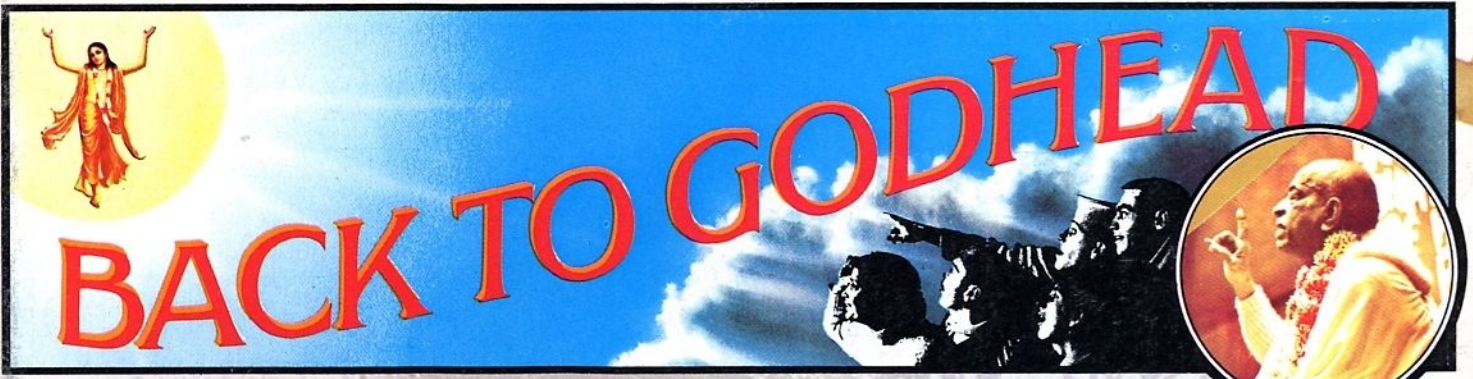


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



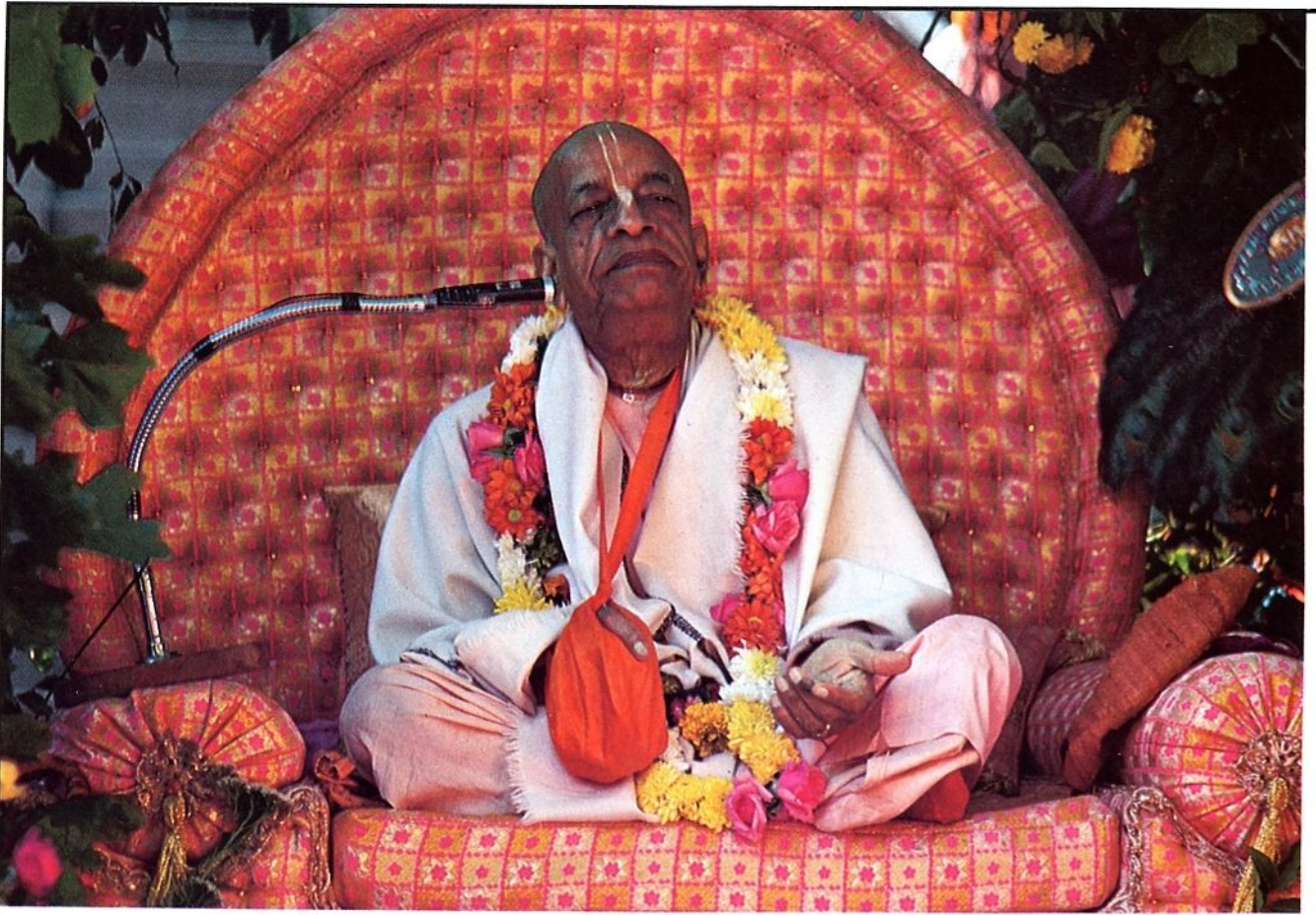
Vol.10 No.3

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

**Special India  
Pilgrimage Issue**







His Divine Grace A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

In Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. And Around the World. . .

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

Although the cities of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and Calcutta, India, lie only fifty miles from each other, they are, quite literally, worlds apart.

Calcutta, like any other large industrialized city, is fast-paced, crowded and noisy. By contrast, Śrīdhāma Māyāpura is peaceful and serene, for it is a transcendental *tīrtha*, or holy place.

It was at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, almost five hundred years ago, that the Supreme Lord descended to this world as the great teacher Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu to propagate the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* (the Great Chanting for Deliverance): Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, one can counteract the miseries of material life and quickly be elevated to the highest spiritual platform — *prema-bhakti* (love



of God). Indeed, Lord Caitanya taught that by the congregational chanting of these holy names of God, the people of the world can begin a new era of peace, brotherhood and prosperity. And by the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His prediction that the holy name of Kṛṣṇa would one day be sung in every town and village in the world is now being fulfilled.



The work of broadcasting the transcendental message of Lord Caitanya is today being carried out by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Under the direction of its founder-*ācārya*, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, ISKCON, over the past eight years, has established centers in cities throughout Europe, America, Africa and Asia. Pictured below is Śrī Māyāpura-candrodaya Mandira, the ISKCON World Center at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, where ISKCON devotees from all over the world gather each year to celebrate the appearance day of Lord Caitanya



Mahāprabhu. This year, the auspicious anniversary of Lord Caitanya's appearance will be observed on March 27. Once again, devotees from every corner of the globe will join in Māyāpura for a Kṛṣṇa conscious festival, beginning in mid-March, to glorify Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His holy abode

Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, and His pure devotee Śrīla Prabhupāda.

If you cannot join us in India for this wonderful celebration, we invite you to take part in the festival through the pages of *Back to Godhead*. Śrīdhāma Māyāpura is a spiritual place of pilgrimage; and on the transcendental level, hearing about such a holy place is practically as good as being there.



# BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

His Divine Grace

**A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

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## PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *e* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *ī* is pronounced like the *er* in the English word *fiber*. The *ī* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch, jh, dh, etc.*) are pronounced as in *staunch*-heart, *hedge*-hog and *red*-hot. The two sibilants *ś* and *ṣ* are like the English *sh*, and *ś* is like the *s* in *sun*. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

## MEMBERSHIP

For information on how you can become a registered member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, please write to the Society's secretary at 3764 Watska Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90034.



## ON THE COVER

Lord Caitanya predicted almost 500 years ago that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would spread to every village and town in the world. Now His prediction is coming true. Here Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees from all over the world are seen during their yearly pilgrimage to Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

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An excerpt from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,  
A new translation, with purports,  
by His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

# Lord Caitanya's Benediction for Humanity

Four hundred years ago, by the request of the greatest transcendentalists of his time, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī wrote *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, an account of the teachings and activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the Supreme Lord Himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the form of His own pure devotee. Although Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja was so advanced in age that the task appeared almost impossible, he eventually composed this work, in three sections, describing the early, middle and final pastimes of Śrī Caitanya and His essential instructions to His most intimate disciples.

The first section, entitled "Ādi-līlā," describes the first twenty-four years of Lord Caitanya's life, including His childhood and household activities, as well as the all-important philosophical discussions He held with the greatest scholars of His time, after He entered the renowned order of life.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, in His Bhagavad-gītā, declares that His mission is to annihilate the demoniac and establish the pious; and, accordingly, accounts of the activities of the Godhead's incarnations tell of numerous contests between the Supreme Lord and great atheistic personalities. But Lord Caitanya, the golden avatāra, is called mahā-vadānya-avatāra, or the most munificent incarnation of Godhead, for He settled such conflicts by congregational chanting and persuasive argument and thereby blessed everyone He met with love of Godhead. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, therefore, not only relates the most confidential pastimes of the golden avatāra, but also fully explicates His sublime devotional philosophy.

The Ninth Chapter of the Ādi-līlā, or first section, describes the Caitanya tree, a most wonderful species, which bears the fruit of genuine self-realization, or love of Godhead. By understanding this tree, one can realize the continuing and ever-increasing potency of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The trunk of this tree is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and from Him, in unbroken succession, stem various branches that gradually span the entire globe in the form of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. One who hears of this transcendental tree will certainly have the seeds of devotional love of Godhead implanted within his heart and will appreciate the divine potency of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda has translated *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* into English with full explanations for the purport of each verse. Here, in the following excerpt from this work, His Divine Grace explains how the distribution of the fruits of the Caitanya tree is the ultimate benediction for the world, and, as well, he reveals the compass of the unlimited mercy of the Personality of Godhead.

## TEXT 42

এতাবজ্জন্মানাফল্যাং দেহিনামিহ দেহিষু ।

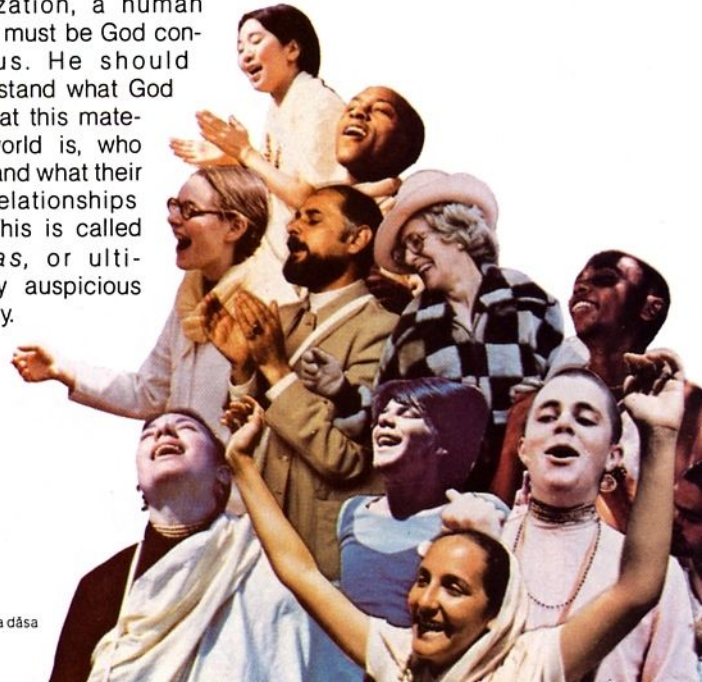
প্রাটৈগরৈর্থেধিবা বাচা শ্রেয়স্বাচরণং সদা ॥ ৪২ ॥

etāvaj janma-sāphalyaṁ dehinām iha dehiṣu  
prāṭṭair arthair dhiyā vācā śreya-ācaraṇaṁ sadā

**Synonyms:** *etāvat*—up to this; *janma*—of birth; *sāphalyam*—perfection; *dehinām*—of every living being; *iha*—in this world; *dehiṣu*—toward those who are embodied; *prāṭṭaiḥ*—by life; *arthaiḥ*—by wealth; *dhiyā*—by intelligence; *vācā*—by words; *śreyaḥ*—eternal good fortune; *ācaraṇam*—acting practically; *sadā*—always.

**Translation:** "It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence and words."

**Purport:** There are two kinds of general activities—*śreyas*, or activities which are ultimately beneficial and auspicious, and *preyas*, or those which are immediately beneficial and auspicious. For example, children are very fond of playing. They don't want to go to school to receive an education, and they think that to play all day and night and enjoy with their friends is the aim of life. Even in the transcendental life of Lord Kṛṣṇa, we find that when He was a child He was very fond of playing with His friends of the same age, the cowherd boys. He would not even go home to take His dinner. Mother Yaśodā would have to come out to induce Him to come home. Thus it is a child's nature to engage all day and night in playing, not caring even for his health and other important concerns. This is an example of *preyas*, or immediately beneficial activities, but there are also *śreyas*, or activities which are ultimately auspicious. According to Vedic civilization, a human being must be God conscious. He should understand what God is, what this material world is, who he is and what their interrelationships are. This is called *śreyas*, or ultimately auspicious activity.





In this verse, which is quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is said that one should be interested in *śreyas*. To achieve the ultimate goal of *śreyas*, or good fortune, one should engage everything, including his life, wealth and words, not only for himself but for others also. However, unless one is interested in *śreyas* in his own life, he cannot preach of *śreyas* for the benefit of others.

This verse cited by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu applies to human beings, not to animals. As indicated in the previous verse by the words *manuṣya-janma*, these injunctions are for human beings. Unfortunately, human beings, although they have the bodies of men, are becoming less than animals in their behavior. This is the fault of modern education. Modern educators do not know the aim of human life; they are simply concerned with how to develop the economic condition of their countries or of human society. This is also necessary; the Vedic civilization considers all aspects of human life, including *dharma* (religion), *artha* (economic development), *kāma* (sense gratification) and *mokṣa* (liberation). But humanity's first concern should be religion. To be religious, one must abide by the orders of God, but unfortunately people in this age have rejected religion, and they are busy in economic development. Therefore they will adopt any means to get money. For economic development one does not need to get money by hook or by crook; one needs only sufficient money to maintain his body and soul. However, because modern economic development is going on with no religious background, people have become lusty, greedy and mad after money. They are simply developing the qualities of *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance), neglecting the other quality of nature, *sattva* (goodness), and the brahminical qualifications. Therefore the entire society is in chaos.

The *Bhāgavatam* says that it is the duty of an advanced human being to act in such a way as to facilitate human society's attainment of the ultimate goal of life. There is a similar verse in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Part Three, Chapter Twelve, verse 45, which is quoted in this chapter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as verse 43.

### TEXT 43

প্রাণিনামুপকারায় যদেবেহ পরত্র চ ।

কর্মণা মনসা বাচা তদেব মতিমান্ ভজ্ঞেৎ ॥ ৪৩ ॥

*prāṇinām upakārāya yad eveha paratra ca  
karmanā manasā vācā tad eva matimān bhajet*

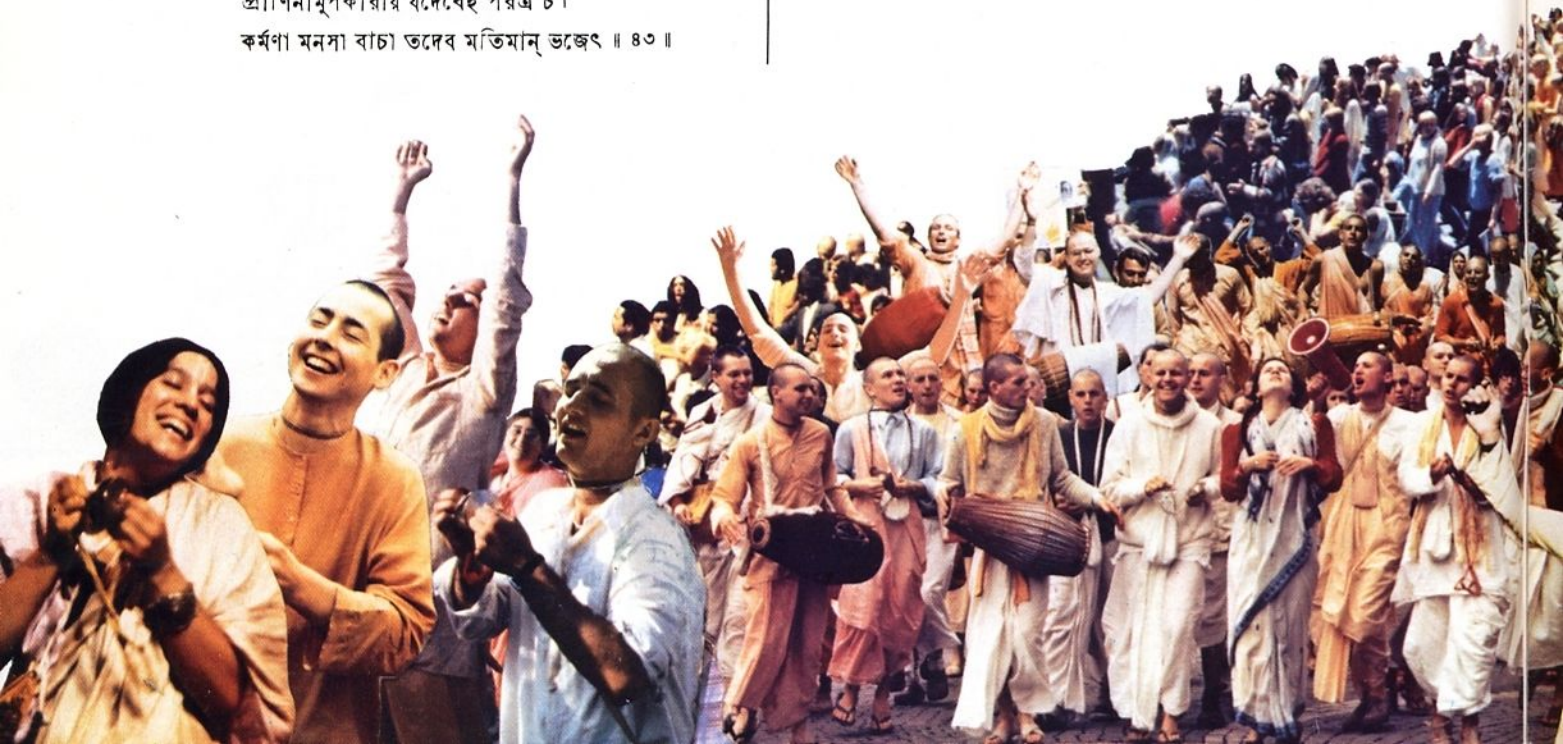
**Synonyms:** *prāṇinām*—of all living entities; *upakārāya*—for the benefit; *yaṭ*—whichever; *eva*—certainly; *iha*—in this world or in this life; *paratra*—in the next life; *ca*—and; *karmanā*—by work; *manasā*—by the mind; *vācā*—by words; *tat*—that; *eva*—certainly; *matimān*—an intelligent man; *bhajet*—must act.

**Translation:** "By his work, thoughts and words, an intelligent man must perform actions which will be beneficial for all living entities in this life and in the next."

**Purport:** Unfortunately, people in general do not know what is to take place in the next life. To prepare oneself for his next life is common sense, and it is a principle of the Vedic civilization, but presently people throughout the world do not believe in a next life. Even influential professors and other educators say that as soon as the body is finished, everything is finished. This atheistic philosophy is killing human civilization. People are irresponsibly performing all sorts of sinful activities, and thus the privilege of the human life is being taken away by the educational propaganda of the so-called leaders. Actually it is a fact that this life is meant for preparation for the next life; by evolution one has come through many species or forms, and this human form of life is an opportunity to promote oneself to a better life. This is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ  
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino' pi mām*

"Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; those who worship ancestors go to the ancestors; and those who worship Me will live with Me." (Bg. 9.25) Therefore, one may promote himself to the higher planetary systems, which are the residence of the demigods, one can promote himself to the Pitṛloka, one can remain on earth, or one can also go back home, back to Godhead. This is further confirmed by *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9):





*tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna.* After giving up the body, one who knows Kṛṣṇa in truth does not come back again to this world to accept a material body, but he goes back home, back to Godhead. This knowledge is in the *sāstras*, and people should be given the opportunity to understand it. Even if one is not able to go back to Godhead in one life, the Vedic civilization at least gives one the opportunity to be promoted to the higher planetary systems where the demigods live and not glide down again to animal life. At present, people do not understand this knowledge, although it constitutes a great science, for they are uneducated and trained not to accept it. This is the horrible condition of modern human society. As such, the Kṛṣṇa

consciousness movement is the only hope to direct the attention of intelligent men to a greater benefit in life.

#### TEXT 44

माली मनुष्य आमार नाहि राज्ज-धन ।

फल-फुल दिग्ग करि' पुण्य उपार्जन ॥ ४४ ॥

*māli manuṣya āmāra nāhi rājya-dhana  
phala-phula diyā kari' puṇya upārjana*

**Synonyms:** *māli*—gardener; *manuṣya*—man; *āmāra*—My; *nāhi*—there is none; *rājya*—kingdom; *dhana*—wealth; *phala*—fruit; *phula*—flowers; *diyā*—giving; *kari'*—do; *puṇya*—piety; *upārjana*—achievement.

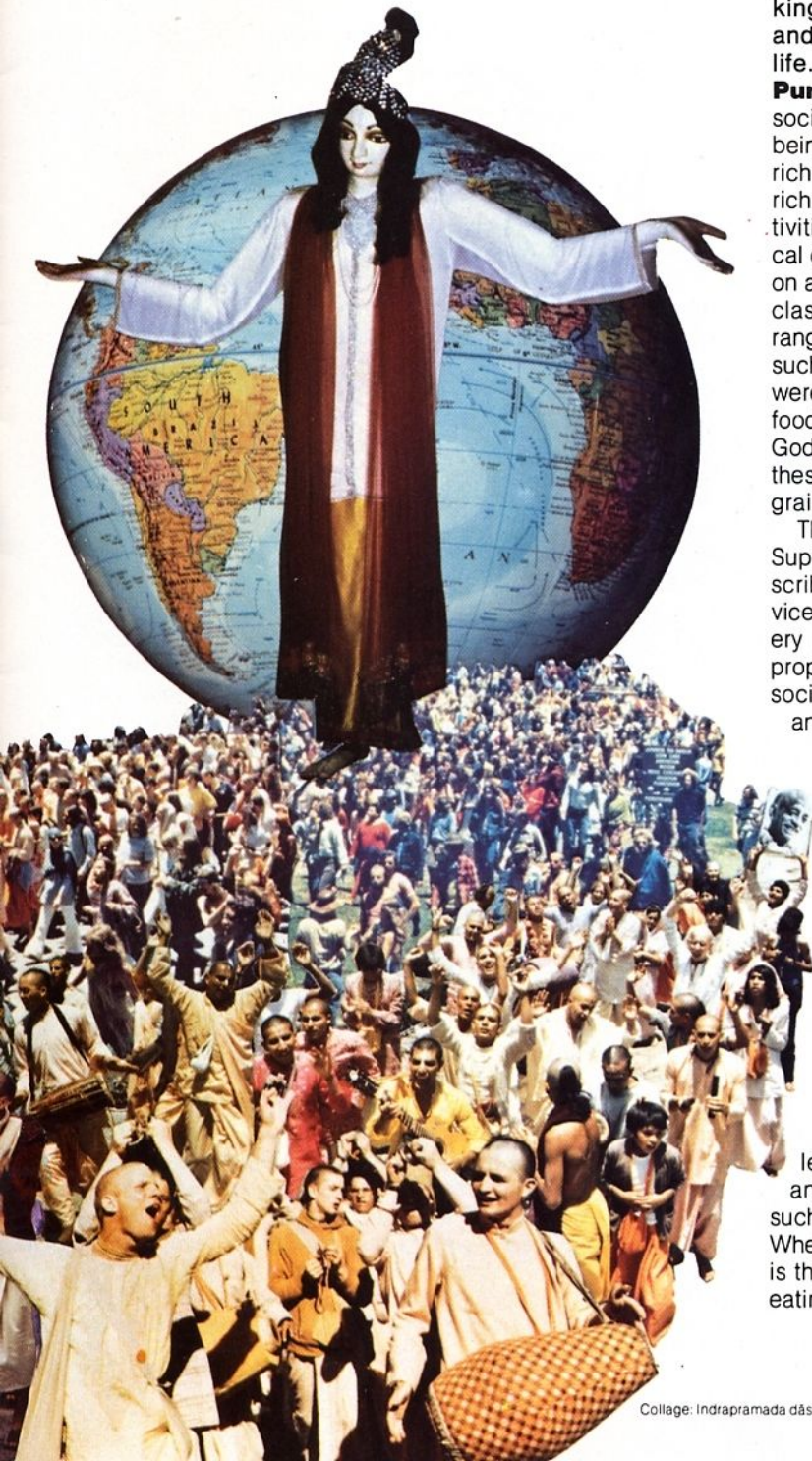
**Translation:** "I am merely a gardener. I have neither a kingdom nor very great riches. I simply have some fruits and flowers that I wish to utilize to achieve piety in My life.

**Purport:** In performing welfare activities for human society, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu presents Himself as being not very rich, thus indicating that a man need not be rich or opulent to act for the welfare of humanity. Sometimes rich men are very proud that they can perform beneficial activities for human society whereas others cannot. A practical example is that when there is a scarcity of food in India on account of meager rainfall, some members of the richer class very proudly distribute foodstuffs, making huge arrangements with the help of the government, as if merely by such activities people will be benefited. But suppose there were no food grains. How would the rich men distribute food? Production of grains is completely in the hands of God. If there were no rain, there would be no grains, and these so-called rich men would be unable to distribute grains to the people.

The real purpose of life, therefore, is to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that devotional service is so exalted that it is beneficial and auspicious for every man. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also declared that to propagate the *bhakti* cult of devotional service in human society, one does not need to be very rich. Anyone can do it and thus render the highest benefit to humanity if he knows the art. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu takes the part of a gardener because although a gardener is naturally not a very rich man, he has some fruits and flowers. Any man can collect some fruits and flowers and satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead in devotional service, as recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ yo me bhaktyā  
prayacchati  
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." (Bg. 9.26) One cannot satisfy the Supreme Lord by his riches, wealth or opulent position, but anyone can collect a little fruit or flower and offer it to the Lord. The Lord says that if one brings such an offering in devotion, He will accept it and eat it. When Kṛṣṇa eats, the entire world becomes satisfied. There is the story in the *Mahābhārata* illustrating how by Kṛṣṇa's eating, the 60,000 disciples of Durvāsā Muni were all





satisfied. Therefore it is a fact that if by our life (*prāṇaiḥ*), by our wealth (*arthaiḥ*), by our intelligence (*dhiyā*) or by our words (*vācā*) we can satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead, naturally the entire world will become happy. Therefore our main duty is to satisfy the Supreme Godhead by our actions, our money and our words. This is very simple. Even if one does not have money, he can preach the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* to everyone. One can go everywhere, to every home, and request everyone to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Thus the entire world situation will become very happy and peaceful.

#### TEXT 45

মালী হঞা বৃক্ষ হইলাঙ এই ত' ইচ্ছাতে ।  
সর্বপ্রাণীর উপকার হয় বৃক্ষ হৈতে ॥ ৪৫ ॥

*māli hañā vṛkṣa ha-ilāṅ ei ta' icchāte*  
*sarva-prāṇira upakāra haya vṛkṣa haite*

## Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar

*Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The year is full of Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals, and some of the upcoming ones are listed here. The devotees of the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of these festivals. The appearance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has begun a new era in spiritual history. Thus the day after His appearance anniversary this year marks the start of the year 489 of the Caitanya Era.*

March 2	March 8	March 11
Appearance day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Disappearance of Śrī Puruṣottama Thākura.	Ekādaśī (Vijayā-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).	Śrī Śiva-rātri-vrata.
March 12	March 17	March 22
Disappearance of Śrīla Jagannātha-dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja and Śrīla Rasikānanda Gosvāmī.	Appearance of Śrī Puruṣottama Thākura.	Starting today, devotees perform <i>parikrama</i> (circumambulation) of the nine islands that form Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma (see page 18 for a map and explanation). <i>Parikrama</i> of Śrī Antar-dvīpa.*
March 23	March 24	March 25
<i>Parikrama</i> of Śrī Simanta-dvīpa.	Ekādaśī (Āmalaki-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans). <i>Parikrama</i> of Śrī Godruma-dvīpa and Śrī Madhya-dvīpa.	<i>Parikrama</i> of Śrī Kola-dvīpa and Śrī Rtu-dvīpa. Disappearance day of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī.
March 26	March 27	March 28
<i>Parikrama</i> of Śrī Jahnu-dvīpa, Śrī Modadruma-dvīpa and Śrī Rudra-dvīpa.	Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā (Appearance day of the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu) (fasting until moonrise). Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava dola-yātrā.	Beginning of the year 489, Caitanya Era. First day of the Kṛṣṇa conscious month of Viṣṇu. Ānandotsava of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra.

\*Each of the nine islands is associated with one of the nine forms of devotional service: Śrī Antar-dvīpa—self-surrender; Śrī Simanta-dvīpa—hearing; Śrī Godruma-dvīpa—chanting; Śrī Madhya-dvīpa—remembering; Śrī Kola-dvīpa—serving the lotus feet of the Lord; Śrī Rtu-dvīpa—worshipping; Śrī Jahnu-dvīpa—praying; Śrī Modadruma-dvīpa—carrying out the Lord's orders; Śrī Rudra-dvīpa—serving as the Lord's friend.

**Synonyms:** *māli hañā*—although I am the gardener; *vṛkṣa ha-ilāṅ*—I am also the tree; *ei ta'*—this is; *icchāte*—by My will; *sarva-prāṇira*—of all living entities; *upakāra*—welfare; *haya*—there is; *vṛkṣa*—the tree; *haite*—from.

**Translation:** “Although I am acting as a gardener, I also want to be the tree, for thus I can bestow benefit upon all.

**Purport:** Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the most benevolent personality in human society because His only desire is to make people happy. His *saṅkīrtana* movement is especially meant for the purpose of making people happy. He wanted to become the tree Himself because a tree is supposed to be the most benevolent living entity. In the following verse, which is from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.22.33), Kṛṣṇa Himself highly praised the existence of a tree.

#### TEXT 46

অহো এষাং বরং জন্ম সর্বপ্রাণুপজীবিনাম্ ।

স্বজনশ্চেব যেষাং বৈ বিমুখা যাস্তি নার্থিনঃ ॥ ৪৬ ॥

*aho eṣāṁ varaṁ janma sarva-prāṇy-upajīvinām*  
*sujanasyeva yeṣāṁ vai vimukhā yānti nārthinaḥ*

**Synonyms:** *aho*—oh, just see; *eṣāṁ*—of these trees; *varaṁ*—superior; *janma*—birth; *sarva*—all; *prāṇi*—living entities; *upajīvinām*—one who provides maintenance; *sujanasya iva*—like the great personalities; *yeṣāṁ*—from whose; *vai*—certainly; *vimukhāḥ*—disappointed; *yānti*—goes away; *na*—never; *arthinaḥ*—one who is asking for something.

**Translation:** “‘Just see how these trees are maintaining every living entity! Their birth is successful. Their behavior is just like that of great personalities, for anyone who asks anything from a tree never goes away disappointed.’”

**Purport:** According to Vedic civilization, *kṣatriyas* are considered to be great personalities because if anyone goes to a *kṣatriya* king to ask for charity, the king will never refuse. The trees are compared to those noble *kṣatriyas* because everyone derives all kinds of benefits from them—some people take fruit, others take flowers, others take leaves, others take twigs, and others even cut the tree, and yet the tree gives to everyone without hesitation.

Unnecessarily cutting trees without consideration is another example of human debauchery. The paper industry cuts many hundreds and thousands of trees for its mills, and with the paper so much rubbish literature is published for the whimsical satisfaction of human society. Unfortunately, although these industrialists are now happy in this life by dint of their industrial development, they do not know that they will incur the responsibility for killing these living entities who are in the forms of trees. A needy person may derive many advantages from trees and also from many animals, but in modern civilization people have become so ungrateful that they exploit the trees and animals and kill them. These are some of the sinful activities of modern civilization.

This verse, quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, was spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa to His friends when He was taking rest underneath a tree after His pastimes of stealing the clothes of the *gopīs* (*vastra-haraṇa-līlā*). By quoting this verse, Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches us that we should be tolerant and beneficial like trees, which give everything to the needy persons who come underneath them.





## The Appearance of Lord Caitanya

by His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was also known as Viśvambhara (“Lord of the universe”), appeared in Bengal, India, 489 years ago and taught love of Kṛṣṇa. The Vedic scriptures, such as the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Vedānta-sūtra* and especially *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all reveal Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Truth and the dearest friend of every living being. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Give up all other forms of religion and surrender to Me. I shall then protect you.” Lord Caitanya, therefore, urged everyone He met, “Surrender to Kṛṣṇa. His holy name is the only shelter.”

Because thousands of years had passed since Kṛṣṇa’s appearance on earth and because people had not fully understood Kṛṣṇa from *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Caitanya, as Kṛṣṇa’s dearest servant, showed everyone exactly how to render loving service to Kṛṣṇa, just according to Kṛṣṇa’s own words as revealed in Vedic literature. These Vedic writings were compiled 5,000 years ago, but when

Lord Caitanya came He created a great revival of love for Kṛṣṇa. Most importantly, Lord Caitanya delivered the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, as He was also called, did not invent the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa; He took it directly from the Vedic scriptures. The *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa* says: *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāma eva kevalam/ kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*: “Chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name! In the Kali-yuga [the Age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy] there is no other way, no other way,



no other way.” The *Kalisantarāṇa Upaniṣad* also says that these sixteen words in thirty-two syllables—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are the most effective means for counteracting the contaminating effects of Kali-yuga.

According to the Vedic scriptures, the chanting is the only process perfectly suitable for the age in which Lord Caitanya appeared, Kali-yuga, a spiritually fallen age. Kali-yuga is still going on, and we shall feel its disruptive influence more and more. Therefore Lord Caitanya gave a great impetus to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement by inaugurating *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the holy names. Indeed, He set in motion, by His own example, a movement that would spread all over the world as the greatest benediction for the people of today. Almost five hundred years ago, He Himself foretold, “The chanting of the names of Kṛṣṇa will be heard in every town and village of the world.”

**W**e know a great deal about the life and teachings of Lord Caitanya because His immediate followers wrote many books, all authoritatively based on the Vedic scriptures. His chief literary followers were known as the six Gosvāmīs. Among them, Jīva, Sanātana and Rūpa especially wrote dozens of scholarly spiritual books proving *bhakti*, or love of Kṛṣṇa, to be the ultimate goal of the *Vedas*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura also wrote authoritative biographies of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, and many of their learned followers have contributed elaborations and expositions upon the philosophy of Lord Caitanya, thus establishing the basis for a complete and consistent spiritual movement.

As we observe the 489th anniversary of Lord Caitanya’s appearance, let us consider His significance for the people of the world today. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, in his biography *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, describes the events leading to Śrī Caitanya’s appearance. We shall try to relate them here, for they tell us much about His mission.

“To fulfill a particular desire within His mind, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Vrajendra-kumāra, decided to descend on this planet after mature contemplation.” Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja plainly declares that Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Caitanya’s advent is also mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākrṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārsadam  
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In this Age of Kali, people endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña* [congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa].” (*Bhāg.* 11.5.32) This verse also describes that in the Age of Kali, Kṛṣṇa will appear, but His complexion will be golden. When Lord Caitanya taught His disciple Sanātana how to detect a genuine incarnation of God, He pointed out that the activities and bodily hues of the incarnations are described in the scriptures. Since the time of Lord Caitanya, many men have posed as Gods or *avatāras*, collected money and attracted followers, but such imposters never fool the experts who know the transcendental science.

The scriptures indicate that the incarnation for Kali-yuga is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is also called Gaurāṅga or Gaurasundara (Gaura means “gold”) because of His golden hue. His complexion is golden, and His activities engage everyone in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. To enact His mission, He always appears with His associates. Thus Lord Caitanya is most often worshiped in His form of *pañca-tattva*, in which He is accompanied by His immediate expansions Nityānanda, Advaita, Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa.

*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes that before Lord Kṛṣṇa took birth as Lord Caitanya, He requested many of His devotees to precede Him. “Lord Kṛṣṇa first allowed His family of superiors to descend on the earth.” (Cc. *Ādi* 13.53) These included Śrī Śacīdevī and Jagannātha Miśra, who were to appear as His mother and father; Mādhavendra Purī, who was to appear as a great spiritual master in the line Śrī Caitanya would follow; and Śrī Advaita, Śrīvāsa and Nityānanda, three of the Lord’s principal associates who would appear as His elders in His pastimes. He also sent Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who, despite his birth in a Moslem family, would become the *nāmācārya*, or master of the holy name, celebrated for chanting 300,000 names of Kṛṣṇa daily. In an important book called *Gaura-gaṇodeśa-dīpikā*, Kavi-karṇapūra has ascertained that the associates or family members of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes 5,000 years ago in Vṛndāvana reappeared in different roles in the pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Thus Jagannātha Miśra and Śacīdevī were formerly Nanda and Yaśodā, the mother and father of Kṛṣṇa; Nityānanda was formerly Kṛṣṇa’s brother, Balarāma; and Advaita Ācārya was an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa’s Viṣṇu expansion from whom all the universes emanate at the time of universal creation.

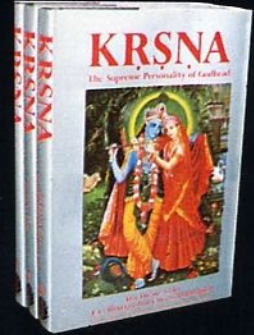
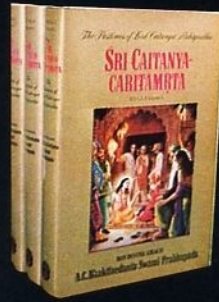
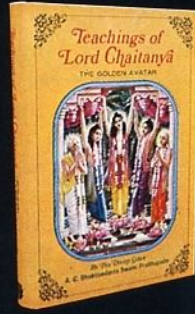
*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes the birthplace of Lord Gaurasundara before the Lord’s advent: “Before the appearance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, all the devotees of Navadvīpa used to gather in the house of Advaita Ācārya. In these meetings of devotees, Advaita Ācārya used to recite *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, decrying the paths of philosophical speculation and fruitive activity and establishing the superexcellence of devotional service.” (Cc. *Ādi-līlā*, 13.63-4)

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja further mentions that devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the actual conclusion of the Vedic scriptures. Although different sections of the Vedic literature teach different paths, staunch devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa reject other processes, such as philosophical speculation, yogic gymnastics and unnecessary austerities and rituals, for these are meant only to raise people gradually to devotional service. Kṛṣṇa says at the end of His teachings in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Give up all other varieties of religion and just surrender to Me.” Devotees, therefore, are the topmost transcendentalists and so need not engage in any other process than devotional service. If one takes to another process but doesn’t recognize that love of the Supreme Person is the supreme goal, he cannot be accepted as a genuine transcendentalist, and his practice of *yoga* or meditation is a waste of time.

It is stated that the associates who preceded Lord Caitanya were reading *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* exclusively. One who doesn’t know the conclusion may search through many literatures and philosophies inquiring for the ultimate. These two Vedic literatures, however, hold the cream of all



"In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time."—Bhagavad-gītā As It Is



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the *Vedas*. Śrīdhara Svāmī, a great Vedic *ācārya* (spiritual master), wrote, "The *Gītā*, which issued from the lotus-like lips of Padmanābha Himself [Lord Kṛṣṇa], must be well assimilated; what is the use of a multiplicity of other scriptures?" Lord Caitanya Himself prescribed reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhāgavad-gītā* as primary because although the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* only hint at the Absolute Truth, that Truth is fully developed in the *Gītā*, which records the spoken words of Kṛṣṇa, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which contains narratives about Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees.

The associates of Lord Caitanya are described as Vaiṣṇavas, which means devotees of the Absolute Truth in His aspect as the Supreme Person. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* continues: "In the house of Advaita Ācārya, all the Vaiṣṇavas took pleasure in always talking of Kṛṣṇa, always worshiping Kṛṣṇa and always chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*." (Cc. *Ādi-līlā* 13.66) From this we can understand that the devotees who gathered at Advaita Ācārya's house were fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, either through talking of Kṛṣṇa on the basis of *Bhāgavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, worshiping the Lord in His form as the Deity, or chanting in *kīrtana* (singing Hare Kṛṣṇa) with musical instruments. Because such Vaiṣṇavas understand that there is nothing but Kṛṣṇa and His energy, they never forget Kṛṣṇa for a moment, and they always engage their senses in some kind of devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* goes on to cite the predominant mood of the assembled Vaiṣṇavas: "But Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu felt pained to see all the people without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, simply merging in material sense enjoyment." (Cc. *Ādi-līlā* 13.67) Such is the vision of all pure devotees. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda) used to say, "There is no scarcity of anything within this world. The only item scarce is Kṛṣṇa consciousness." The devotee can see that for want of God consciousness people are suffering terribly. In ignorance, people think they can be happy without cultivating spiritual life, and so they absorb themselves in plans and activities just to satisfy their senses. Yet this only causes suffering, all over the world. Food shortages, fuel shortages, war and poverty are all directly traceable to humanity's forgetfulness of its relationship to Kṛṣṇa.

Material nature runs by strict laws, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a science of how to live in harmony with the material and spiritual nature by acting always in loving relation to the Supreme Lord, who is in fact the supreme proprietor. Man acts as if no one were in charge but him, and so the masses of people are misled by capitalism, communism, consumerism, voidism and so many other godless "isms." Man breaks nature's laws and suffers from the crises that result. A devotee onlooker is very much aggrieved to see this.

The same materialistic tendencies plagued Navadvīpa 500 years ago, and so Advaita Ācārya expressed His sorrow for the people. The Vaiṣṇavas at His home were free of all anxiety themselves because of their participation in *kṛṣṇa-kathā* (topics about Kṛṣṇa), but a Vaiṣṇava is unhappy to see others unhappy. Another great Vaiṣṇava, Prahlāda Mahārāja, whose life is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, once prayed: "Saintly persons and ascetics generally travel alone, concerned only with their own salvation, but I am not like them. I do not

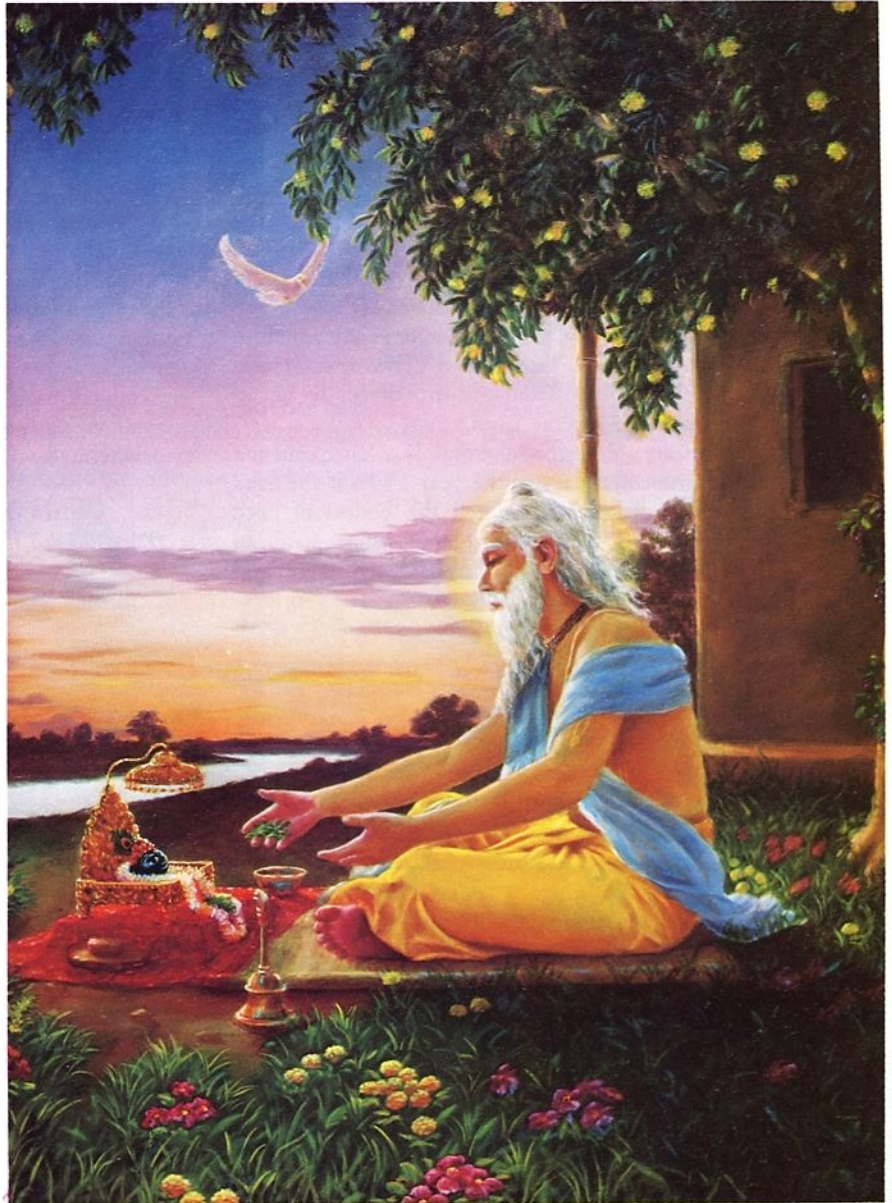


want to go back to the kingdom of God alone, leaving all these bewildered people who have no other shelter but Your Lordship. Unless they can come with me, I shall not go back to Godhead.” A Vaiṣṇava feels free of all difficulty, but he also feels compassion for those who have been duped into accepting a false civilization that will cause them only suffering in this life and the next.

“Vaiṣṇava” is not a sectarian designation. Lord Jesus Christ and Lord Mohammed were also powerful Vaiṣṇava personalities who worked to bring humanity to love of God. Only the presence of such Vaiṣṇavas can save human society. Lord Caitanya was to appear in a community of such Vaiṣṇavas, but with one difference: He Himself was the Supreme Lord, the object of the Vaiṣṇavas’ prayers. Thus even though appearing as a devotee, He would be able to deliver love of Kṛṣṇa directly.

How Lord Caitanya descended at the specific request of Advaita Ācārya is described in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: “Seeing the condition of the world, Śrī Advaita Ācārya began to think seriously of how all these people could be delivered from the clutches of *māyā* (material illusion). Śrī Advaita Prabhu thought: ‘If Kṛṣṇa Himself appears to distribute the cult of devotional service, then only will liberation be possible for all people.’” (Cc. *Ādi-līlā* 13.68-69) His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda comments on this prayer: “Just as a condemned person can be relieved by a special favor of the chief executive head, the president or king, so the condemned people of this Kali-yuga can be delivered only by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself or a person empowered especially for this purpose. Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu desired that the Supreme Personality Himself advent to deliver the fallen souls of this age.” Advaita Ācārya thus promised to cause Lord Kṛṣṇa to descend, and He began to worship the Supreme Lord with offerings of *tulasī* leaves and water of the Ganges. “By loud cries He invited Kṛṣṇa to appear,” writes Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, “and this repeated invitation attracted Lord Kṛṣṇa to descend.”

Just as the prayers of Lord Brahmā caused Lord Kṛṣṇa to descend in Vṛndāvana, so the prayers of Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee, Advaita Ācārya, caused Him to come again as Lord Caitanya. Of course, the Supreme Lord comes at His own will for His own mission, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*: “Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practices, O Bhārata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself. To deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants, as



**With offerings of sacred tulasī leaves and Ganges water, Advaita Ācārya prayed for Lord Caitanya to descend.**

well as to establish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.” (Bg. 4.7-8) According to these verses, Lord Kṛṣṇa appears specifically to mitigate the anxieties of pure devotees who are eager to see Him in His pastimes. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that He appears in every millennium. This indicates that He also incarnates in the Age of Kali. Thus Lord Caitanya, as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, is described secretly, indirectly, in the confidential parts of revealed scriptures such as the *Upaniṣads*, *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa are greatly attracted by the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya because instead of killing the miscreants, the Lord, through this movement, delivers them by His causeless mercy. When Rūpa Gosvāmī first met Lord Caitanya, Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore offered this prayer: “I offer You my most humble obeisances, for You are



the most munificent *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa, offering what was never offered before, even by Kṛṣṇa Himself—pure love of Kṛṣṇa.” These are some of the special features of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

Lord Caitanya’s appearing as the son of Śacidevī and Jagannātha Miśra cannot be compared to the birth of an ordinary conditioned soul. It is comparable only to Kṛṣṇa’s appearance as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva. Before the birth of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śacidevī, the wife of Jagannātha Miśra, gave birth to eight daughters one after another, but just after their birth they died. Unhappy at the death of his children, and desiring a son, Jagannātha Miśra worshiped the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu. After this, Śacidevī gave birth to a highly qualified son, whom they named Viśvarūpa. Greatly pleased with their son, the husband and wife especially began to serve the feet of the Supreme Lord.

Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes elaborately what happened next: “In the month of January in the year 1407 of the Śaka Era [A.D. 1486], Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the bodies of both Jagannātha Miśra and Śaci. Jagannātha Miśra said to Śacimātā: ‘I see wonderful things! Your body is effulgent, and it appears as if the goddess of fortune were now staying personally in my home. Anywhere and everywhere I go, all people offer me respect. Even without my asking, they voluntarily give me riches, clothing and paddy.’

“Śacimātā told her husband: ‘I also see wonderfully brilliant human beings appearing in outer space, as if offering prayers.’

“Jagannātha Miśra then replied: ‘In a dream I saw the effulgent abode of the Lord enter my heart. From my heart it entered your heart. I therefore understand that a great personality will soon take birth.’” (Cc. *Ādi-līlā* 13.80-5) Śacidevī did not become pregnant as an ordinary woman becomes pregnant because of sensual indulgence. But exactly as Kṛṣṇa appeared in the heart of Devakī through the heart of Vasudeva, so Lord Caitanya appeared in the heart of Śacidevī through the heart of Jagannātha Miśra.

While Śacidevī was pregnant, Nilāmbara Cakravartī (the grandfather of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu) astrologically calculated that in that month, at an auspicious moment, the child would be born. At the time of Lord Caitanya’s appearance, a wonderful natural phenomenon occurred—a full lunar eclipse. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes, “When the spotless moon of Caitanya Mahāprabhu became visible, what would be the need for a moon full of black spots on its body?”

In India all the followers of the Vedic scriptures customarily bathe in the Ganges or the sea as soon as there is a lunar or solar eclipse. Strict followers of the Vedic religion stand in the water throughout the eclipse and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. At the time of Lord Caitanya’s birth such a lunar eclipse took place, and naturally the people standing in the water were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja relates that not only were the followers of the *Vedas* chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, but the Mohammedans and others joined them, imitating the chanting. Thus Hindus and Moslems joined together in chanting the holy name of the Lord when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared. It was miraculously appropriate that He who throughout His life would induce everyone to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa appeared in the world at a moment when everyone was joyfully chanting

because of the lunar eclipse. Certainly it signaled the advent of a great leader of *saṅkīrtana*.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja relates that the whole world was induced to blissful chanting of the holy names by the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. “All the ten directions became jubilant, as did the waves of the rivers. Moreover, all beings, moving and nonmoving, were overwhelmed with transcendental bliss. . . . At that time Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu, in His own house at Śāntipura, was dancing in a pleasing mood. Taking Haridāsa Ṭhākura with Him, He danced and loudly chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. But why they were dancing no one could understand. . . . In this way all the devotees, wherever they were situated, in every city and every country, danced, performed *saṅkīrtana*, and gave charity by mental strength on the plea of the lunar eclipse, their minds overwhelmed with joy.” (Cc. *Ādi-līlā* 13.97,99,103)

**A**fter the Lord’s appearance, respectable ladies of the neighborhood came to visit the newly born child, whose bodily color resembled shining gold. Among them, Sitādevī, who was Advaita Ācārya’s wife and a recognized devotee, was astonished when she saw Viśvambhara, for she could appreciate that except for a difference in color, the child was directly Kṛṣṇa Himself.

*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states, “Lord Caitanya is very merciful to anyone who hears this narration of His birth, and thus such a person attains the lotus feet of the Lord.” (13.122)

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes that the pastimes of Lord Caitanya are unlimited and that he can give only a tiny part of them in his book *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Of that tiny part, we have here taken only a brief glimpse, as space would permit. The readers are advised to read *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* further, especially for an elaborate discussion, supported by scriptural references, concerning the identity of Lord Caitanya with Kṛṣṇa Himself. There is also extensive material on the happy results of chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has recently completed his translation, with purports, of the entire *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (11,555 verses). The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has published three volumes of the set, and at least nine more volumes will be printed before it is completed. As Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports establish, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is genuinely continuing Lord Caitanya’s mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

We hope that these few lines on the appearance of Lord Caitanya will encourage interest in the potent reality of Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is authentically based on the Vedic literature and intended precisely for this age. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja emphatically states that if one is at all interested in his self-betterment, he should not miss the chance to take to the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: “Anyone who attains a human body but does not take to the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is baffled in his opportunity. *Amṛtadhuni* is a flowing river of the nectar of devotional service. If after getting a human body one drinks the water in a poison pit of material happiness instead of the water of such a river, it would be better for him not to have lived, but to have died long ago.”



"In this Age of Kali, people endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the golden incarnation of the Lord [Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu], who is accompanied by His associates, by performing congregational chanting of the holy name of God."  
—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.32)

Thousands of years ago, the Vedic scriptures revealed that in the present Age of Quarrel, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the guise of a devotee, would descend to this material world to distribute love of God. Thus God Himself would teach us how to approach God. To fulfill this prediction, the Supreme Lord appeared in the year 1486 in the town of Māyāpura, which is on the bank of the Ganges in what is now known as West Bengal. ["The Appearance of Lord Caitanya," in this issue, gives further details about the Lord's descent.] In this incarnation, Lord Kṛṣṇa, as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, taught that the easiest, most effective means for self-realization is the chanting of the holy names of

God, especially Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has brought *saṅkīrtana*, or the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord, to all parts of the world. And each year, during the anniversary of Lord Caitanya's appearance, many of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples from the worldwide ISKCON centers of the *saṅkīrtana* movement go to Māyāpura, where they celebrate Lord Caitanya's appearance and become increasingly enthusiastic to serve the Lord with devotion.

To perform devotional service, one should purify his mind and senses and use them to satisfy the Supreme Lord, following the instructions of a bona fide spiritual master. The purpose of traveling to a holy place like Māyāpura is to advance in such purified devotional consciousness.

Lord Caitanya prescribed that one should begin his spiritual life in devotional service by hearing of the Lord's activities from a realized devotee of the Lord. If one cultivates spirituality in this way and keeps himself on the honest path in life, then although Kṛṣṇa is never conquered, He becomes conquered by that process.

In this Age of Kali there is no possibility of acquiring spiritual knowledge by renunciation, by speculation or by fruitive work. Because most people are fallen and because there is no time to elevate them by a gradual process, the best course, according to Lord Caitanya, is to let them remain in whatever occupation they are in but to engage them in hearing of the activities of the Supreme Lord as those activities are explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The transcendental messages of the scriptures should be received from the lips of realized souls. In this way a person may continue to live in whatever occupation he is in and still make

by Viśākhā-devī dāśī

# ŚRĪDHĀMA MĀYĀPURA

## A Holy Pilgrimage





progress in spiritual advancement. Thus one can surely advance and fully realize the Personality of Godhead.

One who has begun this process finds that his transcendental feelings are aroused simply by hearing of the glorious names, forms, qualities and entourage of the Supreme Lord. Such a fortunate person develops a desire to visit the places where the Lord performed His transcendental pastimes. Confirming the importance of visiting such holy places, the *Purāṇas* say, "To travel to different places of pilgrimage means to attain emancipation from material bondage. By such traveling, one can pass over the desert of material existence."

Throughout the beautiful green farmlands on the island of Māyāpura, the devotee has occasion to remember the Lord

constantly: "Near this *nīma* tree, Śacīdevī bore a son known as Viśvambhara [Lord Caitanya]. That son is the maintainer of the entire universe and is the leader of all living entities. The moon was eclipsed at the time of the Lord's appearance, and the people of Māyāpura were then engaged, as is usual on such occasions, in bathing here in the Ganges with loud chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. At this place Keśava Miśra of Kaśmīra, the greatest scholar of the day, was defeated by Lord Caitanya, who was then still a young boy. And here, in the house of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, several years later, the Lord opened a nocturnal school of *kīrtana* [chanting] with His sincere followers. There He preached, sang, danced, and expressed all sorts of spiritual emotions. At this place the Lord came in the evening, with thousands of followers, and had a long

discussion with the local ruler, a Mohammedan Kazi. And here the Kazi, feeling the highest ecstasy in the association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, joined the Lord's *saṅkīrtana* party."

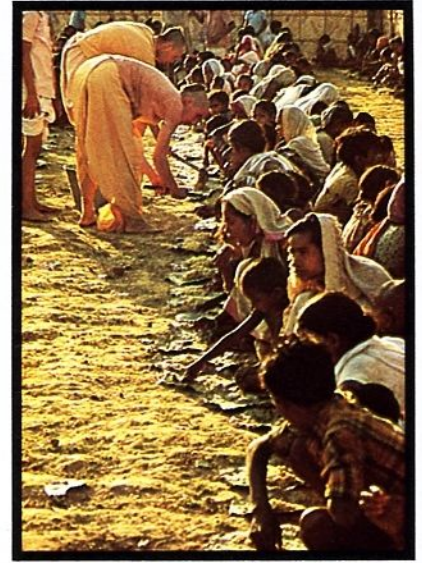
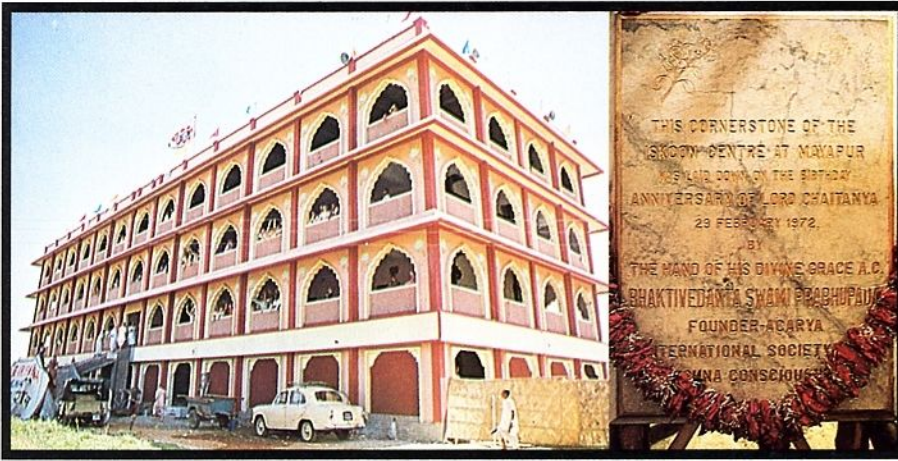
In this way, the devotees visit all the places in Māyāpura where Lord Caitanya's pastimes were performed. So those coming to this sacred land always feel transcendental pleasure.

During the pilgrimage to Māyāpura this year, the devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* with their Godbrothers from around the world, and they will also visit the places where the Lord performed His pastimes. But most importantly, they will hear instructions about Kṛṣṇa from their spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Preceding page: Joyful ISKCON devotees circumambulate Māyāpura on Bhaktisiddhānta Road. The road is named after the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. This page: Pilgrims serenely float down the River Jalāngī to the home of the great spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktiyoḍa Thākura. Below: Following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, ISKCON devotees from East and West join in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in the streets of the city of Navadvīpa.







Above: The first of four residential buildings in Mâyâpura that will accompany a proposed ISKCON temple, with 108 domes, and an ISKCON university for spiritual education. Cornerstone marks the beginning of construction. Right: Distribution of food to the local people, after it has first been offered to Kṛṣṇa, is one of the important programs at ISKCON's Mâyâpura Center.





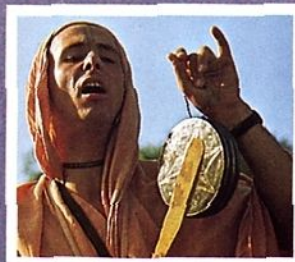
Prabhupāda, who has spread the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and the teachings of Lord Caitanya throughout the world. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, such a great personality is a holy place personified. He can turn any place into a holy place of pilgrimage because he carries the Personality of Godhead within his heart. The Personality of Godhead is always with such a pure devotee because of his unalloyed service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples have therefore set the following verse by the great Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura as the guiding theme for their pilgrimage to Sridhāma Māyāpura:

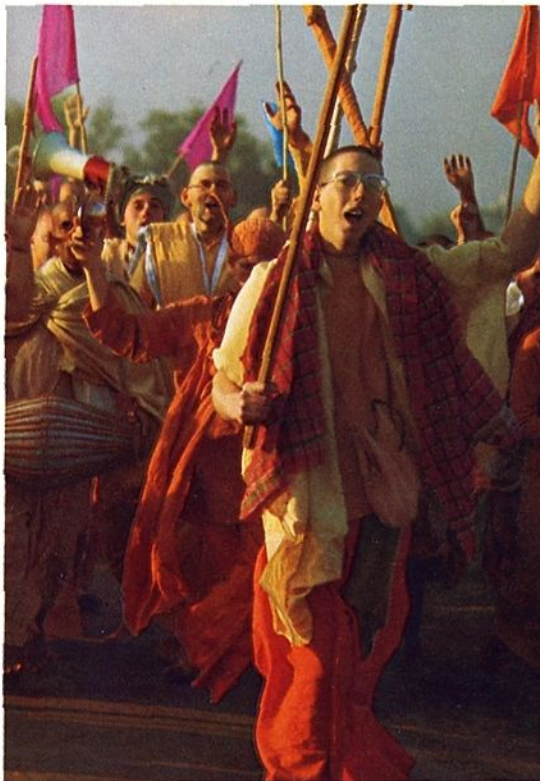
*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo  
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi  
dhyāyam stuvāms tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

"By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any progress. Therefore, I should always remember and praise the spiritual master. At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of the spiritual master."

By hearing about the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness from such a pure devotee, we can gradually come to understand that there is no difference between the Supreme Lord and His name, form, pastimes, qualities and abode. They are all on the same spiritual level. The Lord's holy name is therefore as good as the holy places of pilgrimage. By visiting a holy place like Māyāpura, one can be freed of all impurities. But even if one cannot go to such a place, one can have the same benefit at home—or anywhere—simply by chanting the holy names of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. ❀



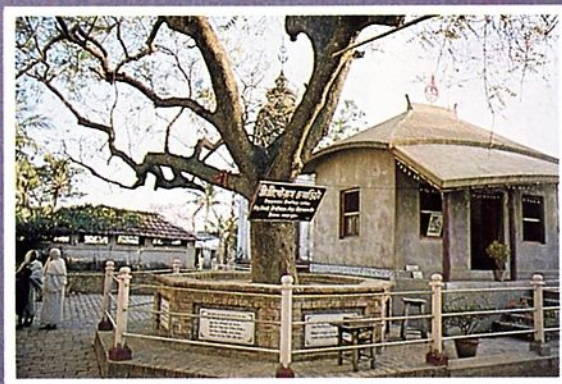
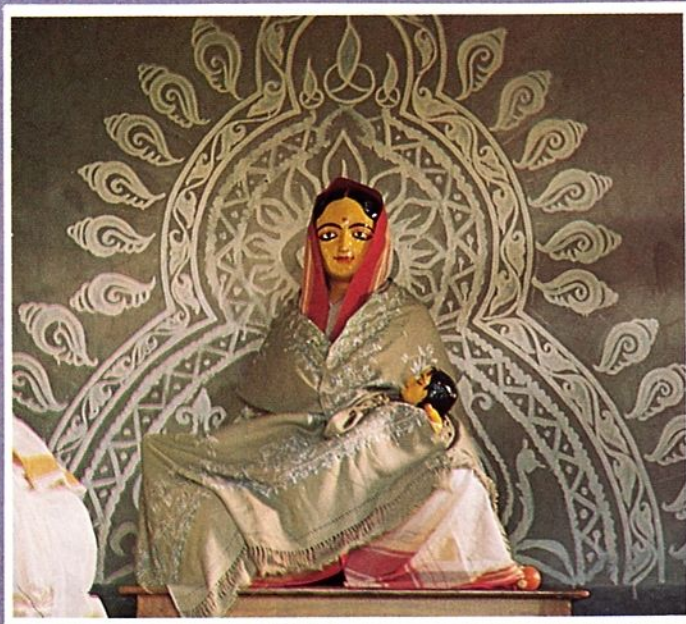
Background: The full evening moon illumines the land of Māyāpura on the anniversary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance. Left and below: Devotees hold saṅkīrtana—congregational chanting—outside the temple surrounding the holy place where Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared.







Above: Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu bestow Their blessings upon Their devotees at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. Below and right: Beneath the nīma tree at the site where the Lord appeared stands a replica of His father's humble cottage. Figures of Lord Caitanya as an infant with His mother, Śacīdevī, are on view within.





# THE GLORIES OF ŚRĪDHĀMA MĀYĀPURA

by Nitāi dāsa

Śrīdhāma Māyāpura is the home of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this abode, apparently located in the district of Nadia, West Bengal, the Supreme Personality of Godhead wonderfully appeared almost five hundred years ago. He appeared in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the most merciful incarnation of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Generally the Supreme Personality of Godhead is invisible to the eyes of ordinary people, who are lacking in spiritual knowledge. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.25), *nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ*: "I am not manifest before all people, for I am covered by My *yoga-māyā*, or spiritual energy." In Māyāpura, however, He drew back the curtain of His *māyā* and revealed Himself, with His associates and His wonderful activities, before the eyes of all. For this reason, Śrī Māyāpura is a dear place for those sincerely trying to follow the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And that place is dear to Him also.

One might ask, since the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the owner and controller of everything, why should He choose one spot as particularly dear? The answer is that He is like a rich man, who may control a thousand acres of land but still be the most fond of the two or three acres where his house is located and his family lives. In this way, although Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, is the proprietor of all the planets within this universe and all the spiritual planets beyond, certain places are especially dear to Him. Within this universe, He has chosen certain places for performing His transcendental pastimes. Such places, like Kurukṣetra, Jagannātha Purī,

Vṛndāvana and Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, have thus become famous because of the Lord's activities.

The chief doctrine taught by the *Vedas*—and strongly underlined by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the one nondual Absolute Truth, and anything connected with Him is the same nondual Truth. The Lord and His name, the Lord and His fame, the Lord and His qualities, activities and paraphernalia are all one and the same. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is never tinged by material qualities, and so anything associated with Him is also spiritual. The abodes in which the Supreme Lord has carried out His activities are therefore spiritual and pure. And although they appear within the material world, in fact they are transcendental, beyond the material creation.

Since these abodes are absolute, one cannot distinguish between them to assign more importance to one than to another. Nevertheless, because Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has appeared in this Age of Kali, the Age of Quarrel, specifically to give the religious principles for this age—and, indeed, to give love of Godhead as it has never been given before—His abode, Māyāpura, is considered the highest of all the abodes of the Supreme Lord. Although all the abodes, being absolute, are one and the same, still there are distinctions among them. That is the inconceivable nature of spiritual truth, which exists beyond the feeble minds of ordinary men. The truth about the Supreme Lord and His names, qualities, pastimes, paraphernalia and abode can be understood only by realization. And those devotees who have realized the highest level of perfect love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, have concluded that Māyāpura is the highest abode.

*Nitāi dāsa, a graduate of Exeter Academy and the University of Colorado, is a personal secretary to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.*





**Lord Caitanya and His associates dance and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in this diorama at Śrīdhāma Māyāpura.**

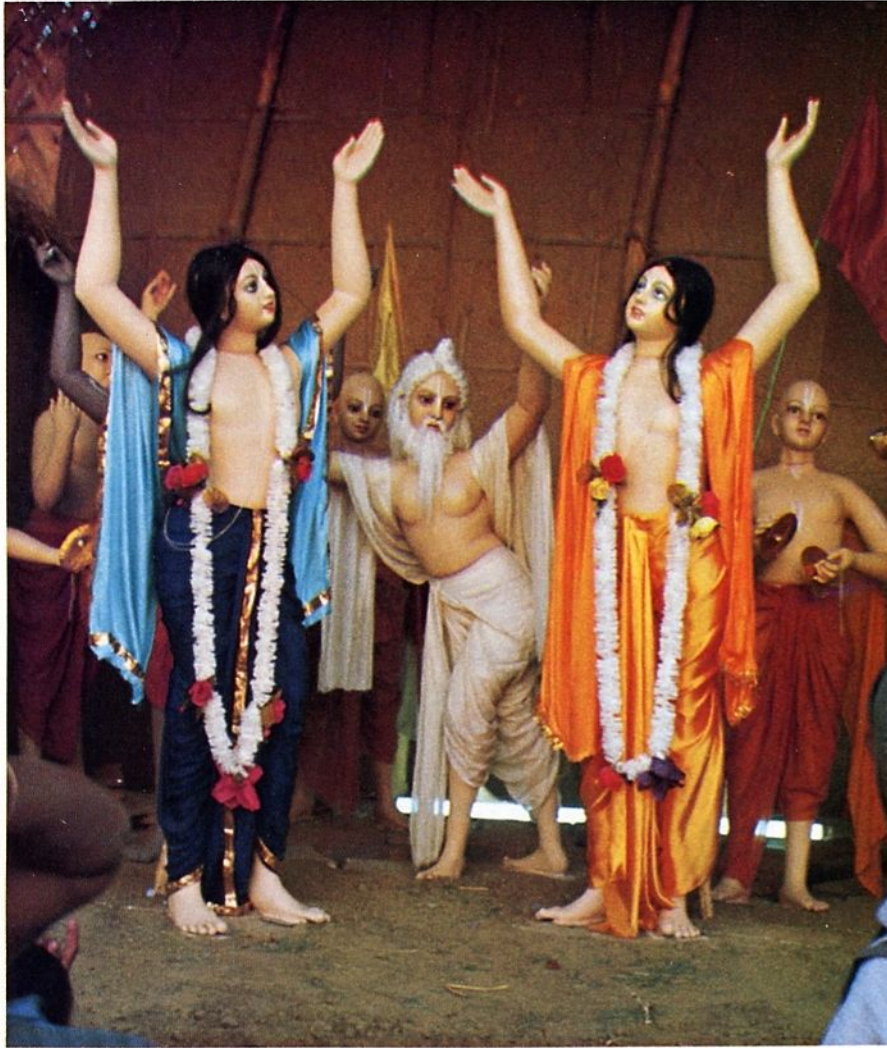


Photo: Viśākhā-devī dāsī

**Discovering the Original Site.** During the last century, when Śrīdhāma Māyāpura was all but forgotten, the great spritiual master Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda vigorously sought to restore it to its true importance. To be near that holy spot, he several times requested, while serving as a Government magistrate, to be transferred to the town of Kṛṣṇanagara, which is near Śrī Navadvīpa (Māyāpura). When all such

requests were rejected, he was willing to resign so that he could live where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had appeared. When the Government officials saw his sincerity and intentness, however, they finally granted his request for a transfer. Thereafter, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda spent every spare moment visiting Navadvīpa, a town on the Western bank of the Bhāgīrathī, or Ganges.

To his surprise, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda

found that the city then called Navadvīpa was not more than a hundred years old and so could not have possibly been the same Navadvīpa, or Māyāpura, where Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu had appeared, although its residents tried to convince him that it was. Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, therefore, tried to find the actual appearance site of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Some people insisted that the city of Navadvīpa was indeed the site where the Lord had appeared, whereas others held that the actual site was now under the Ganges River.

In the midst of such different opinions, Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda ascertained the actual birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. By inquiring from the local people, he heard about a place northeast of Navadvīpa, on land owned by Moslems, where there were seven large mounds covered with *tulasi* plants. It was shrouded with rumors, and it was uninhabited and uncultivated by the local Moslems, who, because of stories about strange lights and sounds, considered it haunted and never went there. That very spot, he learned, was also respected by a few perfect devotees as the actual appearance site of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Furthermore, two maps made by British pilots who had navigated the Ganges in the Eighteenth Century marked a town named Nadia on the eastern bank of the Bhāgīrathī, north of the Jalāngī. That location corresponded to the one discovered by Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda then showed the site to Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji, the foremost devotee of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu at that time, who definitely confirmed that it was the site where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had appeared. Although Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji was incapacitated and had to be carried in a basket, when he reached that holy place



ISKCON devotees  
from around the world  
chant to honor Śrīla  
Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda  
at his home in  
Godruma-dvīpa.

and found it genuine, he immediately jumped up and began to dance, shedding tears of ecstatic love for Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**The Mission Begins.** Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda then began working to establish this holy place in its real glory. He started a campaign for funds throughout Bengal to establish a temple to Lord Caitanya and His consort, Viṣṇu-priyā. And by careful reference to the holy scriptures and transcendental realization, he located and marked all the different places of the Lord's pastimes. Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda himself took up residence on the island of Godruma, just across the river from the appearance site of the Lord. There he constructed a house, called Śrī Svānanda-sukhadakuñja, and he seriously began widespread preaching of the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The mission of preaching and developing Śrīdhāma Māyāpura was later taken up by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's son Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who spread Lord Caitanya's teachings throughout India and who in the course of his preaching established sixty-four *maṭhas*, or centers. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta further developed Śrīdhāma Māyāpura by constructing a large temple at the site of Lord Caitanya's appearance and establishing a *maṭha* where Candrasekhara, one of the Lord's associates, used to have his house. Now His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the spiritual son of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, is spreading the message of Śrī Caitanya all over the world, establishing temples in important cities, and further developing Śrīdhāma Māyāpura.

**Prediction Fulfilled.** It is said that Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, standing on the balcony of his house in Godruma

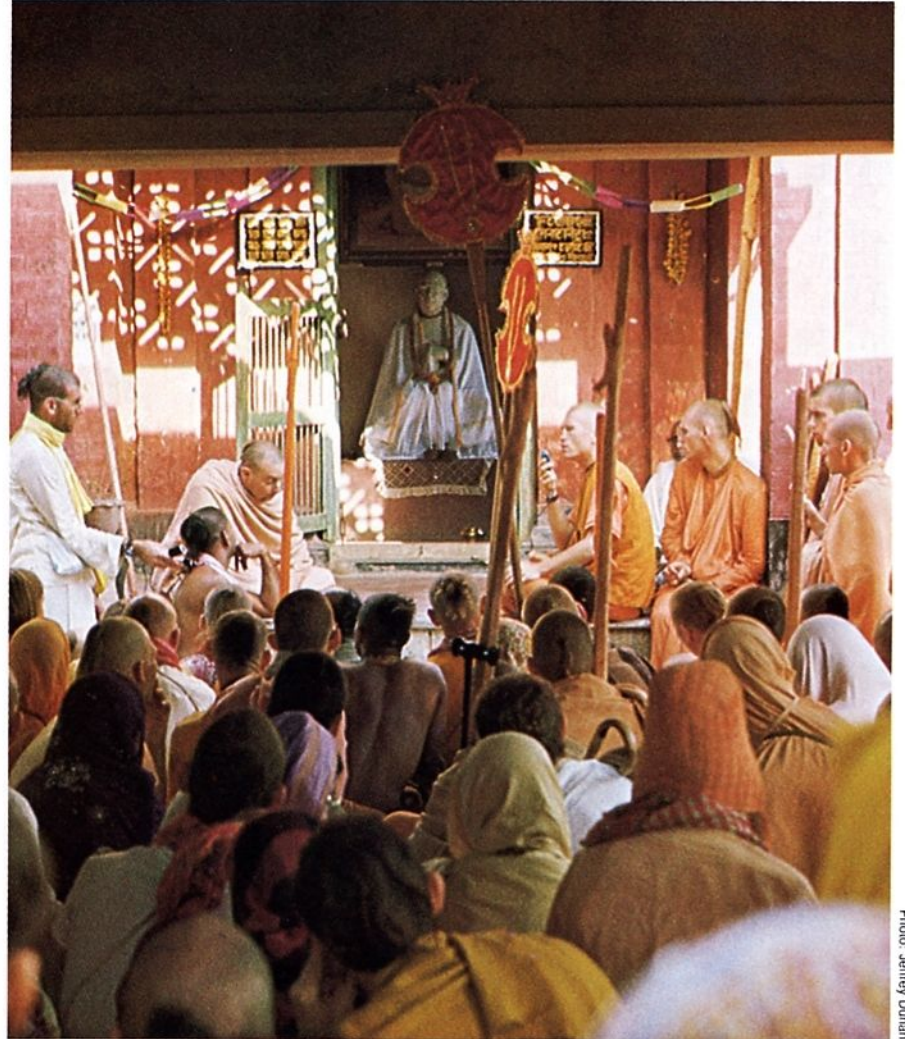


Photo: Jeffrey Dunan

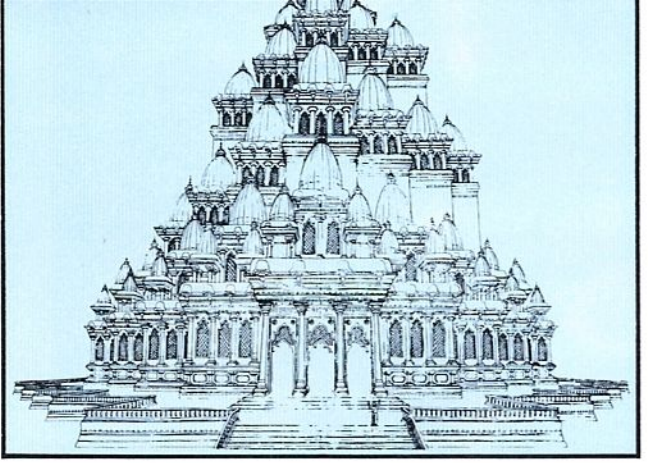
years ago, looked across the River Jalāngī toward the birthsite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and predicted that one day there would be a shining city filled with devotees of Lord Caitanya from all over the world. If today one visits the house of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda and goes to that balcony, he will see directly before him, fulfilling the prediction of Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, the ISKCON Māyāpura-candrodaya Mandira, ISKCON's World Center at the

Birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Explaining the name of ISKCON's Māyāpura center, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that *māyāpura-candra* means Lord Caitanya, who is compared to the moon, and *udaya* means "the arising." So *māyāpura-candrodaya* means "the arising of Lord Caitanya." He further said that the moon rises in two ways—by coming above the horizon and by growing from the new moon to the full moon. ISKCON's completed building in



A sketch of the temple planned for the ISKCON World Center in Māyāpura. When completed, it will be one of the largest temples in India.



Māyāpura, he said, is like the new moon, which gradually grows until full. When the ISKCON project in Māyāpura is actually completed, the prediction of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda will be totally fulfilled.

In his recent visit to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, His Divine Grace further solidified the plans for the future city. He indicated the site for an enormous temple to be constructed, pointed out the main streets of the future city, showed where other roads should be constructed and where land should be bought, and encouraged the construction of a huge lake, surrounded by a park, with bathing places for the future residents. In this way, he gave many ideas for a city of pure devotion to the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As Māyāpura-candrodaya develops, the entire world will be able to see the potency of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. From all over the world people will come to stay there, live peacefully and advance steadily in spiritual life. The only actual platform on which all the people of the world may stand united is one of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord, and that is found only in the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Every other philosophy or solution, if examined carefully, will be found to fall short. The Māyāpura-candrodaya Mandira, therefore, will be the shining example for all the nations of the world.

The discoverer of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, has written in simple Bengali verse a book called *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya* (*The Greatness of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma*). I am humbly submitting a translation of the first chapter in the hope that those who have taken to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and are making efforts to take shelter at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu will be encouraged and inspired with en-

thusiasm to go to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, either to visit or to stay and help this great program develop.

I humbly offer my respectful obeisances to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, by whose mercy I have been able to visit the holy abode of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and whose mercy I am begging in order to describe the glories of that transcendental land. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda entitles his first chapter "The General Greatness of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura."

ALL GLORIES TO NAVADVĪPA-CANDRA, the moon of Navadvīpa, the son of Śrī Śacidevī. All glories to Lord Nityānanda, the wandering mendicant. All glories to Śrī Advaita Prabhu, the greatest personality. All glories to Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita.\* All glories to Navadvīpa, the essence of all holy places. All glories to the residents of Navadvīpa, who are associates of Lord Caitanya. At the feet of all the devotees, I offer my humble obeisances. I shall briefly describe Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma.

The glories of the circle of Navadvīpa are unlimited. Even Brahmā and the other demigods do not know them. Who, then, can describe these glories? If Lord Śeṣa Nāga cannot describe them fully with one thousand mouths, how shall I, a tiny living entity, describe them? Although it is true that these glories are unlimited and that even the god of gods, Lord Śiva, cannot reach their end, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's desire is very strong, and His devotees dispense their orders under the control of that desire. By the desire of Lord Caitanya, the devotees have given their command. Thus I shall describe the glories of Nadia by their mercy.

**Intimate Pastimes Revealed.** There is one very confidential topic of which I

\*Lord Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita Prabhu, Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita were principal associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

do not desire to speak but cannot refrain from speaking. Since the time when Lord Caitanya became unmanifest, the devotees have ordered that His pastimes be made manifest in His eternal abode. It is known throughout the material creation that my Lord Caitanya's incarnation is more confidential than all others. His confidential pastimes, of which the scriptures speak in a confidential way, do not appear in the minds of nondevotees. Māyā-devī (illusion) has for a long time covered and hidden all the confidential scriptures connected with these pastimes. And aside from the many such unmanifested scriptures, Māyā-devī, by covering the eyes of the *paṇḍitas*, or learned scholars, always hides whatever topics appear concerning Lord Caitanya in the revealed scriptures also. Thus the deep pastimes of Lord Caitanya have become unmanifest. But Māyā is very sincere in knowing the desire of the Lord, and she has taken away the deception from the eyes of the living entities. Thus the truths of Lord Caitanya are manifested in this material universe, and the hidden and confidential scriptures have very easily become manifest, dispelling the dilemmas of all the arguments of the living entities.

It is the most merciful Lord Nityānanda who has manifested the truths of Lord Caitanya in the hearts of the living entities. By His order, Māyā gives up her covering, and thus learned devotees can obtain that scriptural wealth. One whose doubt of this is undestroyed is a very unfortunate person. Why does he uselessly continue to live? When the Lord extends His mercy, all fortunate people become very happy. O people! Just see the symptoms of the unfortunate. They consider themselves intelligent, but do not accept the mercy of the Lord. Rather, by false arguments they fall into Māyā's pit again and again. *continued on page 28*





Photo: Muralivadana dāsa



# SANĀKĪRTANA

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ / kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*  
**"O King, the Age of Kali is an ocean of faults. It is an age of quarrel, confusion and hypocrisy. But in this age there is one great advantage—simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, one can be freed of all material contamination and thus be elevated to the spiritual world." (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 12.3.51)**

Photo: Yaduvara dāsa



The age of Quarrel and Hypocrisy—Kali-yuga—is the age we live in now. It is an age fraught with problems and anxieties, a confused age in which spiritual progress is especially difficult. Therefore, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, descended to this world as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to give humanity a direct and potent way to make progress in self-realization

and consciousness of God. That authorized way for spiritual advancement is the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, or Great Chant for Deliverance—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The original Vedas explicitly declare that no spiritual path is superior to

that of chanting the mahā-mantra:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa  
 kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
 hare rāma hare rāma  
 rāma rāma hare hare*

*iti ṣoḍaśakam nāmnām  
 kali-kalmaṣa-nāśanam  
 nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ  
 sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate*

“These sixteen words—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/





Photo: Caitanya dāsa

Sankirtana in New York City

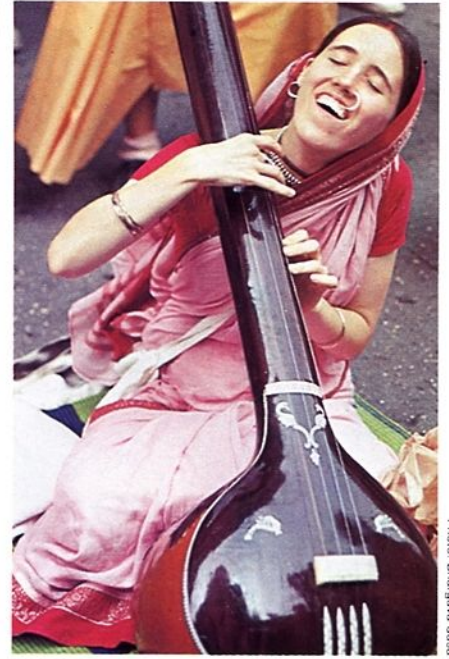


Photo: Bhāgava dāsa

Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are especially meant to counteract the degrading and contaminating influence of the materialistic Age of Kali. After searching through all the Vedic literature, one cannot find a method of religion more sublime for this age than the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.” (*Kalī-santarāṇa Upaniṣad*)

To further emphasize that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is the genuine Vedic way to achieve spiritual success in our modern age, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu often quoted the following verse from the *Bṛhan-nārāḍīya Purāṇa*:

*harer nāma harer nāma  
harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva  
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari [Kṛṣṇa].”

In this Age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa (*kālī-kāle nāma-rūpa kṛṣṇa-avatāra*). Therefore, simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone

who does so is certainly delivered. This chanting has been introduced in the West by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. His Divine Grace says, “Since Kṛṣṇa and His holy name are identical, the holy name is eternally pure and beyond material contamination. It is the Supreme Personality of Godhead as a transcendental vibration.”

In the Vedic literature, Kṛṣṇa is compared to the sun, and *māyā*, or illusion, is compared to darkness. Just as the sun, appearing above the horizon, dissipates the darkness of night, so Lord Caitanya’s movement of *sankīrtana*, or congregational chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, can dissipate the materialistic consciousness of the Age of Kali.

In his purports to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the



Saṅkīrtana at ISKCON's annual Rathā-yatrā Festival in London.

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa



essence of the *saṅkīrtana* movement: “The *saṅkīrtana* movement has been introduced by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu just to dispel the illusion of *māyā*, by which everyone in this material world thinks himself to be a product of matter and

therefore to have many duties pertaining to the body. Actually, the living entity is not his material body; he is a spirit soul. He has a spiritual need to be eternally blissful and full of knowledge, but unfortunately he identifies himself with the body, some-

times as a human being, sometimes as an animal, sometimes a tree, sometimes an aquatic, sometimes a demigod, and so on. Thus with each change of body he develops a different type of consciousness with different types of activities and thus



Saṅkīrtana in Surat, India.

Photo: Yadvuvara dāsa



## A Taste of the Full Nectar

BY TRIPURĀRI DĀSA

Everyone appreciates some aspect of God's innumerable manifestations. As stated in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, *janmādy asya yataḥ*: everything comes from the Supreme Lord. In both the spiritual and material worlds, Lord Kṛṣṇa is providing countless varieties of situations for all living beings, who are parts of Him. In the material world, although we cannot perceive His hand in everything, He directs the wanderings of all living entities (*bhṛāmayan sarva-bhūtāni*). And in the spiritual world, where He is always visible, He arranges to fulfill the desires of His pure devotees. Nothing exists that the Lord has not sanctioned; in fact, not a blade of grass moves outside the will of God.

God has provided this material world to allow us to try to be happy without Him, and to teach us that our attempts to do so will always be fruitless. So we cannot hold God responsible for our sufferings, for we have

offer. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa is the life of all that lives. Kṛṣṇa has the entire spiritual world to offer everyone—we simply must choose to associate with the Lord directly, in harmony, rather than in opposition to His will.

Kṛṣṇa gives knowledge for the conditioned souls through the Vedic literatures, which contain knowledge of both the spiritual and material worlds. This knowledge can afford us full appreciation of life, and this alone can satisfy us. It gives us a taste of the full nectar for which we are always anxious. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has told us, in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, or eight verses of instruction, that this taste is found in the *saṅkīrtana* movement, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, which is the life of all transcendental knowledge. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*, "There is nothing as sublime as transcendental knowledge." And the *saṅkīrtana* movement is both the realization and the distribution of such transcendental knowledge.

If we are at all looking to be happy by understanding



chosen them ourselves. By our material desires, manifested in our activity, we continuously implicate ourselves in a cycle of birth and death. Struggling in this world for survival, forgetful of our real nature, we appreciate but little of what the Lord has to offer.

The Supreme Lord is the reservoir of pleasure, security and knowledge. Yes, knowledge, too, comes from God. God has all knowledge. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "From Me come knowledge, remembrance and forgetfulness." We are suffering, but only because of ignorance. What is that ignorance? It is the bodily concept of life. When we forget our true spiritual nature, we try hard to satisfy our bodily senses. "I am this body," we think, "and everything related to this body is mine." This is the primary dictation of the false ego. We are born into this misconception, and our false ego is enhanced when we are misinformed about our ultimate benefit by other conditioned souls, who are also misinformed but who pose themselves as authorities. Thus we try to be satisfied and enjoy life without really understanding what life has to

who we are, we can begin by appreciating the happiness we can find in the transcendental message spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Handed down to us as it is, *Bhagavad-gītā* is not merely a book. To the contrary, it is the most secret of all secrets, the king of knowledge. It is a manifestation of the Lord's opulence of knowledge.

Yet if we choose to go further, we can appreciate the most wonderful aspect of the Lord—His mercy. By His mercy, He sends His devotees from door to door, from person to person, to distribute knowledge of Him. Such devotees have no other thought than how to deliver the fallen souls back to Godhead, how to bring them in direct touch with their only real friend, Lord Caitanya. We all belong to Lord Caitanya. Just see His mercy as He yanks us out of the darkness of *māyā* (illusion) to join Him eternally in His pastime of *saṅkīrtana*. "Say, stop a second—we want to give you one of these books. They let us see how to enjoy life in a more real way." This simple request by a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee is actually the request of Lord Caitanya. Expressing the transcendental desire of Lord Caitanya, we ask you to give a donation for the costs of printing, read one of the books of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and then pass it on to a friend.

*Tripurāri dāsa, a traveling preacher, is so devoted to distributing Kṛṣṇa conscious literature that Śrīla Prabhupāda has called him "the incarnation of book distribution."*



becomes increasingly entangled in material existence, transmigrating perpetually from one body to another. Under the spell of *māya*, he does not consider the past or future but is simply satisfied with the short life span he has gotten for the present. To eradicate this illusion, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has brought the *saṅkīrtana* movement, and He requests everyone to accept and distribute it."

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested His followers to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world, and He predicted that through their efforts His holy name would one day be chanted in every village and town on the surface of the globe. As a sincere servant of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has taken up the mission of spreading the *saṅkīrtana*

movement, and thus he has been able to render a great service to humanity in this Age of Quarrel and Confusion. Although ten years ago few people in the West had even heard of Hare Kṛṣṇa or Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, now these names are becoming household words in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Australia and, in fact, throughout the world. In the purports of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is being distributed all over the world through the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa


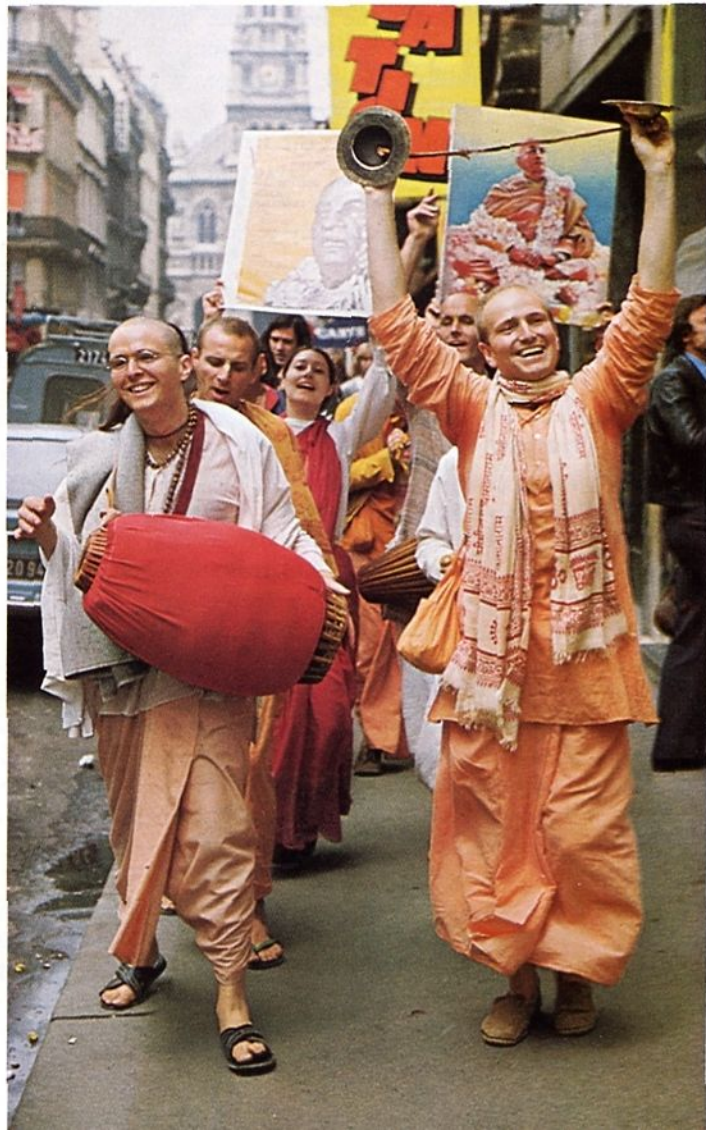
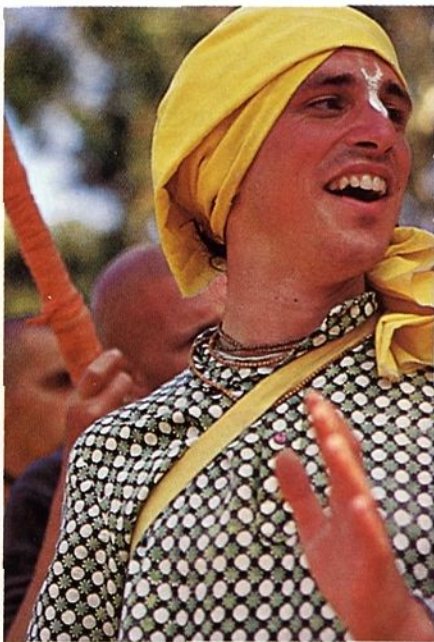
*mahā-mantra*, and people who were leading confused, chaotic lives are now feeling transcendental happiness. They are finding peace in *saṅkīrtana*, and therefore they are acknowledging the supreme benefit of this movement." Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, declines to accept any personal credit for the success of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. "This is the blessing of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu," he continues. "His prediction is now factually being fulfilled, and those who are sober and conscientious are appreciating the value of this great movement." 

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa





“O my dear Kali-yuga living being, please come here. Give up all of your crooked ways. Just take this pure love of Lord Gaurāṅga.” Saying this, Lord Nityānanda calls again and again. But these unfortunate people do not accept the invitation. Why don’t people respect such unalloyed love? Considering very diligently, just see how all living entities are making so many arrangements for happiness. Some argue, and some practice *yoga* within this material world. For happiness one gives up household life and goes to the woods. For happiness one king fights another. For happiness one man chases women and gold. For happiness one cultivates art and science. For happiness one gives up happiness and teaches misery. For happiness one flounders in the ocean and drowns.

Calling loudly and raising both His hands, Lord Nityānanda says, “Come here, living entity. Give up your dilemmas of fruitive action and speculative knowledge. I shall give you the perfect activity for happiness, and in return I shall take nothing. There is no difficulty in this. There is no loss, and you will not be hurt in any way. Uttering the holy name, Gaurāṅga, just dance without anxiety. There is no mistaking it. You will always feel pure joy.” In this way Lord Nityānanda distributes love of God. But the unfortunate, because of their sinful activities, do not want it. Anyone who even once says “Gaurāṅga-Nitāi” puts an end to the results of unlimited sinful activities.

**Offenses Pardoned.** O people! Please hear one more confidential topic. The wealth of the pastimes of Lord Gaurāṅga is just suitable for the living entity influenced by the Age of Kali. Lord Gaurahari, as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, eternally enjoys His pastimes with the *sakhis* (cowherd girls). The living entities have long been able to understand the principle of those Vṛndāvana pastimes from the revealed scriptures. Certainly those eternal pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the glory of Śrī Vṛndāvana. Indeed, those glories of Kṛṣṇa’s name and Kṛṣṇa’s abode, although unlimited, are made known to the entire world by means of the holy scriptures. Still, people generally do not obtain pure love

for Kṛṣṇa. Just consider within your heart, “What is the reason for this?” In this there is one confidential truth, which a living entity deluded by the material energy cannot consider. If one worships Kṛṣṇa for many births and yet does not develop love of Godhead, there must be offenses in his worship. But if one becomes free from such offenses and chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, without difficulty he obtains pure love for Kṛṣṇa. Here is a great distinction between the incarnation of Lord Caitanya and that of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is so merciful that even in the existence of offenses, the living entity obtains from Him the wealth of pure love for Kṛṣṇa. Any living entity who calls “Nitāi-Caitanya” need not search; rather, pure love for Kṛṣṇa flows from his eyes, and in a short time the offenses themselves flee, his heart becomes purified, and thus the pure love increases. The offenses of the living entities in the Age of Kali are unlimited and inevitable, and without the holy name of Gaura there is no deliverance from them. “Except for Lord Gaurāṅga, we see no means of deliverance in the Age of Kali.” That is what the scriptures shout.

In Navadvīpa, Lord Gaurāṅga has appeared. Navadvīpa is the greatest of all the holy places. In other holy places of pilgrimage, offenders are severely punished, but in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa offenses are always cleansed away. The proof is found in the two brothers Jagāi and Mādhāi. Despite having committed many offenses, they attained the shelter of the Lords Caitanya and Nitāi. Just put aside talks of other holy places; even in Vṛndāvana offenders are punished. But in Navadvīpa-dhāma, even if one commits hundreds and hundreds of offenses, by the mercy of Lord Nityānanda one can easily be delivered.

**The Essence of All Abodes.** Such is the glory of Navadvīpa-dhāma, which is in the circle of Gauḍa (West Bengal). “Most fortunate is that land,” say all the *ṛṣis*, or sages. O brother! One who resides in the land of Navadvīpa is greatly fortunate, for he obtains pure love for Kṛṣṇa. Whosoever goes at any time to visit Navadvīpa becomes freed from all offenses. Whatever a pilgrim obtains by wandering to all the holy places is ob-

tained simply by remembering Śrī Navadvīpa. This all the scriptures sing. A person who simply sees Navadvīpa gets the great fortune of love for Kṛṣṇa birth after birth. Even one who practices *karma-* or *buddhi-yoga* never again takes birth if he goes to Navadvīpa. If a person wanders in Navadvīpa, at every step he obtains the result of ten million horse sacrifices. That too is stated in all the scriptures. If anyone resides there and chants his given *mantra*, that *mantra* becomes Lord Caitanya, and so he is easily delivered. What *yogis* obtain in other holy places after ten years of practice is obtained in Navadvīpa by practicing for only three nights. The liberation obtained in other holy places by knowledge of Brahman is obtained simply by bathing in the Bhāgīrathī in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. The five types of liberation—achieving the same planet as the Lord, getting a form similar to that of the Lord, obtaining opulence equal to that of the Lord, getting direct association with the Lord, and merging into the Brahman effulgence—can be obtained in Navadvīpa, even without one’s knowledge, by those who desire such liberation. Falling at the feet of the pure devotees in Śrī Navadvīpa, material enjoyment and liberation always remain their maidservants. The devotees, however, beat these two and try to drive them away. But still these maidservants do not give up the lotus feet of the devotees and run away. What one obtains, O brother, in the seven holy places after one hundred years is obtained in Śrī Navadvīpa by residing there a single night. That Navadvīpa-dhāma is the essence of all holy abodes. In the Kali-yuga the living entity can cross over the ocean of material life by taking shelter of Śrī Navadvīpa. The two fields of knowledge called *tāraka* (crossing over the ocean of material existence) and *pāraka* (obtaining the other side of that ocean) continuously serve the residents of Śrī Navadvīpa as a matter of ordinary course. Taking great pleasure, thus sings Bhaktivinoda, whose desire is the shade of the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda and His eternal consort, Jāhnavā-devī.

Thus ends the First Chapter of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya, entitled “The General Glories of Śrī Navadvīpa.”



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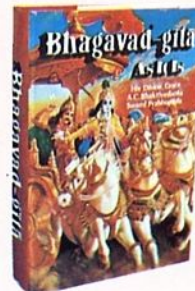
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