

GODHEAD IS LIGHT. NESCIENCE IS DARKNESS. WHERE THERE IS GODHEAD THERE IS NO NESCIENCE.

BACK TO GODHEAD



NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 1993 • \$4.00 / £2.50



Pilgrimage to TIRUPATI

India's
most
visited
temple



PLUS:

Mahābhārata:
the birth
of the
Pāṇḍavas

Books from
India:
the response
from Russia

A treatise on
unalloyed love

Politics and
I-consciousness



Lord Viṣṇu

The expansion of Kṛṣṇa residing in the Vaikunṭha planets.

A painting by Puṣkara Dāsa

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

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COVER: In Tirumala, South India, the golden processional Deity of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, mounted on Garuḍa, the carrier of Viṣṇu, gives audience to His devotees in the temple courtyard. The temple of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is the most popular in India and draws pilgrims from all over the world. Please see the article beginning on page 28. (Photo by Viśākhā Devi Dāsī.)

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. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **r** like the **r** in **rim**, and **c** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce ś and ṣ like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

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

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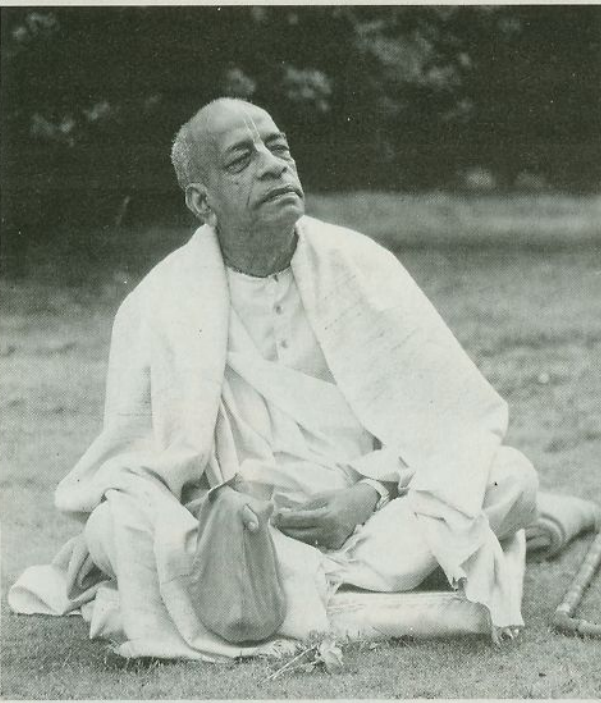
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His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta 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**

FROM THE EDITOR

Misleading Missionaries

RECENTLY I ATTENDED a conference held to honor an Indian missionary who'd come to America a century ago bearing India's message of Vedānta. Though in America his name is now all but forgotten (if ever it was known), back home in India his fame lives on, his impact on the West still an item of national pride.

The conference, a gala event put on for a million and a half dollars by a worldwide body of Hindus, featured, aside from singers, dancers, musicians, and politicians, an assembly of respected Indian swamijis discoursing on the glories of Vedānta.

Their talks went in various directions, and so did I: For a couple of minutes I'd sit and listen, and soon I'd know I ought to be somewhere else—*anywhere* else.

The speakers, you see, stood mainly for Advaita, for Oneness, for the doctrine that an abstract impersonal reality is all that truly is. All else is but an appearance, an illusion. We may revere whom-ever or whatever we choose. In the end it doesn't matter, for ultimately everything is God, everything is One. And as we give up our illusions, we merge with that One and become identical with God.

This doctrine has problems. Among them:

First: If I am God, why am I suffering like a dog? The swamijis will say it's because I've forgotten who I really am. But what kind of God is that?

Second: If all that exists is one supreme impersonal truth, where does

illusion come from? Truth and illusion—that's not one, that's two.

And third (and this is the worst): To persuade myself that I'm God, I first have to dispose of Kṛṣṇa, for all the Vedic scriptures speak of Kṛṣṇa as God. For this the swamijis at the conference were at our service. Kṛṣṇa, they told us, was merely a symbol of something higher. As one swamiji put it, "Kṛṣṇa was the greatest product of Indian civilization."

But according to *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the source of everything—all truth, all illusion, all matter, all living beings. Impersonal oneness is but a partial display of Kṛṣṇa's energy, as the sun rays are but a partial display of the sun. We are one with Kṛṣṇa in quality, but Kṛṣṇa is eternally great and we are eternally small; He is infinite, we are infinitesimal. The entire purpose of Vedānta, says the *Gītā*, is to understand Kṛṣṇa, the personal form of God, to be the ultimate truth and to surrender to Him in devotional service.

So although the speakers at the conference offered oneness as the ultimate profundity, that oneness was the last snare of illusion—"I am God"—the ultimate expression of false ego.

Kṛṣṇa is not "a product of Indian civilization." Rather, Indian civilization—in fact, all civilization—comes from Kṛṣṇa. And by minimizing Kṛṣṇa, the swamijis were in fact attacking the very heritage they had supposedly come to uphold.

—Jayādvaita Swami

LETTERS

Rescue from Children?

I thank Urmilā for her list of creative ideas for preschool children [BTG, May/June]. However, I have a generally uncomfortable feeling after reading her article because she devalues the importance of the family. The nursery, she says, frees mothers from having to divide their minds between children and housework. The community will benefit because mothers will have more time to help in a local temple or project. And even if there isn't a nursery, creating a nursery-school atmosphere for an hour or two at home will make children happy so a mother can devote more time to other service.

Actually I feel sad about these arguments, which imply that parents need to be rescued from their children. Why should mothers necessarily be pleased to have their children off their hands so they can do something else?

Factually the burden will be lifted the more parents love, accept and truly feel the joy of sharing their lives with their children. Many of us did not receive this kind of loving as children, and that makes it difficult for us to give, but we can change that. We can soften and heal ourselves and then find the space in our lives to fully embrace our children instead of passing on the "no time for you" attitudes we may have suffered ourselves.

Having eight children taken care of by one adult is good short-term economics because seven mothers are then free to work, but in my ideal society there would be no nurseries.

Śyāmā Devī Dāsī
London, England

URMILĀ DEVĪ DĀSĪ REPLIES: I'm sorry to have given you the impression that parents "need to be rescued" from their children. I've spent most of the last nineteen years or so taking care not only of my own children but the children of many other devotees. I find their association a great joy.

For a nursery school to succeed,

the teacher should be serving for the sake of the children first, not for the sake of the parents. Helping the parents must be secondary. Yet it is a real consideration. Why?

First, life in a modern nuclear family where a woman must spend all day at home with just her children is unnatural. In a Vedic society the women share child care in an *extended* family. I have seen my brother-in-law's family, originally from Yemen, work this way. Each child has loving care from many "mothers and fathers." Those children are happy, peaceful, and well cared for. Such sharing of child care is good for the children, good for the aunts, good for the grandmothers, and good for the unmarried older girls.

And children themselves like what an extended family can give them. Children *like* to play with others their own age, at least for a few hours. And they *like* to have a time where they can have somewhat structured activities meant just for their spiritual development.

Unless a mother can afford servants, she simply does have more things to do than watch her children. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and gardening, what to speak of spiritual duties, take up a lot of time. And most women want to spend at least some time helping in some preaching beyond the family. That is good for the mother because it reminds her that other people, beyond her bodily family members, are part of Kṛṣṇa's family. It's good for the husband because it reminds him that his wife does not belong to him; he is protecting her because she is Kṛṣṇa's servant. And it's good for the children because it shows them that their parents have concerns that extend beyond the walls of the house.

This can be overdone, but that doesn't negate the benefits. And Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted this. He wanted nursery schools, or women who'd teach their young children as if in nursery schools. And he wanted everyone

to give at least some time to helping spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in addition to raising family members as devotees. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura set the example: he was a first-class husband and father, yet apart from his family duties and his work he wrote more than a hundred books.

Guides for Spiritual Pilgrims

I am glad that in your articles about places of pilgrimage you have finally started providing specific information on how to visit them. The articles should be written in such a way that readers can copy them and take them to India as guides on where to go, how to get there easily, where to stay, and so on. This will make the articles complete and most useful for everyone, especially those not so experienced in traveling in India. When people visit these holy places, they can have experiences that will purify and inspire them for the rest of their lives. So we want to make sure their pilgrimage can go smoothly.

Śrī Nandanandana Dāsa
Detroit, Michigan

Spiritual Vision, Not Television

I was especially impressed by Urmilā Dāsī's article about the influences of television [BTG, July/August]. For both children and parents, watching TV only reveals, and fosters, a lack of spiritual strength.

Śrīman Paṇḍita Dāsa
Soquel, California

Inspired by Shelter

The Shelter band is the most powerful connection between the youth of today and Kṛṣṇa! I am delighted to see what has happened to the music scene ever since Shelter started a few years back. I see kids wearing *tulasī* beads at every show. The lacto-vegetarian diet is spreading rapidly. Not one day goes by when I don't hear Kṛṣṇa in a conversation. Attitudes are changing and lives are being changed.

The best part of it all is the oppor-

tunity to attend a Shelter show and associate with great devotees. It is not just a show, it's an experience. The club is filled with an energy that goes unmatched by any bands around. The lyrics are taken to heart by hundreds of kids eager to move up front and sing along with Raghunātha Dāsa.

There is simply nothing as sincere, pure, energetic and pleasing as the message and music that Shelter has brought us kids.

Thank you, Shelter, for presenting us "a better way." Prabhupāda would have been very pleased.

Pedro A. Ramos Costa
Bradenton, Florida

Fallen Author?

Jayādvaitya Swami's "Where do the Fallen Souls Fall From?" [BTG, May/June] misses the whole point. Śrīla Prabhupāda does *not* reject the idea that the *jīvas* [living beings] originally fell from the *brahmajyoti* [Lord Kṛṣṇa's impersonal spiritual effulgence].

If we all fell directly from Vaiṣṇava (or Kṛṣṇaloka) [the personal abode of the Lord], then we would all be *nitya-siddhas*, eternally liberated souls like Arjuna, play-acting that we are in illusion. But Śrīla Prabhupāda states over and over in his books that *jīva* souls are generally *nitya-baddha*, eternally conditioned souls. Why would Śrīla Prabhupāda contradict Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, who says, *jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa* ("The actual form of the *jīva* is that of an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa")? And *kṛṣṇera taṭastha-śakti bhedaḥ prakāśa*: The *jīva* is Kṛṣṇa's *taṭastha-śakti*, a manifestation of light simultaneously one and different from Kṛṣṇa. The clear significance of this conclusion is that we are infinitesimal and insignificant. We are small; Kṛṣṇa is great.

Tirthaprada Dāsa
Badger, California

It appears that the Editorial Board of BTG is trying to establish (and has

been for more than a decade now) that the *jīvas* fall from the very personal company of the Lord. Your article is a clear challenge to the authority of our ISKCON GBC [Governing Body Commission], which in March 1990 resolved that its Philosophical Research Committee should deal with the issue. Like others, I believe that until a philosophical conclusion is reached through the authoritative department of the society, BTG should not canvass for any particular opinion of its own.

Swami B. R. Sādhu
Sao Paulo, Brazil

JAYĀDVAITYA SWAMI REPLIES:

Tirthaprada Dāsa tells us that Śrīla Prabhupāda does *not* reject the idea that the *jīvas* originally fell from the *brahmajyoti*. This statement might deserve credence if Śrīla Prabhupāda hadn't placed his rejection in writing. But he did (in a letter to Revatī-nandana Dāsa on June 13, 1970). So what am I supposed to say?

Tirthaprada's argument that if we fell directly from the Lord's personal abode we would all be eternally liberated is so obviously self-contradictory that it hardly needs comment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, of course, never contradicts the great authority Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. And when quoting from Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī directly, Tirthaprada Dāsa stands on firm ground. The living being is eternally a servant of Kṛṣṇa. So Tirthaprada's conclusion is right: We are small; Kṛṣṇa is great. All's well that ends well.

Let me assure Swami B. R. Sādhu that the editors of BTG are not campaigning for some privately arrived-at philosophy. I simply presented what Śrīla Prabhupāda said. That, as far as I know, is my job.

The GBC's resolution in 1990 asked that a committee write a paper giving scriptural information about the soul's fall. Can I repeat Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings without overstepping that resolution? I believe so.

Asking for a paper is different from imposing a gag order.

The main point of my article was that arguing on and on about where the fallen soul falls from is simply a useless waste of time. And that was Śrīla Prabhupāda's main teaching about the subject.

As he told one disciple in 1972: "The conclusion is that whatever may be our past, let us come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and immediately join Kṛṣṇa. Just like with a diseased man: it is a waste of time to try to find out how he has become diseased. Better to spend time curing the disease. . . . So wherever you were, in the *brahmajyoti* [the *brahmajyoti*] or with Kṛṣṇa in His *līlā* [pastimes], at the present you are in neither, so the best policy is to develop your Kṛṣṇa consciousness and go there [back to Godhead], never mind what is your origin."

Some of our friends may disagree. They may think that arguing about this topic ad infinitum is a worthwhile or essential engagement. That's their privilege. But fallen as I am, and as much as I might like to argue, I believe we have better things to do.

As *jīvas*, or living beings, we emanate from, or belong to, Lord Kṛṣṇa's *taṭastha-śakti*, or marginal potency, and may therefore turn either towards the Lord or away from Him. About this there should be no dispute. We should simply use our tiny independence by properly engaging in Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, following the standard rules and regulations under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master. That will bring us to the transcendental platform on which all questions are answered and all controversies resolved. Where did we fall from? Let's go back to Godhead now, and if we like we can argue about it later. ☸

We want to hear from you. Please send correspondence to: The Editors, Back to Godhead, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32615, USA.

THE HIGHEST EDUCATION

The Vedic literature reveals the essential qualification of a person ready to accept a spiritual master.

A lecture given in New York, November 22, 1966

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

• • •

*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam
pavitram idam uttamam
pratyakṣāvagamaṁ dharmyam
su-sukhaṁ kartum avyayam*

“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.”—*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.2

VIDYĀ MEANS “education,” and *rāja* means “king.” What is the king of education?

We have different statuses of life in the material world. In education, someone is an M.A., someone is a B.A., someone is in school three years, someone four years. There are different grades of education. Now, what is the *summum bonum*—the highest or topmost education? The topmost education—*rāja-vidyā*—is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Real knowledge is to understand what I am. Unless we come to this point, we are not in knowledge.

When Caitanya Mahāprabhu began His preaching, His first disciple was Sanātana

Gosvāmī, a finance minister of Nawab Hus-sain Shah. Being attracted by Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s movement, Sanātana retired from service and joined Lord Caitanya. When he came to Lord Caitanya for the first time, he inquired, “What is education?”

Sanātana was highly educated. In those days the Persian language was being taught in India. Just as during British rule the English language was taught to us, during Pathan rule the Persian language was the state language. Sanātana Gosvāmī was a great scholar in Sanskrit also. Still, he inquired, “What is education?”

Why did he inquire like that? He told Lord Caitanya, “People in general consider me very educated, and I am such a fool that I accept that I am educated.”

So the next question is “Then why do you think you are not educated? You are great scholar in Sanskrit, a great scholar in Persian. Why do you think you are not educated?”

Sanātana replied, “I think I’m not educated because I do not know what I am. I do not wish to suffer, but material miseries are forced upon me. I do not know where I have come from or where I will have to go, and still



*We are very proud of our advancement of education.
But if you inquire from various persons, "What are you?"
hardly anyone will be able to answer.*

• • •

people think that I am very educated. They designate me a great scholar, and I am satisfied. But I am such a fool that I do not know what I am."

Actually, this is our present situation. We are very proud of our advancement of education. But if you inquire from various persons, "What are you?" hardly anyone will be able to answer. Everyone is under the conception that we are the body. But we are not actually the body. This we have discussed many times. So by passing this examination—by knowing "I am not this body"—one has come to real knowledge. That is the beginning.

Knowledge and Action

Of the knowledge Lord Kṛṣṇa is now imparting to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa says, "This is *rāja-vidyā*." *Rāja-vidyā* means to know oneself and act accordingly. If I do not know what I am, then I am mistaken about my situation, and all my activities are mistaken and illusory. Simply knowing "I am not the material body" is not sufficient. You are not material; you are spiritual. So you must act accordingly. That spiritual activity is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is called *rāja-vidyā*, the king of all education.

Rāja-guhyam means "very confidential." It is not possible to accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness very easily. But by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya, it is very easily delivered to us through chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Lord Caitanya has given an analytical study of the living entity. He has begun by saying that there are innumerable living entities all over the universe. If you dig into the earth, you'll find many living entities. If you study the air, you'll find many living entities. If you go deep into the water, you'll find living entities. So all over the universe there are different types of living entities.

Lord Caitanya divides the living en-

tities into two classes: some are moving and some are not moving. Trees, stones, plants, grass—they cannot move. A stone has life, but a stone has no developed consciousness. It is too covered. Similarly, if a person in the human body does not understand his position, he's almost stonelike.

Then there are the moving entities, such as aquatics, beasts, birds, reptiles, human beings, demigods, celestial angels. Out of the moving entities, a very small number are human beings. There are 8,400,000 species of life. Out of them, only 400,000 are in the human body. Lord Caitanya says, "Out of these 400,000 human species, some are civilized. And out of many civilized persons, some are devoted to the scriptures." People say, "I belong to the Christian religion," "I belong to the Hindu religion," or "I belong to the Moslem religion." But in the present age, most people who claim "I belong to this religion" do not believe in the scriptures.

Three Kinds of Religious Acts

Those who do believe in the scriptures are mostly attracted by pious, philanthropic activities. They believe, for example, that charity is a good thing. Pious, religious acts are of three kinds: *yajña-dāna-tapaḥ*. *Yajña* means "sacrifice," *dāna* means "charity," and *tapaḥ* means "penance." The spiritual orders of *brahmacarya* (celibate student life) and *sannyāsa* (renounced life) involve *tapaḥ*. *Tapaḥ* means voluntarily accepting rigid principles of austerity. Charity means voluntarily giving away one's material possessions.

Yajña means "sacrifice." Nowadays we have no experience of sacrifice. But we get information about sacrifices from such historical literature as the *Mahābhārata*. Formerly kings performed big sacrifices. They distributed millions of rupees, millions of valuables, and gold and silver. That is not

possible today. But formerly the kings did that. The kings used to collect taxes from the citizens, but when the kings performed sacrifices, they distributed wealth freely to the citizens. Nowadays the state simply collects taxes but never distributes. So we have no idea what is *yajña*.

Yajña is the duty of kings or heads of state, *dāna* is the duty of the general householders, and *tapaḥ* is the duty of the *brahmacāris*, *sannyāsīs*, and *vānaprasthas* (retired persons). These are different kinds of rules in religious life. Some who believe in scriptures adopt these rules. Mostly, however, people simply accept a certain faith. They say they accept a certain religion, but they do not do anything. Still, out of many millions of people like that, some are really religious: they perform sacrifice and penance and give charity.

Lord Caitanya says, "Out of many millions of persons actually engaged in charity, penance, and sacrifice, some come to the perfect understanding of what they are: 'I am not this body.'"

Now, simply theoretically knowing "I am not this body; I am spirit soul" is not perfect. You actually have to become liberated from material entanglement. That is called *mukti*, liberation. Out of many thousands of people who know what they are, some of them are actually liberated. And out of many thousands of people who are liberated, some can understand Kṛṣṇa.

Symptoms of Liberation

So understanding Kṛṣṇa is not easy. But Kṛṣṇa is kind. He knows that in this Age of Kali it will be very difficult for people to become liberated by the ordinary process—first to become civilized, then to become religious, then to give charity and perform sacrifices, then to come to the platform of knowledge, and then to come to liberation. Therefore He came as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and gave us a direct method of

becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious.

After being liberated, you can know Kṛṣṇa. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*. The first symptom of a liberated person is that he is very happy. You'll never find him morose. *Na śocati na kāṅkṣati*: he has no anxiety. We are full of anxieties. "Oh, I haven't got this thing, I have to secure that thing, I have to pay this bill. Oh, this I have to do"—so many anxieties. But a liberated person has no anxieties. Does this mean that because he has no anxieties he is a very rich man? No. Not necessarily. But he has no anxiety.

He also has no lamentation. He does not think, "I am poor." Why should he think he's poor? When I think, "I am a part of this material world, and I haven't got this material possession," then I think, "I am poor." But one who is liberated from the material conception

of life has no concern for what he possesses or does not possess. Therefore he's *prasannātmā*, joyful. "Oh, I have nothing to lose, nothing to gain. I am completely separate from here." That is liberation.

The liberated person's vision of life is *samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu*: he does not see anyone as rich or poor, foolish or educated. There are so many dualities in the material world, but the vision of the liberated person is completely on the spiritual platform. He sees that every living entity is a part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he tries to take all living beings back to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He does not distinguish "He is a *brāhmaṇa*. He is a *sūdra*, a laborer. He is Indian. He's American," or "He's black. He's white," or "He's educated. He's noneducated." No. "Everyone should come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness." That is his viewpoint. *Samaḥ sarveṣu*

bhūteṣu. When one is qualified in that way, then *mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Then he becomes eligible to become My pure devotee."

The process of coming to liberation under regulative principles is not easy, especially in this age. The *Bhāgavatam* describes the people of this age as *prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ*: "Their duration of life is very short." And *mandaḥ*. *Mandaḥ* means "very slow." Out of twenty-four hours, people sleep twelve, and out of the remaining twelve, they're busy ten hours earning money. Two hours left. What can they do for spiritual understanding? There's no time.

Then the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says: *sumanda-matayo*. If someone has the intention to make spiritual progress, then there are so many pseudo spiritual societies to entrap him.

Then *manda-bhāgyaḥ*: "And most (please turn to page 40)

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Tat Śṛṇu: Simply Hear

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

RECENTLY I HAVE BEEN reading both the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and the earlier cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda once said that the *Bhāgavatam* contains many things: Joan of Arc is in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the sound of devotees hammering an altar together is the sound of the *Bhāgavatam*. He also told us that the higher planets have millions of *Bhāgavatam* verses. What we have here is only a condensed version.

Prabhupāda's main instruction about approaching his books is *tat śṛṇu*, simply hear. We also find this phrase spoken by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.1): "The Supreme Personality of Godhead said, 'Now hear, O son of Pṛthā [Arjuna], how by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt.'" Simply hear.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, explains that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself mixed with the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. No one else can imitate Him. We can aspire to become *vrajavāsīs*, residents of Vṛndāvana, after millions of lifetimes, but we cannot become Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or fully enter Her mood as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did. Because Kṛṣṇa wanted to know the love She felt for Him, Kṛṣṇa stole Her position. By this we can understand a little how glorious Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is.

From Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu we can learn of the deep sentiments experienced by a lover of Kṛṣṇa. In the Gambhīrā, the room in Purī where Lord Caitanya stayed, Lord Caitanya felt the separation from Kṛṣṇa that Rādhārāṇī felt after Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā. "By the ropes of His good qualities, Kṛṣṇa, who is so unkind, has bound My neck and hands, and I am unable to get relief" (Cc. *Madhya* 2.1).

Are we willing to accept such deep

unhappiness? Are we ready for such intense emotions in love of God? Are we ready to be constantly near death due to separation from Kṛṣṇa? Where is the *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā* we were promised, the sheer joy of spiritual life? Even Uddhava, an admirer of the *gopīs* and an intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa's, didn't want to enter that mood of intense grief but left Vṛndāvana and returned to Kṛṣṇa's side in Dvārakā.

The meaning of Lord Caitanya's ecstatic manifestations is beyond us. Actually, the Lord chose to share them with only a few devotees. His moods are confidential. But Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswami recorded them, and Śrīla Prabhupāda translated them into English and asked that they be widely distributed.

"Topics about Kṛṣṇa are like waves of nectar. If such nectar does not enter our ears, the ear is no better than the hole of a damaged conch shell. Such an ear has no purpose" (Cc. *Madhya* 2.31). Therefore, *tat śṛṇu*. Just hear, free from distractions, free from doubt. Just hear submissively. Don't waste a minute in mundane talk. Time is so precious; though it separates us from our final destination at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, when we use our time to hear about Kṛṣṇa time can also bring us closer. We hanker for the day when we can enter the spiritual world and leave time behind forever. Kṛṣṇa can appear in the mind of anyone who hears submissively.

There are many benefits to reading Prabhupāda's books, but I would like to point out this one: if we read of Lord Caitanya's ecstatic expressions or the service of the *vrajavāsīs*, our reading can serve to cut away any self-image we have of ourselves as advanced devotees. We become humble before the love of God expressed by Lord Caitanya and the *gopīs*. The *gopīs* aren't buoyant because they are anticipating lunch or because some-

thing good has come to them in this world. They are wholly absorbed in Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa. When He is not with them, their hearts catch fire; they change color and dry up. Where is our love? Where is our Kṛṣṇa consciousness? At least we should know about this pinnacle of devotional love. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu quotes Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī: "If by chance such a moment comes when I can once again see Kṛṣṇa, then I shall worship those seconds, moments, and hours with flower garlands and pulp of sandalwood and decorate them with all kinds of jewels and ornaments" (Cc. *Madhya* 2.38).

In the stage of love of God expressed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the slightest absence of that love is as noticeable as a spot of ink on a white cloth. When a devotee detects the absence of love, he at once condemns his whole expression of love of God as a lie. We cannot really understand the mind of a pure devotee. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says, "Externally there appeared severe tribulation, as if Lord Caitanya were suffering from poisonous effects, but internally He was experiencing bliss" (Cc. *Madhya* 2.50).

As I read these verses, I'm trying to get above the pewee's cry in the trees around me, above the rustle of paper in the breeze, above the hum of Interstate 80, above the many other voices in my head. I just want to hear how Lord Caitanya saw the Deity of Jagannātha as Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana with a flute and charming smile. When Lord Caitanya returned to the Gambhīrā, He entered the mood of separation: "Where is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose form is curved in three places? Where is the sweet song of His flute; and where is the bank of the Yamunā? Where is the *rāsa* dance? Where is that dancing, singing, and laughing? Where is My Lord, Madana-mohana, the enchanter of Cupid?" (Cc. *Madhya* 2.56).

Every person is looking for Kṛṣṇa. We may seek Him in the pleasures of this world (*anna-maya*) or in the ideal of a long, healthy life (*prāṇa-maya*). Some search for Him by culturing knowledge (*jñāna-maya*). But all of us are seeking the same supreme bliss (*ānanda-maya*) that can be reached only by those willing to serve Him. Peace in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be attained only when all material desires are burnt up in full-hearted service to Kṛṣṇa. Until then, we will always be striving, always be restless, always be dutiful only for the sake of duty, always be marking time. We won't be decorating the moments of our lives with flower garlands and sandalwood paste.

Tat śṛṇu, just hear. As Nārada Muni told Vyāsadeva, "Whatever you desire to describe that is separate in vision from the Lord simply reacts, with different forms, names and results, to agitate the mind as the wind agitates a boat which has no resting place" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.14). Even Vyāsadeva felt despondent because he had not glorified Kṛṣṇa directly. His spiritual master, Nārada Muni, analyzed the cause of that despondency and prescribed this cure: Vyāsadeva should write of the Lord's inconceivable nature, explain that the living entities are His parts and parcels, and tell how they are meant only to serve Him. Without this understanding, there can be no peace in the world.

Vyāsadeva composed the *Bhāgavatam* on the order of his spiritual master. Now all we have to do is hear it submissively, with faith. Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "The simplest thing for human beings is to follow their predecessors. Whatever is awakened by attachment to one's predecessor is the way of devotional service. . . ." (Cc. *Madhya* 2.86, purport).

"This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His abode. . . . Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the Age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.43).

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to find the brilliance shining in his books. We cannot neglect them. They are not irrelevant to our lives. Even the descriptions of Lord Caitanya's deepest ecstasies are relevant if we

hear of them submissively. Śrīla Prabhupāda has worked so hard to save us. Now all we have to do is follow what Kṛṣṇa says: *tat śṛṇu*, simply hear.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami travels extensively to speak and write about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is the author of more than two dozen books, including a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda.



SCHOOLING KRṢṆA'S CHILDREN

The Test of Education

by Urmilā Devī Dāśī

IN THE LAST WEEK of the last year of school, students sweat at the thought of the final exam. When they've passed their exams and earned their degrees, they'll be entitled to call themselves educated.

But the Vedic culture has a different standard. The sage Cāṇakya, whose proverbs Śrīla Prabhupāda would often quote, tested a person's education by three questions—questions of character and ethics.

Women as Mother

Test one: *māṭṛvat para-dāreṣu*. In the ideal system of education, a properly trained young man should be able to look upon any woman other than his wife as if she were his mother. In other words, his mind and heart should be free from desire for sex outside of marriage. Similarly, a girl should see men other than her husband as her father.

In Vedic society, boys were trained to address women as "Mother." Members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement teach this same etiquette today. Lord Jesus taught a similar principle when he said that a man who lusts after a woman other than his wife has already committed adultery in his heart.

Garbage in the Street

The second test of real education is how the graduate views the property of others. Cāṇakya says, *para-draveṣu loṣṭṛavat*: a learned person looks upon others' property as he would stones or garbage in the street.

A child should be trained to be averse to touching another's things without permission. If I see one of our

students touch something on another child's desk, I ask him, "Is that yours? Do you have the owner's permission to touch that? If not, put it down." I'm careful to show the same respect for the students' property that I expect them to show for each other's and for mine. I don't look through their desks or touch their things without their permission.

How to See Others

Third, *ātmavat sarva-bhūteṣu*: an educated person sees other living creatures as he sees himself. Following the golden rule, he treats others as he wants to be treated. "Others" does not mean just one's own family, one's fellow citizens, or even just other human beings. As Śrīla Prabhupāda would point out, even cruel, fierce animals such as tigers love their own cubs. It is when a person applies the golden rule even to an enemy or a defenseless animal that Cāṇakya would award him a passing grade.

A person educated to see others as though himself will naturally be a vegetarian. He'll think, "I don't like pain, so why should I give pain to an animal just so I can eat?" He'll be honest: "I don't like to be cheated, so why should I cheat others?" And he'll always speak beneficially: "I like to hear the truth, I don't like to be insulted, and I want to hear what is useful to me. Let me speak to others that way." A truly educated person, therefore, will try not to hurt anyone, even by his words.

A student who knows the law of karma knows that what I do to others will be done to me. Even out of self-interest, therefore, he will follow the

principle of treating others as though himself. And by understanding the law of karma, the student will gain respect for the power, justice, mercy, and love of the Supreme Lord. Then the student can go beyond ethics to become transcendently educated.

Kṛṣṇa Defines "Learned"

Kṛṣṇa defines a learned person as one who sees all living beings spiritually as part of Him. And Kṛṣṇa says that ultimately a wise person surrenders to Him, seeing Him as all there is.

Unfortunately, in this dark Age of Kali thousands of schools award diplomas without considering the ethical and spiritual character of their students. Do students at a typical university have a heart free from desire for sex outside marriage? Have they learned to respect the property and feelings of others? We read of date rape and rampant theft on campus, and we see people with advanced degrees who are also advanced in meat-eating and cruelty.

But we need not be resigned to letting our children be falsely assured of knowledge from a system that by Vedic standards teaches ignorance. Rather, let us raise a generation of students protected by ethical and spiritual wisdom.

Urmilā Devī Dāśī 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 school for children aged 5–18. She is the main author and compiler of Vaikuṅṭha Children, a gurukula classroom guidebook.



COOKING CLASS: LESSON TEN

Dry-Textured Vegetables

by Yamuna Devi

PART 2

DRY-TEXTURED vegetable dishes are among the most favored dishes in Indian homes, yet you'll sample few of them in Indian restaurants. Because they take slightly longer to cook than their deep-fried counterparts, chefs prefer the ease of French fries* over pan fries. But any health-conscious cook will find exploring Indian-style pan-fried vegetables well

*British readers: That's American for "chips."

worth the effort. They are certainly more healthful than their fat-laden deep-fried relatives.

I was first introduced to dry-textured vegetable dishes more than twenty-six years ago, in Śrīla Prabhupāda's cooking classes held in his San Francisco apartment. He taught us two of his favorite dishes: cumin-scented hash browns and chili-laced diced green beans. Over the years, I've come up with many variations of these dishes, rarely making them the same way twice. I encourage you to experiment with the recipes offered below and come up with your own

favorite variations. For a light meal, feature a generous portion of dry-textured vegetables and accompany it with *dāl* or flame-toasted *capātīs* and a seasonal salad.

Equipment

Aside from high-quality fresh produce, the most important element for outstanding dry-textured vegetable dishes is the right cookware. In India the most commonly used pan is a heavy bowl-shaped iron vessel called a *karai* (similar to a heavy Oriental wok). Alternatively, a good sauté pan or skillet will yield excellent results.

PRABHUPĀDA-STYLE HASH BROWNS

(Serves 4)

For variations to this dish, try another group of potato dishes Śrīla Prabhupāda favored: potatoes and greens. When the potatoes are nearly cooked, add a few handfuls of chiffonade-cut kale, spinach, collards, or Swiss chard. Cook briefly until the greens wilt and intensify in color. Alternatively, add a handful of chopped fresh fenugreek leaves.

- 1–3 teaspoons ghee or cold-pressed corn oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- a pinch of crushed red chilies
- 4 large (1½-pound) baking potatoes, peeled and diced
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- 2 tablespoons water or vegetable stock
- salt and freshly ground pepper

3 tablespoons chopped cilantro or parsley

Combine the cumin seeds and the ghee or oil in a large nonstick skillet. Place the skillet on medium-high heat and cook the seeds until they darken a few shades. Add the chilies, potatoes, and turmeric. Stir-fry for 3–4 minutes. Add the liquid, cover, reduce the heat slightly, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are soft and browned, about 15 minutes. Offer to Lord Kṛṣṇa with homemade ketchup, tomato chutney, or barbecue sauce.

CHILI-LACED GREEN BEANS

(Serves 4)

Green beans, snow peas, sugar snaps, yellow wax beans, and the very thin French *haricot verts* (green haricots) all work well in this dish. Simply vary the cooking times as needed.

For a more substantial dish, add one cup of cooked and drained chickpeas or other cooked whole legume.

- 1–3 teaspoons ghee or cold-pressed corn oil
- ½ teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1 *jalapeño* pepper, seeded and minced
- 1 pound beans, trimmed and cut into ½-inch lengths
- ¼ cup vegetable stock
- ½ cup tomato, peeled, seeded, and diced
- salt and freshly ground pepper

Warm the ghee or oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mustard seeds, cover, and fry until the seeds pop. Add the next four ingredients and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat slightly, and cook until the beans are soft, about 10 minutes. Remove lid and cook until most of the liquid is gone. Season with salt and pepper. Offer to Kṛṣṇa warm or at room temperature, with or without the added legumes.

provided it's heavy-bottomed. No matter what your choice, remember that for evenly cooked vegetables, heavy-gauge thick-bottomed pans are best.

Since writing *Lord Krishna's Cuisine*, I've cut back on the amount of fat I use in cooking. If you want to prepare vegetables with little or almost no fat content, I highly recommend nonstick cookware.

Recently, the Farberware company sent me a sample of their new Millennium cookware, and I've tested quite a few recipes with it. The outside is heavy-gauge professional-grade 18/10 stainless steel. The inside is a new

nonstick surface called Excaliber Never-Stick, which has a twenty-year warranty. To my knowledge, no other nonstick surface on the market today has a longer warranty. The surface is guaranteed never to peel, blister, or wear off, even if you use metal utensils. The pans are well-balanced and have tight-fitting lids and stay-cool handles. They have superior heat distribution and are oven-safe to 425°.

General Information

Students following this cooking series should read through the recipes in the section of *Lord Krishna's*

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Cuisine called "Dry-Textured Vegetables." You'll quickly notice that many of the dishes are prepared using one of the three methods mentioned in my July/August column. You'll also notice that most dishes call for raw vegetables cut small—perhaps a 1/4-inch julienne, 1/4-inch to 1/3-inch dice, or thin slice. If a recipe calls for precooked vegetables, you can cut them almost any size.

Root vegetables and vegetables with a low water content will do well with moisture added from water, tomato *concassee*, vegetable steaming liquid, homemade vegetable stock, or sliced oven-roasted tomatoes. Under most circumstances, moisture-rich, "watery" vegetables such as greens, eggplant, bell peppers, patty pan squash, and yellow and green zucchini cook well in their own juices.

Awareness in the Kitchen

You probably lead a busy life, with more things to do than time to do them. Avoiding occasional bouts of "automatic pilot" is difficult, especially when leisure time is a luxury more than the norm and you're on the tenth page of your "To Do" list.

But a primary goal in devotional cooking is to meditate on the task at hand. That requires focusing on one activity at a time, even while your mind jumps rapidly from one activity to another. The more you practice, the more skill you acquire. In time, the art of focusing your attention will manifest in a satisfying creative process.

Underneath it all, Vaiṣṇava cooks add an awareness of the Lord. If you add this to your cooking, you'll get tremendous benefits:

You'll really enjoy what you're doing.

You'll notice an improved quality in your cooking.

You'll notice that less food will satisfy you more.

You'll increase your desire for self-realization.

Yamuna Devi is the author of the award-winning books Lord Krishna's Cuisine: The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking and Yamuna's Table. She is a regular contributor to The Washington Post.



Unemployment and the Decline of Small Farms

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

PART 2

IN THE UNITED STATES, African-Americans have most severely felt the effects of being pushed off the farm and out of work. Some people may think that such an anomaly is limited to advanced industrialized America, but there are good reasons to ask if the African-American experience, rather than being an aberration, might not instead prove a prototype for all people around the world whose economies are taken over by commerce and industry.

So let's go back to the beginning of the black experience in America and examine black involvement in farming. To do this, we first go back even further, to Africa in the late Middle Ages. At that time, though trade was gaining importance in Africa, people lived mainly by agriculture and herding cattle and sheep. Historian John Hope Franklin describes that after clearing the land,

Seeds or sprouts were planted in mounds or embankments that had been carefully prepared. Frequent weeding was necessary, especially in new ground, in order to prevent the young plants from being choked. Millet, wheat, rice, cassava, cotton, fruits and vegetables were commonly grown. Dotting the countryside were towers from which watchmen drove away birds and other grain-eating animals.

A Different Kind of Farming

When Africans were taken to America as slaves, their farming skills were still used, but with important differences. To begin with, the slaves were working on land that belonged to someone else.

Actually, to say they had been working on their own land in Africa is

not exactly correct. Land ownership resembled the Vedic practice described by Śrīla Prabhupāda, in which "land was given to people for cultivation not for ownership"—they couldn't sell it.

Under the African system, when land was not used it reverted to the collective domain and could be re-allocated by a local government official called "the master of the ground." This arrangement provided stability for farming families and it discouraged the concentration of land ownership which strict private ownership fosters. Needless to say, black farmers were more inspired to care for the land under the traditional African system than under the exploitative and socially unstable plantation system found in the American South.

Then there was another difference: traditional African farmers worked first to provide food and fiber for their families and second to sell the surplus, but the American South was geared to growing cash crops such as cotton and tobacco. As I'll discuss in future issues, this focus on cash crops, combined with farming by machine, has spelled doom for African-American participation in agriculture—and will eventually spell doom for everyone else.

"Free Slaves"

Officially, slavery in the U.S. ended with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. As related by Franklin, former slaves looked forward to settling on the land and providing a peaceful life for their families. In America some blacks did get land because they received government bounties for their military service. Beyond that, Pennsylvania Representative Thaddeus Stevens introduced a bill granting "forty acres and fifty dollars" to each former slave family. But the bill

was defeated by Congress, and for most of the 3.5 million former slaves "freedom" with no provision for subsistence was a mockery.

Often the only way blacks could make a living was to return to their former masters and take up sharecropping—under harsh terms dictated by the boss man. One former Alabama sharecropper put it this way: "They were still slaves, but they were free slaves—they could go anywhere they pleased. They were unfree slaves before the Civil War and free slaves after."

At least it was a living. But in the next century both sharecroppers and small farm owners were imperiled as farming was taken over by machines.

The Tractor Hits Hard

Although heavy machines began creeping into agriculture in the nineteenth century, most farming was still done by animal power. Farm workers—men and sometimes women—farmed their own land or helped farm someone else's with oxen, mules, or horses. But as the tractor moved onto the scene in the twentieth century, landless farm workers, both black and white, felt their jobs increasingly threatened. One perceptive sharecropper stated, "Here's what I think on it—the tractor's as strong against us as the drought."

Nor were small land owners secure. Machines, land hogging, and laws slanted toward large factory farms ganged up against small farm owners. So from 1900 to 1987 the number of white-operated farms dropped from 5 million to 2 million—a loss of 60 percent. And black farmers fared worse.

Between 1900 and 1987 the number of black-owned farms fell from 747,000 to about 23,000—a loss of 97 percent. And though during those years the percentage of Americans who were black remained almost the same (11.6 percent in 1900 and 12.3 percent in

It may be time to stop regarding the black American experience as an aberration and begin to see it as a prototype for all people when their country faces industrialization.



1990) the portion of black-owned farms fell from 13 percent in 1900 to slightly more than 1 percent by 1990.

Off the Farm, into Misery

In 1990, attorney David Harris, Jr., director of the Land Loss Prevention Project, told a U.S. congressional subcommittee, "If the present rate of loss continues, there will be no minority farmers by the year 2000." Mr. Harris went on:

The socio-economic consequences of the loss of minority farmers are staggering. The qualities of self-reliance, independence, and a sense of efficacy and self-worth which have long been associated with landownership will be lost if the current trend continues. Land represents a source of food, income, shelter, self-employment and wealth. . . .

Studies have shown that black landowners are more likely to be "pillars" of the black community and the general community, more self-reliant, better off nutritionally, more secure psychologically and more confident of the future than black nonlandowners.

What happened to minority farmers who were driven out of agriculture? To be sure, many were absorbed by the industrial cities of the North—which black activist Elaine Brown has appropriately termed "industrial internment camps." They were miserable places. But for several decades some blacks were able to make good wages there as factory workers. Some—but by no means most. While the number of black-operated farms dropped off, the number of black unemployed climbed steeply.

Unemployment Means War

Consistently, unemployment hit blacks harder than whites, and younger workers harder than older

ones. And, nowadays, as employers struggle to keep prices competitive, labor unions can't protect factory workers from losing their jobs to cheap labor abroad. So unemployment keeps growing, and crime and other social miseries keep growing right along with it.

I have focused on the experience of African-Americans to study the problems associated with industrialization and the decline of small farms. But as indicated earlier, it may be time to stop regarding the black American experience as an aberration and begin to see it as a prototype for all people when their country faces industrialization. When we look at David Harris's statement about the benefits of farming for black Americans, we can substitute any other racial or ethnic group. His basic claims hold true. Mr. Harris is talking about more than the value of farming to African-American society—he's talking about its value to human society.

Widespread work in farming is essential for peace and well being—not only for black Americans but for people everywhere in the world. In the United States, racism has made African-Americans feel the crushing effects of industrialism most keenly. But soon everyone else will be suffering similar pain, as small farms around the world are wiped out and the resulting unemployment brings social instability.

What type of social instability? When leaders have no spiritual vision for a practical alternative, unemployment leads beyond crime, to civil strife and war. War can be convenient. It can shift hatred from an incompetent government to a foreign foe, and by fueling the fires of production, war can lift a country's economy out of recession. In the late 1970s, Śrīla Prabhupāda analyzed the sinister

connection between industrialized agriculture, unemployment, and war:

A machine means unemployment for the many. The tractor they're using means unemployment for bulls and plowmen. Then the bulls have to be killed. This is going on. If there are unemployed men, then kill them also. Send all the men to Vietnam to fight and kill them. As soon as there is overpopulation [of the unemployed], they [the leaders in government] declare war so that people may be killed.

Recent experience supports Prabhupāda's statement. Machines on American farms have taken more jobs away from blacks than from anyone else. And when people are out of work, where can they turn to earn a living? Many turn to the military. So black Americans have borne a disproportionate share of the casualties in recent conflicts. But we have to remember: any group can become cannon fodder after the tractor has plowed down their jobs.

Therefore the question becomes, How can society provide not only blacks but also whites, Asians, Hispanics, and others with satisfying, meaningful work? As devotees of Kṛṣṇa, our goal is to realize our eternal identity beyond such temporary bodily labels, but to create a peaceful atmosphere for spiritual progress we need the racial and ethnic harmony that begins by providing satisfying work for everyone.

In my next column we will look at Kṛṣṇa's *varṇāśrama* solution and see how a fully developed program of cow protection and small-scale farming can foster peace by giving people the right kind of work.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsi, an ISKCON devotee since 1978, spent several years on the Gītā Nāgari farm in Pennsylvania. She is co-editor of the newsletter Hare Kṛṣṇa Rural Life.



TV for Free? No Thanks!

by Rohiṇinandana Dāsa

[Editor's note: Two issues ago, Urmilā Devi Dāśī in her column had some strong things to say about television. Now Rohiṇinandana Dāsa has more.]

WHEN I WAS BORN my father bought my mother a present: our first television.

In my childhood the television was pretty much the center of our family. We affectionately called it the "goggle box," and every evening we gathered faithfully around it. Looking back I can't imagine our sitting room without it. The TV is the first thing I think of, then the sofa, the fire, the rug, and then maybe the people in the room.

I used to hear people say how the TV had changed English culture. "Before the TV," they'd wistfully and, from my childish point of view, mysteriously recall, "people used to visit each other's homes much more, and parents and children did things together. They made things and painted and played musical instruments and talked." Perhaps the speakers regretted losing these things for the sake of the beloved box. But for me, life without the TV was unthinkable.

In fact, I remember viewing people and their feelings as if the people were characters from a television program. What people on TV say and how they look may appear important and dramatic, but before you know it you're into the next program. And you can always switch off whenever you like.

Switching off reality was one of the things the television programmed me to do. It was like a drug. At any time I could switch on the TV and get an instant effect.

The TV destroyed any hope we had for family intimacy. I can remember us sitting in the darkened room, hardly speaking a word, occasionally munching on biscuits, gazing hour after hour at the little black and white screen. Whether we were together or alone didn't seem to matter.

We'd watch TV until we felt tired, or until it said "Goodnight" to us and the screen went blank. Then we'd go our separate dreamy ways to bed.

So now here I am with my own family at a time of bigger and better color tellies, with remote control and a vast range of programs to choose from twenty-four hours a day. Someone even offered us one gratis. But we decided against it.

We did have a television once for a couple of months when our eldest child was a baby. A friend asked us to look after his TV while he went on pilgrimage to India. At first we stored it in a corner. But after a week or so we thought we'd see if it worked, so we plugged it in. The screen was blurred and crackly, but as we moved the little antenna around we got a picture.

Lo and behold if it wasn't Charlie Chaplin! We'd heard that Prabhupāda had watched Charlie Chaplin and had sometimes illustrated talks by mentioning him. So we figured it must be OK for us to watch too. Still, my wife and I felt like a couple of naughty children.

After that we kept the TV plugged in and tried to manage it by selective viewing. We watched the news and anything remotely to do with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or at least in the mode of goodness—nature films and the like. But, frankly, the TV managed us more than we managed it. We ended up watching stuff we didn't intend to. We wasted time, which for a devotee is at a premium because Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us so many things to do for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

We didn't like the way the machine began to affect our lives, sitting there tantalizing us, almost demanding to be turned on. We didn't like the way we'd get glued to it. We didn't like the idea of trying to bring up a family with a goggle box in the home. I didn't like the idea of a repeat performance of my childhood.

Let's face it, the TV "culture" is not

a free society. I sense the power of the television when I see one in someone's house. Even if it's not turned on, it seems to be in the center of the room. And if when I arrive it's already on and my host begins a conversation without turning it off, my eyes and mind flash over to the screen as I try to converse. I have a vague sense that I'll miss out on something if I don't keep checking in. Sometimes, at the risk of offending my hosts, I manage to build up the strength to ask them to turn it off.

Once I was passing out Prabhupāda's books and collecting donations when I noticed I was near a TV shop. All the sets in the window were tuned to the same program. I vividly remember that it was a thriller movie in the snows of Russia with tigers attacking a horse-drawn sleigh. As I stopped people to talk to them about the books, I kept glancing over their shoulder at the film. I wasn't passing out many books that way. I looked over at my partner and saw him working purposefully, a steady stream of people walking away from him with Prabhupāda's books under their arms.

The more I became distracted, the more guilty I felt. Wasn't I meant to be busy in the topmost occupation—giving people books capable of saving them from repeated birth and death?

But I was caught, good and proper. Eventually I stopped passing out books altogether and stared goggled-eyed at the window.

This little story didn't end with the end of the film. Oh, no. For the rest of the day the impressions of that silent drama in the snows interfered with my ability to be in the here and now, and you can imagine the result. When the last shoppers were leaving the precinct, my partner came over, put his hand on my shoulder, and asked, "What happened to you, Rohiṇī?"

My wife, Rādhā Priyā, grew up without television. She remembers the embarrassment she felt having to face kids at school who were full of stories

about their favorite programs. But both she and her sisters (who do not practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness) are thankful now as they appreciate the gains of time and freedom and ease of communication.

As for the news, we sometimes listen to it on the radio. We've also used the radio for our home schooling. (We home schooled Rādhānātha

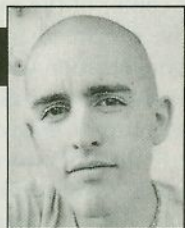
until he was nine and want to do the same with the other children.)

Apart from our fears, I can't imagine us having the time for a TV. There are always so many things going on in our home.

A couple of years ago Rādhā Priyā picked up a miniature TV at a sale—just in case there was anything worth watching. She has watched it perhaps

half a dozen times. Although it lives out of sight in a drawer, I'm still wary of it. I did watch it once. I got halfway through a program about education when the batteries ran out.

Rohiṇinandana Dāsa lives in southern England with his wife and their three children. You can write to him in care of BTG.



STRAIGHT TALK

Politics and I-Consciousness

by Vraja Kishor Dāsa

THE WORLD DOESN'T NEED a political readjustment. The world needs a revolution in consciousness.

Politics itself is rotten to the bone. Re-adjust a rotten bone as much as you like—it will still be rotten.

We'll never solve the world's problems by political or sociological strategies. Such "solutions" are nothing more than a game of musical chairs played by the exploiters and the exploited.

The exploited get fed up, rise up, and overthrow leaders who have all become degraded. After the shakeup, new politicians make up new politics and take up the reins of the same horse they hated. The exploited become the exploiters, the exploiters become the exploited. Exploitation remains. The new politicians call it progress. They call it revolution. Big fat revolution.

The failure of politics (or sociology in all its subheadings) to make any concrete improvement in the world is a fact chiseled again and again in the stone slab of history.

When religious leaders become disgustingly corrupt and exploitative, the politicians overthrow them. This was our "Protestant Reformation."

When kings become gross exploiters of the citizens, the mercantile class overthrow the kings and take power. This was our "French Revolution" and "American Revolution."

When capitalists, hungry for dollars, exploit the people like it's going out of style, the exploited

proletariat overthrows them and takes up the dictatorship. This was our "Communist Revolution."

I call the whole game musical chairs.

The real problem is not who is exploiting; the real problem is exploitation itself. Politics did not cause exploitation; politics is simply a manifestation of it. Politics cannot end exploitation; it can only compound it.

Exploitation is caused by the screwed-up "I-consciousness" that devours the modern social body like a ravenous burning virus.

I-consciousness means "I am the most important, and my interests come first. Let the starving starve while their countrymen grow tons of tobacco for my useless cigarettes. Let the environment rot for my useless hair spray. Let the poor sleep cold while I buy my caviar . . ."

I-consciousness also walks in the guise of "mine-consciousness." My religion first. My nation first. My race first . . . The hellish consequences are obvious.

I-consciousness has infiltrated from broad social levels all the way down to the details of our own interpersonal relationships. Warped I-consciousness has kidnapped peace from our lives and from the world. I-consciousness is what we must strive to revolutionize.

To stop the epidemic of I-consciousness we must surrender our selfish interests. Communism and humanism tried to do this but failed. The communist "state" and the huma-

nist "collective humanity" are unfit to receive our surrender because neither is free from the urge to exploit. They will eventually take advantage of our surrender, and so we'll get fed up, rise up, and . . . the game continues.

The fault of these well-meant attempts is their inability to liberate the individual from I-consciousness, a virus sterilized only by complete surrender of our selfish desires. The attempts fail because they can point out no entity free from the tendency to exploit, and thus worthy of receiving our surrender.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the origin and owner of everything, is supremely self-satisfied, free of all desire to exploit. He doesn't need to get anything from anyone—He already has it all. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is the only worthy object of surrender, and only Kṛṣṇa consciousness can successfully and utterly overthrow misery-generating I-consciousness once and for all.

I beg anyone who really wants to help change the world: dedicate yourself to learning and teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness and don't waste your valuable time trying to light the wet wick of the socio-political firecracker.

There is no lack of anything in this world except Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Vraja Kishor Dāsa (formerly Bhakta Vic of 108) joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement three years ago. He recently received spiritual initiation from Dhanurdhara Swami in Vṛndāvana, India. He and his band, 108, are based at ISKCON's temple in Dallas, Texas.

The Birth Of the Pāṇḍavas

Translated from Sanskrit
by Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami



As Pāṇḍu's wives grieve over the sage, Pāṇḍu, angry with himself for his rash act, becomes determined to give up all material pleasure and pursue the life of an ascetic.

King Pāṇḍu, the emperor of the world, killed a sage and his wife who were disguised as deer just as they were about to mate. Before the sage died, he cursed the king to die if the king ever tried to conceive a child. As the Mahābhārata continues, the sage Vaiśampāyana tells of Pāṇḍu's lamentation and of the extraordinary birth of Pāṇḍu's sons.

Vaiśampāyana said:

Seeing the young sage pass away, the king was distraught. Agonizing over the

accidental killing of a saintly brāhmaṇa, he and his wives lamented as if for their own kin.

Pāṇḍu said:

People like me who lack spiritual advancement, even though born in noble families, come to misfortune by their own foolish acts. Such people are trapped in the network of their selfish desires.

I have heard that my father Vicitravīrya, though born to religious parents, became absorbed in sex pleasure and by

**Pāṇḍu said: “I am determined to seek
salvation, for bondage to this world is nothing but
a great calamity. Now I shall follow the imperishable
path of my father Dvaipāyana.”**

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overindulgence that young king died childless. Therefore, the self-disciplined and divine sage Dvaipāyana begot me in my father's wife. [What a blessed birth was mine!] And yet today my degraded mind became absorbed in evil passion, and I foolishly lost myself in hunting. I am so wicked that even the gods have abandoned me!

[I conquered the earth with military strength, but because I did not conquer my own material desires I remained in bondage.] I am determined to seek salvation, for bondage to this world is nothing but a great calamity. Now I shall follow the imperishable path of my father Dvaipāyana. I have no doubt. I shall practice the most severe austerities and wander the world alone as a thoughtful mendicant, staying each day beneath the shelter of a single tree. I shall shave my head and cover my body with dust. I shall live in deserted houses or simply beneath a tree, and nothing will please or displease me. I shall not lament or rejoice for any material thing. Whether people ridicule or praise me, I shall accept both ridicule and praise equally. I shall not hanker for anything in this mortal world, or flatter any man for his favor. Heat and cold, happiness and distress, victory and defeat—I shall not waver in the face of these worldly dualities, nor shall I claim anything to be mine. I shall not ridicule or frown upon any creature. I shall always be of cheerful countenance and dedicate myself to the spiritual welfare of every living being. I shall not commit violence against any life, moving or unmoving, for I shall always look upon all God's creatures as my own beloved kin. I shall treat all living things with equality.

Vaiśampāyana said:

Speaking thus, King Pāṇḍu, deeply aggrieved, breathed heavily for a long

time. Carefully meeting the eyes of his beloved Kuntī and Mādri, he told them, “Everyone must be told of the changes in my life. Many people depend on me, so as gently as possible you must inform my mother, the wise Vidura and King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and all our other relatives. Speak to the noble Satyawatī and Bhīṣma, all the priests of the royal family, and the *brāhmaṇas*, those great souls so strict in their vows who drink the nectar of the gods. Tell all the senior and elderly citizens who have faithfully served us all their lives. Tell them all that Pāṇḍu is gone, gone alone to the forest.”

Hearing of his decision to live in the forest as an ascetic, the women replied with equal determination: “There are other stages of life for married people in which you can perform heavy austerities together with us, your lawful wives. Undoubtedly you will be successful and reach the heavenly abode. Both of us are ready to fix our mind and senses on spiritual life, for we are determined to follow you in this life and the next. We have decided to give up material lust and enjoyment, and we shall undergo serious austerities. O most learned one, O lord of the earth, if you reject us we shall immediately give up our lives. There is no doubt about it.”

Pāṇḍu said:

If that is what you have both decided, then you may come along, since your proposal is in accord with religious principles. But I warn you, I shall follow my vows strictly, following my father Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. I shall truly renounce all domestic comfort and concerns and perform severe austerities. I shall wander in the deep forest, dressed in tree bark, nourished on wild fruits, nuts, and roots. I shall sit by the fire, not only in freezing winter but in scorching

summer. I shall bathe in the river not only in summer but in winter as well. I shall wear rags and skins and long matted hair, and my body will grow thin from my meager diet. I shall have to tolerate cold, wind, and heat. Hunger, thirst, and fatigue will be my constant companions. By all these difficult austerities, I must conquer and dry up the senses before they conquer me. If my senses overwhelm me, I shall immediately die, and not a glorious death.

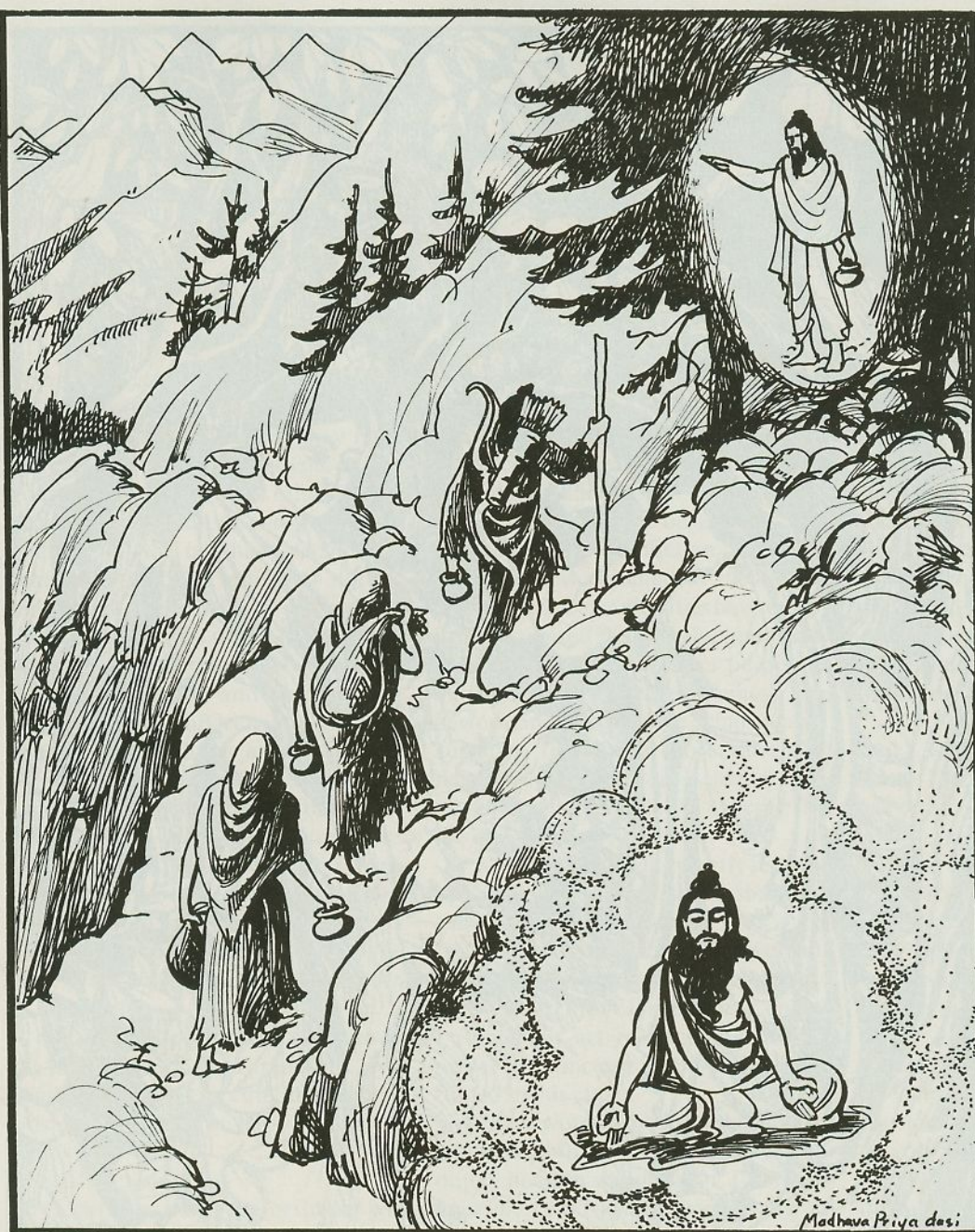
In all my thoughts and acts, spiritual progress will be my only goal. With the fruits of the wilderness, ripened or not, and with my words and thoughts and all that I collect, I shall worship my venerable forefathers and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whom they adored, and I shall revere the Lord's empowered servants who manage this temporary world.

As I wander about the wilderness, I shall never do anything to harm or displease the elderly who have retired to the forest for spiritual liberation. Nor shall I disturb my countrymen or any of the simple village-dwellers. I shall strictly follow the scriptural injunctions for renounced life in the forest. Indeed, I wish to follow the most severe of those injunctions, until this body is finished and I lie down in peace.

Vaiśampāyana said:

Having thus spoken to Kuntī and Mādri, the great Kuru monarch took off his jeweled crown, medallion, bracelets, and earrings, and he offered everything to the saintly *brāhmaṇas*, including his invaluable wardrobe and the wardrobe and jewels of his wives.

Pāṇḍu then spoke again, this time addressing his followers and personal attendants: “Go to Hastināpura,” he said sadly, “and make it known that Pāṇḍu, along with his faithful wives, has



Protected by powerful mystic sages, Pāṇḍu and his wives journey through the Himalayas to the mountain known as Nāga-sabha.

departed for the forest to live as a mendicant, without worldly riches or pleasure.”

Hearing these heart-rending words from their beloved lord, Pāṇḍu’s followers and personal attendants made a terrible cry and sobbed in anguish. Shedding hot tears, they turned away from their monarch and ran to Hastināpura to deliver his final message. When the Kuru leader Dhṛtarāṣṭra heard from them all that had happened in the deep forest, he could not stop weeping for his younger brother.

Life in Hundred Peaks

In the meantime Pāṇḍu, the beloved Kuru prince, journeyed with Kuntī and Mādri to the mountain called Nāga-sabha, along the way eating only wild fruits, nuts, and roots. Traveling like sages, they journeyed next to Caitra-ratha and beyond that to Vāriṣeṇā, continuing their trek by crossing over the mighty Himālayan range and going up to Gandhamādana. All along the way, Pāṇḍu and his women were protected by powerful higher beings such as the mystic Siddhas and liberated

sages. Sometimes he stayed on smooth and easy earth, and at times on the steep sides of mountains. He lived at times in hardship and at times with an abundance of natural gifts. Reaching the famous lake of the primeval monarch Indradyumna, he crossed beyond to Hamsakūṭa and finally arrived at the mountain region called Śataśṛṅga, “Hundred Peaks,” where he surrendered fully to the practice of religious austerity.

Vaiśampāyana said:

The mighty Pāṇḍu lived for some time in the region of Hundred Peaks, perfectly executing religious austerities. Higher beings like Siddhas and Cāraṇas, who frequented the area, appreciated his noble character and grew quite fond of him. They saw that Pāṇḍu was free of false pride, always eager to help others, and completely self-controlled in mind and senses. To some residents of Hundred Peaks he was like a brother, and to others a close friend. The senior sages loved him like their son and took care of his mind in every way.

With the blessings of those sages and after long practice, Pāṇḍu achieved mastery in his religious austerities and became exactly like a powerful sage versed in the spiritual wisdom of the *Vedas*.

Once on a dark-moon night, the leading sages of Hundred Peaks, so strict in their vows, prepared to leave that place. These great ascetics wished to see Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, and they were all leaving together. Seeing the sages ready to depart, Pāṇḍu said, “O eloquent masters, kindly tell

me where you are all going.”

The sages replied, “There will be a great meeting of saints on the planet of Lord Brahmā. The demigods, the sages, the forefathers, and all the great souls will be there. We are eager to see Lord Brahmā, and so we will also journey there.”

Hearing their words, Pāṇḍu at once yearned to go with them and quickly rose from his seat. Eager to reach the heavenly abode, he prepared to depart with his wives toward the north, but seeing this the austere sages told him, “We are going very far to the north on our way to Brahmā’s abode. We shall be ascending Mountain King, the vast Himālayan region. In our previous journeys there, we have seen many lands that are difficult to cross, places where the gods themselves, as well as the Gandharvas and Apsarās, have established exclusive places for recreation. We have seen there the famous gardens of Kuvera, both flat and hilly, the undulating banks of mighty rivers, and impenetrable mountain canyons.

“There are lands en route that are always cold—icy places where no trees, animals, or birds can live. There are vast expanses of inaccessible terrain and zones of such heavy rainfall that even birds cannot cross, what to speak of other animals. Mystic Siddhas and liberated sages like us can make it across, but other than us only the wind goes through that land. How could your two wives possibly travel through Mountain King without collapsing on the way? Those fine ladies



Pāṇḍu asks his wife Kuntī to approach a qualified man to beget a son.

are the daughters of kings and are quite unaccustomed to such hardship. We might add that they hardly deserve such pain and trouble. O Bhārata king, it is best that you not go.”

King Pāṇḍu’s Request

[Hearing the words of the sages whom he so deeply revered, Pāṇḍu

bowed to their request. But since they were leaving, he revealed to them that which troubled his heart, despite all of his austerities.]

Pāṇḍu said:

O most fortunate sages, authorities say that there is no way to heaven for a childless man. I confess to you all that

*The ascetics said: "O virtuous king,
you certainly will have beautiful and sinless children,
like unto gods. We know it by divine sight."*

• • •

being childless causes me great anguish. Strapped with four kinds of debts, men are born in this world, for they have dues to pay to the forefathers, to the gods, to the sages, and to other men—debts by the hundreds and thousands. Knowers of the law have established that a human being who does not acknowledge these debts at the proper time will not attain to the higher planets. One satisfies the gods by sacrifice, the sages by study and penance, the forefathers by children and *śrāddha* rites, and humanity by kindness.

By law, I am freed of my debts to the sages, gods, and humanity, but I still owe a debt to the forefathers, and for this I feel pain, O ascetics rich in austerity. If a man leaves no descendants, when his body perishes his forefathers also perish. That is a fact. Thus it is to have progeny that noble men are born in this world.

Dear sages, even I was begotten in my father's widow by a great soul. By a similar arrangement, couldn't there be offspring from my wives?

The ascetics said:

O virtuous king, you certainly will have beautiful and sinless children, like unto gods. We know it by divine sight. O tiger of men, by your acts you must accomplish what is ordained by providence. An intelligent man, undistracted, enjoys a happy ending. Dear son, since the goal is already in sight, you must simply endeavor, and upon obtaining very qualified children you will attain to happiness.

Vaiśampāyana said:

Hearing these words from the ascetic sages, Pāṇḍu absorbed himself in thought, knowing well that because of the *brāhmaṇa*-deer's curse he could not beget a child. [The sages were gone, but Pāṇḍu fixed their words in his mind.] He

then spoke to his lawful wife Kuntī in a secluded part of the forest, urging that celebrated woman to accept the right and necessary means to beget children in times of difficulty:

"My dear Kuntī, to beget good children is the very foundation of society, and thus it is enjoined in the sacred lawbooks. Sober authorities have therefore recognized that to raise good children is *sanātana-dharma*, a perpetual duty for civilized human beings. The performance of sacrifice, charity, and austerity, the careful observation of regulative principles—it is said that even all these will not suffice to sanctify the life of a childless man.

"Knowing this well, I clearly see that as a childless man I myself shall not achieve the blessed worlds. This is my constant worry, O sweet-smiling woman. O shy one, due to my immaturity I was cruel toward the *brāhmaṇa*-deer, and as I ruined his act of begetting, so my power to conceive a child has been ruined by his curse.

"Good woman, I cup my red-nailed hands like lotus petals, and placing them on my head in supplication, I beseech your mercy. O lovely-tressed lady, at my behest [and as authorized by scripture] approach a *brāhmaṇa* who is greater than I in his vows and austerity and beget sons endowed with every noble quality. With your help, broad woman, I will surely go to the blessed land reserved for the fathers of good sons."

Determined to help her husband and to please him, that lovely woman of tapering thighs then replied to her Pāṇḍu, who had conquered the cities of all impious kings: "While living as a young girl in my father's house, I was engaged in serving the respected guests who came to our kingdom. Once I received the fierce *brāhmaṇa* Durvāsā, who is so strict in his vows. Durvāsā

bears frightening power and is extremely dangerous when displeased. It is more-over most difficult to understand what will please or displease him. I made every possible effort to serve him nicely, and at last that strict seer was satisfied. He gave me a boon and revealed a set of mantras invested with mystic power. He said this to me: 'Whatever demigod you care to summon with this mantra, he will certainly come under your control, willing or unwilling.'

"O Bhārata, that *brāhmaṇa* thus spoke when I was still in my father's house. His words are true, and the time has come. O mighty, saintly king, with your permission, I shall summon a god with this mantra so that we may have a child. You know best what is right and true. Tell me, which god shall I summon? Know that I simply await your permission, for I am determined to carry out this mission."

Pāṇḍu said:

This very day, O statuesque woman, you must act, and by the rule! Bring to you the god Dharma, good lady, for he among all the gods is devoted to virtue. Dharma would never join us in this endeavor were it unjust or evil. O statuesque lady, thus the world will conclude, "This act was lawful." Our little son will undoubtedly be the very image of justice for the Kurus. When he is given to us by Dharma, the lord of justice, his mind will never delight in *adharma*, injustice. Therefore, making *dharma*, virtue, our first priority, you must concentrate, sweet-smiling one. With reverence and the mystic mantra, seek the blessings of Dharma.

Vaiśampāyana said:

When Kuntī was thus addressed by her husband, that excellent woman replied, "So be it!" She offered him

*Joining with Dharma, who appeared in
his true form as a devoted servant of the Lord,
the statuesque princess obtained
as her son the best of all that breathe.*



her heartfelt obeisances and, with his permission, respectfully circumambulated him.

Sons of the Gods

My dear King Janamejaya, after a year of pregnancy, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's wife Gāndhārī still had not given birth to a child. At that time Kuntī summoned the unfailing Dharma so that she herself could become pregnant.

Kuntī quickly offered an oblation to Dharma and carefully chanted the mantra given to her years ago by Durvāsā Muni. Joining with Dharma, who appeared in his true form as a devoted servant of the Lord, the statuesque princess obtained as her son the best of all that breathe.

Exactly at noon, at a most auspicious moment, when the moon is especially benevolent and the stars foretell pious victory, Kuntī gave birth to a son of glorious fame. As soon as he was born, an invisible voice spoke from the heavens: "Among all who faithfully follow the laws of God, this child is undoubtedly the best. The first-born son of Pāṇḍu will be known as Yudhiṣṭhira, 'steady in battle,' and his fame as a monarch will spread throughout the universe. Fully endowed is he with fame, strength, and kindness."

Having obtained a virtuous child as his first son, Pāṇḍu again approached Kuntī and said, "It is said that a *kṣatriya* king is preeminent in strength. [Our sons will be leaders, and they must have ideal qualities.] Therefore, choose for your boon a son who is the strongest of all men."

Being so instructed by her husband, Kuntī summoned the mighty wind-god, Vāyu, and from him was born a mighty-armed son named Bhīma, "the dreadful one," for he would act with terrifying

power. Indeed, Bhīma's surpassing strength would never fail, and at his birth a heavenly voice declared, "Of all mighty men, the mightiest has now taken birth."

Indeed soon after his birth, a most amazing incident took place. Still an infant, Bhīma once fell from his mother's lap and with his tender limbs pulverized masses of solid stone. On the tenth day after his birth, Kuntī had taken her son to a charming lake to bathe him. After bathing him, she went to visit various religious shrines in the area to obtain blessings on her baby. Just as Kuntī reached the foot of a mountain and stopped to rest, a huge tiger suddenly emerged from a mountain cave and rushed with deadly speed toward the helpless mother and child. Pāṇḍu had been keenly watching his wife as she walked toward the mountain. He always carried his bow and arrows to protect his family in the dangerous jungle. As the huge tiger rushed to kill, Pāṇḍu, with the prowess of the gods, pulled back his handsome bow and pierced the tiger's body with three deadly arrows. Lunging back into its cave, the mortally wounded beast filled the cavern with awful roars.

When the tiger attacked, Kuntī had jumped up in terror, forgetting that her child slept peacefully on her lap. The infant Bhīma fell from her lap and began to roll down the slope. He struck the stone mountain with the strength of thunderbolts hurled by mighty Indra. Indeed, as Bhīma bounced down the slope, solid stone shattered into hundreds of pieces. When Pāṇḍu had seen his beloved son fall from his mother's lap, Pāṇḍu had come running, but when he beheld the shattered stone he was struck with awe.

On the very day Bhīma was born, O

lord of the abundant earth, Duryodhana also was born. Soon after Bhīma's birth, Pāṇḍu again began to desire another son. "How can I have another excellent son," he thought, "a son who will be most exalted in this world? Success in life depends both on God's blessings and on our own honest endeavor. If we carefully follow the laws of God and act at the proper time, surely we can obtain His blessings.

"We have heard that among the demigods who manage our world, Indra is the chief. He is said to possess immeasurable strength, courage, nobility, and splendor. [Surely Indra could give us the greatest son of all.] I shall make a special effort to satisfy Indra by performing austerities, and I shall thus obtain a mighty son. Indeed, Indra will give a most exalted son. Yes, I shall perform very difficult austerities with my body, mind, and speech [to convince mighty Indra of our sincerity]."

Pāṇḍu discussed his plan with the great sages and he then instructed Kuntī to observe an auspicious vow for one year. And with utmost concentration, Pāṇḍu underwent a grueling austerity, standing on one leg from sunrise to sunset without rest, determined to gain the favor of Lord Indra, the chief of the thirty principal demigods. After a long time, O Bhārata, Indra addressed the virtuous Kuru king: "I shall give you a son who will be celebrated throughout the universe. That excellent child will fulfill the mission of the gods, the *brāhmaṇas*, and his own loved ones, for I shall give unto you the first of sons, and he will vanquish all who oppose him."

Hearing these words from Lord Indra, and keeping them in his mind, the noble Pāṇḍu said to Kuntī, "O
(please turn to page 50)

A TREATISE ON LOVE OF GODHEAD

*Part Seven of an overview of the
Ṣaṭ Sandarbha of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī*

...

by Kuṇḍalī Dāsa and Satya Nārāyaṇa Dāsa

THE PRĪTI SANDARBHA is the last of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's six *sandarbhās*, or treatises. Here *prayojana*, or the ultimate goal of life, is defined as *prīti*, or unalloyed love of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that everyone is interested in having an end to all miseries and attaining unending happiness; but happiness in this material world is always mixed with misery. Furthermore, happiness is always temporary, and we can never get as much as desired. So material happiness cannot be the supreme goal of life.

Beyond material happiness lies the ultimate spiritual bliss, described in the Vedic scriptures. That bliss is of two types—the bliss of self-realization and that of God realization. Of these two, the bliss of self-realization is small compared to that of God realization, because of the infinitesimal size of the soul. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is unlimited, so the bliss of God



Unalloyed love of God (prīti) has its highest manifestation in mahābhāva, as in the love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

realization is unlimited. That realization, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī maintains, is the ultimate goal of life.

In self-realization, which here means impersonal realization, one's motive is to have one's own bliss. But in impersonal Brahman, the impersonal Absolute, the qualities and potencies of the Lord are not manifest, and so there are no varieties in Brahman realization; there is only a state of apparent oneness between God and the living entity.

In the four types of personal liberation the Lord's form, qualities, and other features are present, but for one's own purpose. Because one still does not love the Lord, one cannot realize the loving feature of the Lord, and therefore one cannot experience the ultimate bliss of *prīti*, love of Godhead.

The Ultimate in Love

Love is supreme. Though a person may not possess many good qualities, if he has love for others he is appreciated

God is the supreme independent being, but He becomes dependent on any finite soul who loves Him. Indeed, He is conquered by love. His bliss is of two kinds. (1) He experiences the bliss of His own nature. (2) He experiences the bliss of His potency, which is of two types—bliss in the mind and bliss in His controlling potency. Of these, His experience of the bliss of devotion, which comes under the category of bliss in the mind, is the highest of all.

Love has two types of effect on the heart of a devotee: (1) It produces refinement in the heart. (2) It produces a particular type of ego.

When love produces refinement in the heart, it has these consequences: (a) That love for the Lord fills the devotee's mind with delight. (b) Out of intense love, the devotee feels the Lord to be his very own. (c) That love produces in the devotee a state of trust. (d) The devotee's love generates a type of pride, as he thinks, "The Lord is mine." (e) Love melts his heart. (f) Love generates an intense hankering for the Lord and gives great attachment to Him. (g) Love makes him feel that God is ever fresh. (h) Love intoxicates his mind with the unparalleled wonders of God's sweetness.

These states of love of God have different levels, which affect different devotees at different times. All together, there are eight levels of *prīti*:

(1) Love in which there is an excess of delight in the loving mood of the devotee is called

rati. At this stage Kṛṣṇa is considered the only object of desire, and all else is insignificant.

(2) Love enriched with the feeling of possession, in which one feels "the Lord is mine," is called *prema*.

(3) Love of God accompanied by an abundance of trust in Him is called *praṇaya*. At this stage one deals very intimately with Kṛṣṇa and does not have reverence for Him.

(4) The conceit of excessive love that manifests itself in a crooked nature is called *māna*. When this type of love

of a favored mental state, but love means acting only for the beloved's pleasure and *thereby* feeling happiness. Therefore either in union or in separation, a lover feels happiness if the beloved is happy. Happiness has no object but one's self, whereas love has both subject and object.

This state of *prīti* always exists in the eternal associates of the Lord, and it is by their mercy that a qualified practitioner can acquire it.

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The experience of melting of the heart signals the appearance of *prīti* in the person of a devotee. This manifests externally in such symptoms as tears and rising of the hairs on the body while one is hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, topics about Lord Kṛṣṇa. When love appears and one loses all attachment to the material body, one's heart is completely purified. This exalted state of *prīti*, or intense love for the Lord, can grow to its full intensity only towards Kṛṣṇa and no other deity, because He is the complete Personality of Godhead.

because his love gives pleasure to others. This means that love surpasses all other considerations. And the highest love is love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. Jīva Gosvāmī says that even if a person has many wonderful qualities, if he is devoid of pure love for the Lord he is not considered very glorious. But one who loves the Lord is always glorious.

The Lord has all wonderful qualities, and when we love Him and He reciprocates our love, we derive the supreme form of bliss. Because He is eternal and unlimited and because we are also eternal, He can reciprocate our love eternally. The resultant pleasure is indescribable.

Everyone in this material world hankers for love. As the saying goes, love conquers all. For the sake of love one may sometimes sacrifice one's dearest object—one's own life. So love is superior even to one's own self.

But in this material world there is no suitable object on which to repose one's love, because everything here perishes in time. No one wants to love something that will disappear. That's why people often change from one object of love to another. Jīva Gosvāmī concludes that ideally the object of our love must be permanent, able to reciprocate our love, and full of other attractive qualities as well. That ideal object can only be Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Earlier, in the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has already established that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme object of love, for He is the origin of everything, sentient and insentient.

Beyond Bliss

There is a world of difference between mere happiness and the bliss of *prīti*, or love. Happiness is a quality derived from being in the mode of goodness, whereas *prīti* is a potency of the Lord's internal energy. *Prīti* is the essence of the Lord's pleasure potency, mixed with His knowledge potency. *Prīti* includes bliss, but it is not just bliss or happiness.

Happiness is one's own experience

appears, even Kṛṣṇa fears the angry mood of the devotee.

(5) Intense love that thoroughly melts the heart is called *sneha*. In *sneha* the devotee is dissatisfied even at the sight of the Lord and fears that demons may harm Him.

(6) An excessive longing in love for the Lord is called *rāga*. Here even a moment's separation becomes unbearable. Union with the Lord makes great pain feel pleasurable, and separation from Him makes great pleasure feel like pain.

(7) That stage of love in which Kṛṣṇa appears newer and newer at every moment is called *anurāga*. At this stage the Lord and the devotee feel dependent on each other, and even while in His presence the devotee feels the fear of separation. Hence the devotee loses his balance of mind and behaves strangely.

(8) The love that awakens a state of madness in a devotee owing to its unsurpassed wondrousness is called *mahā-bhāva*. On this level even a moment's separation feels to the devotee like millions of years.

Transcendental Superexcellence

A person desiring to realize one of these stages of *prīti*, or complete absorption in love of God, can do so by associating with and serving a devotee already situated in *prīti* and acquire it from him. According to the level on which one's master is situated, the aspirant gets a particular kind of ego or relationship with the Lord.

Here Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī goes into many technical details. He speaks of the criteria by which a devotee achieves a particular level of devotional service and explains how far one can progress beyond those given stages. He concludes the section by explaining that the *mahā-bhāva* of the *gopīs* is the topmost experience of bliss of love of God and is not accessible to anyone else. Among the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love is unexcelled; She has no peer in loving Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī then gives details regarding the various emotional moods (*bhāvas*) of the experience of *prīti*. These twelve emotional moods are called the *sthāyi-bhāvas*. The subject matter is too technical to present here.

Another point Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī makes is that nondevotee rhetoricians say that *bhakti*, devotional service, is

not a manifestation of *rasa*, a transcendental taste; they accept it only as a sentiment of the heart. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī refutes this idea by showing how *rasa* is impossible between human beings; it is possible only between the Lord and His devotees.

On the material platform, love is only a transformation of *sattva guṇa*, the material quality of goodness. It is not transcendental and has no possibility of any *bhāva*, or emotional mood, comparable to the twelve moods in the spiritual sky. The mellow (*rasa*) experienced in mundane poetics, for example, is due to the expertise of the poet. It is nothing like the mellows experienced in relation to *prīti*, which can put a devotee

into a state of transcendental madness.

Thus with logic and examples from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī proves the superexcellent position of *prīti*, which is nowhere better exemplified than in the *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī concludes the *Prīti Sandarbha* by pointing out that love of God is the desirable object for all devotees coming in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That understanding and the opportunity to realize it in full are Lord Caitanya's special gift to humanity. ❀

Kuṇḍalī Dāsa and Satya Nārāyaṇa Dāsa are living in Vṛndāvana, India, working on a translation of the Śaṭ Sandarbha.

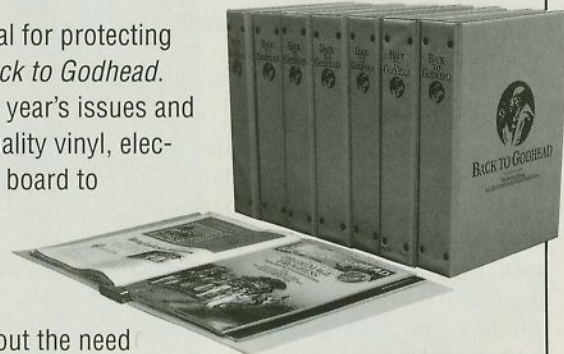
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A Glimpse of the Opulence of God

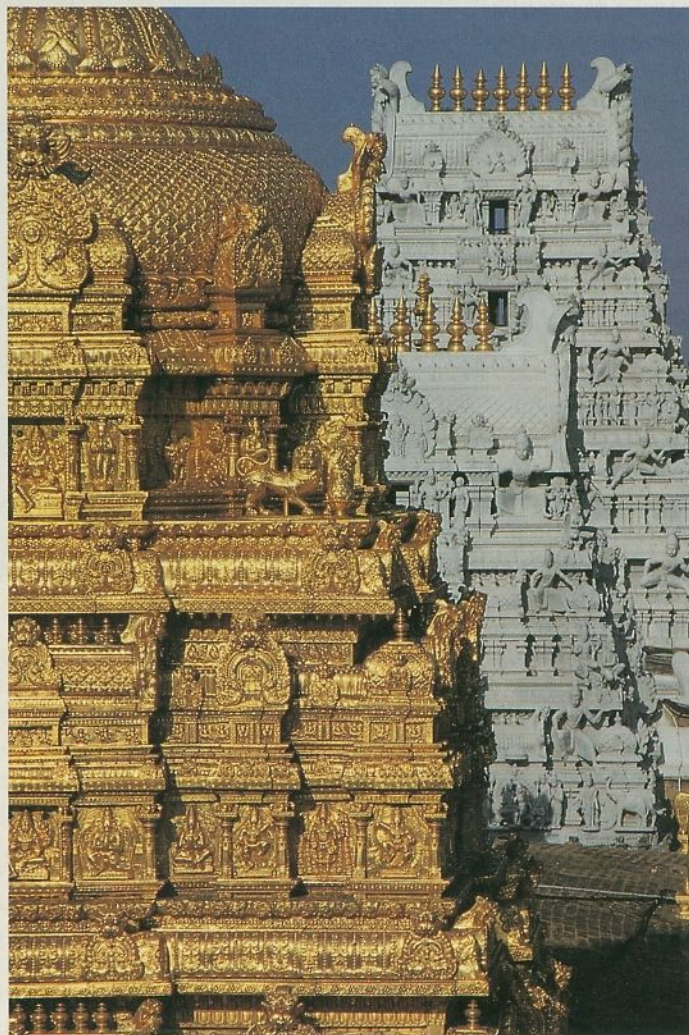
Thirty thousand pilgrims a day come to see awe-inspiring Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and offer in His service their rupees, their jewelry—even their hair.

Text and photos by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

*Wednesday, April 21, 1993, 5:30 A.M.
Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India.*

THE SULTRY DARKNESS IS brightened by a hint of dawn and pierced by rattles from rickety buses. Nirmala Madanlal, 37, and her husband, son, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, and five nieces and nephews walk beneath an eighty-foot *gopuram* (decorated gate) and up steep, winding, canopied, fluorescent-lit steps. Although Nirmala climbs slowly, she and several of the children soon outpace the others. The children talk excitedly and laugh together, occasionally racing ahead, only to become breathless. For Nirmala the trek is more of a steady, determined struggle.

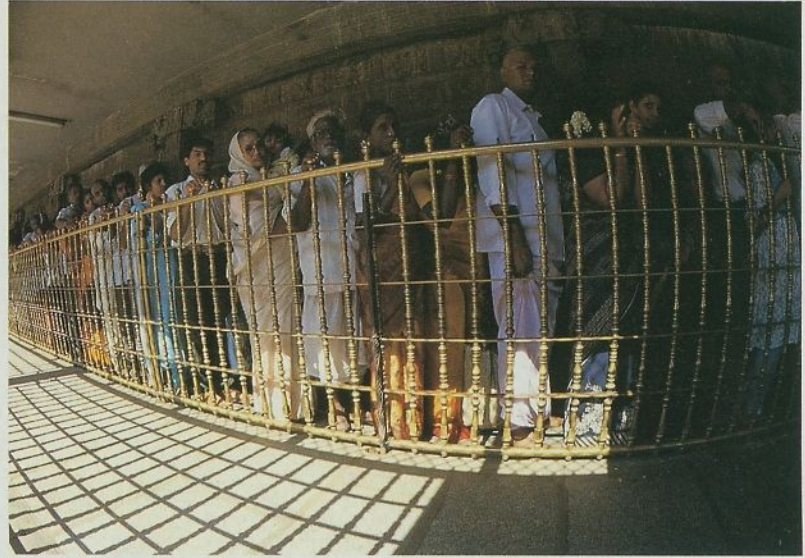
The path takes the group through a mountainside forest filled with fruit trees, flowering trees, deer, wild langur monkeys, and varieties of birds and butterflies. The sun and temperature rise together, but a cool breeze keeps discomfort at bay. During a rest, the children munch on wild tamarind they



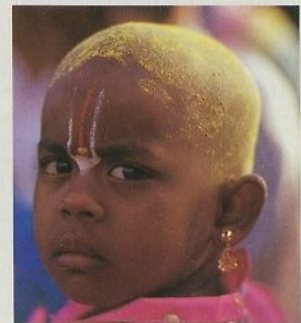
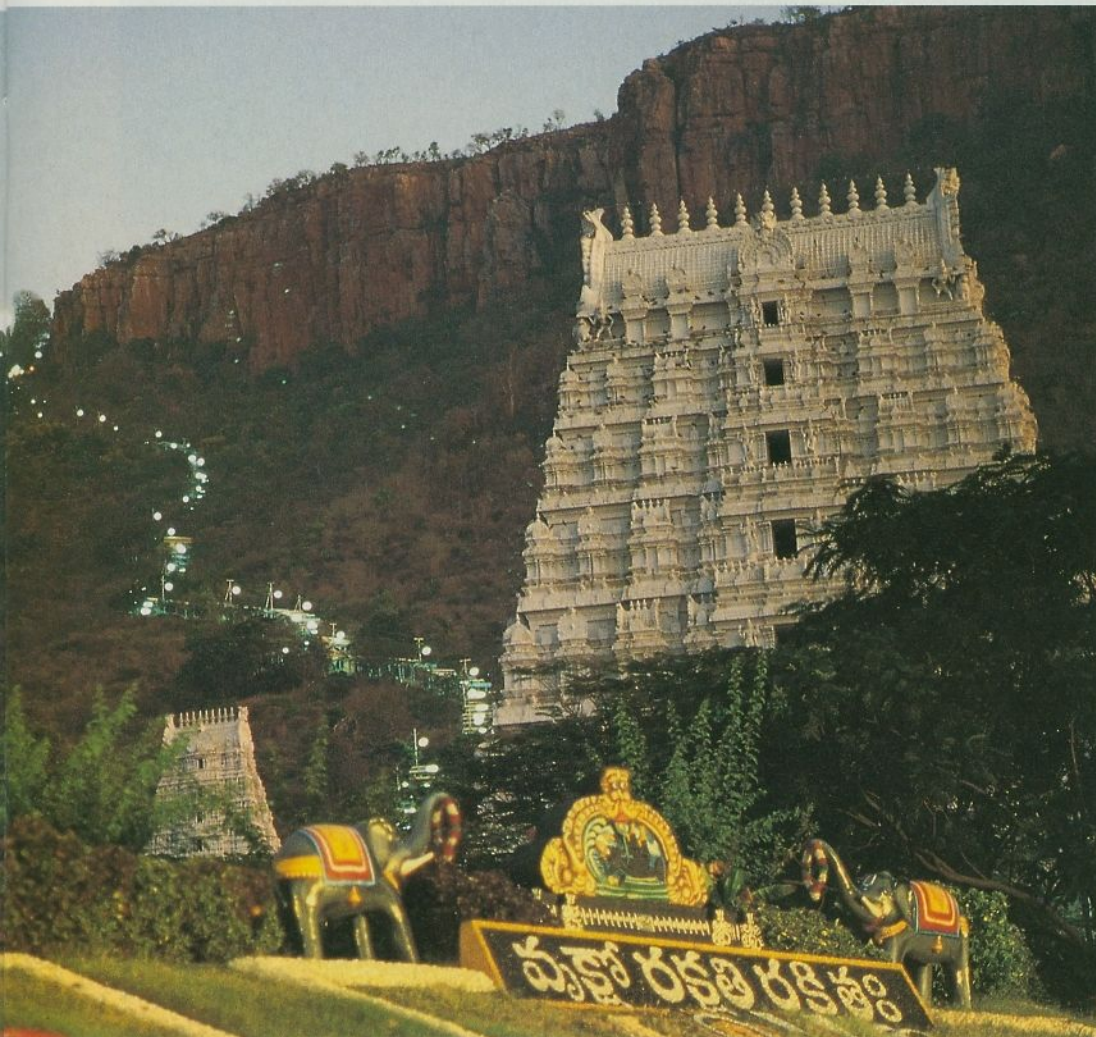
A golden dome (right) marks the inner chamber of the Deity of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. In the background: two intricately carved gates through which pilgrims pass on their way to see the Deity.



Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara



Pilgrims stand on line (above) in the massive queue complex, where they may spend hours patiently awaiting a brief audience with Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. A lighted stairway (left) climbs the first of seven hills leading to Tirumala.



A young pilgrim with a freshly shaven head—soothed with cooling sandalwood pulp.

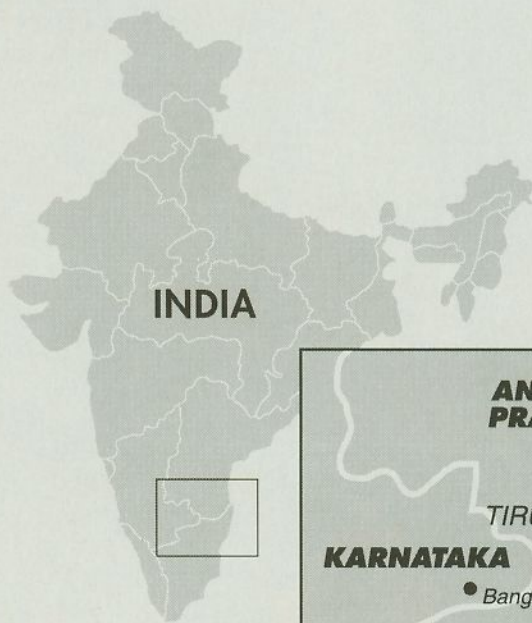


Mrs. Nirmala Madanlal climbs steadily, while two young members of her party wait for her to catch up.

knock down from a nearby tree. As the Mandanlals near their destination, they pass flower-laden gardens, and finally—after 4 hours, 9 kilometers, and 4,047 steps (one of the children counted them)—they arrive in Tirumala, the home of Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, the Supreme Lord who resides on the Veṅkaṭa hill.

Devotional music is broadcast over loudspeakers throughout the area. The music is periodically interrupted by an announcement given in four languages: “Caution to pilgrims: Tirumala is a holy religious pilgrimage center. Don’t smoke here. Don’t take intoxicating drinks. Don’t prepare or eat non-vegetarian food. Always keep the premises clean. . . .”

The story behind Tirumala begins in the second century B.C., when Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, a self-manifested Deity, was discovered on the hill-bound southern bank of Puṣkariṇī Lake, located west of Tirupati, 2,800 feet above sea level. South of the lake, devotees built a



Putting the Lord in the Center

THOSE WHO THINK that in India too much time, energy, and money is devoted to meaningless traditions, superstitions, rites, and ceremonies, that resources are properly spent only in technological progress, will find their view opposed by Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara's devotees. In Tirumala His devotees have put Him, the Supreme Personality of

Godhead, in what they regard as His rightful place—the center. His picture or symbols (conch, disc, *tilaka*) decorate the mountain peak and every shop, bus, office, guest room, and telephone booth, as well as the heart of each sincere pilgrim and staff member. Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara's presence gives material and spiritual solace to His followers. Without being balanced by such spiritual culture, unchecked materialism creates a moral vacuum in the minds and hearts of men, leaving them prone to violent acts—products of lust, greed, and anger—now seen too often in India and throughout the world.

On the role of temples in society in past ages, Dr. C. Anna Rao, former Executive Director of the Tirumala temple, writes,

Temples were conceived of not only as places of worship but also as places of comprehensive religio-cultural activities where instruction even in such subjects as music, architecture, sculpture, painting, dancing, etc., was given. The temple served as an inspiring center of the social and cultural life of the community—a center of great spiritual force and social advancement—and a place of learning, both religious and scientific. . . . A place without a temple had no amenities of life; there was want of righteousness and . . . of truth among the people



Dr. and Mrs. C. Anna Rao

there. . . . When we see that the number of temples that are defunct and dilapidated is far greater than those that are functioning, we can realize how much harm has been done to the society, spiritually, morally, and economically.

Mr. D. V. Murti, the present Executive Officer in Tirumala, comments on the temple today:

The faith of these pilgrims is strong and is worth more than material knowledge, which often makes people faithless. Many of the pilgrims undergo hardships traveling great distances to come here. And once here, they surrender fully to the Lord—for a woman to shave her head, for example, giving her beauty to the Lord, is itself a great sacrifice. I have seen that the more a person gives selflessly, without wanting credit and without expectation of return, the more the Lord reciprocates in His own way. We cannot predict how. Actually, it is foolishness to ask anything of the Lord. He already knows what we want, and whatever He gives us—whether apparently good or bad—is exactly what we deserve and in our best interest. To serve Him and the pilgrims in Tirumala is our great fortune. Here our work is truly our service to the Lord.

Kamisetty Srinivasulu, director of temple audiovisual productions, comments:

Here God is not sitting quietly. He is actively benefiting everyone. Just the fact that people forget their economic status, their caste, creed, and sex, they forget all material designations, chant the Lord's holy name, and come before Him, all equal—in that alone there is great benefit. Besides, from a practical viewpoint, whether you believe in God or not, just see the job opportunities here. Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams [the official name of the temple management] employs 15,000 people directly and many times that number indirectly. These duties are not ordinary—they are godly. And the



Kamisetty Srinivasulu

people who engage in them in the proper spirit will become godly. These duties can affect us in the most profound way, by reviving our God consciousness. And God consciousness more than anything else is what's lacking in our world today. In Tirumala no one need go hungry or be without shelter and medical attention. There is no social unrest.

With a smile he concludes, "This is all the mercy and the glory of Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. Whatever we give to Him, He returns a thousandfold."

ISKCON Tirupati



Sri Sri Rādhā-Govinda at ISKCON Tirupati.

TO FURTHER the goal of spreading *sanātana-dharma*, in 1984 Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) gave ISKCON a 99-year lease on 2.1 acres of land in Tirupati, not far from the mountain base and the road and path leading to Tirumala. TTD fur-

ther supported ISKCON by building a small temple for the Deities of Sri Sri Rādhā-Govinda and a two-story house to serve as a *brahmacārī āśrama* and an elementary school.

Now there are eighteen full-time devotees. They maintain book tables in Tirupati and, during festivals, in Tirumala. On the temple property there is an eighteen-room guesthouse under construction and a *goshalla* (barn) with twelve cows. The first floor of the guesthouse—six marble-floored rooms with attached baths—is complete and often booked. All the construction funds for this project have been raised by the devotees, and when it is finished, fund-raising and construction will begin on a large temple for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

Every day, tour buses bring pilgrims to six noteworthy holy places in Tirupati, and the ISKCON temple is one of them.

Four to five hundred pilgrims a day offer their respects to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, meet devotees, and occasionally buy books. As many as five thousand local people throng to the temple on Janmāṣṭamī, Kṛṣṇa's appearance day, to chant, dance, see dramas, and feast on Rādhā-Govinda *prasādam*.



Jai Sinha Dāsa operates an ISKCON book stall at the entrance to the Govindarāja Swami Temple.



Pilgrims enjoy a free meal of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's prasādam (above). An average of 16,000 meals are served every day.

simple temple for the Lord—just pillars supporting a roof—and began worshipping Him. Over the centuries Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara attracted the attention and devotion of the area's rulers, and they gave generously to build a grand, stone-carved temple around Him and to increase the grandeur of His worship.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Rāmānujācārya, the great Vaiṣṇava preceptor and reformer, established in

detail Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara's mode of worship and an excellent organizational arrangement for His temple. So because of the munificence of pious kings, Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara displayed His opulence, and because of the inspired influence of Rāmānujācārya, the elaborate worship and operation of His temple was set up and has continued smoothly to the present day.

Once in Tirumala, Nirmala and the

children wait for the rest of the family and then locate their car, their driver having dropped them off at the mountain base and driven up the mountain road to meet them.

"Walking here is a kind of prayer for us," Nirmala explains with a smile, "a fulfillment of our vow."

A similar faith and conviction draw pilgrims from all parts of India to Tirumala. To reach Tirumala from the



town of Tirupati below, some walk, some take a private car or taxi, but most ride the public bus for ten rupees (about thirty U.S. cents). These pilgrims—35,000 daily and 100,000 on festivals and holidays—wait patiently in a queue for two to fifteen hours to get a glimpse of the Supreme Lord who resides on this remote mountain. In India, waiting is part of a way of life, and in Tirumala every type of person and all phases of life are represented in an unending queue: just-married couples still in their wedding dress; joint families with a host of children (the smallest asleep in their parents' arms); the educated; the illiterate; the well-to-do; the destitute; the elderly; the handicapped; and even the blind. While they wait, they talk, snack, tend their children, look at people who aren't on the queue, occasionally become angry and argue, and they meditate on the Lord for whom they have come to Tirumala and for whom they are sacrificing their time and comfort. After renting a room and bathing, the Madanlals will wait three and a half hours to see Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara.

If we accept God, we must also accept His inconceivable potency. We cannot limit Him. If God desires, He can appear in a form suitable for receiving our worship and devotion. This is the Deity. The Lord also has an impersonal, all-pervading feature, but that feature does not evoke our love, reverence, and desire to render devotional service. It is God's kindness that He appears as the Deity for us to see and pray to, and to give us the privilege of being in His personal presence.

Yet this simple truth applies to all Deities of the Supreme Lord. It does not explain the unparalleled attraction to Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. And perhaps nothing can explain it. It is as mystical and inconceivable as the Lord Himself.

After sitting in a modern two-story complex that can accommodate 16,500 pilgrims at a time, the Madanlals cross a covered bridge over the road that encircles the temple. Outside the temple walls, they wait patiently within the queue barriers (barred to prevent queue-jumpers). The lines move on, and the Madanlals step into the shallow, fresh water that runs nonstop at the temple entrance, cleansing the bare feet of all who enter.

The queue continues moving slowly,



A pilgrim bathes with his son in the sacred Puṣkariṇī Lake.



now along the south side of the inner temple, past the temple kitchen, where 250 *brāhmaṇa* cooks work in shifts throughout the day to prepare offerings for the Lord. Finally the Madanlals approach the inner sanctum, where the Lord waits regally beneath His golden dome. The Madanlals and the pilgrims around them are eager with divine anticipation. The crowd spontaneously swells with the chant "Govinda!" another name for Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara is awe-inspiring.



The president of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, leaves the temple with his wife and assistants after offering respects to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.



Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara goes on procession (left), and His devotees (below) offer silent prayers as the Lord passes by.



Solid black, He stands seven feet tall, His lustrous form dimly lit by ghee lamps. The first sight of Him is of His prominent *tilaka*, two large, white, vertical, slightly separated blocks adorning most of His forehead and nose and part of His eyes and cheeks.

Moving closer, the Madanlals can see His jewel-inlaid golden crown, His garland, His jeweled ornaments and, just faintly, their eyes now accustomed to the dimness, His benign smile. The Deity's right palm—open, facing forward, fingers down—beckons pilgrims

of material tribulation to a knee-deep pond.

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's presence is captivating. No one wants to leave: Yet after just a moment it is time. Thousands are yet to come, and the Lord awaits them also.

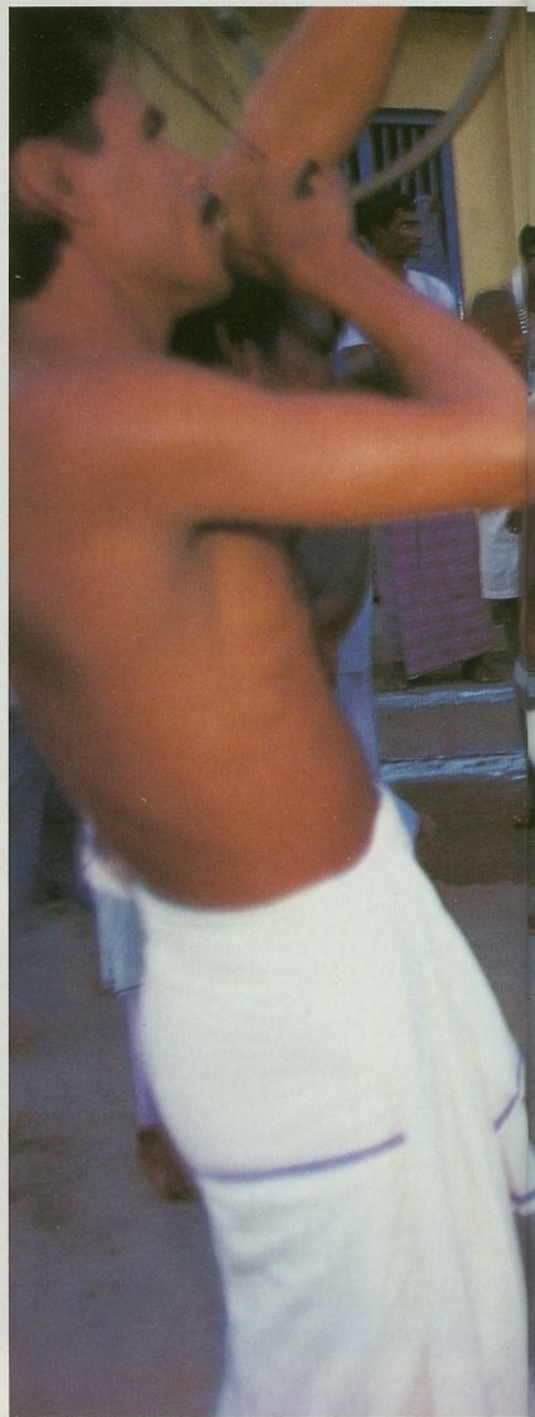
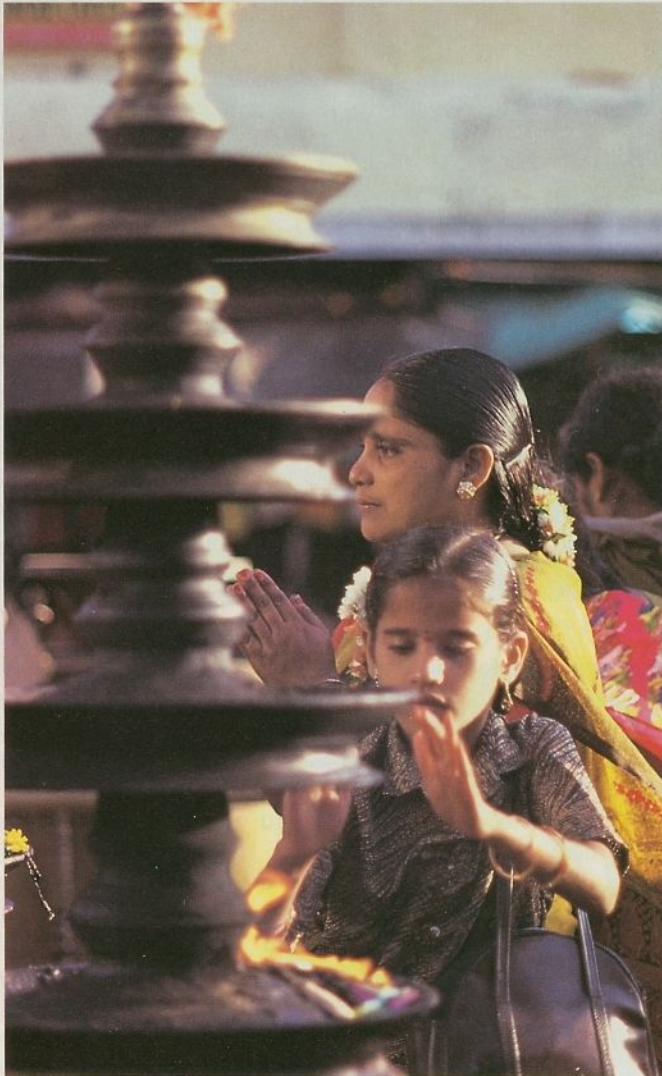
The next queue is to the *hundi*, a cloth-covered three-cubic-foot brass vessel into which pilgrims place their offerings to the Lord—money, precious metals, family treasures, and whatever else they feel would be of value to Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. When the *hundi* is full it

is replaced with an empty one and carried to a barred room at the west end of the temple. There, twice each day, the *hundis* are emptied, and their contents sorted and counted. Each counting is a five-hour process performed by thirty men picked at random from the Tirumala staff. The whole procedure is observed by two pilgrims, also picked at random, as well as by closed-circuit video cameras. And everyone who leaves the room is thoroughly searched. The total donations are registered and deposited in the bank. *Hundi* theft is unlikely in Tirumala. The daily average: a million rupees (about US\$30,000). Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara is the wealthiest Deity in the world.

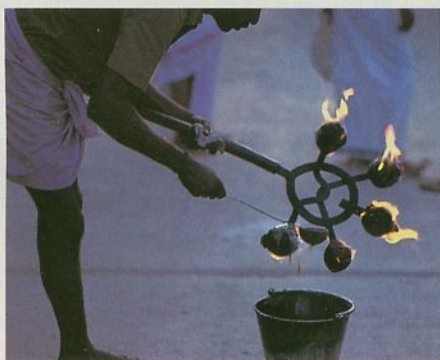
By temple policy, the funds are used for several purposes: (1) for the preservation, maintenance, and renovation of the temple, and for the Lord's clothing, ornaments, and decorations; (2) for the pilgrims—their food, housing, transportation, medical needs, water supply, and sanitation; (3) for the public—hospitals, orphanages, homes for



During a festival (above) held each spring, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara “marries” His two eternal consorts, Bhūdevī and Śrīdevī. At the entrance to the temple, a pilgrim (right) honors a sacred flame that burns continuously for the pleasure of the Lord.



Drummers (above) perform in honor of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara as they and other musicians lead the Lord’s procession around the temple. A temple assistant (right) pours ghee on a five-wick torch during an evening procession.



the disabled, and care for lepers; (4) for education; and (5) for the propagation of *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal way of life of the living being.

The facilities provided for pilgrims in Tirumala are outstanding. The covered, lit walkway, the reforested mountainside, and the lush gardens are examples. Even more, every pilgrim is entitled to free food, free accommodations, and free medical treatment. Pilgrims who need more than bare

necessities pay a nominal fee for accommodation (for example, 50 rupees a night for a furnished room with attached bath). Dr. C. Anna Rao, former Executive Officer of the temple, says, "Necessities should be provided free, comforts on a little payment, and luxuries avoided."

Before leaving the temple, each of the Madanlals receives a leaf cup containing *mahā-prasādam*—food that has been offered to Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. They



Visiting Tirupati And Tirumala

ALTHOUGH SOME state transit buses go directly to Tirumala, where the temple of Lord Veṅkateśvara is located, most pilgrims—traveling by air, rail, bus, car, or foot—first arrive in Tirupati, at the base of Tirumala hill. From Tirupati pilgrims walk or take buses or taxis up the

hill to the temple. The buses run about every three minutes from 3:30 A.M. to 11:00 P.M.

Getting to Tirupati

By Air—Indian Airlines has daily flights connecting Tirupati with Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Vijayawada.

By Rail—Trains run direct to Tirupati from Madras, Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta,

Puri, Madurai, Hyderabad, and Vishakapatnam.

By Road—Direct buses run from most major towns in Andhra Pradesh and from major cities within 600 kilometers of Tirupati. Tirupati is 131 kilometers from Madras, the nearest large city.

Where to Stay

Tirupati—Free accommodations are



Temple brāhmaṇas accompany the Lord on procession.

relish it, wash their hands, and spend a few minutes reading some of the more than 640 inscriptions of the temple's history engraved in local languages on the temple's stone walls. One of them reads: "On February 10, 1513, Śrī Krishnadevaraya [a powerful king] and his two queens, Chinnajidevi and Tirumaladevi, visited the temple for the first time. The king presented Śrī Venkateśvara a gold crown set with nine kinds of gems, and twenty-five silver plates for offering camphor. His queens each gave a gold cup for offering milk to the Lord." A temple attendant explains that even now those same cups are used nightly for the Lord's milk offering.

Finally, the Madanlals leave through the same large gate they entered. Tonight they will drive four hours southeast to their home in Madras. In three or four months, they will return to spend another day in Tirumala. ❀

Viśākhā Devī Dāsī became a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1971 and has served him since then through her writing, photography, and filmmaking.

provided at two *dharmashalas* (unfurnished hostels) connected with the two main temples in Tirupati: Sri Govindaraja temple and Sri Kodanda Rama temple. Furnished rooms (30–150 rupees) are available at Sri Venkateswara Dharmashala, S.V. Guest House, Sri Padmavathi Guest House, and the T.T.D. (Alipiri) Guest House.



Tirumala guesthouses.

Tirumala—The Tirumala manage-

ment runs many *dharmashalas*, cottages, and guesthouses. Several large *dharmashalas* provide families free lodging in unfurnished rooms. The prices for cottages and rooms in guest houses range from 15 rupees a night for a room to 2,500 rupees a night for an entire guest house. Pilgrims should contact the Central Reservation Office, near the bus stand, upon their arrival in Tirumala.

EDUCATION

(continued from page 9)

of the people are unfortunate.” Most people don’t even have sufficient arrangements for the primary principles of life—eating, sleeping, defending, and mating. These are only primary principles; they are available even in animal life. But in this age, even these primary principles are difficult to obtain—shelter, food, a wife. And everyone is afraid. “When will war be declared and I’ll be sent to the warfield?”

And finally, *upadruta*—“On top of all this, people are always disturbed with diseases and so many other things.”

This is the position of people in this age. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa thought that it would be impossible for such people to come to the point of liberation under the regulative process. So out of His causeless mercy, He came as Lord Caitanya and distributed the highest perfection of life—spiritual ecstasy—through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This chanting is practical. It does not depend on whether you are liberated or nonliberated, on your position or your condition. Just come and take part in it, and you’ll feel spiritual ecstasy. Therefore this process is called *pavitram*, “very pure.” Anyone who takes to this process becomes purified. The purification begins at once.

Uttamam means “the highest,” or “transcendental.” Yesterday I explained

the meaning of *uttamam* by quoting a commentary on today’s verse. The commentator explained the meaning of *uttamam* by referring to a verse from the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*aprārabdha-phalam pāpam
kūṭam bijam phalonymukham
krameṇaiva praliyeta
viṣṇu-bhakti-ratātmanām*

This means that when one is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—in the highest transcendental knowledge—gradually the seeds of all reactions to his sins become vanquished. We have studied in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the example that if you put something into the fire, the fire turns it into ashes. Similarly, as soon as the fire of Kṛṣṇa consciousness begins, all reactions of sinful activities from our past life are destroyed.

The Purpose of Scripture

Our suffering is due to sinful activities. And sinful activities are due to our ignorance. Sinful activities are done by persons who do not know what is what. A child does not know the result of touching fire, because he is ignorant. But as soon as the child touches fire, his hand becomes burned. The fire does not allow any concession for the child. The fire will act as fire. Similarly, we do not know how this material world is going on—what the laws are, who the controller is, how it is being controlled. Out of ignorance we act in some way, but nature is so stringent that it will never excuse us, whether

we do it knowingly or unknowingly.

Therefore ignorance is the cause of suffering. So one should be put into proper knowledge. And proper knowledge means knowing things as they are: what we are, what the world is, what God is, what our relationship with God is. We should know these things. One should not simply become a technical expert or some departmental expert. That is not knowledge. Here is knowledge: you should know what you are and how you should act. And this knowledge can be achieved in the human form of life, not in the animal form of life. Therefore, to give you knowledge, to give you proper direction, there are so many scriptures in all parts of the civilized world. They should not be neglected.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Since time immemorial, people have forgotten their relationship with the Supreme Lord. Therefore the Lord has sent many representatives to give them the scriptures.” So we should take advantage of the scriptures, especially the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* you’ll find everything presented nicely. You can put your arguments. You can try to understand with your knowledge, with your intelligence. Everything will be clear.

So we should take advantage of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. And our power to understand it will increase if we begin our study with this transcendental sound vibration: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Thank you very much. ❁

VAIṢṆAVA (continued from page 64)

In the *R̥g Veda* we find, *om tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padaṁ sadā paśyanti surayaḥ*: “All the demigods look constantly towards the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu.” And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Lord Śiva himself is described as the greatest of the Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇavāṅgām yathāśambhu*).

In other words, *Vaiṣṇava* is not a limited sectarian designation. Even the demigods are Vaiṣṇavas. And in fact, according to all the Vedic knowledge, to serve as a Vaiṣṇava is the eternal occupation of the soul. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that one should give up all other supposedly

religious duties and just surrender unto Him, or, in other words, become a Vaiṣṇava (*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja*).

“Veda” means “knowledge,” and knowledge is meant for everyone. Similarly, “Vaiṣṇava” means a devotee of the Supreme Lord, and everyone ought to give up all sectarian designations and become the Lord’s devotee.

Unfortunately, some people mistakenly think that the Vedic scriptures are meant only for certain sectarian, ethnic, or cultural groups—basically, only for Indians. And they think that Vaiṣṇavas are merely adherents to a particular Indian sect or faith. We have to inform

people, therefore, that the Vedic scriptures are meant to offer knowledge and self-realization to all human beings. And we must bring people to understand that Vaiṣṇavism is the eternal spiritual function of all living entities. A Vaiṣṇava, and only a Vaiṣṇava, has attained perfect knowledge and become a perfectly self-realized soul.

Let me assure you that we shall not give up using the word *Vedic*. As mentioned above, when one reaches the conclusion of Vedic knowledge (*vedānta*) one becomes a devotee of the Lord (a Vaiṣṇava). Kṛṣṇa consciousness is “Vedic” and “Vaiṣṇava,” and therefore we shall continue to use both words. ❁

EVERY TOWN & VILLAGE

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

WORLD NEWS

North America

The mayor of San Diego attended

the celebration

for Lord Kṛṣṇa's "birthday" in August at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in her city. The mayor, Mrs. Susan Golding, said the temple grounds reminded her of Bali, Indonesia, one of her favorite vacation spots.

Eight hundred devotees met for a "family gathering," the second annual Prabhupāda Festival, in Los Angeles last May.

ISKCON's school in Dallas celebrated its reopening in July after a \$65,000 renovation. Śrīla Prabhupāda first opened the school in 1972. Thirty students now attend.

Forty boys and girls vacationed in August at the tenth annual "Camp Krishna," at the Gītā-Nāgarī farm in Pennsylvania. The program ran for ten days.

ISKCON Houston held a thirty-hour series of Kṛṣṇa conscious seminars in July. Forty-five people attended.

The youth of ISKCON's farm in Mississippi sponsored the Rathayātrā float in the New Orleans Mardi Gras last spring. They painted, decorated, organized, advertised, and raised funds for the project. Then they performed *kīrtanas* and classical Indian dances on the float. One million people attended the parade.

Sumati Morarji is donating a granite floor for the Miami ISKCON temple. She has also offered to ship large altars waiting in India for the Deities. Through her shipping company, Scindia Steamship Lines, Mrs. Morarji sponsored Śrīla Prabhupāda's first passage to America, in 1965.

An internal FBI memo suggests that acts of violence ten years ago against several Hare Kṛṣṇa temples were perpetrated by Al-Fuqra, a U.S.-based Black Muslim group. Among acts that investigators have linked to the group: violence at the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in San Diego (August 1979) and firebombings of temples in Philadelphia and

Denver (June and August 1984). Most of the targets of assaults attributed to Fuqra members have spiritual or cultural ties to India or hold Muslim views that Fuqra members regard as wayward, reported the New York newspaper *Newsday*. According to *USA Today*, Fuqra is suspected of sixteen bombings and six murders since 1979.



Chicago Rathayātrā

Devotees in Chicago held their first large-scale Rathayātrā since the late seventies. In July, they pulled the 35-foot-tall cart down Gandhi Marg and passed out *prasādam* to thousands along the route.

Latin America

Devotees in Brazil have purchased

four hundred acres of land in the jungle four hours from Manaus. They plan to build a temple, a school, a guesthouse, and houses for families.

Europe

Two devotees from Belgrade brought

prasādam to children's hospitals, children's refugee camps, and homes for the aged in Podgorica, in the Yugoslavian republic of Montenegro. Yugoslav Airlines provided round-trip flights, the Red Cross

welcomed the devotees at the airport, and a government firm gave a free hotel room for ten days.

Devotees in London celebrated their twenty-fifth annual Festival of the Chariots on July 4.

The "Hare Krishna Summer Festival" drew two thousand local people to the ISKCON farm in Bavaria, Germany. The festival marked twenty-five years for ISKCON in Germany.

India **The Bhaktivedanta Institute presented** a three-day lecture series to more than two hundred students and professors last summer at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Bombay. The school is one of India's five most important institutes for research in engineering and technology.

Fifty children attended ISKCON Secunderabad's first Bhakti-yoga Training Camp, held for ten days last May.

ISKCON Chandigarh will hold its fifth annual Rathayātrā festival on November 6.

Africa **A convoy of fourteen vehicles delivered** hot Kṛṣṇa prasādam to the primary school in the black township of Gamalakke last summer. Gamalakke is one of South Africa's most troubled spots, with intense fighting between the Zulu and Xosa tribes. Devotees led the school's staff and students in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. And after the fourteen hundred barefoot and

hungry students were fully fed, the devotees passed out a thousand of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in Zulu.

The annual Festival of the Chariots took place this summer in Nairobi and Mombasa.



Actress Hayley Mills prepares to bathe the Deity of Lord Jagannātha with water from a conchshell during the Lord's annual bathing festival in Christchurch, New Zealand.

South Pacific **British actress Hayley Mills took part** in the bathing ceremony for Lord Jagannātha in Christchurch this summer. She and city council member David Cox also attended ceremonies to start a series of programs leading up to the Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial in 1996.

Devotees in Singapore held their first Rathayātrā last July.

PADAYĀTRĀ NEWS

Padayātrā America

Padayātrā America this summer completed its 1,700-mile walk through all the countries of Central America. The walk began in December from the freezing hills of Costa Rica and ended in May in Colon, on the Atlantic side of Panama.

Padayātrā California

A group of devotees spent June bringing Kṛṣṇa's holy names to the streets of fifty-four California towns. The devotees put on programs in thirty-seven homes during their travels.

Padayātrā Phillipines

For two months this year, twenty-five devotees toured the island of Cebu, visiting forty towns and putting on a festival every night. An average of three hundred people attended each program.

Padayātrā Eastern Europe

In July and August devotees walking alongside a bullock cart chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa from Moravia to Prague.

For more information about Padayātrā, contact:

Padayātrā Worldwide

62, Sant Nagar, New Delhi 110 065, India.

Phone: +91 (11) 642-1736. Fax: +91 (11) 647-0742

Padayātrā America

1111 Grand Ave., San Diego, CA 92109.

Phone: +1 (619) 273-7262.

Padayātrā Europe

Bhaktivedanta Manor, Leckmore Heath, Watford, Herts. WD2 8EP, England.

Phone: +44 (92) 385-7244

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

NONSENSE COMMENTARY ON BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

This conversation took place in Allahabad, India, on January 18, 1971.

Guest (1): We believe in an incorporeal God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Who says, “incorporeal”? Who says?

Guest (1): It is scripture—*vyotir liṅga*, “incorporeal.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You are bringing in something else besides *Bhagavad-gītā*. You should know that we are preaching *Bhagavad-gītā*. So this *vyotir liṅga*—all these theories—they are not in *Bhagavad-gītā*. They may be in other literature, but we are particularly interested in preaching *Bhagavad-gītā*. Because *Bhagavad-gītā* has been wrongly preached all over the world by nonsense commentary, we want to rectify that. Therefore our society is specifically named “Kṛṣṇa conscious.”

Guest (1): What is wrongly preached about the *Gītā*?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yesterday, for instance, I went to that Gita Samiti [Gita Society]. There is a lamp [on display]. Why is there a lamp instead of Kṛṣṇa?

Guest (1): I don't know.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You do not know. Therefore I say there is wrong preaching. Why is there a lamp in place of Kṛṣṇa? Does Kṛṣṇa say this?

Guest (1): The Gita Samiti people must evolve with this idea because . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. The *Gītā* is spoken by Kṛṣṇa. So why is there no picture of Kṛṣṇa?

Guest (1): They didn't put the picture.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. That means they have not understood Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, this so-called Gita Society is not bona fide. Suppose there is a political meeting. You keep Gandhi's photo or Jawaharlal Nehru's photo, because they are political leaders. Yet in this Gita Samiti they are preaching *Bhagavad-*

gītā, and there is not a single picture of Kṛṣṇa. This is misguided. They are wrongly representing *Bhagavad-gītā*. So our position is to rectify that wrong propaganda about *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Guest (2): What is that wrong propaganda?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is one instance. And there are many other instances. In the Ninth Chapter there is the verse *man-manā bhava mad-bhaktō mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru*. [Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna: “Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me, and worship Me.”] One respected scholar says, “It is not to the person Kṛṣṇa [but to the unborn within Kṛṣṇa that one must surrender].” Where does the scholar get this nonsense idea?

Guest (1): V— has also said that . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They are all nonsense. Anyone who deviates from the original text of the *Gītā* is nonsense.

Guest (2): Swamiji, by declaring other interpretations nonsense . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You cannot interpret! First of all, my proposal is that you cannot interpret.

Guest (2): We'll come to that. But if I say that you are not interpreting correctly, that does not make me correct. I must be correct also.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I am correct as long as I present the correct thing. If I present Kṛṣṇa as He is, then I am correct.

Guest (2): Swamiji, most respectfully, how do you judge that “I am correct”?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because I am presenting what Kṛṣṇa says. First of all, you answer this: What is the standard of correctness? You cannot create correctness. When Kṛṣṇa says *man-manā bhava mad-bhaktah*—“Just surrender unto Me, become My *bhaktā* [devotee]—how can you say, “It is not to Kṛṣṇa [one must surrender]?” Is this not nonsense? If I say, “Give me a glass of water” and you say, “It is not to Swamiji [that the glass of water should be given],” isn't that an interpretation?

Guest (1): But surrender is what Jesus Christ says, Mohammed says, everyone says.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Let others surrender to Christ. But why don't you surrender to Kṛṣṇa?

Guest (1): That is true, but . . .

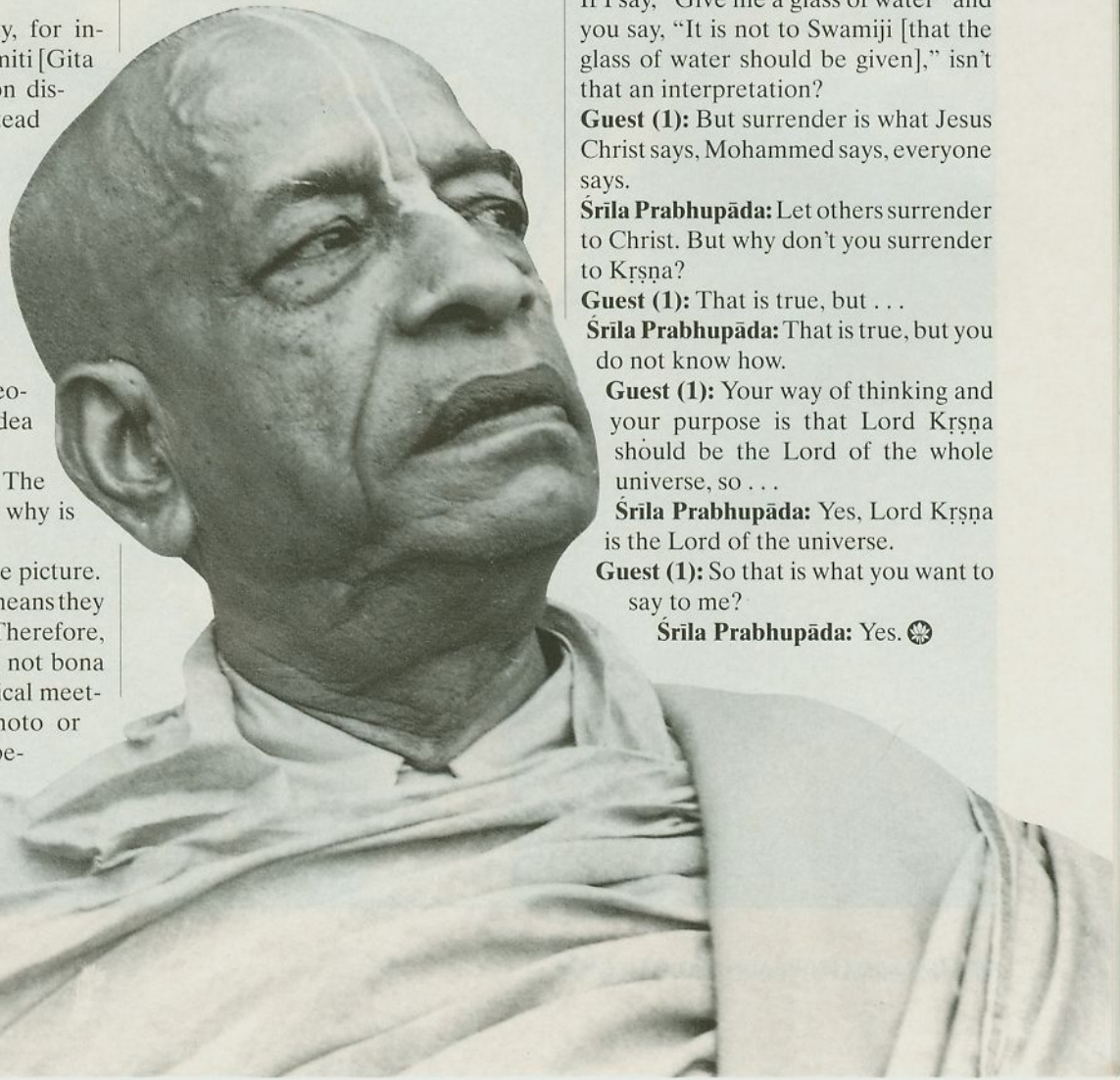
Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is true, but you do not know how.

Guest (1): Your way of thinking and your purpose is that Lord Kṛṣṇa should be the Lord of the whole universe, so . . .

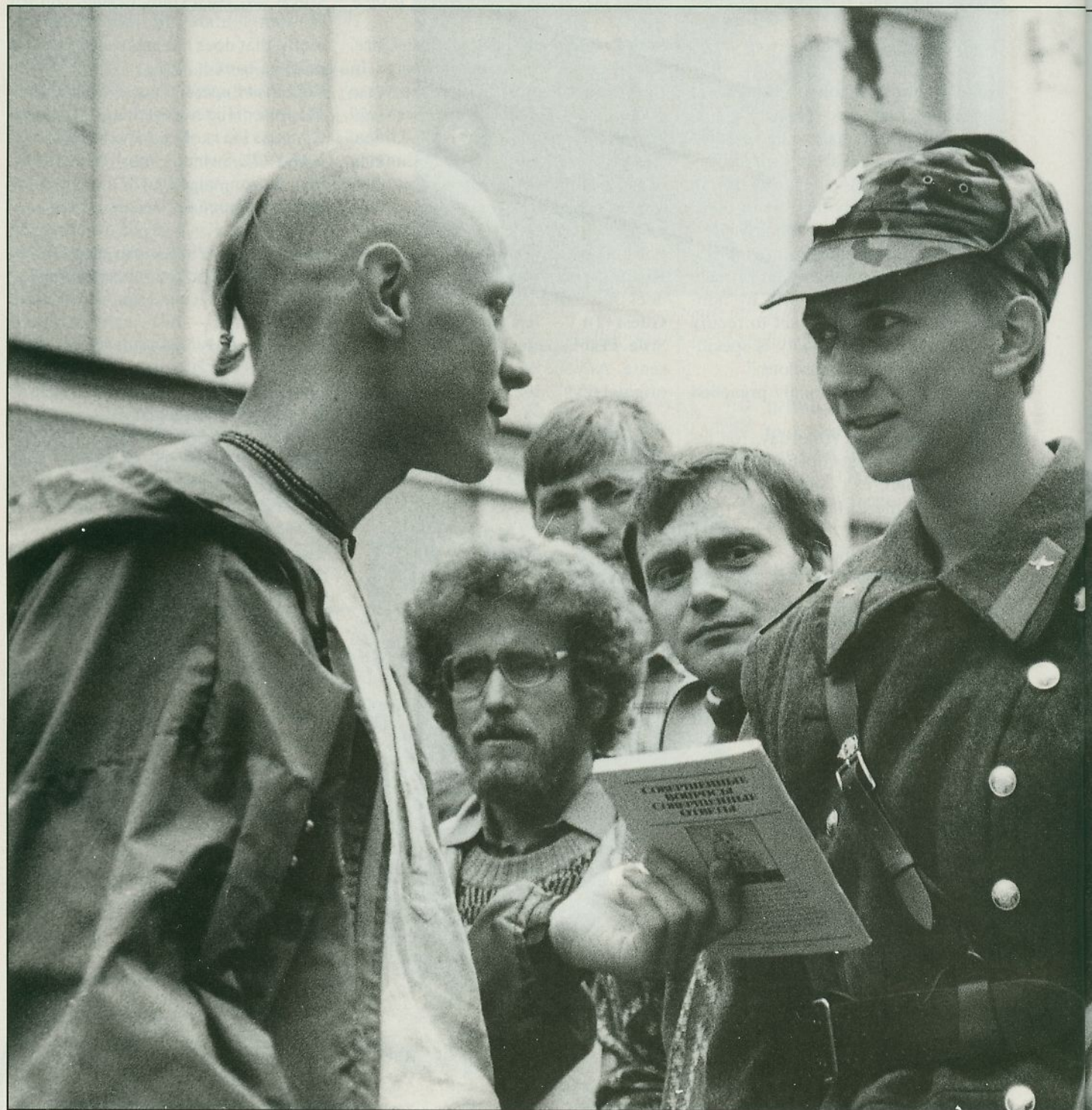
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the universe.

Guest (1): So that is what you want to say to me?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. ❁



Eager to Read About



ut Kṛṣṇa

Letters to the Moscow branch
of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.



Every year, through the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust some 200,000 people buy a book of Vedic literature in Russian. And every day the Trust's office in Moscow receives letters of appreciation from people whose spiritual yearnings have long been repressed. Here we present a sample of those letters.

THE BOOKS PUBLISHED by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust changed my attitude towards life completely. Lord Kṛṣṇa is really present in these books, and the instructions given by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda are so simple and easy to understand that when we hear them our life gains meaning.

A. F. Tsvion
Amurskaya obl., Russia

Thank you for the books you are publishing. Why did I know nothing about *Bhagavad-gītā* before? Now I only have to lament that I have wasted 44 years of my life.

V. N. Apopov
Satka, Russia

From your books one can derive more and more energy. As I read the translation and then the purports, sometimes I have a feeling that these books are the most important things in my house and that everything else is just vain, temporary, of less importance.

S. S. Siatdinova
Kazan, Russia

Thanks to the books by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I found my real self and I am very grateful to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In your TV advertisement for

Bhagavad-gītā, I heard *saṅkīrtana* chanting. It sounded like thousands of devotees going side by side, like a gigantic sea wave. I had an impression that the wave was going to come up and carry me away. That is my great desire—to become just a tiny drop of that wave. Unfortunately I am not worthy of it. Still, I set my hopes upon the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I hope that He will not only show me the way but give me strength and determination to follow it. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Radic Shakirov
Kazan, Russia

The books by Śrīla Prabhupāda are of the greatest value for us. He moved a curtain, revealing the spiritual reality to the whole world. I consider it a great honor to bow to the ground before His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Anatoliy K. Serov

Dear publishers, please consider my words. Since our country is in a great spiritual need, I am appealing to you—do not stop producing these books. They bring enlightenment to the people and I am convinced that many would share my opinion.

Boris, 17 years old
Belorussia

Thank you very much for your energy in sending the revealed scriptures by Śrī Vyāsadeva, which became widely known due to timely interference by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami and his spiritual masters.

What a wonder, what a great fortune for all of us, to have such a confidential source of knowledge accessible! Now there is hope that the quantity of

The photos in this article were all taken in Moscow on Arbat Street. Devotees approach thousands of people daily here with Kṛṣṇa conscious literature and the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

ignorant people will not increase with such an oppressive speed and that in this very lifetime we will be able to see the teachings of God taught in schools by these very books.

Let me express to you my gratitude for all that you are doing, for it is the only thing that has a real value nowadays.

May the luster of the material world never overtake the fire of devotional service in your hearts!

M. V. Lipatnikov
Kirovskaya obl., Russia

We were brought up without any religion or knowledge about the spirit soul, the purpose of the human being, and the existence of the spiritual world. But our eagerness to know all this is so great. While listening to the radio and hearing the voices of your people—very gentle and pure in heart—I want to fly up and sing, my soul overwhelmed with some unknown feeling.

I have no *Bhagavad-gītā*; therefore please send me one, for any price. I want my children to also know about this.

Svetlana Filenko
Krasnodar, Russia

When I started reading these books, I was so captured by their topics that I read the *Kṛṣṇa* book at one go, just swallowed it. I can swear to you, sirs, that for all my 37 years I've never read such an interesting and fascinating book. And when I started reading *Bhagavad-gītā*, I realized that there is nothing to compare to it in the whole world.

V. E. Sokolov
Kirov, Russia

Me and my friends are very interested in books published by you. We already have some of them, but not all. Your books are going from hands to hands and are read with great interest. And the most wonderful thing is that the people, who read your books become much more pure in their thoughts and actions. It would be very nice if we could keep our connection with you in the future.

S. Y. Sobolve

Bhagavad-gītā opened a window to another world! A world where there are no soldiers and civilians, commu-

nists and capitalists, no wars, starvation, or epidemics.

Thank you that despite the terror of our times you are doing true necessary work for everyone with no exceptions—be one a minister or an unimportant worker.

Aleksey,
Evdokimov
Ilyutin,
Magadanskaya obl.

I learned about the movement for *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness long ago. Till recently I only felt respect for those boys singing and dancing on Nevskiy, tolerating scowl smiles and insulting laughs of the passersby. Only in May last year I became greatly interested in everything related to *Kṛṣṇa*. After one night and half the next day in argument (in which I defended my atheistic views), I understood that worship of *Kṛṣṇa* is not just idle whims but a scientifically based philosophy.

And now here I am, sitting and humming the Hare *Kṛṣṇa* mantra, making the next bead for my new chanting beads.

I try to practice bhakti-yoga at home, but since I have no guidance of a spiritual master, everything works out as if I did it with my left foot. And then I think about how rough and insincere I am and that due to my ignorance I cannot approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *Kṛṣṇa*. I am unable to understand the deep spiritual meaning of *Bhagavad-gītā* since I consider myself to be capable of offenses only.

At such moments I keenly feel my imperfection but then remember this prayer by Rūpa Gosvāmī: "O my Lord, I do not have any love for You, nor am I qualified for discharging devotional service by chanting and hearing. Nor do I possess knowledge, pious activities, or



the mystic power of a Vaiṣṇava. Nor do I belong to a very high-caste family. On the whole, I do not possess anything. Still, O Gopījana-vallabha, because You bestow Your mercy on the most fallen, I have an unbreakable hope that is constantly in my heart. That hope is always giving me pain."

My situation is just like that. Sincerely wishing to be amongst you,

Ruchyev A.V.
St. Petersburg

My prostrated obeisances to all the devotees! I intended to write this letter long ago, but something was holding me until now. And now when I am finally writing, all the words are gone, for there is just a single idea in the mind—to come to you and stay.



Serge Korotkov

A year ago I knew nothing of the books, but already at that time I was often appealing to the Lord, not with material desires. I saw those who were serving the Lord but spoke badly of other religions and did not follow any principles. I could not be among them. After some time I bought *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

For half a year I was reading it, and my joy had no limit. I was reading about what was most important for me, what was always in my mind. I do not know if I can repay Lord Kṛṣṇa for His mercy. But could it be possible for me to ever know anything without the mercy of His great saintly devotee, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda? Certainly not.

Now I have already 15 books, which

I am studying step by step. After finishing I start reading again. How is it possible not to read them? They contain the full mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

If there is any opportunity, considering place, time and circumstances, I tell people about Kṛṣṇa and what I have learned from the Vedic scriptures. My friend also accepted these teachings. My brother, by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy, all of a sudden gave up all his bad habits. Some people hear me with understanding, some hear and think, "What nonsense," and others say directly, "You must be crazy." But I can see their ignorance, and thanks to them I only increase my faith and service. And I still hope to plant the seeds of love of Kṛṣṇa in their concrete hearts. Everything depends on Kṛṣṇa's mercy. He gives, He takes away, and this is all but His mercy.

Let me kneel before all the devotees for their great love of Lord Kṛṣṇa, for their humility and wisdom. In great respect I bow down before all the real spiritual masters who were present on earth previously and who are present now.

Vladimir Er.
Uhta, Russia

I have an earnest request to you. I beg you to keep one set of 13 books for me till the end of March. At that time I will get my pension and redeem them. I am begging you to please keep the set of books for me. That would be a great gift for me. Please, put it away, hide it somewhere. Put this set away and hide it till at most April, otherwise my pension will be not enough. I am begging you to do something about it. Be merciful, help me, keep just one set. Better I will be

lacking of cloth but have your books. Kindly give me the opportunity to put some money by. Please, have mercy in this world.

B. B. Vorozstov
Slavgorodskiy r-n, Russia

Now we are learning mantras. "We" means a group of self-taught Hare Kṛṣṇas, about 10-14 people. We are making our own attempts to offer food to the Lord, learning mantras, listening to many tapes with different spiritual masters speaking.

Do you want to hear our story? About two years ago we took an interest in reading about UFOs. We started gathering to discuss and analyze the information. The conclusion was, God exists. Then we start looking into Christian literature. Then your books appeared. We tried them, and that was something! Your books are the most truthful; everything is explained. After practicing chanting of the *mahā-mantra* we felt, "It works." Tried *prasādam* and concluded, "That's a real thing." Now we all have just one goal: to serve the Lord and come back to Him.

V. G. Vlasenko
Rostovskaya obl., Russia

I am Chaikin Eduard from Kazahstan, 17 years old. After seeing your advertisement in one of the magazines, I ordered by mail *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. While reading it, I don't know why but I was believing every single word. Then for some reason I interrupted my reading for some time, but over and over I was thinking about what I had read. The other day I started it again and bought some other books of Vedic knowledge. I attained self-realization: I am not Chaikin Eduard but a spirit soul which is meant to go back home, back to Godhead.

Eduard, Chaikin
Kustanai, Russia

I am 23 years old. Sometimes I am terrified thinking how engrossed I am in this unmeaningful existence devoid of anything spiritual. But I am sure that if I have a spiritual guide I will gain a real meaning of this life, without doubt. I am not cheating myself with false expectations that someone can transform my life and make me happy without my personal endeavors, but I



feel a necessity of spiritual support, wise advise, a sincere word. Till now I thought such an attitude to be mere selfishness. But now, after reading some of the Vedic literature, I understand that this is needed on the neophyte stage of self-realization. This is a necessity for deeply understanding the meaning of one's life and the soul.

Though I am unable to do it by my own, one thing I know for sure: there is a way back to Godhead, the way on which one can find a real happiness. Please help me!

Nikolay Nepochatkov
Yakutiya

When I had a business visit to Moscow I happened to buy these books in the

metro. That was the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I read them and was terrified with my ignorance. What a great layer of the human civilization was kept away from the Soviet person, me.

I love Kṛṣṇa very much, I want to serve Him:

- 1) by joining the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement;
- 2) by giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others;
- 3) by associating with servants of Kṛṣṇa.

Olga Nikolayevna Tereshenko
Novgorodskaya obl, Russia

Now when I have an opportunity to read the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I can, thanks to his great work, distin-

guish a real servant of the Lord from one who is after satisfaction of his personal whims. This is the mercy given by the Lord Himself.

The most strong feeling which overwhelmed me while I was reading these books was the feeling of regret that I had no chance to read them before.

L. N. Shnaider
Stavropol, Russia

On seeing your advertisement, I ordered *Bhagavad-gītā*. After I read it for the first time, I read it again for the second and then for the third time. Now I am reading it and cannot give it up. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa advises us to take shelter of a spiritual



master, but how can I find him? Whom should I approach? There is no Kṛṣṇa conscious center in our town. Please tell me what one should do to learn how to perform devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. What should one start with? I feel that something should be changed in my life, that its purpose is different, spiritual.

Igor
Kizlyar, Russia

The other day my friend and I read one of the numerous books by His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda—*Life Comes from Life*—and came to the conclusion that this spiritual understanding is what we can never get from our present life, which we would like to change com-

pletely. All the author describes in the book showed us that human life is infinitesimally short and we have so much to do. We are very eager to dedicate our lives to the direct real service of God. Could you please send us the addresses of some Hare Kṛṣṇa monasteries? Our intentions are serious.

Oleg Volobuev
Belogorsk, Russia

Reading of the Vedic literature purifies my consciousness and gives me strength of mind. I became faithful to my wife and gave up smoking a year ago. This year I gave up alcohol, tea, coffee (and even do not feel any chemical dependence). I feel a great desire to associate with Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

A. I. Tarasov
Monchegorsk, Russia

I am twenty years old. I was almost completely frustrated with life, but upon seeing your book advertisement all the dismal thoughts disappeared at once. Now I'm ready to dedicate my life to the distribution of Vedic knowledge.

I live in a village and never had a chance to meet a devotee while visiting the nearest towns. Nor is there any possibility to find a spiritual master. Therefore, please send me a set of your books. Although one can never comprehend and realize all the knowledge without the help of spiritual master, still I will accept every word of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, without any personal interpretation.

Vyatcheslav
Semenovka, Russia

I live very far away. Still, it is not a complete backwoods—your books reached it. I read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, first and second parts. It was like a shock. I was overwhelmed with ecstasy.

I started following the four regula-

tive principles, and others just wonder how one can manage to drink no alcohol on holidays and eat no sausages. I simply smile with pity in reply. My dearest desire is to have talks with a person like Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda. I know he had a lot of followers all over the world. Perhaps there are some in our country too. We are in the greatest need of them, since most of our people have completely lost their spiritual assets. Please give me just one address where I can find such a person, a teacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I want to express to you my sincere gratitude that you are existing and bringing people this most confidential of all knowledge—knowledge of God, of love of God.

Galina, Novoselova
Siberia, Russia

I offer my special respect unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, as well as unto you, his followers. By chance I came across one of his books and after reading just this one, I believed. And that was it. Now I cannot imagine myself without it. Perhaps because it answers all the questions I had since my very boyhood. I've prepared myself for one year to become a disciple. I am ready to accept any conditions, any difficulties. I want! I, the spirit soul, have a desire. I want to develop love for Kṛṣṇa and go back to Him.

Please help me. Write to me how to become a disciple. I am prepared to accept any conditions.

Ruslan Trofimov
Pervomayskiy

My name is Yuriy. I am 19 years old. Recently I took up reading the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Also I try to follow the regulative principles and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. I notice a change in my inner consciousness. I would like to completely renounce this material world and engage myself fully in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the association of the believers.

Yuriy Aleksandrovich Trushaev
IPTU, Ivanovo, Russia

The service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pure

devotees is my very life. Thank you so much that you have spoken to the temple president.

Of course I agree to take a probational period. I accept any conditions just to live with you. Please tell the president I will do whatever you say to me. Just please don't leave me alone!

You have advised me to be prepared to meet difficulties, but what kind of difficulties are you speaking about? Can the lack of food be a problem when there is a possibility to see the pure devotees, to touch their bodies? May-

be you meant poverty? Well if I join you I will become the most rich man. Not without reason is Kṛṣṇa called "the Lord of those who are materially exhausted." Is this what you called difficulties? I wish to have more of them.

Dmitriy M.
Novocheboksarsk, Russia

Please, let me know the conditions for joining the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Are there any centers in Voronej or other places of Russia? Thank you for distributing such books as *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is

the greatest of books. It revealed to me the meaning of my life. When I read it, I experience the greatest joy. Thank you so much for carrying out your mission. While I am reading the Vedic literature with the help of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda I realize more and more about the nasty and rotten world we live in. But these books are written in such a way that one becomes eager to read about Kṛṣṇa again and again. After reading these topics, I lose all interest in other books.

Oleg, Pervih
Bratsk, Russia ❁

PĀṆDAVAS

(continued from page 40)

sweet-smiling wife, we have received the mercy of the king of gods. O shapely wife, call him now and beget a son who will carry all the fire and might of the warrior race, a great soul who will be strict in moral principles, brilliant as the sun, invincible in battle, dynamic, and exceedingly wondrous to behold."

At these words, that illustrious lady called Indra, and the king of gods came to her and begot Arjuna. As soon as the child was born, a voice from the sky spoke out in such deep, clear tones that the heavens resounded with the message: "O Kuntī, this child shall bring glory to your name, for he will be as invincible as his mighty father, Indra. Indeed, his power and courage will equal those of kings like Kārtavīrya and Sibi.

"Just as the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu gave ever-increasing pleasure to His mother Aditī [when He appeared as Vāmana], so your son Arjuna, who is like Viṣṇu Himself, will increase your happiness more and more. He will subdue the Madra warriors, the Kekayas and the warriors of Cedi, Kāśi, and Karuṣa, and thus he will establish the authority of the Kuru dynasty. By the strength of his arms, the god of fire will be fully satisfied by consuming all the creatures of the Khāṇḍava forest.

"This powerful leader of his people will heroically conquer the regional rulers of the earth and then with his brothers perform three great religious sacrifices. O Kuntī, your son will be fierce in battle like Paraśurāma himself, and his deeds as glorious as those of

primeval Viṣṇu. Arjuna will be the very best of heroes, and none will defeat him, for he will secure unto himself the most advanced celestial weapons. Thus this best of men will bring back the glory and opulence of his dynasty."

Resting in the maternity room, Kuntī heard these most extraordinary words which Vāyu himself vibrated in the sky. As the learned ascetics of Hundred Peaks heard these loud declarations, the greatest joy arose among them. And so Lord Indra himself, with all the demigods, great sages, and other denizens of heaven, began to celebrate the birth of his earthly son. Celestial drums sounded forth, and a joyful tumult filled the skies. Showers of flowers floated to earth from the heavenly abodes as communities of demigods and godly beings, shouting congratulations, gathered to honor the exalted son of Pṛthā.

Pāṇḍu himself happily worshiped the Supreme Lord and His appointed representatives. Pleased with his worship, the demigods then addressed that best of kings: "By the mercy of the Supreme Lord, acting through his empowered demigod agents, Justice himself has taken birth as your first son, Yudhiṣṭhira; the mighty Wind has appeared as your powerful son Bhīma, who will always crush the wicked; and now by the mercy of Indra, Arjuna has appeared as your son, endowed with all the potency of Lord Indra. Surely there is none more pious than you, for the gods themselves have become the fathers of your children. You are free of your debt to the forefathers, and you will attain the heavenly abode, for the merit of piety is yours to enjoy." Having thus spoken, all

the demigods departed as they had come.

King Pāṇḍu, overjoyed by his blessings, was still not satiated, but rather felt encouraged to pursue further his intense yearning for exalted children. Again, therefore, the illustrious monarch requested his lovely and shapely wife Kuntī to beget a child, but this time Kuntī adamantly refused and spoke the following words:

"Even in times of crisis, authorities do not allow a woman to approach four different men. If I approach another man, I shall certainly become a fallen woman. A fifth time and I would become an ordinary harlot. Pāṇḍu, you speak like a madman. How can you think to violate my honor like this for the sake of another son, knowing as you do our religious principles? We should remember those principles!"

"Yes," said Pāṇḍu, "you are right. The religious principle is exactly as you have stated it." ❁

Hridayananda Dasa Goswami led the team of devotee-scholars who completed the translation and commentary of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam begun by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Fluent in several languages, Hridayananda Dasa Goswami has extensively taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India, Europe, the United States, and Latin America. He is a member of the Governing Body Commission, the ultimate managing authority of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He is now doing graduate work in Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University.

BEYOND SALVATION

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

Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is teaching His mother, Devahūtī, about devotional service. As the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Lord Kapila explains that pure devotional service is more glorious than even liberation from the material world.

THIRDCANTO/CHAPTER 25

30 तदेतन्मे विजानीहि यथाहं मन्दधीर्हरे ।
सुखं बुद्धयेय दुर्बोधं योषा भवदनुग्रहात् ॥३०॥

*tad etan me vijānihi
yathāhaṁ manda-dhīr hare
sukhaṁ buddhyeya durbodhaṁ
yoṣā bhavad-anugrahāt*

tat etat—that same; *me*—to me; *vijānihi*—please explain; *yathā*—so that; *ahaṁ*—I; *manda*—slow; *dhīh*—whose intelligence; *hare*—O my Lord; *sukham*—easily; *buddhyeya*—may understand; *durbodham*—very difficult to understand; *yoṣā*—a woman; *bhavad-anugrahāt*—by Your grace.

My dear son, Kapila, after all, I am a woman. It is very difficult for me to understand the Absolute Truth because my intelligence is not very great. But if You will kindly explain it to me, even though I am not very intelligent, I can understand it and thereby feel transcendental happiness.

PURPORT: Knowledge of the Absolute Truth is not very easily understood by ordinary, less intelligent men; but if the spiritual master is kind enough to the disciple, however unintelligent the disciple may be, then by the divine grace of the spiritual master everything is revealed. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura therefore says, *yasya prasādāt*, by the mercy of the spiritual master, the mercy of the Supreme



When a devotee engages solely in the service of the Lord, Mukti Devī (liberation personified) waits with folded hands to offer him freedom from all material miseries.

Personality of Godhead, *bhagavat-prasādaḥ*, is revealed. Devahūtī requested her great son to be merciful towards her because she was a less intelligent woman and also His mother. By the grace of Kapiladeva it was quite possible for her to understand the Absolute Truth, even though the subject matter is very difficult for ordinary persons, especially women.

मैत्रेय उवाच

31 विदित्वार्थं कपिलो मातुरित्थं
जातस्नेहो यत्र तन्वाभिजातः ।
तत्त्वाम्नायं यत्प्रवदन्ति सांख्यं
प्रोवाच वै भक्तिवितानयोगम् ॥३१॥

maitreya uvāca

*viditvārtham kapilo mātur ittham
jāta-sneho yatra tanvābhijātaḥ
tattvāmnāyam yat pravadanti sāṅkhyam
provāca vai bhakti-vitāna-yogam*

maitreyaḥ uvāca—Maitreya said; *viditvā*—having known; *artham*—purpose; *kapilaḥ*—Lord Kapila; *mātuḥ*—of His mother; *ittham*—thus; *jāta-snehaḥ*—became compassionate; *yatra*—upon her; *tanvā*—from her body; *abhijātaḥ*—born; *tattva-āmnāyam*—truths received by disciplic succession; *yat*—which; *pravadanti*—they call; *sāṅkhyam*—Sāṅkhya philosophy; *provāca*—He described; *vai*—in fact; *bhakti*—devotional service; *vitāna*—spreading; *yogam*—mystic yoga.

Śri Maitreya said: After hearing the statement of His mother, Kapila could understand her purpose, and He became compassionate towards her because of being born of her body. He described the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy, which is a combination of devotional service and mystic realization, as received by disciplic succession.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

32 देवानां गुणलिङ्गानामानुश्रविककर्मणाम् ।
सच्च एवैकमनसो वृत्तिः स्वाभाविकी तु या ।
अनिमित्ता भागवती भक्तिः सिद्धैर्गरीयसी ॥३२॥

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
devānām guṇa-liṅgānām
ānuśravika-karmaṇām
sattva evaika-manaso
vṛttiḥ svābhāvikī tu yā
animittā bhāgavatī
bhaktiḥ siddher garīyasī

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *devānām*—of the senses or of the presiding deities of the senses; *guṇa-liṅgānām*—which detect sense objects; *ānuśravika*—according to scripture; *karmaṇām*—which work; *sattve*—unto the mind or unto the Lord; *eva*—only; *eka-manasaḥ*—of a man of undivided mind; *vṛttiḥ*—inclination; *svābhāvikī*—natural; *tu*—in fact; *yā*—which; *animittā*—without motive; *bhāgavatī*—to the Personality of Godhead; *bhaktiḥ*—devotional service; *siddheḥ*—than salvation; *garīyasī*—better.

Lord Kapila said: The senses are symbolic representations of the demigods, and their natural inclination is to work

under the direction of the Vedic injunctions. As the senses are representatives of the demigods, so the mind is the representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The mind's natural duty is to serve. When that service spirit is engaged in devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, without any motive, that is far better even than salvation.

PURPORT: The senses of the living entity are always engaged in some occupation, either in activities prescribed in the injunctions of the *Vedas* or in material activities. The natural inclination of the senses is to work for something, and the mind is the center of the senses. The mind is actually the leader of the senses; therefore it is called *sattva*. Similarly, the leader of all the demigods who are engaged in the activities of this material world—the sun-god, moon-god, Indra and others—is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

It is stated in the Vedic literature that the demigods are different limbs of the universal body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Our senses are also controlled by different demigods; our senses are representations of various demigods, and the mind is the representation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The senses, led by the mind, act under the influence of the demigods. When the service is ultimately aimed at the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the senses are in their natural position. The Lord is called Hṛṣīkeśa, for He is actually the proprietor and ultimate master of the senses. The senses and the mind are naturally inclined to work, but when they are materially contaminated they work for some material benefit or for the service of the demigods, although actually they are meant to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The senses are called *hṛṣīka*, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is called Hṛṣīkeśa. Indirectly, all the senses are naturally inclined to serve the Supreme Lord. That is called *bhakti*.

Kapiladeva said that when the senses, without desire for material profit or other selfish motives, are engaged in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one is situated in devotional service. That spirit of service is far better than *siddhi*, salvation. *Bhakti*, the inclination to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is in a transcendental position far better than *mukti*, or liberation. Thus *bhakti* is the stage after liberation. Unless one is liberated one cannot engage the senses in the service of the Lord. When the senses are engaged either in material activities of sense gratification or in the activities of the Vedic injunctions, there is some motive, but when the same senses are engaged in the service of the Lord and there is no motive, that is called *animittā* and is the natural inclination of the mind. The conclusion is that when the mind, without being deviated either by Vedic injunctions or by material activities, is fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it is far better than the most aspired-for liberation from material entanglement.

33 जरयत्याहु या कोशं निगीर्णमनलो यथा ॥३३॥

*jarayaty āśu yā kośam
nigīrṇam analo yathā*

jarayati—dissolves; *āśu*—quickly; *yā*—which; *kośam*—subtle body; *nigīrṇam*—things eaten; *analaḥ*—fire; *yathā*—as.

Bhakti, devotional service, dissolves the subtle body of the living entity without separate effort, just as fire in the stomach digests all that we eat.

PURPORT: *Bhakti* is in a far higher position than *mukti* because a person's endeavor to get liberation from the material engagement is automatically served in devotional service. The example is given here that the fire in the stomach can digest whatever we eat. If the digestive power is sufficient, then whatever we can eat will be digested by the fire in the stomach. Similarly, a devotee does not have to try separately to attain liberation. That very service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the process of his liberation because to engage oneself in the service of the Lord is to liberate oneself from material entanglement. Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura explained this position very nicely. He said, "If I have unflinching devotion unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, then *mukti*, or liberation, serves me as my maidservant. *Mukti*, the maidservant, is always ready to do whatever I ask."

For a devotee, liberation is no problem at all. Liberation takes place without separate endeavor. *Bhakti*, therefore, is far better than *mukti* or the impersonalist position. The impersonalists undergo severe penances and austerities to attain *mukti*, but the *bhakta*, simply by engaging himself in the *bhakti* process, especially in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, immediately develops control over the tongue by engaging it in chanting, and accepting the remnants of foodstuff offered to the Personality of Godhead. As soon as the tongue is controlled, naturally all other senses are controlled automatically. Sense control is the perfection of the *yoga* principle, and one's liberation begins immediately as soon as he engages himself in the service of the Lord. It is confirmed by Kapiladeva that *bhakti*, or devotional service, is *garīyasī*, more glorious than *siddhi*, liberation.

34 नैकात्मतां मे स्पृहयन्ति केचिन्
मत्पादसेवाभिरता मदीहाः ।
येऽन्योन्यतो भागवताः प्रसज्य
सभाजयन्ते मम पौरुषाणि ॥३४॥

*naikātmatām me sprhayanti kecin
mat-pāda-sevābhiratā mad-ihāḥ
ye 'nyonyato bhāgavatāḥ prasajya
sabhājayante mama pauruṣāṇi*

na—never; *eka-ātmatām*—merging into oneness; *me*—My; *sprhayanti*—they desire; *kecit*—any; *mat-pāda-sevā*—the

service of My lotus feet; *abhiratāḥ*—engaged in; *mat-ihāḥ*—endeavoring to attain Me; *ye*—those who; *anyonyataḥ*—mutually; *bhāgavatāḥ*—pure devotees; *prasajya*—assembling; *sabhājayante*—glorify; *mama*—My; *pauruṣāṇi*—glorious activities.

A pure devotee, who is attached to the activities of devotional service and who always engages in the service of My lotus feet, never desires to become one with Me. Such a devotee, who is unflinchingly engaged, always glorifies My pastimes and activities.

PURPORT: There are five kinds of liberation stated in the scriptures. One is to become one with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or to forsake one's individuality and merge into the Supreme Spirit. This is called *ekātmatām*. A devotee never accepts this kind of liberation. The other four liberations are: to be promoted to the same planet as God (Vaikuṅṭha), to associate personally with the Supreme Lord, to achieve the same opulence as the Lord and to attain the same bodily features as the Supreme Lord. A pure devotee, as will be explained by Kapila Muni, does not aspire for any of the five liberations. He especially despises as hellish the idea of becoming one with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya, said, *kaivalyaṁ narakāyate*: "The happiness of becoming one with the Supreme Lord, which is aspired for by the Māyāvādīs, is considered hellish." That oneness is not for pure devotees.

There are many so-called devotees who think that in the conditioned state we may worship the Personality of Godhead but that ultimately there is no personality; they say that since the Absolute Truth is impersonal, one can imagine a personal form of the impersonal Absolute Truth for the time being, but as soon as one becomes liberated the worship stops. That is the theory put forward by the Māyāvāda philosophy. Actually the impersonalists do not merge into the existence of the Supreme Person but into His personal bodily luster, which is called the *brahmajyoti*. Although that *brahmajyoti* is not different from His personal body, that sort of oneness (merging into the bodily luster of the Personality of Godhead) is not accepted by a pure devotee because the devotees engage in greater pleasure than the so-called pleasure of merging into His existence. The greatest pleasure is to serve the Lord. Devotees are always thinking about how to serve Him; they are always designing ways and means to serve the Supreme Lord, even in the midst of the greatest obstacles of material existence.

The Māyāvādīs accept the description of the pastimes of the Lord as stories, but actually they are not stories; they are historical facts. Pure devotees accept the narrations of the pastimes of the Lord not as stories but as Absolute Truth. The words *mama pauruṣāṇi* are significant. Devotees are very much attached to glorifying the activities of the Lord, whereas the Māyāvādīs cannot even think of these activities. According to them the Absolute

Truth is impersonal. Without personal existence, how can there be activity? The impersonalists take the activities mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literatures as fictitious stories, and therefore they interpret them most mischievously. They have no idea of the Personality of Godhead. They unnecessarily poke their noses into the scripture and interpret it in a deceptive way in order to mislead the innocent public. The activities of Māyāvāda philosophy are very dangerous to the public, and therefore Lord Caitanya warned us never to hear from any Māyāvādī about any scripture. They will spoil the entire process, and the person hearing them will never be able to come to the path of devotional service to attain the highest perfection, or will be able to do so only after a very long time.

It is clearly stated by Kapila Muni that *bhakti* activities, or activities in devotional service, are transcendental to *mukti*. This is called *pañcama-puruṣārtha*. Generally, people engage in the activities of religion, economic development and sense gratification, and ultimately they work with an idea that they are going to become one with the Supreme Lord (*mukti*). But *bhakti* is transcendental to all these activities. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, therefore, begins by stating that all kinds of pretentious religiosity is completely eradicated from the *Bhāgavatam*. Ritualistic activities for economic development and sense gratification and, after frustration in sense gratification, the desire to become one with the Supreme Lord, are all completely rejected in the *Bhāgavatam*. The *Bhāgavatam* is especially meant for the pure devotees, who always engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in the activities of the Lord, and always glorify these transcendental activities. Pure devotees worship the transcendental activities of the Lord in Vṛndāvana, Dvārakā and Mathurā as they are narrated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *purāṇas*. The Māyāvādī philosophers completely reject them as stories, but actually they are great and worshipable subject matters and thus are relishable only for devotees. That is the difference between a Māyāvādī and a pure devotee.

35 पश्यन्ति ते मे रुचिराण्यम्ब सन्तः

प्रसन्नवक्त्रारुणलोचनानि ।

रूपाणि दिव्यानि वरप्रदानि

साकं वाचं स्पृहणीयां वदन्ति ॥३५॥

*paśyanti te me rucirāṅgy amba santaḥ
prasanna-vaktrāruṇa-locanāni
rūpāṇi divyāni vara-pradāni
sākam vācam sprhaṇīyāṁ vadanti*

paśyanti—see; *te*—they; *me*—My; *rucirāṅgi*—beautiful; *amba*—O mother; *santaḥ*—devotees; *prasanna*—smiling; *vaktra*—face; *aruṇa*—like the morning sun; *locanāni*—eyes; *rūpāṇi*—forms; *divyāni*—transcendental; *vara-pradāni*—benevolent; *sākam*—with Me; *vācam*—words; *sprhaṇīyām*—favorable; *vadanti*—they speak.

O My mother, My devotees always see the smiling face of My form, with eyes like the rising morning sun. They like to see My various transcendental forms, which are all benevolent, and they also talk favorably with Me.

PURPORT: Māyāvādīs and atheists accept the forms of the Deities in the temple of the Lord as idols, but devotees do not worship idols. They directly worship the Personality of Godhead in His *arcā* incarnation. *Arcā* refers to the form which we can worship in our present condition. Actually, in our present state it is not possible to see God in His spiritual form because our material eyes and senses cannot conceive of a spiritual form. We cannot even see the spiritual form of the individual soul. When a man dies we cannot see how the spiritual form leaves the body. That is the defect of our material senses. In order to be seen by our material senses, the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts a favorable form which is called *arcā-vigraha*. This *arcā-vigraha*, sometimes called the *arcā* incarnation, is not different from Him. Just as the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts various incarnations, He takes on forms made out of matter—clay, wood, metal and jewels.

There are many sāstric injunctions which give instructions for carving forms of the Lord. These forms are not material. If God is all-pervading, then He is also in the material elements. There is no doubt about it. But the atheists think otherwise. Although they preach that everything is God, when they go to the temple and see the form of the Lord, they deny that He is God. According to their own theory, everything is God. Then why is the Deity not God? Actually, they have no conception of God. The devotees' vision, however, is different; their vision is smeared with love of God. As soon as they see the Lord in His different forms, the devotees become saturated with love, for they do not find any difference between the Lord and His form in the temple, as do the atheists. The smiling face of the Deity in the temple is beheld by the devotees as transcendental and spiritual, and the decoration of the body of the Lord is very much appreciated by the devotees. It is the duty of the spiritual master to teach how to decorate the Deity in the temple, how to cleanse the temple and how to worship the Deity. There are different procedures and rules and regulations which are followed in temples of Viṣṇu, and devotees go there and see the Deity, the *vigraha*, and spiritually enjoy the form because all of the Deities are benevolent. The devotees express their minds before the Deity, and in many instances the Deity also gives answers. But one must be a very elevated devotee in order to be able to speak with the Supreme Lord. Sometimes the Lord informs the devotee through dreams. These exchanges of feelings between the Deity and the devotee are not understandable by atheists, but actually the devotee enjoys them. Kapila Muni is explaining how the devotees see the decorated body and face of the Deity and how they speak with Him in devotional service.

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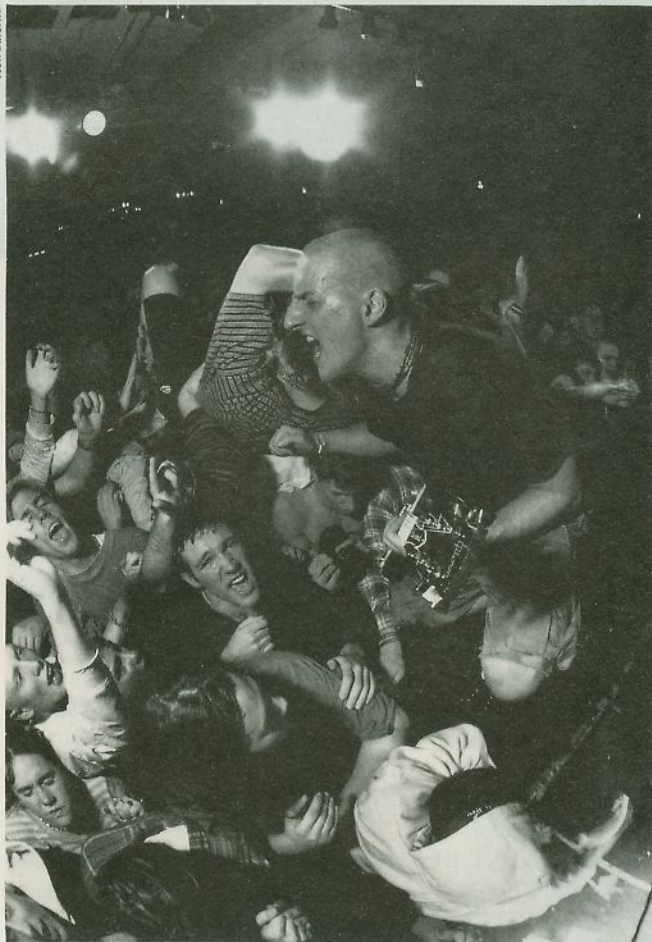
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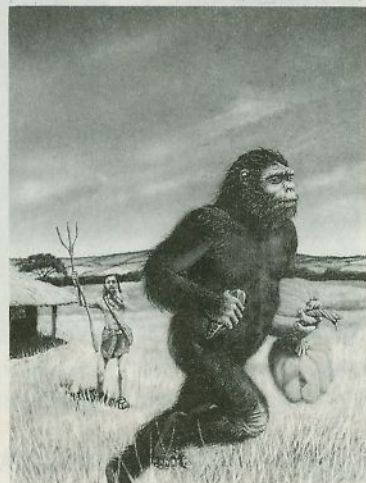
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To produce books for the BBT and engage trainees in the work.

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To give BBT workers opportunities to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness and provide training in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to people academically inclined.

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which the Center will be producing.

Aja Dāsa manages the Center and its programs for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He's also a Sanskrit student and an editor.

Ekanātha Dāsa, a student from North Europe, is compiling a survey

OBSTACLES

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Devotees attend the opening of the ISKCON temple run by the BBT Center for Sanskrit Studies. Ajā Dāsa (middle, wearing a white scarf) and Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa (to Ajā's left) oversee the project.

of the *Purāṇas*. Another student, Kamala-mukha Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, from Bangladesh, is researching the similarities and differences between Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's *Govinda-bhāṣya* and the Vedānta commentaries of other Vaiṣṇava schools.

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- Millfield, N.S.W.** — New Goloka Farm, Lewis Lane (off Mt. View Rd. Millfield near Cessnock), N.S.W. (mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock 2325, N.S.W., Australia)/ Tel. +61 (049) 98-1800
- Murwillumbah (New Govardhana)** — Tylagum Rd., Eungella, via Murwillumbah N. S. W. 2484 (mail: P.O. Box 687)/ Tel. +61 (066) 72-1903

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

- Brisbane** — Govinda's, 1st floor, 99 Elizabeth Street/ Tel. +61 (07) 210-0255
- Melbourne** — Crossways, 1st floor, 123 Swanston St., Melbourne, Victoria 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 6502939
- Melbourne** — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., Melbourne, Victoria 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 650-1578
- Perth** — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 200 William St., Northbridge, WA 6003/ Tel. +61 (09) 22716
- Sydney** — Govinda's Upstairs and Govinda's Take-Away, 112 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst, N.S.W. 2010/ Tel. +61 (02) 380-5162

NEW ZEALAND AND FIJI

- Christchurch, New Zealand** — 83 Bealey Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 25-190)/ Tel. +64 (03) 3665-174
- Labasa, Fiji** — Delailabasa (mail: Box 133)/ Tel. +679 822912
- Lautoka, Fiji** — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +679 64112
- Rakiraki, Fiji** — Rewasa, Rakiraki (mail: P.O. Box 94243)
- Suva, Fiji** — Nasinu 7½ miles (mail: P.O. Box 6376)/ Tel. +679 391-282
- **Wellington, New Zealand** — 60 Wade St., Wadestown, Wellington (mail: P.O. Box 2753, Wellington)/ Tel. +64 (04) 4720510

RESTAURANTS

- Auckland, New Zealand** — Gopal's, Civic House (1st floor), 291 Queen St./ Tel. +64 (09) 3034885
- Christchurch, New Zealand** — Gopal's, 143 Worcester St./ Tel. +64 (03) 3667-035
- Labasa, Fiji** — Govinda's, Naseakula Road/ Tel. +679 811364
- Lautoka, Fiji** — Gopal's, Corner of Yasawa St. and Naviti St./ Tel. +679 62990
- Suva, Fiji** — Gopal's, 18 Pratt St./ Tel. +679 62990
- Suva, Fiji** — Gopal's, 37 Cumming St./ Tel. +679 312259

FARM COMMUNITY

Auckland, New Zealand (New Varshan) — Hwy. 18, Riverhead, next to Huapai Golf Course (mail: R.D. 2, Kumeu, Auckland)/ Tel. +64 (09) 4128075

SOUTH AFRICA

- Cape Town** — 17 St. Andrews Rd., Rondebosch 7700/ Tel. +27 (21) 689 1529
- ◆ **Durban (Natal)** — Chatsworth Centre, Chatsworth 4030 (mail: P.O. Box 56003)/ Tel. +27 (31) 435-815
- Johannesburg** — 14 Goldreich St., Hillbrow 2001, (mail: P.O. Box 10667, Johannesburg 2000)/ Tel. +27 (11) 484-3273
- Port Elizabeth** — 10 Skegnes Rd., Summerstrand/ Tel. +27 (41) 133-3353

INDIA

- ◆ **Bombay, Maharashtra** — Hare Krishna Land, Juhu 400049/ Tel. +91 (022) 6206860 (ISKCON has more than 30 other centers in India)

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

Month of Dāmodara (October 31–November 29)

NOVEMBER

4—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

10—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

13—Diwali, the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

14—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.



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

17—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.

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

25—Utthānā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, the disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora

The calendar is 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.

Dāsa Bābāji, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

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

Month of Keśava
(November 30–December 28)

DECEMBER

9—Utpannā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

24—Mokṣadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

Month of Nārāyaṇa (December 29–January 27)

JANUARY

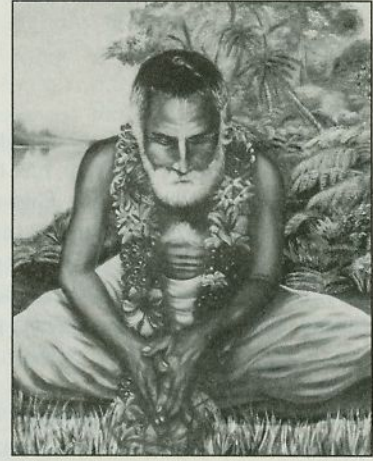
1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

8—Saphalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

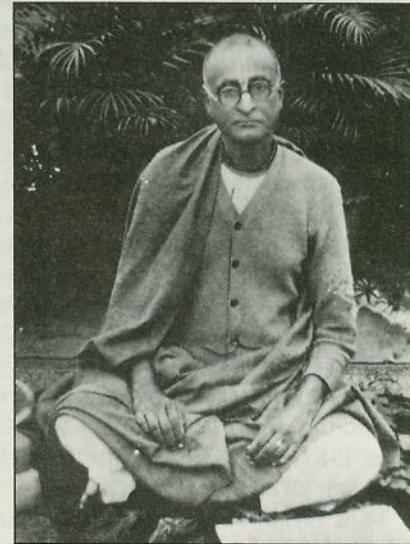
12—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional

songs. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

23—Putradā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.



Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābāji



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

ISKCON's Use of "Vedic" and "Vaiṣṇava"

Are we deviating from Prabhupāda's teachings?

•••

Dear Editor,

There seems to be a disturbing trend in ISKCON today, and that has to do with the term "Vaiṣṇava." This word seems to be more in vogue to the expense of "Vedic." Though it may seem silly to worry about semantics, the differences between the two terms go to the heart of ISKCON's mission and purpose.

Devotees within ISKCON use "Vaiṣṇava" to mean devotee. Yet, to outsiders, "Vaiṣṇava" implies a particular sect of Hinduism. A "Vaiṣṇava" is opposed to a "Śaivite" or other sects. Using the term "Vaiṣṇava" implies that ISKCON is nothing more than an organization that follows the tenets of a particular sect of a particular religion. This implication is exactly what Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to avoid. He repeatedly emphasized that ISKCON propagates the *science* of the soul and explains what reality is; ISKCON does not simply practice a particular subset of a particular religion. He, in fact, stated that ISKCON is not concerned with "isms"; that is, ISKCON is not here to propagate a particular religion. Yet one finds the use of the word "Vaiṣṇavism," another "ism," by the GBC (*Is Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Hindu?* BTG, July/August, 1992). Śrīla Prabhupāda did not use Vaiṣṇava or Vaiṣṇavism too often because he realized that these terms do not summarize ISKCON's mission most clearly. Instead, he used the term "Vedic."

The term "Vedic" accurately delineates ISKCON's philosophy. ISKCON is based on the Vedic scriptures and propagates the essence of Vedic philosophy. If ISKCON gives up on the term "Vedic," that is tantamount to saying that ISKCON is not Vedic and the Māyāvādīs [impersonalists] are (since

they use Vedic and Vedāntic freely). It is a defeat for ISKCON. ISKCON wants to show that it is not merely another religious organization; ISKCON propagates pure knowledge about the soul's condition. "Vedic," as a term related to "knowledge," is much more apt for ISKCON's purposes. The problem here is not that of substance; ISKCON clearly follows the Vedic teachings. The problem is that of packaging; ISKCON must claim that it actually follows the essence of the *Vedas* and that the Māyāvādīs do not. In order to do so, ISKCON must use the term "Vedic."

Most people got attracted to ISKCON because ISKCON presents the truth about reality; most people did not join ISKCON because of ISKCON's immediate lineage in a particular sect or tradition. ISKCON should not get away from the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda; ISKCON should follow his example and consciously use "Vedic" wherever possible. ISKCON will be fine as long as it follows Śrīla Prabhupāda; most of the time, ISKCON does. On this issue, however, ISKCON has strayed from Prabhupāda's words. Prabhupāda certainly never wanted his ISKCON to give the Māyāvādīs the cloak of being Vedāntic and Vedic; ISKCON has done so by default by not using the term "Vedic." Is ISKCON aware of the communication and packaging problems inherent in these semantic issues?

Sandeep Vaishnavi
Atlanta, Georgia

JAYĀDVAITA SWAMI REPLIES: The points you raise surprise me somewhat because, in fact, Śrīla Prabhupāda commonly used both words, *Vedic* and *Vaiṣṇava*. I haven't done a word count, but I do know that he used both

words frequently.

An essential misunderstanding some hold is that "Vaiṣṇavism" refers to a sectarian religion, or a mere subset within a larger sectarian faith. And another misunderstanding seems to be that one can attain perfection in knowledge but still not become a Vaiṣṇava.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, used the term "Vaiṣṇavism" to refer to nonsectarian devotional service to the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead. And he made clear that only when one becomes a Vaiṣṇava can one be considered to have attained perfect knowledge. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti
sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

After many, many births, when one reaches the perfection of Vedic knowledge one surrenders to Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, the original Viṣṇu, and thus becomes a Vaiṣṇava.

Elsewhere in *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedayaḥ*: "All the Vedic literature is meant for understanding Me."

And Śrīpāda Madhvācārya quotes:

*vede rāmāyaṇe caiva
purāṇe bhārata tathā
ādav ante ca madhye ca
hariḥ sarvatra gīyate*

In the Vedic literature, including the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Purāṇas*, and *Mahābhārata*, from the very beginning (*ādau*) to the end (*ante*), as well as within the middle (*madhye ca*), only Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is explained.

(please turn to page 40)

New York City, December 1965 . . .

Swamiji's First Christmas



New to New York, Bhaktivedanta Swami, Śrīla Prabhupāda, had undoubtedly taken up the greatest austerity on the order of his Guru Mahārāja. In the short space of three months he had traveled from his beloved village of Vṛndāvana, crossing the ocean in a small freighter on which he had suffered two heart attacks, to the freezing, inhospitable, dangerous streets of New York City.

Possessing only a short letter of introduction, he was offered a small room in the back of an apartment occupied by Dr. Mishra, a well-meaning Māyāvādī “uptown Swami.”

Even with weather, health, and living conditions at their worst, Śrīla Prabhupāda enthusiastically began spreading the message.

As his biography tells us, “The weather grew cold. . . . On Columbus Avenue shops were selling Christmas trees, and the continental restaurants were bright with holiday lighting. On Seventy-second the Retailers’ Association erected tall red poles topped with green tinsel Christmas trees. The tops of the trees on both sides of the street sprouted tinsel garlands that spanned the street and

joined in red tinsel stars surrounded by colored lights.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda wore a coat Dr. Mishra had given him, but he never gave up wearing his *dhoṭī*, despite the cold, windy walks.

“Although Prabhupāda did no Christmas shopping, he visited many bookstores—Orientalia, Sam Weiser’s, Doubleday, the Paragon, and others—trying to sell his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Mrs. Ferber, the wife of the Paragon Book Gallery proprietor, considered Prabhupāda ‘a pleasant and extremely

polite small gentleman.’ The first time he called she wasn’t interested in his books, but he tried again, and she took several volumes. Prabhupāda used to stop by about once a week, and since his books were selling regularly, he would collect. Sometimes when he needed copies to sell personally, he would come by and pick them up from Mrs. Ferber, and sometimes he would phone to ask her how his books were selling.”

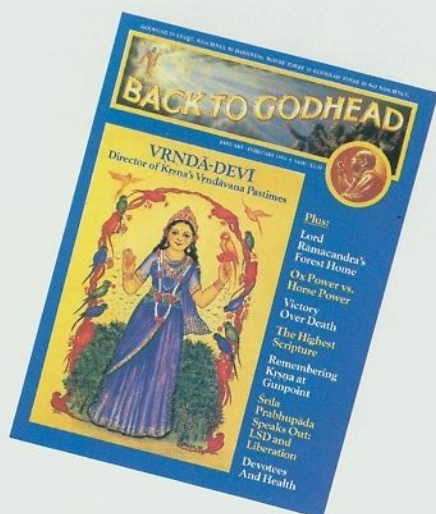
“I Have Come to Give Something”

All during that winter Prabhupāda would try to preach to whomever he could get to listen. He also continued to translate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, alone in his fifth-floor room.

“The weather went below freezing, colder than he had ever experienced in India. Daily he had to walk toward the Hudson against a west wind that even on an ordinary winter’s day would take your breath away and make your eyes water and your face grow numb. . . .

“His advisors had cautioned him not to remain an alien but to get into the spirit of American life, even if it meant breaking vows he had held in India. . . . But Prabhupāda’s idea was different, and he could not be budged. The others may have had to compromise, he thought, but they had come to beg technological knowledge from the West. ‘I have not come to beg something,’ he said, ‘but to give something.’”

Swamiji had reinvented Christmas. And his followers for decades to come would try to assist him in his transcendental giving. Especially at Christmas.



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