

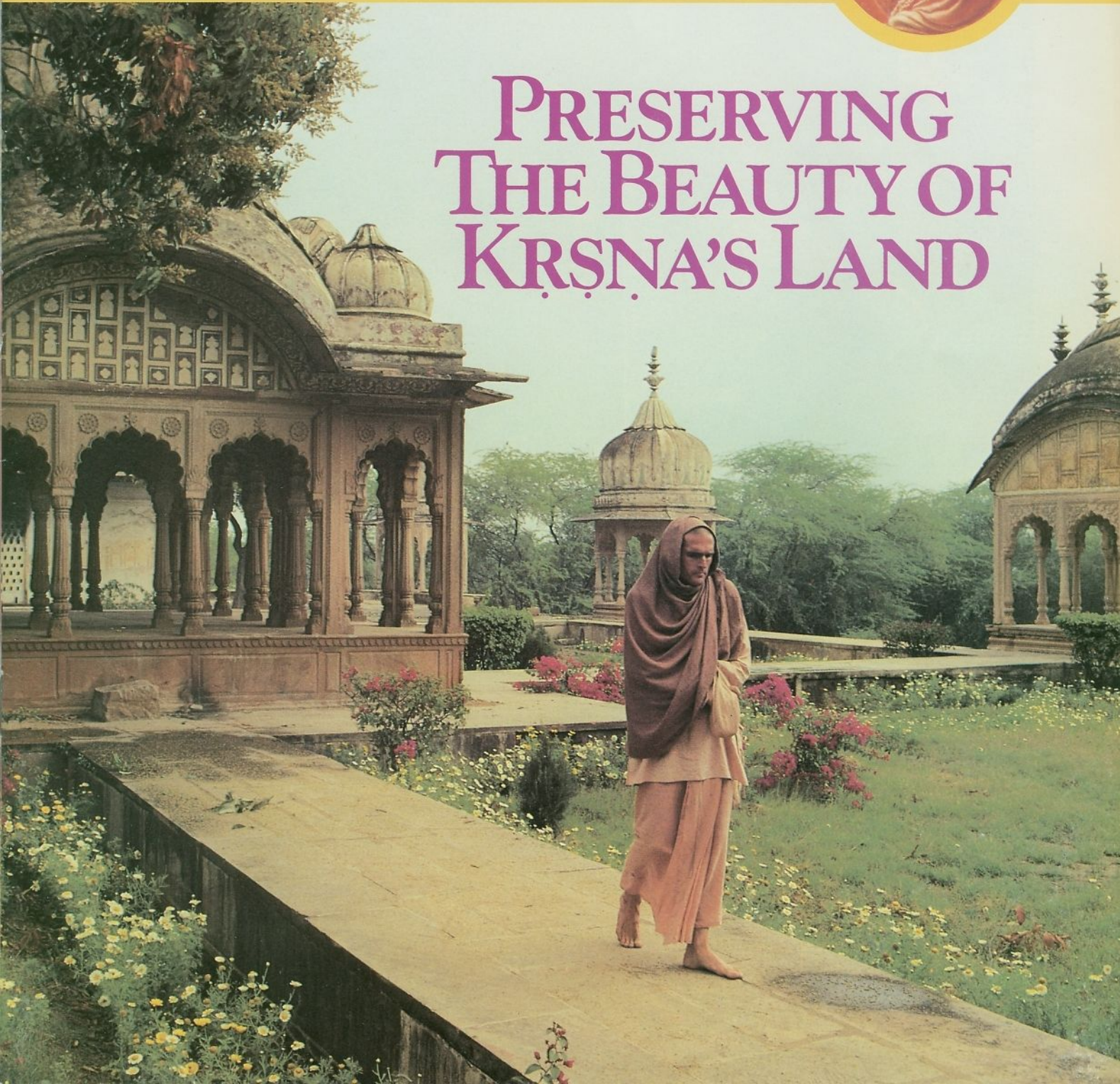
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PRESERVING THE BEAUTY OF KṚSṆA'S LAND





Yamarāja Dāsa

Gazebos mark the location of Kāliya Ghāta in Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa subdued the serpent Kāliya. The pilgrims' path around Vṛndāvana passes by this holy site, where the Yamunā River once flowed. Today the town's sewage flows by here in the old bed of the sacred river. (Please see the article starting on page 24.)

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

Founded 1944 • Vol. 26, No. 5 • September / October 1992



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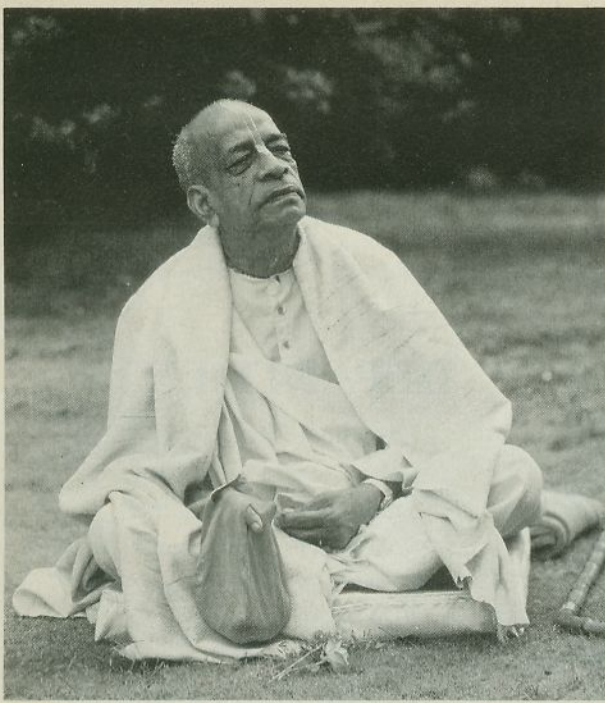
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FRONT COVER: A devotee walks in the gardens at Kusuma Sarovara, a holy site in Vṛndāvana, India. When Kṛṣṇa lived in Vṛndāvana fifty centuries ago, the local cowherd girls, His most beloved devotees, would come here to pick flowers for Him. Though this spot retains its beauty, much of Vṛndāvana faces ecological disaster. To see how devotees are fighting it, please see the article beginning on page 24. (Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa.)

BACK COVER: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhāvallabha at the ISKCON temple in Melbourne, Australia. (Photo by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī.)



**His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**
Founder-Ācārya of the
International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Statement of Purposes

Back to Godhead magazine is a cultural presentation to respiritualize human society. It aims at achieving the following purposes:

1. To help all people distinguish more clearly between reality and illusion, spirit and matter, the eternal and the temporary.
2. To present Kṛṣṇa consciousness as taught in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.
4. To offer guidance in the techniques of spiritual life.
5. To expose the faults of materialism.
6. To promote a balanced, natural way of life, informed by spiritual values.
7. To increase spiritual fellowship among all living beings, in relationship with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
8. To perpetuate and spread the Vedic culture.
9. To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God through the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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SPIRITUAL NAMES Members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with Dāsa (Dāsi for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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FROM THE EDITOR

Are You More than Green, Righteous, and Dead?

TWENTY YEARS AGO, no one gave a damn. You could gum up a river with factory sludge, chop down rain forests wholesale, spray fluorocarbons into the air like a kid sprinkling confetti, and no one would say boo.

No longer. Grade-school kids want to grow up to be ecologists. New York tycoons sort their trash to recycle. Rock singers play concerts to save prairies and wetlands. Political candidates tell us they're worried about the fate of the three-toed baboon.

Caring about the environment helps you feel good about yourself. At the supermarket you choose paper instead of plastic. You write your thank-you notes on paper made from ground-up newsprint and cotton waste. You chip in a few dollars for Greenpeace. Hey, you care about the earth. You're a righteous person.

Yet too often our concern for the earth lacks a metaphysical grounding. Intuitively, living in harmony with the earth feels right. If the earth is the house we're going to live in, why litter the rooms with beer cans or pee all over the carpet?

But in an ultimate sense, so what? If (I don't buy it, but *if*) life is just a series of chemical reactions, what does it matter if the chemicals go messy? Species come and species go. Why get all mushy and teary-eyed if a few berserk bipeds wipe out some hundred thousand kinds of

their neighbors? The earth may be our mother, but sooner or later she's going to blow to atomic dusting powder anyway. And from a cosmic point of view that's just a few mega-moments down the line. So why all the fuss?

You can say it's for our children, it's for future generations. But they're also just a flash in eternity. Why bother for them?

Guardians of the green remind us urgently that dirtying and devouring the earth is short-sighted. But to be far-sighted we have to look beyond what seems clean, pleasant, and harmonious on a physical spot of earth on a brief ride through the universe. We have to ask ourselves not only how well we're treating the earth but why we're on it and where we are ultimately going.

Otherwise, though ecologically aware, we're metaphysically dead.

In this issue of *Back to Godhead*, starting on page 24, you'll find the story of an ecological effort that grows from a deep-rooted spiritual understanding. In one sense, it's the story of how a group of people are trying to restore a certain tract of earth. But the effort has a purpose that goes beyond the earth, beyond matter, beyond time, beyond all limits. It's a story not only of how people can restore harmony to the earth, but how in doing so they can bring the world more closely in harmony with Kṛṣṇa.

—Jayādvaita Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda's

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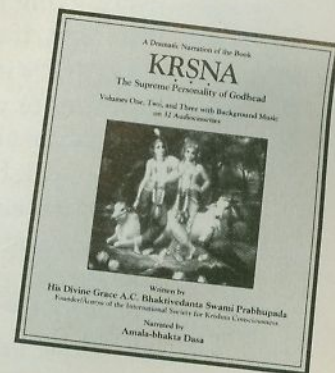
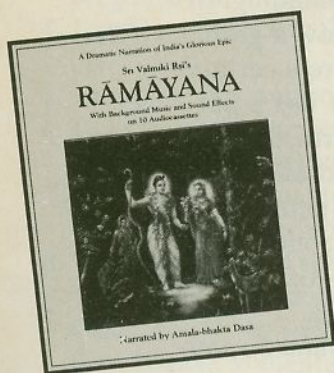
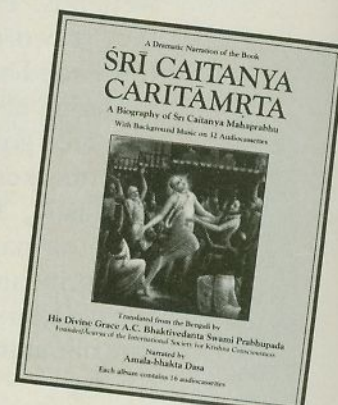
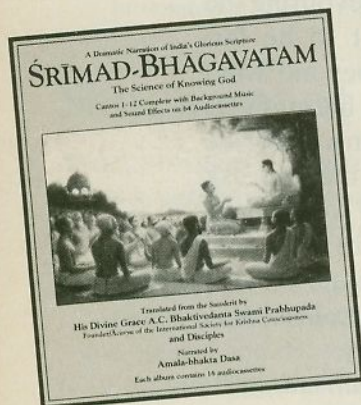
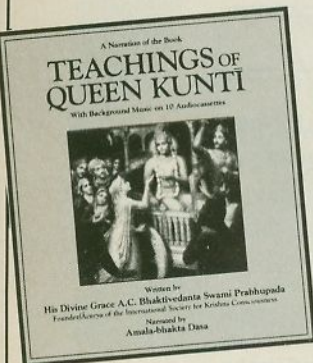
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LETTERS

Farming on Charity

It is relieving to find that interest in Vedic agriculture is gaining momentum in ISKCON. But I believe some adjustments are required in ISKCON farm infrastructure.

As Hare Kṛṣṇa Dasi mentioned in her recent article [Nov/Dec '91], "Cow protection that depends on charity can never become the economic basis of society." But many ISKCON farm communities are in fact run on charity. Using methods of income employed in city temples, such as congregational solicitations and communal businesses, many farms can barely pay the bills, what to speak of providing inspiration for devotees who seek to live in a *daivi-varnasrama* society.

Perhaps the GBC [ISKCON's governing body commission] could do more in this regard. Present corporate setups often restrict the possibilities for private enterprise or co-op efforts on our farms. Legal adjustments could go a long way toward bringing about agricultural prosperity for individuals on ISKCON farms.

If many householders can be convinced that the Vedic model can fulfill their needs, then surely we will be able to broaden the roof of the house in which the whole world can live.

Jñāna-śakti Dāsa

Ashcroft, B.C., Canada

HARE KṚṢṆA DĀSĪ REPLIES: *Making ISKCON's farms self-sustaining is a challenge. And as you say, we need help from ISKCON's leaders. If our communities can't pay their own way, they'll never become stable enough to attract people. And without the help of the GBC I don't think we will make much progress.*

But I believe that the GBC's interest will turn more in this direction. After all, what is the point of having a great farm if we can't create a farm-based Vedic economy to sustain it? The project would simply be artificial.

On the other hand, the burden of figuring these things out cannot fall solely

on the GBC. We can all give a hand by drawing on what we've learned from Śrīla Prabhupāda and from our own experience.

Devotees are organizing forums for this purpose. The first, a Conference on Community Development, scheduled for August in Los Angeles, will already have taken place by the time this magazine reaches press. A Conference on Ox Power and Varṇāśrama is scheduled for early August 1993 at Gītā Nāgarī Farm in Pennsylvania. These conferences will allow devotees to share their concerns and exchange knowledge on community development (either in person or by contributing papers).

One of the many topics for these forums will be our economic direction. Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us a system for a local economy that avoids the great problems of centralization presented by both the capitalist and the communist systems. But how do we get there from here? How much can we make room for the market economy and still move ahead toward self-sufficiency? What is the role of private ownership and responsibility in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? What is the role of the family in community development?

We urgently need to develop our communities and set up many Kṛṣṇa conscious ox-power farms. As things stand now, just one full-scale oil war could jack up feed grain prices high enough to wipe out most of the cows and bulls in the developed countries within a couple of years. Last time, the world got a reprieve: the conflict was brief and the economic disruption fairly small. Next time we may not be so lucky.

So we hope many devotees such as you will join in the discussion of how we can build farm communities that can stand on their own to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement according to Śrīla Prabhupāda's desires.

Please Come Back

It's not possible for us to read each issue of BTG. But the article on spiritual falldown and the letter written by Pusta

Kṛṣṇa Dasa [BTG March/April] are indeed very good. We are going to translate them into Chinese so that all the devotees here can read them.

We sincerely welcome those who have left this movement to come back, again surrender, and engage in devotional service. Yes, please come back!

We'd like to offer our respectful obeisances to Pusta Kṛṣṇa Prabhu and Mr. Dan Richardson [same issue of BTG] for their coming back to do service again.

Please keep on with such topics.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and others
Hong Kong

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Parenting

As parents of three young children, as doctors with special interests in family and pediatric medicine, and as aspiring servants of the servants of Lord Caitanya, we were touched by Cintamani Devi Dasi's article [BTG March/April]. Parenting is a tenderly powerful eye-opener to devotional practice and can teach what undivided service means. Pregnancy, childbirth, and early rearing of children expose parents to some of the greatest feelings of helplessness and vulnerability, heightening our dependence at the lotus feet of the Lord.

Like Cintamani Devi Dasi we too find that example speaks louder than words. The lives of the Vaisnavas speak for themselves. It is the underlying parental and community attitude that speaks to the impressionable children's hearts and spirits. Creating this requires direct participation of both mother and father, and also support of husband and wife for each other. This close family then needs the nurturing from the greater family of the Vaisnava community. And, of course, this creates fertile ground for reciprocation and advancing in the common goal.

Dr. Paul Oliver

Dr. Heena Oliver

Nottingham, England

Bhakti Yoga Club

I bought your latest magazine [May/June]. I loved all the articles, especially

the one about Anjali Sankhla's high school Bhakti Yoga Club. It's amazing that there's a time after school for students to learn about Kṛṣṇa together. I wish there had been a Bhakti Yoga Club when I was in high school. Anjali's devotional activities at home and in school are very enlivening. I'd like to congratulate her for her superb job.

Pat Moore
Dearborn, Michigan

My husband and I enjoy reading your magazine. We were very impressed with Anjali Sankhla's high school Bhakti Yoga Club. The family tree she put together shows her devotion, hard work, and intelligence. It will help us understand the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* better.

Thank you very much for printing her articles. They were very inspirational for my husband and me.

Jane Miller
Vienna, Virginia

When I saw the front cover of your latest BTG, I became overwhelmed with joy. Anjali Sankhla's altar on the front cover is gorgeous. I never knew that someone could have such elaborate worship in their home. It's great!

Kate Brown
Windsor, Ontario

Parenting: Authoritative vs. Authoritarian

It was with great sadness that I read the recent article by Sri Rama Dasa about "Four Kinds of Parents." The ideas in that article epitomize the conservative authoritarian approach to child-raising that has failed so-called fundamentalist Christians and others who have sought to forcibly channel their children's behavior into socially acceptable and parent-gratifying lines.

First of all, Sri Rama Dasa Prabhuh outlines four different parenting styles in a manner that could have been lifted verbatim from a right-wing educational diatribe, as if they were Vedic categories. It is grossly misleading when such descriptions are published unchallenged, and without a clear explanation of the real sources of the theories. The bias of the article is clearly seen in the choice of labels. "Permis-

sive" is a pejorative term long applied by right-wingers in America to explain how it could have happened that a generation of young people turned away from war, animal slaughter, materialistic addiction, and slavish obedience to the government, turning instead to other lifestyles, including the Hare Krishna movement.

In his analysis of the "neglectful" parent, he lists as one of the unfortunate results of such a parental attitude a poor response to "discipline outside the home (from teachers, pastors, police, and so on)." Do devotees really want their children to give blind obedience to police and other representatives of the cruel, materialistic American society we find ourselves in? If those who are now members of the Krishna consciousness movement had given such obedience to karmi culture, they would today be good little meat-eating workaholics instead of ecstatic devotees of the Lord.

As the father of two small children, I certainly do not want my kids to learn slavish obedience to outside authority. We must not forget that we must be discriminating and judge who is a legitimate authority and who is not. We are given clear guidance that a leader must act in accordance with sadhu [saints] and sastra [scripture]. My wife and I want our children to grow up thinking for themselves. We accept very seriously our obligation as devotees to provide an atmosphere that will encourage and nurture our children's Krishna consciousness.

Of the devotee parents I know, some are open, loving, and generous and teach their children by example, while others are more stern and authoritative. That is variegatedness. I am aware of no categories given by Krishna or Srila Prabhupada that outline the divisions in parenting styles presented in this article. You do a disservice to the devotee community by publishing such a one-sided and misleading article.

My fear is that the article will have a chilling effect on parents in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Now those parents who, out of fear, practice the same authoritarian ways of child-rearing that their parents did (unsuccessfully) will be bolstered in their belief that if they

just demand enough, their kids will grow up just like them. And those parents who seek to raise their children with affection and gentle exploration, while not compromising the principles of Krishna consciousness, may be intimidated into thinking that gentleness is somehow not Krishna conscious.

Another troubling fault in Sri Rama Dasa's article is the tendency, noticed increasingly in the pages of *Back to Godhead*, to refer to the authorities and experts of karmi, cow-killing society for advice. It should be clear that we should rely on more benign sources for our information and theories and not look to the culture that hates Krishna, delights in killing cows and human beings, has no concern for the unfortunate among us, and daily tortures innocent animals in laboratories.

Krishna consciousness flourishes when children feel love and unqualified support from their parents and the surrounding devotee community. Remember that honey attracts much better than vinegar.

Everyone, including devotees, is entitled to his opinions on various matters, under the guidance of guru, sadhu and sastra. But those opinions should not be presented in the pages of *Back to Godhead* as fact.

Let us be honest, loving, and open with our children and lead them by example. Then we are serving the Divine within them, and when we do that we are making the world a little more conscious of Krishna. Hare Krishna!

Bhāva Dāsa
San Carlos, California

ŚRĪ RĀMA DĀSA REPLIES: *I must have failed to properly explain the difference between "authoritarian" and "authoritative" parenting. The complaints and fears expressed by Bhāva Dāsa seem directed at the authoritarian approach, a mode of action I definitely did not recommend.*

Authoritative parenting embodies two primary concepts: (1) transferring values and (2) setting reasonable limits.

Parent's must try their best to pass on their genuinely held values. This is especially true for devotees. Otherwise, what is the meaning of the following injunc-

LETTERS

tion from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.5.18): "One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother, or a worshipable demigod"?

Vedic culture was highly authoritative. Children received the same clear value messages from parents, teachers, relatives, neighbors, the government, and so on. Now, when children hear nothing but a conflicting cacophony of "situation ethics" from all sides, don't we owe them something more than just setting a good example? Shouldn't we take the time and trouble to explain why we lead the lives we do?

Śrīla Prabhupāda also advised that we directly engage our children in devo-

tional service. He said it is like fire: it will have its effect whether one knows its potency or not. Never forcing—but direction and encouragement.

Our children should and will learn to think for themselves. But at the right time. Prabhupāda referred to Cāṇakya Paṇḍita's recommendation to treat them like friends at sixteen years—not before. From five to sixteen years a more disciplined approach is called for.

From everything I've seen, heard, and studied, children (including teenagers) want and expect parents to set reasonable limits on their behavior. Limits inspire feelings of stability and concern. Properly applied, they show that parents believe enough in their values to take steps to instill them in their sons and

daughters. Authoritarian parents say, "Do as I say or else!" Authoritative parents say, "Do as I do, and here is the reason why."

If one makes a detailed study of Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions to parents and teachers, one will find they fit the authoritative concept quite closely—clear and firm direction, but no force. Perhaps this approach hasn't worked for non-devotee parents because they had little to offer in genuine spiritual values. I don't think that should make us afraid to do the right thing ourselves.

We welcome your letters. Send correspondence to The Editors, Back to Godhead, P. O. Box 90946, San Diego, CA 92169, USA.

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SIMPLY LOVE KṚṢṆA

*The unconquerable Supreme Lord,
whom even the greatest scholars can't approach,
is controlled by the love of His devotees.*

• • •

by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
For Krishna Consciousness

*gopy ādade tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvad
yā te daśāśru-kalilāñjana-sambhramākṣam
vaktraṁ ninīya bhaya-bhāvanayā sthitasya
sā mām vimohayati bhūr api yad bibheti*

Queen Kuntī prayed: "My dear Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā took up a rope to bind You when You committed an offense, and Your perturbed eyes overflowed with tears, which washed the mascara from Your eyes. And You were afraid, though fear personified is afraid of You. This sight is bewildering to me."

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.31

HERE IS AN EXPLANATION of the bewilderment created by the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is the Supreme in all circumstances. Here is a specific example of the Lord's being the Supreme and at the same time a plaything in the presence of His pure devotee.

The Lord's pure devotee renders service unto the Lord out of unalloyed love only, and while discharging such devotional service the pure devotee forgets the position of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord also accepts the loving service of His devotees more relishably when the service is rendered spontaneously out of pure affection, without anything of reverential admiration.

Generally the Lord is worshiped by the devotees in a reverential attitude, but the Lord is meticulously pleased when the devotee, out of pure affection and love, considers the Lord to be less important than himself. The Lord's pastimes in the original abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, are exchanged in that spirit. The friends of Kṛṣṇa consider Him one of them. They do not consider Him to be of reverential importance. The parents of the Lord (who are pure devotees) consider Him a child only. The Lord accepts the chastisements of the parents more cheerfully than the prayers of the Vedic hymns. Similarly, He accepts the

Right: Child Kṛṣṇa flees from His mother, Yaśodā Devī, as if very much afraid.

Text from *Teachings of Queen Kuntī*. Illustration by Dīrghā Devī Dāsī.

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Indirectly, mother Yaśodā is praised for her unique position of love, for she could control even the all-powerful Lord as her beloved child.

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reproaches of His fiancées more palatably than the Vedic hymns.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa was present in this material world to manifest His eternal pastimes of the transcendental realm Goloka Vṛndāvana as an attraction for the people in general, He displayed a unique picture of subordination before His foster mother, Yaśodā. The Lord, in His naturally childish playful activities, used to spoil the stocked butter of mother Yaśodā by breaking the pots and distributing the contents to His friends and playmates, including the celebrated monkeys of Vṛndāvana, who took advantage of the Lord's munificence. Mother Yaśodā saw this, and out of her pure love she wanted to make a show of punishment for her transcendental child. She took a rope and threatened the Lord that she would tie Him up, as is generally done in the ordinary household. Seeing the rope in the hands of mother Yaśodā, the Lord bowed His head and began to weep just like a child, and tears rolled down His cheeks, washing off the black ointment smeared about His beautiful eyes.

This picture of the Lord is adored by Kuntī Devī because she is conscious of the Lord's supreme position. He is feared often by fear personified, yet He is afraid of His mother, who wanted to punish Him just in an ordinary manner.

Kuntī was conscious of the exalted position of Kṛṣṇa, whereas Yaśodā was not. Therefore Yaśodā's position was more exalted than Kuntī's. Mother Yaśodā got the Lord as her child, and the Lord made her forget altogether that her child was the Lord Himself. If mother Yaśodā had been conscious of the exalted position of the Lord, she would certainly have hesitated to punish the Lord. But she was made to forget this situation because the Lord wanted to make a complete gesture of childishness before the affectionate Yaśodā. This exchange of love between the mother and the son was performed

in a natural way, and Kuntī, remembering the scene, was bewildered, and she could do nothing but praise the transcendental filial love. Indirectly, mother Yaśodā is praised for her unique position of love, for she could control even the all-powerful Lord as her beloved child.

This pastime presents an opulence of Kṛṣṇa—His opulence of beauty. Kṛṣṇa has six opulences: all wealth, all strength, all influence, all knowledge, all renunciation, and all beauty. The nature of Kṛṣṇa is that He is greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest (*aṅoraṅīyan mahato mahīyān*). We offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa with awe and veneration, but no one comes to Kṛṣṇa with a rope, saying, "Kṛṣṇa, You have committed an offense, and now I shall bind You." Yet this is the prerogative of the most perfect devotee, and Kṛṣṇa wants to be approached in that way.

Thinking of Kṛṣṇa's opulence, Kuntī Devī did not dare take the part of Yaśodā, for although Kuntī Devī was Kṛṣṇa's aunt, she did not have the privilege to approach Kṛṣṇa the way He was approached by Yaśodāmāyī, who was such an advanced devotee that she had the right to chastise the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That was Yaśodā's special prerogative. Kuntī Devī was simply thinking of how fortunate was Yaśodāmāyī that she could threaten the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is feared even by fear personified (*bhīr api yad bibheti*). Who is not afraid of Kṛṣṇa? No one. But Kṛṣṇa is afraid of Yaśodāmāyī. This is the super-excellence of Kṛṣṇa.

To give another example of such opulence, Kṛṣṇa is known as Madana Mohana. *Madana* means Cupid. Cupid enchants everyone, but Kṛṣṇa is known as Madana Mohana because He is so beautiful that He enchants even Cupid. Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa Himself is enchanted by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and

therefore Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is known as Madana Mohana Mohiṇī, "the enchanter of the enchanter of Cupid." Kṛṣṇa is the enchanter of Cupid, and Rādhārāṇī is the enchanter of that enchanter.

These are very exalted spiritual understandings in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are not fictional, imaginary, or concocted. They are facts, and every devotee can have the privilege to understand and indeed take part in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes if he is actually advanced. We should not think that the privilege given to mother Yaśodā is not available to us. Everyone can have a similar privilege. If one loves Kṛṣṇa as one's child, then one will have such a privilege, because the mother has the most love for the child. Even in the material world, there is no comparison to a mother's love, for a mother loves her child without any expectation of return. Of course, although that is generally true, this material world is so polluted that a mother sometimes thinks, "My child will grow up and become a man, and when he earns money, I shall get it." Thus there is still some desire to get something in exchange. But while loving Kṛṣṇa there are no selfish feelings, for that love is unalloyed, free from the material gain (*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*).

We should not love Kṛṣṇa for some material gain. It is not that we should say, "Kṛṣṇa, give us our daily bread, and then I shall love You. Kṛṣṇa, give me this or that, and then I shall love You." There should be no such mercantile exchanges, for Kṛṣṇa wants unalloyed love.

When Kṛṣṇa saw mother Yaśodā coming with a rope to bind Him, He immediately became very much afraid, thinking, "Oh, Mother is going to bind Me." He began to cry, and the tears washed the mascara from His eyes. Looking at His mother with great respect, He appealed to her with feelings, (please turn to page 54)



Is Kṛṣṇa a Myth?

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami replies to a letter

Harish Dindigal
Syracuse University

Dear Harish,

I have seen the letter you wrote to the editors of *Back to Godhead*. You describe yourself as a South Indian Hindu *brāhmaṇa* “asking questions and inquiring seriously about religion.” You are a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, but as you tell me, the scholarly books you are reading have confused you.

I think the reason you are confused is that these books are anti-religious. If you are inquiring about God out of a hankering to know Him, then you are searching in the wrong place. Professed atheists whose authority is the speculation of the mind and who study religion only as an academic or historical exercise cannot satisfy the needs of the self. Such persons are especially unfit to understand confidential topics about the nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

As a graduate student in computer engineering, you know that each science has its own experts. For example, to study computer science you have gone to recognized experts in computing. If you had wanted to learn medicine or law or violin playing, you’d have gone to doctors, lawyers, or violinists. Similarly, to understand God you have to approach experts in the science of God.

Every world religion has a theology, a scientific approach to understanding God. Among these theologies, the Vedic teachings are the oldest and most comprehensive. The actual science of Kṛṣṇa, however, lies beyond even the student of religion; it can be understood only by one who is transcendently qualified.

Those who are not Kṛṣṇa’s devotees can never be experts in understanding Him. So the Vedic literature forbids us to try to understand Kṛṣṇa

by hearing their commentaries and explanations. As stated in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*avaīṣṇava mukhodgīrṇam
pūtaṁ hari-kathāmṛtam
śravaṇam naiva kartavyam
sarpochīṣṭam yathā payah*

“One should not hear about Kṛṣṇa from a nondevotee. Milk touched by the lips of a serpent has poisonous effects; similarly, talks about Kṛṣṇa given by a nondevotee can also be poisonous.”

Commenting on this verse, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “We should strictly follow this injunction and never try to hear from Māyāvādīs, impersonalists, voidists, politicians, or so-called scholars. Strictly avoiding such inauspicious association, we should simply hear from pure devotees.”

Some of the books you have read declare that Kṛṣṇa never existed and that He is just a myth. The authors speak from their own historical analysis, from disbelief in God’s descent as an *avatāra*, and from an inordinate trust in their own speculations. And so they dismiss the formidable evidence of the Vedic scriptures, the testimony of those who witnessed Kṛṣṇa’s appearance, and the teachings of learned Vedic scholars and devotees throughout the ages.

You are at a crossroads in your religious life. So you have to decide which authorities you are going to accept.

The ancient philosophers of India have thoroughly discussed the points upon which the empirical and scriptural authorities clash. Such persons as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, and in the modern age the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs and Śrīla Prabhupāda have all knocked apart the false arguments used to show that Kṛṣṇa is just a myth or an ordinary man. Some of Prabhu-

pāda’s followers have also written books discussing the claims of mundane Indologists. You may like to look at those books. I think they may help you. For example, see *Archeology and the Vaishnava Tradition*, by Steven Rosen. This book clearly establishes the pre-Christian roots of Kṛṣṇa worship. Also, see my *Readings in Vedic Literature*, in which I give evidence that empirical approaches to Vaiṣṇava teachings have been faulty and biased and have failed to let the tradition speak for itself. Also, see the books of Sadāpūta Dāsa. Sadāpūta writes for the scientifically trained person who wishes to understand and confront the differences between mundane science and Vedic thought.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11) Śrī Kṛṣṇa states, “Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord of all that be.” Commenting on this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda states, “The scholar may be born an extraordinary man due to his previous good work, but his conception of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is due to a poor fund of knowledge.” Materialistic scholars, Śrīla Prabhupāda says, “do not know that Kṛṣṇa’s body is a symbol of complete knowledge and bliss, that He is the proprietor of everything that be, and that He can award liberation to anyone. Because they do not know that Kṛṣṇa has so many transcendental qualifications, they deride Him.”

You mentioned that some scholars criticize what they see as flaws in Kṛṣṇa’s character. “Kṛṣṇa’s retreat from the warriors Kālayavana and Jarāsandha is inconsistent with His hero image. The destruction of the Yādava clan and the death of Kṛṣṇa are themes derived from outside India.” Again scholars are poking their noses into an area to which they have no proper access. The so-called flaws in Kṛṣṇa’s character are displays of

transcendental variety in His pastimes. God always has a purpose to accomplish in His pastimes. Learned devotees understand that purpose and glorify Him as all-good.

For example, when Kṛṣṇa ran from the demon Kālayavana on the battlefield, the demon thought that Kṛṣṇa feared him. So the demon kept running after Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa led him far away into a cave. Was Kṛṣṇa hiding in the cave to avoid fighting? With this thought in mind, Kālayavana rebuked Kṛṣṇa and followed Him inside. There Kālayavana saw a man lying asleep. Thinking it was Kṛṣṇa, the demon kicked the man, who then awoke and opened his eyes. As soon as the man glanced upon Kālayavana, rays of fire emanated from the man's eyes, burning Kālayavana to ashes. This was a tactic Kṛṣṇa used to kill Kālayavana and deliver the sleeping man, who was a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa's named Mucukunda. Commenting on this narration, Prabhupāda writes that when Kālayavana was following

Kṛṣṇa, running very fast, "he could not catch Kṛṣṇa because he was not free from all contaminations of sinful life." Similarly, the mundane scholars cannot catch Kṛṣṇa with their speculations of "mythology" and "character flaws."

When Kṛṣṇa left the battlefield during His fight with another demon, Jarāsandha, the Lord again had a special purpose. He wanted to attend to a confidential letter He had received from Rukmiṇī, His future wife. By leaving the battlefield, Kṛṣṇa also displayed the opulence of renunciation, showing that He was not attached to reputation or power. When time and circumstances were right, Kṛṣṇa proved that He was competent to defeat Jarāsandha.

Kṛṣṇa's devotees do not consider Kṛṣṇa's leaving the battlefield a shameful act. In fact, there are many temples, especially in Gujarat, where Kṛṣṇa is worshiped as Raṇacorajī, "He who left the battlefield." By hearing from pure devotees, we can understand that Kṛṣṇa, Raṇacorajī,

left the battlefield not out of fear but for another purpose. In similar ways, there are transcendental explanations for all of Kṛṣṇa's so-called controversial or contradictory activities. His dancing with other men's wives (the spiritual *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana), His disappearance from the earth (which was not by "death" but by His return to the spiritual world)—all such pastimes can be understood only from self-realized souls. Those who are envious of Kṛṣṇa will always try to find fault with Him. In the old days of British rule in India, missionaries used to criticize Kṛṣṇa's boyhood by saying He was a notorious butter thief! But devotees always worship and find pleasure in Kṛṣṇa's activities, despite the envious attacks of nondevotees.

In your letter you describe yourself as a devout Kṛṣṇa *bhakta*, but you express being disturbed by the scholars' allegations. You see a conflict between religious faith and scientific evidence. Don't feel intimidated. Although people who approach Kṛṣṇa sentimentally or with blind faith may

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not be acting scientifically, there is a science of Kṛṣṇa—Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is both superior to and transcendental to all the limited and imperfect material sciences found in this world.

I would advise, therefore, that you become a scientific student not only of computers but of Lord Kṛṣṇa, whom you have worshiped since your childhood. If you are serious about inquiring into God consciousness, then avoid those who are inimical and unqualified in their approach to the science of Kṛṣṇa. Go to those who have the transcendental qualification to teach you real religion.

Ultimately, Kṛṣṇa is known through love. That love is dormant within the

soul. What I have referred to as the science of Kṛṣṇa is properly called *bhakti-yoga*, and it is the means to purify the heart and bring out the innate love of Kṛṣṇa inherent in everyone. Whoever does this and attains even a little bit of love for Kṛṣṇa becomes the most learned person.

Please forgive me for trying to instruct you, Harish. You are fortunate because by birth you have worshiped Kṛṣṇa as God and heard about Him from your parents and from the scriptures. So you need not be affected by Western ways and awed by the apparent prowess of scientists and scholars. We who were born in Western countries, and who are not so fortunate as you, have heard this

atheistic speculation throughout our childhood and youth. There was little chance we would ever understand Kṛṣṇa. But by Kṛṣṇa's grace His pure devotee Śrīla Prabhupāda brought the science of Kṛṣṇa to the West by teaching *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, transmitting the words of the sages who know Kṛṣṇa in truth. It is only by Prabhupāda's mercy that I dare offer you some advice and encourage you to embrace your original faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami is the author of more than two dozen books, including a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda.



BHAKTI-YOGA AT HOME

The Art of Reading Transcendental Literature

by Rohiṇīnandana Dāsa

WHEN SŪTA GOSVĀMĪ spoke the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the sages in the Naimiṣāraṇya forest, the atmosphere was so intensely respectful that even the birds ceased their songs. The sages didn't cough or shuffle their feet; they were enraptured. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself had appeared in the form of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Those sages have long since crossed the great ocean of material illusion and happily returned home, back to Godhead, on the boat of transcendental sound. Although we stay here, apparently marooned, we can also take advantage of the boat. It still lies on our side, and the simple act of approaching this mystical boat reduces the material ocean to a puddle. As the sages crossed, so can we, by following in their footsteps, by hearing as they heard.

We'll find the boat of transcendental sound safely moored in the harbor of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. We can recognize this boat by its brilliance, which destroys the darkness of igno-

rance and doubt; by its beauty, which captivates the mind and heart; and by its breadth, for it easily encompasses the entire world in a small corner of its hold.

We cannot replicate the scene in the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya, but we can learn and perfect the art of reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. We can read as he wrote, pondering each word.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are transcendental sound. When he spoke into the dictaphone, Lord Kṛṣṇa and the members of the disciplic succession spoke through him. That spiritual sound was then transformed into the printed word, which, when read and assimilated, can once again manifest the full potency of the original sound.

Nondevotees cannot unlock the code of spiritual words, for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, reveals Himself to whomever He chooses. On the pretext of mere scholarship, we cannot force our way into the mysteries of Kṛṣṇa. Yet even the least edu-

cated person with the right attitude can understand the highest philosophical truths.

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* relates the story of a devotee in South India whose *guru* advised him to read the *Bhagavad-gītā* every day. He would read at the local temple, and because he often made mistakes in reading and pronunciation, people made fun of him. But he didn't care. He felt happy as he attended to his *guru's* order. In fact, as he read, tears sometimes welled up in his eyes, and his body trembled in ecstatic emotion.

Lord Caitanya once visited the devotee's village and saw him reading.

"Excuse Me, My dear sir," the Lord said, "How have you developed such ecstatic love? What portion of the *Bhagavad-gītā* gives you so much bliss?"

The devotee shyly replied, "I am illiterate and therefore do not know the meaning of the words. Sometimes I read correctly and sometimes incorrectly, but in any case I just picture

Lord Kṛṣṇa as Arjuna's charioteer. When I think how the Supreme Lord so humbly serves His devotee, I cannot help but cry."

Lord Caitanya declared, "You are the actual authority in reading *Bhagavad-gītā*. Whatever you know constitutes its real meaning."

This fortunate, humble person had faith in his *guru's* words and the scripture. To have faith in the *Gītā*, one must have faith in Kṛṣṇa, the speaker of the *Gītā*. In the Introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that to understand the *Gītā* one must at least theoretically accept Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unless we do, how can we take His statements seriously?

Taking the *Bhagavad-gītā* seriously is like stepping outside into the full sunshine. As the sun does not need anything else to prove its existence, so the *Bhagavad-gītā* is its own proof. For the doubtful there is enough logic and reason to help coax them out of the darkness of their houses of skepticism and ignorance.

Some Practical Suggestions

To help us develop the necessary reverence toward the scriptures, we can keep our books in a special place. In Burma some temples place the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on the altar as the main *mūrti*, or form of God. Imagine a complete set of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams* installed in your home!

Once one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples asked if he and his wife could worship small Deities as they traveled and preached. Śrīla Prabhupāda advised them to worship his books.

The books should not be put on the floor or the seat of a chair, or used as a resting place for other things. Sometimes devotees keep the book they are currently reading wrapped in a piece of fine cloth.

It's also a good idea to offer prayers before we begin reading. In our ISKCON temples, before reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* devotees chant *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*: "O my Lord, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You." It's

also good to have a prayerful attitude as we read. We can follow the example of Sanātana Gosvāmī, who prayed to Lord Caitanya that whatever the Lord had taught him would be manifest in his heart.

The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya, the devotee Lord Caitanya met, and Śrīla Prabhupāda all had a service attitude as they heard, read, or wrote transcendental literature. When we read, let us remember that we are also Lord Kṛṣṇa's servants.

When we read, it is important to remember that we are not alone. In a purport in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda thanks Nārada Muni for kindly appearing on the pages of this great literature. In other words, when we read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books we are directly associating with Śrīla Prabhupāda, all the previous spiritual masters, and the Supreme Lord Himself.

As with chanting, it's best to read daily, either a certain number of pages or for a certain

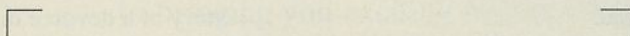
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amount of time. We can make a thorough study, noting interesting or difficult passages, or we can simply read our way through, confident of our spiritual purification. If we are surrounded by our children, we can paraphrase and dramatize the stories.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that besides reading, when we discuss

spiritual topics with others we become even more enlivened and make rapid spiritual progress. He tells us that the way to assimilate the knowledge of the revealed scriptures is to hear and explain them. Giving this essential knowledge to others will help us understand it ourselves. And anyone who makes a gift of the knowledge of

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will surely attain the highest perfection of life by returning home, back to Godhead.

Rohiṇinandana Dāsa lives in southern England with his wife and their three children. Write to him at Woodgate Cottage, Beckley Nr. Rye, E. Sussex TN31 6UH, UK



STRAIGHT TALK

Why Hare Kṛṣṇa And Hardcore?

by Bhakta Vic 108

IT'S NOTHING NEW.

Every curve and crevice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness has always been tightly interwoven and saturated thick with music. Kṛṣṇa philosophy says that music and sound are the very backbone on which the universe is constructed and therefore sound is the most powerful way to change the world.

It's true. Sound and music have fueled the machinery of every social change. The hippies and their acid rock. Limitless revolutions and its limitless anthems. Punk rock . . . Straightedge . . . New age . . .

Just go to any concert and see the power of sound. Kids drive hundreds of miles and pay a good chunk of their money to get in the door. Once they're inside, sound will toss them around the dance floor, impelling, commanding them to jump and run and scream and sweat.

The Kṛṣṇas can channel this audio-force fully because their spiritual process is built on music and sound.

Like everything powerful, music can cause havoc if misused—leading people to sex, drugs, and hatred. But if you use it right, it can rescue human consciousness from the swamps of egocentric envy and malice, evaporating the ocean of struggle drowning the people of the world. That's the purpose of Kṛṣṇa conscious hardcore bands.

Like I said, it's nothing new.

Thousands of years before Shelter and 108, thousands of years before the first Fender guitar ever fuzzed to life, Hare Kṛṣṇas have been touring the world writing and performing Kṛṣṇa conscious music, with the same purpose as today's hardcore bands.

Just to assure you I'm not dreaming this up as I go along, snowballing you to make you think I'm cool and hip, I'll quote from the ancient Vedic song called *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*deva-dattām imām viṇām
sarva-brahma-vibhūṣitām
mūrchayitvā hari-kathām
gāyamānās carāmy aham*

This is from a seriously long time ago, and it's sung by a devotee named Nārada. He says, "I'm constantly touring, playing my instrument [the *viṇā*], and singing spiritual songs decorated with transcendental messages."

Getting a little more modern: About five hundred years ago, Caitanya Mahāprabhu (who is Kṛṣṇa Himself) did a gigantic tour from town to town in India. He even sang while He walked. Everywhere He went audience participation was practically a hundred percent, and the lyrics were all holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Then there's Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. He's famous for his super-heavy lyrics (which inspired more than a few 108 songs). He toured eastern India,

and his songs are still sung today.

More recently, just a few generations back, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote more songs than you can count. His lyrics inspired Shelter's *Śaraṇāgati* and are directly translated in 108's *Gopinātha*. Often he'd sing in people's houses. He called it *nāma-haṭṭa* ("the holy name right in your home").

You're still doubtful? You can agree that there have been plenty of Hare Kṛṣṇa musicians in the past. But howling vocals? Electric guitars wailing away at full blast? A frenzy of passionate jumping around on and off the stage?

Well, try not to get carried away by the externals. Pierce the superficial and see hardcore for what it really is. It will become obvious that hardcore is a powerful medium for expressing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hardcore is a lot deeper than stage diving and gang vocals. By expressing emotion and philosophy through music, hardcore tries to make people happy by helping society and the individual progress.

The most progressive thing you can do is raise human consciousness out of egoism. It is egoism, self-centeredness, that gives birth to every puzzling crisis that strangles the eleven o'clock news.

When we put the interests of "I" before the interests of the environment, of the animals, of the hungry

and the poor, that's egoism.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness means turning around this insane attitude. It's like a shift from geocentrism to heliocentrism—a shift from gimme consciousness to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the pinnacle of kindness and compassion because it pulls human consciousness from the suffocating quagmire of me-ism.

How? By expression of spiritual emotion and philosophy through sound.

Kṛṣṇa conscious hardcore bands try to tune our consciousness back to Kṛṣṇa, the true center of existence, through musical glorification of Kṛṣṇa and His holy name. Yeah, so we turn the volume up a little louder—but the essential idea is still the same.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not only compatible with hardcore; Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the final evolution, the perfection, of hardcore and, for that matter, of all means of self-expression.

Bhakta Vic 108 joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement about two years ago. He and his band are based at ISKCON's temple in Washington, D.C.



THE LAND, THE COWS, AND KRṢṆA

The Farmer and the Cows

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāśī

The bull is the emblem of the moral principle, and the cow is the representative of the earth. When the bull and the cow are in a joyful mood, it is to be understood that the people of the world are also in a joyful mood. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.18, purport)

IN MY LAST COLUMN I discussed how government policies often drive farmers off the land. One important exception came in the early days of American settlement. In *Whereby We Thrive*, Smithsonian agricultural historian John Schleebecker documents numerous bills and provisions that encouraged Americans to take up farming.

One government policy, that of making large tracts of land available to farmers at little cost, was a great stimulus to farming. This practice was similar to the Vedic system under which the *kṣatriyas* (leaders) distribute land to *vaiśyas* (farmers) for production. But as we have seen, the particular type of agricultural development the U.S. government promoted has led ultimately to a precarious situation for everyone.

What Went Wrong?

The major problem was that the whole agricultural policy developed around centralization and animal slaughter, especially cow slaughter. In contrast, Kṛṣṇa advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that central to economic development in a *varṇāśrama*

society is *go-rakṣya*—cow protection. Let's examine how a policy of cow protection keeps things from getting out of hand.

Ox-Power Farming Keeps People in the Country

As I've explained, cow protection implies using the oxen for farming. While Mother Cow provides milk, Father Bull produces grain for his human children and is valued as a beloved member of society. One common objection to using animal power is that it takes a lot of people to produce grain this way. If we use a tractor, the argument goes, one person produces grain, and the rest are free to do other things.

But free to do what? Free to work in hellish factories, to live in nightmarish cities, to eat the flesh of innocent animals, and to buy an endless variety of artificial services and manufactured goods—without ever becoming satisfied. That's not really freedom; it's slavery. It's becoming a slave to manufacturers and to the senses. Cow protection protects human society by saving us from all these things. Farmers work hard, but they're free from the oppressive environment of the city.

Cow Protection Means Protecting Mother Earth

Protecting cows is the most important component of protecting the earth. In Sanskrit *go-rakṣya* means

“cow protection.” But it can also mean “protection of the earth,” because the word *go* means both “cow” and “earth.” The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* presents several accounts in which Mother Earth, Bhūmī Devī, assumes the form of a cow. So the cow is the representative of Mother Earth, and when the cow and the bull are mistreated, Mother Earth withdraws her bounty.

Under the *varṇāśrama* system, small ox-powered farms can benefit human society, benefit animals, and benefit the earth. A simple life in the country working with animals provides a natural, wholesome environment for human society. On a small farm, the animals can be given the most caring personal treatment, and the earth can be saved by thoughtful cultivation and the use of manure.

The proper use of manure—critical to protecting the earth—can best be achieved with small-scale ox-powered farms. As we hear from Sir Albert Howard, the grandfather of organic gardening, “No permanent or effective system of agriculture has ever been devised without the animal. Many attempts have been made, but sooner or later they break down. The replacement of livestock by artificials is always followed by disease the moment the original store of fertility is exhausted.”¹

In *The Violence of the Green Revolution*, physicist and agricultural philosopher Vandana Shiva details

how chemical farming causes desertification and ruins the soil. Manure from confinement cattle operations also causes immense environmental destruction. Authors like Jeremy Rifkin justifiably decry another horror of the cattle industry—the destruction of the Amazon rain forest for meat.² Exploiting cows ruins the environment. But we're missing out if we fail to see that cow protection is the most potent way to bring devastated lands back to lush growth.

With small-scale farming, the proper use of cow manure can provide the most valuable protection and enhancement of the soil. Only a small-scale farmer can fully use the miracle available in cow manure, because he's the one who truly cares for bulls and cows.

Still, someone may object that small-scale ox-powered farming doesn't make farmers a lot of money. It's true that this may mean farmers can't buy so many goods. But simple living eases the strain on the earth's resources.

Environmentalists are anxious to fight the pollution of the earth. If only they could realize the need to protect the cows and work the oxen. If all cows were well cared for and all our

grain were grown locally with oxen, so many workers would be involved that the whole world would become practically de-urbanized. With no one to work in the factories, no money squirreled away for manufactured goods, and no need to ship food around on vast transportation infrastructures, a huge burden on the earth would be lifted. Producing food and grain with oxen would also put the scythe to the need for petroleum (and the devastating oil wars that come with it).

Cow Protection Helps Sense Control

The word *go* has another meaning in Sanskrit. Besides "cow" and "earth," the word also means "senses." Kṛṣṇa has designed the *varṇ-āśrama* social system to help different types of people bring their senses under control so they can make spiri-

Miracle in Manure

I HAD PERSONAL EXPERIENCE of the miracle of cow manure while I lived at Gītā Nāgari Farm. In the fall of 1987 I dug a pit two and a half feet deep and filled it with fresh cow manure. I topped it with three inches of soil and compost and transplanted spinach and lettuce into it. Then I covered this hotbed with a cold frame (a four-sided box covered with plastic to let in the sun). The decomposing manure provided heat to grow the plants during the snowy months so that we could offer the Deities fresh garden greens in the winter. (The winter-grown greens were exceptionally flavorful.)

But the real eye-opener for me came the following year when my hotbed, six feet by four, was plowed under to become part of the potato garden. There was a horrible drought over most of the United States that year. Crops were so bad the government had to keep farms alive with disaster relief. Even our potato field looked bad. By the end of July, the tops of most of the potato plants were dry and yellow. But not the three plants that grew over last winter's hotbed. They just sank their roots into that rich, cool, moisture-holding cow manure and flourished in the hot sun. They were so green and healthy they looked like they'd never heard of the word *drought*. It was a striking lesson to me about how cow protection also protects the earth.—HKDD

tual advancement. The farming and mercantile class is partly motivated by the mode of passion. In city life, this



On a Hare Kṛṣṇa farm in Australia, devotees protect oxen by employing them in their natural work—drawing a plow.

As Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā*,

lust to enjoy the sense objects causes anger, which then gives rise to delusion and bewilderment.

The whole structure of urban life turns out to be a formula for violence and insanity.

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passion is fanned like a fire, and the urge to consume and to enjoy the senses becomes greater and greater. As Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, lust to enjoy the sense objects causes anger, which then gives rise to delusion and bewilderment. The whole structure of urban life turns out to be a formula for violence and insanity.

But Kṛṣṇa's *varṇāśrama* system is the opposite. In Kṛṣṇa's system, farmers have the chance to exercise their brawny nature in situations where it is needed to control their animals. When a farmer uses his grit constructively—either to work the animals or simply to accomplish the hard tasks of farming—he becomes purified. And when the cows and oxen are well treated, they're affectionate and obedient the next moment after they're scolded.

On the other hand, in some situations, especially when milking cows, the farmer must learn to control his moods carefully. The cow won't give milk if she's upset by angry talk or tension.

If someone wants to be the controller, working with the animals provides a constructive outlet for this desire, as described by draft animal technical consultant Jean Nolle,

You should know that draft animals are pleased to work with their master. It is an honour for them to participate with him in useful work in the field. When the driver requests them to give the best of themselves, they do so. It is also a pleasure for the man to order an animal and to be followed immediately. No President can do the same with the citizens. Animals are more attentive to their duties than we are.³

Milk for Spiritual Understanding

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that milk nourishes the fine brain tissue needed for understanding spiritual knowledge. Therefore, society needs the cow for spiritual advancement. As Śrīla Prabhupāda put it, "Milking the cow means drawing the principles of religion in liquid form."⁴

And only if we protect cows can we be sure of having milk. If we depend on an economic system that exploits the cow instead of protecting her, when that system collapses most cows will be killed and milk will become scarce. Evidently this is happening in the former Society Union with the collapse of state-subsidized agriculture. According to the February issue of *Hoard's Dairyman*, milk has become so scarce that a half gallon of milk (less than two liters) costs thirty hours of labor.

If we don't work the oxen and protect them, they won't be there for us when petroleum becomes too costly to use for food production. As Jean Nolle observed, "It is an incredible reality that farmers in the [industrialized countries], after having killed all their draft animals, are now sentenced to death by their own stupid economy." Neglect of cow protection means the end of human civilization.

A Special Way to Remember Kṛṣṇa

The last and most important reason for cow protection is that it helps us think of Kṛṣṇa. We can catch glimpses of His attractive and wonderful personality in many ways that would be more difficult without protected cows. When Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Gītā Nāgarī, he told the devotees, "This town life, industrial life, factory life, is asuric [demonic]

life. It is killing human ambition. It is killing civilization." He encouraged us to set an example by protecting cows and living as Kṛṣṇa lived:

Kṛṣṇa, in His natural life, is a village boy in Vṛndāvana. Vṛndāvana is a village. There is no factory, there is no motorcar, there are no big, big skyscraper buildings; it is a village. That Kṛṣṇa likes. . . . Kṛṣṇa is so fond of Vṛndāvana village life, with His cowherd boys and cowherd girls, His *gopīs*, mother Yaśodā, father Nanda, Upananda, uncles, big family, the cows and the calves, the trees, the Yamunā River. He is satisfied in that life. So at least those who are Kṛṣṇa conscious, they should be satisfied with simple life in the village. That is part of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. . . . Whatever Kṛṣṇa has taught by His personal life, by His teaching, to follow that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.⁵

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Was There an Eve?

by Sadāpūta Dāsa

IN A 1987 ARTICLE in the prestigious journal *Nature*, three biochemists published a study of mitochondrial DNA's from 147 people living on five continents. The biochemists stated, "All these mitochondrial DNA's stem from one woman who is postulated to have lived about 200,000 years ago, probably in Africa."¹

The story became a sensation. The woman was called the African Eve, and *Newsweek* put her on its cover. There she was—the single ancestor of all living human beings.

Eve was one in a population of primitive human beings. But all human lineages not deriving from her have perished. For students of human evolution, one important implication of this finding was that Asian populations of *Homo erectus*, including the famous Peking ape men, must not have been among our ancestors. Those ape men couldn't have descended from Eve, it was thought, because they lived in Asia before 200,000 years ago.

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) carries genetic instructions for the energy-making factories of human cells. Unlike other genetic material, it is transmitted to offspring only from the mother, with no contribution from

the father. This means that the descent of mtDNA makes a simple branching tree that is easy to study.

Computer studies on the sample of 147 people (who represent the world population) show that the original ancestral trunk divided into two branches. Only Africans descended from one branch. The rest of the population, as well as some Africans, descended from the other. The inference was that the stem was African. In 1991 another analysis of exact mtDNA sequences from 189 people confirmed this and indicated that Eve was roughly our ten-thousandth great-grandmother.

The Fall of Eve

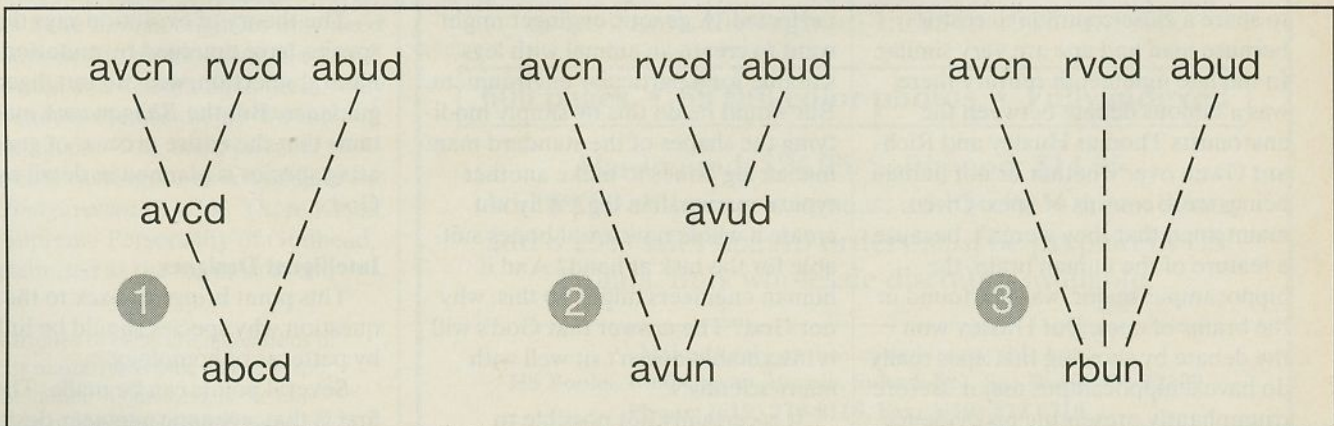
Unfortunately, however, Eve quickly fell down. In 1992 the geneticist Alan Templeton of Washington University stated in the journal *Science*, "The inference that the tree of humankind is rooted in Africa is not supported by the data."² It seems that the African Eve theory evolved from errors in computer analysis.

The ancestral trees had been drawn from mtDNA sequences through what is called the principle of parsimony. The figure below gives a rough idea of how this was done. To

create the figure, I used sequences of four letters to stand for the genetic information in mtDNA. In (1) I started with *abcd* as the original ancestor, and by making single changes, or mutations, I produced descendants *avcd* and *abud*. Then from *avcd* I got two more descendants, *avcn* and *rvcd*, again by single mutations.

Let's suppose we are given the sequences *avcn*, *rvcd*, and *abud* and we are asked to deduce their ancestry. How would we go about this? The method used by the scientists studying mtDNA was to say that ancestors and descendants should be as similar as possible. One way to measure how similar they are is to count the number of mutations from ancestor to descendant in the tree of descent. A tree with few mutations shows high similarity, so it is a good candidate for the real ancestral tree. Such a tree is said to be parsimonious.

For example, tree (1) has four mutations, and tree (3) has eight. Scientists would argue that (1) is therefore more likely to resemble the real ancestral tree. This seems promising, since in this case tree (1) is in fact the real tree. But tree (2) requires five mutations, and so it is nearly as



Examples of evolutionary trees. Tree 1 represents the evolution of a gene sequence. Each change from one letter to another represents a mutation. Trees 2 and 3 show other possible evolutionary histories yielding the same results. Such are the ambiguities involved in figuring out evolutionary histories from existing gene sequences. (See text).

The theory of evolution says that species have emerged by mutation and natural selection, with no intelligent guidance. But the Bhāgavatam maintains that the entire process of generating species is planned in detail by God.

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parsimonious. Yet (2) shows a completely different pattern of ancestors.

The problem with the parsimonious tree method is that in a complex case there are literally millions of trees that are equally parsimonious. Searching through them all on a main-frame computer can take months. According to Templeton, the original findings on African Eve came from computer runs that missed important trees. When further runs were made, a tree with African roots turned out no more likely than one with European or Asian roots.

The parsimonious tree method rests on the idea that similar organisms should share close common ancestors, and less similar organisms more distant ones. This idea is the central motivating concept behind the theory of evolution. Since the span of recorded human history is too short to show evolutionary changes that mean very much, evolutionists are forced to reconstruct the history of living species by comparing likenesses and differences in living and fossil organisms.

For example, man and ape are said to share a close common ancestor because man and ape are very similar. In the late nineteenth century there was a famous debate between the anatomists Thomas Huxley and Richard Owen over whether or not human beings were cousins of apes. Owen maintained that they weren't, because a feature of the human brain, the hippocampus major, was not found in the brains of apes. But Huxley won the debate by showing that apes really do have a hippocampus major. Before triumphantly presenting his evidence for this to the British Association of Science, Huxley had written to his wife, "By next Friday evening they

will all be convinced that they are monkeys."³

Why Man and Ape Are Similar

Of course, man and ape really are similar. So if they don't descend from a close common ancestor, how can one account for this? Biblical creationists propose that God created man and ape separately by divine decree. To many scientists this story seems unsatisfactory. The geneticist Francisco Ayala indicated why in a discussion of the close likenesses between human beings and chimpanzees. He remarked, "These creationists are implying God is a cheat, making things look identical when they are not. I consider that to be blasphemous."⁴ In other words, why would God fake a record of apparent historical change?

To illustrate the idea behind Ayala's comment, consider the legs of mammals. In all known land mammals the leg bones are homologous, or similar in form. Thus all mammals have a recognizable thigh bone, shin bone, and so on. Now imagine that genetic engineering becomes highly perfected. A genetic engineer might want to create an animal with legs suitable for a particular environment. But would he do this by simply modifying the shapes of the standard mammalian leg bones to make another typical mammalian leg? Why not create a whole new set of bones suitable for the task at hand? And if human engineers might do this, why not God? The answer that God's will is inscrutable doesn't sit well with many scientists.

It is certainly not possible to second guess the will of God. But the Vedic literature offers an account of the origin of species that explains the

patterns of similarity among living organisms. According to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, living beings have descended, with modification, from an original created being. All species, therefore, are linked by a family tree of ancestors and descendants. Forms sharing similar features inherit those features from ancestral forms that had them. So the theory given in the *Bhāgavatam* accounts for the likenesses and differences between species in a way comparable to that of the theory of evolution.

But these two theories are not the same. The neo-Darwinian theory of evolution says that species descended from primitive one-celled organisms and gradually developed into forms more and more complex. In contrast, the *Bhāgavatam* says that Brahmā, the original created being, is superhuman. Brahmā generated beings called *prajāpatis*, who are inferior to him. These in turn produced generations of lesser beings, culminating in plants, animals, and human beings as we know them. From the *prajāpatis* on down, these successive generations generally came into being by sexual reproduction.

The theory of evolution says that species have emerged by mutation and natural selection, with no intelligent guidance. But the *Bhāgavatam* maintains that the entire process of generating species is planned in detail by God.

Intelligent Designer

This point brings us back to the question why species should be linked by patterns of homology.

Several points can be made. The first is that a genetic engineer designing one special-purpose mammal might find it convenient to introduce one special design. But if he wanted to

create an entire ecosystem of interacting organisms, he might want to do it with a general scheme in which he could produce different types of organisms by modifying standard plans. So a standard mammalian plan could be used as the starting point for producing various mammals, and similar plans could be used for birds, fish, and so on. It would be most efficient to organize these plans into a parsimonious tree to make short the design work needed.

This idea can overcome one of the drawbacks of the theory of evolution. Many living organisms have complex structures that evolutionists have a hard time accounting for by mutations and natural selection. Observed intermediate forms linking organisms that have these structures to those that don't are notoriously lacking. Evolutionists have often found it hard to imagine convincing possibilities for what these intermediate forms might be. But the structures are easy to account for if we posit an intelligent designer.

To illustrate this point, consider the problem of writing computer programs. A programmer will often write a new program by taking an old one and modifying it. After doing this for a while, he winds up producing a family tree of programs. But the changes required to go from one program to the next are often extensive. They're not the kind you'd be likely to get by randomly zapping the first program with mutations and waiting to get a new program that operates in the required way.

The point could be made, however, that a finite human engineer may need efficient design methods but God is unlimited and doesn't need them. Why then should He use them? We can't second guess God, but a possible answer is waiting for us to consider in the *Bhāgavatam* (2.1.36). There Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is celebrated as the topmost artist:

Varieties of birds are indications of His masterful artistic sense. Manu, the father of mankind, is the emblem of His standard intelligence, and humanity is His residence. The celestial species of human beings, like the Gandharvas, Vidyādharas,

Cāraṇas, and Apsarās, all represent His musical rhythm, and the demoniac soldiers are representations of His wonderful prowess.

Orderly patterns of design are also natural in artistic works. Just as Bach dexterously combines and modifies

different themes in his fugues, so the Supreme Artist may orchestrate the world of life in a way that shows order, parsimony, and luxuriant novelty of form. The patterns of parsimonious change follow naturally from the procreation of species. The novelty flows from Kṛṣṇa's creative

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intelligence and cannot be accounted for by neo-Darwinian theory.

Subtle Energies

This brings us to our last point. The life forms descending from Brahmā include many species unknown to us. The higher species, beginning with Brahmā himself, have bodies made mostly of subtle types of energy distinct from the energies studied in modern physics. Manu, the Gandharvas, and the Vidyādhara are examples of such beings.

We may speak of the energies studied by modern physics as gross matter. The bodies of ordinary human beings, animals, and plants are all made of

this type of matter. If they have descended from beings with bodies made of subtle energy, then there must be a process of transformation whereby gross forms are generated from subtle. Such a process, the *Bhāgavatam* says, does in fact exist.

So the *Bhāgavatam's* explanation of the origin of species makes the following two predictions: (1) There should exist subtly embodied beings that include the precursors of grossly embodied organisms, and (2) there should be a process of generating gross form from subtle form. It would be interesting to see if there is any empirical evidence that might corroborate these predictions.

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Sadāpūta Dāsa (Richard L. Thompson) earned his Ph.D. in mathematics from Cornell University. He is the author of several books, of which the most recent is Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy.



SCHOOLING KṚṢṆA'S CHILDREN

Teens and Celibacy

by Urmilā Devī Dāsī

CELIBACY IS SUCH an important part of Vedic education that the Sanskrit word for student is *brahmacārī* ("celibate"). The pressure to give up celibacy begins, of course, in adolescence, the most dangerous age and often the turning point of one's life. Young adults need guidance before and during the teenage years to recognize and follow the right path.

Celibacy trains adolescents for self-restraint, whether they stay single or get married. It develops their inner strength, self-control, and good character. It also fosters good health and a fine memory.

Without celibacy we can never realize that we are spirit soul, distinct from the body. Sex reinforces the illusion that we are these bodies. Sexual attraction and its extensions in family and society are the main knots that bind us to material identification. Vedic education aims to free the child from these knots so the adolescent can act on the spiritual plane.

Children, of course, have no knowledge of sex. How do we train them to value celibacy before they reach puberty? By association and environment.

Modern educators know well how children's early impressions influence their later moral behavior. And these educators are passing on their decadent moral values to our children. For example, the New York City public school board recently introduced textbooks in the first grade that show families with two "mommies" or two "daddies," to get children used to homosexuality.

And schools aren't the only place kids learn to think well of illicit sex. Role models such as those on television, on radio, and in politics keep reinforcing the message. Parents add to the negative influence by using contraceptives or cheating on their marriage vows.

The result, of course, is that children enter adolescence with attitudes that lead them away from self-realization, or even civilized life. The illicit sex that results from years of indoctrination leads to chaos. Yet the very educators and politicians who promote illicit sex to children talk about fatherless families and unwanted kids who turn to crime and drugs.

To be trained in celibacy, our

young students should live with people who take pleasure in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our first task is to shield our children from materialistic influences and surround them with positive, transcendental life. That's the only way to get them ready to face their transition into adulthood.

But childhood training isn't enough. Prabhupāda told us we must carefully guide our children during their teens. Then surely they will come out first-class Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees. We should be like a commanding officer who not only trains his soldiers but also serves with them on the battlefield.

Traditionally, a spiritually guided society helped young people with good association, vocational training, and marriage. Our teenagers need to train and study with Kṛṣṇa conscious friends and teachers. Otherwise, Prabhupāda once said, if from twelve to fifteen years of age they go to an ordinary school, by bad company they become rotten. It is sad to see this happen to a child who had strong childhood training and could have become a first-class human being.

Despite the best training and the

best company, most teenagers want to associate with the opposite sex. Therefore, Vedic culture prescribes early marriage, on religious principles. That kind of marriage makes the mind peaceful and receptive to spiritual instruction.

Parents must help their sons and daughters find suitable marriage partners, except for children who are going to stay happy in lifelong celibacy. Parents should understand that adolescents have only three choices in sexual morality: celibacy, marriage, or immorality. Because of the danger in a society where boys and girls mix freely, marriage should be encouraged.

We sometimes mistakenly think that an "arranged" marriage means that the parents force a twelve-year-old girl to marry a thirty-year-old man—and they meet for the first time at the wedding. Prabhupāda gives us a

different picture. He tells us of a gradual process, usually spanning several years. The parents look for a suitable partner for their child, taking into account that the boy and girl should be equal in character, qualities, social position, and renunciation.

The parents judge the match through their own observations, by asking others, and through astrology. The wishes of the boy and girl are also important. Once the families and the boy and girl agree, a period of occasional, supervised association begins. It's as if the parents introduce their child to a suitable mate and then chaperone formal "dates" to prepare the children for marriage. When the children are old enough to marry, the girl may still spend long regular visits at her parents' home so she may gradually get used to being a wife. An extended family makes this easier by helping the new couple in their duties

and relationship.

This time-tested process can be easily followed today. The girl engaged to a suitable boy doesn't have to advertise herself to find a man. And the boy knows he can't marry until he becomes responsible. He is therefore motivated to mature into a conscientious man of good character.

Built on the early training in renunciation, their marriage will be dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, fulfilling our hope for their future.

Urmilā Devī Dāsi was initiated in 1973 and has been involved in ISKCON education since 1983. She, her husband, and their three children live at the ISKCON community in Hillsborough, North Carolina, where she runs a growing school for boys and girls aged 5–18. She is the major author and compiler of Vaikuṅṭha Children, a gurukula classroom guidebook.

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Reviving the Forests Of Vr̥ndāvana

*Devotees work together in a relief effort to recover
a spiritual oasis from ecological disaster.*

by Ranchor Dāsa

*A group of
ISKCON
devotees is raising
the money to save
this last piece of
unspoiled
woodland in
Ramaṇa Reti,
where Kṛṣṇa and
Balarāma used to
play. Instead of
falling before a
developer's
bulldozer, it will
be preserved as a
small forest
sanctuary.*



WHEN MY SON was ten years old, I took him to India to visit Vṛndāvana, the home of Kṛṣṇa. Having been brought up as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, he had been taught to see Vṛndāvana as a sacred forest, full of peacocks, cows, and deer. I had warned him that things were different now than five thousand years ago, but still he expected to see paradise. What he saw when we got there was an environmental disaster area. He was so disappointed that afterwards he said he never wanted to go there again.

His reaction is not unique. Many pilgrims to Vṛndāvana are profoundly shocked when they see how neglected and polluted it has apparently become. How did Vṛndāvana get into such a

state, and what is being done about it? In the heart of Vṛndāvana rests Nidhivana—the sacred Forest of Sleep—its trees bent double with age. Some of them are many thousands of years old. Standing among them one can sense the great age of the place. Five thousand years ago, Kṛṣṇa used to sleep here at night with His beloved Rādhā. Since then this holy ground has been kept a secret place, guarded by monkeys. Beyond its high walls crowd the intricately carved temples and houses of the holy town in a tangle of narrow lanes. But in here after dark no human being can set foot—it belongs to Kṛṣṇa and to His monkeys.

Vṛndāvana lies at the heart of India on the Yamunā River, inside the

“Golden Triangle” bordered by Delhi to the north, Agra to the east, and Jaipur to the west. It is the center of Kṛṣṇa worship.

Vṛndāvana Then and Now

It is said that Kṛṣṇa never leaves Vṛndāvana, and every tree and rock is permeated with His presence. Vaiṣṇava saints have written volumes of devotional works describing it as an eternal divine realm where every living thing is conscious of Kṛṣṇa. Pictures of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana show Him garlanded with forest flowers amidst the trees, in the company of the cows, deer, monkeys, parrots, and peacocks. Now, however, most of the trees are gone, and along with them the animals. It takes spiritual



The dried-up lake and crumbling walls at Brahma-kuṇḍa, where Lord Brahmā offered prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vṛndāvana's inadequate sewage system pours sewage into the sacred Yamunā River, adding to the industrial pollution already present in her waters. The government of India has declared the Yamunā unsuitable for drinking or bathing.



Pilgrims follow the bank of the Yamunā through a dying landscape, where trees, water, and air are caught in a stranglehold of pollution and neglect. Where once stood beautiful groves rich with flowering trees and wildlife, now stand ruins, rubble, and squalor.



vision to perceive Kṛṣṇa's presence in the midst of the dried up and empty landscape.

In the sixteenth century, fabulous temples were built on the banks of the Yamunā, and Vṛndāvana became a great center of pilgrimage. The wealthy patrons who built these temples were the kings of Jaipur and Bharatpur, who have long since gone, leaving their magnificent buildings neglected and crumbling.

But Vṛndāvana is still alive with devotion for Kṛṣṇa. Millions of pilgrims come every year from all over India, fulfilling their life's ambition to see with their own eyes the forests where Kṛṣṇa walked.

When they come to Vṛndāvana, pilgrims go on *parikrama*, walking the seven-mile path which surrounds the town. By this act they worship the sacred place. Surprisingly, however, their route takes them through a dying landscape in which trees, water, and air are caught in a stranglehold of pollution and neglect. Where once stood beautiful groves rich with flowering trees and wildlife, now stand the ruins of the ornate temples and spires of old Vṛndāvana, surrounded by a wasteland of rubble and decay.

An essential part of the pilgrims' visit to Vṛndāvana is their bath in the Yamunā River. By bathing in her waters they wash away their sins. But the

Yamunā has become a dumping ground for refuse and sewage. It is so heavily polluted by wastes from the factories and sewers of Delhi, seventy miles upstream, that the government of India has declared it unsuitable for drinking or bathing.

Pilgrims also see widespread evidence of ongoing deforestation. All over Vṛndāvana, mature trees have been felled, and unspoiled woodland has been cleared for development. The pressure of population growth and Vṛndāvana's popularity as a holy town make it a target for developers. Many of the new houses are second homes for well-to-do Delhi families. One developer's sign reads:



Devotees embrace these sacred trees—said to have witnessed the dancing of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa—and pray to them for protection in spiritual life. Unfortunately, little is done to protect the trees or replace the ones that die.

This renunciant (with Ranchor Dāsa), whose āśrama adjoins the path around Vṛndāvana, is one of the many local residents who have pledged to help protect the trees. He also promised the support of his one thousand disciples.



Welcome at this holy land of
 Lord Krishna
 SRI BAN [holy forest]
 Plots for sale.
 Freehold Residential complex
 in very peaceful
 and tranquility atmosphere [sic]

But as soon as the houses are built, the tranquil forest has gone forever.

The loss of trees has brought the inevitable erosion of topsoil, turning garden to desert. Dense forest cools the air and induces rainfall, but now without trees the grueling summer heat gets even hotter, and rain falls less. Pilgrims find little shelter from the fierce heat of the summer sun. Wells built to supply

them water stand high and dry above the parched sand.

According to local reports, the water table is falling as much as five feet a year, and the quality of the water is deteriorating. Reservoirs that in former times collected surface rainwater to replenish the underground water now stand empty. The sacred pond called Brahma Kuṇḍa, which marks the spot where Brahma offered prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa, is now neglected and ruined. Govinda Kuṇḍa, another of the original tanks of Vṛndāvana, is now a field.

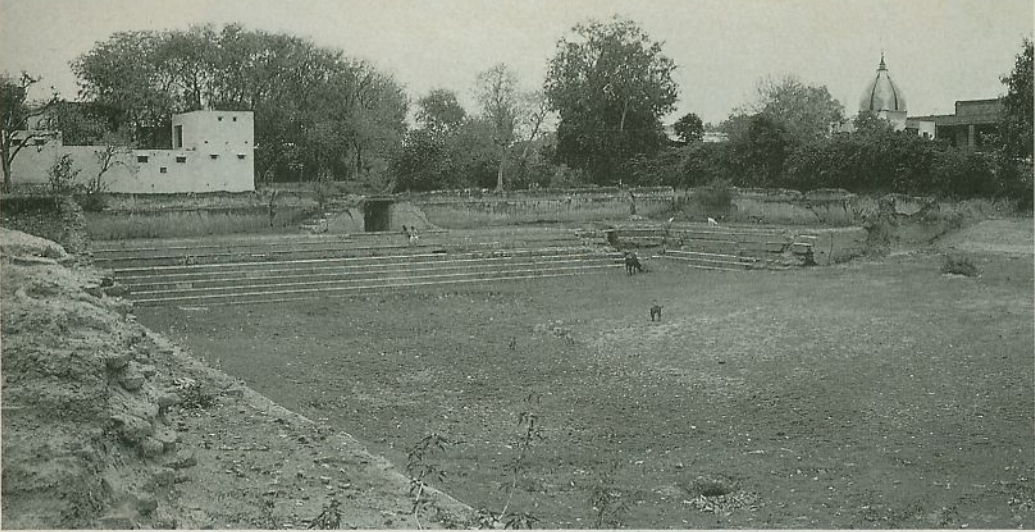
With the demise of these tanks the traditional water system has fallen into obsolescence, replaced by modern water towers and piped water, which only

serve to increase the demand on the already scarce water reserves.


Every year hundreds of great trees such as those in the sacred grove of Satalavana die from old age and lack of care. These trees are said to have witnessed the dancing of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and are worshiped as great souls. But although devotees embrace them and pray to them for spiritual protection, little is done to protect the trees or to plant new ones when they die.

Gathering Support

I first visited Vṛndāvana in 1975. At that time I was unaware of the depth of its environmental problems. I saw the uncared-for surroundings and



Govinda-kuṇḍa, one of the original tanks in Vṛndāvana, is now a field. With the demise of such tanks, the traditional water system has fallen into obsolescence, replaced by modern water towers and piped water, which dramatically increase the demand on Vṛndāvana's scarce water reserves.



Municipal rubbish piles up, slowly burying one of the many beautiful bathing places that line the old river bank in Vṛndāvana. Because of silting caused by deforestation, the Yamunā River has shifted to a mile from this spot.

assumed they had always been that way. Śrīla Prabhupāda had once commented that Vṛndāvana appears desolate in order to deter impersonalists from coming there. But he had also said that it was like this because of offenses and that one day it would again become green. I felt sorry to see the state of the place and wished to myself that one day I might have an opportunity to do something. That opportunity presented itself many years later, on the inspiration of a friend and colleague.

In 1989 my friend Martin and I were traveling by train to a meeting in northern England and discussing ideas for a school book on pilgrimage. As an illustration of Hindu pilgrimage, I suggested

we look at Vṛndāvana. I told Martin how Vṛndāvana was once covered by the forests of Kṛṣṇa but these forests had now vanished. Somehow, in all my years of visiting Vṛndāvana, I had never thought of the area as the victim of the same sort of deforestation that was taking place in such better known areas as the Amazon rain forest and the Himalayan foothills. Now, as I talked with Martin, with the green wooded landscape of central England speeding past our window, I realized that Vṛndāvana was such a victim.

We found ourselves talking of how we might be able to set up a reforestation project in Vṛndāvana. We knew that the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) would be interested in such a project to serve as an example of Hindu environmental values and inspire Hindus to take more interest in caring for their environment. Perhaps the Fund could be persuaded to support the initial setting up of the work.

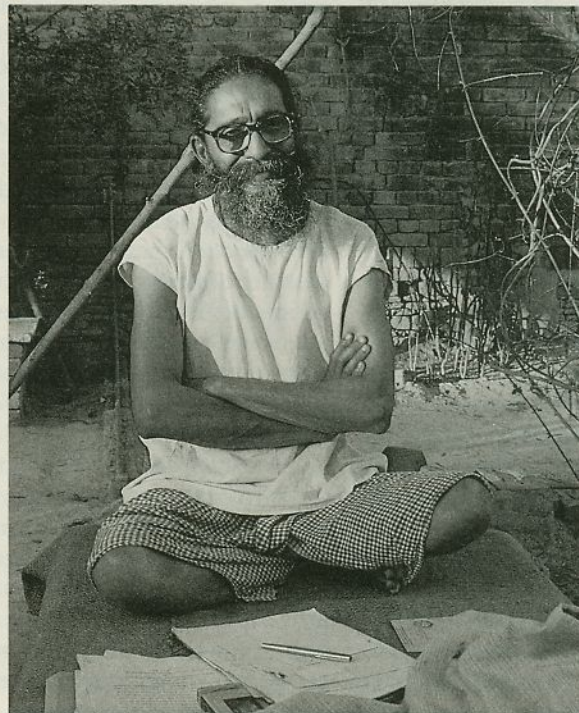
Six months later I visited Vṛndāvana to do research for a book on Hinduism and ecology. I began to inquire into Vṛndāvana's environmental condition to see what, if anything, was being done about it.

I came across Sri Sewak

Saran, a lifelong resident of Vṛndāvana, who has spent many years researching the environmental problems of the area and campaigning to revive Vṛndāvana's ecological traditions. Astonishingly, he seemed the only one to have taken an active interest in the problem. We had long discussions on the philosophical basis of ecology in the Hindu tradition. These became the basis for a chapter in my book *Hinduism and Ecology*. We then went on to discuss a scheme to plant trees along the *parikrama* path which encircles Vṛndāvana.

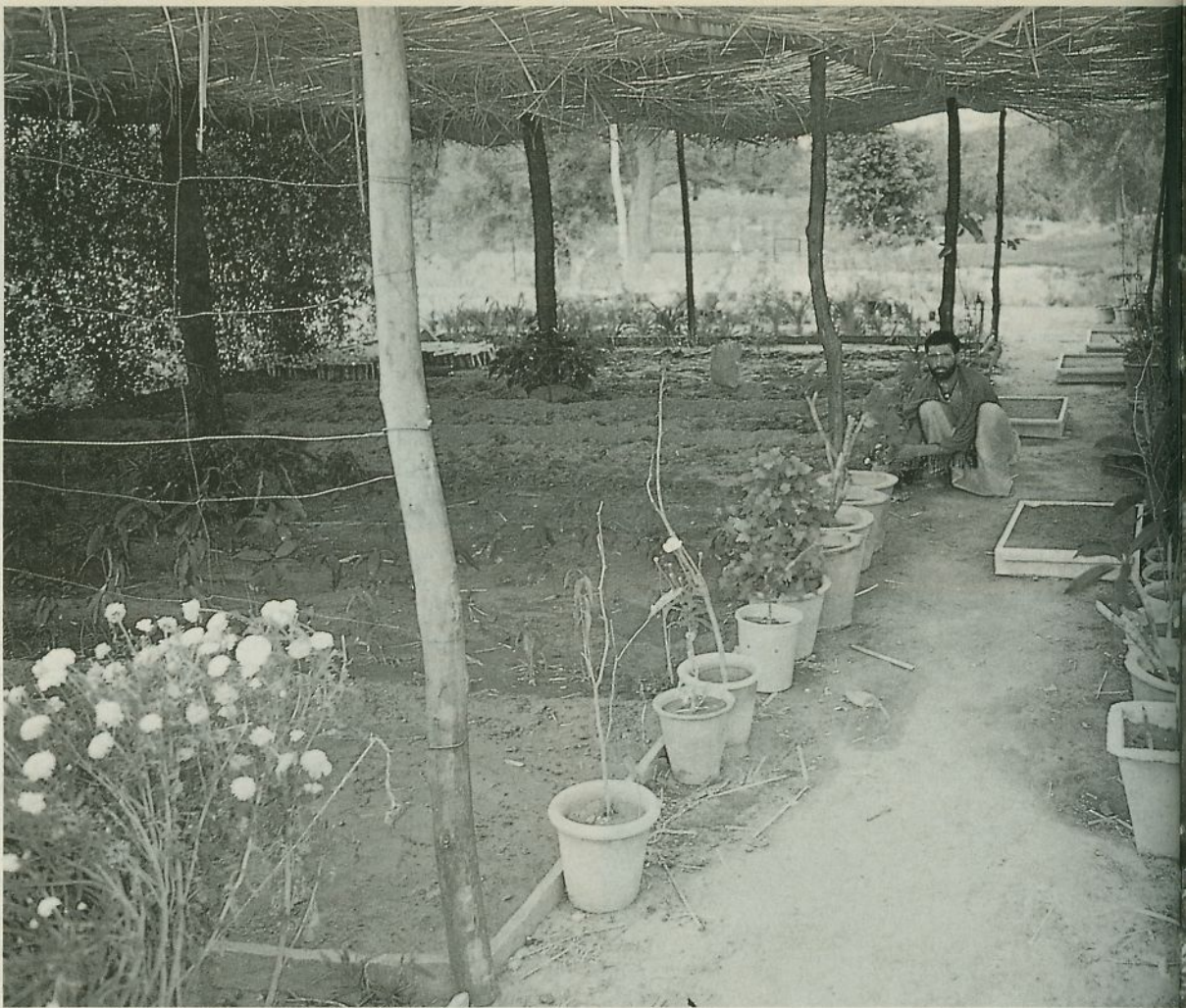
This path is followed by about two million pilgrims a year. Parts of it still have tree cover, but most of it is exposed and in need of reforestation. In many places it has changed from forest path to urban road, with hardly a tree in sight. If this path could be restored to its natural beauty it would draw attention to the disaster threatening Vṛndāvana and inspire others to take up similar restorative work.

I prepared a report for the WWF in Geneva. The WWF is committed to working internationally with religious communities to help revive ecological practices. Its members believe that a worldwide renaissance in environmentalism cannot happen unless people develop a more caring and spiritual understanding of their relationship to the natural world, as taught in the world's



From his garden nature reserve in the heart of Vṛndāvana town, Sewak Saran has campaigned for fifteen years to protect Vṛndāvana's environment.

More than twenty local varieties of trees, many of them disappearing, are being carefully grown in the shade of this grass-roofed shelter, cared for by expert local gardeners. Summer temperatures regularly reach 44° C (111° F).



great religious traditions.

After further research and preparation, with two more visits to Vṛndāvana, I was able to present a full proposal, asking funds for a three-year project to revive Vṛndāvana forest. The WWF accepted the proposal and awarded the project a grant of about \$40,000 a year for three years, starting in September 1991.

Our first task was to involve the local community of Vṛndāvana. Experience has shown that without the support and commitment of the local people, environmental projects fail to achieve much. An effective project must be aimed at changing the practices that led to the original problem, not simply doing superficial remedial work. So we visited Vṛndāvana Town Hall to enlist the help of the municipality. There we put together a series of public meetings to talk about our ideas with local political and religious leaders and seek their advice.

We explained that the millions of pilgrims who come to Vṛndāvana every year expect to see the beautiful landscapes they have seen in pictures of Kṛṣṇa. They think of Kṛṣṇa as the Lord of the forest, always surrounded by flowers, clear waters, and abundant wildlife. But when they come they see all around them signs of neglect and pollution. What sort of message does this give them? Either they will conclude that caring for Kṛṣṇa's trees and land is not important or that the people of Vṛndāvana are neglecting their duty. Our central thesis was: one who cares for Kṛṣṇa cares for His land.

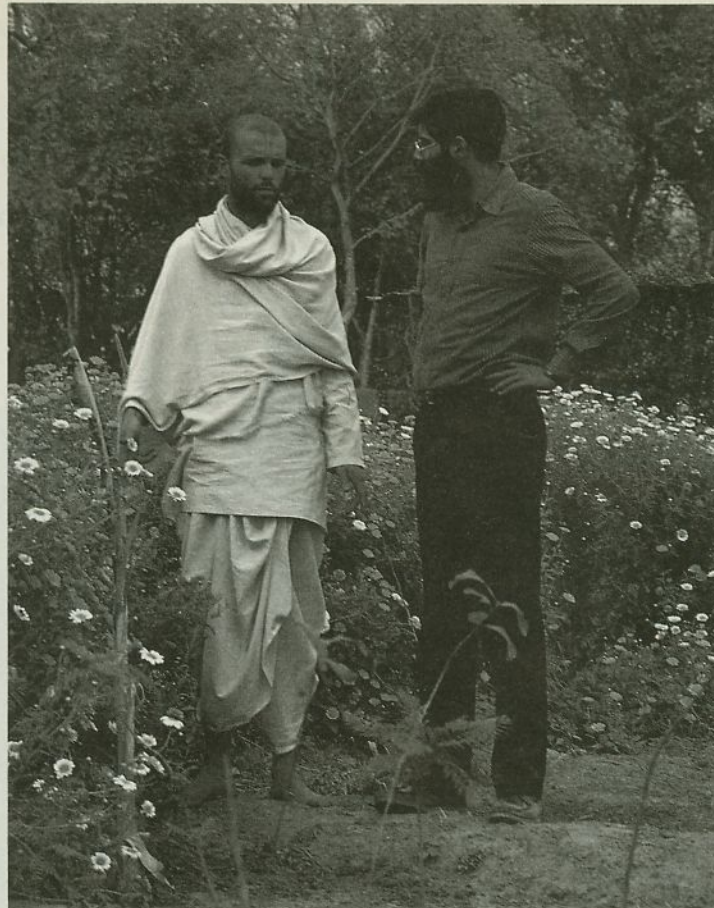
I told our listeners how I had brought my own son to visit Vṛndāvana and how sad it had made him. I told them that my ambition was to bring him back in ten years, show him how things had improved, and give him hope for the future. Moved by what they heard, leaders of the community pledged themselves to support our work.

Step 1: The Nursery

One of the most difficult aspects of organizing a project of this sort is finding the right people. We were fortunate to be able to recruit Acyuta Dāsa, a field worker for over five years in Vṛndāvana with ISKCON. With his local knowledge and his experience as an engineer and project manager he was the ideal man to organize the practical work.

Our first task was to establish a tree nursery. Working with devotees and local labor, Acyuta supervised the laying out of the nursery area. ISKCON agreed to allow us to use an acre and a half of its land adjoining the *parikrama* path. This made an ideal base for our work. Here we would establish our nursery.

During the hot summer of 1991, through the rains and into the autumn, the work went ahead. In planning the nursery we had the help of one of Delhi's top landscape architects, K. C. Sharma. When he heard about the project, he volunteered his services free.



Acyuta Dāsa (left), the project field manager, and Ajay Rastogi, the WWF-India project officer, discuss the progress of the nursery.

system connected by underground pipes to a tube well and a twenty-thousand-gallon water tank. For delicate seedlings we built a special grass-roofed shelter in which to keep up a micro-climate by using different plants and varying regimes of watering.

While this work was going on we met with as many teachers and local leaders as we could, to discuss ways of publicizing the project and involving the school children of Vṛndāvana.

A WWF team from Delhi came to see the work in progress and discuss the launch of the project, set for

We planned to invite guests to a special tree-planting ceremony on the *parikrama* path outside the nursery. We would place forty trees on the path to inaugurate the project.

To plant a tree in India is not as simple as it might seem. Enormous care has to be taken to protect it from sun, cows, goats, vandals, and thieves and make sure it is regularly watered. This can only succeed if the local people take part. Despite all the efforts of the Indian Forestry Service, their experience is that less than five percent of trees survive.

A well-known *sādhu* was one of many local residents who pledged us their help to protect the trees. His *āśrama* is right beside the path, and he enthusiastically promised not only his own support but that of his one thousand disciples.

By October the nursery was beginning to take shape, with paths separating the seed beds, and an irrigation

the full-moon festival in mid-November at the end of the Hindu month of Kārtika. Together we all walked along the *pari-krama* path, joining in with a group of pilgrims who happened to be there at the same time. Only one of the WWF team had actually been to Vṛndāvana before, and all the team members were moved by the experience of walking with the pilgrims. We went to Kāliya Ghāṭa, where Kṛṣṇa had jumped off the *kadamba* tree to fight with Kāliya, the poisonous serpent who was polluting the river.

On one level, Kāliya represented pollution, and by driving him out of Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa showed that pollution should not be tolerated. The same *kadamba* tree, or its direct descendant, still stands in memory of Kṛṣṇa the environmentalist. Now once again Vṛndāvana is polluted, and we are called upon to follow Kṛṣṇa's example. Together we all stood on the sacred

(please turn to page 39)



Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, regional director of ISKCON, plants a kadamba tree at the inauguration ceremony.

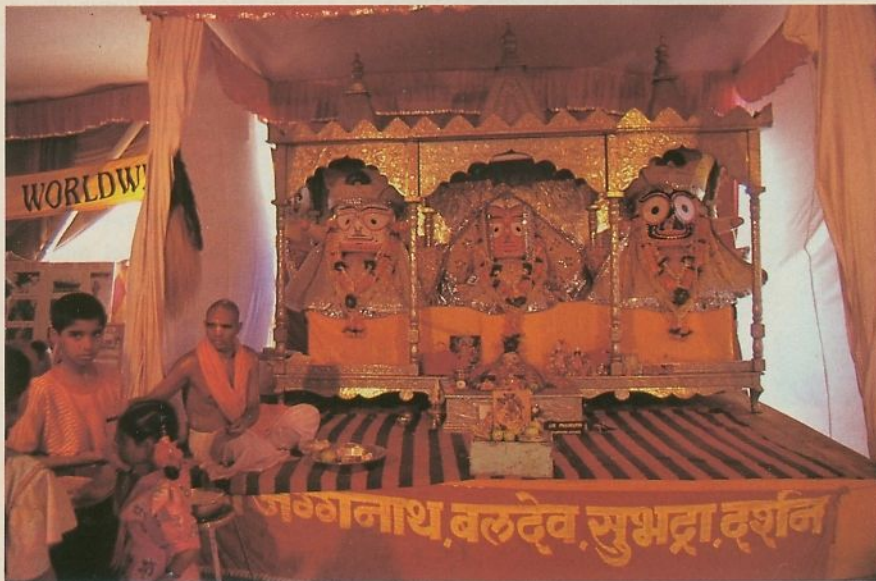
A Bath in the Nectar

The quest for immortality draws thousands to this holy site once every twelve years.

From reports by
Jaya Vijaya Dāsa and Mahā-mantra Dāsa

Photos by Mahā-mantra Dāsa

• • •



The deities of Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā give audience to visitors at the ISKCON camp.

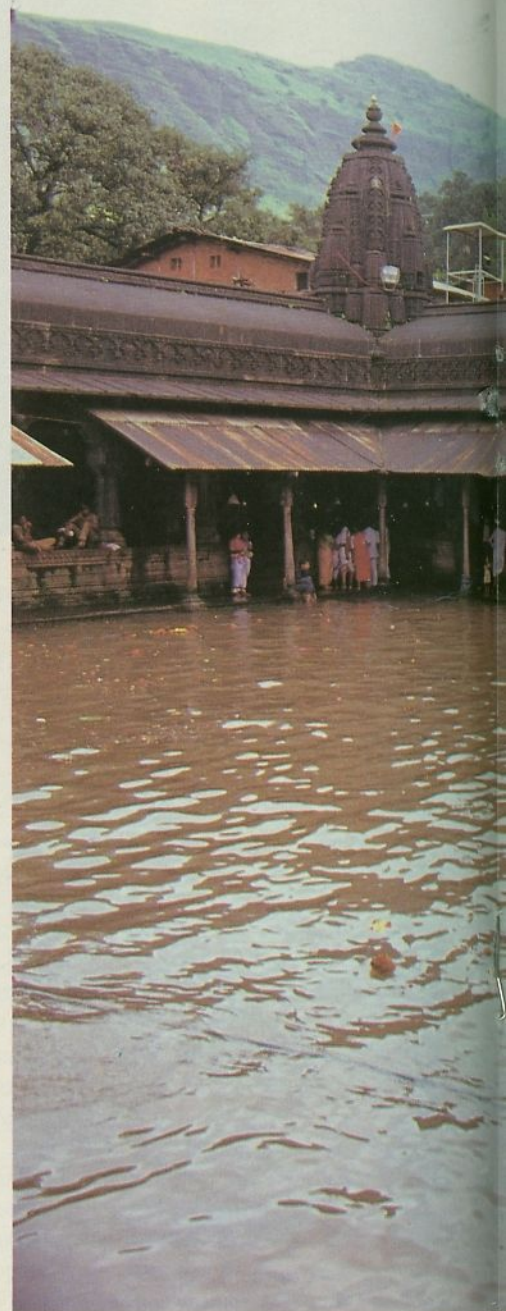
MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO, the most powerful beings in the universe, known as the *devas* (demigods) and the *asuras* (demons), fought in the heavens over a pot of immortal nectar. During their twelve-day battle, some of the nectar spilled onto four places in India: Allahabad and Haridwar in Uttar Pradesh, Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, and Nasik in Maharashtra.

According to the Vedic texts, a day in heaven equals a year on earth. So once every twelve years the nectar still pours onto these four sites, during certain planetary configurations. At these times, millions of people come to partake of the nectar by bathing in the holy rivers

and drinking the sacred water. These gatherings of pilgrims are known as the Kumbha Melās (“festivals of the pots”).

When the Kumbha Melā was held at Nasik last year, from August 14 to September 20, more than two million pilgrims bathed there in the holy river Godāvarī.

The *Purāṇas*, or Vedic histories, say that the Godāvarī was created by Lord Śiva for the sage Gautama, who wanted to bathe in her sacred waters to atone for accidentally killing a cow. To fulfill the sage’s wish, Lord Śiva dashed his matted hair (which carries the Ganges) against the mountain known as Brahma Giri, and some water from the Ganges



Pilgrims bathe in the sacred Godāvarī River.

at Nasik





Yaśomañinandana Dāsa, ISKCON's regional director for Gujarat, leads a chanting party through the festival village.

sprang forth. This “Ganges of the south”—the Godāvārī—is also known as Gautami, in honor of Gautama.

It is said that Lord Śiva once told all the sacred lakes and rivers on earth that for their own purification they should go to the Godāvārī during the Kumbha Melā, just as the demigods do.

The city of Nasik is on the western side of the Godāvārī. Here Lakṣmaṇa, the divine brother of Lord Rāmacandra, cut off the nose of Śūrpaṅkhā, the sister of the demon Rāvaṇa. *Nāsik* means “nose,” and thus the city gets its name.

Across the Godāvārī from Nasik lies

the place known as Pañcavātī. Here Lord Rāmacandra and His wife, Sītā Devī, lived with Lakṣmaṇa during their exile. Near Pañcavātī is the cave where Sītā hid while Rāma battled fourteen thousand Rākṣasas (cannibals).

Nearby is Tapovana, a place of penance and meditation where great sages used to practice austerities. Here the Godāvārī River meets the Kapila Ganges. And close by is Kapila Tīrtha, where the Supreme Lord in His incarnation as Kapila Muni taught His mother, Devahūti, about devotional service. Now, during the festival, Tapovana is the site

of the main Kumbha Melā village, a cluster of about three thousand camps of *sādhus* and pilgrims.

The Kumbha Melā Bath

It is said that by bathing in the Godāvārī while the nectar falls one gains as much merit as by bathing in the Ganges for sixty thousand years.

During the Kumbha Melā, pilgrims bathe in the Rāma Kuṇḍa area of the Godāvārī and at a place called Triambikeśvara, about forty-five kilometers away. Triambikeśvara, sacred to Lord Śiva, is said to be the origin of the



At the ISKCON camp devotees pass out tasty halvā to pilgrims eager for the spiritual benefit of food that's been offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Godāvārī River. From here the Godāvārī flows across India and enters the Bay of Bengal at Rajahmundry in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

On the first of four special bathing days during the 1991 Kumbha Melā, fifty thousand *sādhus* took part in the *shani snan* ("royal bath") at Rāma Kuṇḍa. About two hundred recognized *āśramas* marched, in assigned order, to Rāma Kuṇḍa for this first bath. The head of each *āśrama* sat atop an elephant, a horse, a truck, a jeep, a car, or a tractor, while his disciples and followers marched behind, chanting *mantras*.

In all, about 800,000 *sādhus* and pilgrims bathed on that day.

On the main day of the festival, the parade of *sādhus* grew to 100,000, and the number of bathers passed a million and a half.

ISKCON's Camp

The ISKCON camp, on the main road to Rāma Kuṇḍa, was crowded with visitors day and night. Every day, devotees passed out three hundred kilos of hot, tasty *halvā* and hundreds, sometimes thousands, of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. At night, devo-

tees filled the air with the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*, the great chant for spiritual realization—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. ☀

Jaya Vijaya Dāsa, from America, is the leader of ISKCON's Padayātrā in India, with which he has been walking since 1985.

Mahā-mantra Dāsa, also from America, is the director of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Library Party for India.

Bringing Kṛṣṇa To the Arab World

Two devotees find many inhabitants of North Africa eager for the message of Kṛṣṇa.

...

*An interview with Gaura Bhakta Dāsa—
February 18, 1992.*

BTG: When did you go to Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia?

Gaura Bhakta Dāsa: November 1991. Abhidheya Dāsa and I left from New Māyāpur, our farm in France, after we had the blessings of the devotees. And we stopped for a program in Malaga, Spain.

BTG: So you went from Malaga to Morocco.

GB: Yes. Of course, we had to go through customs to enter Morocco. We were very afraid because we had eight hundred of Prabhupāda's books hidden in the car. The customs people asked us what we had in the car. We said, "Just presents." They wanted to check. But Abhidheya said something to them, and somehow Kṛṣṇa protected us and we were able to go through.

We stayed one day in Ceuta, a Spanish city on the north coast of Morocco. A very nice city, lots of tourists. We met a devotee there, Hari Nārāyaṇa Prabhu. He's an Indian. He gave us a very nice reception,

prasādam, and two or three hundred French magazines. He encouraged us to preach. Then we drove further into Morocco.

We arrived at Tetouan, a small city. The first day, we were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and some people thought we were on drugs. Māyā is always making plans to try to stop our service. When I spoke

to them they were satisfied—"Yes, yes, yes, go on chanting."

Two days later we went to Tangier, an international city. Lots of tourists, writers, artists. We met Nayanābhirāma Prabhu, an American devotee teaching English there. He arranged a program at his school with about twenty or thirty students. We gave an intro-

duction to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and then everyone asked for a *Bhagavad-gītā*. We told them we had just a few copies, but at the end everybody got a copy.

BTG: Arabic *Gītās*?

GB: French and Arabic. But the people there speak French more than Arabic.

After that we met an Indian family. The mother said, "I want all the English books you have." She invited us for a program at her home, and to our amazement she had big Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. She cooked, we showed a video about chanting, and we had *bhajana* [chanting of songs] and a lecture. Very nice program.

The next day we went out to sell Prabhupāda's books. Abhi-



Gaura Bhakta Dāsa (left) and Abhidheya Dāsa in France after returning from North Africa, where they sold a vanload of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

dheya went to shops, and I was on the streets. It was amazing because all the people I met took the books. Someone even embraced me and said, "Thank you very much for bringing these books to our country." He realized the value of these books. And I realized how fortunate these people were for understanding the importance of the books.

Then we went to Rabat, the capital of Morocco. Here also we sold books in shops and on the street. We met very nice people who are interested in the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They like Indian culture very much.

I noticed that in Morocco there are a lot of Hindu movies. The people like Indian songs, dances, and language. I even met some people who speak a little Hindi. We met some *yoga* teachers who teach gymnastic-type *yoga*. When we introduced ourselves as teachers of *bhakti-yoga*, they were amazed.

They said, "That's what we need in this country. Why don't you stay here and teach this *bhakti-yoga* also?"

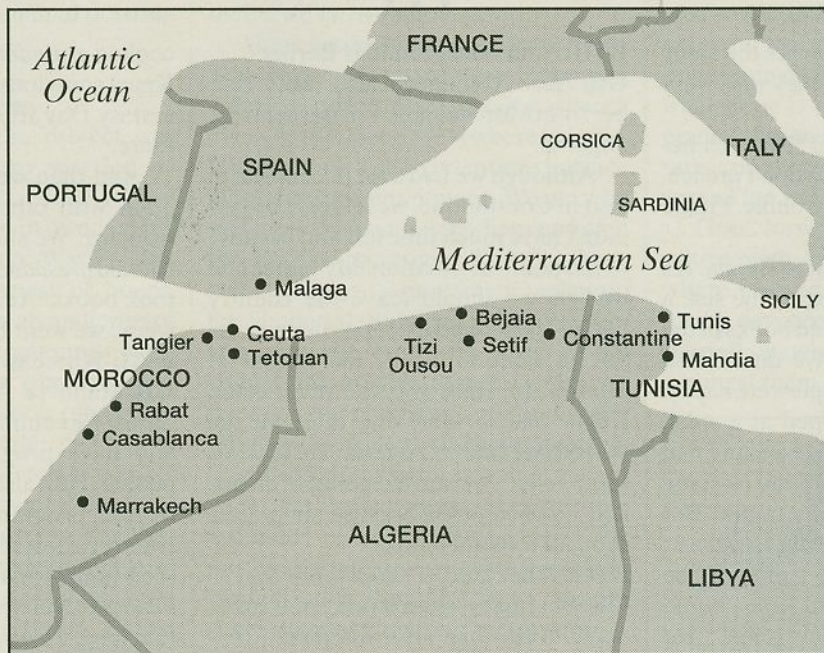
We said, "We first want to see other countries and then think about it."

From Rabat we went to Casablanca, where people showed even more interest. We met more than 150 Indian people there. They are very attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so they invited us for programs. The president of one Indian association invited us for *prasādam*, and he gave us presents. He said, "Whatever help you need, please don't hesitate to ask. I am here with all the Indian people, who are ready to give you a hand if you want to get established here."

Abhidheya had gone to Casablanca last year. He had met some Indian people, and when we returned he saw how they had improved. They were chanting, and they were reading Prabhupāda's books. When they saw Abhidheya they were crying in ecstasy,

they were kissing him. They said, "Please come to our home and do a program." Everyone was chanting, taking *prasādam*. It was amazing seeing these people chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in ecstasy. I could see they were relishing chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. They're devotees. And in every shop people took books.

After Casablanca we went to Marrakech for one or two days. And then we



arrived when people were preparing for the election. There were some people for and some against the Islamic movement. So it was not easy for us, because the police, the army, were everywhere, controlling the people, looking for people. They stopped us every hour to check our car.

went to Agadir, on the west coast.

From there we went to Efran, in the mountains. We met two young men and invited them for chanting and *prasādam*. To our amazement, in the middle of *kīrtana* one of them stood up and started dancing in ecstasy. We were shocked. He picked up the *mṛdaṅga* and started to play, and his friend followed the tune of Hare Kṛṣṇa on a guitar. Very naturally. We didn't ask them to dance, to chant. They just felt it.

It was like they'd just woken up from a dream, like they were devotees who had forgotten Kṛṣṇa and when they heard Hare Kṛṣṇa that was it—they woke up and started chanting and dancing. We chanted until one in the morning. And even then they didn't want us to stop.

From there we went to visit Abhidheya's family. They live in Morocco near the Algerian border. He has more than seventy cousins. We had programs with his cousins and distributed books in the shops. It was difficult because there was some political trouble. We

It was not easy to preach freely. So we decided to go to the Berber cities. **BTG:** The people who were there before the Arabs?

GB: Yes. They are the real inhabitants of North Africa. They are different from the Arabs, because they have a different language and culture. Their culture is more Westernized in one sense. But they are Muslims by conversion.

We started in the city of Tizi Ouzou. They were very favorable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Everyone speaks French, everyone took a book, everyone was excited by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There was no fanaticism. They were ready to hear about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

BTG: What city was that?

GB: Tizi Ouzou. It's the capital of the Berber cities. Very intellectual. We distributed lots of books. And from there we went to Setif, Algeria, where my parents live. They told me, "You practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is not part of our faith; it's not Islam." Yet because Abhidheya was there, they offered to host us. Because Abhidheya

*Now we know how to preach
in these countries by Kṛṣṇa's grace. What to say,
how to present it. And we're not afraid, because we know
there are devotees; they're just waiting for us.*

• • •

is from Morocco and speaks the same language as my parents, they were very excited.

Then my father said, "Now it's becoming too dangerous, so don't preach. If you do, you will get in trouble. Please don't do it here."

So from there we went to Bejaia. It's another Berber city, next to the sea, a very historical city. We sold books in the streets and the shops. We distributed lots of books, and the people were happy.

On the way we stopped at a small bookstore that belonged to a man I had met before. He had asked me to come see him when I visited my family. But he wasn't there, so I looked around and saw another bookstore. I offered the owner *Bhagavad-gītā* and Kṛṣṇa book. He said, "Yes, I will buy some." He wanted twenty of each. I said ok.

So he followed me to the car and said, "Hey, can I have all the books."

I said, "These books are for other countries. I cannot give you all the books; I can give you some."

He was not happy. He wanted to take everything. So I asked him why he wanted all the books. He said, "I am responsible for the Youth Hostel. People will love these pictures, these books, so I would like to give them these books." So we sold him *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa book, *Coming Back*, and magazines. Lots of books. He was very happy.

Then we went back to Setif and then to Constantine, in the East. Here we visited the parents of a devotee from Algeria. Her parents were very happy. We met her brother and her sisters. They were all very excited. We preached to them for two hours. Everyone was laughing in ecstasy. In the beginning they were thinking that this is a very fanatic, very secluded movement. But when they saw us (they are Berbers like us) they were amazed that Arabs are in this movement.

BTG: Your background is Berber?

GB: Yes. Abhidheya also. He's Berber from Morocco, and I'm Berber from Algeria.

Although we had a lot of contacts to visit in Constantine, we left because we didn't have much time left and because of the political situation. My father had told us we should leave the country before the second election, January 16. So we went to Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. In Tunis was the real nectar. Kṛṣṇa was so kind that after all the trouble we had in Algeria, He gave us some relief. We started going to shops, and I was amazed because shop after shop all took the books.

BTG: What kind of shops were they?

GB: Pharmacy, cloth store, shoe store, book store—one after another. Abhidheya said he did the same thing. After two hours we met each other, and I said, "Prabhu, it's so ecstatic, isn't it?" He said, "Yes, I also did lots of books. Ah! Kṛṣṇa wants something here, huh?" So we continued very excitedly distributing books.

We had a contact, a Tunisian lady who had visited the Paris temple last year for a week. We'd been corresponding. When I phoned her she was so happy. She said, "Prabhu, please come as soon as possible to my home. I want to see you, and I want to make a feast and invite my parents to see you." She introduced us to some of her friends who are of the Bahai faith. They are very open and friendly to devotees. And they like to hear philosophy and share their realizations with us.

So the next day we went to where the lady lives. She has a nice temple. She has Prabhupāda's books and a picture of the Paris Deities. She invited her friends. When they came, they all said, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Prabhu!" and offered obeisances just like devotees. They were all respectful. So we did a *bhajana*,

cooked *prasādam*, and gave a lecture on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Everybody was in ecstasy. Day after day we had a program there.

And then we went to another program with others of the Bahai faith, Iranians. We showed them videos and cooked *prasādam* with lots of ghee. They took books. And from there, after one week, we went back to Tunis.

BTG: Where was that place?

GB: Madhvia. And from there back to Tunis. We continued to distribute books and have programs with the Bahai people there also. They were so excited by the program. There were about twenty people all wanting to invite us to their home for a program of *prasādam*, *bhajana*. But we said we cannot stay that long. Finally, we accepted one program, with Egyptians.

Tunisia is one of the best places. Maybe not as rich as Morocco, but people are more into spirituality than in Algeria or Morocco. We distributed about four hundred books. It was amazing. I never thought we could distribute books so easily in these countries. And we had more than twenty programs. We had very nice *prasādam*. We were given donations. Kṛṣṇa arranged everything—the money for our maintenance, food, everything. People were crying in ecstasy. They said, "This is a very wonderful movement. We are just like in India now."

BTG: These are all Arabic people?

GB: Yes, all Arabs. Some are from Egypt, but most of them are from Tunisia. We had to decide whether to establish something there—incognito, of course—or continue traveling as we were. Because we had a plan to go to Turkey and especially to Lebanon to see the Druze, who are very fond of our philosophy, who like our books. And now we have a plan to go and preach in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia—

all the neighboring countries.

Now we know how to preach in these countries by Kṛṣṇa's grace. What to say, how to present it. And we're not afraid, because we know that there are devotees; they're just waiting for us. We are convinced that in all the Arabic coun-

tries there are devotees, just like in France, England, America. We go and see them and give the books.

So then we returned to France, happily and very enthusiastically.

BTG: Indian people will be very surprised to see that the Muslim people are

chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and becoming devotees.

GB: Caitanya Mahāprabhu has done the whole thing. We are also surprised. We didn't expect such a response from them. They responded very enthusiastically to the message. 🌸

FORESTS (continued from page 31) spot and committed ourselves to fighting against the environmental destruction of Vṛndāvana.

The Tree Planting Begins

Two weeks later, the project was launched. The ceremony was led by Padmanābha Goswami, head of the Rādhā Ramaṇa temple in Vṛndāvana, with the vice-president of WWF India, S. P. Godrej, as the guest of honor. Speeches were made to an audience of several hundred local community leaders. After a charming play by local schoolchildren, Mr. Godrej offered an *ārati* ceremony to Vṛndā, the sacred plant after which Vṛndāvana is named.

We then moved down to the *parikrama* path to plant our trees. The District Magistrate, a powerful figure in local government, planted a *kadamba* tree. His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, regional director of ISKCON, planted another. And a keen supporter of the project, the Chief Conservator of Forests for the state of Uttar Pradesh, joined us to plant another. The rest of the trees were planted by children from five Vṛndāvana schools. These trees belong to the future for these children, so we wanted them to plant as many as

they could, symbolizing our desire to involve the community in improving their own environment.

There is now much work to be done. The empty tree guard—signifying that a tree has been planted but has since died—is to be seen everywhere in India. It is a symbol of good intentions but lack of long-term commitment. We must be sure that this is not what happens with the Vṛndāvana project. The Chipko—“tree-hugging”—movement, inspired by Sunderlal Bahugana, has demonstrated to the world the power of the community to save trees. Like him, we hope to inspire millions of Hindus and others worldwide to think more deeply about caring for nature.

As the project gains support, there are many other tasks to take up. The *parikramapath* round Govardhana Hill, twenty miles from Vṛndāvana, is another obvious target for restoration.

Already a group of ISKCON devotees, inspired by our first efforts, have committed themselves to raising the money to save the last piece of unspoiled woodland in Ramaṇa Reti, where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma used to play. Instead of falling before the developer's bulldozer, this spot will be preserved as a memorial garden to ISKCON's

founder-*ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Vṛndāvana is worshiped as the sacred source of life on this planet. If even here—at the root of existence—pollution and environmental destruction rule, what hope is there for the rest of the planet? On the other hand, if here nature is protected, that positive spirit will spread far and wide.

I look forward to the day when I can return with my son to a Vṛndāvana where trees grow in abundance, cared for by devotees and in turn caring for the millions who come to worship Kṛṣṇa among them. 🌸

PRESIDENT

(continued from page 64)

Kṛṣṇa does. Live Prabhupāda's books. Make a revolution. Not just tell it, show it. Show people how to be clean, kind, truthful, and merciful, and they'll demand it in their leaders. It starts right here."

She dug the earth with her hoof. "Kṛṣṇa says, *kṛṣi-go-rakṣya*: farm the land and protect the cows. *Kṛṣi* means to pull. Pull the plow." She nodded toward Māyāpur, our one-horned ox. "He needs more work. Can you engage him? In a sane society, everyone has a cow and bull. You have two cars. You should have a cow and bull. A cow for your milk, a bull for your garden.

You don't have to be a farmer. Just be a gentleman."

I don't know who was taking a bigger licking, me or the salt block. Vote for Kṛṣṇa, the cows were pleading. Live like Kṛṣṇa, not like Kali. Kali has already killed '92. When will we challenge him? By '96? By Śrīla Prabhupāda's centennial? Hmmm. A Vedic village in place and prospering by 1996. Now there's one for the ISKCON electorate . . .

I woke up sweating. No time for Tweedle Tuesday. We have work to do. 🌸

Sureśvara Dāsa has been grazing at Gītā Nāgarī since 1980.

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

UPDATE

Our address list was starting to take up lots of space—space we'd rather use for articles. So we now plan to run it every third issue. What do you think?

As new subscriptions come in, we'll send each new subscriber the full list. And in each issue we'll print changes to the list. Here's what has come in since the last issue:

NEW

- Bern, Switzerland (restaurant)** — Weihergasse 7 (Marzili), 3005 Bern/ Tel. +41 (031) 21 38 25
- Biel, Switzerland (restaurant)** — Govinda, Untergasse 29 (Alstadt), 2502 Biel/ Tel. +41 (032) 23 12 91
- Copenhagen, Denmark (restaurant)** — Govinda's Vegetarisk Restaurant, Noerre Farimagsgade 82, Copenhagen/ Tel. +45 (33) 33 74 44
- Denver, Colorado, USA (restaurant)** — at ISKCON Denver
- Durbuy, Belgium (restaurant)** — Gopinatha's Garden (at ISKCON Durbuy)
- Port Elizabeth, South Africa** — 10 Skegnes Rd., Summerstrand/ Tel. +27 (41) 153-3353

REVISED

- Mayapur, W. Bengal** — phone number correction: +91 (34) 733218 and 733213 are not valid. Use +91 (34) 762218
- Nairobi, Kenya** — phone number correction: area code is (02), country code is +254
- Paris, France** — phone number correction: +33 (01) 43 04 32 63 is not valid. Use +33 (01) 43 04 31 15
- Johannesburg, South Africa** — 14 Goldreich St., Hillbrow 2001, (mail: P.O. Box 10667, Johannesburg 2000)/ Tel. +27 (11) 484-3273

Śrīla Prabhupāda's

In the land of Lord Caitanya, an architectural wonder in honor of th



The chamber in the center of the samādhī, where a bronze form of Prabhupāda on an azure marble seat will preside.

by Ṣaḍbhujā Dāsa

Photos by Arcita Dāsa

IN VṚNDĀVANA, in July of 1977, Śrīla Prabhupāda said he wanted to go to Māyāpur, where perhaps he could regain his health. He had asked before that a small house be built there so he could have a peaceful, quiet place to write his books. He had said that his Māyāpur house “should be by the side of our decorative pond, positioned so that I may enjoy the summer breeze.”

When the devotees directing the Māyāpur project visited Śrīla Prabhupāda as he lay ill, they showed him sketches for his house.

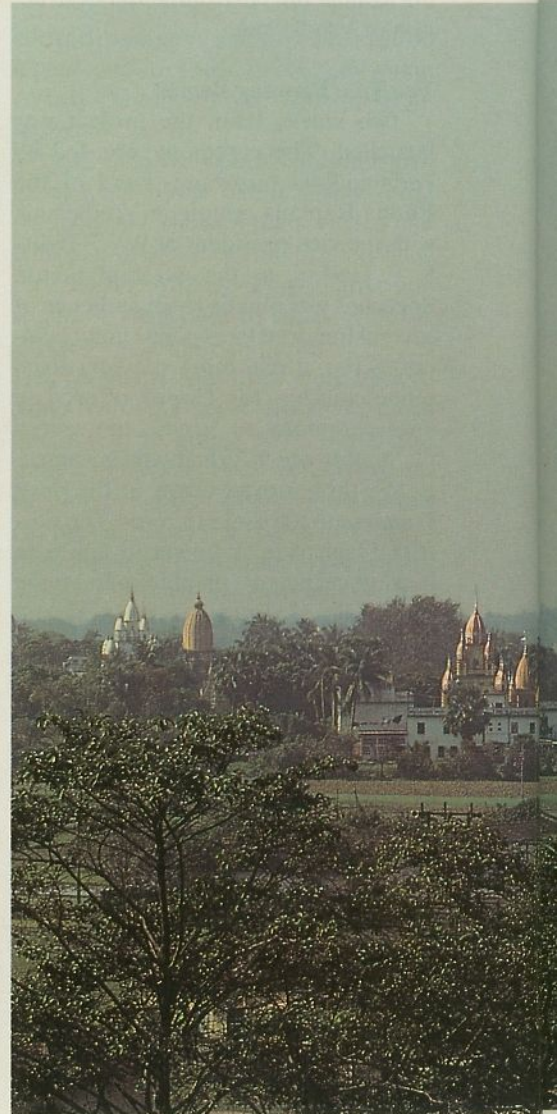
“It has not yet begun?” he asked.

“The plans are being drawn up,” they replied. “The architects say there will be no problem building it, and we can keep working right through the monsoon season.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that for now it would be his residence and after he passed away it could be his *samādhī*



A worker carries cement along one of two wings that extend from the main structure. Between these wings is Śrīla Prabhupāda's “decorative pond.”



(memorial tomb). He was preparing his disciples for his departure from this world, which took place on November 14, 1977.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's body was buried in Vṛndāvana, and flowers from the garlands that had last adorned it were brought to Māyāpur. With great ceremony the flowers were placed in the earth at the site Śrīla Prabhupāda had selected for his house. There devotees laid a cornerstone for a memorial shrine.

Māyāpur Memorial

the founder/ācārya of ISKCON towers above the plains of West Bengal.



The architecture of the memorial to Śrīla Prabhupāda in Māyāpur melds features of traditional Bengali brick temples, simple thatched-roof cottages, and grand European churches.

Construction of Prabhupāda's *puṣpa samādhi* ("tomb of flowers") began in 1980. The building stands 200 feet high, its dome spanning 120 feet. The architecture melds features of traditional Bengali brick temples, simple thatched-roof cottages, and grand European churches. All the work has been done by local Muslim and Hindu villagers, closely guided by ISKCON devotees to assure the best workmanship.

Concrete and brick are available

locally, but gathering materials for the decorative finishings took devotees to many parts of India. From Makrana, Rajasthan, they brought carved marble, hand-selected from the mines, from Hindaun, Rajasthan, they brought sandstone, from Bombay Italian marble, and from Benares silver and brass work.

The structure is done, and the decorative work is well underway. The marble and sandstone in the main hall is almost all in place. The main hall, de-

signed by Matsya Avatāra Dāsa, from Italy, uses striped Albata marble with green Baroda borders on the walls, pink marble with green bases on the columns. Inlaid into the floor will be a large lotus in Italian marble of red, yellow, and green. Niches in the walls will house bronze panels and sculptures.

The exterior of the dome, clad in polished white marble, is completed. Its *kalāṣa* (metal spire) will be ornamented with gold mosaic tiles made on



Red sandstone columns line the veranda, which, like most of the building, will be covered in marble.

site. Fitting the tiles has begun, and already the golden spire can be seen from Navadvīpa, across the Ganges River.

Inside, the dome will be covered with eight large mosaics depicting Prabhupāda in some of his major achievements—translating and publishing books, preaching, building temples, installing Deities, setting up schools, holding Rathayātrā festivals, starting programs for cow protection, and initiating disciples from all over the world. Above these scenes and over-

looking the main floor, a museum of dioramas will show scenes from Śrīla Prabhupāda's life.

The heart of the *samādhi* is the chamber, where a bronze form of Śrīla Prabhupāda on an azure marble seat will preside. The chamber will be clad with carved white Indian marble, inlaid with gold mosaic tiles and marble of Italian red,

Italian yellow, and Baroda green.

Outside, the pink sandstone walls of the veranda will be set off by red sandstone balustrades, columns, and arches. On the ground floor, terra cotta relief panels and sculptured figures, all finished in colored glazes, will depict the nine methods of devotional service. A frieze of terra cotta figures dancing, playing instruments, and singing Hare Kṛṣṇa will encircle the building.

Landscaping is underway. The road that goes around the building will be

bound by a hedge with thirteen arched entrances, decorated lampposts, and pots with plants. Śrīla Prabhupāda's "decorative pond" has been surrounded by a rock garden.

Visitors to the *samādhi* will experience Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence by seeing his deity form, by seeing the depictions of his instructions and pastimes, and by meeting his dedicated disciples and granddisciples. Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi* will be the focus for prayers glorifying him as more and more people realize his greatness and the value of his transcendental instructions. As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written, the pure devotee lives forever by his divine instructions.

Now that the task of building the *samādhi* is nearing completion, we pray for the continued mercy of the devotees worldwide who have given funds to the project and who spread the glories of Śrīdhām Māyāpur, as presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda. 🌸

Ṣaḍbhujā Dāsa joined ISKCON in Melbourne, Australia, in 1980. He lives in Māyāpur and is a project co-ordinator for Śrīla Prabhupāda's puṣpa samādhi.

Advertisement

Hinduism and Ecology

Seeds of Truth

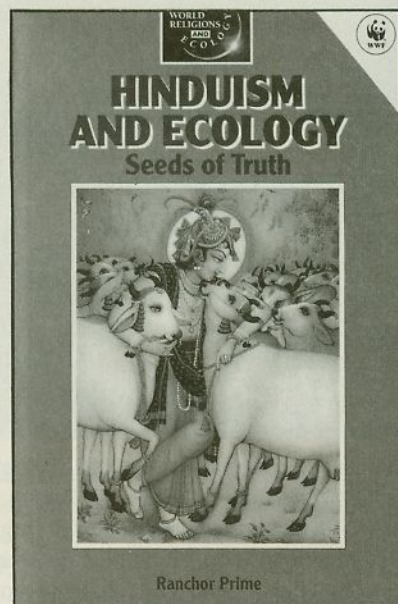
by RANCHOR PRIME

This book looks at the environmental values of the Hindu tradition—its past and present teachings and practice. The author speaks to prominent environmental activists and thinkers, presents their ideas, and explains what they are doing.

Ranchor Prime (Ranchor Dasa) was born in Leeds, England, and has spent his life as a devotee of Krishna in Britain and India. He now works with the World Wide Fund for Nature as their Religious Network Officer in the UK. He is also currently running a tree planting and restoration project in Vrindavan, India, on behalf of the WWF.

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LORD KAPILA'S TRANSCENDENTAL FORM

Rendered from Sanskrit into English,
with commentary,
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

The sage Kardama Muni is about to leave home for a life of full renunciation. As Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Kardama offers prayers to his divine son, Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kapila descended to explain the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy, which culminates in devotional service to the Lord.

THIRDCANTO/CHAPTER 24

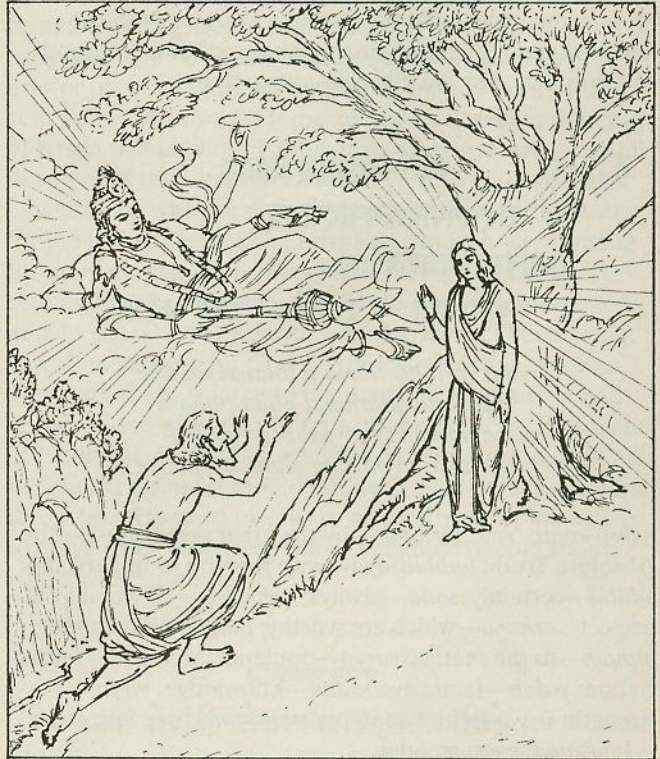
31 तान्येव तेऽभिरूपाणि रूपाणि भगवंस्त्व ।
यानि यानि च रोचन्ते स्वजनानामरूपिणः ॥३१॥

*tāny eva te 'bhirūpāṇi
rūpāṇi bhagavams tava
yāni yāni ca rocante
sva janānām arūpiṇaḥ*

tāni—those; *eva*—truly; *te*—Your; *abhirūpāṇi*—suitable; *rūpāṇi*—forms; *bhagavan*—O Lord; *tava*—Your; *yāni yāni*—whichever; *ca*—and; *rocante*—are pleasing; *sva janānām*—to Your own devotees; *arūpiṇaḥ*—of one with no material form.

My dear Lord, although You have no material form, You have Your own innumerable forms. They truly are Your transcendental forms, which are pleasing to Your devotees.

PURPORT: In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is stated that the Lord is one Absolute, but He has *ananta*, or innumerable, forms.



Kardama Muni offers prayers to Lord Kapiladeva, recognizing Him as the same Supreme Lord who absorbs the material universes after their dissolution.

Advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam. The Lord is the original form, but still He has multiforms. Those multiforms are manifested by Him transcendently, according to the tastes of His multidevotees. It is understood that once

Hanumān, the great devotee of Lord Rāmacandra, said that he knew that Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Lakṣmī, and Rāma, the husband of Sītā, are one and the same, and that there is no difference between Lakṣmī and Sītā, but as for himself, he liked the form of Lord Rāma. In a similar way, some devotees worship the original form of Kṛṣṇa. When we say “Kṛṣṇa” we refer to all forms of the Lord—not only Kṛṣṇa, but Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, Varāha, Nārāyaṇa, etc. The varieties of transcendental forms exist simultaneously. That is also stated in the *Brahma-saṁhita*: *rāmādi-mūrtiṣu . . . nānāvātāram*. He already exists in multiforms, but none of the forms are material. Śrīdhara Svāmī has commented that *arūpiṇaḥ*, “without form,” means without material form. The Lord has form; otherwise how can it be stated here, *tāny eva te ’bhirūpāṇi rūpāṇi bhagavanis tava*: “You have Your forms, but they are not material. Materially You have no form, but spiritually, transcendently, You have multiforms”? Māyāvādī philosophers cannot understand these transcendental forms of the Lord, and being disappointed, they say that the Supreme Lord is impersonal. But that is not a fact; whenever there is form there is a person. Many times in many Vedic literatures the Lord is described as *puruṣa*, which means “the original form, the original enjoyer.” The conclusion is that the Lord has no material form, and yet, according to the liking of different grades of devotees, He simultaneously exists in multiforms, such as Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, Varāha, Nārāyaṇa, and Mukunda. There are many thousands and thousands of forms, but they are all *viṣṇu-tattva*, Kṛṣṇa.

32 त्वां सूरिभिस्तत्त्वबुभुत्सयाद्ध
सदामिवादारहणपादपीठम् ।
ऐश्वर्यवैराग्यशोषबोध-
वीर्यश्रिया पूर्तमहं प्रपद्ये ॥३२॥

*tvām sūribhis tattva-bubhutsayāddhā
sadābhivādārhaṇa-pāda-pīṭham
aiśvarya-vairāgya-yaśo-’va bodha-
vīrya-śriyā pūrtam ahaṁ prapadye*

tvām—unto You; *sūribhiḥ*—by the great sages; *tattva*—the Absolute Truth; *bubhutsayā*—with a desire to understand; *addhā*—certainly; *sadā*—always; *abhivāda*—of worshipful respects; *arhaṇa*—which are worthy; *pāda*—of Your feet; *pīṭham*—to the seat; *aiśvarya*—opulence; *vairāgya*—renunciation; *yaśaḥ*—fame; *avabodha*—knowledge; *vīrya*—strength; *śriyā*—with beauty; *pūrtam*—who are full; *ahaṁ*—I; *prapadye*—surrender.

My dear Lord, Your lotus feet are the reservoir that always deserves to receive worshipful homage from all great sages eager to understand the Absolute Truth. You are full in opulence, renunciation, transcendental fame, knowledge, strength, and beauty, and therefore I surrender myself unto Your lotus feet.

PURPORT: Actually, those who are searching after the Absolute Truth must take shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and worship Him. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna many times to surrender unto Him, especially at the end of the Ninth Chapter—*man-manā bhava mad-bhaktaḥ*: “If you want to be perfect, just always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer your obeisances to Me. In this way you will understand Me, the Personality of Godhead, and ultimately you will come back to Me, back to Godhead, back home.” Why is it so? The Lord is always full in six opulences, as mentioned herein: wealth, renunciation, fame, knowledge, strength, and beauty. The word *pūrtam* means “in full.” No one can claim that all wealth belongs to him, but Kṛṣṇa can claim it, since He has full wealth. Similarly, He is full in knowledge, renunciation, strength, and beauty. He is full in everything, and no one can surpass Him. Another one of Kṛṣṇa’s names is *asam-aurdhva*, which means that no one is equal to or greater than Him.

33 परं प्रधानं पुरुषं महान्तं
कालं कविं त्रिवृतं लोकपालम् ।
आत्मानुभूत्यानुगतप्रपञ्चं
स्वच्छन्दशक्तिं कपिलं प्रपद्ये ॥३३॥

*param pradhānam puruṣam mahāntam
kālam kavim tri-vṛtam loka-pālam
ātmānu bhūtyān ugata-prapañcam
svacchanda-śaktim kapilam prapadye*

param—transcendental; *pradhānam*—supreme; *puruṣam*—person; *mahāntam*—who is the origin of the material world; *kālam*—who is time; *kavim*—fully cognizant; *tri-vṛtam*—three modes of material nature; *loka-pālam*—who is the maintainer of all the universes; *ātma*—in Himself; *anubhūtya*—by internal potency; *anugata*—dissolved; *prapañcam*—whose material manifestations; *sva-chanda*—independently; *śaktim*—who is powerful; *kapilam*—to Lord Kapila; *prapadye*—I surrender.

I surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, descended in the form of Kapila, who is independently powerful and transcendental, who is the Supreme Person and the Lord of the sum total of matter and the element of time, who is the fully cognizant maintainer of all the universes under the three modes of material nature, and who absorbs the material manifestations after their dissolution

PURPORT: The six opulences—wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation—are indicated here by Kardama Muni, who addresses Kapila Muni, his son, as *param*.

The word *param* is used in the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in the phrase *param satyam*, to refer to the

sumum bonum, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Param* is explained further by the next word, *pradhānam*, which means the chief, the origin, the source of everything—*sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*—the cause of all causes. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is not formless; He is *puruṣam*, or the enjoyer, the original person. He is the time element and is all-cognizant. He knows everything—past, present, and future—as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*. The Lord says, “I know everything—present, past, and future—in every corner of the universe.” The material world, which is moving under the spell of the three modes of nature, is also a manifestation of His energy. *parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*: everything that we see is an interaction of His energies (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 6.8). *Parāśya brahmaṇaḥ śaktis tathedaṁ akhilam jagat*. This is the version of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. We can understand that whatever we see is an interaction of the three modes of material nature, but actually it is all an interaction of the Lord’s energy. *Loka-pālam*: He is actually the maintainer of all living entities. *Nityo nityānām*: He is the chief of all living entities; He is one, but He maintains many, many living entities. God maintains all other living entities, but no one can maintain God. That is His *svacchanda-śakti*; He is not dependent on others. Someone may call himself independent, but he is still dependent on someone higher. The Personality of Godhead, however, is absolute; there is no one higher than or equal to Him.

Kapila Muni appeared as the son of Kardama Muni, but because Kapila is an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kardama Muni offered respectful obeisances unto Him with full surrender. Another word in this verse is very important: *ātmānubhūtyānugata-prapañcam*. The Lord descends either as Kapila or Rāma, Nṛsiṁha or Varāha, and whatever forms He assumes in the material world are all manifestations of His own personal internal energy. They are never forms of the material energy. The ordinary living entities who are manifested in this material world have bodies created by the material energy, but when Kṛṣṇa or any one of His expansions or parts of the expansions descends on this material world, although He appears to have a material body His body is not material. He always has a transcendental body. But fools and rascals, who are called *mūḍhas*, consider Him one of them, and therefore they deride Him. They refuse to accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead because they cannot understand Him. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *avajānanti mām mūḍhāḥ*: “Those who are rascals and fools deride Me.” When God descends in a form, this does not mean that He assumes His form with the help of the material energy. He manifests His spiritual form as He exists in His spiritual kingdom.

34 आ साभिपृच्छेऽद्य पतिं प्रजानां
त्वयावतीर्णं उताप्तकामः ।
परिव्रजत्पदवीमास्थितोऽहं
चरिष्ये त्वां हृदि युञ्जन् विशोकः ॥३४॥

ā smābhipṛcche 'dya patim prajānām
tvayāvātīrṇaṇa utāpta-kāmaḥ
parivrajat-padavim āsthito 'ham
carisyē tvām hṛdi yuñjan viśokaḥ

ā sma abhipṛcche—I am inquiring; *adya*—now; *patim*—the Lord; *prajānām*—of all created beings; *tvayā*—by You; *avātīrṇa-ṇaḥ*—free from debts; *uta*—and; *āpta*—fulfilled; *kāmaḥ*—desires; *parivrajat*—of an itinerant mendicant; *padavim*—the path; *āsthitaḥ*—accepting; *aham*—I; *carisyē*—I shall wander; *tvām*—You; *hṛdi*—in my heart; *yuñjan*—keeping; *viśokaḥ*—free from lamentation.

Today I have something to ask from You, who are the Lord of all living entities. Since I have now been liberated by You from my debts to my father, and since all my desires are fulfilled, I wish to accept the order of an itinerant mendicant. Renouncing this family life, I wish to wander about, free from lamentation, thinking always of You in my heart.

PURPORT: Actually, *sannyāsa*, or renunciation of material household life, necessitates complete absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and immersion in the self. One does not take *sannyāsa*, freedom from family responsibility in the renounced order of life, to make another family or to create an embarrassing transcendental fraud in the name of *sannyāsa*. The *sannyāsi*'s business is not to become proprietor of so many things and amass money from the innocent public. A *sannyāsi* is proud that he is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa within himself. Of course, there are two kinds of devotees of the Lord. One is called *goṣṭhy-ānandī*, which means those who are preachers and have many followers for preaching the glories of the Lord and who live among those many, many followers just to organize missionary activities. Other devotees are *ātmānandī*, or self-satisfied, and do not take the risk of preaching work. They remain, therefore, alone with God. In this classification was Kardama Muni. He wanted to be free from all anxieties and remain alone within his heart with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Parivrāja* means “an itinerant mendicant.” A mendicant *sannyāsi* should not live anywhere for more than three days. He must be always moving because his duty is to move from door to door and enlighten people about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

35

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मया प्रोक्तं हि लोकस्य प्रमाणं सत्यलौकिके ।
अथाजनि मया तुभ्यं यदवोचमृतं मुने ॥३५॥

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mayā proktaṁ hi lokasya
pramāṇaṁ satya-laukike
athājani mayā tubhyaṁ
yad avocam ṛtaṁ mune

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *mayā*—by Me; *proktam*—spoken; *hi*—in fact; *loka sya*—for the people; *pramāṇam*—authority; *satya*—spoken in scripture; *laukike*—and in ordinary speech; *atha*—therefore; *ajani*—there was birth; *mayā*—by Me; *tubhyam*—to you; *yat*—that which; *avocam*—I said; *ṛtam*—true; *mune*—O sage.

The Personality of Godhead Kapila said: Whatever I speak, whether directly or in the scriptures, is authoritative in all respects for the people of the world. O Muni, because I told you before that I would become your son, I have descended to fulfill this truth.

PURPORT: Kardama Muni was to leave his family life to completely engage in the service of the Lord. But since he knew that the Lord Himself, as Kapila, had taken birth in his home as his own son, why was he preparing to leave home to search out self-realization or God realization? God Himself was present in his home—why should he leave home? Such a question may certainly arise. But here it is said that whatever is spoken in the *Vedas* and whatever is practiced in accordance with the injunctions of the *Vedas* is to be accepted as authoritative in society. Vedic authority says that a householder must leave home after his fiftieth year. *Pañcāśordhvaṃ vanaṃ vrajet*: one must leave his family life and enter the forest after the age of fifty. This is an authoritative statement of the *Vedas*, based on the division of social life into four departments of activity—*brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, and *sannyāsa*.

Kardama Muni practiced *yoga* very rigidly as a *brahmacārī* before his marriage, and he became so powerful and attained so much mystic power that his father, Brahmā, ordered him to marry and beget children as a householder. Kardama did that also; he begot nine good daughters and one son, Kapila Muni, and thus his householder duty was also performed nicely, and now his duty was to leave. Even though he had the Supreme Personality of Godhead as his son, he had to respect the authority of the *Vedas*. This is a very important lesson. Even if one has God in his home as his son, one should still follow the Vedic injunctions. It is stated, *mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*: one should traverse the path which is followed by great personalities.

Kardama Muni's example is very instructive, for in spite of having the Supreme Personality of Godhead as his son, he left home just to obey the authority of the Vedic injunction. Kardama Muni states here the main purpose of his leaving home: while traveling all over the world as a mendicant, he would always remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart and thereby be freed from all the anxieties of material existence. In this age of Kali-yuga *sannyāsa* is prohibited because persons in this age are all *śūdras* and cannot follow the rules and regulations of *sannyāsa* life. It is very commonly found

that so-called *sannyāsis* are addicted to nonsense—even to having private relationships with women. This is the abominable situation in this age. Although they dress themselves as *sannyāsis*, they still cannot free themselves from the four principles of sinful life, namely illicit sex life, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling. Since they are not freed from these four principles, they are cheating the public by posing as *svāmīs*.

In Kali-yuga the injunction is that no one should accept *sannyāsa*. Of course, those who actually follow the rules and regulations must take *sannyāsa*. Generally, however, people are unable to accept *sannyāsa* life, and therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu stressed, *kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*. In this age there is no alternative, no alternative, no alternative than to chant the holy name of the Lord: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare. The main purpose of *sannyāsa* life is to be in constant companionship with the Supreme Lord, either by thinking of Him within the heart or hearing of Him through aural reception. In this age, hearing is more important than thinking because one's thinking may be disturbed by mental agitation, but if one concentrates on hearing, he will be forced to associate with the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa and the sound vibration "Kṛṣṇa" are nondifferent, so if one loudly vibrates Hare Kṛṣṇa, he will be able to think of Kṛṣṇa immediately. This process of chanting is the best process of self-realization in this age; therefore Lord Caitanya preached it so nicely for the benefit of all humanity.

**36 एतन्मे जन्म लोकेऽस्मिन्मुक्षुणां दुराशयात् ।
प्रसंख्यानाय तत्त्वानां सम्मतायात्मदर्शने ॥३६॥**

*etan me janma loke 'smin
mumukṣūṇāṃ durāśayāt
prasaṅkhyānāya tattvānāṃ
sammatāyātma-darśane*

etat—this; *me*—My; *janma*—birth; *loke*—in the world; *asmin*—in this; *mumukṣūṇām*—by those great sages seeking liberation; *durāśayāt*—from unnecessary material desires; *prasaṅkhyānāya*—for explaining; *tattvānām*—of the truths; *sammatāya*—which is highly esteemed; *ātma-darśane*—in self-realization.

My appearance in this world is especially to explain the philosophy of Sāṅkhya, which is highly esteemed for self-realization by those desiring freedom from the entanglement of unnecessary material desires.

(continued in the next issue)

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

INSTANT HEAVEN

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a journalist took place on December 30, 1968, in Los Angeles.

Journalist: I think an awful lot of our readers, and an awful lot of people in the United States, are terribly confused with the many people who claim to be *avatāras* and who come from India to this country, one after the other.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I can declare, they are all nonsense.

Journalist: Could you elaborate on that a little more?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And I can say furthermore, they're all rascals.

Journalist: The Maharishi, for example.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He is rascal number one. I say it publicly.

Journalist: Could you explain that, give me a little background on that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: From his behavior I can understand he's rascal number one. But the wonderful thing is that the people in the Western countries, they're supposed to be so advanced. How are they befooled by these rascals?

Journalist: Well, I think people believe what they want to believe. They're looking for something, and he comes along . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. But they want something very cheap. That is their fault.

Journalist: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now, for our disciples we don't give anything cheap. Our first condition is character, moral character. You see? So unless one accepts moral character, we don't initiate him. We don't allow him in this institution. And this Maharishi says, "Oh, you do whatever you like. You simply pay me thirty-five dollars and I'll give you some *mantra*." So people want to be cheated, and many cheaters come.

Journalist: Instant heaven.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Journalist: The Maharishi turned me off, and so many people.

My daughter was involved in that kind of thing for a while, and she's terribly disillusioned.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. The psychology is that your people, all the Western people, especially youngsters, they are hankering after something, you see? But if somebody comes to me and says, "Swamiji, initiate me," I immediately say, "You have to follow these four principles [no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no gambling, no intoxication]." And he goes away.

And this Maharishi, he did not put any restriction, you see? Just like a physician might say, "You can do whatever you like. You simply take my medicine, and you will be cured." That physician will be very much liked.

Journalist: Yes, he'll kill a lot of people, but he'll be very much liked.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes [*Laughs*]. And if a physician says, "Oh, you cannot do this, you cannot do that, you cannot see this," that will be seen as a botheration. So people want something. That is a

fact. But at the same time, they want it very cheap. Therefore the cheaters come and cheat them. They take the opportunity. "These people want to be cheated. Oh, let us take advantage."

They are advising, "You are God, everyone is God. You just realize this yourself. You have forgotten you are God. You take this *mantra*, and you will become God and become powerful. Whatever you like, you can control. But there is no need to control your senses. You can drink, you can have unrestricted sex, and whatever you like."

People like this. "Oh, simply by fifteen minutes of meditation I shall become God, and I have to pay only thirty-five dollars." So many millions of people will be ready to do it. Thirty-five dollars in your country is not so much. But thirty-five multiplied by a million becomes thirty-five million dollars.

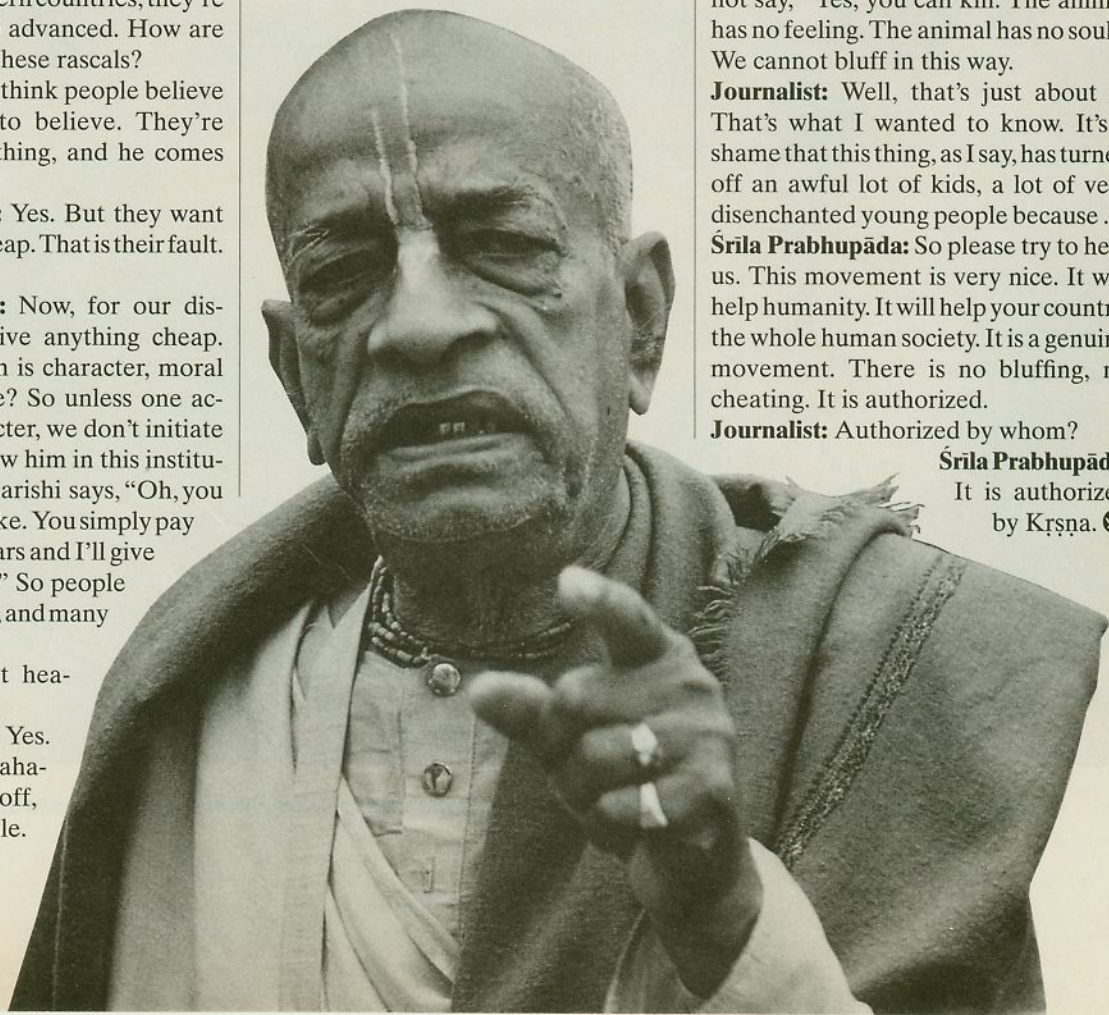
But we cannot bluff. We say that if you actually want spiritual life, you have to follow the restrictions. If the commandment is "You shall not kill," I cannot say, "Yes, you can kill. The animal has no feeling. The animal has no soul." We cannot bluff in this way.

Journalist: Well, that's just about it. That's what I wanted to know. It's a shame that this thing, as I say, has turned off an awful lot of kids, a lot of very disenchanted young people because . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So please try to help us. This movement is very nice. It will help humanity. It will help your country, the whole human society. It is a genuine movement. There is no bluffing, no cheating. It is authorized.

Journalist: Authorized by whom?

Śrīla Prabhupāda:
It is authorized
by Kṛṣṇa. ❁





Yadurāṇī's 1967 painting of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, done under Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal direction.

Divine Ferocity

*Śrīla Prabhupāda acts as the model for
a painting of God in His most terrifying form*

by Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsī

IN NEW YORK CITY, 1967, in Śrīla Prabhupāda's Second Avenue apartment, he asked me to paint a picture of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, the half-man, half-lion incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared many millennia ago. In a print Prabhupāda's disciple Hayagrīva Dāsa had brought from India, Lord Nṛsimhadeva had about ten arms, and He was ripping apart the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu in His lap, tearing out the demon's intestines. Prabhupāda told me to paint only four arms, and he told me the story of Lord Nṛsimhadeva.

I was already somewhat familiar with the story because Prabhupāda had been giving lectures on Lord Nṛsimhadeva and Prahlāda, the Lord's pure devotee, whom the Lord had come to protect. Prabhupāda asked me to do a big painting of the killing scene. In fact, he posed for me to demonstrate the proper postures for the action. Imitating Lord Nṛsimhadeva, Prabhupāda stretched out his hands and then drew them back, spreading his fingers straight a little apart from one another, like delicate claws. I could almost see long lotus nails protruding from his hands. As Prabhupāda drew back his hands in a mock menacing way, he glorified Nṛsimhadeva: "Your lotus hands have lotus nails with which You rip apart the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu."

As Prabhupāda was pulling his arms back, he opened his eyes wide and crossed them in an inimitable way. I could feel Nṛsimhadeva manifesting through His pure devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda then dropped his arms, and his face at once gained its former composure.

In order to remember his expression for the painting, I asked Prabhupāda, "Could you do that again?" He did it again, exactly as before.

Prabhupāda then had Gargamuni (the temple treasure) and Brahmānanda (the temple president) act out the death scene to show me the

essence of the composition. Prabhupāda was the director. He had one of them lie across the other's lap to mimic the way Hiraṇyakaśipu was pulled into the Lord's lap and torn apart. I studied the scene and then set about to paint it.

I painted the blood sparingly, applying only a little on the floor and on Hiraṇyakaśipu's body. Prabhupāda looked at the painting and told me, "Paint blood everywhere." He saw the look of surprise on my face and posed a hypothetical question: "If God is not ferocious, then from where does ferocity come?"

So I painted a lot of blood and gore. But I still needed a reference picture for the rug under the Lord's feet.

Prabhupāda in his lectures had described the opulence of Hiraṇyakaśipu's palace. "What does a rug from an opulent Vedic palace look like?" I wondered. I remembered that there was an Indian picture in Prabhupāda's room, right above where he would write his books or sit and talk with his disciples and guests. It showed Lord Rāmacandra, Sītā Devī, and Hanumān, with an opulent rug below their lotus feet.

I went into Prabhupāda's room and looked high up on the wall trying to see the details of the rug in the picture. I couldn't really make out all the details

without stepping on Prabhupāda's mat to get a closer look. So I started standing on my toes and stretching. I must have looked pretty ridiculous.

Prabhupāda, who was sitting on the mat, asked, "What are you doing?"

"I'm trying to see the print so that I can paint a similar rug in my picture of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva. But I don't want to step on your seat."

"In Kṛṣṇa's service," Prabhupāda said humbly, "you can step on my head."

When the painting was finished Prabhupāda okayed the blue effulgence I'd painted around Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva's head, although it would generally be perceived as yellowish white.

Soon after I'd completed the Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva painting, my younger sister came to visit the temple. Her disbelief in God was overshadowed only by her criticism of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, which she bad-mouthed to anyone who would listen.

I tried to find some common ground with her, so I showed her the Nṛsiṃhadeva painting, hoping she could appreciate it, at least as her sister's work. As I told her the story, she insisted we should have more compassion for poor Hiraṇyakaśipu.

"How could God kill someone," she asked, "especially the father of His devotee?"

I couldn't answer her, because our

relationship was too familiar and she couldn't accept anything I said. So I brought her to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Defending his fledgling spiritual daughter, Prabhupāda patiently explained to my sister that the father may love everyone but he especially loves his own children. Similarly, God loves everyone, but He shows special favor to His devotees. He explained that Prahlāda was a five-year-old devotee and his father had repeatedly tried to kill him and others for their religious beliefs, so Kṛṣṇa in His fierce form of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva killed Prahlāda's demonic father.

Prabhupāda also told her that being slain by the Lord is not an ordinary thing. Actually, the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, because the Lord personally killed him, attained a position usually reserved for those who have dedicated their life to austerity and piety. Kṛṣṇa was doing the demon a favor by killing him.

My sister couldn't accept anything Prabhupāda said. She wasn't ready for spiritual life. She got up and left in acute frustration, not realizing the benefit she had derived from associating with a pure devotee. ❀

Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsi lives at ISKCON's Krishna-Balaram temple in Vr̥ndāvana, India.

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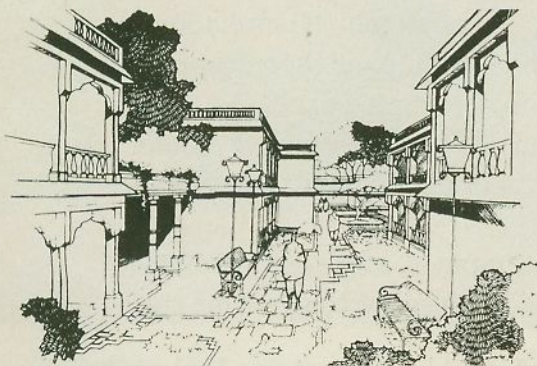
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The worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

WORLD NEWS

North America

Great Vegetarian Dishes, a video series based on Kūrma Dāsa's book of the same name. ITV (ISKCON Television) produced the series, which will be listed in *TV Guide*.

Seventy-eight U. S. television stations will show

ISKCON leaders in North America have formed a group to plan celebrations for 1996, marking one hundred years since Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance. Want to assist? Contact Rāmīya Dāsa at ISKCON Dallas.

The U. S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in the *ISKCON v. Lee* case. The Court ruled that devotees can pass out books in airports but can't ask for donations. Although the case concerned the New York metropolitan airport, the Court's decision is likely to affect airports throughout the country.

A festival to honor Śrīla Prabhupāda drew more than six hundred devotees and friends to New Dvārakā, the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in Los Angeles, on May 30. The festival, meant for "reuniting Śrīla Prabhupāda's family," included the reopening of Prabhupāda's newly restored garden, where he'd regularly spoken with devotees and guests during his extended visits to Los Angeles.



Oscar-winning actor Michael Douglas with devotees at Venice Beach, Los Angeles.

Chanting devotees will appear in the Hollywood movie *Falling Down*, starring three Oscar-winning actors. Director Joel Schumacher, who had philosophical discussions with devotees in the sixties, saw the devotees chanting on Venice Beach in Los Angeles on Lord Caitanya's appearance day and thought they would make a nice addition to the movie.

Twenty thousand people received prasādam, food first offered to Kṛṣṇa, on Earth Day at Washington University in St. Louis. One of the festival's themes was vegetarianism. Govinda's, the devotees' restaurant near the campus, was the only restaurant invited to cater the event.

Another book of Prabhupāda's writings has appeared: *Renunciation Through Wisdom*, an English translation of essays he wrote in Bengali in the 1940's and '50's. Due out in the fall: King Kulaśekhara's *Mukunḍa-mālā-stotra*.



Devotees assemble at the Los Angeles temple for a festival to reunite Śrīla Prabhupāda's family.

Europe

The New Gopal Restaurant has opened in Stockholm, on Sodermalm, a section of the city that attracts people searching for alternative lifestyles. The restaurant is the devotees' second one here. In another part of town, Govinda's restaurant serves about 250 meals a day.

Devotees in Copenhagen have opened a new Govinda's restaurant. The opening was attended by two TV stations, two weekly magazines, and a member of Parliament.

India

A large temple complex will go up on seven acres of prime land in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka. The devotees plan to finish the project on the newly acquired land by 1996, in time to celebrate the centennial of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance.

will include a temple, park, guesthouse, school, and retirement home.

Each ISKCON temple can give exams for Bhakti Śāstrī degrees, which attest to devotional scholarship. Procedures recently set in place by ISKCON's Board of Examinations let temples design their own exams, following guidelines set by the Board. All devotees who follow ISKCON's four regulative principles and daily chant sixteen rounds of Hare Kṛṣṇa qualify to take the exam.

ISKCON's Vṛndāvana temple has hooked up a fax machine. The number is +91 5664 82355.

ISKCON devotees in Jaipur, Rajasthan, are giving out eight hundred plates of *prasādam* every Thursday in front of the famous Govindaji temple.

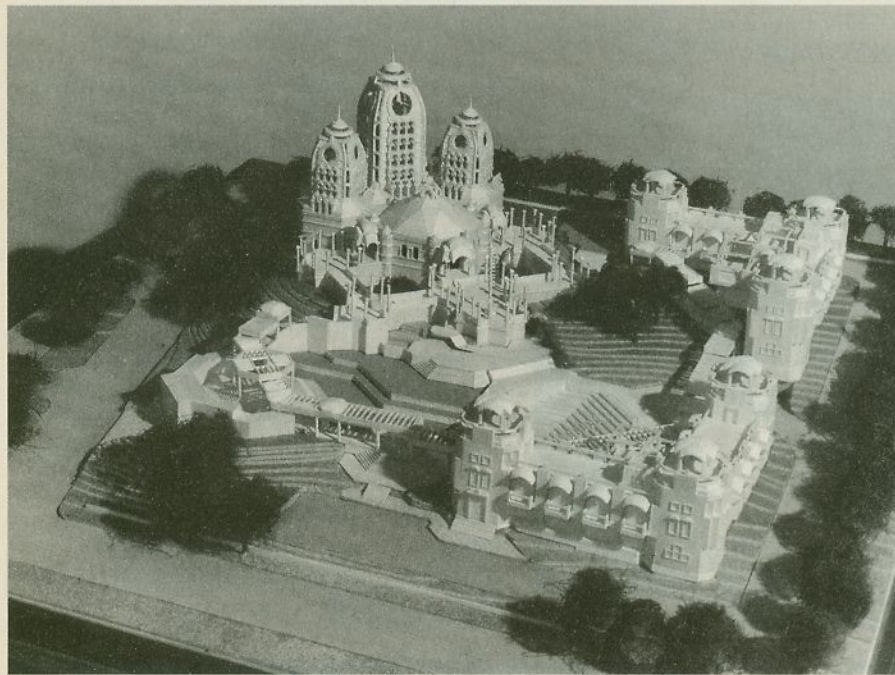
Commonwealth of Independent States

Thousands of people in Moscow, Kiev, Riga, and St. Petersburg chanted and danced in ecstasy with the latest tour of ISKCON's Gaur-anga Bhajan Band.

Students at the main technical college in Russia are receiving *prasādam*. Fifteen hundred servings per day.

Two to three thousand people a day are mailing in paid orders for the Russian edition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Half a million hardbound copies of *The Nectar of Devotion* just rolled off the press in Russian.



Scale model of New Delhi's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathi Temple and Glory of India Vedic Cultural Center.

Work has begun on one of ISKCON's most ambitious projects—New Delhi's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathi Temple and the Glory of India Vedic Cultural Center. The hilltop site for the project overlooks bustling Nehru Place and adjoins the lotus-shaped Bahai center, a major tourist attraction.

Besides a grand temple, the complex will include a museum, a performing arts center, a Vedic studies center, a theme park, and a network of ponds, gardens, waterfalls, and wooded groves.

ISKCON life member Santosh Dey has given land to build a new center in Siliguri, in northern West Bengal. Matsya Avatāra Dāsa, from Italy, is designing the project, which

***Easy Journey to Other Planets* has been printed** in Kirghiz, the language spoken in the state of Kirghizstan, which borders China. The next language: Mongolian.

Australia and New Zealand

More than two hundred devotees flew in from Europe, America, Japan, India, and New Zealand to attend "Śrīla Prabhupada's Family Reunion," held in Melbourne in early June. The weekend featured enthusiastic chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, a grand fire sacrifice, picnics, readings about Śrīla Prabhupāda, films of his Australian tours, a *gulābjāmun*-eating festival, memory sharing, and re-enactments of Śrīla

Prabhupāda's historic morning walks in Melbourne.

As devotees discussed the bond that unites them—their relationship with Śrīla Prabhupada—they patched up old wrongs, offered respects to deceased Godbrothers and Godsisisters, and cried tears of joy in renewing old friendships.

Another reunion is planned for Easter, 1994.

Hare Krishna Food for Life has opened a new center in downtown Christchurch. The center offers free meals, cooking classes, professional counseling, and health advice from a devotee nurse who works with the department of health. Also part of the project: a reading room, a nursery school, and classes in *yoga*, meditation, and *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Asia

New Agers are getting Kṛṣṇa in Hong Kong. Rāma Śaraṇa Dāsa and Śravaṇīyā Devī Dāsī have started the New Age Forum, a workshop of spirituality, personal growth, and holistic health. At the workshop, Rāma Śaraṇa, a successful art wholesaler, and Śravaṇīyā, a *yoga* teacher well-known in Hong Kong and Taiwan, teach *Bhagavad-gītā* and the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Mauritius

The largest Rathayātrā ever in Mauritius took place at Grand Bay, the country's most popular resort. Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean. Prime Minister Annarood Jagernnauth allowed the festival to be shown for five minutes on national state-owned television.



Rathayātrā at Grand Bay, Mauritius.

PADAYĀTRĀ NEWS

Padayātrā India

Having walked from Jaipur, Rajasthan, to the Himalayan foothills, now the Padayātrā party is entering the Himalayas. From Rishikesh, they'll ascend along the Ganges to Kedarnath and Badrinath. They'll also visit the sources of the Ganges (Gangotri) and the Yamunā (Yamunotri).

Padayātrā America

The walk through Central America continues. Some time in September the devotees will finish their tour through El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.



The devotees of Padayātrā America acquired this oxen and cart in El Salvador for their walking tour through Central America.

Padayātrā Worldwide

Countries with summer or fall Padayātrās this year: England, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Mauritius, and Malaysia.

Confirmed for next year: New Zealand (January) and Hungary (summer).

"How to Start Your Own Padayātrā," a detailed manual, is now available from the Padayātrā Worldwide office in New Delhi. Cost: US \$16, plus \$4.00 for overseas postage.

For more information about Padayātrā, write to:

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Padayātrā America
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Padayātrā Europe
Bhaktivedanta Manor, Letchmore Heath, Watford,
Hertfordshire WD2 8EP, England
Phone: +44 (92) 385-7244

KṚṢṆA (continued from page 10)
 “Yes, Mother, I have offended you. Kindly excuse Me.” Then He immediately bowed His head. Kuntī Devī appreciated this scene, for this was another of Kṛṣṇa’s perfections. Although He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He puts Himself under the control of mother Yaśodā. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.7) the Lord says, *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhananājaya*: “My dear Arjuna, there is no one superior to Me.” Yet that Supreme Personality of Godhead, to whom no one is superior, bows to mother Yaśodā, accepting, “My dear Mother, yes, I am an offender.”

When mother Yaśodā saw that Kṛṣṇa had become too much afraid of her, she also became disturbed. She did not actually want Kṛṣṇa to suffer by her punishment. That was not her purpose. But it is a system, still current in India, that when a child creates too much of a disturbance, his mother may bind

him up in one place. That is a very common system, so mother Yaśodā adopted it.

This scene is very much appreciated by pure devotees, for it shows how much greatness there is in the Supreme Person, who plays exactly like a perfect child. When Kṛṣṇa plays like a child He plays perfectly, when He plays as the husband of sixteen thousand wives He plays perfectly, when He plays the lover of the *gopīs* He plays perfectly, and as the friend of the cowherd boys He plays perfectly.

The cowherd boys all depend on Kṛṣṇa. Once they wanted to take fruit from a forest of palm trees, but there was a demon named Gardabhāsura who would not allow anyone to enter the forest. Therefore Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd boy-friends said to Kṛṣṇa, “Kṛṣṇa, we want to taste that fruit, if You can arrange for it.” Kṛṣṇa immediately said yes, and He and Balarāma went to the forest where

that demon was living with other demons, who had taken the shape of asses. When the ass demons came to kick Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with their hind legs, Balarāma caught one of them and threw him into the top of a tree, and the demon died. Then Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed the other demons the same way. Thus Their cowherd friends were very much obliged to Them.

On another occasion, the cowherd boys were surrounded by fire. Not knowing anyone else but Kṛṣṇa, they immediately called for Him, and Kṛṣṇa was ready: “Yes.” Thus Kṛṣṇa immediately swallowed the whole fire. There were many demons that attacked the boys, and every day the boys would return to their mothers and say, “Mother, Kṛṣṇa is so wonderful,” and they would explain what had happened that day. And the mothers would say, “Yes, our Kṛṣṇa is wonderful.” They did not know that Kṛṣṇa is God, the Supreme Person. They

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***Kṛṣṇa has created all these things,
so how can we study Kṛṣṇa? If we cannot understand
the things Kṛṣṇa has created, how can
we understand Kṛṣṇa? It is not possible at all.***

• • •

only knew that Kṛṣṇa is wonderful, that's all. And the more they perceived Kṛṣṇa's wonderful activities, the more their love increased. "Perhaps He may be a demigod," they thought. When Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa's father, talked among his friends, the friends would talk about Kṛṣṇa and say, "Oh, Nanda Mahārāja, your child Kṛṣṇa is wonderful." And Nanda Mahārāja would respond, "Yes, I see that. Maybe He is some demigod." And even that was not certain—"maybe."

Thus the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana do not care who is God and who is not. They love Kṛṣṇa, that's all. Those who think of first analyzing Kṛṣṇa to determine whether He is God are not first-class devotees. The first-class devotees are those who have spontaneous love for Kṛṣṇa. How can we analyze Kṛṣṇa? He is unlimited, and therefore it is impossible. We have limited perception, and our senses have limited potency, so how can we study Kṛṣṇa? It is not possible at all. Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to a certain extent, and that much is sufficient.

We should not be like the Māyāvādī philosophers, who try to find God by speculative deduction. "Neti neti," they say. "God is not this, and God is not that." But what God is they do not know. Materialistic scientists also try to find the ultimate cause, but their process is the same: "Not this, not that." As much as they advance, they will always find "Not this, not that." But what the ultimate cause is, they will never find. That is not possible.

What to speak of finding Kṛṣṇa, materialistic scientists cannot properly understand even material objects. They are trying to go to the moon, but actually they do not know what it is. If they understand what the moon is, why do they come back here? If they knew perfectly what the moon is, they would have resided there by now. They have

been trying for the last twenty years to go there and stay, but they are simply seeing, "Not this, not that. There are no living entities, and there is no possibility of our living there." Thus they can report on what is *not* on the moon, but do they know what *is* there? No, they do not know. And this is only one planet or one star.

According to Vedic literature, the moon is regarded as a star. The scientists say that the stars are all suns, but according to the *Bhagavad-gītā* the stars are of the same nature as the moon. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.21) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *nakṣatrāṇām ahaṁ śaśi*: "Of stars I am the moon." Thus the moon is just like the many stars. What is the nature of the moon? It is bright because it reflects light from the sun. Therefore although the scientist say that the stars are many suns, we do not agree. According to the Vedic calculation, there are innumerable suns, but in every universe there is only one.

What we see in this universe we are seeing imperfectly, and our knowledge is not perfect. We cannot count how many stars or planets there are. We cannot fully understand the material things existing all around us, and therefore how can we understand the Supreme Lord who created this universe? That is not possible. Therefore in the *Brahma-sāṃhitā* (5.34) it is said:

*panthās tu koṭi-śata-vatsara-sampragamyō
vāyor athāpi manaso muni-puṅgavānām
so 'py asti yat-prapada-simny avicintya-tattve
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

Space is unlimited, and the *Brahma-sāṃhitā* suggests: Suppose one travels by spacecraft for millions of years at the velocity of the wind or even the speed of mind. Everyone knows that the mind is so swift that in even one ten-thousandth of a second it can take us millions of miles. If we have seen something mil-

lions of miles away, the mind can go there immediately. But even if we can travel at that speed on a spacecraft manufactured by *muni-puṅgavānām*, the greatest scientists and most thoughtful men, will that be perfection? No. The *Brahma-sāṃhitā* says, *so 'py asti yat-prapada-simny avicintya-tattve*: still this creation will remain inconceivable to our understanding. And Kṛṣṇa has created all these things, so how can we study Kṛṣṇa? If we cannot understand the things Kṛṣṇa has created, how can we understand Kṛṣṇa? It is not possible at all.

Therefore the mentality of Vṛndāvana is the perfect status of the mind for devotees. The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana have no concern with understanding Kṛṣṇa. Rather, they want to love Kṛṣṇa unconditionally. It is not that they think, "Kṛṣṇa is God, and therefore I love Him." In Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa does not play as God; He plays there as an ordinary cowherd boy, and although at times He proves that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the devotees do not care to know it.

Kuntī Devī, however, was not an inhabitant of Vṛndāvana. She was an inhabitant of Hastināpura, which is outside Vṛndāvana. The devotees outside of Vṛndāvana study how great the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana are, but the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana don't care to know how great Kṛṣṇa is. That is the difference between them. So our concern should be simply to love Kṛṣṇa. The more we love Kṛṣṇa, the more we shall become perfect. It is not necessary to understand Kṛṣṇa and how He creates. Kṛṣṇa explains Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and we should not try to understand much more. We should not bother very much to know Kṛṣṇa. That is not possible. We should simply increase our unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa. That is the perfection of life.

Thank you very much. 🌸

PROJECT PROFILE

HERE'S A Kṛṣṇa conscious project you might like to support or get involved in.

PROJECT

The Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust

HEADQUARTERS

Śrīdhama Māyāpur, Nadia District, West Bengal, India

PROJECT LEADERS

The Trust is overseen by seven trustees, of whom Jayapatāka Swami is the chairman. The managing board is made up of devotees from ISKCON and other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava groups. Representing ISKCON are Subhāga Swami (chairman of the board) and Kiranāsa Dāsa.

GOALS

To rediscover and restore the holy places in Bengal connected with the pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. To provide suitable arrangements for pilgrims in these places. To unite the followers of Lord Caitanya, especially those descended from Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami Mahārāja.

DETAILS

Once in Vṛndāvana during Śrīla Prabhupāda's last days, he suddenly began to shed tears, lamenting that many of the old temples founded by Lord Caitanya's followers were giving way to ruin. He then expressed his de-sire to set up a trust to renovate these holy places.

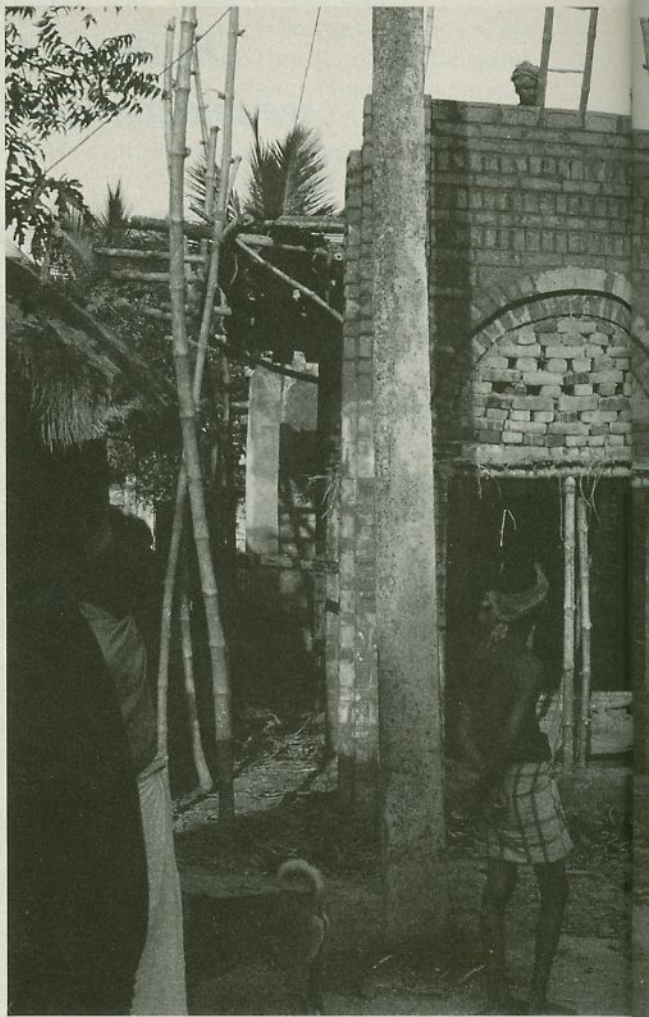
Lord Caitanya had told the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana to rediscover the lost places of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana

pastimes. Later, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura found the place of Lord Caitanya's birth. Now Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to renovate the pastime places of Lord Caitanya and His personal associates.

Lord Caitanya started the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the holy tract of land known as Gaura Maṇḍala Bhūmi (now West Bengal and Bangladesh). The places where He lived and the homes, temples, and Deities of His associates form the roots of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. By seeing to the health of these roots, we can help Kṛṣṇa consciousness grow to encircle the whole world, with blossoms, flowers, and fruits in every town and village.

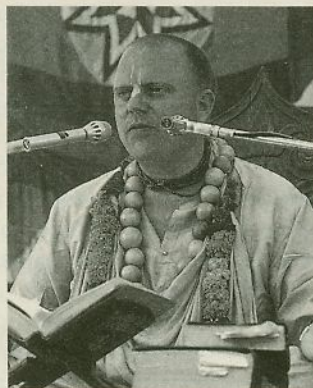
Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, set up the Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust. And he placed funds in a fixed-deposit account, so that interest from the account could provide for the work of the Trust.

To unite the devotees of Lord Caitanya, he also envisioned offering help to the temples of his God-brothers in Bengal.



PLANS

The Trust plans to put together a computerized database on the holy places related to Lord Caitanya and His associates. The database will note where the places are, what condition they're in, and what work needs to be done.



Jayapatāka Swami



Subhāga Swami



Kiranāsa Dāsa

Yamañga Dasa (3)



A project of the Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust: A hall for the congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is being built in front of the temple of Nayānanda Ṭhākura in Bharatpur, West Bengal. Nayānanda was a disciple and nephew of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's closest associates.

Once we renovate a temple, we need to maintain the daily worship there. You can "adopt a *tirtha* [holy place]." That means you take a personal interest in providing for the daily worship, clothes for the Deities, and so on. In a following article we will tell of some of the temples most badly in need.

Temples falling apart need to be renovated. Lost places known only from old writings need to be found. And neglected places known only to local residents need to be located and restored.

Another plan calls for setting up multilingual plaques to mark the way in holy places and provide information for pilgrims.

A book is to be published telling what Lord Caitanya's associates did in various places and giving directions for reaching those places.

OBSTACLES

With the onset of Western materialistic culture in India, local involvement in many of the old temples has seriously declined. Some temples lie in remote villages where people are too poor to maintain them.

Yet inflation has cut away at the value of the funds Śrīla Prabhupāda allotted to the Trust. This limits how much work the Trust can do. Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the Trust at the very end of his stay with us. So, unlike his other projects, it never developed under his direct guidance. Many devotees, therefore, are unaware of the Trust and its importance.

Busy with working around the world to spread Lord Caitanya's teachings, we may neglect places sacred to the heritage we are trying to spread. While we buy land in holy places for new temples and residences, old temples crumble.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you're able, come to Māyāpur to help with research and renovation. Or else donate funds to help the work.

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For further information, contact:

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To find out about programs in Anaheim Hills, Corona, Cerritos, Diamond Bar, Granada Hills, Laguna Niguel, Long Beach, Redlands, Santa Ana, Simi Valley, and other southern CA locations, call Pāvaka Dāsī at (310) 815-9501.

Badger:
Nṛsīmhānanda Dāsa & Īśvarī Devī Dāsī
(209) 337-0021
Full temple program, with Deities, starts at 6:00 A. M. daily. Sunday feast begins at 4:00 P. M.

Grass Valley/ Nevada City:
Haripāda Dāsa & Phalīnī Devī Dāsī
(916) 432-2789

Ojai:
Māyeśvara Dāsa & Urvaśī Devī Dāsī
(Bill & Joan Roberts)
(805) 640-0405

Placentia:
Sri Radha Raman Temple
(714) 996-7262

Santa Rosa:
Jagannātha Purī Dāsa & Tripurārī Devī Dāsī
Bus. phone: (707) 526-7211

Turlock/Modesto:
Nitāi-Caitanya Dāsa Stein
(209) 634-5976

GATHERINGS

Perhaps the nearest temple is too far away and you wish there were some place closer you could go to. Perhaps you'd like to meet others in your area who are interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

If so, get in touch with the people listed here. They and their friends regularly gather in their homes—or they want to start. They'll be happy to hear from you.

If you'd like to be added to the list, please send your name, city, and phone number to: Gatherings, BTG, P. O. Box 90946, San Diego, CA 92169, USA.

In each issue we'll add new gatherings and list as many old ones as space allows.

Florida

Cocoa:
Bhāgavata Dharma Dāsa & Śyāmā Devī Dāsī
(Joe & Sandy Springer)
(407) 633-7664

Ft. Myers/Naples:
Rasātala Dāsa
(813) 463-1057 or 4870

Georgia

Augusta:
Rāma Rāghava Dāsa & Anaṅga-latā Devī Dāsī
(Rakesh & Ana Sharma)
(404) 738-2159

Hawaii

Ninole:
Ādi Karta Dāsa or Kīrtana Rāsa Dāsī
P. O. Box 108, Ninole, HI 96773
(No phone)

Maryland

Silver Spring:
Mr. & Mrs. Sankhla & Jāhnavī Devī Dāsī
(301) 236-0564

Massachusetts

Quincy:
Charran Mahadeo
(Caitya Guru Dāsa)
(617) 471-7911

Nevada

Henderson:
Margaret Dvorak
(702) 454-1215

New York

Buffalo:
Mahāvegavatī Devī Dāsī
(716) 873-4360

Lockport:
Jagannātha Dāsa & Vṛndārānī Devī Dāsī
(716) 434-9662

North Carolina

Belmont:
Kantilal & Sashila Patel
(Satyavrata Dāsa & Kṛṣṇa Kumārī Devī Dāsī)
(704) 825-3753

Fayetteville:
Dayāvira Dāsa
(919) 425-6861

North Dakota

Esmond:
Randolph Schwab
(Raṅga Rañjana Dāsa)
(701) 249-3233

Oregon

Portland:
Kṣetra-jña Dāsa
(503) 234-8971

Pennsylvania

Norristown:
Radha Krishna Mahajan, M. D.
(Kaivalya Dāsa)
(215) 539-3221

Stroudsburg:
Dr. Shyamsundar Mahajan
(Śamika Rṣi Dāsa)
(717) 424-9449

Tennessee

Murfreesboro:
Nitāi Gaurasundara Dāsa
(Dr. Ravi Singh)
(615) 896-3425

Utah

Spanish Fork:
KHQN Radio (1480 AM)
(801) 798-3559

Washington

Kennewick:
Dave & Anna Sherman
(509) 582-6520

Canada

Hamilton, Ontario:
Viśvakarma Dāsa & Kāraṇa Kāraṇā Devī Dāsī
(416) 545-5114

Markham, Ontario:
Prabhupāda Dāsa
(V. B. Sharma)
(416) 294-9431

India

Palakollu, Andhra Pradesh:
Dr. D. Rajendra Prasad
(Raghunātha Dāsa)
08814-3122

Italy

Cislano (Milano):
Citrika Dāsa & Parābhakti Devī Dāsī
(02) 90119990

United Kingdom

Regular gatherings take place in more than twenty cities. To find the one nearest you, or for help in starting one, contact Bhaktivedanta Books Ltd., Reader Services Dept., P. O. Box 324, Borehamwood, Herts. WD6 1NB. Phone: (081) 905 1244.

2329, Sydney 2001, Australia. Phone: (61) 2-9582748.

Gaura Govinda Swami Tape Ministry. For free catalog, write to: GGSTM, 1420 228th Avenue SE, Issaquah, WA 98027. Phone: (206) 391-3293.

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EDUCATION

The Bhaktivedanta School for Sanskrit Studies, working to substantiate ISKCON's claim to being Vedic and Vedāntic, invites your participation. Train to be an authorized translator, BBT editor, or *gurukula* Sanskrit teacher. Help develop the school's brahminical *āśrama* and its preaching programs. Study the works of Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and the Vedic *śāstras* in their original languages. Write: Gopī-parāṇadhana Dāsa, 82 Flint Ridge, Hillsborough, NC 27278.

Keep in touch with ISKCON educational programs. For a free issue of *ISKCON Education Journal*, send your name and address to: ISKCON Board of Education, 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Gurukula Guidebook for classroom organization and teaching now available. Teaching all subjects for ages 5–18, choosing reading books, helping adolescents, and more. 500 pages (8 1/2" x 11" three-ring binder). \$25 plus \$5 shipping. Urmilā Devī Dāsī, 1842 Bushy Cook Rd., Efland, NC 27243, (919) 563-4176; or Śrī Rāma Dāsa, Los Angeles BBT.

Bhakti-Śāstrī Degrees. The ISKCON

Board of Education is authorizing the awarding of Bhakti Śāstrī Degrees. For information on how your temple can become an approved Bhakti Śāstrī examination center, contact the ISKCON Board of Education, P.O. Box 16146 (Circus Avenue Office), Calcutta 700 017, India.

Gītā Nāgarī Retreats

Port Royal, Pennsylvania

Like to learn more about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and how you can apply it to your life? Like to spend a few days with other devotees of Kṛṣṇa in a quiet, peaceful setting, away from the pressures of modern life?

Spend a weekend in Gītā Nāgarī—"The village where the teachings of the *Gītā* are lived." It's in rural Pennsylvania, an hour northwest of Harrisburg.

1992 Retreats

September 5–7
November 27–29

To register, or for more information, contact Romapāda Swami, 305 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, NY 11217. Phone: (718) 624-8614.

PROJECTS

Śrīla Prabhupāda in Australia, a book in progress by Kūrma Dāsa, will tell the remarkable story of how Śrīla Prabhupāda transplanted the timeless Vedic culture from India to Australia. Please send any material you have on Śrīla Prabhupāda's visits to Australia that might help produce this book (recollections, written materials, audiovisual materials, donations, etc.) to Kūrma Dāsa, P.O. Box 125, Albert Park, VIC 3206, Australia. Phone: +61 (03) 699-5122.

Padayātrā America invites all. Join the ecstatic "Every Town and Village" campaign. Donations accepted. For information write to: Padayātrā America, P. O. Box 3991, La Mesa, CA 91944-3991. Phone/Fax: (619) 463-0168.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness for prisoners.

Correspond with prisoners who want to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Donate new or used books (softbound only) to our prison program, or donate for postage. Learn how to get books into the prisons in your state. Let us know if there's a prisoner you'd like us to get in touch with. Write to Candrasekhara Dāsa, Alachua Apts. #603, Alachua, Florida 32615.

Rural Community Conference:

The Foundation of Rural Community—Purpose, Economics & Government. A call for papers on the purpose, economics, or government of a rural community, within the framework of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. Write down your thoughts and realizations and submit them for the upcoming conference, to be held in Los Angeles on August 1, the day before Rathayātrā. Discount for early registration. Write or call for materials to submit a paper, or for registration information. Vaishnava Community Development, P. O. Box 90143, San Diego, CA 92169. Phone: (619) 273-6110.

GENERAL

Original paintings as seen in BTG, *Bhāgavatam*, etc., available. Paintings done to order. Puṣkara Dāsa, 25 Alachua Villas, Alachua, FL 32615. Phone: (904) 462-0144.

Devotional Supplies. Incense (bulk & pack), music, posters, art books, seminar tapes, neck and *japa* beads, cookbooks, Indian comics, Ayurveda and health books, children's books, etc. Write for free catalog. Krishna Culture, P. O. Box 12380, Philadelphia, PA 19119. Or call 1-800-829-2579.

Lucrative, blissful prasādam distribution. Samosa Express is looking for cooks and distributors. Contact Rasānanda Dāsa, 2334 Stuart St., Berkeley, CA 94705.

New Books and Seminars. *Renunciation Through Wisdom*, by Śrīla Prabhupāda (trans. from Bengali by Sarvabhāvana Dāsa) \$5; *Mathura-maṇḍala Parikrama [Bhakti-ratnākara (Fifth Wave)]*, trans. Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi Dāsa \$7; *Prabhupāda Meditations III*, by Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami \$10; *Neighbor James*, by Mathurēśa Dāsa \$7; *Vedic Archeology*, by Satyārāja Dāsa \$8; *Krishna Consciousness in the West*, edited by Bromley and Shinn \$39; *Servant of the Servant*, by Tamāl Krishna Goswami (soft edition) \$10; *Second European Communications Seminar 1992* (16 C90 tapes in album) \$49; *Religion and Religions* (3 C90 tapes), by Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa \$15; Memories of Vrindavan souvenir boxes \$25. Add 10% shipping or \$3 minimum in mainland USA. Krishna Culture, P.O. Box 12380, Philadelphia, PA 19119. Phone: 1-800-829-2579. Catalogs available.

BTG back issues. New-edition issues (beginning Jan. 1991), \$4.00 each; 1988–89 issues, \$2.00 each. Postage extra. Write or call BTG, P.O. Box 90946, San Diego, CA 92169. Phone: (619) 272-7384; Fax: (619) 272-3673. For earlier issues, try Rādhā Dāmodara Dāsa at the Vancouver temple, or Krishna Culture (address above).

Kṛṣṇa's Favorite Chutney Recipes! Easy—Exotic—Delicious. Apple, raisin, peanut, etc. 10 recipe cards—\$4.95. Also, 10 recipes each for left-over bread or rice. 10 cards—\$4.95. Aarti Dalal, P. O. Box 1481, El Toro, CA 92630.

Retirement āsrama in India. Any devotee interested in developing a retirement āsrama for withdrawing from the material world and preparing to leave your body from India, please contact Mahāśṛṅga or Rādhā Kānta at 274-B Lenox, Detroit, Michigan 48215. Phone: (313) 331-1426.

Matchless Memories, by Śrīvānī Dāsi. Handmade devotional gifts, Deity pictures, Tulasi, semi-precious necklaces, magnets, frames, Hare Krishna greeting cards, pop-up cards. Free catalog, 3755 Watseka Ave #9, Los Angeles, CA 90034, USA. Phone: (310) 204-4807.

All-in-one 1993 Vishvahindu Calendar, essential and useful, especially for Hindu families. In ten languages, with holidays of all states of India and other countries of the world where Hindus live. The ideal international Hindu calendar. £3 or US\$8, by airmail from: L. J. Bhardia, P.O. Box 43414, Nairobi, Kenya. Phone: +254-2-228890. Fax: 211426.

BTG Resource Service. For help with any question you may have about Kṛṣṇa consciousness—philosophical, practical, how-to, where-to, or whatever—please feel free to get in touch with us at BTG. Write to: Resources, P.O. Box 90946, San Diego, CA 92169, U.S.A. Phone: (619) 272-7384; Fax: (619) 272-3673.

Start a Hare Kṛṣṇa club at your school. High school students in the U.S. can form a Hare Kṛṣṇa club if the school allows other clubs, off the subjects taught in the regular classes. Find out from your school the rules for starting a club. When you get your Hare Kṛṣṇa club off the ground, we at BTG would be interested to hear about it. And if your school denies your request, let us know about that too. Maybe we can help.

The Governing Body Commission, the highest ecclesiastical body guiding ISKCON, can be reached through its local representatives and its permanent secretary. The address for the secretary is GBC Communications Office, P. O. Box 16146, Circus Avenue Office, Calcutta 700 017, W. Bengal, India.

Visit a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple near you. Take advantage of the spiritual programs that go on every morning and evening and the special festival—with

a sumptuous feast—every Sunday. Call ahead for the specific schedule at your temple.

Artists, writers, and photographers, you can use your talent in Kṛṣṇa's service by contributing to *Back to Godhead*. We're looking for input from devotees from all over the world. To learn more about how you can contribute your talent, write to BTG, P.O. Box 90946, San Diego, CA 92169.

Live in ISKCON. All ISKCON temples offer programs that give you the opportunity to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the company of devotees. You can stay for, say, a week or a month and learn spiritual practices you can carry with you when you return home. Or you can make serving Kṛṣṇa within ISKCON your life's work—the opportunities are unlimited. Inquire from the center nearest you.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness for prisoners. Correspond with prisoners who want to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Donate new or used books to our prison program. Learn how to get books into the prisons in your state. Let us know if there's a prisoner you'd like us to get in touch with. Contact: Candrasekhara Dāsa, Alachua Villas #5, Alachua, Florida 32615.

Want to Help BTG? Here are some things you can do to help us spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness through *Back to Godhead*:

1. Subscribe.
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3. Ask your local public or college library to subscribe.
4. Subscribe for your library.
5. Tell your friends and relatives about BTG.
6. Become a BTG agent. (Just ask us, and we'll tell you how.)
7. Send us names of prospective subscribers.
8. Carry BTG in your store.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa (August 14–September 12)

SEPTEMBER

- 1—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sitā Devī, the consort of Śrī Advaita Ācārya.
- 2—Appearance anniversary of Lalitā-sakhī, one of the principal cowherd girlfriends of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- 4—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.
- 7—Parśvā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Fasting till noon for appearance of Lord Vāmanadeva (tomorrow).
- 8—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmanadeva. Feast at noon. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.
- 9—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.
- 10—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- 12—Anniversary of the acceptance of *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).
- 19—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States in 1965.

23—Trisrṣā Mahā-dvādaśī, fasting from grains and beans for Indirā Ekādaśī.

OCTOBER

- 6—Rāmacandra Vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa.
- 7—Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.
- 11—Beginning of Dāmodara-vrata. Offering lamps for one month. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins

Calendar calculated for Śrīdhām Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. Dates may vary for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

(fasting from *ūrad dāl*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaradiyā Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Dāmodara (October 12–November 10)

- 16—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.
- 22—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.
- 25—Diwali, the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.
- 26—Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

29—Disappearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees observe this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting.



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

NOVEMBER

2—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a great follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

6—Utthānā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and

beans. Also, the disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakīśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon.

10—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsa-yātrā. Last day of Dāmodara-vrata and Cāturmāsya.

Month of Keśava (November 11–December 9)

20—Utpannā Ekkādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

Kṛṣṇa for President

by Sureśvara Dāsa

AS THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL race roars on, one night last week I had a dream. The cows at Gītā Nāgarī had me cornered in the upper pasture. They had heard I was going to vote.

“Who’s it gonna be?” they belated. “Tweedledum? Tweedledee? Tweedle3?”

I hadn’t voted since 1968, I told them, when I wrote in Dick Gregory on the Peace-and-Freedom ticket. The vote was a protest, a fistful of flowers. But now *everyone* was up in arms, desperate for leadership. I said that was auspicious.

“Auspicious?!” The voice was Cakra’s, the herd spokesman. “Indeed! We’ve been desperate for leadership for five thousands years, since the reign of Mahārāja Parikṣit. Why are the candidates always cow-eaters?”

I hadn’t heard this question discussed on the radio, so I started talking about how I wasn’t living in a temple anymore, how I was holding a house, a wife, a child, and paying taxes, and how it was high time I voted again.

“Vote for whom?” asked Duṣśalā, who lowered her neck, munched a clump of grass, and looked up at me again. “Do any of the candidates know who they are, who they really are? Do they know who we are? We feel, same as they. Look at us. We lick and love. We eat and sleep and lock horns. We’re souls inside, same as you, part of Kṛṣṇa. Come clean, candidates.”

Clean. Her words echoed the *Bhāgavatam*. Clean, merciful, truthful, austere. These qualities could solve the dualities of the day: pro-life vs. pro-choice, black vs. white, ecology vs. economy, men vs. women, men vs. animals. But dualities die hard, especially when you’re dreaming.

“Ladies and gentlemen!” I announced. “We are on the eve of a great moment in history. Politics as usual is dead. The enlightened people

of this enlightened country are about to elect the first enlightened chief executive since the onset of the Kali-yuga, the present age of cheating and degradation.”

Just then, a swarthy man dressed as Uncle Sam stepped from behind a sprawling oak. Buttons of all candidates covered him hat to toe. As he strode forward to shake my hand, a thunder of bellows and boos erupted from the herd.

“It’s Kali!” cried Cakra. “Vice personified. I’d know him anywhere. Come on, Gopāla, let’s vote.” Gopāla, the herd tough, lowered his horns and charged. But Kali was already over the fence, tails and top hat flying. Deprived of their man, the herd turned on me.

“They’re all Kali’s men,” scolded Mākḥana-cora, spitting gnats. “Kali’s tweedles.”

“Radio’s got you hypnotized,” muttered wild-eyed Rukmiṇī, lumbering toward me. “Bābā, all you gotta do is open up the First Canto to see what’s going on. All those cannibals talkin’ about the fiftieth anniversary of the holocaust and how we have to learn from history. Hey, citizen, the holocaust is now. Forty million cows murdered every year in America alone. Why isn’t *that* an issue? Because the majority of the electorate eats us. That’s why. So the politicians eat them. If you want mercy, you’ve got to give it.”

I blinked and nodded. “Pride destroys austerity,” lowed cream-colored Subhadṛā. She’d guessed right. I was too proud to buy *everything* the cows were saying. “If human beings would just control themselves,” she went on, “what a society we would have. We cows make milk, ‘liquid religion,’ so your brain can take to transcendental knowledge. And we make more cows. And bulls to till the ground for food. And manure to make the grasses grow thick and tall for us to munch and make more milk, and on the cycle goes. Kṛṣṇa’s perfect cycle. Break that cycle and you

start ruining the world. Listen to this.”

Subhadṛā nosed through an old clay-colored *Bhāgavatam*. One hundred fifty ears swung her way as she read from “The Punishment and Reward of Kali.”

The cow stands with tears in her eyes, the *śudra* milkman draws milk from the cow artificially, and when there is no milk, the cow is sent to be slaughtered. These greatly sinful acts are responsible for all the troubles in present society. People do not know what they are doing in the name of economic development. The influence of Kali will keep them in the darkness of ignorance. Despite all endeavors for peace and prosperity, they must try to see the cows and bulls happy in all respects. Foolish people do not know how one earns happiness by making the cows and bulls happy, but it is a fact by the laws of nature.

If only my head wasn’t so big, I thought, I could jump down a gopher hole.

“They get a little self-righteous, the Brown Swiss,” said a quiet voice. It was Mallikā, the lone Jersey in the herd.

“The first year I was here, I wouldn’t even graze with them. Too sanctimonious. But they’re right, you know. Kali really suckered you on this race, Sureśvara. You should know better. Prabhupāda saved you. Why don’t *you* run for President?”

I told her there was no fire in my horoscope, and anyway ISKCON had its brush with politics in the seventies. We started the In-God-We-Trust-Party-for-Purified-Leaders. Prabhupāda liked it, but he didn’t want his devotees getting covered with the dirt of politics, so he stopped it. “We don’t mind getting the post,” he remarked, “but not at the cost of our God consciousness.”

“Then give people something to vote for,” Mallikā persisted. “Engage us more, and Mother Earth as well. Like
(please turn to page 39)



Krishna, the Friend of the Cows — © S. S. Bhattacharya & Sons, 59 Mirza Street, Bombay 400 003, India. Used by permission.

