

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1994 • \$4.00 / £2.50



KRSNA'S SUKHUMI SOLDIERS

Armed with mercy

PLUS:

Rational "mythology"

Who's a fool?

Lust conquers a king

Turn off that set!

**FIFTY
YEARS
OF
BTG!**





Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

1944 **50th** 1994
Anniversary

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

Founded 1944 • Vol. 28, No. 1 • January / February 1994



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COVER: As war rages around them, devotees of Kṛṣṇa in Sukhumi, Georgia, in the former Soviet Union, stand “armed” outside their small temple. Despite constant danger and hardship, every day the devotees deliver Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa) to people who have not been able to flee the city, mostly women, children, and the elderly. Please see the story beginning on page 36.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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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 **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṛ** 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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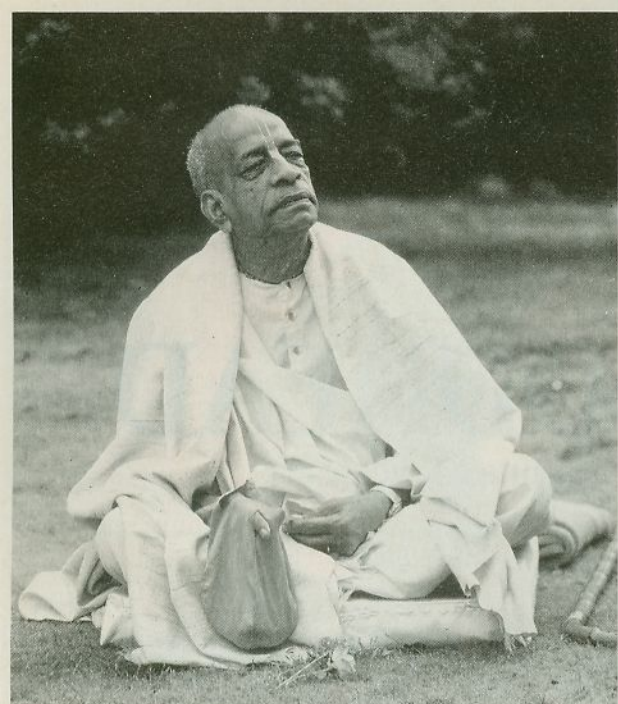
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His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the
International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Statement of Purposes

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

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

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

Sharing Good Fortune

IN *BACK TO GODHEAD*, we've got a magazine like no other. One that glorifies Kṛṣṇa and tells the science of Kṛṣṇa. One that faithfully transmits the message of the Vedic sages and the Vedic culture. It serves as the voice of the *Vedas* today.

Our articles are unique.

Our art is unique.

Our message is unique.

I keep a close eye on other magazines, and as far as I've seen, there simply isn't any other magazine in the world like BTG.

In BTG, Kṛṣṇa's message comes through in its pure form, so that spirituality is not just a feeling but a scientific fact.

We're printing 14,000 copies of each issue. From being unsure a few years ago how BTG could even survive, we've now become strong and steady. Survival is no longer a problem.

And *Back to Godhead* is being read. It's having an impact. It's playing a valuable role in readers' lives. That's what I hear from you when you write to us, or when I meet you while traveling.

We're accomplishing our goal of linking readers together and helping one another remember Kṛṣṇa and move forward in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

But we can do better:

Editorially, what we have isn't everything we *could* have. We're always on the lookout for new ideas and new contributors. So send your ideas, comments, suggestions, criticisms. Or send articles, artwork, or photographs. Volunteer your service for BTG.

Let's raise our circulation.

Though 14,000 copies an issue is enough to keep us going, it's not enough

to keep us happy. It's nothing like what we should have. We want to reach more readers.

BTG is not meant only for a fortunate group of devotees.

Let's share our good fortune with others.

In BTG, we have a wonderful tool for helping people become strong and joyful in self-realization and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now let's make full use of that tool.

How?

Simple:

Spread the word of BTG. Tell people about it. Let them know what you're reading—and what they could be reading too. Here's a magazine that can brighten and strengthen their spiritual life. So tell them about it. Talking about BTG is as good as talking about Kṛṣṇa.

Show people the magazine. Let them see for themselves its spiritual beauty and spiritual substance.

Encourage your friends and relatives to subscribe. Or give them a subscription as a gift.

Do whatever you can to spread the message of *Back to Godhead*.

By each of us doing a little bit, we can have an effect that can surprise us. Kṛṣṇa is the most wonderful, and when we give just a little effort to sharing Kṛṣṇa's message with others, we can have the most wonderful effect.

We have the best philosophy, the best mantra, the best food, the best culture, the best way of life. And it's all there in *Back to Godhead*. Now the best thing we can do is share it with the world.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

—Jayādvaita Swami

Moved Almost to Tears

This note is to let you know how much I appreciate the September/October BTG. My service here at Gītā Nāgarī caring for the cows and oxen is very demanding, and I don't take much time to read. But I became very much enlivened and even moved almost to tears by two articles in that issue.

Mahāviṣṇu Swami's article on distributing a book really moved me. I was fortunate years ago to distribute books for a while before starting my present service. The article by Bhaktin Robin was also very enlivening. I grew up in the South during the bussing years and saw riots between blacks and whites in my schools.

Brajendranandana Dāsa
Port Royal, Pennsylvania

Butcherlike TV Producers

In the July/August issue, Urmilā Devī Dāsī's article "Your Kids and the One-Eyed Guru" contained many convincing references from Śrīla Prabhupāda and other sources exposing TV for what it really is.

To add, if I may, to her wonderful contribution: I can't find words horrible enough to describe the psychological manipulation knowingly employed by butcherlike TV producers to exploit the innocent trust and wonder of childhood. Children virtually get trained through TV to break all regulative principles, to feel confident and good about it, and to teach the same to their children. Let's give our children the real television Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us—the television constantly being transmitted live to the heart of a devotee through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Ajāmīlā Dāsa Adhikārī
Watford, England

Working for Nondevotees Is OK

Thank you for writing "Giving Everything Up" in the September/October issue of BTG. It was wonderful preaching.

You've found Śrī Caitanya's interaction with Kūrma to be instructive, and you've also added relevant good commentary. I believe your most

important commentary to be, "One can teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. In this way one makes one's own life perfect. . . ."

Śrīla Prabhupāda himself encouraged me thus: "You family men, you require some money. . . . You have got better job now and better service also. Kṛṣṇa has awarded you for your service. Stick to it" (*Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda*, vol. 25, p. 172).

It pained me to read Ravīndra Svarūpa Prabhu's comment (back in BTG 11/12, 1991, p. 35) "Prabhupāda did say that it was bad for a devotee to be employed by a nondevotee." Prabhupāda did not discourage me in this way. Prabhupāda emphasized my service, my preaching. He simply encouraged me to see my job as dependent on my service.

Although I like much of Urmilā's "Higher Vocation" (BTG 3/4, 1993), I take exception with her understanding of independence. Prabhupāda defined independence to me as dependence only on God and nature, whereas modern society is dependent on material things. Urmilā implies that service to an employer is a lower vocation. However, there are examples to the contrary. Indeed Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a great independent devotee, had a profession that was apparently dependent on the British rulers of Calcutta and Orissa. To older children and young adults, aware of a complex world, Bhaktivinoda's example appears inconsistent with Urmilā's ideal view. Arjuna did not fight in an ideal world. He had to carry out his duty to his family, to Draupadī, and to Kṛṣṇa. Thus, we can teach adolescents and adults that an independent devotee can work in the world or live in a temple but he or she must put service to Kṛṣṇa first.

In 1979 as I passed through the airport in Denver I met a bus driver who was a devotee. She was a married mother of a sixteen-year-old child and was struggling to do her worldly duties and be a devotee. I took great inspiration from that person. There are many devotees who practice their vows in the temple, but there are also

many in the world who endeavor to pattern their lives on the *Bhagavad-gītā* as Prabhupāda taught it.

My request is that you continue to print articles like "Giving Everything Up," and that you avoid giving misleading information. Cancer is such a threat in modern society that doctors are called upon to be precise. They must try to cut or burn out the malignancy only. Using primitive methods, entire limbs used to be amputated. As spiritual doctors, please do not cut off our limbs. We need those to serve Kṛṣṇa.

Dayānanda Dāsa
Rockville, Maryland

Allured to Kṛṣṇa

Several months ago I had the pleasure of obtaining some old issues of *Back to Godhead* and enjoyed them very much. I have always been allured to the Kṛṣṇa faith and remained curious about it for many years.

I am a 34-year-old prisoner who is very serious about becoming a devotee to serve Kṛṣṇa and clean my spirit with the Kṛṣṇa faith. I am most eager to meet other brothers and sisters to bond myself with the faith and life style. Therefore, I would like to personally appeal directly to you to publish my name and address in *Back to Godhead*.

Needless to say, as a state prisoner I do not have the funds to subscribe to *Back to Godhead*. I can just assure you that my motives are genuine and I would like to learn as much as I can about the faith. If a free subscription was provided to me, I promise you I would keep it in circulation among the prison population, where others could learn about the Kṛṣṇa movement.

Jimmy Zientek #76B1899
Collins Correctional Facility
Helmuth, NY 14079-0200 ☸

Thanks for your letter. We've published your address and entered a complimentary subscription for you. Hare Kṛṣṇa. (Readers wishing to sponsor subscriptions for needy persons can send contributions to BTG at our editorial offices.)

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“I Am Not This Body”

*Without this preliminary spiritual knowledge,
Lord Kṛṣṇa says, one is a fool.*

A lecture given in New York, March 4, 1966

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

• • •

śrī bhagavān uvāca
aśocyān anvaśocas tvam / prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase
gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca / nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead.”—*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.11

HERE KṚṢṆA IS IDENTIFIED as *bhagavān*, or God. I have given the definition of *bhagavān*: a person who is full in all opulences—wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation. If you find a person who has all these opulences in full, He is God. With this understanding, it will be very difficult to accept an ordinary man as God.

You’ll find that in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna was convinced that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But because in the future others would have doubts about Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna requested Kṛṣṇa, “Will You show me Your universal form?” Kṛṣṇa agreed and showed it to him. So now an intelligent man may test a so-called God by asking, “Just show something that proves you are God.” Without showing something—simply by false advertisement—one cannot be God.

Our mistake is that we do not know what is God. We think that God may be just like one of us. No. The God who controls the huge affairs of

Drawing by Vyāsāsana Dāsa



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

**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.**

• • •

universal administration cannot be like one of us. He is superconscious.

Transmigration of the Soul

To understand God, first we must understand our self, or the soul within the body. The existence of life is very subtle. Our gross body is made of earth, water, fire, air, and sky. And behind that is a subtle body of mind, intelligence, and ego. When I give up the gross body, the subtle body carries me to another gross body. So when my body is lifeless, the subtle body is not. At night, for example, when the gross body is asleep the subtle body works, and therefore we dream. Similarly, when the gross body dies the subtle body carries us to the next life.

I have explained in the Introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* how a person changes bodies. When the mind, intelligence, and ego of a dying person are absorbed in a certain kind of thought, that thought takes him to a suitable body for the next life. Just as the air is pure but when passing over a rose tree it carries the aroma of the rose and when passing over a filthy place it carries the smell of that filthy place, so the mind, intelligence, and ego carry the flavor of our present activities to the next life. That is the subtle mystery of the transmigration of the soul from one body to another.

If in our present life we purify our consciousness, then in our next life we shall get a body full of transcendental "flavor." If in our present life we practice devotion to God, then our next life will be as an associate of God. The whole thing is in our hands. If we want to be degraded, we can prepare ourselves in this life for degradation in the next. And if we want to elevate ourselves to the highest perfection of life—

to become one of the associates of God—we can prepare ourselves for that. How?

Beyond the Gross and Subtle Bodies

Let me give an example: Since people are now trying to go to the moon, they cultivate thoughts of the moon, first by hearing. Unless you hear about a place, you cannot desire to abide there. Our friend Mr. Cohen has left for California. I have no understanding of California, but Mr. Cohen has told me that after reaching there he'll write with a description of the place. Now, suppose if after reading that description I think of going there. Then I'll prepare myself—"Oh, I must go there." Similarly, when I described to you the spiritual world, you were very much pleased and thought, "I must go there." So we have to hear. Unless we hear what God is like, what sort of place He has, what the mode of life is there, we cannot be attracted.

Now, to go to the spiritual world, we must first get free from the two bodies in which we are now living—the gross body and the subtle body. Suppose a man's gross body appears dead. One must know that the subtle body has carried him to another body. The subtle body has not lost life. The life is there.

But when you get liberation, the subtle body—the egoistic life—has to be left also. And since in any case the body has to be left, why should one cry for the body? Therefore Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "A learned man does not lament over the body. One who is actually learned has no concern for the body. He's concerned with the activities of the soul. You are speaking so many things according to bodily relations—'If my friends die, their wives will become wid-

ows . . .' You are posing as a learned man, but you are fool number one because your whole conception is based on the body. Your whole argument with Me was based on the body."

Anyone who identifies with the body is not a learned man; he's a fool. He may be a B.A., an M.A., a Ph.D., but if he identifies with the body then according to *Bhagavad-gītā* and according to the Vedic literature he's not a learned man. That is the first instruction in spiritual life. If we want to progress toward spiritual advancement in knowledge, we must have this preliminary knowledge: "I am not the body." This is not an advanced understanding. This is simply the A-B-C-D of spiritual life.

A Society of Cows and Asses

In the *Bhāgavatam* there is a very nice verse in this connection:

*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma-ijya-dhīḥ*

Kuṇape means "bag," and *tri-dhātuke* refers to the three elements that make up the body. According to the Āyurvedic medical system, the body is made of three elements: *kapha*, *pitta*, *vāyu* (cold or water, heat or fire, and air). Therefore the body is called a bag made of these three elements. The *Bhāgavatam* says, "One who identifies with the body made of water, fire, and air, who thinks of the issues or by-products of the body as his own kinsmen, who sees the land from which the body has grown as worshipable, and who goes to places of pilgrimage simply to bathe is considered no better than a cow or an ass."

My children, my wife, my relatives, my father, my mother, my brother, my
(please turn to page 54)



Turn Off That Set!

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

IN THE AIRPORT LOUNGE on my last flight to Europe, I couldn't escape. We found the last two seats in the boarding section, and they faced the TV sports report. It was a boxing match. The black guy hit the white guy twice in the face, and the referee stopped the fight because the white guy's face was bleeding.

After the fight, the loser complained on TV: "This is no way to lose! Why did they stop the fight?" The anchorman summed things up: "Boxing: it's a wonderful sport!"

Forty inches of snow this year in Boston, and an Amtrak train hit an inflammable truck. Bill Clinton wants homosexuals in the Army, and the homosexuals want to be part of the St. Patrick's Day parade. The conservatives, though, held a protest march to stop them. We saw their placard on TV: "God hates Fags."

We sat there in the lounge, two saffron-dressed Hare Kṛṣṇas, on our way to Ireland. I didn't really want to watch the television, but it was hard to avoid, and I thought, "Anyway, I'll soon forget it."

But I didn't forget it. It stayed with me. It made me want to remind devotees—turn off that set!

I certainly wouldn't want to be a child watching TV all day, or anyone watching the news straight from the high-tech video relay teams with their

correspondents and talking faces in Washington, D.C. "This is June Meadows, from Washington." "This is Scrub Donuls, from Istanbul." You know how they come on, standing in the heat in a shirt unbuttoned at the neck in Africa, or standing with their breath coming in frosty puffs in Moscow. The reporters start rapping what the news is—"Premier Yeltsin's opponents are going for blood in the latest round of political infighting. The former Soviet Union . . . blah, blah, blah . . . only time will tell. This is Flip Furrows, in Moscow."

Then you're back to the anchor people in your own living room in Boston or New York or wherever you are. You're trapped and entertained, and the web of false news and commercials is wrapped around your head and the heads of your children like a cocoon around a silkworm.

Stay tuned to Friendly Freckles. Don't forget Death and the March of Time. And here's the latest weather. Then a jovial weatherman tells you what's going on with fronts and masses of clouds. Do you really want to know how the weather is two thousand miles away? But he has predicted everything; he appears to be in control; and so you sit there listening.

Stay tuned to "The Chamber of Horrors." "Winkles the Pet Chimpanzee, tonight at 9:00." Stay tuned to

see the U.S. Army dropping bombs.

Hey, turn off that set. Turn it off.

But you can't turn it off. Once you've seen the soccer ball or the football being kicked up and down a field and the guys in blue scoring and then embracing in utmost serious affectionate camaraderie, once you've seen it, even if you go to Dingle Bay to a house that the wind buffets and where no one comes to bother you, those flickering images will return.

This is it. This is our problem. This is why we can't chant attentively. Because an Amtrak train smashed an inflammable truck and when the camera crew got there all they could film was the remains of the burning truck—and the train was already gone, so they filmed any old Amtrak car moving in the snow—and "This is Burt Billson, in Maryland."

Turn off that set.

Wish we could. We can't call someone in to fix the stuck switch in our heads. There's no plumber who can unclog our pipes. Frankly, there's no way to make the world void of inane images. That's the kind of place it is.

The only remedy is to turn to Kṛṣṇa, to live in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami travels extensively to speak and write about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is the author of more than two dozen books.



COOKING CLASS: LESSON ELEVEN

Moist Vegetables

by Yamuna Devi

ALMOST ANYONE who has eaten Indian food has been served at least one. It's commonplace in

far too many Indian restaurants—an overcooked mush of greasy vegetables. Such dishes are a mockery

of Indian vegetable cookery. You often find them in muted shades of red, brown, or yellow from a predomi-

nance of tomatoes, tamarind, or turmeric. I have long called them greasy-spoon vegetable shlups. They're a far cry from the real thing—succulent, moist-textured vegetable dishes, known as *foogath*, *tarkari*, and *charchari*.

Simple Dishes

So how do you make the real thing? You use the techniques I described in the introduction to vegetable cooking (Lesson Eight), and you become aware of just how heat and timing affect the finished quality of a dish. Vegetable shlups result either from bad technique or from unconscious cooking—or both.

Getting the right texture when cooking several vegetables at once takes experience. You can practice by making single-vegetable dishes. Steam or bake a vegetable just short of the finished texture you desire. Then briefly sauté it in spice-infused ghee or fold it into a smooth fresh chutney. The first two recipes of the Moist Vegetable section in the class textbook, *Lord Krishna's Cuisine*, illustrate these approaches.

Vegetables high in moisture will cook softer than drier vegetables. For example, if you steam yellow squash until just tender and sauté it, it will have a final texture softer than Brussels sprouts made the same way.

As you cook through a few of the dishes in this section, take special care to control the finished texture of the dish. You'll quickly note how heat control and timing are important when several vegetables with different amounts of moisture are cooked together, as in Succulent Mixed Vegetables with Crunchy Fried *Badis*, or Garden Vegetable Stew with Crunchy Fried *Badis*. But, oh, when you get them right, what one-pot meals these are! With centuries of tradition behind them, these are examples of moist-vegetable cookery at its best.

Charcharis

Although *foogath*, *tarkari*, and *charchari* dishes are all moist and succulent, *charcharis* have a unique flavor—char flavor. Before you assume this means burned, I want to assure you that the char tastes more like the

smoke-flavored crust on a pan of long-cooked campfire hash-browns. OK, maybe it's even better than that, but you get the idea. To achieve the distinct char flavor, you boil, steam, and pan-fry the vegetables in one pot—classically without stirring them. So you can understand why you might need a few tries to get the knack of it. To make a perfect *charchari*, the thickness of the pan, how it conducts heat, the texture of the vegetables, how they are cut, heat regulation, and timing must come together harmoniously.

Though Śrīla Prabhupāda made a flawless *charchari* in any pan, most of us would do well to use a heavy-bottomed nonstick saucepan. You're less apt to burn the dish in those pans, and even when overcooked the crust that forms usually stays deep chocolate brown instead of coal black. A skillet is the wrong shape, but a well-seasoned cast-iron saucepan will work well. Very heavy French enamel-covered steel also makes a good pan but requires more judgment in timing and heat regulation.

One reason *charchari* dishes taste so scrumptious is they contain lots of *ghee* or butter. Richness is part of their character. So save *charchari* for special festive occasions, and serve it as a side dish. I re-tested two recipes from the textbook's *charchari* section and cut the *ghee* by half, with negligible loss of flavor or character.

Śrīla Prabhupāda and Charchari

In the early days of ISKCON Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't teach us the Hindi or Bengali names for moist vegetables; I learned them sometime later. The earliest note I've found expressing his fondness for *charchari* is an entry in his diary on board the ship *Jaladuta*. On September 13, 1965, he wrote, "Today is the 32nd day of our

SIMPLE CHARCHARI

(Serves 6–8)

A rich moist vegetable served as a side dish.

- 1 pound waxy red or white potatoes, cubed
- 1 pound green beans, cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons yellow *mung badi** (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red chilies
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ¼ cup unsalted butter or ghee
- 2¾ cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- freshly ground pepper
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro

Place all the ingredients in a heavy-bottomed nonstick saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium, cover partially, and boil gently until the liquid is absorbed and the vegetables are fork tender, about 25 minutes. Remove the lid, raise the heat slightly, and cook until the vegetables fry in the seasoned butter. (Do not burn the vegetables; only allow a deep-brown crust to form in the pan.) Cover and set aside for 10 minutes; then stir in the crust and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

*Also called *bati* and *warian*. Available at Indian grocery stores.

journey from Calcutta. In the morning I couldn't take my breakfast, then I cooked *bati-charchari*. It appeared to be delicious, so I was able to take some food."

Two years later in San Francisco Śrīla Prabhupāda taught me to make *bati-charchari*, in two variations—Potatoes and Green Beans, and Potatoes and Eggplant. Of course, as the years went on, my repertoire expanded, and many years later in India he requested *bati-charchari* quite frequently. Certainly if you are following these classes you'll want to work on perfecting these dishes.

A Personal Note

This is my last column before I leave for an extended visit to India to begin research for my next cookbook. So my next columns will come from India. Cooking is an adventure and a constant learning experience. I am eager to share with you new

information as I learn it. One of the many principles I learned from Śrīla Prabhupāda is that cooking in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a process of purification, ever increasing and ever pleasing. I hope you allow yourselves to taste this in your culinary journey.

Yamuna Devī is the author of the award-winning cookbooks Lord Krishna's Cuisine; The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking and Yamuna's Table. She is a regular contributor to The Washington Post and Vegetarian Times. You can write to her in care of Back to Godhead.



SCHOOLING KṚṢṆA'S CHILDREN

The Playful Mood

by Urmilā Devī Dāsī

FIFTEEN CHILDREN between two and five years old stood at one end of our living room. Some inched away from the wall. All waited.

"Be cowherd boys!" I called, and the children pretended to blow flutes and horns or bring a cow by a rope. Pretending in this way, they went as quickly as possible to the other side of the room and back. (Having a living room with little furniture was an advantage.) My infant son squirmed in my arms and tried to join the fun.

"Ambarish won!" I announced. "He got back first, playing like a cowherd boy the whole time. Now, ready again. Be fish!"

I set the baby in a crib and demonstrated pretend swimming.

Prabhupāda has given us a wonderful process of molding activity to awaken love for Kṛṣṇa. Even children involved in games, toys, and playing can be guided to use their playful mood to their spiritual advantage. Then Kṛṣṇa consciousness will easily arise in their hearts.

Saintly children such as Dhruva, Prahlāda, and Nārada shunned childish playthings. And Prabhupāda noted that one child of his disciples rejected ordinary toys as "māyā." Yet while we don't want to encourage toys and games that will lead to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, for children to play in a transcendental way is natural and beneficial.

Babies

Babies start to play when they like to grasp and move objects, at about

three months. My husband and I made a mobile of pictures of Kṛṣṇa and hung it above our first baby's sleeping place, carefully putting it out of range of the child's feet.

Soon a baby can sit and then crawl. Children this age need playthings just to keep out of mischief and distress. They like toys they can crawl or walk with, such as a toy wooden bull on wheels with a string. As far as possible, we selected toys to remind our child of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, such as cows, peacocks, and elephants.

Very young babies love to look at pictures of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Prabhupāda told us to show the pictures and not give them directly to the child, who might disrespect them. So we put pictures on the walls near the floor and covered them with plastic. Our children would crawl to them and touch them. We also made books filled with pictures from extra BTGs and worn-out book covers (and put plain covers on them so that no picture would touch our feet or the floor).

As a child masters language, he or she will point at the pictures again and again. "Kṛṣṇa," he'll say, and then "Kṛṣṇa kills the demon."

Pre-School

As children mature, they like to play not just around other children but with them. Kṛṣṇa Himself showed the ideal play for children of this age. Children in the country can go in groups to herd calves, playing by a lake or river in the open air. This is

their "education." They will play leapfrog, imitate animals, build with dirt, sand, and sticks, and use their vast imagination. What is the need of purchased toys and games?

Unfortunately, even those of us who live in the country may not have calves for our children to care for, nor are we always blessed with ideal weather. And we worry about thieves and kidnapers. So children can pretend to herd cows and may have to settle for playground equipment in place of rocks, vines, and rivers.

The main way to direct the play of small children toward Kṛṣṇa is to surround them with devotional service. The children will then imitate. If they see adults cook for Kṛṣṇa, the children will make mud pies and "offer" them, pretending that a stone or tree is Kṛṣṇa. One of our children built temples out of blocks, set up dead batteries for Deities, and then imitated the worship he'd seen at the temple.

Young children learn of Kṛṣṇa by looking through Prabhupāda's books, which are lavishly illustrated. The children then love to imitate Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. We had a collection of make-up, cloth scraps, and inexpensive props from a costume shop. When our child's friends came over, they had fun dressing as Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, mother Yaśodā, and demons such as Bakāsura.

"Now, Yaśodā," I would say to my daughter, "tell Kṛṣṇa to play nicely today."

"Play nicely today," she would say. One of my friends plays like this

***If we walk through the aisle
of a toy store, we see gruesome toys of terror.
If we want to raise saintly children,
we should avoid such things.***

• • •

with just herself and her three-year-old daughter.

“I’m Kṛṣṇa. You’re Balarāma,” the child says, and they put on cloths as belts and turbans, dancing through the house pretending to call their cows.

Pre-schoolers enjoy simple toys such as measuring cups and a bowl of water. They like to build and create with blocks and clay. If they keep to such simple toys, they will learn to be happy without extravagant arrangements. Modern toy manufacturers push movies and television shows through which to market related toys. Such toys stimulate a child’s hankering for a flood of electronic wonders, of which they soon tire. And the nature of such toys! If we walk through the aisle of a toy store, we see gruesome toys of terror. If we want

to raise saintly children, we should avoid such things.

In contrast, I know of one teenage girl who made her little sister beautiful felt toys—felt figures of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, felt clothes, and felt altars. One parent made beautiful puppets for her children. In another family, the father draws pictures of Kṛṣṇa on canvas, and the mother and children fill them in with needlepoint. A little time and creativity can give a child eternal benefit.

Ages Five Through Twelve

As children progress through school, their time for play gradually decreases. Their lives become filled with learning and chores. Yet through these years a child still wants to play.

At this age, children can still use

simple toys such as blocks to imitate devotional service, though their play becomes more complex. They’ll want outdoor games with friends to become more organized, with rules about winning and losing. Prabhupāda mentioned tag, swimming, running games, and kite-flying as suitable games for children. He discouraged highly organized and competitive games that mimic professional sports and take up so much of Western children’s time and energy. That children emotionally and physically need to run and jump doesn’t mean they need to join the local Little League. Some devotees have adapted many outdoor games so that children will grow in spiritual consciousness while they play. (See sidebar.)

Children in these years like to make dioramas of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

In the gurukula we plan diorama projects for various festivals. We also organize dramas of spiritual philosophy or Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. As the children grow and can perform dramas for public viewing, we spend time rehearsing and making costumes, scenery, and sound effects. Children also often play at dramas informally with their friends.

During these years children often like games that challenge their logic, memory, and intelligence. Because Śrīla Prabhupāda considered games such as crossword puzzles a waste of time, we want to carefully choose games that teach our children if not about Kṛṣṇa then at least skills and knowledge they can use to

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Games

Let’s Catch Kṛṣṇa First

The leader chants one Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra while pointing from player to player with each word. The last person pointed to plays as Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa takes in His hand a big peacock feather (or a big leaf or flower representing a peacock feather) so the other players can easily recognize Him. He runs a little ahead, and then all the other children—the cowherd boys—must try to tag Him. Whoever tags Kṛṣṇa first becomes the next Kṛṣṇa, and the previous Kṛṣṇa becomes one of the cowherd boys. The previous Kṛṣṇa must hand the peacock feather to the new Kṛṣṇa while still running and then let the new Kṛṣṇa get a little bit ahead. Then everyone runs after the new Kṛṣṇa. The players must

keep careful track of who is Kṛṣṇa at each stage of the game.

Fun Storytelling

This game is meant for children well versed in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. The leader (using again the one-mantra method) selects the first child to tell a story. The storyteller is supposed to purposely make funny mistakes from time to time. For example, he will say, “Kṛṣṇa stole the *gopīs’ capātis* (instead of clothes) and hung them on a tree,” or “Mother Yaśodā ran after Kṛṣṇa with a cow (instead of a stick) in her hand.” The other children must correct the mistakes.

From *The Book of Kṛṣṇa Conscious Games*, Bala Books, 1981.

serve Kṛṣṇa. Games that supercharge the mind and senses simply increase a child's identification with the body. I know of many parents and teachers who, especially when a group of children gather, arrange for contests in knowledge of scripture. This must be done according to the age of the children and in such a way that it is not too competitive and stressful.

What of the increasingly popular computer and video games that begin to appeal to children during these years? There is excellent educational computer software for teaching math, English, history, and geography. Just as we devotees get children playing spiritually, programmers get children playing to learn. That is a valid use of games for our children, but we should make certain, first, that what is learned is really essential and, second, that it's the major component of the software. If all a game is said to do is teach eleven-year-olds hand and eye coordination, it's probably worthless.

Generally, if our children are playing video games we can take it as a sign that we're failing to provide them useful work to play at. Just as Prabhupāda tells us that children will take the work of herding calves as play, so children can take pleasure in growing a garden, learning to cook, and helping with adult devotional service.

Perhaps the most important play

during this age is festivals and Deity worship. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was a boy, he organized a Rathayātrā festival, much as other children organize games for their friends. His father also gave him Deities to worship. Prabhupāda describes this Deity worship by young children as play. That doesn't mean a child can put the Deity on the floor or on his bed like a stuffed toy. (I don't suggest Deity worship for children under five, or for those who regularly put their hands or other objects in their mouth.) Yet a child is excused from the strict rules of Deity worship. Children can bathe and dress their Deity once a week and make a daily offering of food. By chanting before the Deity and offering incense and flowers, a child learns to progress in spiritual life. King Parīkṣit and Mīrābāī, both great devotees from childhood, were trained in that way. Prabhupāda suggests that the worship can become formal when a child is ten or twelve.

Thirteen to Sixteen

When a child enters adolescence, the desire to play decreases. Yet I've seen fourteen-year-old girls binding their eyes like Gāndhārī to enact scenes from the *Mahābhārata*. Just today a fourteen-year-old boy picked up a kindergarten boy. "Grrr! I'll tear Hiraṇyakaśipu to pieces!" the older

boy growled, pretending to be Lord Nṛsiṃha. Teenagers can organize their own plays and puppet shows or create intricate works of art and music.

Perhaps at this age, especially for boys, sports becomes a question. Again, while these growing adolescents need fresh air and exercise, it is better to meet those needs through their service than arrange for separate sports. And if children need some specific program of exercise, we should keep things in balance and not get overwhelmed with caring for the body.

As we watch our children play, we can remember that the whole material world is like a toy given by the Lord so that we can act in a perverted imitation of His pastimes. Even our adult activities, therefore, are merely games with no lasting consequence or meaning unless we engage in the service of the Lord.

Urmilā Devī Dāsī 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 Vaiṣṇava Children, a gurukula classroom guidebook.



THE LAND, THE COWS, AND KṚṢṆA

Unemployment and The Decline of Small Farms

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

PART 3

A MATERIALISTIC PERSON, thinking himself very advanced in intelligence, continually acts for economic development. But again and again, as enunciated in the *Vedas*, he is frustrated by material activities, either in this life or in the next.

Indeed, the results one obtains are inevitably the opposite of those one desires" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.7.41).

Through technology we have tried to improve our life. We've invented the tractor, for example, so that now one percent of a nation's people can grow enough food for the whole country. Guaranteed peace and prosperity?

On the contrary. By wiping out

small farms, technology has spread unemployment, crime, and misery.

So it's time to look at another way to organize society—with a focus that's not material but spiritual. That way is called the *varṇāśrama* social organization. Instead of trying to create or destroy a class system, *varṇāśrama* recognizes that four broad classes of people live in every society. And *varṇ-*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's

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by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.44): *kṛṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyam*—“farming, cow protection, and trade.” In the *vaiśya's* duties, cow protection is central, and this implies that agriculture (*kṛṣi*) must be carried out with oxen.

As I've explained before, protecting cows without working the oxen is incomplete. A bull is so costly to keep that unless he's working he's usually slaughtered. So in the *varṇāśrama* system the bull or ox is put to work producing and transporting food grains.

Modern experts may object that this is “labor intensive.” But when

millions of people are unemployed, what's wrong with that?

Since unemployment fuels crime, putting people to work by depending on ox power brings crime down, especially when you're moving toward a society with a satisfying spiritual culture. And the work of growing food with oxen provides a challenging, fulfilling engagement in a natural environment, in contrast to boring, grueling work in a hellish city factory.

By allocating land for ox-powered farming, a spiritually enlightened government helps make sure that land is distributed fairly. Tractors and

āśrama purifies people of all classes by linking their work to the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.13) Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that He created the four classes that make up society—the intellectuals (*brāhmaṇas*), the administrators and military people (*kṣatriyas*), the farmers and merchants (*vaiśyas*), and the laborers (*sūdras*).

In modern society, employers try to make money by exploiting their workers, but that goes against Lord Kṛṣṇa's intention. In the social plan given by Lord Kṛṣṇa, all classes of people work interdependently, for *spiritual* progress. And the Vedic scriptures say that this is the system of cooperation we need to follow to please the Supreme Lord:

varṇāśramācāravatā
puruṣeṇa paraḥ pumān
viṣṇur ārādhyate panthā
nānyat tat-toṣa-kāraṇam

“One can worship the Supreme Lord by properly following the principles of *varṇāśrama*. There is no alternative for pleasing the Lord than to follow this system” (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 3.8.9).

Under the plan of *varṇāśrama*, society prospers not by exploiting its laborers but by depending on the productive work of its farmers.

The Role of the Farmer

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains how in *varṇāśrama* the social classes cooperate for a smoothly working Kṛṣṇa conscious society:

The *brāhmaṇas* [the spiritual leaders] would guide the head of state. The head of state would then give protection to the citizens. The *kṣatriyas* [administrators] would take charge of protecting the people in general, and under the protection of the *kṣatriyas* the *vaiśyas* [farmers and merchants] would protect the cows and produce food grains and distribute them. *Sūdras*, the working class, would help the higher three classes by manual labor. This is the perfect social system.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.17.9,
purport

The duties of the *vaiśyas* noted here by Śrīla Prabhupāda are specified

even horses produce best on large farms, but oxen fit with small, family-sized farms. So the ox defines a human-sized unit of productivity—a small farm, meant for a family.

Employment in a Godly Way of Life

Furthermore, using oxen to replace petrol-powered transport promotes peace and stability because it keeps production close to home. As documented by N. S. Ramaswamy of the Indian Institute of Management, for short hauls oxen are cheaper than trucks and trains. So when you're

using oxen you're promoting a way of life in which people can easily get food grown locally. What need, then, to ship food in from hundreds or thousands of miles away? And what need to fight over the petroleum with which to do it?

Ox power is cleaner, too. As much as industrialism and pollution have filled our lives with anxiety, ox power and a natural way of life can restore us to a happy, peaceful environment, conducive for spiritual progress.

Ox power and cow protection are essential elements in the *varṇāśrama*

system, a system that puts people to work in a spiritual, godly way of life. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that the world can be peaceful only with a spiritually reformed social structure. So the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement aims at introducing the *varṇ-āśrama* system for spiritual progress—all over the world.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī, 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.



BHAKTI-YOGA AT HOME

Our Deity Worship

by Rohiṇinandana Dāsa

THE DEITY WORSHIP in our home is simple compared to the gorgeous worship that always thrills me when I visit a temple. In ISKCON temples devotees bathe the Deities every day, dress Them twice a day, feed Them six times a day, and offer Them seven *āratis* a day. The sparkling cleanliness, the beautiful fresh-flower garlands, and the peace and order of temple life all add to the spiritual atmosphere.

My wife, Rādhā Priyā, and I, who have both done Deity worship in temples, took some time to find a standard of cleanliness, punctuality, and regularity both practical and enlivening for everyone in our family.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that one can adjust Deity worship at home to the requirements of the individual or family. He described how sometimes a person may keep a Deity in a box and bring Him out only to worship Him or feed Him. In our home we have a simple method of awakening our Deities in the morning and putting Them to rest at night. Every day we offer

Them fresh water, food, and an *ārati* ceremony. Whenever we go away for a few days or weeks, we put Them to rest.

One of the most important features of our Deity worship is that it provides a focus for our chanting. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that in this Age of Kali family members can “sit down together and simply clap hands and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.”

For our family, the routine of offering a daily *ārati* brings us together to regularly chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Life at Woodgate Cottage is not always a bed of rose petals—there are some thorns too. But our experience is that mainly due to our efforts to worship our Deities together, Lord



Rāmāi, here at age four, offers Lord Balarāma a gift on His appearance day.

***Srīla Prabhupāda creatively introduced
Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world, in consideration
of the time, place, and circumstances.
In my home I want to follow in his footsteps.***

• • •

Kṛṣṇa is never far away.

Here's a short story to show you what I mean:

"O.K. It's time to come down, have your showers, and get ready to dress the Deities."

No response.

Rādhā Priyā, whom I consider more skilled than I am at parent-child negotiations, is away for a few days, and I'm alone with our three children. They carry on playing roughly with their bedding.

I anxiously return to the small room we use as a temple and awaken Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, Lord Jagannātha, and His brother and sister, Balarāma and Subhadrā.

Meanwhile the thumps and cries increase. I remember how Kṛṣṇa describes yoga as the art of action, the art of living, and I find solace in thinking that even if I fail in my efforts at Kṛṣṇa conscious parenting (like Jatāyu, who failed to stop Rāvaṇa from carrying away Sītā), I will have tried my best, and that's the main thing. In fact, when I see my children as part of Kṛṣṇa, I serve Kṛṣṇa simply by being with them, serving them, guiding them, playing with them, supporting and loving them.

A loud scream breaks my reverie. I run up the stairs.

Rādhānātha, eleven, grins sheepishly and claims, "I didn't do anything."

Rāmāi, six, shouts, "You did! You liar! You always try to get out of it."

He grabs the nearest thing to him—a wooden duck—and hurls it at his brother. The duck slams into Rādhānātha's arm.

"Rāmāi!" I shout, as he hightails it down the stairs.

Rādhānātha, tearful and furious, dashes after him. Two-and-a-half-year-old Jīva watches wide-eyed, learning the family ropes.

After trying unsuccessfully to shut the kitchen door in Rādhānātha's face, Rāmāi grabs a plastic bottle of sunflower oil, whips off the top, and makes a stand.

"Rāmāi!" I command. "Put it down. Remember our talk about boundaries!"

He thumps the bottle down on the table and zips into the bathroom, unconscious of the spurt of oil. Catching up, vengeful Rādhānātha punches him in the back. Rāmāi returns the punch, and they're locked in combat. At least they're in the bathroom.

I go in too.

"Have you finished yet?"

"No," says Rādhānātha, "he scratched my face, and I'm going to get him."

By now Rāmāi has hidden behind my legs.

"Listen, Prabhus," I begin, "Today's Ekādaśī, and we could be dressing the Deities instead of beating each other up. Do you want to hurt each other any more?"

"No, but . . ."

"I don't care who started it; let's make up now. Who do you want to dress today?"

"I want to dress Prabhupāda," replies Rādhānātha.

"And I want to dress Nṛsiṃhadeva!" exclaims Rāmāi.

"Phew!" I breathe out quickly, my hand on my chest.

After one or two more minor inci-

dents, we are all in the temple, wearing *dhotis* and *tilaka*. I'm due to dress Rādhānātha's Deities, Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā, so he gives me some instruction. He also helps Rāmāi choose a new outfit and jewelry for Nṛsiṃhadeva. The two brothers look so mild and so caring for each other I can hardly believe that a few moments earlier they were at each other's throats.

I put on a tape of Śrīla Prabhupāda singing, and Jīva presses the buttons on the tape player. Next I help him light a stick of incense.

As I watch Rādhānātha carefully dressing Śrīla Prabhupāda, I think how Prabhupāda demonstrated that the art of applying Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not stereotyped but dynamic. He creatively introduced Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world, in consideration of the time, place, and circumstances. In my home I want to follow in his footsteps.

When the dressing is done and we've made up the flower vases, placed the Deities back on a clean altar, and tidied up, we play the tape *Govindam* as the children take turns fanning Their Lordships with a peacock fan and a *cāmara* (yak-tail whisk). When the tape ends, we have a short *kīrtana*, bow our heads to the floor, and then head for the kitchen. As I watch Rāmāi clean up his pool of oil, I'm reminded how much life is indeed, as Kṛṣṇa says, like the changing seasons.

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

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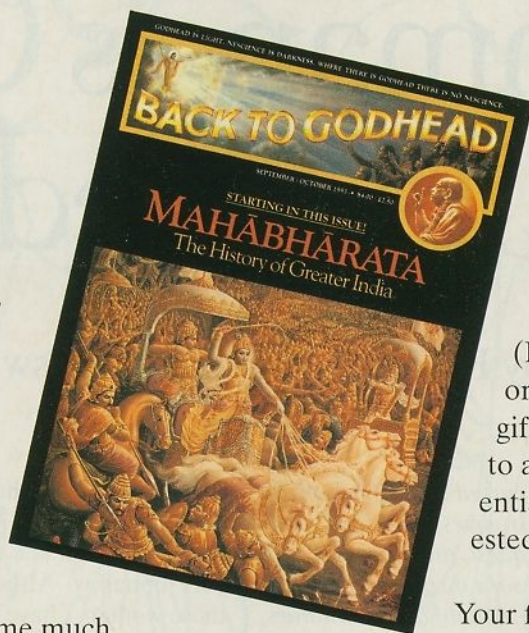
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The History of Greater India

The Brāhmaṇa's Curse Fulfilled

Translated from Sanskrit
by Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

• • •

King Pāṇḍu was cursed to die if he were to ever approach his wives for sexual intercourse. At his request, therefore, his wife Kuntī bore three sons through union with demigods. As the Mahābhārata continues, the sage Vaiśampāyana tells of the birth of two sons to Mādri, Pāṇḍu's other wife, and of the king's death. For the mighty king, who in the forest had mastered his senses as he had formerly conquered his enemies, fell prey to uncontrolled lust.

Vaiśampāyana continued:

AFTER KUNTĪ and Gāndhārī gave birth to their children, the lovely Mādri, daughter of the Madra king, approached her husband, Pāṇḍu, in a secluded place and spoke these words: "I have no complaint against you, even if you have treated me unfairly. I have always taken the inferior role, though by right I was to be honored. Nor was I un-

happy or jealous when I heard that Gāndhārī gave birth to a hundred sons. But allow me to tell you what makes me very, very unhappy. Although I am equal to these women, I have no children! It is our good fortune that Kuntī has given you sons to preserve your family line. If she could possibly arrange for me to give you sons also, this would be the greatest blessing for me and good for you as well. Because of my natural rivalry with Kuntī, I cannot bring myself to ask her, but if you are in any way pleased with me after all these years, you should personally convince her."

Pāṇḍu said:

My dear Mādri, you know that the desire for children is ever turning in my heart. [I wanted you to ask Kuntī to share her boon with you, but] I dared not ask you to do this because I was not

Right: The twin Aśvins, the handsome physicians of the heavenly planets, came at once to beget sons in Madri, having been summoned by Kuntī's mantra.

Illustrations by Mādhava Priyā Devī Dāsī

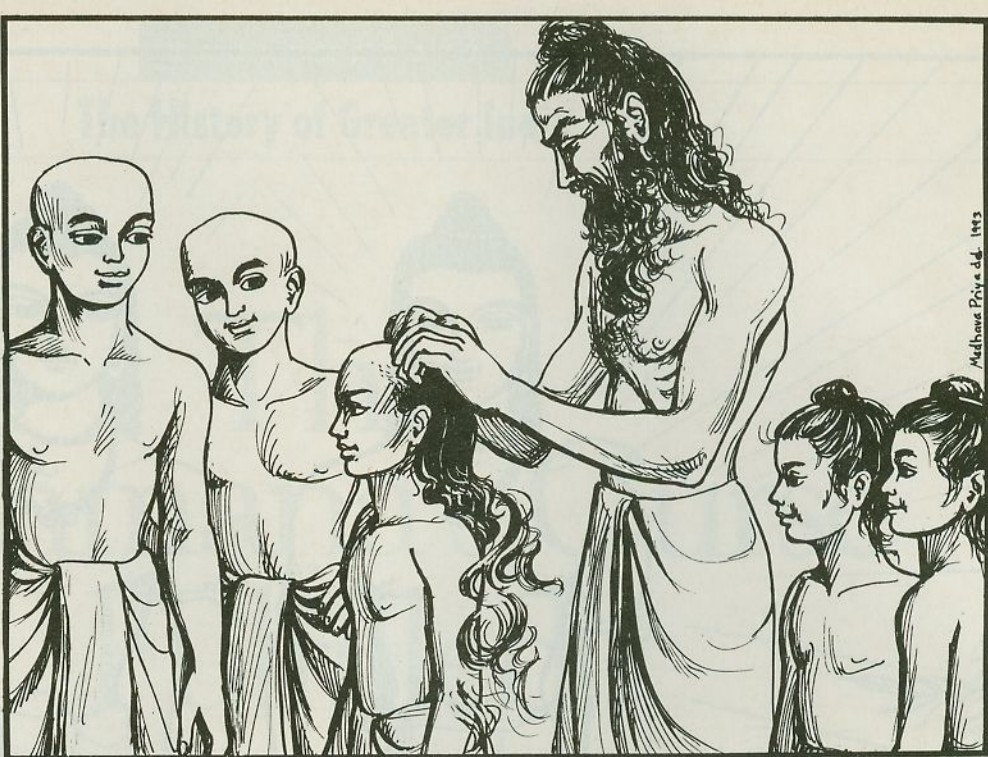


Madhava
© 1993

certain whether you would be pleased with the idea or not. But now that I know your feelings, I accept personal responsibility to do this for you. I'm sure that Kuntī will carry out my instruction.

Vaiśampāyana said:

Thereafter Pāṇḍu spoke to Kuntī in a secluded place and told her, "You must act to preserve my family and bring happiness to the world. You are a good woman, and now, out of your love for me, you must carry out a supreme act of goodness so that I and our forefathers never lose the holy Piṇḍa*. For the sake of your good name and glory, perform this difficult task. Even after achieving sovereignty, Lord Indra performed sacrifices, seeking a good reputation. O lovely lady, the twice-born knowers of man-



Kaśyapa, the priest of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, performs the sacred hair-cutting ceremony for the Pāṇḍavas before initiating them as students of the Vedic science.

tras yet undertake grueling austerities and wait upon their gurus for the sake of glory and a good name. Likewise all the saintly seers, *brāhmaṇas*, and ascetics underwent difficult tasks, large and small, for the sake of true glory. O faultless woman, with the boat of your boon it is you who must take Mādri across the river of her grief. Share the gift of progeny and attain to the highest glory."

Thus addressed, Kuntī at once spoke to Mādri. "You must think of a deity, one time, and he will undoubtedly bestow on you a child with qualities similar to his own."

Hearing these words, Mādri carefully considered the matter, until finally her mind settled on the twin Aśvins, the handsome physicians of the heavenly planets. Kuntī then faithfully chanted her powerful mantra, and the twin gods came at once and begot in Mādri a set of twins.

Mādri's two sons, unequalled in their beauty, became known in this world as Nakula and Sahadeva. As with Pāṇḍu's other children, an invisible voice announced their glorious birth: "These

two boys will surpass all others in beauty, strength, and kindness. Indeed, they are blessed with extraordinary splendor, stamina, beauty, and wealth."

As these noble Kuru princes were born to Pāṇḍu, one year after the another**, the joyful *brāhmaṇas* bestowed names. The eldest they called Yudhiṣṭhira; the middle son of Kuntī, Bhīmasena; the third, Arjuna. The eldest twin of Mādri they declared to be Nakula, and the younger Sahadeva. All five possessed great nobility, stamina, courage, strength, and daring. Seeing his sons as handsome as gods and very powerful, the monarch rejoiced, and the greatest happiness was his. The five Pāṇḍava boys were loved by all the sages who dwelled in Hundred Peaks, and by the sages' saintly wives.

Then Pāṇḍu again spoke to Kuntī, requesting that Mādri be allowed to use the special mantra again. As they sat alone together, the chaste Pṛthā replied, "I invoked the mantra only once on her behalf, and yet she obtained two children. Somehow I feel cheated by that. I fear that Mādri will surpass me. I am sorry, but that is the nature of women. I

was so foolish. I didn't know that by calling two gods it was possible to get two sons at once. Therefore, I should not be ordered by you to do this. Please give me that benediction."

[Pāṇḍu agreed.] Thus all five god-given sons were born to King Pāṇḍu. Each of them possessed great strength, all would be glorified for their heroic deeds, and all would increase the prosperity and influence of the Kuru dynasty. Their bodies were marked with auspicious signs and were as agreeable to the sight as the placid moon. Proud as lions, these sons possessed deadly skills with the bow and arrow. They walked with the confident gait of lions, and their necks were as strong as a lion's. They were the natural leaders of society, and as they grew to maturity their heroic deeds revealed their godly origins. Growing up in the holy Himālaya range, the five constantly amazed the saints who resided there with them. In fact, both the five Pāṇḍavas and the hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra grew quickly, like lotus flowers quickly rising up in clear waters.

Vasudeva Sends Gifts

When the sons of Pāṇḍu came into this world, the ascetic inhabitants of

*Piṇḍa is a religious offering made by sons and descendants to ensure that their fathers and forefathers do not fall from heaven.

**except for the twins, who were born together.

Hundred Peaks at once accepted them within their community, treating them as if their own children. Meanwhile, the members of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, headed by Vasudeva, spoke among themselves as follows: "Frightened by a *brāhmaṇa*'s curse, Pāṇḍu journeyed to Hundred Peaks and there became an ascetic, dwelling with the sages. He lived on forest vegetables, roots, and fruits, performed austerities, carefully controlled his senses, and fully devoted himself to mystic meditation on the form of the Lord within the heart. So has the king lived." [The Vṛṣṇi leader, Vasudeva, was Kuntī's brother and Pāṇḍu's brother-in-law.]

The many Vṛṣṇi warriors, with their friends and allies, shared a great love for Pāṇḍu, so much that as they heard and discussed the news of his condition, their hearts were torn by grief. "When will we hear good news about Pāṇḍu?" they lamented.

Even as the Vṛṣṇis and their friends were thus grieving, they heard that Pāṇḍu, despite the *brāhmaṇa*'s curse, had become the father of worthy sons. All of them were then filled with joy. Celebrating among themselves, they spoke to Vasudeva these words: "The mighty sons of Pāṇḍu must not be deprived of the proper religious ceremonies. O Vasudeva, you ever seek their welfare and affection. Send to them the royal priest."

"So be it," said Vasudeva, and he sent the royal priest, together with many gifts appropriate for young boys. Remembering Kuntī and Mādri, he also sent cows, gold, and silver, and he dispatched servants, maidservants, and gifts for the home. When all these gifts were ready, the priest took them and departed.

When King Pāṇḍu, who had conquered the cities of his enemies, saw that the royal priest Kaśyapa, the best of *brāhmaṇas*, had come to them in the forest, Pāṇḍu received him with full honor, strictly observing the etiquette. Kuntī and Mādri were

joyous, and they praised Vasudeva. Pāṇḍu then had the priest perform all the religious rites for the birth of his sons, and Kaśyapa did all that was required and all that was beneficial. He cut the hair of those illustrious princes, whose gaze was as fearless as that of a bull. He initiated them as serious students of the Vedic science, and they excelled in their studies.

Vaiśampāyana continued:

Watching his five beautiful sons grow up in the great Himālaya forests, Pāṇḍu rejoiced, and he protected the boys with his own powerful hands. Once, at the height of spring, when the forest was ablaze with colorful new blossoms, King Pāṇḍu began to wander about the woods with his faithful wife Mādri. So lovely and sensuous was that forest that it could enchant the mind of any creature.

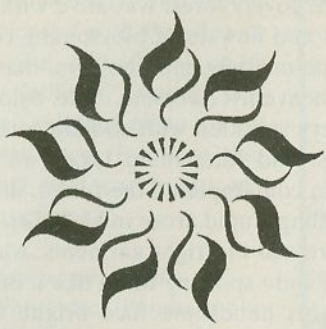
The lovely forest was alive with the fruits and flowers of blossoming coral and palm trees, glorybowers, mango, and heavenly *campaka*. The colorful scenery sparkled with cooling springs, rivers, and lotus-filled lakes, and as Pāṇḍu contemplated the forest, mind-meddling Cupid arose in his heart.

Dressed in bright garments, Mādri saw Pāṇḍu sporting there like a demigod, his handsome face bright with affection, and she followed behind him. Pāṇḍu observed his youthful wife walking along in her thin dress, and his desire now grew like a fire that flames up from the depths of its fuel. Alone with Mādri in that secluded dale, Pāṇḍu saw the same fire burn in Mādri's heart, and as he peered into her lovely eyes he could no longer control his desire, for it had taken over his very life.

In that secluded forest the monarch
(please turn to page 46)



Having begged Kuntī to stay and raise the Pāṇḍavas, the devoted Mādri ascends Pāṇḍu's funeral pyre.



Rational “Mythology”

Can a rational person accept the stories of the Purāṇas as literally true?

A lecture by Sadāpūta Dāsa

Presented at the Parliament of the World's Religions
Chicago, 1993



Vivekananda Swami

IN VIVEKANANDA Swami's famous lecture on Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions in 1893, he began by outlining some of the salient features of traditional Hinduism. He mentioned karma, reincarnation, and the problem of evil in the material world. He went on to explain that the solution to this problem depends on seeking refuge in God. God is that one “by whose command the wind blows, the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth.”¹ He is the source of strength and the support of the universe. He is everywhere, pure, almighty, and all-merciful. And we are related to God as a child to a father or mother and as a friend to a beloved friend.

Vivekananda said that we are to worship God through unselfish love, and he pointed out that the way to achieving love of God was “fully developed and taught by Krishna, whom the Hindus believe to have been God incarnate on earth.”² Through love we are to perfect ourselves, reach God, see God, and enjoy bliss with God. On this, he said, all Hindus are agreed.³

But he went on to say that in the final stage of realization, God is seen to be

impersonal Brahman. The individual then ends separate existence by realizing his identity with Brahman. Making an analogy with physical science, he said, “Physics would stop when it would be able to fulfill its services in discovering one energy of which all the others are but manifestations, and the science of religion [would] become perfect when it would discover . . . One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations.”⁴

The Pros and Cons of Pure Monism

Vivekananda's strictly monistic concept of God has a long history. The idea has always been linked with the rational, speculative approach to reality. For example, in the fifth century B.C., the Greek philosopher Parmenides concluded by speculative arguments that “only One Thing can possibly exist and that this One Thing is uncreated, unchangeable, indestructible, and immovable. Plurality, creation, change, destruction, and motion are mere appearances.”⁵

Parmenides argued that the One must have no parts distinct from one another, for otherwise it would be not

Top left: Logo for the Parliament of the World's Religions.



Bhaktivinoda Thākura

One but many. Thus he concluded that the One must be a sphere of perfectly uniform substance. But even a sphere has an inside and an outside, and so it is marked by duality, not oneness. The idea of absolute oneness, or pure mo-

nism, may seem alluring, but it requires us to give up all conceivable attributes and finally give up thought itself.

Vivekananda recognized this problem, and he argued that in the Hindu religion specific forms of gods and god-

esses serve as symbols to help us visualize the inconceivable. Thus he said, "The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized, or thought of, or stated, through the relative, and the images, crosses, and crescents are simply so many symbols, so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on."⁶

The idea of religious imagery as a symbol for the unthinkable Absolute sometimes turns out useful in the modern age. Vivekananda was born in Calcutta in 1863 as Narendranath Datta, and he grew up during the high noon of British dominance in India. During this period, European rationalism, based on the famous French Enlightenment, made a strong impact on India. Reformers like Rammohan Roy and Devendranath Tagore founded the Brahmo Samaj in an effort to revise Hinduism and make it compatible with modern Western

thinking.⁷ This effort required the solving of two problems: (1) the problem of religious plurality and (2) the problem of the clash between modern science and old religious beliefs.

The old philosophy of pure monism, or *advaita*, is well suited to solve these problems. First of all, if religious imagery has only a symbolic meaning that refers to something inconceivable, then many different systems of symbols should work equally well. In this way, all major religious systems can be reconciled. This was Vivekananda's idea, and he greatly stressed the equality of all religions.

Likewise, if religious imagery is simply symbolic, then there is no question of a conflict between religion and science. A religious story that seems to conflict with established scientific facts can simply be interpreted as a symbolic clue pointing to the One beyond the grasp of the finite scientific mind. Vivekananda also mentioned that the stark simplicity of the impersonal Brahman fits with the simplicity sought by physicists in their hoped-for Grand Unified Theory of nature.

But in pure monism, what becomes of love of God, or indeed, love of anyone? If the ultimate reality is pure oneness, and personal existence is illusory, then love is also illusory. Love requires two, and not just two of anything. Two persons are needed for a relationship of love. If such relationships do have spiritual reality, then at least two spiritual persons must eternally exist. In traditional Hindu thought, there are, in fact, two categories of eternal persons: (1) the *jīva* souls that live in individual material bodies and (2) the original Supreme Personality of Godhead and His countless spiritual expansions. As Vivekananda pointed out, Hindus believe that the Supreme Being incarnated on earth as Kṛṣṇa, who expounded on the ways of loving devotional reciprocation between Himself and individual *jīva* souls.

Unfortunately, after making this point, Vivekananda rejected both Kṛṣṇa and the individual soul as illusory. In his monistic approach to religion, all conceivable features of the Absolute are ruled out. Beingness, knowledge, and bliss are three, and they must be discarded from the One as earthbound misconceptions. The same is true of the

might and truth of the Lord. Likewise, if the real truth is absolute oneness, all personal relationships of admiration, friendship, parental love, or conjugal love must be given up as delusions.

The Vaiṣṇava Alternative Given by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

It is natural then to ask if some other solution is available to the problems posed when modern rational thought meets the multiplicity of religious systems. To explore this, I now turn to the life of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a contemporary of Swami Vivekananda.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was born in 1838 as Kedaranath Datta in the Nadia district of West Bengal. As a young man he acquired an English education, and he used to exchange thoughts on literary and spiritual topics with Devendranath Tagore, the Brahmo Samaj leader and Vivekananda's early teacher. In due course he studied law, and for many years he supported his family as a magistrate in the British court system.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura deeply studied the religious thought of his day. He scrutinized the works of European philosophers, and he was greatly impressed with the devotional teachings of Jesus Christ. At first, his Western education inclined him to look down on the Vaiṣṇava literature of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, he wrote that the *Bhāgavata*, one of the main texts describing Kṛṣṇa, "seemed like a repository of ideas scarcely adopted to the nineteenth century."⁸

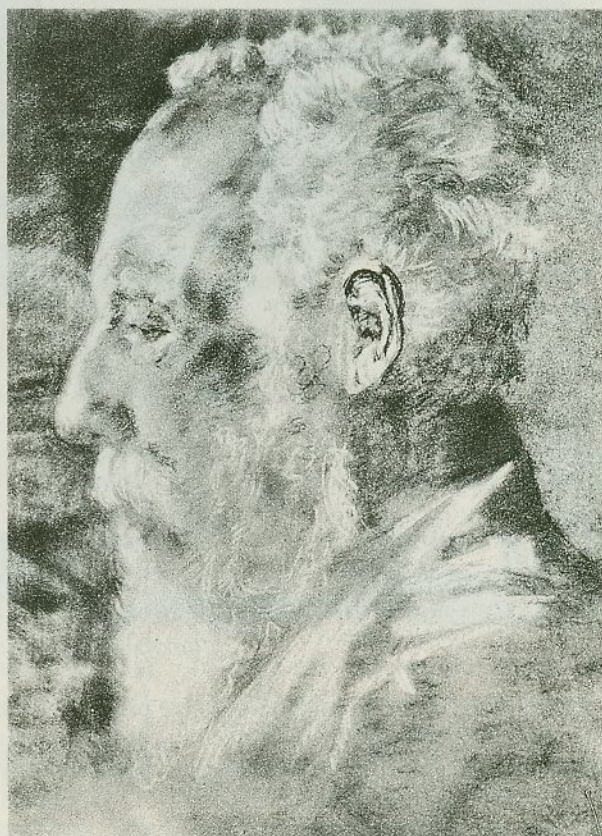
But at a certain point he ran across a work about the great Vaiṣṇava reformer Lord Caitanya, and he was able to obtain the commentary Caitanya had given on the *Bhāgavata* to the *advaita* Vedāntists of Benares. This created in him a great love for the devotional teachings of Kṛṣṇa as presented by Caitanya.⁹ In due course he achieved an exalted

state of spiritual realization by following Caitanya's teachings, and he wrote many books presenting those teachings to people both in India and abroad.

A Historical Interlude

Before we go into Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's spiritual teachings, let me give an explicit idea of the intellectual climate in which he was operating in late nineteenth-century Bengal. To do this, I will quote a passage from the writings of Sir William Jones, a jurist who worked for the British East India company and was the first president of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In an article on Hindu chronology written in 1788, Jones gave the following account of the close of *Dvāpara-yuga*, the Third Age of the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*:

I cannot leave the third Indian age, in which the virtues and vices of mankind are said to have been equal, without observing, that even the close of it is manifestly fabulous and poetical, with hardly more appearance of historical truth, than the tale of *Troy*, or of the *Argonauts*; for Yudhishtir, it seems, was the son of Dherma, the *Genius of Justice*; Bhima of Pavan, or the *God of Wind*; Arjun of Indra, or



Devendranath Tagore

Reproduced from a drawing by Abanindranath Tagore (1898)

the *Firmament*; Nacul and Sahādeva of the Cumars, the Castor and Pollux of *India*; and Bhishma, their reputed great uncle, was the child of Ganga, or the Ganges, by Santanu, whose brother Devapi is supposed to be still alive in the city of Calapa; all which fictions may be charming embellishments of an heroic poem, but are just as absurd in civil History, as the descent of two royal families from the Sun and the Moon.¹⁰

What Jones is referring to here is the story in the *Mahābhārata* of events in India at the time of Kṛṣṇa's advent. According to Hindu tradition, these events took place about five thousand years ago, when the Dvāpara-yuga gave way to the present epoch, called the Kali-yuga. Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna, Bhīma, Nakula, and Sahadeva are the five Pāṇḍava brothers who figured in many of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

We can see from Jones's comments that he does not regard the story of the Pāṇḍavas as true history. Why not? For many of us, the problem is that the story contains elements simply not credible to a person trained in the modern rational viewpoint. We know that people don't descend from demigods. All documents putting forth such nonsense are rejected by responsible historians, so objective historical accounts hold no such absurdities. Such things never happened, and our history books abundantly confirm this.

Sir William Jones was clearly thinking along these lines, but he was not exactly a modern rationalist. Jones was a Christian who believed fully in the Mosaic chronology of the Bible. The table on page 26 shows how Jones attempted to reconstruct Hindu chronology to bring it in line with Christian.¹¹ Jones, it seems, was able to scorn Hindu myths as absurd while at the same time accepting as true the supernatural events of the Bible.

It is perhaps poetic justice that the same scornful treatment Jones applied to the *Mahābhārata* was soon applied to the Bible. During Jones's lifetime, the "higher" scientific criticism of the Bible was being developed in Germany, and it was unleashed in England in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1860, the Anglican theologians Benjamin Jowett and Baden Powell stole attention from Darwin's newly published book *On the*



Lord Caitanya

Origin of Species by a controversial essay that rejected miracles, on scientific grounds.¹² The Darwinists and the higher Biblical critics quickly joined forces, and Darwin's supporter Thomas Huxley began quoting German Biblical scholars in his essays on the interpretation of Genesis.¹³ As the nineteenth century drew to a close, rational, scientific skepticism became the only acceptable path for a scholar or intellectual in any respectable field of study.

The *Bhāgavata*

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was confronted with this hostile intellectual climate in his efforts to present spiritual knowledge to the young Bengali intellectuals of his day. After drinking in from their British teachers the ideas of William Jones and other Western orientalisks, these young people were not at all inclined to give credence to old myths. How then could the teachings of Kṛṣṇa on love of God be presented? Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura judiciously chose to give a partial picture of the truth that would introduce important spiritual ideas without invoking rejection due to deep-seated prejudices.

In a lecture delivered in Dinajpur, West Bengal, in 1869, he focused on the *Bhāgavata*, or *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as the preeminent text on the nature of the Supreme and the means of realizing our relation with the Supreme. Rejecting pure monism as a useless idea, he held that God is an eternal person. Thus he said, "The *Bhāgavata* has . . . a Transcendental, Personal, All-intelligent, Active, absolutely Free, Holy, Good, All-powerful, Omnipresent, Just and Merciful and supremely Spiritual Deity without a second, creating, preserving all that is in the universe."¹⁴ The

highest object of the soul, he went on to say, is to "serve that Infinite Being for ever spiritually in the activity of Absolute Love."¹⁵

Bhaktivinoda described the material world as the product of *māyā*. Here *māyā* means not illusion but the eternal energy of the Supreme that He uses to bewilder souls who desire to live outside of harmony with Him. The creation of the material world through *māyā* is actually an aspect of the Lord's mercy, since He thereby allows independent-minded souls to act in a world from which God is apparently absent.

All these ideas are taken from the *Bhāgavata* without modification. But in describing what the *Bhāgavata* says about the details of the material universe, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura adopted an indirect approach. Thus he said,

In the common-place books of the Hindu religion in which the *Raja* and *Tama Gunas* have been described as the ways of religion, we find description of a local heaven and a local hell; the heaven is as beautiful as anything on earth and the Hell as ghastly as any picture of evil. . . . The religion of the *Bhagavat* is free from such a poetic

imagination. Indeed, in some of the chapters we meet with descriptions of these hells and heavens, and accounts of curious tales, but we have been warned in some place in the book, not to accept them as real facts, but to treat them as inventions to overawe the wicked and to improve the simple and the ignorant.¹⁶

In fact, the *Bhāgavata* does ascribe reality to hells and heavens and their inhabitants. It describes in great detail the higher planetary systems and the various demigods who live there, including Brahmā, Śiva, and Indra. Not only does the *Bhāgavata* say that these beings are real, but it gives them an important role in the creation and main-

tenance of the universe. It also gives them a role in many of Kṛṣṇa's manifest pastimes (*līlās*) within the material world. For example, in the story of the lifting of Govardhana Hill, it is Indra who creates a devastating storm when Kṛṣṇa insults him by interfering with a sacrifice in his honor.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura chose to sidestep these "mythological" aspects of the *Bhāgavata* in an effort to reach an audience of intellectuals whose mundane education ruled out such myths as absurd fantasy. Indeed, he went even further. In 1880 he published a treatise entitled *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Saṁhitā* in which he elaborately explained the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.¹⁷ In this book

he also put forth a reconstruction of Indian history similar to the one introduced by Sir William Jones to bring Hindu chronology into line with the Mosaic timetable of the Bible. This involved converting demigods and Manus into human kings and reducing their total span of history to a few thousand earthly years.

I should point out clearly that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura did not personally accept the modified version of the *Bhāgavata* he presented to the Bengali intellectuals. He actually accepted the so-called myths of the *Bhāgavata* as true, and he presented them as such in many of his writings. For example, in his book *Jaiva Dharma*, Bhaktivinoda said this:

Reconstruction of Hindu Chronology

by Sir William Jones

Occidental History	Hindu History	Years from 1788 A.D.	Date
Adam	Menu I, Age I	5794 B.C.	4006 B.C.
Noah	Menu II	4737	2949
Deluge		4138	2350
Nimrod	Hiranyacasipu, Age II	4006	2218
Bel	Bali	3892	2104
	Rama, Age II	3817	2029
	Noah's death	3787	1999
	Pradyota	2817	1029
	Buddha, Age IV	2815	1027
	Nanda	2487	699
	Balin	1937	149
	Vicramaditya	1844	56
	Devapala	1811	23
Christ		1787	1 A.D.
	Narayanpala	1721	67
	Saca	1709	79
Walid		1080	708
Mahmud		786	1002
Shengez		548	1250
Taimur		391	1397
Babur		276	1512
Nadirshah		49	1739

Ages I, II, III, and IV are the Satya-, Treta-, Dvapara-, and Kali-yugas. Menu I is Svayambhuva Manu. Menu II is Vaivasvata Manu.

I have said that the Vaishnava religion came into being as soon as the creatures came into existence. Brahma was the first Vaishnava. Sriman Mahadeva is also a Vaishnava. The ancient Prajapatis are all Vaishnavas. Sri Narada Goswami, who is the fancy-born child of Brahma, is a Vaishnava. . . . You have seen the Vaishnava religion of the beginning of the creation. Then again when Gods, men, demons, etc., have been separately described, we get Prahlada and Dhruva from the very start. . . . Manu's sons and Prahlada are all grandsons of Prajapati, Kashyapa. . . . There is no doubt about it . . . that the pure Vaishnava religion began with the beginning of history. Then the kings of the solar and lunar dynasties and all great and famous sages and hermits became devotees of Vishnu.

This passage was written in response to challengers who argued that Vaiṣṇava *dharma* is a recent development. The passage takes it for granted that beings such as Brahmā, Mahādeva, Nārada, and Prahlāda literally exist as described in the *śāstras*, or Vedic scriptures. Many similar examples can be found in Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writings.

Now, if Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted the literal truth of the *śāstras*, how could he

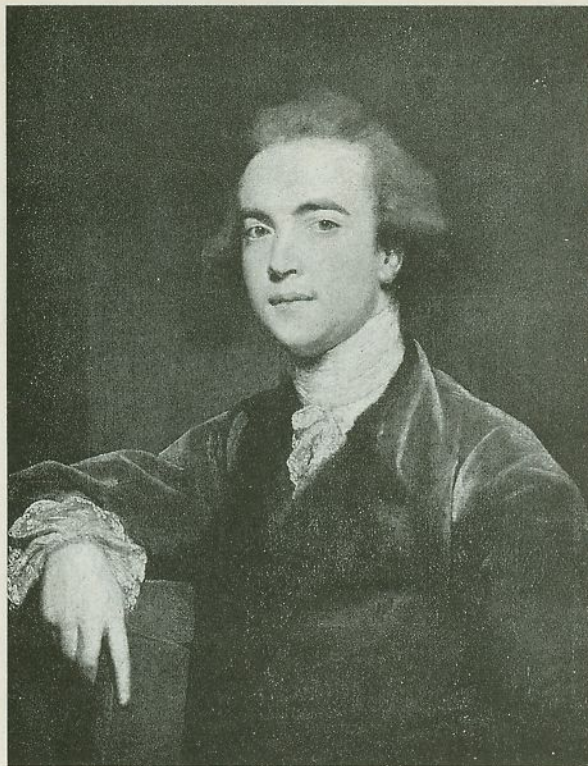
justify making presentations in which he denied it? His grand-disciple Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda has pointed out that there is a precedent for making such indirect presentations of *śāstra*. An interpretation of a text that adheres directly to the dictionary definitions of its words is called *mukhya-vṛtti*, and an imaginary or indirect interpretation is called *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* or *gauṇa-vṛtti*. Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out, "Sometimes . . . as a matter of necessity, Vedic literature is described in terms of the *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* or *gauṇa-vṛtti*, but one should not accept such explanations as permanent truths."¹⁹ In general, one should understand *śāstra* in terms of *mukhya-vṛtti*.

The Theology of Visions

One might grant that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was justified in modifying the *śāstras* to reach out to intellectuals trained to scorn old myths. But serious questions can still be raised: What is the scope for making such a presentation of religion today, and to what extent can such a presentation be regarded as true? Is the mythological material in the Hindu *śāstras* unimportant, so that one might present it as true to people who believe in it and false to people who disbelieve? Or should we accept from modern knowledge that Hindu myths really are false and try to formulate a philosophy that preserves the essential idea of love of God while dispensing with superannuated ideas?

To answer these questions, let us see how we would have to reformulate Vaiṣṇava philosophy to make it readily acceptable to Western intellectuals in the late twentieth century. To do this we must deviate to some extent from the prevailing materialistic framework of modern science. Physical scientists tell us that the mind, with all its conscious experiences, is simply a product of the brain. If we accept this, then all religious experience, whether it be the bliss of Brahman or *prema-bhakti*, love of God, is simply hallucinatory. If this is true, we can forget about religion—unless, of course, we like hallucinations.

For an alternative viewpoint, I will turn to the psychologist William James. Although James was a man of the nineteenth century, he was a Western scientist who applied the methods of empirical scientific research to the phe-



Painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Sir William Jones

nomena of religion. Thus his observations are still relevant today.

As a result of his studies, James reached the following conclusions:

The further limits of our being plunge, it seems to me, into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely "understandable" world. Name it the mystical region, or the supernatural region, whichever you choose. . . . Yet the unseen region in question is not merely ideal, for it produces effects in this world. When we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality, for we are turned into new men, and consequences in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. But that which produces effects within another reality must be termed a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal.²⁰

One could take this idea of a mystical or transcendent dimension and arrive at the following version of Vaiṣṇava philosophy: Such a transcendental region does exist, and it is the eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa. Advanced souls can perceive that realm in meditation by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, and so they are able to enter into Kṛṣṇa's eternal loving pas-

times. But all Purāṇic descriptions of events within the material world have to be understood rationally through modern scientific knowledge. On the whole, the myths in the *Purāṇas* are not literally true. But the stories of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are not simply fantasy. Rather, they are spiritual transmissions into the meditative minds of great souls, and they refer not to this world but to the purely transcendental domain.

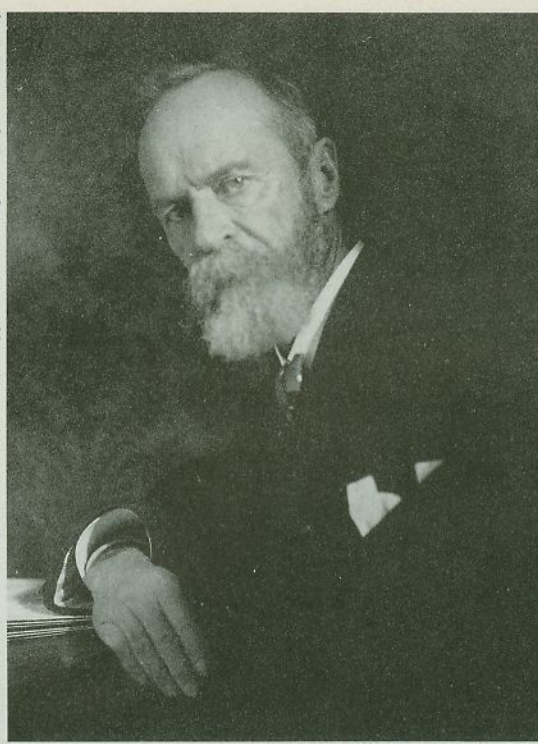
This is a philosophy that might appeal to many, and I will refer to it as the theology of visions. It allows one to retain the idea of love of God, while at the same time avoiding disturbing conflicts between

mythological tales and modern knowledge. It also appears implicitly in the work of some modern scholars of religion who study the *bhakti* tradition.

To illustrate this, I will briefly consider an article, "Shrines of the Mind," by David Haberman, Assistant Professor of Religion at Williams College.²¹ In this article, Haberman argues that Vraja, the traditional place of Kṛṣṇa's manifest *līlās*, is first and foremost a mental shrine, a realm that can be entered and experienced in meditation.

He argues that the physical Vraja, a tract of land near the North Indian city of Mathurā, has only been a major center for the worship of Kṛṣṇa since the sixteenth century, when the followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and other Vaiṣṇavas "rediscovered" the lost sites of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. In fact, says Haberman, these sites never really existed before the sixteenth century, and so they weren't rediscovered. Rather, they were projected onto the physical landscape of Vraja from the transcendental landscape perceived in meditation.

Haberman gives a number of interpretations of what happens when a person meditates on a mental shrine. These range from the contemplation of imaginary scenes in the ordinary sense to entry into "an eternal transcendent



William James

world which is perceptible only to the mind's eye and is reached through meditative technique."²² Since Haberman seems to lean toward the latter, it could be said that he is hinting at a version of the theology of visions: One can enter into Kṛṣṇa's transcendental world by meditation, but Kṛṣṇa never had any actual pastimes in the physical world. Physical, worldly history followed the lines revealed by modern scholarship. This means that many centuries ago in Vraja there may have been various primitive tribes following animistic cults, but there was no Kṛṣṇa literally lifting Govardhana Hill.

Although this religious theory allows one to avoid certain conflicts with modern scholarship, it does have a number of drawbacks. A few of these are the following:

1. This theory is contrary to Vaiṣṇava tradition, so it calls into question the thinking of the many great souls who have supported the tradition. Since those great souls are the very meditators who have seen visions of Kṛṣṇa, how can those visions be real? In other words, why should persons who see the absolute realm believe in the truth of myths that even worldly scholars see to be false?

2. This theory doesn't explain why the worship of Kṛṣṇa should be a recent affair, as scholars claim. If there is an eternal realm of Kṛṣṇa that can be accessed by meditation, why did people begin to access it only recently?

3. What does this theory say about the multiplicity of religions? Are the visions reported in other religious traditions real? If not, then why is it that Vaiṣṇava visions alone are real? If so, then are there many transcendental realms, one for each religion? Or is it that people see in one transcendental realm whatever they are looking for?

4. This theory greatly limits the power of God. If God only appears in visions, what becomes of His role as the creator and controller of the universe? If we let modern science explain the material world, God's role is whittled down to

practically nothing.

5. The theology of visions can easily be transformed into a purely psychological theory of religious experience. After all, this is the view that will be overwhelmingly favored by psychologists, neuroscientists, and physical scientists of all varieties.

In view of objections (1) through (4), objection (5) is almost unavoidable. We are left with a totally mundane theory that explains religion away. In the case of Kṛṣṇa's *līlās*, this line of thinking leads us to especially unpleasant conclusions. Thus Haberman describes meditation on Kṛṣṇa *līlā* as follows: "The desired end is a religious voyeurism and vicarious enjoyment said to produce infinite bliss."²³ Such sad conclusions are avoided in the more balanced approach taken by traditional Vaiṣṇavas, who stress Kṛṣṇa's roles as the supreme creator and the performer of humanly impossible pastimes on earth.

Shifting the Boundary Between Myth and Science

Yet if we start from the theology of visions and proceed in the inductive manner of scholars, we can see how it *could* serve as a steppingstone toward a more satisfactory theory. A starting point for developing such a theory can

be a story related by Haberman about the Vaiṣṇava saint Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura.²⁴

It seems that Narottama was once meditating on boiling milk for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. When the milk boiled over in his meditation, he took the vessel off the fire with his bare hands and got burned in the process. When Narottama awoke from his meditation, he discovered that his hands were actually burned.

There are many stories like this, and I will briefly mention two more. In the second story, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a contemporary of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, was meditating on fanning Lord Caitanya. In Śrīnivāsa's meditation, Lord Caitanya placed His garland around Śrīnivāsa's neck. When Śrīnivāsa awoke from meditation, the unusually fragrant garland was actually there, around his neck.²⁵

In the third story a Vaiṣṇava saint named Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa was sweeping the site of Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance in Vraja. He found a remarkable golden anklet and hid it, since he thought that it was very important. Later, an old lady came to him and asked for the anklet. It turned out that the old lady was really Lalitā, one of the transcendental maid-servants of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The lady finally revealed that the anklet belonged to Rādhā Herself, and then she disclosed her true form as Lalitā.²⁶

What are we to make of such stories? The story of the burned hands might be accepted by many scholars. After all, it is well known that Catholics meditating on the crucifixion of Christ sometimes develop stigmata, in which the wounds of Christ appear on their hands and feet. If meditation can somehow cause bleeding wounds, then maybe it can also cause burns.

The story of the miraculous garland goes one step further. Here a tangible object is said to materialize. This may seem fantastic, but it turns out that there is an extensive literature on materialization. For example, Stephen Braude, a professor of philosophy at the University of Maryland, has argued that many cases of alleged materializations produced by spirit mediums are backed up by solid empirical evidence that deserves serious study.²⁷ If materializations by spiritualists might be factual, why not materializations of beautiful garlands

by saintly persons?

This brings us to the third story. Although this story seems "far out," there are many similar stories in which a transcendent person seems to step into our material continuum, perform some action, and then disappear. Another example would be the story from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in which Kṛṣṇa, as a small boy, approached the saint Mādhavendra Purī, gave him a pot of milk, and then mysteriously disappeared. Mādhavendra Purī drank the milk, thus showing that it was tangible. Later that night he had a dream in which Kṛṣṇa revealed the location of the Gopāla Deity, which had originally been installed by Kṛṣṇa's grandson Vajra and had been hidden during a Muslim attack.²⁸

The stories of the burned hand, the miraculous garland, and the transcendental visits are progressively harder and harder to accept from a conventional scientific standpoint. But it is hard to see how to draw a line between such stories that might possibly be true and ones that definitely cannot. And all the stories seem to hint at energetic exchanges between spiritual and material energy that might add an important new chapter to our scientific knowledge, if only they could be properly studied.

When we study a body of empirical evidence, we always evaluate it with our limiting assumptions. In the end, the conclusions we derive from the evidence may reflect our limiting assumptions as much as they reflect the evidence itself. If the assumptions change, the conclusions will also change, even though the evidence stays the same.

Consider what might happen if all the available evidence about the history of human experience were to be studied not through nineteenth-century rationalism but through a new science in which spiritual transformations of matter were considered a real possibility. The result might be a completely different picture of the past from the one now accepted by scholars.

For one thing, the objections that Sir William Jones expressed about the story of the Pāṇḍava brothers might not seem so weighty. If higher beings can step into our continuum from another realm, then humans might well descend from such beings. The new picture of the past might prove much more compatible with

traditional spiritual teachings than the one that now prevails.

In the late twentieth century there are signs that a broader approach to science may be developing. In the days of Vivekananda and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, mechanistic, reductionistic science appeared to be marching unimpeded from triumph to triumph, and many people believed that it would soon find explanations for everything. But in the late twentieth century this triumphant march has been checked on many different fronts.

For example, physics in the 1890s looked like a closed subject, but in the early decades of the twentieth century it entered a phase of paradox and mystery with the development of relativity theory and quantum mechanics. The mysteries of quantum mechanics continue to inspire scientists to contemplate ideas that would have seemed outrageously mystical at the turn of the century.^{29, 30, 31}

But now physics has encountered an even more serious obstacle. The bold architects of universal physical theories are now realizing that these

theories can never be adequately tested by experiment.³² Thus the Harvard physicist Howard Georgi characterized modern theoretical physics as "recreational mathematical theology."³³

In the mid-twentieth century, computer scientists believed they were on the verge of proving that thought is mechanical, thereby fulfilling La Mettrie's eighteenth-century dream of man as a machine. But in more recent years, even though computers have become more and more powerful, the dream of simulating human intelligence has seemed to recede further and further into the future.

With the discovery of the DNA spiral helix by Watson and Crick in 1953, many scientists thought that the ultimate secret of life had been revealed. Since then, molecular biologists have had tremendous success in shedding light on the mechanisms of living cells. But as molecular biology unveils the incredible complexity of these high-precision mechanisms, the goal of explaining the origin of life seems progressively more difficult to attain.³⁴

These are just a few of the many areas in which the program of mechanistic reductionism seems to be reaching ultimate limits as the twentieth century draws to a close. Perhaps as a result of these developments, many professional scientists are now showing a willingness to consider theoretical ideas and areas of research that have traditionally been taboo.

For example, we now find organizations of professional scientists who openly study phenomena lying on the edge between physical science and the realms of mysticism and the paranormal. Examples are the International Association for New Science (IANS), the Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE), the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS), and



*His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*

International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine (ISSSEEM). These all sponsor regular scientific conferences.

Some of the phenomena these groups study seem similar to the "mythical" phenomena so often reported in old religious texts and in recent accounts of religious experiences. A synergistic interaction between scholars of religion and these new scientific organizations might prove to be a valuable source of new insights for both groups of researchers.

The Direct Presentation Of Vaiṣṇava Teachings

We have discussed how Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura found it necessary to present a modified version of the Vaiṣṇava teachings to young Bengali intellectuals at the high noon of British political and ideological imperialism. But as the sun began to set on the British empire, his son and successor Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī began a vigorous program of directly presenting the Vaiṣṇava conclusions throughout India. This program was taken abroad by his disciple Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who boldly celebrated the ancient Rathayātrā festival of Jagannātha Purī in London's Trafalgar Square.

In the changing climate of scientific opinion in the late twentieth century, the time may have come to openly introduce the traditional teachings of *bhakti* to the world's intellectual communities. The once jarring conflicts between rationalism and traditional religion may progressively fade as science matures and becomes open to the study of mystical phenomena. This opens up the possibility of an approach to religion that is intellectually acceptable and at the same time satisfies the soul's inner desire for love in a transcendental relationship.

This leaves us with one possible objection. Could it be that the Vaiṣṇava teachings, with their specific emphasis on Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme, are guilty of sectarian disregard for other religious traditions? The answer is that, of course, any doctrine can be put forward in a narrow, sectarian way. But as Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura pointed out in his essay on the *Bhāgavata*, the Vaiṣṇava teachings are inherently broad-minded and

acknowledge the value of all religious systems.

The following prayer shows the approach to other religions taken in the *Bhāgavata*:

O my Lord, Your devotees can see You through the ears by the process of bona fide hearing, and thus their hearts become cleansed, and You take Your seat there. You are so merciful to Your devotees that You manifest Yourself in the particular eternal form of transcendence in which they always think of You.³⁵

This verse states that God appears to His devoted worshipers in many different forms, depending on their desires. These forms include the *avatāras* of Kṛṣṇa described in traditional Vaiṣṇava texts, but are not limited to those forms. Indeed, it is said that the expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are uncountable, and they cannot be fully described in the finite scriptures of any one religious community.

The following verse gives some idea of the different religious communities

in the universe, as described by the *Bhāgavata*:

From the forefathers headed by Bhṛgu Muni and other sons of Brahmā appeared many children and descendants, who assumed different forms as demigods, demons, human beings, Guhyakas, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādhars, Cāraṇas, Kindevas, Kinnaras, Nāgas, Kimpuruṣas, and so on. All of the many universal species, along with their respective leaders, appeared with different natures and desires generated from the three modes of material nature. Therefore, because of the different characteristics of the living entities within the universe, there are a great many Vedic rituals, mantras, and rewards.³⁶

This statement is explicitly "mythological," and one can well imagine how Sir William Jones might have reacted to it. But it offers a grand picture of countless races and societies within the universe, all given religious methods suitable for their particular natures. Here the word "Vedic" cannot be limited

to particular Sanskrit texts that now exist in India. Rather, it refers to the sum total of religious systems revealed by the infinite Supreme God for the sake of elevating countless societies of divinely created beings.

As always, the distinguishing feature of the Vaiṣṇava teachings is that God is a real person and His variegated creation is also real. Thus the Vaiṣṇava approach to religious liberality is to regard all genuine religions as real divine revelations. Likewise, the Vaiṣṇava teachings of love of God aim to set in place a relationship of loving service between the real individual soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the performer of real transcendental pastimes.



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2. Vivekananda, 1963, p. 11.
3. Vivekananda, 1963, p. 13.
4. Vivekananda, 1963, p. 14.
5. Jordan, 1987, p. 27.
6. Vivekananda, 1963, p. 17.
7. Majumdar, 1965.
8. Thakur Bhaktivinod, 1986, p. 5.
9. Thakur Bhaktivinod, 1986, p. 6.
10. Jones, 1799, p. 302.
11. Jones, 1799, p. 313.
12. Moore, 1986, p. 334.
13. Moore, 1986, p. 344.
14. Thakur Bhaktivinod, 1986, p. 30.
15. Thakur Bhaktivinod, 1986, p. 30.
16. Thakur Bhaktivinod, 1986, pp. 24–25.
17. Rūpa-vilāsa dāsa, 1989, pp. 138–39.
18. Thakur Bhakti Vinod, 1975, pp. 155–56.
19. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 1975, *Ādi-līlā*, Vol. 2, p. 95.
20. James, 1982, pp. 515–16.
21. Haberman, 1993.
22. Haberman, 1993, p. 31.
23. Haberman, 1993, p. 26.
24. Haberman, 1993, p. 33.
25. Rosen, 1991, pp. 63–64.
26. Rosen, 1991, pp. 119–39.
27. Braude, 1986.
28. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 1975, *Madhya-līlā*, Vol. 2, pp. 12–19.
29. Bohm, 1980.
30. Penrose, 1989.
31. Jahn and Dunne, 1987.
32. Weinberg, 1992.
33. Crease and Mann, 1986, p. 414.
34. Horgan, 1991.
35. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 3.9.11.
36. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.14.5–7.

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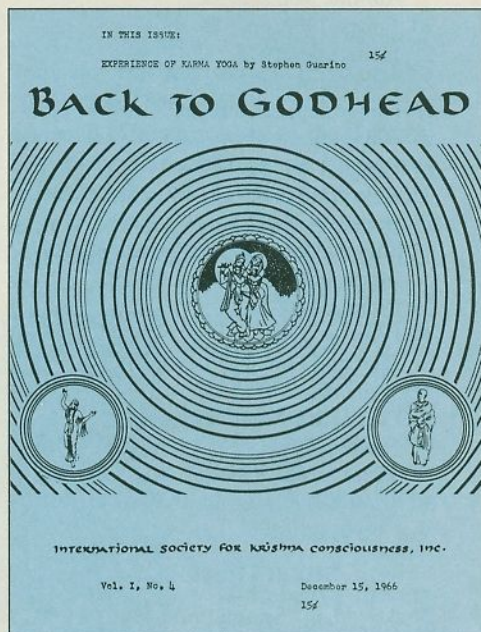
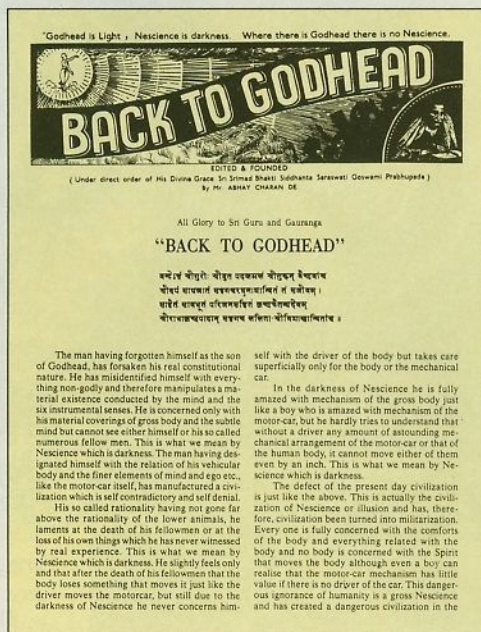
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Back to Godhead 1944-1994 Founded Fifty

Inspired by devotion to his guru and Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda took a bold first step to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking world.

by Satyarāja Dāsa



ON FEBRUARY 14, 1944, a group of devotees gathered to celebrate the appearance day of their spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (1874-1937). Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta had ordered one of them to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. So now, on this auspicious day, that devotee, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, started the English magazine he would later refer to as the beginning of his spiritual life.

In *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, a six-volume biography, Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami tells of Prabhupāda (then known as Abhay) working at home in Calcutta on his first issue:

From his front room at 6 Sita Kanta Banerjee, Abhay conceived, wrote, edited, and typed the manuscript for a magazine. He designed a logo, a long rectangle across the top of the page. In the upper left-hand corner was a figure of Lord Caitanya, effulgent with rays of light like rays from the sun. In the lower right were silhouettes of a crowd of people, in darkness but grop-

The man having forgotten himself as the son of Godhead, has forgotten his real constitutional nature. He has misidentified himself with every thing non-godly and therefore manipulates a material existence conducted by the mind and the six instrumental senses. He is concerned only with his material coverings of gross body and the subtle mind but cannot see either himself or his so called numerous fellow men. This is what we mean by Nescience which is darkness. The man having designated himself with the relation of his vehicular body and the finer elements of mind and ego etc., like the motor-car itself, has manufactured a civilization which is self contradictory and self denial. His so called rationality having not gone far above the rationality of the lower animals, he laments at the death of his fellowmen or at the loss of his own things which he has never witnessed by real experience. This is what we mean by Nescience which is darkness. He slightly feels only and that after the death of his fellowmen that the body loses something that moves is just like the driver moves the motorcar, but still due to the darkness of Nescience he never concerns him-

ing to receive light from Lord Caitanya. And between Lord Caitanya and the people, the title unfurled like a banner—BACK TO GODHEAD. In the lower right corner was a picture of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī seated at his writing, looking up thoughtfully as he composed. Above the logo ran the motto “Godhead is Light, Nescience is Darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no Nescience.”

Under Śrīla Prabhupāda’s supervision, the logo went through several changes over the years. But today, fifty years later, it still matches Śrīla Prabhupāda’s original idea. The only difference is that by the desire of his disciples Śrīla Prabhupāda, rather than his spiri-

self with the driver of the body but takes care superficially only for the body or the mechanical car. In the darkness of Nescience he is fully amazed with mechanism of the gross body just like a boy who is amazed with mechanism of the motor-car, but he hardly tries to understand that without a driver any amount of astounding mechanical arrangement of the motor-car or that of the human body, it cannot move either of them even by an inch. This is what we mean by Nescience which is darkness. The defect of the present day civilization is just like the above. This is actually the civilization of Nescience or illusion and has, therefore, civilization been turned into militarization. Every one is fully concerned with the comforts of the body and everything related with the body and no body is concerned with the Spins that moves the body although even a boy can realize that the motor-car mechanism has little value if there is no driver of the car. This dangerous ignorance of humanity is a gross Nescience and has created a dangerous civilization in the

tual master, now sits across from Lord Caitanya.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purity and scholarship are now well known, and he is known for his books, his disciples, and his lifetime of devotion. But when he began *Back to Godhead*, few knew of his spiritual gifts, and fewer still came forward to help him.

In fact, between 1944 and 1960 Śrīla Prabhupāda published most of the issues almost single-handedly. The magazine then was a tabloid—one sheet folded in half, making four pages of type. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote nearly all the articles, oversaw the printing, and sold or gave out every copy (one thousand per issue), mostly by approaching people on the street.

Years Ago

Producing *Back to Godhead* was a struggle. In the very beginning, after Prabhupāda had selected a printer and a distributor, he was denied paper. Because of World War II, India had a paper shortage. Śrīla Prabhupāda persisted, however, and finally received permission to print his first issue—forty-four pages.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami writes: “It was 1944, and Abhay specifically addressed the crisis of world war. . . . After four years of fighting, costing millions of human lives, the second world war within twenty years was still scourging the earth. . . .

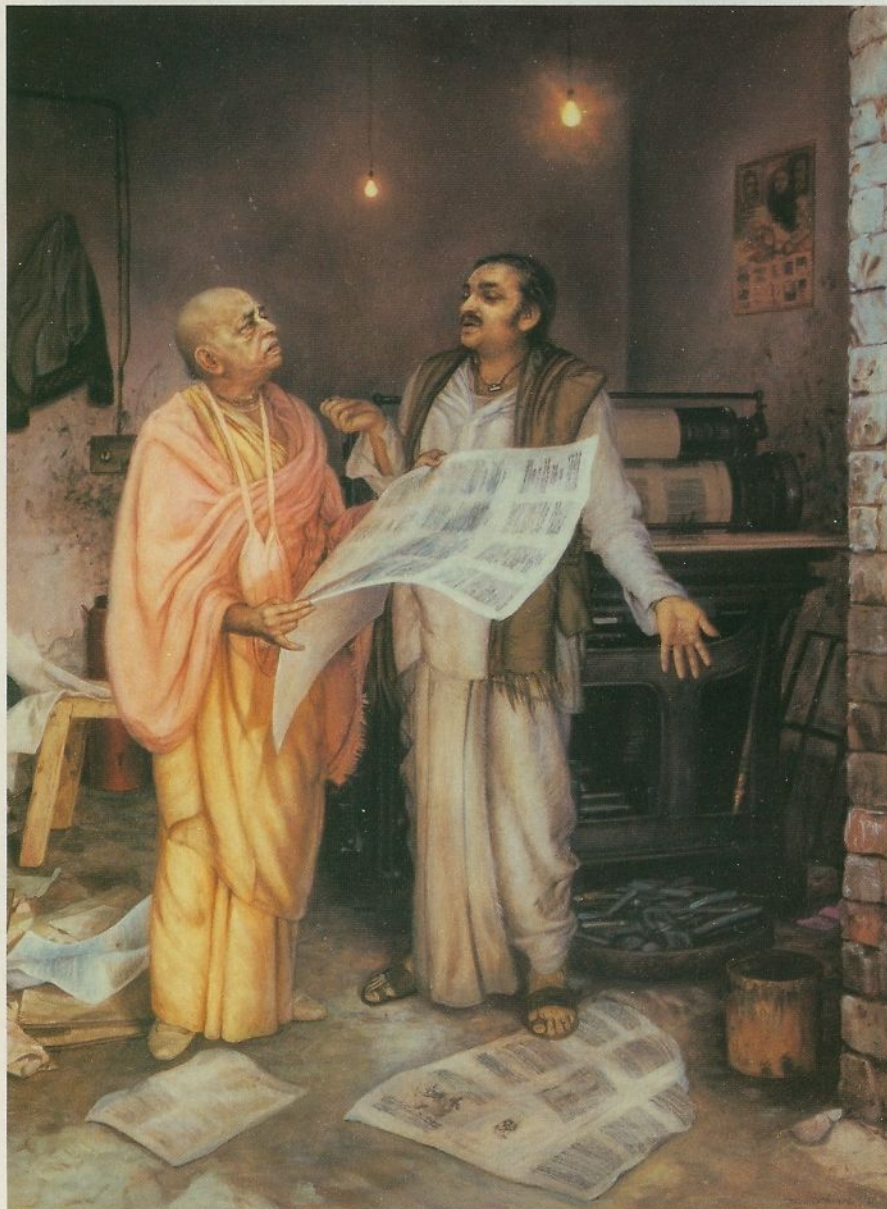
“Abhay quoted the Archbishop of Canterbury:

In every quarter of earth men long to be delivered from the curse of War and to find, in a world which has regained its peace, respite from the harshness and bitterness of the world they have known till now. But so often they want the Kingdom of Heaven without its King, the kingdom of God without God. And they cannot have it.

OUR RESOLVE MUST BE BACK TO GOD. We make plans for the future for peace amongst nations and for civil security at home. That is quite right enough and it would be wrong to neglect it. But all our plans will come to shipwreck on the rock of human selfishness unless we turn to God. BACK TO GOD, that is the chief need of England and of every nation.

“Abhay told how he had come to begin *Back to Godhead* magazine—how he had written a letter [in the 1930s] two weeks before the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and how his spiritual master had instructed him to preach in English.”

Prabhupāda carried out this instruction by presenting an English magazine focusing on the concerns of the English-speaking world and written for people with Western sensibilities. The magazine offered translations and explanations of ancient Vedic texts alongside political and sociological commentaries, and spiritual views on current events. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote about subjects ranging from the war to Theosophy to life on other planets. Times were tough, though, and money was scarce. And so, after only two issues, Śrīla Prabhupāda had to stop printing.



Painting by Yaduram Devi Das

In the opening article of the first *Back to Godhead* (opposite page, left), Śrīla Prabhupāda explained the magazine's purpose. In 1966, his disciples designed covers (opposite page, right) to attract the young people of New York's Lower East Side. Above, in Delhi Prabhupāda would inspect press proofs for the early BTGs.



In a Delhi tea stall in 1956 (left), Prabhupāda tries to sell his *Back to Godhead*. Below, Indra Pramada Dāsa pastes up an issue of BTG in the 1970s. In 1990, Yamarāja Dāsa (bottom), who has been with *Back to Godhead* for twenty years, began designing and laying out the magazine electronically.

Painting by Yamarāja Dāsa

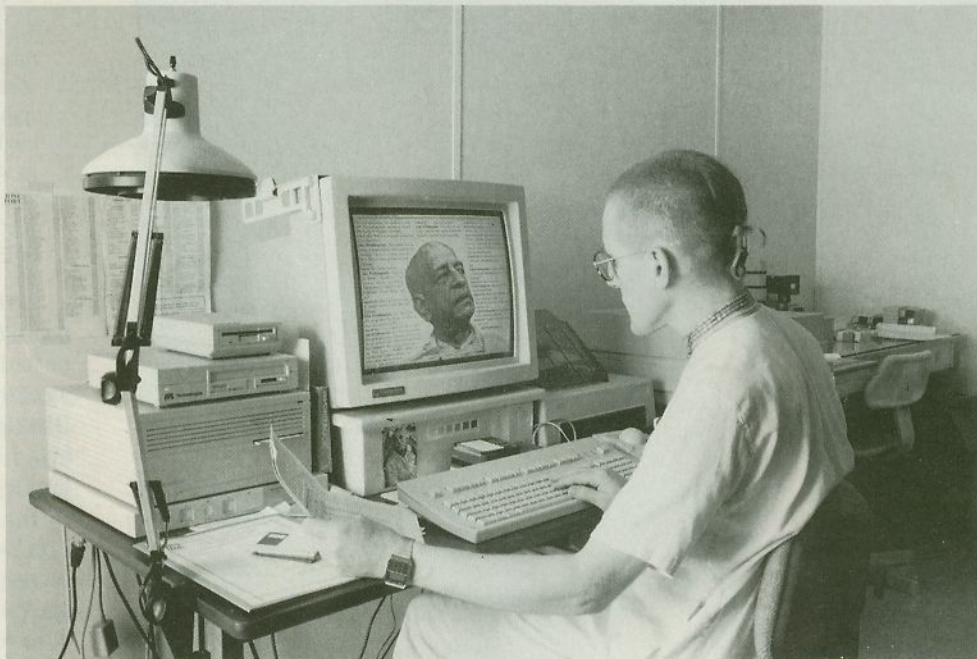


As the years passed, Prabhupāda kept writing, and he kept meditating on how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In 1952 he and his family moved to Allahabad, where he was able to revive *Back to Godhead*, making a new beginning in February 1952. He was still doing most of the writing, and all of the typing, editing, meeting with printers, and so on. But now, in Allahabad, he was better set up to distribute BTG to respectable Indian people and send it to important people around the world.

He soon went to Jhansi, about four hundred miles west of Allahabad. There he met Ācārya Prabhākara (then Prabhakar Misra), who was to become his first disciple. Together they continued printing *Back to Godhead* and canvassed for funding to keep it going.

Years later, when Prabhupāda started printing and distributing the magazine in Delhi, he would go to tea stalls and spend hours to sell even one copy.

In 1965 Śrīla Prabhupāda traveled to



the United States and opened the first center of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), in New York City. Soon after, in October of 1966, he relaunched *Back to Godhead*. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the job of writing and publishing *Back to Godhead* to his first American disciples. The early issues were printed on a mimeograph

machine Prabhupāda bought second-hand from a country club in Queens. Setting a lofty goal, Śrīla Prabhupāda told his disciples they should work hard and make BTG as popular as *Time*, *Life*, or *Reader's Digest*.

Though since then BTG has come a long way, it still hasn't quite caught up with *Time* or *Reader's Digest*. And that's

hardly surprising. Most people have yet to see the importance of self-realization. So they spend their money on magazines that speak to their conditioning and material desires. Despite religious and quasi-spiritual affiliations, they ultimately think the purpose of human life is to enjoy the senses. To them, self-realization is merely an addendum, some peripheral curiosity one can add—if one so chooses—to an otherwise full life of work and pleasure. They don't see themselves as essentially

TIME." They say that they are too busy earning money for maintaining the body and soul together. But when we ask them what they mean by the "soul," they have nothing to reply. . . . But everybody should know from the Bhagavat Geeta that the body is the outward dress. . . . So if the dress is taken care of only, without any care of the real person—it is sheer foolishness and a waste of time.

Without understanding the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, modern civi-

it was started: the respirtualization of human society. People who do not take advantage of *Back to Godhead* are missing a golden opportunity to respirtualize their consciousness.

Therefore, those with insight and sincerity of heart will take this opportunity—*Back to Godhead's* golden anniversary—to make a vow: "I will become like one of those people on the BTG logo and move toward Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the golden incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa."



Śrīla Prabhupāda looks over the November 1975 issue of *Back to Godhead*.

spiritual beings and therefore can't understand the relevance and urgency of *Back to Godhead's* message.

So when approaching people to try to interest them in BTG, devotees of Kṛṣṇa often find that people don't want to take the time. Prabhupāda addressed this same concern years ago, in the March 1956 issue of BTG:

When we approach some gentleman and request him to become a reader of "Back to Godhead," sometimes we are replied to with the words "NO

lization treads a path that can only lead to pain: the path of misidentifying the body with the self. If someone thinks he is his clothes, he's going to feed his shirt and bathe his pants. That is the situation today. Therefore, despite economic and scientific advancement, people are dissatisfied.

Back to Godhead aims to deliver people from their dissatisfaction by shining the light of Kṛṣṇa consciousness into the darkness of the modern age. Despite obstacles, *Back to Godhead* continues to pursue the goal for which

Satyarāja Dāsa, a long-time contributor to Back to Godhead, is the author of Food for the Spirit, The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan, and several other books. ☸

NOTE: The *Back to Godhead* staff thanks Balabhadra Dāsa, president of ISKCON Scotland, and his wife, Ratna-rañjinī Devī Dāsī, for their generous contribution toward the improvement and development of BTG's desktop publishing system.

The Saffron Berets

*Amid the bombs and bullets of a civil war,
courageous devotees deliver
Kṛṣṇa's mercy in Sukhumi, Georgia,
in the former Soviet Union.*

by Priyavrata Dāsa

April 16, 1993

AMBARĪŚA DĀSA, president of the ISKCON temple in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, is a native of Georgia. Wearing an army uniform and handing out a few hot *samosās*,* he convinced the Tbilisi airport officials to get us on the next flight, me and Murāri Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, my translator and traveling partner. The Aeroflot plane was packed, half with soldiers, half civilians. I noticed a strange silence on board and asked Murāri why. He looked at me soberly and said, "Probably because there's a dead body in the front."

Thirty minutes later we stepped off the plane in Sukhumi, the capital of the province of Abkhazia. Once a popular tourist resort, Sukhumi was now the center of a civil war.

Parjanya Mahārāja Dāsa had arranged to pick us up at the stairs to the



Above: Murāri Kṛṣṇa Dāsa (left) and the author stand in front of one of the many Georgian tanks that roamed the Sukhumi streets during their visit. The Sukhumi devotees enjoy good relations with soldiers on both sides of the war. Left: Murāri Kṛṣṇa Dāsa inspects the room where Bhakta Marhas usually sleeps. Fortunately, Marhas was at the temple the night the bomb hit.

*Non-English terms used in this article are explained in a glossary at the end.



plane. Driving swiftly toward the temple, he pointed out some of the devastation from the last six months—trees felled, shops abandoned, roads blown apart, blocks of flats destroyed, hotels burnt to the ground. Ours was the only civilian car on the street.

Parjanya suggested we stop at one of the distribution points for Hare Krishna Food for Life. “They’re serving lunch right now.” We drove past a

military base and a line of tanks and then through a street blockade before arriving at a dingy storefront bearing a faded Russian sign: “Stalovar” (eating place). A crowd of old people had already gathered, and more were just arriving. Big overcoats, Russian hats, men with unshaven faces. The people looked depressed.

The room was dark, dirty, and bare. It had once been a cheap restaurant;

now it was a place for serving Kṛṣṇa’s *prasādam*. Bhakta Marhas, holding incense sticks in his left hand, expertly served the long line of people. I didn’t ask why he held onto the incense. It was obvious—water was scarce, so many of these people hadn’t bathed for days.

Suddenly an explosion shook the building. We raced out to see what was happening. A paint factory a hundred



yards up the road had been hit by a shell. A crowd gathered to watch as the factory burned to the ground. To the local people it was a type of entertainment. They were used to this by now.

Murāri gestured we should get out of there fast, before another shell hit, so we started moving. Marhas flung the pots into the trailer and followed in his tractor close behind us.

We arrived at a little white house in a back street of Sukhumi. It was the temple. Like all ISKCON temples, it was an embassy of Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world.

That night while we took *prasādam*, shells hit just a few hundred yards away.

Vakreśvara Dāsa, the Sukhumi temple president, said the devotees were expecting a major attack at any time. "It sounds like the bombs are getting closer," said Bhakta Marhas. "Tonight could be the beginning." We held a *Bhagavad-gītā* class as shells exploded and machine guns rattled away in the background.

As I walked out of the temple room after the class, Bhakta Sergey, the fifteen-year-old *pūjārī*, came in carrying a candle, preparing to put the Deities to rest. He seemed indifferent to the gunshots, his face as serene as the full moon yet aglow with determination. Despite the difficulties, he was absorbed

in caring for the Deities, Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi. "Doesn't all this noise bother you, Sergey?" I asked. "No," he replied, "the soldiers are just playing."

As we prepared to rest for the night, shells kept raining down, seeming to get closer and closer. I winced at the sound of every shot and explosion. I lay in my sleeping bag and prayed to Kṛṣṇa that since I might not live through the night, maybe He would be kind enough to allow me to remember Him in my dreams. I knew I was in the safest place in the city—Kṛṣṇa's temple.

April 17

Today I spoke with an army colo-



In the Sukhumi temple kitchen a devotee prepares the evening meal for the Deities and the devotees.

Fifteen-year-old Bhakta Sergey offers a meal to the temple Deities.



Bhakta Marhas adds grains to the porridge in Food for Life's reliable wood stove, donated by the Georgian army.



nel. The colonel spoke Georgian, so Murāri translated. I told the colonel that the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has the solutions to all the material and spiritual problems of the world. Handing him a book, I said, "All the problems of the world are the result of one thing—forgetfulness of God. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has come to teach people what they have forgotten. This book is about God. Please take it and read it."

Hints of tears appeared in the colonel's eyes. "I will definitely try to read it and explain it to my colleagues," he said. "I will remember your face and what you have told me. Thank you, thank you."

April 18

It was Easter, so Bhakta Marhas decided to prepare some sweet-bread sticks for the neighbors. Seeing Marhas at the door, a Christian man said, "Actually, you people are the true Christians, but somehow you prefer to call yourselves Kṛṣṇas."

April 19

The Sukhumi devotees were happy to have us with them. Practically no one



At the temple gate, devotees load prasādam onto the Food for Life trailer.

had visited them for six months, and they were missing their leader, Mayūradhvaja Dāsa, who was in Moscow undergoing a heart operation.

Mayūradhvaja Dāsa had begun the Sukhumi program in August 1992, at the beginning of the fighting. Since then, without fail the Sukhumi devotees had been stoking up the fires of their cher-

ished wood-fueled pressure cooker, donated by the Georgian army. The cooker, with its green paint peeling off and its black chimney, is a wonderful sight for any seasoned cook.

At 7:30 sharp every morning, Bhakta Vilodya, wearing a saffron beret, sorts out the pots and water barrels while another devotee gathers the rice, oats,

and millet and begins washing them under the tap on the front lawn. The Sukhumi Food for Life kitchen is set up in the temple's front driveway. Spoons and ladles hang from trees.

I went out in the trailer with Marhas. His brother, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, maneuvered the tractor through the vacant streets, dodging potholes and keeping an eye



Food for Life recipients help unload the trailer at a prasādam distribution site—a former restaurant. The sign reads “Stalovar” (eating place).





Sukhumi residents await their only meal of the day.

out for danger. The streets were quiet. Most people stayed inside. Murāri laughed and said, "Only madmen and Hare Kṛṣṇas would dare drive down the streets like this." I agreed. Shots and shells fired only half a mile away. An occasional bullet sailed twenty feet above our heads.

After twenty minutes we arrived at the first distribution point, located behind a block of flats in the orchard-laden mountains of North Sukhumi. This was a short stop, only a hundred elderly people. But many of them collected rations for their families, so they eagerly packed *prasādam* into their little aluminum pots and plastic jars.

Our next stop was the most dangerous of all—the west side. At times the fighting comes within a hundred yards of where the devotees give out free porridge. I was apprehensive, so Marhas encouraged me with the promise of some sweet-bread sticks and milk when we returned to the temple. "What if we don't return?" I said with half a smile. He replied, "We'll just keep chanting all the way."

We neared the west side. Worse devastation. Many houses ruined from bombs. Everywhere buildings and shops riddled with bullets. Again, except for an occasional army jeep, we were the only ones on the road.

Stopping at a bombed building, we jumped out of the trailer and were greeted by a small dark-skinned Russian woman named Mara. She wore a colorful headband. Half her teeth were missing. As soon as she saw us she chanted, "*Haribol! Hare Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!*" and then she began blowing a whistle and calling out to the local residents hiding in the buildings. Suddenly, crowds of old people and children appeared, carrying pots, jugs, plates, and thermoses, and began converging on our tractor, all of them chanting, "*Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hare Kṛṣṇa!*"

Mara grabbed the handle of a fifty-liter pot of porridge and led us into a



"If it wasn't for you boys," this woman told us, "we would all be dead."



A bowl of porridge and words of encouragement from Bhakta Marhas.



Mara cleans the pots. "Nyet problem," she says.



The Sukhumi devotees in their driveway kitchen, where they prepare Kṛṣṇa prasādam for the war against illusion.

building while all her friends followed. The people quickly assembled into a long line and waited for Bhakta Marhas to dish out the mercy.

“We were all respectable people before this war,” one woman told me. “I always had money, enough food, a nice house. Now I have nothing, absolutely nothing, except the clothes I wear. All

my belongings have been pillaged by the enemy soldiers.”

Marhas is a lively fellow, with a cheeky smile and a strong, youthful body. He encourages everyone to chant louder and then leads a short *kirtana*. They all respond.

Many of these people are grandmothers and children. When the war broke

out, most of the young men and women either fled the city or were drafted into the Georgian army.

One woman, her voiced choked, told me, “If it wasn’t for you boys we would all be dead.”

All the shops are empty, and all the incoming roads are blocked. There is no food in Sukhumi. Practically speaking,

Sukhumi Food for Life

An Update

In September, Abkhazian forces broke a truce with the Georgian army and took over Sukhumi. The devotees couldn't leave the temple without risk of being shot. And even if they'd wanted to keep passing out food, they couldn't—the Abkhazians had captured the boat carrying all their food supplies. The program had to stop for the first time in a year.

Mayūradhvaja Dāsa, the director of the program—and a Georgian—tried to secure food by fearlessly driving around the city as soldiers shot at his car. He had just returned from open-heart surgery in Moscow. The doctors had told him to relax.

Food Supplies Recovered

Mayūradhvaja then heard that Rāghava Paṇḍita Dāsa, who had been running the Food for Life program in Gudauta, Georgia, had received the shipment of food stolen on its way to Sukhumi. Abkhazian soldiers had appreciated Rāghava Paṇḍita's efforts to save the local people and decided to hand the shipment over to him.

In Sukhumi, some of the old people the devotees had been feeding died after five days without food. The devotees waited in expectation as the Abkhazian soldiers blasted the city, killing every Georgian in sight. Fortunately many of the Sukhumi devotees were Russian by birth, which meant they were a little safe. Of course, in war no one is safe. Some of the devotees decided to leave. Mayūrdhvaja encouraged the rest. "I'm sure Kṛṣṇa will protect us," he told them.

Transcendental Soldiers

He was right; the Abkhazian soldiers spared the devotees' lives. They avoided shooting at the devotees or their temple, even though many houses on the same street were blasted. The devotees stayed inside chanting,

while Bhakta Sergey, now Śikhāmaṇi Dāsa, continued his worship of Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi.

Bullets criss-crossed the sky. No one could leave or enter the city. Within a week, three Aeroflot planes were shot down, killing hundreds of civilians. Another plane was blown up as it prepared to leave the Sukhumi airport carrying two hundred Georgian citizens trying to escape.

Eventually the fighting subsided, and Rāghava Paṇḍita arrived in town from Gudauta with his Food for Life team and began arranging for food distribution. He had supplies and was



The co-founders of Sukhumi's Hare Krishna Food for Life program: Mayūradhvaja Dāsa (left), a Georgian, and Yamarāja Dāsa, an Abkhazian.

full of enthusiasm. The Sukhumi devotees could get back to work. Soldiers even began coming to the temple to take *prasādam*. Before the siege Georgian soldiers would sometimes come; now the native Abkhazian soldiers came. It seemed the devotees were transcendental to politics and foolish nationalism, and the soldiers on both sides unconsciously knew it. The devotees were not on anyone's side. They were here to help.

In Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, a television news reporter commented that practically everyone and everything in Sukhumi was being shot at, except a group of *brāhmaṇa*'s who were feeding the people.

Escaping Sukhumi

Mayūrdhvaja eventually had to leave Sukhumi to organize Food for Life in Tbilisi, where many Georgians from Sukhumi had fled. But all routes to Tbilisi were blocked, with check points everywhere. It would be dangerous trying to get out. Mayūrdhvaja decided to try something even the Georgian soldiers wouldn't dare—drive cross-country.

Mayūradhvaja and three other devotees passed through many check points, finally arriving at the last one on the border between Abkhazia and Georgia. There was a line of cars a mile long. Everyone was being checked: if you were Georgian, you'd be shot. Two of the devotees were Georgian.

After waiting for some time, Mayūrdhvaja got out of the car and walked to the front to speak with the Abkhazian soldiers. He told them about the Food for Life mission. One of the soldiers recognized him; another had heard something about Hare Krishna Food for Life. They told him to return to his car and drive up to the front. After passing the long line of cars, Mayūrdhvaja and the devotees passed through the border without inspection. They made it out. Kṛṣṇa had protected them once again.

The Program Continues

Mayūrdhvaja is now organizing for food supplies to be sent to Tbilisi, where thousands of Georgian citizens struggle to survive, having fled Sukhumi. He wants to return to Sukhumi, despite the danger.

"I have a taste," he explains. "I want to help these people. Someone has to do it, and it may as well be us. There is nothing more beneficial than Kṛṣṇa *prasādam*. This is the real welfare work—we're saving people's souls."

these people exist on whatever they receive from the devotees.

“I think you boys must be saints,” a bearded man said. “How is it possible that in the middle of war we are receiving such nice food as this? You must be sent by God. I’m convinced.”

I looked over at Marhas. He was calling out “Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hare Kṛṣṇa! Gaurāṅga!” Everyone responded excitedly while he filled their pots.

After an hour we served the last people and then got set to go home. Mara was washing the pots, easily maneuvering them under the tap. With a toothless grin, she looked up and said, “Nyet problem. Nyet problem.”

When we returned to the temple, as

promised I was treated to a plate full of hot sweet-bread and a cup of warm milk. It had been a long and eventful day for me, just one of many for the Sukhumi devotees. ☀

GLOSSARY

Samosā: a kind of vegetable pastry.

Prasādam: food first offered to Kṛṣṇa and then distributed. (literally, “mercy”)

Pujāri: a devotee who tends to the worship of the temple Deities. The Deities are respected as being forms of Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi: Lord Kṛṣṇa’s forms as Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who appeared on earth to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Haribol: “Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa!” (a commonly used greeting)

Gaurāṅga: a name of Lord Caitanya.

Priyavrata Dāsa, an Australian, joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1983. For the last four years he has run a Hare Krishna Food for Life program from New Gokula, a Kṛṣṇa conscious farm in New South Wales. He recently accepted the position of global coordinator for Hare Krishna Food for Life.

Note: Since this article was written Bhakta Marhas, Bhakta Sergey, and Bhakta Vilodya have received spiritual initiation. Marhas is now Marhasvān Dāsa, Sergey is Śikhāmaṇi Dāsa, and Vilodya is Vṛṣākapi Dāsa.

CURSE (continued from page 24)

pressed down his wife by force. The goddess writhed and struggled with all her strength to stop him, but desire had already possessed him, and Pāṇḍu remembered nothing of the curse, as by force he went upon Mādri in the act of love. As if to end his life, the great Kuru monarch, throwing off his long fear of the curse, fell under the sway of mind-churning Cupid.

[God is said to be the force of time, which carries away all things in this world.] Destiny, as revealed through time, so harassed Pāṇḍu’s senses and bewildered his intelligence that he lost his reason and even his ordinary awareness. O Kuru child, even as he united with his wife, that most virtuous king was joined to the inexorable workings of time.

Tightly embracing the unfeeling king, Mādri wailed in agony. Again and again her tormented cries pierced the forest sky until Kuntī came running with all five boys to see what was wrong. As they came near the fallen king, Mādri cried out to Kuntī, “Come here alone! The children must stay where they are!”

Hearing these words, Kuntī held the children back and proceeded alone. [Knowing intuitively what had happened,] she moaned to herself: “My life is over! My life is finished!” Then she saw Pāṇḍu and Mādri lying on the ground, and every one of Kuntī’s limbs was seized with sorrow, and she wailed in pain.

“I always protected him!” she sobbed, “and he was a self-realized soul,

in full control of himself. O Pāṇḍu, you knew that the forest *brāhmaṇa* had cursed you. How could you violate the curse?”

[Trembling with pain, Kuntī turned to Mādri.] “You of all people, Mādri, were meant to protect the king. How could you lust for him in this secluded forest? The poor king was always worried about the curse. How could he be so agitated with desire that he would come to you in a secluded place? O Mādri, you are blessed. You are far more fortunate than I; you have seen Pāṇḍu’s face in his rapture of desire.”

Mādri said:

The king was allured by me. I tried again and again to stop him, but he refused to turn back, as if he himself would make the *brāhmaṇa*’s words come true.”

Kuntī said:

I am the elder of his religious wives, and if our years of faithful service are to bear fruit, then the first reward is for the elder. Do not turn me back, Mādri, from that which must come to be. I am going to follow our lord who has now passed away. You should rise now! You can let go of him, [for I shall die with Pāṇḍu on the funeral pyre.] Take care of these children!

Mādri said:

I must follow my husband, for he will not return. My desires for him were not satisfied. As my senior, please let me do it! The great Bhārata king was approaching me with desire at the moment of his

death. How could I thwart his love, even in the halls of Yamarāja? And were I to remain in this world, Kuntī, I could not treat your children like my own. I will act out my real character, and thus, noble lady, evil would truly lay hands on me. Therefore, Kuntī, you must take care of my boys like your sons, for you can actually do it. After all, the king was longing for me when he passed away. My body is to be burned on the funeral pyre along with that of the king. The bodies must be completely covered. O noble woman, do me this kindness! Be careful, and do what is best for the children! I see nothing else to be said.

Vaiśampāyana said:

Pāṇḍu was the best of men, and the daughter of the Madra king loved him with a sacred vow. Now that famous woman hurriedly mounted his funeral pyre. ☀

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.



EVERY TOWN & VILLAGE

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

WORLD NEWS

North America

A millionaire's boat stall has become a shrine to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The boat stall, once owned by Lawrence ("body by") Fisher, was part of Fisher's waterfront mansion in Detroit. The mansion now serves as ISKCON's Detroit temple and cultural center. The presiding Deity at the boat-stall-turned-shrine is Lord Kṛṣṇa's form as Śrī-nāthajī. Attendance for the opening of the shrine: three thousand people.

Photo courtesy ISKCON World Review



Lord Śrīnāthajī at ISKCON Detroit.

A Rathayātrā cart that sets up in less than an hour has been designed and built by Canadian devotee Abhaya Caraṇa Dāsa. The transportable cart weighs 4,000 pounds, stands 37 feet high, and has wheels 6 feet across. Abhaya Caraṇa hopes the cart will inspire more and more temples to bring the Rathayātrā festival to their city. Interested devotees can reach him through ISKCON's temple in Montreal.

The ISKCON temple in Laguna Beach, California, was unharmed during the October fires there that burned hundreds of homes and thousands of acres of land.

Europe

Thousands of vacationers in Italy came forward to pull the ropes of Lord Jagannātha's cart at the Rathayātrā parade this past summer. The parade was held in Viareggio, in the heart of the

Italian Riviera. At the festival site, devotees sold three hundred books and passed out two thousand plates of *prasādam*.

Poland's National Museum put on a cultural exhibit in October, "The Touch of Govinda." The two-day exhibit, organized by local ISKCON devotees, included chanting, Bharat Natyam dances, a Vedic fire sacrifice, and lectures on yoga and reincarnation. About four hundred people attended.



Abhaya Caraṇa Dāsa's transportable Rathayātrā cart at the Montreal festival.

Devotees in Paris observed Janmāṣṭamī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance day, by celebrating the twentieth year since Śrīla Prabhupāda installed the Paris Deities of Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Parīśīvara. A week before Janmāṣṭamī, the devotees held the first Paris Rathayātrā since 1982.

India

ISKCON Calcutta is constructing a five-story building at 3 Albert Road, behind the present ISKCON temple. The building will provide offices, guest-rooms, living facilities, kitchens, and rooms for serving *prasādam*. The building is scheduled to be finished by June.

The chief minister of the south Indian state of Karnataka talked with ISKCON devotees about their plans for a farm and retreat in the Karnataka hills. The chief minister, Sri

Photo courtesy ISKCON World Review

Back to Godhead gets most of its news from ISKCON World Review, the newspaper of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. For more detailed news, subscribe to ISKCON World Review (see page 55).

Veerappa Moily, met the devotees during their Rathayātrā festival in Kollur. They also presented him with a copy of the Bhaktivedanta Books Trust's *Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtra*.

of Ipoh. After bowing in front of Lord Jagannātha, the dragon danced excitedly for thirty minutes for the pleasure of the Lord and the crowd. In August, the festival moved on to Teluk Intan and Seramban. (The dragon troupe stayed behind.)

South America The president of Colombia recently received Śrīla

Prabhupāda's *Science of Self-Realization* from Dhṛta Vrata Dāsa, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples.

Mauritius More than eight thousand people attended the Janmāṣṭamī

festival at the Hare Kṛṣṇa farm outside Bon Accueil. An equally large crowd showed up at the ISKCON center in town. Devotees at the farm offered Lord Kṛṣṇa 250 preparations in honor of His appearance.

Malaysia A Chinese dragon unexpectedly appeared at ISKCON's Jagan-

nātha Chariot Festival in July in the northern city



A Chinese-dragon troupe dances for Lord Jagannātha in Malaysia.

Photo courtesy ISKCON World Review

PADAYĀTRĀ NEWS

Padayātrā India

The Indian Padayātrā has passed through tens of thousands of towns and villages on its 35,000 km journey. It is headed by Jaya Vijaya Dāsa, who has been on the road nonstop since 1985. Last June, in the state of Orissa, the party began its third trip around India. The Indian *padayātrīs* plan to log 50,000 kms by 1996.



Padayātrā in the former Soviet Union.

Padayātrā Europe

A team of devotees from Bhaktivedanta Manor, outside London, brought Padayātrā to London, rural England, and several other countries last year. Last year they walked, chanted, and held programs in Sweden, Germany, Luxembourg, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia.

Another Padayātrā is working its way from England to

Moscow. After traveling through France, Spain, and Italy, in August the devotees began walking through Greece.

Padayātrā America

Begun in 1989, the American Padayātrā has traveled 2,700 kms. Last year the devotees completed their walk through Central America. They are now beginning a South American tour.

Padayātrā Canada

Last summer devotees held a ten-day Padayātrā in the greater Toronto area. They called it "The 108 km Peace Walk." From twenty-five to seventy people took part daily.

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, Letchmore Heath, Watford, Herts. WD2 8EP, England.
Phone: +44 (92) 385-7244

THE OPULENCE OF THE DEVOTEES

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 explaining to His mother, Devahūti, the glories of devotional service to the Lord. As the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Lord Kapila tells how by absorption in devotional service devotees gain eternal, transcendental opulences.

THIRDCANTO/CHAPTER 25

36 तैर्दर्शनीयावयवैरुदार-

विलासहासेक्षितवामसूक्तैः ।

हृतात्मनो हृतप्राणांश्च भक्ति-

रनिच्छतो मे गतिमर्षीं प्रयुङ्क्ते ॥३६॥

tair darśanīyāvayavair udāra-
vilāsa-hāsekṣita-vāma-sūktaiḥ
hṛtātmano hṛta-prāṇāṁś ca bhaktiḥ
anicchato me gatim aṣvīm prayuṅkte

taiḥ—by those forms; darśanīya—charming; avayavaiḥ—whose limbs; udāra—exalted; vilāsa—pastimes; hāsa—smiling; ikṣita—glances; vāma—pleasing; sūktaiḥ—whose delightful words; hṛta—captivated; ātmanah—their minds; hṛta—captivated; prāṇām—their senses; ca—and; bhaktiḥ—devotional service; anicchataḥ—unwilling; me—My; gatim—abode; aṣvīm—subtle; prayuṅkte—secures.

Upon seeing the charming forms of the Lord, smiling and attractive, and hearing His very pleasing words, the pure devotee almost loses all other consciousness. His senses

are freed from all other engagements, and he becomes absorbed in devotional service. Thus in spite of his unwillingness, he attains liberation without separate endeavor.

PURPORT: There are three divisions of devotees—first-class, second-class, and third-class. Even the third-class devotees are liberated souls. It is explained in this verse that although they do not have knowledge, simply by seeing the beautiful decoration of the Deity in the temple, the devotee is absorbed in thought of Him and loses all other consciousness. Simply by fixing oneself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, engaging the senses in the service of the Lord, one is imperceptibly liberated. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Simply by discharging uncontaminated devotional service as prescribed in the scriptures, one becomes equal to Brahman. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*. This means that the living entity in his original state is Brahman because he is part and parcel of the Supreme Brahman. But simply because of his forgetfulness of his real nature as an eternal servitor of the Lord, he is overwhelmed and captured by *māyā*. His forgetfulness of his real constitutional position is *māyā*. Otherwise he is eternally Brahman.

When one is trained to become conscious of his position, he understands that he is the servitor of the Lord. “Brahman” refers to a state of self-realization. Even the third-class devotee—who is not advanced in knowledge of the Absolute Truth but simply offers obeisances with great devotion, thinks of the Lord, sees the Lord in the temple, and brings forth flowers and fruits to offer to the Deity—becomes imperceptibly liberated. *Śraddhayānvitāḥ*: with

great devotion the devotees offer worshipful respects and paraphernalia to the Deity.

The Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, and Rāma and Sītā are very attractive to devotees, so much so that when they see the statue decorated in the temple of the Lord they become fully absorbed in thought of the Lord. That is the state of liberation. In other words, it is confirmed herewith that even a third-class devotee is in the transcendental position, above those who are trying for liberation by speculation or by other methods. Even great impersonalists like Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the four Kumāras were attracted by the beauty of the Deities in the temple, by the decorations, and by the aroma of *tulasī* offered to the Lord, and they became devotees. Even though they were in the liberated state, instead of remaining impersonalists they were attracted by the beauty of the Lord and became devotees.

Here the word *vilāsa* is very important. *Vilāsa* refers to the activities or pastimes of the Lord. It is a prescribed duty in temple worship that not only should one visit the temple to see the Deity nicely decorated, but at the same time he should hear the recitation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, or some similar literature, which is regularly recited in the temple. It is the system in Vṛndāvana that in every temple there is recitation of the *sāstras*. Even third-class devotees who have no literary knowledge or no time to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Bhagavad-gītā* get the opportunity to hear about the pastimes of the Lord. In this way their minds may remain always absorbed in the thought of the Lord—His form, His activities, and His transcendental nature.

This state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a liberated stage. Lord Caitanya, therefore, recommended five important processes in the discharge of devotional service: (1) to chant the holy names of the Lord, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, (2) to associate with devotees and serve them as far as possible, (3) to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (4) to see the decorated temple and the Deity and, if possible, (5) to live in a place like Vṛndāvana or Mathurā. These five items alone can help a devotee achieve the highest perfectional stage. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and here in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That third-class devotees can also imperceptibly achieve liberation is accepted in all Vedic literatures.

37 अथो विभूतिं मम मायाविनस्ता-

मैश्वर्यमष्टाङ्गमनुप्रवृत्तम् ।

श्रियं भागवतीं वास्पृहयन्ति भद्रां

परस्य मे तेऽश्रुवते तु लोके ॥३७॥

*atho vibhūtiṁ mama māyāvīnastā
aiśvaryaṁ aṣṭāṅgam anupravṛttam
śriyaṁ bhāgavatīṁ vāspṛhayanti bhadrāṁ
parasya me te 'śnuvate tu loke*

atho—then; *vibhūtiṁ*—opulence; *mama*—of Me; *māyāvīnaḥ*—of the Lord of *māyā*; *tām*—that; *aiśvaryaṁ*—mystic perfection; *aṣṭa-aṅgam*—consisting of eight parts; *anupravṛttam*—following; *śriyam*—splendor; *bhāgavatīṁ*—of the kingdom of God; *vā*—or; *asṛhayanti*—they do not desire; *bhadrām*—blissful; *parasya*—of the Supreme Lord; *me*—of Me; *te*—those devotees; *aśnuvate*—enjoy; *tu*—but; *loke*—in this life.

Thus because he is completely absorbed in thought of Me, the devotee does not desire even the highest benediction obtainable in the upper planetary systems, including Satyaloka. He does not desire the eight material perfections obtained from mystic yoga, nor does he desire to be elevated to the kingdom of God. Yet even without desiring them, the devotee enjoys, even in this life, all the offered benedictions.

PURPORT: The *vibhūti*, or opulences, offered by *māyā* are of many varieties. We have experience of different varieties of material enjoyment even on this planet, but if one is able to promote himself to higher planets like Candraloka, the sun or, still higher, Maharloka, Janaloka, and Tapoloka, or even ultimately the highest planet, which is inhabited by Brahmā and is called Satyaloka, there are immense possibilities for material enjoyment. For example, the duration of life on higher planets is far, far greater than on this planet. It is said that on the moon the duration of life is such that our six months are equal to one day. We cannot even imagine the duration of life on the highest planet. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that Brahmā's twelve hours are inconceivable even to our mathematicians.

These are all descriptions of the external energy of the Lord, or *māyā*. Besides these, there are other opulences which the *yogīs* can achieve by their mystic power. They are also material. A devotee does not aspire for all these material pleasures, although they are available to him simply by wishing. By the grace of the Lord, a devotee can achieve wonderful success simply by willing, but a real devotee does not like that. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has taught that one should not desire material opulence or material reputation, nor should one try to enjoy material beauty; one should simply aspire to be absorbed in the devotional service of the Lord, even if one does not get liberation but has to continue the process of birth and death unlimitedly.

Actually, however, to one who engages in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, liberation is already guaranteed. Devotees enjoy all the benefits of the higher planets and the Vaikuṅṭha planets also. It is especially mentioned here, *bhāgavatīm bhadrām*. In the Vaikuṅṭha planets everything is eternally peaceful, yet a pure devotee does not even aspire to be promoted there. But still he gets that advantage; he enjoys all the facilities of the material and spiritual worlds, even during the present life-span.

38 न कर्हिचिन्मत्पराः शान्तरूपे
नङ्क्ष्यन्ति नो मेऽनिमिषो लेढि हेतिः ।

येषामहं प्रिय आत्मा सुतश्च
सखा गुरुः सुहृदो दैवमिष्टम् ॥३८॥

*na karhicin mat-parāḥ śānta-rūpe
nañkṣyanti no me 'nimiṣo ledhi hetih
yeṣām ahaṁ priya ātmā sutaś ca
sakhā guruḥ suhṛdo daivam iṣṭam*

na—not; *karhicit*—ever; *mat-parāḥ*—My devotees; *śānta-rūpe*—O mother; *nañkṣyanti*—will lose; *no*—not; *me*—My; *animiṣaḥ*—time; *ledhi*—destroys; *hetih*—weapon; *yeṣām*—of whom; *ahaṁ*—I; *priya*—dear; *ātmā*—self; *sutaḥ*—son; *ca*—and; *sakhā*—friend; *guruḥ*—preceptor; *suhṛdaḥ*—benefactor; *daivam*—Deity; *iṣṭam*—chosen.

The Lord continued: My dear mother, devotees who receive such transcendental opulences are never bereft of them; neither weapons nor the change of time can destroy such opulences. Because the devotees accept Me as their friend, their relative, their son, preceptor, benefactor, and Supreme Deity, they cannot be deprived of their possessions at any time.

PURPORT: It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that one may elevate himself to the higher planetary systems, even up to Brahmaloḥka, by dint of pious activities, but when the effects of such pious activities are finished, one again comes back to this earth to begin a new life of activities. Thus even though one is promoted to the higher planetary system for enjoyment and a long duration of life, still that is not a permanent settlement. But as far as the devotees are concerned, their assets—the achievement of devotional service and the consequent opulence of Vaikuṅṭha, even on this planet—are never destroyed.

In this verse Kapiladeva addresses His mother as *śānta-rūpā*, indicating that the opulences of devotees are fixed because devotees are eternally fixed in the Vaikuṅṭha atmosphere, which is called *śānta-rūpa* because it is in the mode of pure goodness, undisturbed by the modes of passion and ignorance. Once one is fixed in the devotional service of the Lord, his position of transcendental service cannot be destroyed, and the pleasure and service simply increase unlimitedly. For the devotees engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in the Vaikuṅṭha atmosphere, there is no influence of time.

In the material world the influence of time destroys everything, but in the Vaikuṅṭha atmosphere there is no influence of time or of the demigods because there are no demigods in the Vaikuṅṭha planets. Here our activities are controlled by different demigods; even if we move our hand and leg, the action is controlled by the demigods. But in the Vaikuṅṭha atmosphere there is no influence of the demigods or of time; therefore there is no question of destruction. When the time element is present, there is the certainty of destruction, but when there is no time element—past, present or future—then everything is eternal. Therefore this verse uses the words *na nañkṣyanti*, indi-

cating that the transcendental opulences will never be destroyed.

The reason for freedom from destruction is also described. The devotees accept the Supreme Lord as the most dear personality and reciprocate with Him in different relationships. They accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the dearest friend, the dearest relative, the dearest son, the dearest preceptor, the dearest well-wisher, or the dearest Deity.

The Lord is eternal; therefore any relationship in which we accept Him is also eternal. It is clearly confirmed herein that the relationships cannot be destroyed, and therefore the opulences of those relationships are never destroyed.

Every living entity has the propensity to love someone. We can see that if someone has no object of love, he generally directs his love to a pet animal like a cat or a dog. Thus the eternal propensity for love in all living entities is always searching for a place to reside. From this verse we can learn that we can love the Supreme Personality of Godhead as our dearest object—as a friend, as a son, as a preceptor, or as a well-wisher—and there will be no cheating and no end to such love. We shall eternally enjoy the relationship with the Supreme Lord in different aspects. A special feature of this verse is the acceptance of the Supreme Lord as the supreme preceptor. *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken directly by the Supreme Lord, and Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as *guru*, or spiritual master. Similarly, we should accept only Kṛṣṇa as the supreme spiritual master.

Kṛṣṇa, of course, means Kṛṣṇa and His confidential devotees; Kṛṣṇa is not alone. When we speak of Kṛṣṇa, “Kṛṣṇa” means Kṛṣṇa in His name, in His form, in His qualities, in His abode, and in His associates. Kṛṣṇa is never alone, for the devotees of Kṛṣṇa are not impersonalists.

For example, a king is always associated with his secretary, his commander, his servant, and so much paraphernalia. As soon as we accept Kṛṣṇa and His associates as our preceptors, no ill effects can destroy our knowledge. In the material world the knowledge which we acquire may change because of the influence of time, but nevertheless the conclusions received from *Bhagavad-gītā*, directly from the speeches of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, can never change. There is no use interpreting *Bhagavad-gītā*; it is eternal.

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, should be accepted as one's best friend. He will never cheat. He will always give His friendly advice and friendly protection to the devotee. If Kṛṣṇa is accepted as a son, He will never die. Here we have a very loving son or child, but the father and mother, or those who are affectionate towards him, always hope, “May my son not die.” But Kṛṣṇa actually never will die. Therefore those who accept Kṛṣṇa, or the Supreme Lord, as their son will never be bereft of their son. In many instances devotees have accepted the Deity as a son. In Bengal there are many such instances, and even after the death of the devotee, the Deity performs the *śrāddha* ceremony for the father. The relationship is never destroyed.

People are accustomed to worship different forms of demigods, but in *Bhagavad-gītā* such a mentality is condemned; therefore one should be intelligent enough to

worship only the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His different forms such as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Sitā-Rāma and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Thus one will never be cheated. By worshipping the demigods one may elevate himself to the higher planets, but during the dissolution of the material world, the deity and the abode of the deity will be destroyed.

But one who worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead is promoted to the Vaikuṅṭha planets, where there is no influence of time, destruction or annihilation. The conclusion is that the time influence cannot act upon devotees who have accepted the Supreme Personality of Godhead as everything.

39 इमं लोकं तथैवामुमात्मानमुभयायिनम् ।
आत्मानमनु ये चेह ये रायः पशवो गृहाः ॥३९॥
40 विसृज्य सर्वानन्यांश्च मामेवं विश्वतोमुखम् ।
भजन्त्यनन्यया भक्त्या तान्मृत्योरतिपारये ॥४०॥

*imaṁ lokam tathaivāmum
ātmānam ubhayāyinam
ātmānam anu ye ceḥa
ye rāyaḥ paśavo gṛhāḥ*

*visṛjya sarvān anyānīs ca
mām evaṁ viśvato-mukham
bhajanty ananyayā bhaktiyā
tān mṛtyor atipāraye*

imam—this; *lokam*—world; *tathā*—accordingly; *eva*—certainly; *amum*—that world; *ātmānam*—the subtle body; *ubhaya*—in both; *ayinam*—traveling; *ātmānam*—the body; *anu*—in relationship with; *ye*—those who; *ca*—also; *īha*—in this world; *ye*—that which; *rāyaḥ*—wealth; *paśavaḥ*—cattle; *gṛhāḥ*—houses; *visṛjya*—having given up; *sarvān*—all; *anyān*—other; *ca*—and; *mām*—Me; *evaṁ*—thus; *viśvataḥ-mukham*—the all-pervading Lord of the universe; *bhajanti*—they worship; *ananyayā*—unflinching; *bhaktiyā*—by devotional service; *tān*—them; *mṛtyoḥ*—of death; *atipāraye*—I take to the other side.

Thus the devotee who worships Me, the all-pervading Lord of the universe, in unflinching devotional service, gives up all aspirations to be promoted to heavenly planets or to become happy in this world with wealth, children, cattle, home, or anything in relationship with the body. I take him to the other side of birth and death.

PURPORT: Unflinching devotional service, as described in these two verses, means engaging oneself in full Kṛṣṇa

consciousness, or devotional service, accepting the Supreme Lord as all in all. Since the Supreme Lord is all-inclusive, if anyone worships Him with unflinching faith he has automatically achieved all other opulences and performed all other duties. The Lord promises herein that He takes His devotee to the other side of birth and death. Lord Caitanya, therefore, recommended that one who aspires to go beyond birth and death should have no material possessions. This means that one should not try to be happy in this world or to be promoted to the heavenly world, nor should he try for material wealth, children, houses, or cattle.

How liberation is imperceptibly achieved by a pure devotee and what the symptoms are have been explained. For the conditioned soul there are two statuses of living. One status is in this present life, and the other is our preparation for the next life. If I am in the mode of goodness then I may be preparing for promotion to the higher planets, if I am in the mode of passion then I shall remain here in a society where activity is very prominent, and if I am in the mode of ignorance I may be degraded to animal life or a lower grade of human life.

But for a devotee there is no concern for this life or the next life because in any life he does not desire elevation in material prosperity or a high-grade or low-grade life. He prays to the Lord, “My dear Lord, it does not matter where I am born, but let me be born, even as an ant, in the house of a devotee.”

A pure devotee does not pray to the Lord for liberation from this material bondage. Actually, the pure devotee never thinks that he is fit for liberation. Considering his past life and his mischievous activities, he thinks that he is fit to be sent to the lowest region of hell. If in this life I am trying to become a devotee, this does not mean that in my many past lives I was one-hundred-percent pious. That is not possible. A devotee, therefore, is always conscious of his real position. Only by his full surrender to the Lord, by the Lord’s grace, are his sufferings made shorter.

As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Surrender unto Me, and I will give you protection from all kinds of sinful reaction.” That is His mercy. But this does not mean that one who has surrendered to the lotus feet of the Lord has committed no misdeeds in his past life. A devotee always prays, “For my misdeeds, may I be born again and again, but my only prayer is that I may not forget Your service.” The devotee has that much mental strength, and he prays to the Lord: “May I be born again and again, but let me be born in the home of Your pure devotee so that I may again get a chance to develop myself.”

(continued in the next issue)

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

NO MORE CHEAP BODIES

The following conversation took place in Gorakhpur, India, on February 17, 1971.

Guest: If the soul is always changing from one body to another, how is the soul liberated?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In this material world the soul is accepting material bodies. And when he becomes a bona fide servant of Kṛṣṇa, he'll be offered a spiritual body. As long as a person is not a soldier, he will not be awarded a uniform. But as soon as he accepts service as a soldier, he is given the uniform. So you are accepting different bodies in the material world. That is *bhūtvā bhūtvā praliyate*: You accept one type of body, it is vanquished, and again you have to accept another. But as soon as you become perfectly Kṛṣṇa conscious, after leaving this body you do not come to the material world—*tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti*. You are immediately transferred [to the spiritual world], and you accept a spiritual body.

Is that clear or not? You are accepting material bodies now, birth after birth. That is transmigration. Sometimes you accept a human body, sometimes a dog's body, sometimes a king's body, and sometimes some other kind of body.

Now when you are Kṛṣṇa conscious, you haven't got to accept a material body. You go directly to Kṛṣṇa and accept a spiritual body. Then your life is eternal.

Guest: You will not again get a material body?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti*. When you are Kṛṣṇa conscious,

you no longer accept a material body. Kṛṣṇa says, *mām eti*: "The soul comes to Me." And *mām eti* means that whoever goes to Kṛṣṇa has as good a body as Kṛṣṇa. That is oneness.

Guest: Then what does it mean when Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna on the battlefield, "Never was there a time when you and I were not existing."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are existing, and you are existing. You are eternal. You are simply changing bodies. What is the difficulty in understanding this fact? But Kṛṣṇa is not changing His body. That is the difference.

Guest: The soul will not merge into Kṛṣṇa's light?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The soul is changing bodies. Why are you talking of merging?

You are changing your body, I am changing my body, but we are individuals. I may change to a dog's body; you may change to a demigod's body. That is going on. According to one's karma one is changing bodies.

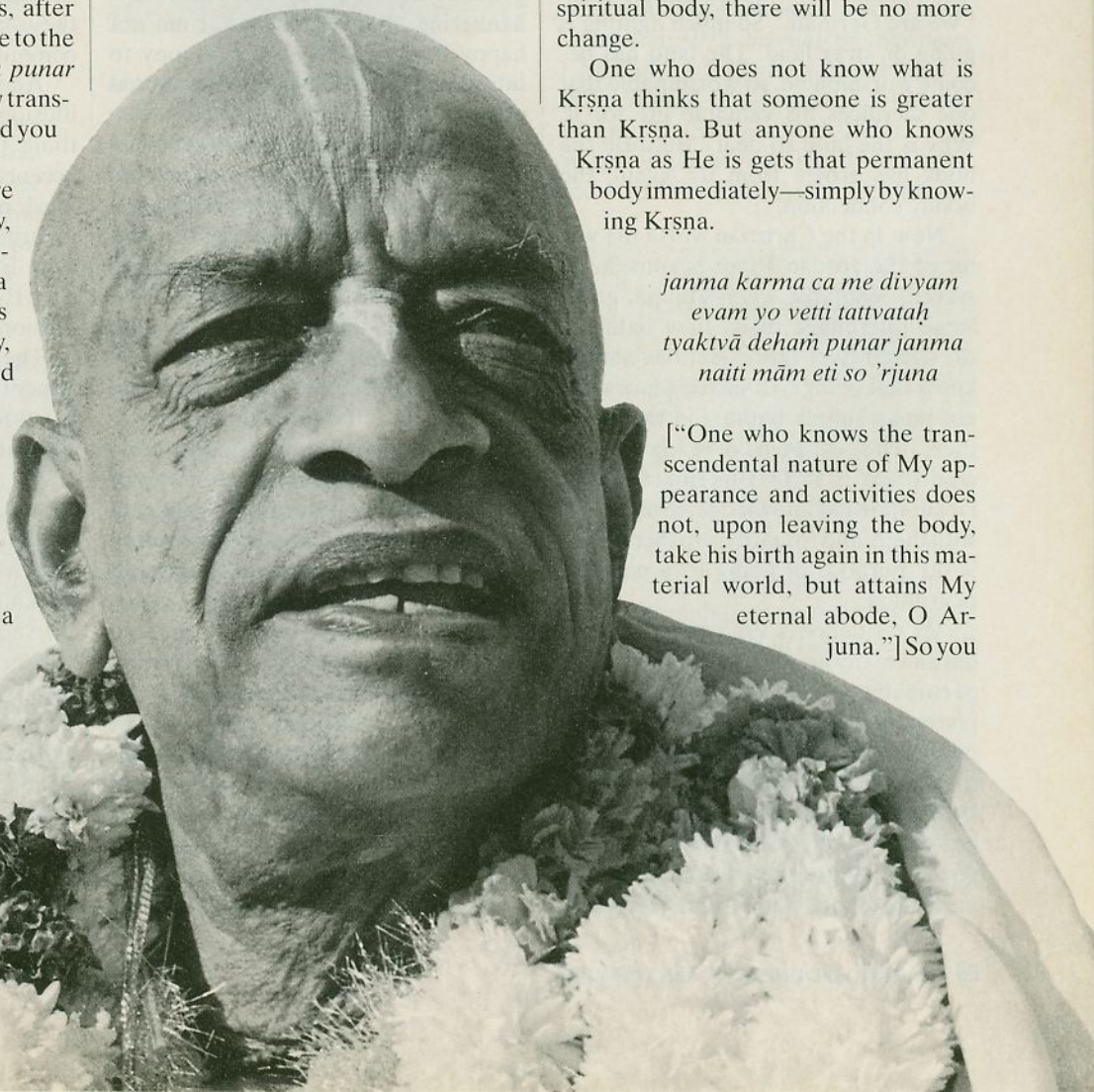
Now, when you are fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, a change of body will also take place. But that new body will be spiritual. As long as you get material bodies, you have to change—one after another, one after another, one after another.

For example, if you purchase something cheap, it goes wrong and you have to purchase a new thing. But if you purchase a real, nice thing, it will continue for good. Similarly, as long as you are getting a cheap body, a material body, you have to change. And as soon as you get the most valuable body, a spiritual body, there will be no more change.

One who does not know what is Kṛṣṇa thinks that someone is greater than Kṛṣṇa. But anyone who knows Kṛṣṇa as He is gets that permanent body immediately—simply by knowing Kṛṣṇa.

*janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

[“One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.”] So you



simply have to understand Kṛṣṇa. Then the whole problem is solved.

Try to understand Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa can be understood simply by devotional service. Kṛṣṇa says, *bhaktyā mām abhijā-*

nāti: If you want to understand Kṛṣṇa, you have to accept devotional service. You cannot propose any alternative. That is useless. Don't spoil your time. Kṛṣṇa says, *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti*.

And that begins with surrender to Kṛṣṇa. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya*: Whatever nonsense you have known, throw it away. Simply surrender to Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā*. ❀

“I AM NOT THIS BODY”

(continued from page 8)

nation, my society—these ideas are all due to bodily relations. There are thousands of women in the streets of New York, but because I have a bodily relation with a particular woman, I call her my wife. And because I have a bodily relation with the children produced by her, they are my children. But the basic principle—“I am this body”—is wrong. And because I am not the body, the expansions of the body are not mine. But the whole world is going on under under the false impression that the body is the self and that the expansions of the body are mine.

The fighting between one nation and another nation is due to the body. Now everyone is fighting for land. “Oh, we are Indian.” “We are Pakistani.” “We are Vietnamese.” “We are Americans.” “We are German.” So much fighting is going on over land. The land has become worshipable, so worshipable that one sacrifices his valuable life for it. Why is the land so dear? Because the body has grown from it. Again, the bodily connection.

Now, in the Christian world the water of the Jordan River is considered sacred. Similarly, when Hindus go to some pilgrimage place they bathe in the sacred river there. But one should know that going to a sacred place does not mean simply bathing in the water there. The real point of going to a sacred place is to find intelligent scholars in spiritual knowledge, to associate with them, and to learn from them. That is the purpose of going to a place of pilgrimage.

My residence is Vṛndāvana. In Vṛndāvana many great scholars and saintly persons live. One should go to such holy places not simply to bathe in the water; one must be intelligent enough to find some spiritually advanced man living there and take instruction from him and be benefited by that. But people do not go to find saints. They simply bathe and purchase some goods and advertise,

“Oh, I have been to such and such pilgrimage place.”

The *Bhāgavatam* says that such persons are considered cows or asses. Practically the whole world is moving as a civilization of cows and asses because our whole life is based on identification with the body. The center is the body, and everything expands from the body.

Perfection in Spiritual Knowledge

A woman in the audience: In the Indian places known as sacred places, isn't it also a fact that there is more magnetism there because of the meeting of saints?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Certainly. Therefore the place itself has got some magnetism—just like Vṛndāvana. Now I am sitting here in New York—the world's greatest city—but my heart is always hankering after Vṛndāvana. I am not happy here. I shall be very happy to return to my Vṛndāvana, that sacred place.

“But then why are you here?” Because it is my duty. I have brought some message for you people. Because I have been ordered by a superior, my spiritual master: “Whatever you have learned, you should go to the Western countries and distribute that knowledge.” So in spite of all my difficulties, all my inconveniences, I am here because of duty. If I go and sit down at Vṛndāvana, I shall be very comfortable there. I'll have no anxiety, nothing of the sort. You see? But I have taken all the risk in old age because I am duty bound. So I have to execute my duty in spite of all my inconveniences. That is the idea.

So the basic principle of spiritual advancement in knowledge is that one should first be convinced that one is not the body. Then other spiritual knowledge will begin. Unless one understands himself, he cannot understand God. “I am not the body”—that knowledge one must accept, at least theoretically.

Here it is said, *bhagavān uvāca*, which

means that Kṛṣṇa has such extensive knowledge that there cannot be any mistakes in His teachings. He's the authority, so whatever He says is right. That is the conception of *bhagavān*. Here it is not said *kṛṣṇa uvāca*, because someone may doubt Kṛṣṇa—“Kṛṣṇa was a historical personality. Why should you be so much concerned with Kṛṣṇa?” So it is said, *bhagavān uvāca*. Bhagavān has all knowledge. So there cannot be any mistake in whatever He will speak.

For ordinary persons there are four imperfections: to commit mistakes, to become illusioned, to have imperfect senses, and to cheat. First, we must commit mistakes. We are sure to commit mistakes. Even Gandhi, the great politician, committed mistakes, and so have many other great men. “To err is human.” Any man, however great in the estimation of the world, is sure to commit mistakes.

Another imperfection is that we are illusioned. Illusion means taking one thing for another. In the desert one accepts the sand as water. That is called illusion. Similarly, every one of us who identifies with the body is under illusion. Even the President is under illusion. Even the greatest scientist is under illusion.

The next imperfection is the tendency to cheat. One is imperfect, but he wants to give knowledge to others. That is cheating. You may ask, “You are also giving us knowledge . . . ?” No, I am not giving you knowledge. I am speaking *Bhagavad-gītā*. I am giving you knowledge as given by Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is not my knowledge.

And finally, we have imperfect senses.

One who is above these four imperfections—who never commits mistakes, is never illusioned, never cheats others, and has perfect senses—He is God. That is a definition of God. And one who is not God but who comes to the perfect stage of life is liberated. Then he's as good as God.

Thank you very much. ❀

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- ◆ **Toronto, Ontario** — 243 Avenue Rd., M5R 2J6/ Tel. (416) 922-5415



Balarama, Subhadra, and Jagannatha (Denver, Colorado)

- ◆ **Vancouver, B.C.** — 5462 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby V5J 3G8/ Tel. (604) 433-9728

FARM COMMUNITY

Ashcroft, B.C. — Saranagati Dhama, Box 99, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

Hamilton, Ontario — Govinda's, 195 Locke St. South, L8T 4B5/ Tel. (416) 523-6209
 Vancouver — The Hare Krishna Place, 46 Begbie St., New Westminster

U.S.A.

- ◆ **Atlanta, Georgia** — 1287 South Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E., 30306/ Tel. (404) 378-9234
- Baltimore, Maryland** — 200 Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville, 21228/ Tel. (410) 744-1624 or 4069
- Boise, Idaho** — 1615 Martha St., 83706/ Tel. (208) 344-4274
- Boston, Massachusetts** — 72 Commonwealth Ave., 02116/ Tel. (617) 247-8611
- ★ **Champaign, Illinois** — 210 W. Green St., 61820/ Tel. (217) 351-4053
- Chapel Hill, North Carolina** — 109 N. Roberson St., 27516/ Tel. (919) 932-9219
- ◆ **Chicago, Illinois** — 1716 W. Lunt Ave., 60626/ Tel. (312) 973-0900
- ◆ **Cleveland, Ohio** — 2704 Bridge Ave., 44113/ Tel. (216) 579-9510
- ◆ **Dallas, Texas** — 5430 Gurley Ave., 75223/ Tel. (214) 827-6330
- ◆ **Denver, Colorado** — 1400 Cherry St., 80220/ Tel. (303) 333-5461
- ◆ **Detroit, Michigan** — 383 Lenox Ave., 48215/ Tel. (313) 824-6000
- Encinitas, California** — 468 First St., 92024/ Tel. (619) 634-1698
- Gainesville, Florida** — 214 N.W. 14th St., 32603/ Tel. (904) 336-4183
- Gurabo, Puerto Rico** — Route 181, P.O. Box 8440 HC-01, 00778-9763/ Tel. (809) 737-5222
- Hartford, Connecticut** — 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, 06108/ Tel. (203) 289-7252
- ◆ **Honolulu, Hawaii** — 51 Coeltho Way, 96817/ Tel. (808) 595-3947
- Houston, Texas** — 1320 W. 34th St., 77018/ Tel. (713) 686-4482
- ◆ **Laguna Beach, California** — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (714) 494-7029
- Long Island, New York** — 197 S. Ocean Ave., Freeport, 11520/ Tel. (516) 867-9045
- ◆ **Los Angeles, California** — 3764 Watska Ave., 90034/ Tel. (310) 836-2676
- ◆ **Miami, Florida** — 3220 Virginia St., 33133/ Tel. (305) 442-7218
- ◆ **New Orleans, Louisiana** — 2936 Esplanade Ave., 70119/ Tel. (504) 484-6084
- New York, New York** — 305 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, 11217/ Tel. (718) 855-6714
- New York, New York** — 26 Second Avenue, 10003/ Tel. (212) 420-8803
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — 41 West Allens Lane, 19119/ Tel. (215) 247-4600
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — 529 South St., 19147/ Tel. (215) 829-0077
- ◆ **St. Louis, Missouri** — 3926 Lindell Blvd., 63108/ Tel. (314) 535-8085
- ◆ **San Diego, California** — 1030 Grand Ave., Pacific Beach, 92109/ Tel. (619) 483-2500
- San Francisco, California** — 84 Carl St., 94117/ Tel. (415) 661-7320

- ◆ **San Francisco, California** — 2334 Stuart St., Berkeley, 94705/ Tel. (510) 644-1113
- Seattle, Washington** — 1420 228th Ave. S.E., Issaquah, 98027/ Tel. (206) 391-3293
- Tallahassee, Florida** — 1323 Nylis St. (mail: P.O. Box 20224, 32304)/ Tel. (904) 681-9258
- Topanga, California** — 20395 Callon Dr., 90290/ Tel. (213) 455-1658
- Towaco, New Jersey** — (mail: P.O. Box 109, 07082)/ Tel. (201) 299-0970
- ◆ **Tucson, Arizona** — 711 E. Blackidge Dr., 85719/ Tel. (602) 792-0630
- Walla Walla, Washington** — 314 E. Poplar, 99362/ Tel. (509) 525-7133
- Washington, D.C.** — 600 Ninth St. NE, 20002/ Tel. (202) 547-1444
- Washington, D.C.** — 10310 Oaklyn Dr., Potomac, Maryland 20854/ Tel. (301) 299-2100

FARM COMMUNITIES

- Alachua, Florida (New Ramana-reti)** — Box 819, Alachua, 32615/ Tel. (904) 462-2017
- Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan)** — 31492 Anner Road, 39426/ Tel. (601) 798-2083
- Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill)** — (contact ISKCON Gurabo)
- Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka)** — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/ Tel. (919) 732-6492
- Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka)** — Rt. No. 1, Box 146-A, 37359/ Tel. (615) 759-6888
- Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 839, 17082/ Tel. (717) 527-4101

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS AND DINING

- Boise** — Govinda's, 500 W. Main St./ Tel. (208) 338-9710
- Carrboro, North Carolina** — Govinda's Natural Foods Restaurant, 102 Main St., 27510
- Eugene, Oregon** — Govinda's Vegetarian Buffet, 270 W. 8th St., 97401/ Tel. (503) 686-3531
- Ojai, California** — Govinda's Veggie Buffet, 1002 E. Ojai Ave., 93023/ Tel. (805) 646-1133
- Provo, Utah** — Govinda's Buffet, 260 North University, 84601/ Tel. (801) 375-0404

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

- ◆ **Belfast, Northern Ireland** — 140 Upper Dunmurray Lane, BT17 0HE/ Tel. +44 (0)232 620530
- Birmingham, England** — 84 Stanmore Rd., Edgbaston, B16 9TB/ Tel. +44 (0)21 420-4999
- Bristol, England** — 2 Perry Rd., Bristol BS1 5BQ
- ◆ **Coventry, England** — Sri Sri Radha Krishna Cultural Centre, Kingfield Rd., Radford (mail: 19 Gloucester St., CV1 3BZ)/ Tel. +44 (0)203 555420
- ◆ **Dublin, Ireland** — 56 Dame St., Dublin 2/ Tel. +353 (0)1 679-1306
- Leicester, England** — 21 Thoresby St., North Evington, Leicester LE5 4GU/ Tel. +44 (0)533 762587
- ◆ **Liverpool, England** — 114 Bold St., Liverpool L1 4HY
- ◆ **London, England (city)** — 10 Soho St., London W1V 5DA/ Tel. +44 (0)71 4373662
- London, England (country)** — Bhaktivedanta Manor, Letchmore Heath, Watford, Hertfordshire WD2 8EP/ Tel. +44 (0)923 857244
- London, England (south)** — 42 Enmore Road, South Norwood, London SE25/ Tel. +44 (0)81 656-4296
- Manchester, England** — 20 Mayfield Rd., Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8FT/ Tel. +44 (0)61 2264416
- Newcastle upon Tyne, England** — 21 Leazes Park Rd., NE1 4PF/ Tel. +44 (0)91 2220150
- Rathgorragh, Ireland** — Kiltegan, County Wicklow/ Tel. +353 508-73305
- ◆ **Scotland** — Karuna Bhavan, Bankhouse Rd., Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire ML11 0ES/ Tel. +44 (0)555 894790

FARM COMMUNITIES

- ◆ **Lisnaska, North Ireland** — Hare Krishna Island, BT92 9GN Lisnaska, Co. Fermanagh/ Tel. +44 (0)3657 21512
- London, England** — (contact Bhaktivedanta Manor)

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

Manchester, England — Krishna's, 20 Cyril St., Manchester 14/ Tel. +44 (0)61 226 965

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GERMANY

- ◆ **Berlin** — Bhakti Yoga Center, Muskauer Str. 27, 10997 Berlin/ Tel. +49 (0)30 618 92 19
- ★ **Flensburg** — ISKCON, Neuhoerup 1, 24980 Hoerup/ Tel. +49 (0)4639 73 36
- ◆ **Hamburg** — ISKCON, Muehlenstr. 93, 25421 Pinneberg/ Tel. +49 (0)4101 2 39 31
- ◆ **Heidelberg** — Center for Vedic Studies, Kurfuersten-Anlage 5, 69115 Heidelberg (mail: P.O. Box 101726, 69007 Heidelberg)/ Tel. +49 (0)6221 16 51 01
- ◆ **Köln** — ISKCON, Taunusstr. 40, 51105 Köln/ Tel. +49 (0)221 830 37 78
- ◆ **Leipzig** — ISKCON, Peterssteiner Weg 10b, 04107 Leipzig/ Tel. +49 (0)341 31 22 08
- Munich** — Brodstrasse 12, W-8000 München 82/ Tel. +49 (0)89 428546
- ★ **Nuremberg** — Bhakti Yoga Center, Kopernikusplatz 12, 90459 Nürnberg/ Tel. +49 (0)911 45 32 86
- ★ **Stuttgart** — ISKCON, Dr.-Diether-Strasse 12, 71263 Weil der Stadt/ Tel. +49 (0)7033 3 59 23
- ◆ **Weimar** — ISKCON, Rothauserbergweg 6, 99425 Weimar/ Tel. +49 (0)3643 5 95 48
- ◆ **Wiesbaden** — ISKCON, Schiersteiner Strasse 6, 65187 Wiesbaden/ Tel. +49 (0)611 37 33 12

Telephone numbers include country codes, identified by a +. To save space, we've skipped the codes for North America (1) and India (91).

◆ Temples with restaurants or dining. ★ New listing. ● Revised listing.

FARM COMMUNITY

● **Jandelsbrunn** — Nava Jiyada Nrsimha Ksetra, Zielberg 20, 94118 Jandelsbrunn/ Tel. +49 (08583) 316

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

- **Berlin** — Higher Taste, Kurfürstendamm 157/158, 10709 Berlin/ Tel. +49 (030) 892 99 17
- **Flensburg** — Goloka, Heiligengeistgang 9, W-2390 Flensburg/ Tel. +49 (0461) 13878
- **Heidelberg** — Higher Taste, Kornmarkt 9, D-69115 Heidelberg/ Tel. +49 (06221) 165464

ITALY

- Asti** — Roatto, Frazione Valle Reale 20/ Tel. +39 (0141) 938406
- Bergamo** — Villaggio Hare Krishna, Via Galileo Galilei 41, 24040 Chignolo D'isola (BG)/ Tel. +39 (035) 490706
- Bologna** — Via Ramo Barchetta 2, 40010 Bentivoglio (BO)/ Tel. +39 (051) 863924
- ◆ **Catania** — Via San Nicola al Borgo 28, 95128 Catania, Sicily/ Tel. +39 (095) 522-252
- ◆ **Naples** — Via Vesuvio, N33, Ercolano LNA7/ Tel. +39 (081) 739-0398
- ◆ **Rome** — Nepi, Sri Gaura Mandala, Via Mazzanese Km. 0,700 (dalla Cassia uscita Calcata), Pian del Pavone (Viterbo)/ Tel. +39 (0761) 527038
- ◆ **Vicenza** — Via Roma 9, 36020 Albettonne (Vicenza)/ Tel. +39 (0444) 790573 or 790566

FARM COMMUNITY

Florence (Villa Vrindavan) — Via Comunale degli Scopeti 108, S. Andrea in Percussina, San Casciano, Val di Pesa (FI) 5002/ Tel. +39 (055) 820-054

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

Milan — Govinda's, Via Valpetrosa 3/5, 20123 Milano / Tel. +39 (02) 862-417

POLAND

- Gdynia** — Międzynarodowe Towarzystwo Świadomości Kryszny, Światynia w Gdyni, ul. Kapitanska 9 A, 81 331 Gdynia/ Tel. +48 (58) 202865
- ◆ **Kracow** — ISKCON, ul. Ehrenberga 15, 31-309 Krakow/ Tel. +48 (12) 36 28 85
- ◆ **Poznan** — ul. Nizina 26, 61-424 Poznan/ Tel. & Fax +48 61 323838



Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai (Helsinki, Finland)

- Warsaw** — Mysiadło k. Warszawy, ul. Zakret 11, 05-500 Piaseczno / Tel. +48 (22)562-711
- Wroclaw** — ul. Nowowiejska 87/8, 50-340 Wroclaw/ Tel. & Fax +48 (71) 225704

FARM COMMUNITY

New Santipura — Czarnow 21, k. Kamiennej gory, woj. Jelenia gora/ Tel. +48 8745-1892

SWEDEN

- Göthenburg** — Lagmangsgatan 11, s-41653 Göthenburg/ Tel. +46 (031) 192319
- **Grödinge** — Korsnäs Gärd, 14792 Grödinge/ Tel. +46 (853) 29151
- ★ **Karlstad** — ISKCON, Box 5155, 650 05 Karlstade
- ◆ **Malmö** — Hare Krishna Temple, Gustav Adolfs Torg 10 A, 211 39 Malmö/ Tel. +46 (040) 127181
- ◆ **Stockholm** — Fridhemsngatan 22, 11240 Stockholm/ Tel. +46 (08) 6549 002
- ◆ **Uppsala** — Nannaskolan sal F 3, Kungsgatan 22 (mail: Box 833, 751 08, Uppsala)/ Tel. +46 (018) 102924 or 509956

FARM COMMUNITY

- **Järna** — Almviks Gärd, 153 95 Järna/ Tel. +46 (8551) 52050; 52105

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

- Göthenburg** — Govinda's, Storgatan 20, S-411 38 Göthenburg / Tel. +46 (031) 139698
- Malmö** — Higher Taste, Amiralsgatan 6, S-211 55 Malmö/ Tel. +46 (040) 970600
- Stockholm** — Gopal, Timmermangsgatan 13, 117 25 Stockholm/ Tel. +46 (08) 6441035

SWITZERLAND

- ★ **Basel** — Hammerstrasse 70, 4057 Basel/ Tel. +41 (061) 693-2638
- ★ **Bellinzona** — New Nandagram, al Chiossascio, 6594 Contone TI/ Tel. +41 (092) 622747
- Bern** — Govinda Kulturtreff, Weihergasse 7, 3005 Bern/ Tel. +41 (31) 213825
- ★ **Ticino** — Fattoria di Nanda, Via Al Chiossascio, 6594 Contone/ Tel. +41 (92) 622747
- ◆ **Zürich** — Bergstrasse 54, 8030 Zürich/ Tel. +41 (01) 262-33-88
- ◆ **Zürich** — Preyergrasse 16, 8001 Zürich/ Tel. +41 (01) 251-8851

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

Bern — Weihergasse 7 (Marzili), 3005 Bern/ Tel. +41 (031) 21 38 25

OTHER COUNTRIES

- Amsterdam, The Netherlands** — Van Hillaertstraat 17, 1072 JX/ Tel. +31 (020) 6751404
- Antwerp, Belgium** — Amerikalei 184, 2000 Antwerpen/ Tel. +32 (03) 237-0037
- Athens, Greece** — Methymnis 18, Kipselli, 11257 Athens/ Tel. +30 (01) 8658384
- Barcelona, Spain** — c/de L'Oblit 67, 08026 Barcelona/ Tel. +34 (93) 347-9933
- Belgrade, Yugoslavia** — VVZ-Veda, Custendilska 17, 11000 Beograd/ Tel. +381 (11) 781-695
- Budapest, Hungary** — Hare Krishna Temple, Dimitrov u. 77, Budapest 1028 II
- **Copenhagen, Denmark** — 23, Bendstrup, 3400 Hillerød/ Tel. +45 42286446
- Debrecen, Hungary** — L. Hegyi Mihalyne, U62, Debrecen 4030
- Helsinki, Finland** — Ruoholanderkatu 24 D (III krs) 00180, Helsinki/ Tel. +358 (0) 6949879
- **Romania** — Stradela Moara De Vint 72, 6600 Iasi
- Kaunas, Lithuania** — Savanoryu 37, 233 000 Kaunas/ Tel. +370 (07) 222574
- Lisbon, Portugal** — Rua Fernao Lopes, 6, Cascais 2750 (mail: Apartado 2489, Lisboa 1112)/ Tel. +351 (011) 286 713
- Ljubljana, Slovenia** — Zibertova 27, 61000 Ljubljana
- Madrid, Spain** — Espiritu Santo 19, 28004 Madrid/ Tel. +34 (91) 521-3096
- Málaga, Spain** — Ctra. Alora, 3 int., 29140 Churrriana/ Tel. +34 (952) 621038
- Oslo, Norway** — Senter for Krishnavedvisst, Skolestien 11, 0373 Oslo 3
- Paris, France** — 31 Rue Jean Vacquier, 93160 Noisy le Grand/ Tel. +32 (01) 43043263
- Plovdiv, Bulgaria** — ul. Sasho Dimitrov 80, 4000 Plovdiv/ Tel. +359 (32) 453987
- Porto, Portugal** — Rua S. Miguel, 19 C.P. 4000 (mail: Apartado 4108, 4002 Porto Codex)/ Tel. +351 (02) 2005469
- **Prague, Czech Republic** — Jilova 290, Prague 5-Zlicin 155 21/ Tel. +42 (02) 3021282 or 3021608
- Riga, Latvia** — Kirshyana Barona 56/ Tel. +371 (02) 272490
- Riga, Latvia** — Prospekt Lenina 420-6, 226 024 Riga
- Rijeka, Croatia** — Centar za Vedske Studije, Boze Starga Jurica 5, 51000 Jijeka/ Tel. +38 (051) 611-589
- Rotterdam, The Netherlands** — Braamerg 45, 2905 BK Capelle a/d Yssel/ Tel. +31 (010) 4580873
- Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain** — C/ Castillo, 44, 4°, Santa Cruz 38003, Tenerife/ Tel. +34 (922) 241035
- Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina** — Krajska 5, 71000 Sarajevo/ Tel. +38 (071) 22-663
- Skopje, Macedonia** — Vvz. "ISKCON," Roze Luksemburg 13/ Tel. +389 (91) 201-451
- ◆ **Septon-Durbuy, Belgium** — Chateau de Petite Somme, 6940 Septon-Durbuy/ Tel. +32 (086) 322926
- ★ **Sofia, Bulgaria** — Neofit Rilski 31, 1000 Sofia/ Tel. +359 (02) 814548
- ★ **Sofia, Bulgaria** — Zdravetz 5, kv Filipovci, 1753 Sofia
- Tel Aviv, Israel** — P. O. Box 48163, Tel Aviv 61480/ Tel. & Fax +972 (03) 663022
- Timisoara, Romania** — ISKCON, Porumbescu 92, 1900 Timisoara/ Tel. +40 (961) 54776
- **Turku, Finland** — Kaurakatu 39, 20740 Turku 74/ Tel. +358 (9) (21) 364 055
- Vienna, Austria** — Govinda, Lindengasse 2A, 1070 Vienna, Austria
- ◆ ★ **Vienna, Austria** — Center for Vedic Studies, Rosenackerstrasse 26, 1170 Vienna/ Tel. +43 (0222) 455830
- Vilnius, Lithuania** — Raugyklos G. 23-1, 2056 Vilnius/ Tel. +370 (0122) 66-12-18
- Zagreb, Croatia** — Centar za Vedske Studije, Teslicka 55, 41000 Zagreb

FARM COMMUNITIES

- Czechoslovakia** — Krsnuv Dvur c. 1, 257 28 Chotysany
- Denmark** — Gl. Kirkevej 3, 6650 Broerup/ Tel. +45 (075) 392921
- France (La Nouvelle Mayapura)** — Domaine d'Oublaiss, 36360, Lucay le Mâle/ Tel. +33 (054) 402481
- Spain (New Vraja Mandala)** — (Santa Clara) Brihuega, Guadalaajara/ Tel. +34 (911) 280018
- Switzerland** — Gokula Project, Vacherie Dessous, 2913 Roche d'Or/ Tel. +41 (066) 766160

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

- Barcelona, Spain** — Restaurant Govinda, Plaza de la Villa de Madrid 4-5, 08002 Barcelona
- Copenhagen, Denmark** — Govinda's, Noerre Farimagsgade 82/ Tel. +45 33337444
- Vienna, Austria** — Govinda, Lindengasse 2A, 1070 Vienna

COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

RUSSIA

- Moscow** — Khoroshevskoye shosse d.8, korp.3, 125 284, Moscow/ Tel. +7 (095) 945-4755
- Moscow** — Prospekt Mira d.5, kv. 8, Moscow/ Tel. +7 (095) 207-07-38
- Novosibirsk** — ul. Leningradskaya 111-20, Novosibirsk
- St. Petersburg** — ul. Bursleva 20-147, 20-147 Leningrad/ Tel. +7 (0812) 150-28-80
- Vladivostok** — ul. Sakhalinskaya 48-12, 690 080 Vladivostok

UKRAINE

- Chernigov** — ul. Krasnogvardeyskaya, 10-56, 250033 Chernigov/ Tel. +7 (865571) 5-42-63
- Dnepropetrovsk** — ul. Ispolkomovskaya, 56A, Dnepropetrovsk
- Donetsk** — ul. Treneva, 3 Flat N44, Donetsk
- Kharkov** — ul. Verhne-Gievskaya, 43, 310015 Kharkov
- Kiev** — Kotovskogo 3-39, 252 060 Kiev/ Tel. +7 (044) 440-7309
- Lvov** — 292066 Lvivska obl. Buski rajon, S. Zbolotni Chuchmani
- Odessa** — ul. desi Ukrainki, 47-57, Odessa

OTHER COUNTRIES

- Baku, Azerbaijan** — ul. Mikrorayon 123-72, Baku 9
- Kishinev, Moldova** — ul. George Asaki, 68/1 Flat 105, 277028 Kishinev/ Tel. +7 (0127) 73-70-24
- Minsk, Belarus** — ul. Pavlova 11, 220 053 Minsk
- Sukhumi, Georgia** — Pr. Mira 274, Sukhumi
- Tashkent, Uzbekistan** — ul. Babadjanova 36-34
- Yerevan, Armenia** — St. Krupskaya 18, 375019 Yerevan/ Tel. +7 (8852) 275106

AUSTRALASIA

AUSTRALIA

- Adelaide** — 74 Semaphore Rd., Semaphore, S. A. 5019/ Tel. +61 (08) 493 200
- Brisbane** — 95 Bank Rd., Graceville. Q.L.D. (mail: P.O. Box 83, Indooroopilly 4068)/ Tel. +61 (07) 379-5455
- Canberra** — P.O. Box 1411, Canberra ACT 2060/ Tel. +61 (06) 290-1869
- Melbourne** — 197 Danks St., Albert Park, Victoria 3206 (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +61 (03) 699-5122
- Perth** — 144 Railway Parade (cnr. The Strand), Bayswater (mail: P.O. Box 102, Bayswater, W. A. 6053)/ Tel. +61 (09) 370-1552
- ♦ **Sydney** — 180 Falcon St., North Sydney, N.S.W. 2060 (mail: P. O. Box 459, Cammeray, N.S.W. 2062)/ Tel. +61 (02) 959-4558

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- Bambra (New Nandagram)** — Oak Hill, Dean's Marsh Road, Bambra, VIC 3241/ Tel. +61 (052) 88-7383
- Millfield, N. S. W.** — New Gokula Farm, Lewis Lane (off Mt. View Rd. Millfield near Cessnock), N.S.W. (mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock 2325, N.S.W.)/ Tel. +61 (049) 98-1800
- Murwillumbah (New Govardhana)** — Tyalgum 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, Floor 1, 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) 227-1684
- 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 Christchurch)/ 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 (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

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

- Cape Town, South Africa** — 17 St. Andrews Rd., Rondebosch 7700/ Tel. +27 (21) 689 1529
- ♦ **Durban (Natal), S. Africa** — Chatsworth Centre, Chatsworth 4030 (mail: P.O. Box 56003)/ Tel. +27 (31) 435-815
- Johannesburg, South Africa** — 14 Goldreich St., Hillbrow 2001, (mail: P.O. Box 10667, Johannesburg 2000)/ Tel. +27 (11) 484-3273
- Port Elizabeth, South Africa** — 10 Skegnes Rd., Summerstrand/ Tel. +27 (41) 153-3353
- Bangkok, Thailand** — 139 Soi Puttha Osotha, New Road (near GPO), Bangkok 10500

OTHER COUNTRIES

- Abeokuta, Nigeria** — Ibadan Rd., Obantoko, behind NET (mail: P.O. Box 5177)
- Abidjan, Ivory Coast** — 01 BP 8366, Abidjan
- Accra, Ghana** — 582 Blk. 20, Odokor, Official Town (mail: P.O. Box 01568, Osu)
- Buea, Cameroon** — Southwest Province (mail: c/o Yuh Laban Nkesah, P and T, VHS)
- Freetown, Sierra Leone** — 13 Bright St., Brookfields (mail: P.O. Box 812, Freetown)
- Kampala, Uganda** — Bombo Rd., near Makerere University (mail: P.O. Box 1647, Kampala)
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The Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

Month of Nārāyaṇa

(December 29–January 27)

JANUARY

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

Month of Mādhava

(January 28–February 26)

FEBRUARY

1—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, a great spiritual master and author of *Gīta-govinda*.

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great spiritual master whose Bengali devotional songs perpetuate the simple Kṛṣṇa conscious method of self-realization.

6—Ṣaṭ-tilā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

15—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a Vaiṣṇava ācārya and author who appeared in the seventeenth century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī, the consort of Lord Caitanya.

18—Appearance anniversary of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu and a close associate of Lord Caitanya. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

20—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

21—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, an eleventh-century philosopher and spiritual master.

22—Bhaimī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Fasting till noon for the appearance of Lord Varāha (tomorrow).

23—Appearance anniversary of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation.

24—Appearance anniversary of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, a close associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

26—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a spiritual

master in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who composed many devotional songs in Bengali.

Month of Govinda

(February 27–March 27)

MARCH

2—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

8—Vijayā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

11—Śrī Śiva Rātri, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śiva.

13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, the great devotee in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed Śrīla Bhaktivindoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

24—Amardakī-vrata Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

27—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by feasting.

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.



HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA, KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA, RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE

THE SOUND *Kṛṣṇa* and the original *Kṛṣṇa* are the same. When we chant Hare *Kṛṣṇa* and dance, *Kṛṣṇa* is also dancing with us. Of course we may say, “Well, I do not see Him,” but why do we put so much stress on seeing? Why not hearing? Seeing, tasting, smelling, touching, and hearing are all instruments for experience and knowledge. Why do we put such exclusive stress on seeing? A devotee does not wish to see *Kṛṣṇa*; he is satisfied by simply hearing of *Kṛṣṇa*. Seeing may eventually be there, but hearing should not be considered any

less important. There are things which we hear but do not see—the wind may be whistling past our ears, and we can hear it, but there is no possibility of seeing the wind. Since hearing is no less an important experience or valid one than seeing, we can hear *Kṛṣṇa* and realize His presence through sound. Śrī *Kṛṣṇa* Himself says, “I am not there in My abode, or in the heart of the meditating *yogī*, but where My pure devotees are singing.” We can feel the presence of *Kṛṣṇa* as we actually make progress.

—*Śrīla Prabhupāda*

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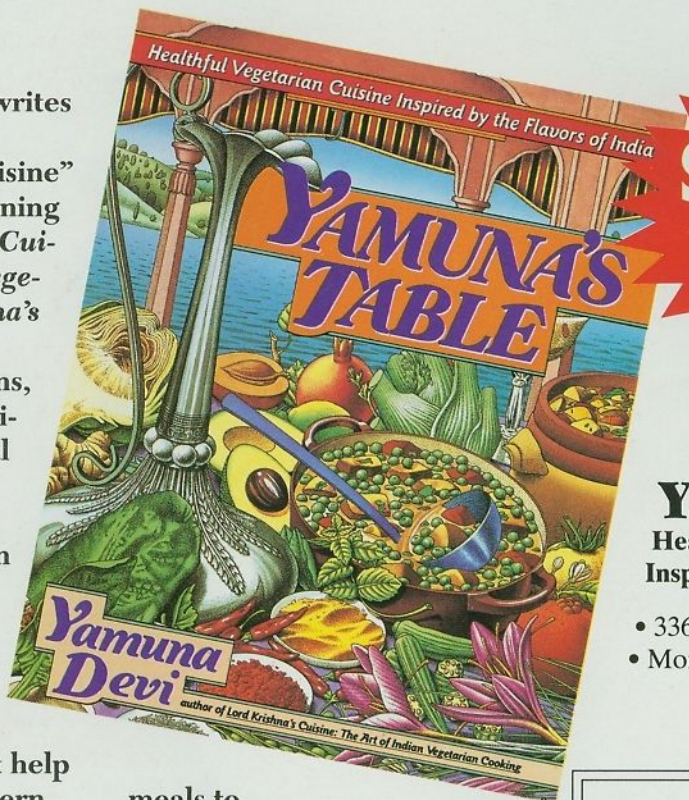
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