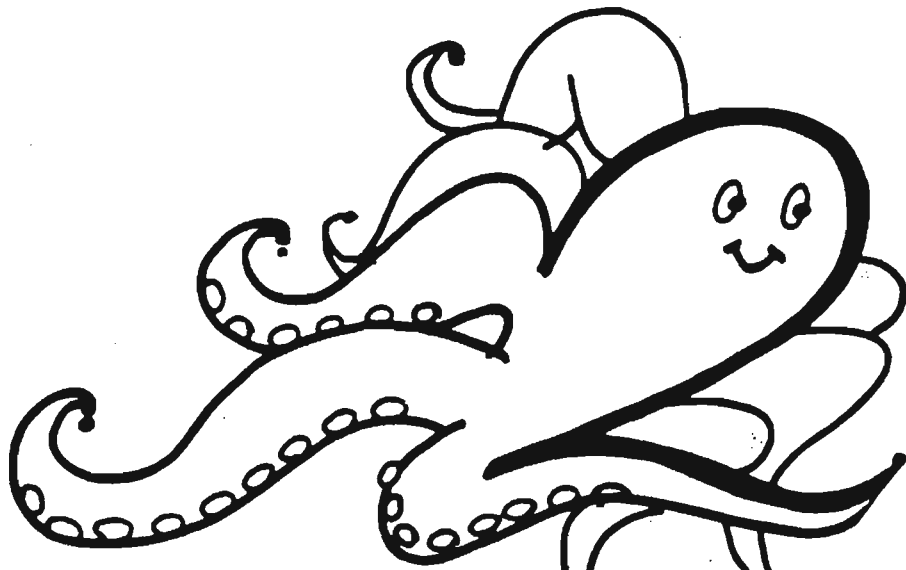
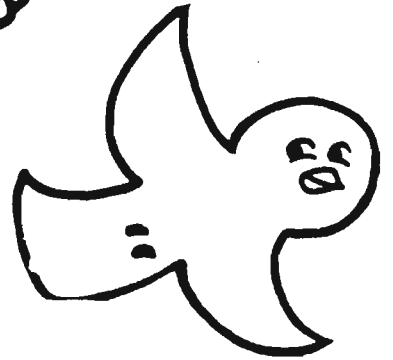
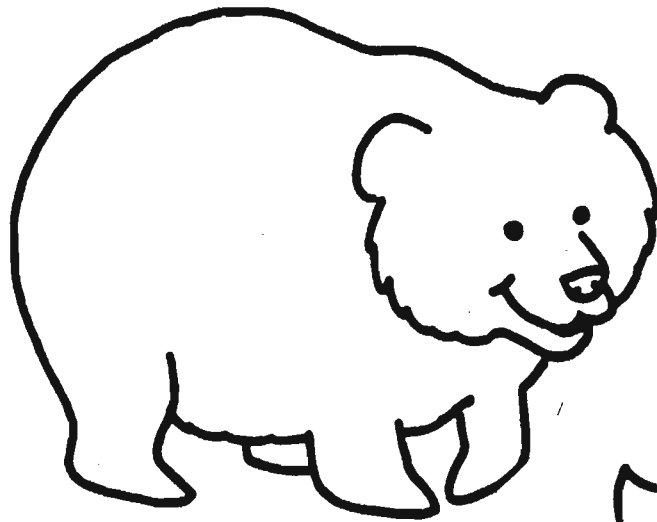
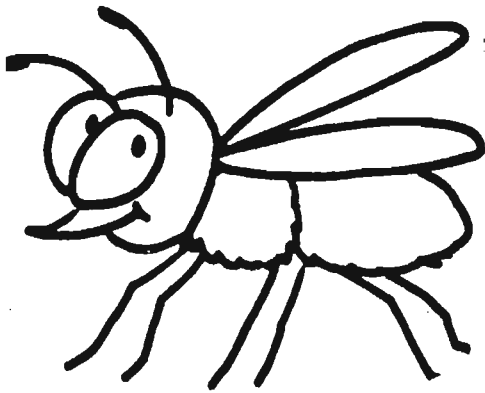
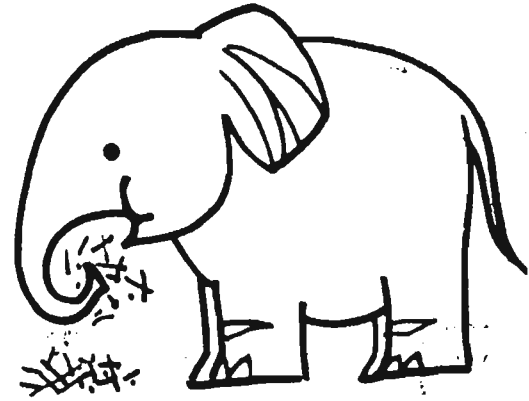
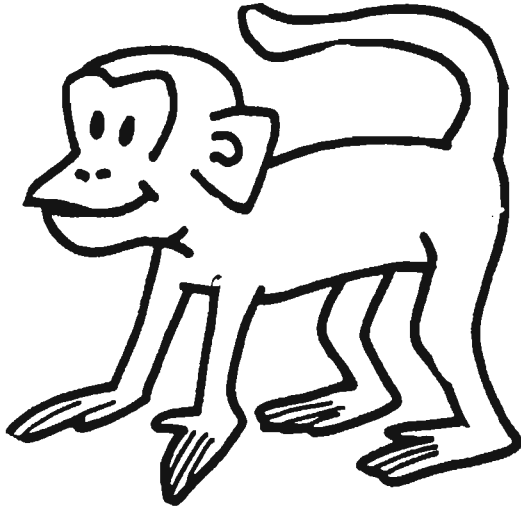
The monkeys, lions, and cows should always be announced last, since they are the three bodies usually inhabited by the soul before it takes a human birth. Each leader can add any animal name he wants to the list.

4. Then the leader finally says, "Now take the human body!"

5. When the leader finally says, "Now take a pure devotee body!" everyone dances in ecstasy. That is the end of the game!

Let's Add the Soul!

We have learned that without the presence of the soul, the body would not be alive. Use glue and gold glitter to represent the spirit soul within the body of the living beings below.



Lesson Six *Don't Come Back*

Let's Review What We Have Learned

*The living being is forced to take one birth after another within this material world.

*The living being receives a body according to his previous activities or *karma*..

*"Once a human, always a human," does not apply. One can easily take birth in a lower species of life according to ones deeds.

*Only the human has the intelligence to understand the real position of the eternal soul.

Fortunately, we have learned that we are not these bodies. As spirit souls we all have a relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna. Understanding this knowledge, we now know how to end this cycle of repeated birth and death.

The human form of life is very rare. The soul gets a human body only after evolving through millions and millions of lower species. We should not waste the chance to escape the sufferings of material life. Every living being within the material world must suffer in one form or another. Even if someone is born a king, he must still suffer from the same four miseries that all living beings experience:

birth, disease, old age and death.

What Can I Do?

Because we have been in the material world for such a long time, our pure, spiritual consciousness is like a mirror covered by dust. By chanting the Hare Krishna mantra we gradually begin to see the real self, the spirit soul, and understand our relationship with the Lord.



HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA
KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA
RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

By chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, we are praying, “O, Lord, O, energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service.” Because Krishna’s holy names and Krishna, Himself, are non-different, when we chant the Hare Krishna mantra we are personally associating with the Lord.



By chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, we will naturally want to serve Lord Krishna more and more. There are many ways you can serve the Lord; cooking, cleaning, decorating with flowers, offering your food, dancing for the Deities, reading about Krishna and telling others about Krishna. On the lines below, list some other ways you can serve the Lord.




In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Lord Krishna said, “From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery where repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode never takes birth again.” (8.16)



When we return to the spiritual world, we will have full knowledge. Having broken the cycle of birth and death, we will be happy forever.

Check for Understanding

Fill in the blanks below using the words in the box: 

Lord	lower	waste
service	serve	

1. By chanting Hare Krishna, we will naturally want to _____ Krishna more and more.
2. The Hare Krishna mantra means, “O, Lord, O, energy of the _____, please engage me in Your _____.”
3. The soul gets a human form after evolving through millions of _____ species.
4. We should not _____ the chance to escape the sufferings of material life.
5. Even if one is born is king, he must still suffer the four miseries in the material world. List them below:

Make a Puzzle!

Directions:

1. Remove this page from your workbook.
2. Cut the frame around the picture. ✂----
3. Glue to sturdy cardboard or poster board.
4. Cut along dotted lines. ✂----
5. Mix puzzle pieces then put together to form the original picture.



Fun With Pictures!

Directions:

1. Carefully remove this page from your workbook.
2. Cut captions on the dotted lines. ✂-----
3. Review the pictures on the following pages and glue the correct caption under the appropriate picture.
4. Use markers, crayons, or colored pencils to color the pictures.



One serves Krishna in various ways such as by chanting His name or offering Him a flower. In this way, one can understand Krishna and go to His spiritual planet.



The car of the material energy represents the body. The driver is the soul. Krishna, in the heart of the living being, gives him guidance as he travels in the material world.



Krishna is the Father of all living beings.



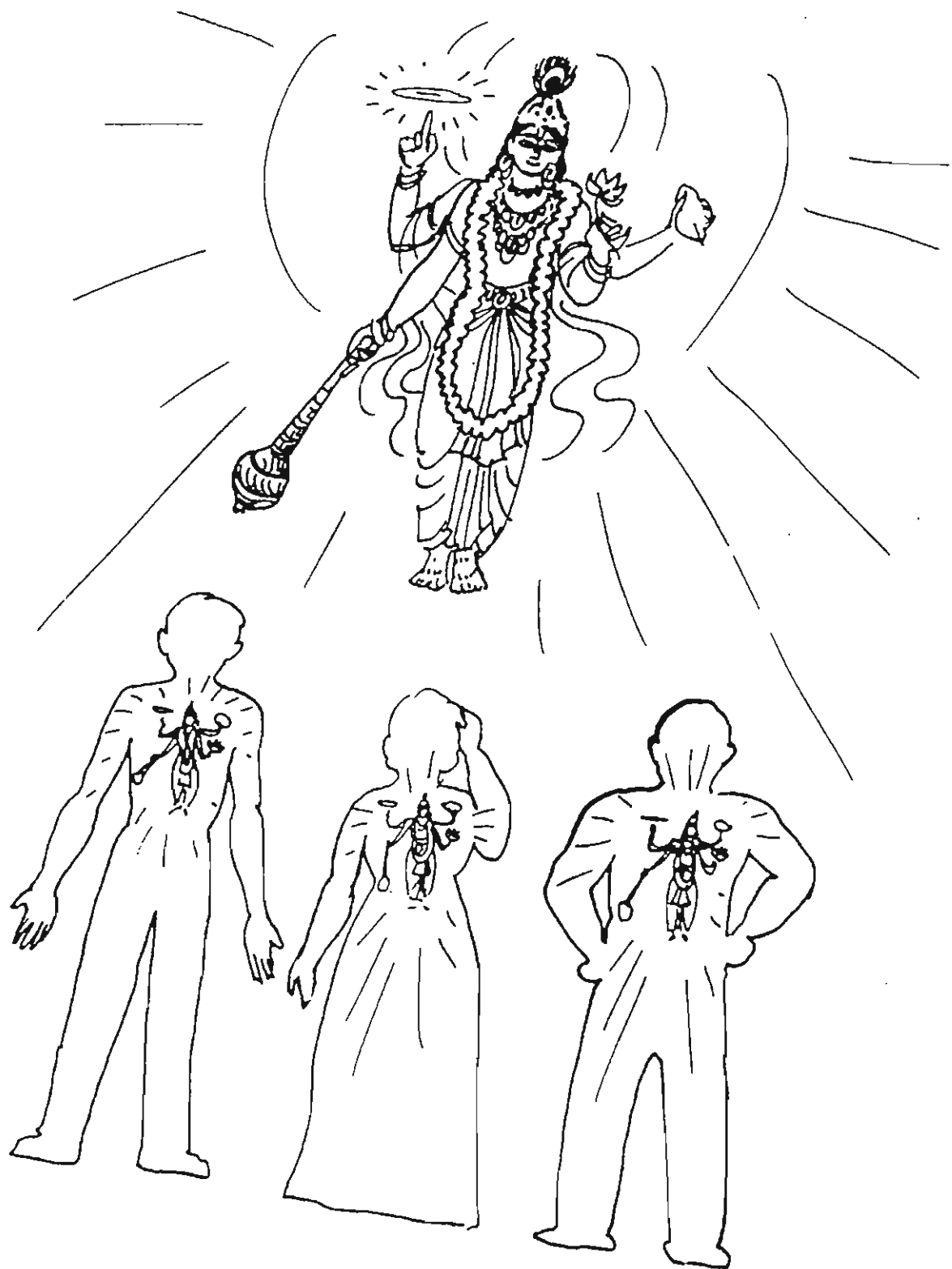
Krishna, present in all bodies, is called the Supersoul.



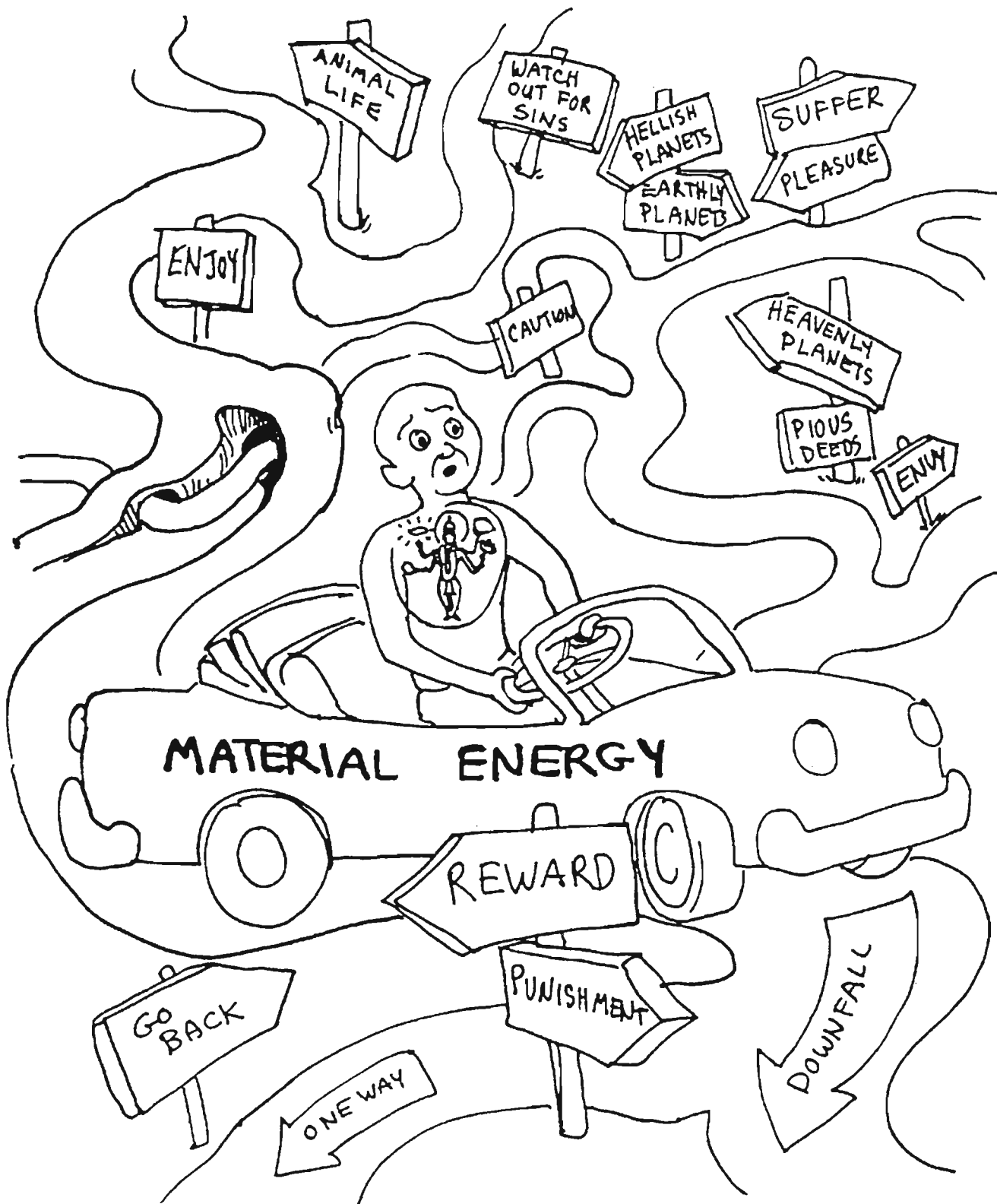
This devotee is serving Krishna with love, so Krishna shows her the way to come to Him.



Devotees are always happily thinking of Krishna,







ANIMAL LIFE

WATCH OUT FOR SINS

HELLISH PLANETS
EARTHLY PLANETS

SUFFER PLEASURE

ENJOY

CAUTION

HEAVENLY PLANETS

PIOUS DEEDS

ENVY

MATERIAL ENERGY

REWARD

PUNISHMENT

GO BACK

ONE WAY

DOWNFALL



HARE
KṚṢṂA
HARE
KṚṢṂA

