

## **Philosophy of the Ganesha Purana** by C. Devadas

After concluding the discussion of all eighteen major Vedic treatises, from the Agni, Bhagavat to the Visnu Purana, Srila Suta Gosvami was asked to speak before the assembly of sages at Naimasaranya. This request was due to his illustrious spiritual nature, being very advanced in knowledge of the Absolute. He felt that the stories of Lord Ganesha would be best to impart to his audience, so he recited the Ganesha Purana. We can get a hint of the importance of this information from such a great spiritual teacher.

Although the stories in the other Puranas, such as the Bhagavat, contain highly esoteric and practical spiritual knowledge, we shouldn't consider the other Puranas as having less significance. While the Ganesha Purana ontologically belongs to a minor category of spiritual literatures, nevertheless it would be imprudent to suggest it is inferior knowledge. It is interesting to note that the Narada and Nrsingha Puranas are classified as subordinate texts, considering that Narada Muni is deemed one of the greatest mahajans in the universe. In the Bhagavat Purana, Lord Nrsinghadev has also been described as the fourth principle avatar of Lord Vishnu.

Because we live in a world of duality, a tendency of the mind is to classify what is less and more, good and bad, or beginning and end, etc., etc. On the spiritual platform, 'it's all good,' so to speak. Loving Ganesha in all His forms, and not discounting others, is the basis for understanding the true equality or non-dualistic nature of God. Unless one has truly realized their eternal relationship with the Absolute, duality may creep in, especially if we have put forth the assumption that our understanding of divinity is higher than others. At a time in the distant past, all followers of God, be they devotees of Shiva, Ganesha, Vishnu or Krishna , etc., lived in harmony with one another, although this

concept may seem quite idealistic by today's sectarian standards. In any case, in order to understand Sri Ganesha, it may be better to consider all aspiring transcendentalists (whatever their faith) as belonging to one family; the eternal family of the Absolute One.

'God is One, Paths are Many'. In the Bhagavad-Gita As It Is, Krishna says, "Everyone follows My path in all respects". In his commentary, Swami Prabhupada says, 'All kinds of spiritual processes are but different degrees of success on the same path'. As far as these statements are concerned though, discernment is necessary to determine if our spiritual path is descending through suitable channels. In this regard, Suta Gosvami is an adept guru who has been endorsed by his peers to pass this pure knowledge on to others.

### **Karma**

The Third Law of Nature, discovered by Sir Issac Newton states, 'for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction'. How many times have we heard the expression, loosely used in conversation, 'what goes around comes around'? Jesus said, "As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap". These are all concepts with a similar meaning. If we do good deeds, then good things will come to us, and if our actions are less than scrupulous then the opposite happens. This is Karma. Not only is it nature's decree, but according to metaphysical knowledge, it is universal in scope.

We may also be familiar with the cliché's, 'bad things only happen to good people?' or 'only the good die young'. This is karma in action. Why does a so-called innocent infant or young child get a disease or have an accident and die? The Judaic-Christian religions don't explain these things very clearly. It is not that we are punished for being 'non-believers'. All actions, good or bad, encompass their own consequences, either in this life

or from previous lives. These incidences are stored in our personal Akashic record as subtle karmic seeds that sprout and fructify at the perfect time, as dictated by the universe. As we will see from our reading of this Purana, King Somakanta, although a very good and celebrated king, suffered a terrible bout of bad karma from a previous lifetime.

### **Conduct**

King Somakanta instructs his son about personal conduct as well as politics. It is understandable that although the King was immersed in politics most of his life, and presently suffering from a horrible disease, foremost on his mind was imparting spiritual knowledge to his son, Hemakanta. We can see in this day and age that there is practically no concern with personal conduct, especially by many of those engaged in politics. It seems that politicians are only interested in taking millions of dollars in contributions by soliciting help from less than honest corporate lobbyists, so they may be re-elected. By showing favor to those same lobbyists and the corporations they represent, economic chaos, intense greed, useless wars, and environmental disasters have been the outcome.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says, ‘Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps’. If the leaders of society are honest, then those who depend on them for leadership, including their own families, will follow suit. This standard of decency would lead to a more prosperous and peaceful society for all.

## **All Life is Sacred**

In the Ganesha Purana we come to understand the dilemma of King Somakanta, due to activities performed in a previous birth. In a previous lifetime he had to choose whether it was worthwhile to rob and kill an innocent Brahmin, considering the horrible karmic reaction accrued by performing such an atrocious act. What to speak of the reactions he had already incurred by murdering other innocent people, as well as animals. In the Sastras it is mentioned that the killing of women, children, the elderly, Brahmins, one's guru, or the cows are strictly forbidden, or else horrible karma occurs.

Other than regarding only human life, the cow, according to the ancient Vedas, is always to be protected, or society will owe a heavy debt. The cow is considered like our own mother, because, like our human mother, she supplies milk and nourishment. Cow's milk, above all other animals, is considered the tastiest of all. Therefore it is used by society for nutrition and enjoyment. As we all know, cow's milk can be made into many delicious foodstuffs such as butter, cream, yogurt, cheese and sweets. We actually owe the cows a debt of gratitude. In today's society, however, we steal her gifts, send many of her baby's away to be killed, and then send her to slaughter when she is no longer useful.

Some say that cows are killed for food because they are dumb. In this regard, the saying may hold true - 'you are what you eat'. It's true that cows are peaceful, but not dumb. Just like humans, they eat, sleep, mate and defend themselves if provoked. We could compare a cow to a child, whose intelligence is not fully developed, but certainly not dumb. One would certainly not raise their own children for food, although there are some lower animals that eat their own young. In this regard, eating the young calf, as

veal, is also abominable. If we truly desire to eat flesh, then we may be born a lion, tiger or one of many other carnivorous beasts.

Cows hold life dear just like any other living creature. Until society stops the massive widespread slaughter of cows, calves and bulls for food, the collective bad karma of our planet will result in many wars and unfortunate events. In the Bhagavat Purana, it states that an individual who is a party to the slaughter of cows, whether one farms, slaughters, butchers, sells or eats the meat, will have to die as many deaths as there are hairs on the cow. Whether or not we believe this statement is not the issue. What does matter, though, is that we become aware, if we aren't already, that a special holy bond exists between human society, God and Mother Cow - and all animals for that matter. The Puranas help us to understand this important spiritual lesson.

### **Detachment**

Due to his diseased condition, King Somakanta decided to leave for the forest. It is always a sad time when one leaves his family due to responsibilities elsewhere, like a soldier being called to duty. The emotions felt, which can cause mental anguish, are mostly due to attachment to temporary bodies in the world. In reality we do not belong to one another but have been projected here, like a hologram from the Infinite. This metaphorical hologram (our spirit) has been uniquely energized by the Supreme Spirit of God, and is ever-existing. Since the beginning of time, due to our desire to dominate material nature, we have been propelled into this universe, like light beams from a movie projector; the projection being the energy of God. In other words, there is never any

separation from Universal Spirit. Although seemingly distinct, light can never be separated from the sun. That is an illusion of the Master Director.

Our true dharma is to dispel the false impression that we are separate from God. This can be accomplished in many ways. Some methods for helping one to become self-realized are mentioned in the text, such as offering prayers to the divine, chanting mantras, worshipping a form of the Lord, reading, reciting or listening to spiritual texts, or hearing from and glorifying the spiritual master. There are many, many ways to make progress in spiritual life. These methodologies help one to become detached from the bodily conception of life. In this way, when we lose something or someone we are overly attached to, we will be able to understand the temporary nature of such mental aberrations and remain balanced in such difficult circumstances.

### **The Guru**

The material world is known as Mrtyloka, the world of birth and death. From our first breath to the last, we are dying at every second. The primary spiritual lesson we are all destined to solve is how to completely eradicate the effects of birth, old age, disease, and death. This can be done through surrender to the loving will of the Absolute through the kindness of a spiritual master. How do we know, however, who is a worthy teacher? Sri Isopanisad states that one who has conquered the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to pass on this knowledge to others. This means that a true guru speaks only about spiritual topics, eats only pure food, and has overcome the desire for sex life outside of a holy bond with one's partner. In this way the precious kundalini-shakti is properly channeled in order to keep one's mind fixed in God consciousness. One may

think that this type of lifestyle is meant for others like priests, nuns, or monks. In reality spiritual life is meant for everyone. Self-realization is a gradual process for removing the attachment to this world of temporary forms, thereby merging one's original pure spiritual consciousness into the blissful reality of the eternal spiritual realm where there is no anxiety, ill health or death.

### **Service**

Service is the natural propensity of the soul. A spiritual entity is always looking for an opportunity to be of some service to others. In this world, however, this inclination is either perverted by exploitation, or is misappropriated to those who have no interest in spiritual life. Usually this takes the form of serving corporate entities, which are greedily becoming wealthy at the expense of others.

Many people also waste their time in mundane friendship and love. This inclination, unless properly directed, has no ultimate value. It binds one to the practically unlimited delusions in this world for lifetimes on end. The primary illusion is that we are the body, and life is meant for enjoying ourselves to the nth degree. Unless one becomes educated in the Science of the Self, then we will be unceasingly attracted to accumulating more and more possessions that will never make us happy. As humans already steeped in maya, we also share the endless preoccupation with our own and other bodies, which are destined over time to disintegrate right before our eyes.

If there is so much suffering in the world, why don't we just engage in charitable activities aimed at helping our fellow man, animals, or the environment? Yes, that is good and will produce future good karma, but it is also binding to the world, if not done

in the spirit of service to God. Our objective is to permanently extricate our self from the illusion of birth and death. This can be done by carefully hearing from a self-realized sage like Suta Gosvami, and by reading texts like the Ganesha Purana and others. It is not difficult to feel compassion for those who are suffering, so we may naturally desire to lend a hand, but we must also try to understand the true significance of our actions in this world. We can learn these things from a self-realized soul.

### **God**

Some claim that either there is no God or that we are all God. If there were no higher power or God, then we, as well as everything else in the creation, would not exist - just like if there were no architects or builders, a house would never be constructed. Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, 'Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be'. Krishna goes on to explain that one difference between the Infinite and the infinitesimal (us) is that He can remember the details of all his births, past, present and future, and we can not remember any. In fact, if you asked most people what they were doing exactly at this same time the previous day, they can't tell you, what to speak of years ago or in another lifetime. We are limited and God is unlimited.

As far as someone professing to be God, there is a litmus test. The next time one needs to go to the toilet, plainly hold it in, indefinitely. If one cannot exhibit such simple control, then how can you claim to be God who holds the planets, stars, and galaxies in their orbits? One may think they are engaged in the process of realizing they are God, or becoming God, but is it possible for God to ever fall into illusion, or be forgetful of

Himself? By definition, God is omniscient, so how is it possible that He could forget Himself, if even for a moment. There is no process for God to understand Himself – He is the process. God cannot be understood through the mind.

Sometimes we are confronted by those who object to the punitive side of God. They will not accept a God that seems mean, angry or vindictive, especially to our mundane sense of duality; mean/nice, etc. God does not punish us. Karma, as discussed previously, does that very efficiently. There is no extraneous effort on God's part, just like when a satellite is in orbit, there is no effort to keep it there. It is acted on by the Laws of Gravitation and Motion. We don't need to bat the satellite around like a ball and God does not need to bat us around either, if we are so-called bad. Anything that happens to us in life, especially if it is not to our liking, is our own doing (from this life or the past). If we feel mistreated by a higher power, or can't accept that a higher power is acting on us, as the Laws of Nature are, then that is also part of our misfortune from the past – afforded by our desire to forget our spiritual nature. The experience of pleasant things in life is our fortune, but we need to be grateful. We are truly blessed when we possess the humility to understand things as they are.

### **Health**

When one is ill sometimes they lose hope. The traditional medical establishment, although very good at managing certain types of illnesses like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc., etc., certainly has its limitations in treating many serious illnesses such as AIDS, Alzheimer's, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Heart Disease, plus a whole host of others. With all the complex technology available, the complexity of the human body still

evades modern medical science. This is due to the fact that the power plant of the body, the spirit soul, which is inconceivably smaller than any nuclear particle, has not been discovered by science.

The soul is forever intimately connected with God. Unless one has knowledge of the soul, then all other understanding is incomplete. For example, if a child wants to know who their father is, then ask the mother, who is the source of this knowledge. In order to understand the root cause of all suffering, of which the foibles of the human body are inclusive, then seek out God or learn from His representative. Jesus said, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God , and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' Hence, we find that the simple solution to our problems is to hear about God from the self-realized soul. Especially if we are sick, with no apparent solution, we have no choice other than to go to the Source for the answer.

### **Kali Yuga**

Vyasadeva compiled the Vedas approximately 6000 years ago at the end of Dwarapa Yuga. The last 1000 years of Dwarapa Yuga were the transition from Dvapara to Kali. Dwarapa Yuga was a spiritual age of enlightenment in India , and spread throughout the civilized world. Mostly everyone adhered to spiritual principles during this time, but there was also a noticeable declination into selfishness and bodily attachment. Kali Yuga, starting about 5000 years ago, the age we are presently in, is now in full swing. In this age hardly anyone adheres to spiritual principles, which include, among others, the protection and care for all living beings, especially animals, which are cruelly slaughtered for medicines, clothing, trophies and food. Although there are sages presently living on

earth to disseminate this knowledge to others, there are too few. Nevertheless, they exist here now and are ready to aid in the gradual transition into the realization of one's true identity as spirit soul. One only needs to seek out a guru and inquire as to one's true purpose while on Earth in this temporary human form. Vyasadev, as guru, seeing the inevitability of the declination of spiritual values in this age of Kali, compassionately wrote volumes of literatures on the subject of the Absolute Truth.

Spiritual realization is a gradual process for most people, so a gentle, loving, approach to self realization is the perfect solution. Through the reading of this Purana, and giving one's attention to Lord Ganesha, one will gradually learn how to remove the obstacles that blind us to our true identity. In this way, we can realize that we are all humble servitors of God on the path back to the spiritual atmosphere where there is no birth, disease, old age or death, and all of the problems associated therewith.

### **The Secret**

In the text, Lord Brahma reveals to Vyasa the key to composing the Ganesha Purana. He divulges two secret mantras that reward one with not only spiritual enlightenment, but material success as well. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says, 'All purposes served by a small well can at once be served by a great reservoir of water.' Lord Ganesha contains the material and spiritual worlds in His belly. He is that great reservoir. When one is self-realized, there is no doubt of complete success, because one realizes that there is really no difference between the material and spiritual. It is only a matter of perception. This incongruity is rectified by either using an object for sense gratification or in the service of

God. If one remembers the Lord in all of their undertakings, surely the finest outcome can be expected.

At times, we may feel that our life is not working out, despite our devotion to God. When we dedicate ourselves to God, we are placed in His hands. Sometimes, due to our material attachments, the Lord may feel that our activities are becoming an impediment to our spiritual progress. Ganesha is known as Vigna Nashanaya, or the remover of obstacles. God may be trying to help us to remove an impediment, and that may appear frustrating. Ultimately though, we do have to decide whether we want God or Maya, the illusion of this world. If we really are hell-bent, so to speak, and desire to stay on the wheel of samsara for uncountable births to come, then, according to our karmas, we may suffer or enjoy. If we truly desire God and an end to material suffering, then the Lord personally takes charge of our life and benedicts us with liberation.

Although Ganesha mantras may award one temporary material boons, their true purpose is to understand the Infinite. King Somakanta, Vyasa, Brahma and Lord Vishnu were instructed to chant various mantras in order to clear the misgivings in their hearts. For Somakanta, the purpose was to realize that he was not the temporary diseased body, but an eternal servitor of the Absolute. For Vyasa, his lesson was on a more subtle platform, which was to rid himself of egoism. The Lord's incarnations sometimes become arrogant due to their powerful positions, but the Lord, having direct control of their will or willfulness, as it were, very kindly helps them to realize the fallacy of their minor offences.

## **Evolution**

Vyasadev's guru is Lord Brahma, the topmost spiritual master in our universe. Brahma was certainly pleased by Vyasa's inquiries, and foremost, by his humility. Brahma is the first created being. He was born from a lotus flower stemming from the navel of Maha Vishnu. His birth is not only immaculate but has manifested from the Supreme male person alone. Brghu Muni, Lord Brahma's son, is King Somakanta's guru. This information gives us an idea of who we are being introduced to in this Purana, and our own good fortune in coming in contact with such famous spiritual personalities. The evolutionists can only speak of ordinary man's ascent from an aquatic life form to an upright land dweller, but cannot trace back our universal ancestry to the original father of all living entities in the universe, Lord Brahma. Many of Lord Brahma's sons were given the task to populate the universe. They were known as Prajapatis, of which Brghu is one. Our lineage stems from Brahma, not only by birth, but he is also the original universal guru of all created beings. To learn this spiritual knowledge it would be advantageous to seek out a guru that has directed descended in a succession from Lord Brahma. These personalities are here on earth today. If one truly desires liberation, then they will come in contact with a teacher of this spiritual magnitude.

After doing austerities for thousands of celestial years, Brahma was able to realize Lord Ganesha's transcendental form. He meditated on the AUM (OM) vibration in order to realize Him. How can we mere mortals understand AUM? Om is Ganesha. The source of Om is Ganesha Loka. Om is the sound of creation. Om is situated at the base of our spine, known as the Muladhara Chakra. As Dorothy said, "There is no place like h Om e"

## Self Realization

As presented in the Ganesha Purana, illustrious personalities like Vyasadev and Brahma had some difficulties in the performance of their own duties. Then what hope is there for us insignificant jiva's? In order to gain clarification as to our own transcendental position, and duties associated therewith, we may begin to have a glimpse of the answer to this inquiry by observing the activities of these great souls. We have heard, read, or may have seen movies depicting God's "chosen one's" as having a direct experience of Godhead. For example – Moses came in contact with a 'burning bush' that manifested to him tablets with the Ten Commandments. In the Bhagavat Purana, Krishna personally appeared to His friends and family members in His four armed Vishnu form many times. We will read about Lord Ganesha appearing before Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, which is just as mysterious. Can we expect to have a vision of the Godhead in this lifetime? By studying this Purana, as well as others, and imbibing their teachings, it is possible.

There are two very important points to remember. Number one; if we are to have that vision of Ganesha, just as Brahma did, we need to make contact with that realm. If we spend our life in activities that reflect the pure sattva or platform of goodness, then we will automatically vibrate with that spiritual frequency. In this way, we can tune into, by our purified mind, the higher realms that God and His servants are residing on. Chanting mantras, praying, serving, and worshipping, etc., all fine tune our consciousness, and open the lines of communication to the Absolute. Number two; in order to learn these things, then we must seek out a qualified guru. A qualified guru is one who has dedicated their life to disseminating spiritual knowledge, and who shows the way by good example. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says to Arjuna, 'Just try to understand the truth by humbly

approaching a spiritual master. The guru can impart knowledge of the Self, because they have realized the Truth.’ The guru is in contact with Godhead at all times. They are not interested in having many followers, collecting vast amounts of money, or enjoying the so-called pleasures of this world. They are only interested in God and helping others. They may be a woman or a man, born any place in the world. They do not proclaim themselves as being Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian or Jew, but they have realized the nature of the soul – as an eternal servant of the servant of God.

### **Suffering**

The Lord’s devotee may be seen to experience anxiety or pain like anyone else. There have been many who have endured suffering on God’s behalf; Jesus Christ being one of the most famous. There have also been Sikh martyrs who were killed by their Muslim adversaries. Everybody, with the passage of time, is subject to trials and tribulations of some sort, whether they are a spiritualist or not.

Many times a spiritual person may suffer due to some karma, which is not ordinary karma, but spiritual purification. A person of this caliber has finished with their worldly business, and is liberated from material existence. An ordinary person may experience similar ordeals, but for them there will be many more births and deaths to come. Karma for a devotee can be compared to a fan’s power that has been shut off. The blade is still spinning temporarily without power, until it stops completely within a short period of time. Ordinary karma can be compared to the fan still powered on and running continuously.

Brahma, although an extraordinary being, had to undergo some purification in order to increase his humility, so he could begin the process of creation. His was not, in the least, ordinary karma, but an instant karmic reaction to a seemingly immature state of consciousness. When we begin to understand that there is one Supreme Controller, and offer our deepest, sincerest prayers and service, then we will get a glimpse of the true humility required to become liberated from material existence. Until then, we will continue to struggle in the ocean of suffering birth after birth.

### **Separation**

If we are to rid ourselves of the illusion of separation from God, then having full confidence in our eternal relationship with the Lord, and acting on that, is the key. Faith is the belief of something unseen, but we are not using ordinary anatomical vision to see the Lord. The eyes of spiritual understanding are known as *sastra-chakrus*, or seeing through the eyes of the Sastra. Through certain yogic practices, one may eventually spiritualize the senses, including the vision. Although very difficult to master, this mystical practice can be learned from a specialized guru. In some circles it may be described as opening the Third Eye, known as the Ajna (6th ) Chakra, or as a spiritual “Awakening”.

In this age of Kali, though, we are usually short lived and have no real determination, other than to make money and create a family. By the kindness of Lord Ganesha, we have been given a very easy, sublime process to realize Him. One can chant His holy names - Om Sri Ganeshaya Namah. Brahma chanted the very simple OM mantra in order to begin

the process of creation. We should not be fooled into thinking, though, that we can do as he did. After all, Lord Brahma is an incarnation (avatar) of Godhead.

You may think that the ‘Puranas, composed in Sanskrit, are only mythological stories. The Sanskrit language is descriptive, and not exactly a literal language. Each Sanskrit word, when spoken or heard in the correct context is a potent spiritual sound vibration coming from the heavenly worlds, revealed to us on earth by highly enlightened beings. The Puranas, Vedas and Sastras are not ordinary, but are cosmogenic histories that have been delivered to Earth through sound vibration, transmitted in Sanskrit, in order to describe the activities in the spiritual realms.

Regarding the spiritual civilization of India; there have been many misunderstandings propagandized by the British while they were unlawfully controlling India up to the time of Mahatma Gandhi. Many fallacious statements unfortunately have brainwashed many of the Indian citizens, even up to today. Two of these assertions are that the authorized Murthis or statuesque forms of God are just ‘idols’, and that the Vedic literatures are ‘mythology’. As we know from Judaic-Christian philosophy, stemming from the Old Testament, God had said that “one should not put any other Gods before Me’. Moses saw, after delivering the Ten Commandments, that his followers were worshipping an idyllic golden calf. These events have erroneously led many religionists to misunderstand the definition of an idol, especially in relation to the authorized Vedic forms of deity worship. In this regard, one wonders why it is alright to offer salutations to many different statuesque forms of Jesus or the Virgin Mary, but when one observes a worshipper of a so-called statue of a Hindu God or Goddess, then that is labeled “idol worship.” This misunderstanding is just that - a mis (lack of) understanding.

Armed with a clarified perception and a new spiritual vision, we are now ready to dive deeper within the ocean of the great mystery of the Lord, as it is revealed in this Purana. The stories of Lord Ganesha are not fables, but are the highest truth and reality. They are extraordinary dealings from a greater spiritual culture, not only confined to planet Earth, but encompass activities within the scope of the entire universe.

### **Heaven**

At an early stage of creation, Lord Brahma, who resides in the highest material realm in the universe, suffered tremendously from the harassment of the two demons known as Madhu and Kaitabha. Brahma previously awarded these two powerful entities boons so they could not be killed by anyone in the universe, thereby making them invulnerable and practically indestructible. This example shows that Brahma is compassionate and generous to a fault. A devotee of the Lord is usually very kind.

There is no escape from suffering in the material world, from the highest heavenly planets down to the lowest hellish worlds. All are places of suffering where repeated stress, as well as birth and death, take place. Although a person's karma may afford them a birth as a demigod or king, as long as they are not liberated from material existence, then there must be impediments and troubles. The universe is actually constructed this way so the rebellious souls eventually come to realize this material world is not their true home.

Religion promotes the idea that, after death, due to good works, one will attain heaven. Although heaven is seemingly wonderful, it is also a temporary place. One must be born a human being again in order to complete the 'universal school of hard knocks', and

finally become liberated from the propensity to enjoy separately from God. The Sastras state that the Earth is the easiest place to attain God realization. Heaven is too pleasurable to practice spiritual life seriously, and hell, much too horrible to be conducive to God consciousness. The solution is to become God-conscious now in order to step off the wheel of death and rebirth. In this way we will regain our perpetual status as an eternal servitor of the Lord, never to be born or die again.

VAYAM BHRAMITAS SARVATHA JNANA-YOGAT  
ALABDHASTAVANGHRIM BAHUN VARSHA PUGAN  
EDANEEMAVAPTAHA TAVAIVA PRASADAT  
PRAPANAN SADA PAHI VISHWAMBHARADYA

"Deluded by ignorance, not being able to see thy lotus feet for thousands of celestial years, we have been in grief, but by your grace we now have your darshan, and are truly blessed. O Lord Ganesha, support of the universe, bless us, bless all, and protect every one! All glories unto you!"

-- Chapter 13, Ganesha Purana, Upasana Khanda - from the Stava Raja prayers.

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