

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

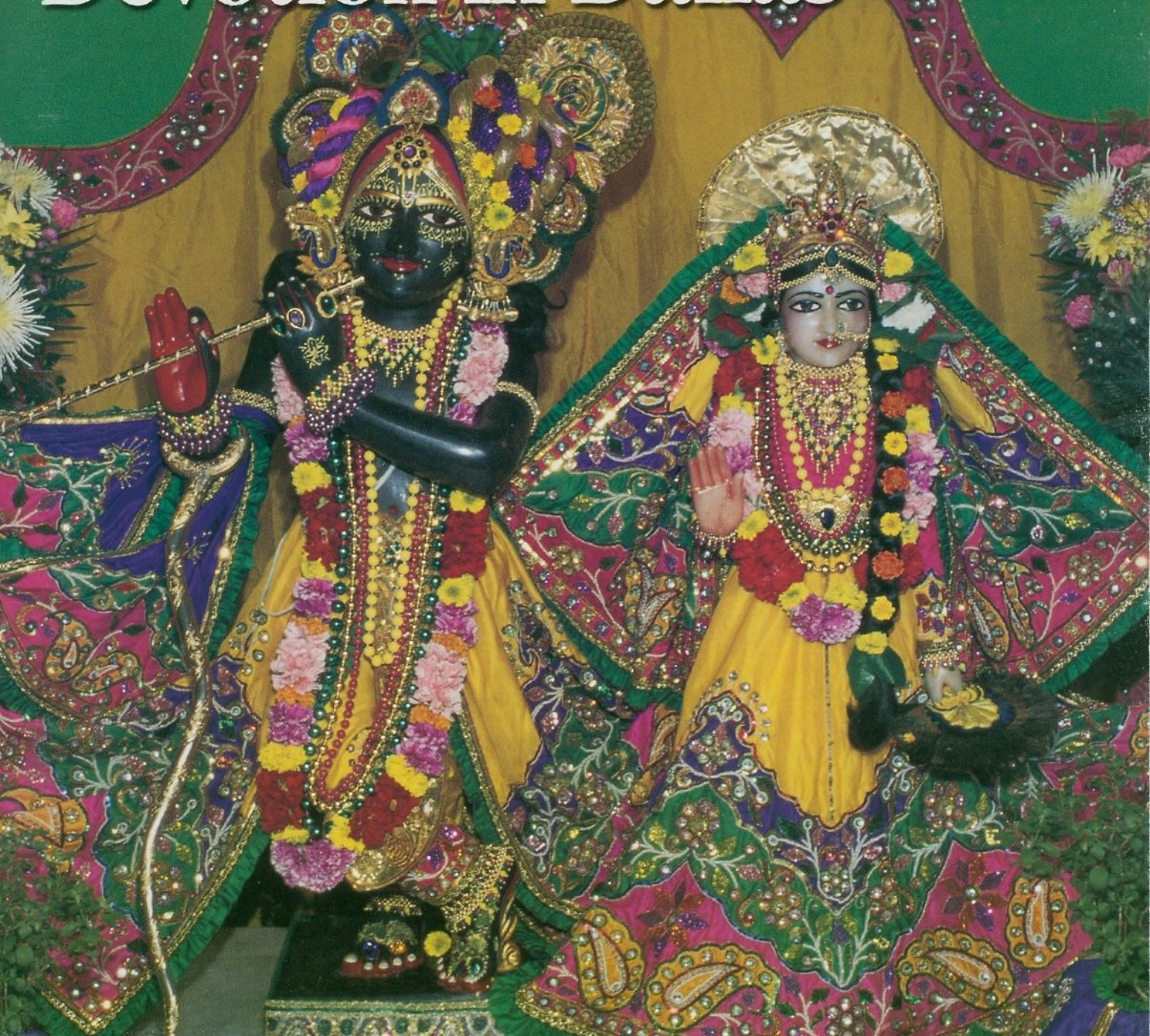


BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Jan/Feb 1999 • \$4.00/£4.50



Devotion in Dallas



Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

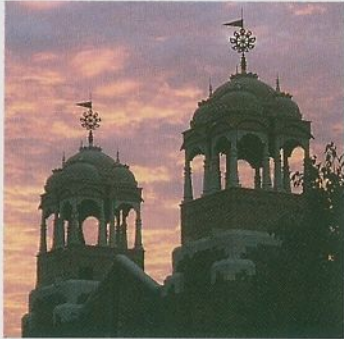
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COVER

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kālacandajī (the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī), the presiding Deities of the Hare Kṛṣṇa community in Dallas, Texas. Photo by Bali Mahārāja Dāsa. Please see the article beginning on page 16.

WELCOME



Articles under the heading “How I Came to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness” have long been popular with readers of *Back to Godhead*. Not surprising, since we're all persons eternally. People

like to hear about people.

Back to Godhead focuses on the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but it also tells about the people who put the philosophy into practice. In this issue, three articles give a glimpse into the lives of Kṛṣṇa devotees past and present. Our cover story tells about the lives of six members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa community in Dallas, Texas. Their pasts are as varied as the services they perform for Lord Kṛṣṇa today. You'll also read about Rasik-ānanda Prabhu, from the sixteenth century. And in “A Storybook Ending,” a devotee describes his coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and then tells of the passing of his mother—an event that forged a spiritual bond between mother and son and brought them both closer to God.

May these stories help form or strengthen a sense of kinship between you and these souls, who have accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord and have dedicated their lives to His service.

If you're new to *Back to Godhead*, I suggest the Glossary on page 53 as a good place to start.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Nāgarāja Dāsa
Editor

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and source of all material and spiritual worlds



Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa's most recent incarnation, taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa



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

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

Changing Channels

Suhotra Swami's article "Channeling: Extrasensory Deception?" (BTG, Sept./Oct. 1998) is an excellent correction of many common notions about channeling, although by pointing out only the errors of those who channel lower spirits posing as elevated souls, it is clearly one-sided. He asks, "But is it logical to suspect all channeled entities because of the mischief of a few? Can't we hope that there are some genuine guides out in the ether somewhere?" but answers his excellent question only by further describing lower spirits and quoting one author's inability "to distinguish truth from falsehood in communications from the next world." However, from both scriptural and modern experience, we know that God and other higher spiritual beings also communicate to us in various ways, and when it is necessary or most efficient they may utilize a human medium or channel.

There are spiritual principles that such a medium must follow, however, to learn how to distinguish genuine spiritual communications from those of the many "hungry ghosts," described by Suhotra Swami, who are always so eager to influence anyone open to the subtle realm. Among the most important of these principles are to regularly worship God, chant His holy names, hear scripture, and follow laws of personal purity—especially to remain free from sexual desire and sexual activity, which is so prominent in the cases of "extrasensory deception" in Suhotra Swami's article.

When, as Suhotra Swami concludes, "we recover our eternal link to the Supreme Person and His pure devotees," we will gradually learn to remain in pure and ecstatic communion with God and His associates, uninfluenced by lower subtle beings, and then we will be able to act as perfect via media from the higher spiritual realm to the world of confused, conditioned souls. This,

indeed, is the meaning of guru, a transcendental position Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to achieve.

Amoghālilā Dāsa
Berkeley, California, USA

SUHOTRA SWAMI REPLIES: It is said there is irrationality at the heart of all rational arguments. Irrationality occurs when people argue from assumptions that cannot be proved. We tend to forget in the heat of debate that our assumptions are not self-evident.

It is irrational to suggest that God and other higher spiritual beings transmit messages by way of the pipeline of the trance state, through the mouth of a human channeler. No, I do not mean "irrational" in the sense of "crazy." But it is by no means self-evident that spiritual beings will receive and answer questions through a channeler. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that the only evidence that proves itself is *śabda-pramāṇa*: Vedic evidence. And the disciple can be certain only about Vedic evidence he or she hears from the spiritual master. Śrīla Prabhupāda *did not teach his disciples to get answers by way of the trance-pipeline.*

Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 6.137) confirms that *śabda-pramāṇa* is self-evident. Self-evident scriptural testimony does not require the additional evidence of sensory experimentation (*pratyakṣa*) or speculative interpretation (*anumāna*). Nor does it require the evidence of a psychic channel.

The Vedic method of knowledge is the method of *darśana* revealed by scriptural sound. *Darśana* means to directly perceive that what is named, for example, by the scriptural sound *Kṛṣṇa* is Kṛṣṇa Himself. *Darśana* is self-evident in consciousness that is clear of attachment, fear, and anger, and strengthened by knowledge and austerity. The process of clearing consciousness is objective and scientific and taught by guru, scripture, and self-realized souls. Being self-evident, *darśana* is exoteric, meaning that when the medium of consciousness is

unclouded, no more mysterious an effort is required to see a deep truth than to see an ordinary surface truth—like the sun in the sky, for instance. This is no irrational assumption, since the process—hearing and chanting transcendental sound—is participatory. As many devotees who with purified hearts take part in glorifying Him, to that many Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself simultaneously as the name and the named.

On the other hand, channeling is not participatory. It is demonstrative. The channeler demonstrates his assumed abilities for others, and it is never obvious to the others from where these abilities come or how others can develop them. Channeling is esoteric: deep truths are assumedly fished out of the murk by a psychic “idiot-savant.” By idiot-savant I mean that the channeler’s qualifications—why he or she of all people fishes truths out of the murk, and others not—can’t be rationally explained. The channeler’s qualifications are not the result of an objective, scientific methodology.

Why did Jane Roberts hear messages from an entity claiming to be Seth? Why did Aviva hear messages from an entity claiming to be Filipa? Why would a channeler today hear messages from an entity claiming to be, for example, Śrīla Prabhupāda? In each case, the answer can only be assumed.

Which Forms to Worship?

I have a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā* by Swami Prabhupāda. I must say that I did not know the depths of the soul, mukti, God, nature, and material existence. It says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that we must ask somebody for interpretations who is the master of the *Gītā*. I do not consider myself a master; I am just seeking guidance from Lord Kṛṣṇa.

When Arjuna asks “What form should I meditate upon to please You?” the Lord replies, “I am the

serpent Vāsuki, I am the tree, I am Indra, Śiva, Viṣṇu,” and many other forms. However, in the beginning of *Gītā* it says we must not worship any other demigods, only the supreme reality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa). Indra, Śiva, Vāsuki, and Agni are thought to be demigods. Viṣṇu and Rāma, I know, are incarnations of the supreme reality of Godhead. But how is it possible to worship demigods when the *Gītā* forbids us in the beginning and allows it in a later chapter.

Nitin Ajwani
via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Although Lord Kṛṣṇa says that various forms in this world represent Him, He clearly says that love and surrender are meant for Him alone. These other forms display some aspect of Kṛṣṇa’s opulence, but ultimately He is much more than any of His creations. He decries demigod worship in a few places in the *Gītā*, and in the end He asks for surrender to Him alone—*mām ekam*. Although in one sense Kṛṣṇa and His energies are identical, He is at the same time different from them, being the supreme independent source of everything. We are eternally related with Him as servants, and by realizing that we attain perfection.

Soul Searching

I have recently been searching for the answer to the question “Where does the soul go when we die?” I cannot find a suitable reply to my quest. Someone says we end up in a grain and then go into sperm, to be then transferred to the womb. A devotee told me once that the soul is immediately reincarnated, but how does it happen? What happens when an infant dies or when many people die at once?

Carlo Grimaldi
Oxford, England

OUR REPLY: Since every soul is unique, there is no single answer to
(please turn to page 50)

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on in the modern world a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five milleniums ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya’s movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

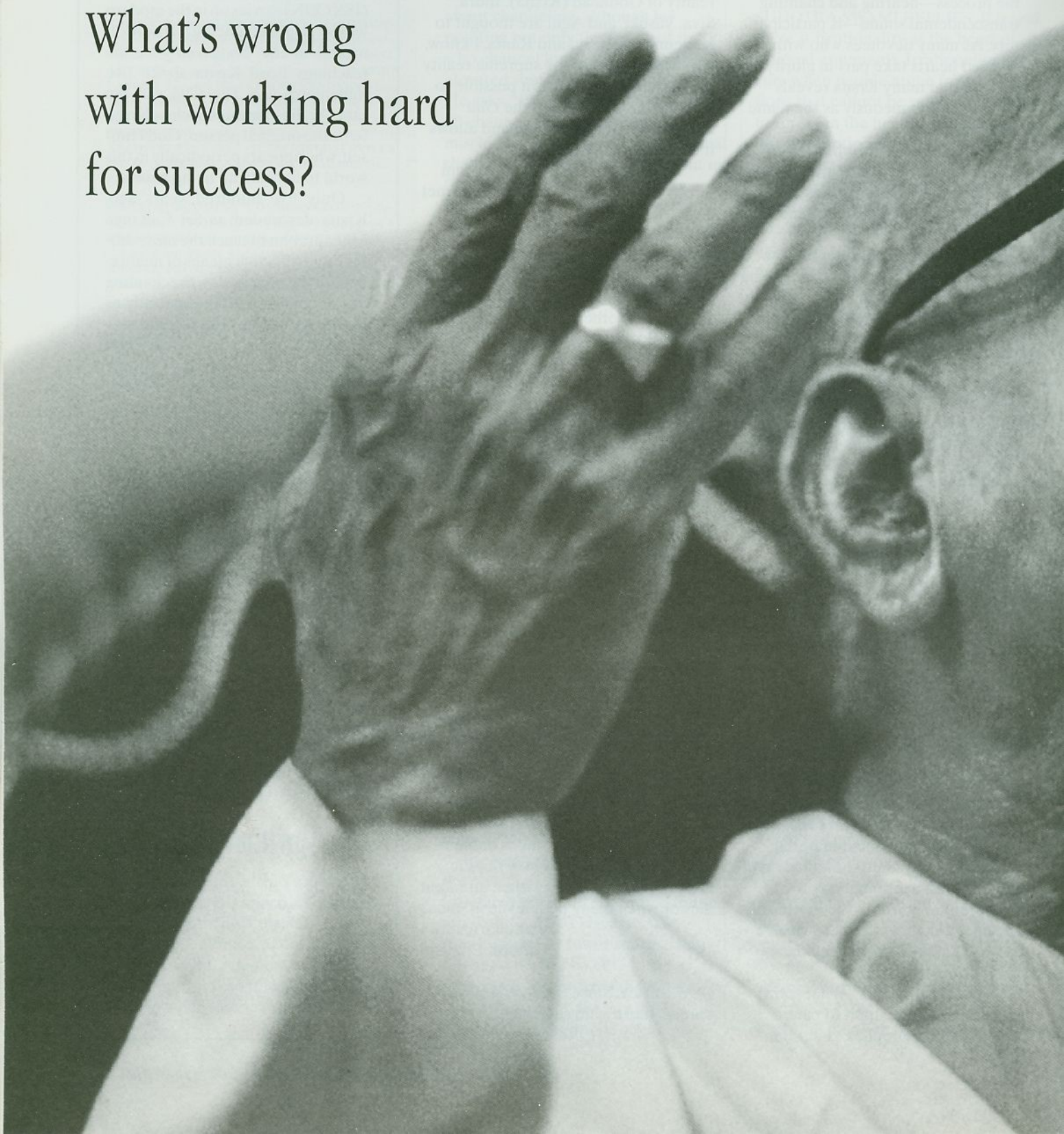
We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **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**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce ś and ṣ like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, 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.”

Life Without Me

What's wrong
with working hard
for success?



aningless Work

A lecture given in Vṛndāvana, India,
on November 3, 1976, by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness.

*putrāṁś ca śiṣyāṁś ca nṛpo gurur vā
mal-loka-kāmo mad-anugrahārthaḥ
itthaṁ vimanyur anuśiṣyād ataj-jñān
na yojayet karmasu karma-mūḍhān
kaṁ yojayan manujo 'rthaṁ labheta
nipātayan naṣṭa-dṛśaṁ hi garte*

TRANSLATION: If one is serious about going back home, back to Godhead, then he must consider the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead the summum bonum and chief aim of life. If he is a father instructing his sons, a spiritual master instructing his disciples, or a king instructing his citizens, he must instruct them as I have advised. Without being angry, he should continue giving instructions, even if his disciple, son, or citizen is sometimes unable

to follow his order. Ignorant people who engage in pious and impious activities should be engaged in devotional service by all means. They should always avoid fruitive activity. If one puts into the

Material life is not real life. Real life is in the spiritual world.

• • •

bondage of karmic activity his disciple, son, or citizen who is bereft of transcendental vision, how will one profit? It is like leading a blind man to a dark well and causing him to fall in.”

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.15

Two kinds of ruler or controller are mentioned here: the government and the spiritual master. As the government controls the citizens, the spiritual master controls the disciples, but the disciples obey the order of the spiritual master out of love. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks of this kind of obedience when describing the *brahmacārī*, or celibate student living in the āśrama of the guru. *Brahmacārī guru-kūle vasan dānto guror hitam*. Whatever the guru wants, the *brahmacārī* has to do. The disciple acts for the guru's benefit, as shown by the example of Arjuna in accepting Kṛṣṇa as his guru. *Śiṣyas te 'ham śādhi mām tvām prapannam*: “Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You.”

For his personal benefit, Arjuna did not want to fight, but for Kṛṣṇa's benefit, he fought. This is the example shown by Arjuna. When considering his own benefit, he did not want to kill his kinsmen: “Oh, if I kill my kinsmen I'll go to hell. I'll be responsible for so much trouble for others.” He put forward many arguments when he was considering his benefit and not Kṛṣṇa's. But Kṛṣṇa wanted the fight, and Arjuna agreed, “I'll no longer act for my benefit; I'll act for Your benefit.” That is the desirable mentality: *guror-hitam*, “for the benefit of the guru.”

Why should the guru order, and why should one accept the order? That is stated here. *Mal-loka-kāmo mad-anugrahārthaḥ*: “If one is serious about going back home, back to Godhead, he must consider the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead the summum bonum and chief aim of life.” This is the ideal life. One should seek the benediction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. By

pleasing Kṛṣṇa, one returns to Kṛṣṇa's abode.

Now we are suffering in the material world. That is described in every book of Vedic knowledge. *Bhagavad-gītā* states, *aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyu-saṁsāra-varmani*. Persons who don't attain Kṛṣṇa remain suffering in this material world of birth and death.

The aim of life is to go back home, back to Godhead. But people do not know the aim of life or why they are suffering. They have become so animalistic they cannot understand they are suffering. Their brains have become so dull.

In this world we are always suffering. Take, for example, this fan. We don't require it now, so if we run it, it will cause us to suffer. But in the summer it is required. It is pleasing, and we suffer without it. That means that either in summer or in winter we are always suffering.

Another example: The same water is pleasing during summer but the cause of suffering during winter. As long as we have this body we must suffer. That is the truth. We are getting different types of body, each body for a short period. The body will not last forever. But as long as it lasts, it will cause suffering. That we do not understand.

We can end our suffering only by surrendering to Kṛṣṇa. Suffering is inflicted by *māyā*, Kṛṣṇa's illusory energy. But people are so dull they cannot understand that they are suffering. They accept suffering as enjoyment. In this way they are rotting in the material world. The aim of life is to stop suffering. The guru or the government should rule dependents with this aim in view.

TWO GOALS

Two things are required: to get the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and to go back home, back to Godhead. Unless we go back home, back to Godhead, there is no question of peace or happiness. We are trying to

be happy within the material world by material adjustment. But happiness is not possible in that way.

Because we are giving this information, people accuse us of brainwashing. We are not brainwashing; we are clearing the brain. But nowadays people have become such rascals that they say, “There is no God. This is all mythology.” Even prominent *sannyāsīs* say, “Don't concern yourself with talk of God and sin and piety. You can do whatever you like, because you are yourself God.” But that is not the fact.

The spiritual master and the government are both controllers. The citizen is also considered *śiṣya*, “disciple” or “one who is controlled.” The rules and regulations of the government and the spiritual master should be such that the dependent, either the disciple or the citizen, must know that material life is not real life. Real life is in the spiritual world. The material world is an illusion, a mirage. We are searching for happiness here, but Kṛṣṇa says, “No, there is no happiness here.”

Kṛṣṇa personally instructs us, “If you don't want to continue suffering, then come to Me.”

A person who understands this instruction is called a *mahātmā*, a great soul. A person trying to be happy in the material world is a *durātmā*, a rascal. Rascals do not know there is no happiness here. There cannot be any happiness, however expert you may be. If you are thrown into the middle of the ocean, you may be an expert swimmer, but you will not be happy.

Our situation in the material world is a struggle for existence. That understanding should come to our brain. That is not brainwashing; it is brain-clearing. If you want to end suffering, you must wash your brain or heart.

The government or the spiritual master should not give big programs for material happiness. There are always planning commissions by the government. Why? To engage people to work very hard.

CHECKING ANGER

When you rule, there may be some disobedience on the part of your subordinates. Therefore it is the duty of the spiritual master not to be angry if the disciples or followers are fools. Sometimes they commit mistakes; they do not obey. But the ruler—the spiritual master, the government—has to tolerate.

People have a natural tendency to work and get some benefit. They plan, “I shall become a very rich man. I shall own so many houses, so much property, so much land.” Why are such people so busy? They do not know that they cannot improve their economic position simply by working hard. That is not possible. Otherwise, everyone would become rich. In big cities like Calcutta, Bombay, London, New York, everyone is working very hard. But do you think everyone is in the same position? No. That is not possible, because of destiny. One man works hard day and night and simply gets two pieces of bread, that’s all. We have seen in Bombay that people are living in such rotten conditions that even in the daytime they have to use a kerosene lamp. Does everyone in Bombay live luxuriously? No. And the same is true for every city.

You cannot improve your economic position simply by working hard. That is not possible. Whether you work hard or you don’t work, whatever is destined to you you’ll get. Therefore our energy should be used to please Kṛṣṇa. We should not waste our energy on the false hope that “I shall become happy. I shall do this. I shall do that. I shall make money like this . . .”

The story of the potter illustrates this point. A potter had a few pots, so he was planning, “Now I have these pots, and I will sell them and make some profit. Then I’ll get ten pots, sell them, and make more profit. Then I’ll get twenty pots, thirty pots, forty pots . . . In this way I shall become a millionaire. Then I shall marry, and I shall control my wife. And if she is disobedient, then I shall put my foot down.” Absorbed in thought, he accidentally kicked the pots, and all the pots broke. His dream was gone.

Similarly, with a few pots we are simply dreaming, “These pots will



• KṚṢṆA ON THE NET •

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www.krsna.com or www.krishna.com

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Site for BTG, the Bhaktivedanta Archives, the Hare Kṛṣṇa Catalog, and the full text of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

www.shamantaka.org or www.iskcon.org

HARE KṚṢṆA, THE COMPLETE PICTURE

A visually dynamic site from the North European BBT.

www.harekrishna.com/

HARE KṚṢṆA HOME PAGE

Book excerpts and more from the BBT in Los Angeles.

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KRISHNA CHAT

A Kṛṣṇa conscious chat channel in real-time. Visit www.iskcon.org/ire/ for more information.

increase to more pots, more pots, more pots," then finished. Don't make imaginary plans in this way. The spiritual master and the government should be careful that people don't make imaginary plans to become happy.

This world is *karma-jagat*, the place where everyone is engaged in fruitive work. So what is the use of teaching them in that direction? Take, for example, sex life. Sex is natural. People do not require a university education to enjoy sex. There is a Bengali saying: "No one needs to be taught how to cry, laugh, or enjoy sex." These things are natural; they don't require any education.

Now leaders make big plans to teach people how to work hard. This is a waste of life. Educational institutions should be for teaching people how to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, not to become this or that. That is a waste of time, because that program will never be successful.

Therefore Vedic civilization teaches people to be satisfied in their own position as a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, or *śūdra*. Whatever by God's grace one has, one is satisfied. One's energy is used to become eligible to receive the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. That is wanted—to learn how to surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

The great sages wrote many books, but they lived in cottages. Only the kings, because they had to rule, constructed big palaces. Everyone else lived very simply. They did not waste time in so-called economic development and building skyscrapers, subways, and so on. That is not Vedic civilization. This is asuric—demonic—civilization.

People are inclined to *karma-sukha*, the so-called happiness of karmic activity. So it is difficult to convince them that this is not needed. Real life is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and for that purpose one should undergo austerities. You have to purify your existence. You are suffering. You are not meant for birth and death. You are undergoing birth and death and do not know what kind of life you are going to get next. You have no information. Today you may be a very big man, and tomorrow you may be a dog.

These things are going on, but people do not know. They simply work, making plans to be happy. But obtaining

happiness through karmic work is not possible. Therefore in this verse the leaders are forbidden to engage people in karmic work. *Na yojayet karmasu karma-mūdhān*. The leaders should engage people in acquiring Kṛṣṇa's favor. If they teach them like that, Kṛṣṇa will be very pleased.

Here it is said, *mal-loka-kāmaḥ*: "the desire to go to My abode." How can one go to Kṛṣṇaloka or Vaikuṅṭhaloka? Very easy. Kṛṣṇa says, *man-manā bhava mad-bhaktō mad-yāji mām namaskuru*: "Do these four things: Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer obeisances to Me, and without any doubt you'll come to Me."

Why do people not accept this proposal by Kṛṣṇa? We have not manufactured this proposal. We are not brainwashing. These are Kṛṣṇa's words. If you simply do four things—think of Kṛṣṇa, become His devotee, worship Him, and offer Him obeisances—Kṛṣṇa will be pleased, and you'll go to Him, without a doubt. So don't waste your time making big material plans.

There is a Bengali proverb:

Big, big monkey—big, big belly
Ceylon jumping—melancholy

There were many monkeys, and one of them—chanting "*Jaya Rāma!*" ["Glories to Lord Rāmacandra!"]—jumped over the Indian Ocean. The others could only hang their heads.

So our plan is to chant "*Jaya Rāma!*" and jump over the material world to the spiritual world. That is required, not working hard to improve our material condition. That will never be possible. *Tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovido na labhyate yad bhramatām upary adhaḥ*. You cannot get happiness within the material world. *Upari* means up to the higher planetary system, and *adhaḥ* means down to the lower planetary system. We are wandering like this: sometimes up to Svargaloka, sometimes down to Pātālaloka, sometimes in heaven, sometimes in hell.

So take the seed of bhakti by the mercy of guru, by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and make your life successful. Don't engage yourself in material fruitive activities to improve your material condition. That will never be successful.

Thank you very much.

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The Search for the Authentic Self

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

IN HER BOOK *Mightier Than the Sword*, Kathleen Adams has a chapter called “Authenticity.” She writes, “The discrepancy between image/being, external/internal, acculturated self/authentic self—the maintenance of the lie—reverberates in the journals of men like an echo bouncing off canyon walls. The search for authenticity is a modern-day grail quest. It is the beating heart of many men’s writings.”

The search for authenticity is the beating heart not only of people’s journals but of many people’s lives. It means asking that age-old question: Who am I? That question is deep; we can’t lie when we answer it. Authentic means the answer has to be real.

But “real” has different levels. From the Vedic literature we learn that real means I am an eternal, separated part of Kṛṣṇa, constitutionally a servant. On another level, it feels real that I am sitting in this room, at peace for a moment, seeing a flock of swans land on a calm lake. Yet another level of real is the acculturated self, shaped largely by the society we live in. Then there is the voice within us that rebels against that self and lives in a private, confidential world of spiritual and material aspiration.

So which is the authentic self? Or are they all authentic? Sometimes we have to start with the negative side of the question: Who am I not? By peeling off identities one after another—marital status, occupation, responsibilities, desires—we can learn to redefine ourselves by what

we find important.

Śrīla Prabhupāda speaks about authenticity in terms of self-interest. He says self-interest is good but most of us know neither what our real self-interest is nor how to pursue it. We pursue a limited self-interest, starting with physical gratification and extending that to identification with community and nation. Because we don’t recognize the authenticity of our constitutional nature as servants of Kṛṣṇa, we don’t remember that the goal of life is to satisfy Him. Which takes us back to that ultimate level of understanding our authentic self: we are servants of God, eternally. If that truth remains only theoretical to us, we cannot be single-minded in our endeavor to satisfy the ultimately authentic self. The only way to satisfy that self is to act out of love for Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore we are still searching for authenticity. We haven’t found the truth yet. For people in our condition, the guru recommends regulative devotional service (*vaidhi-bhakti*). When we are living our authenticity, we will love Kṛṣṇa spontaneously. In the meantime, we have a list of shoulds and should-nots to follow, and often we have to accept the discipline they impose in spite of ourselves. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that the more we practice devotion even when we don’t always feel it bubbling up within us, the more we will uncover our original, authentic natures. When we uncover our pure intelligence, he says, we won’t know anything but surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

But it’s a razor’s edge. We can’t

lose ourselves in the following. As Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, a too-rigid following of rules and regulations without understanding the ultimate goal can be just as detrimental to our search for authenticity as not following at all. The goal of life is to love Kṛṣṇa with our pure selves, but if we don’t know who that pure self is, we have to love Kṛṣṇa with whatever we are now. We have to make room for all those other voices within us—the physical voice, the mental voice, the emotional voice—and imbue them all with the truth of our spiritual aspiration. Then we can turn to something we love to do, something meaningful to us, and offer it to Kṛṣṇa.

And we have to consider not what is authentic but how much we are willing to be authentic. It’s that “being” that constitutes surrender of the self to Kṛṣṇa. If we are searching for the authentic self, we can’t remain mere imitators of spiritual life. Imagine going through an entire life with the blessings we have been given and choosing to remain inauthentic. A devotee wants to be tuned to the ring of truth within himself. He wants to get behind the image, even the one he has of himself, to find his honest, loving offering to place at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Eventually, as we practice expressing devotion, the outer self will harmonize with the inner self, and we will become whole.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami is the author of many books, including a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda.



Thoughts at the Births of Grandchildren

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

THE HEAD SLOWLY appears, then the body slips and slides, and finally the feet exit—birth! The child sounds the cry of life, and everyone is relieved and joyful.

In its previous life the now helpless baby may have dived into a deep pool of learning, but now the baby is in ignorance. He or she will have to struggle to regain all lost skills and learning. Picture thoughts will give way to words, for many months garbled. The child will struggle to master the new body, learn the new language, understand the new family and society into which it has been thrust. Then will come many years of formal training in culture, behavior, academics, and skills. How much of this was known not so many years ago in another life? But the child must again struggle to attain what will be lost yet again at another death.

The stereotyped grandparent is a person of experience who can guide the grandchildren to what is most useful in life. But what can I give that will not simply be taken away?

Of course, the child needs ordinary knowledge and skills. Just as we clean dishes, clothes, and floors that again require cleaning, so we must educate and prepare children for their roles in this lifetime. But if we give our children only temporary things, neither they nor we will be satisfied.

Service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is not like material acquisitions, which must be renewed each life. Whatever one has

done for the Lord stays through the change of body. One can see the truth of this practically. For example, so many people find themselves naturally attracted to spiritual life, even when their present family or society doesn't encourage it.

A person who has made much spiritual progress yet failed to attain perfection generally enters a womb where circumstances will be favorable for further spiritual progress. Formerly, expectant mothers might attend gatherings of sages who would

As soon as mother and baby have recovered, they can again immerse themselves in growing in knowledge of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Kṛṣṇā Devī in 1968: "We should train all our first-day small babies in such a way that they are always satisfied and there will be no disturbance in the *Bhāgavatam* lecture, and there will be no complaint. But there cannot be any hard and fast rules that only children who are grown up, seven or eight years old, can be admitted and no other children can

be admitted. That is not possible, and I am not going to sanction any such rule. Rather I shall welcome a baby from the very beginning, so that the transcendental vibration may enter into its ear, and from the very beginning of its life it becomes purified."

If we give our grandchildren wisdom and realization that transcends the change of body, then we achieve the real goal of educa-

tion. If a child can fully understand his own nature, the Lord, and service to Him, all of which are eternal, then there is no more need of rebirth; the ultimate lesson has been learned. Why engage our children only in an ultimately absurd struggle to gain with great intensity what will surely be lost?

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī and her family run a school in North Carolina. She is the major author and compiler of Vaikuṅṭha Children, a guide to Kṛṣṇa conscious education for children.



Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

give instructions the unborn child could hear. With Śrīla Prabhupāda's genius of using modern technology in Kṛṣṇa's service, a mother can now play tapes of devotional lectures or singing. When the mother attends the *ārati* ceremony of the Deity and eats food offered to Kṛṣṇa, the unborn child also benefits.

As labor progresses, the mother can chant or listen to a tape. As the child appears, friends and relatives gathered to greet the new family member can chant, "Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hare Kṛṣṇa!"



Mercy Amid Mayhem

compiled by Navina Nirada Dāsa

FOLLOWING ARE excerpts from the diary of Aisvarya Dāsa. Based in San Diego, he travels throughout America with other devotees, distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Saturday, June 13, 1998

Washington, D.C.

We'd just come from New Vrindavan, so after the peace and serenity of farm life, my mind was having trouble coping with being thrown into this mayhem—the Tibetan Freedom Concert, an outdoor rock concert at RFK Stadium. Then I remembered that in a short while Lord Jagannātha would be happily gliding down New York's Fifth Avenue on His Rathayātrā cart. I longed to be there and began thinking I'd made a mistake in coming to a show where it would be difficult to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. But I suddenly realized that if I went out and tried my best, then Lord Jagannātha would be there too. So I tentatively stepped out of the van into the sounds of illusion.

One Eager Soul

At first Jananivāsa, another distributor, thought Joe looked interested, but Jananivāsa's mind said no, and he kept walking. Joe smiled at him.

Awhile later, amid thousands of people, Jananivāsa saw Joe again. Joe smiled a bigger smile, but Jananivāsa kept walking.

Later, they met yet again, and Joe smiled the biggest smile yet. Jananivāsa finally conceded it must be that Lord Caitanya wants Joe to get a book. Joe bought six books.

Candidates Everywhere

Four young men in a car each took

a book. Later I passed by them again, and one of them called me over. We briefly discussed Nietzsche and other philosophers, and he told me he was stuck in existentialism, as he pointed to the beer in one of his hands.

"I really want to give this up," he said, "but it's so hard when everyone else around me is doing it."

He realized the folly of what he was doing and had taken a book to improve himself.

There's a *brāhmaṇa* in every parking lot.

Rained Out

It rained, and the show was canceled. We decided to leave but got caught up in the exiting traffic. This all turned out to be Lord Jagannātha's mercy. Within a few minutes the rain stopped, the sun came out, and everyone was sitting in the traffic jam, waiting for their books. A day that had started out rough ended up very auspicious.

Sunday, June 14

Claire is interested in the Hare Kṛṣṇas, so much so that if she were a man she would have joined at once. But from observing ISKCON she felt some prejudice against the ladies.

I told her we're aware of the problem and are improving. Then I said that Kṛṣṇa consciousness goes beyond the interactions of a society and into the realm of our true nature.

"So it doesn't matter where we are—whether we're on a mountain top or in a society—it all boils down to our consciousness. When I first became a monk, I wanted to go live in a secluded place and escape this crazy world, but now here I am in the middle of this parking-lot mayhem,

selling books. I would never be a salesman in a million years, so the reason I'm here has to come down to my consciousness. These books are not for my profit but for the profit of the people who get them. I could be selfish, not do it, and think of myself. But then what about everyone else? Do I forget about everyone else and leave them to rot while I sit on my mountain thinking of myself? So if we limit ourselves by getting bogged down with others' problems, then we're not really helping anyone, including ourselves."

At the end of my sermon, she took a *Science of Self-realization* to add to the *Quest for Enlightenment* she'd gotten yesterday. As I fumbled with her change, I mentioned that I don't like dealing with this money stuff.

"But you have to deal with it," she sternly reminded me. "Don't forget about the rest of us out here!"

Joe Returns

Jananivāsa met Joe again. This time Joe went out and tried his hand at book distribution. Afterwards he came back to the van and had some *prasādam* with us. He had a ticket for the show but got so fired up by distributing books that he sold his ticket so he could be with us. I was feeling ill and couldn't read, so I asked Joe to read out loud from his *Quest for Enlightenment*. I've never before experienced Prabhupāda's words coming across so clearly so soon after Prabhupāda's action in giving a spirit soul Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

Navina Nirada Dāsa heads ISKCON's book-distribution ministry and travels worldwide to train and inspire book distributors.



Y2K and the Simple Life

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

ON JANUARY 1, 2000, you might wake up, turn on your lights, take a shower, use the phone, and drive to the grocery store. Or you might not—if Y2K, or the millennium computer bug, brings the world's economic systems to a halt.

Many people say that the gravity of the Y2K problem has been exaggerated. But some experts tend to be more pessimistic. Testifying before the U.S. Congress, Dr. Edward Yardeni, chief economist for the global investment-banking firm Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, warned, "There is not enough time to fix and test all the systems, with billions of lines of software code around the world, that need to be fixed."

A large part of the problem is that the numerous computer systems keeping our governments and economy going are highly interconnected. Said Dr. Yardeni, "The sum total of all interdependent computer systems must all be compliant. The network is the computer. A problem in one system could trigger a domino effect. . . . The networks that must function perfectly at the risk of partial and even total failure include: 1. Electrical power systems, 2. Telecommunications, 3. Transportation, 4. Manufacturing, 5. Retail and wholesale distribution, 6. Finance and banking, 7. Government services and administration, 8. Military defense, and 9. International trade."

Although Dr. Yardeni didn't include agriculture or food-processing in his list, the Gartner Group, in an ongoing survey of 15,000 companies and government agencies in 87 countries, claims that agriculture and food-processing companies are

among the most delinquent in their efforts to make their systems Y2K compliant. Shipping companies are not much better. In January 1996, Charles Parks of the Union Pacific Railroad said, "To convert these programs, we estimate that it would require . . . 100 staff years. The problem turned out to be much larger than we had realized."

In July, Richard Lugar, chairman of U.S. Senate Agricultural Committee, noted with frustration that the U.S. Department of Agriculture projected it would be Y2K compliant by the year 2002. And Dr. Yardeni told the agricultural committee, "We are especially blind about the possible problems that will hit the global food supply in 2000. . . . I suspect the Y2K technological problem could significantly disrupt the food-supply chain."

The Y2K alarm gives us a glimpse of just how fragile our modern social system is. Two tiny 0s could bring down the world economy. We've become proud of our economic progress, but Śrīla Prabhupāda reminds us, "Economic development or supremacy over the world can be finished at any moment by the cataclysms of material nature." Will that moment be January 1, 2000? Only Kṛṣṇa knows for sure.

Modern life rests on a global economy that seems to give us all convenience but is actually a source of unlimited anxiety. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the best way of life:

By God's arrangement, anyone in any part of the world can live very peacefully if he has some land and a milk cow. There is no need for

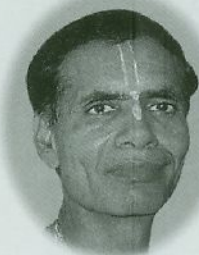
man to move from one place to another to earn a livelihood, for one can produce food grains locally and get milk from cows. That can solve all economic problems. Fortunately, man has been given higher intelligence for the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or the understanding of God, one's relationship with Him, and the ultimate goal of life, love of God.

Unfortunately, so-called civilized man, not caring for God realization, utilizes his intelligence to get more than necessary and simply eat to satisfy the tongue. By God's arrangement there is sufficient scope for the production of milk and grains for human beings all over the world, but instead of using his higher intelligence to cultivate God consciousness, so-called intelligent men misuse their intelligence to produce many unnecessary and unwanted things.

—*The Nectar of Instruction*,
Text 2, Purport

Śrīla Prabhupāda's statement reminds me of the Bengali villagers I saw working in the fields with their oxen. What will they be doing on January 1, 2000? They'll get up, bathe in the Ganges or at a village ghat, go to the temple to worship Kṛṣṇa, come back home, hitch up their ox team, and go out plowing while singing Hare Kṛṣṇa. Computer chip? Never heard of it.

Formerly the editor of Hare Kṛṣṇa Rural Life, Hare Kṛṣṇa Dāsī is currently compiling a five-volume series of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings on varṇāśrama and farm community development.



Why Accept a Spiritual Master?

by Puruṣottama Dāsa

I WAS BORN INTO a Hindu family, and from an early age I was taught the necessity of accepting a spiritual master. Also early on, I was disciplined to get up every day at 4:00 A.M., bathe, meditate, say prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma as well as other *devatas* (demigods), and read the *Bhagavad-gītā*. After doing these things I would begin my schoolwork.

When I came to study in the U.S.A., everything changed for the worst. Though keeping the designation "Hindu," I stopped worshipping God and following religious principles. To me "God" was a vague term. And without the guidance of a spiritual master, I couldn't understand the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

After obtaining a doctorate degree, I was swayed by the Western way of life. I was proud of my academic education and strongly entrapped by the consciousness of enjoying materialistic life. I was also influenced by modern methods of acquiring knowledge, which rely on conjecture. Equipped with a hodgepodge of ideas about God and unaware that the goal of life is to return to Godhead, I used to say, "I know everything. Why should I accept a spiritual master?" In fact, I was a fool.

Ultimately, by the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and the association of devotees, I found out that God is not something vague. God is Kṛṣṇa. And transcendental knowledge, which is beyond material nature, cannot be known experimentally or by argument or speculation. Vedic knowledge is called *śabda*, or

knowledge acquired through hearing from higher authority. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.21) says, "Any person who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation."

The spiritual master awards initiation when he feels confident that the candidate has shown sincerity and determination to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. In the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement the candidate must be following four regulative principles: no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, and no gambling. At the time of initiation in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, one vows to chant sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra and follow the four regulative principles. The day I took initiation by accepting a spiritual master was the happiest and most glorious day of my life.

Initiation links the disciple with Kṛṣṇa through the intermediary of the spiritual master. The spiritual master's duty is to liberate the disciple from repeated birth and death by guidance and instruction from the Vedic scriptures. The disciple's duty is to follow the spiritual master's instructions for life.

The spiritual master binds the roaming mind of the disciple in bhakti, devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Bhakti is the innate desire of the soul to serve Kṛṣṇa. The urge of bhakti has to be developed, and this is done under the guidance of the spiritual master, who has already reached the pinnacles of bhakti. To advance in bhakti, the disciple must receive the mercy of the spiritual master through service and obedience. It is said that the instructions of

the spiritual master should be the life and soul of the disciple.

The relationship with the spiritual master is based on service, submission, and inquiry. The spiritual master's instructions provide spiritual strength to the disciple and help the disciple become liberated from materialistic life and attain pure Kṛṣṇa-prema, love of God.

In ISKCON we are grateful to Śrīla Prabhupāda for setting the most glorious example for all spiritual masters to follow. From his life and teachings, we can understand that a real spiritual master always directs our attention not to himself but to Kṛṣṇa, or God.

Accepting a spiritual master has made all the difference in my life. The more I serve Kṛṣṇa through my spiritual master, the more blissful I become. I know that God is not something vague. God is the Supreme Person, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Every day I'm learning more about my personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Through the medium of the spiritual master, it is now easy to understand the Vedic scriptures. Now I realize that serving Kṛṣṇa is infinitely more pleasurable than the best of this world's pleasures. Everything here is temporary and limited, but my relationship with Kṛṣṇa is eternal, full of bliss and knowledge.

Puruṣottama Dāsa (Pritam S. Verma, Ph.D.) and his wife, Padmā Devī Dāsī, are disciples of His Holiness Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami. Puruṣottama Dāsa works as a pharmacologist for the U.S. government and is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. He and his wife have three children.



Śrīla Prabhupāda in Dallas, 1975 (above). At right, ISKCON Dallas today.

A LEGACY OF DEVOTION IN DALLAS

Faithful longtime residents and enthusiastic newcomers work together to carry on Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission.

by Kālakaṅṭha Dāsa

IN 1970, WHILE Richard Nixon was sending American troops into Cambodia, Śrīla Prabhupāda sent two families to Dallas, Texas, to introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness in one of America's more conservative cities.

Attracting interest with daily *kīrtana* and *prasādam* distribution, the two couples (Mohanānanda Dāsa and Saṣṭhī Dāsī, Dīna Bandhu Dāsa and

Ākutī Dāsī) promptly outgrew their temple/apartment. They rented a large house and outgrew that within a year. Then they located a large church in a transitional East Dallas neighborhood. Soon the growing team of devotees found themselves the proud owners of the former Mt. Auburn Church.

To encourage the devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda visited the new temple in

1973 and sent an extraordinary Deity of Kṛṣṇa to Dallas from India. Kālacandajī ("the dark, moon-faced Lord"), a large black-marble Deity, had been worshiped in an Indian temple some five hundred years earlier. Historical events had relegated the sacred Deity to serving as a doorstep in an Indian museum. Upon seeing Kālacandajī, Prabhupāda arranged for His trans-



Rohiṇinandana Dāsa



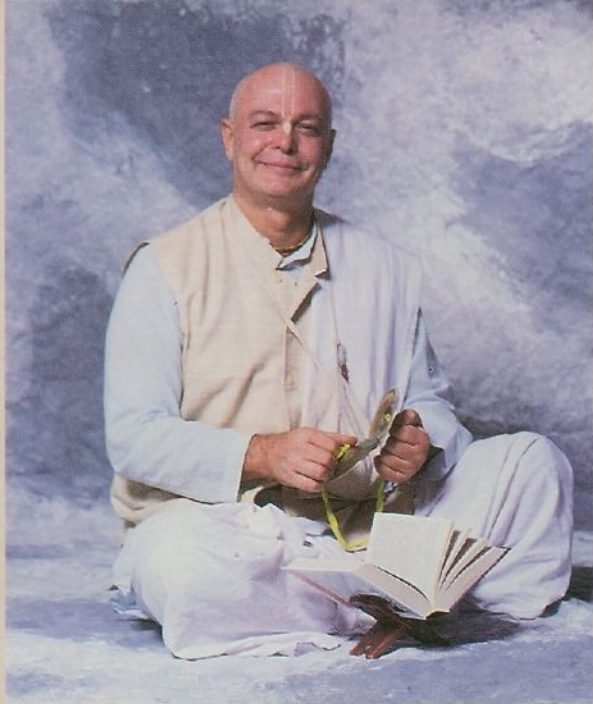
port to Dallas, along with a deity of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and the devotees in Dallas have cared for Them ever since.

Nearly thirty years later, the Dallas community is thriving under the leadership of regional director Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, who is also the guru of many devotees in Dallas, including temple president Yudhiṣṭhira Dāsa. The devotees have transformed the church into

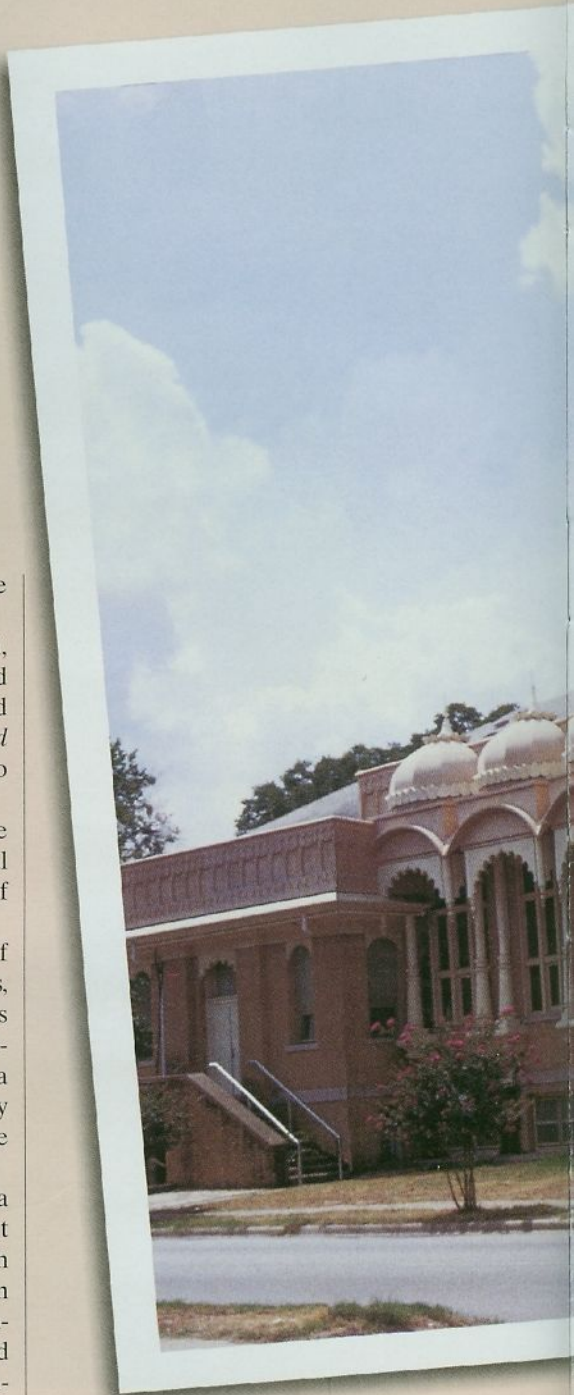
an ornate temple with neo-Vedic architectural veneer. The complex includes a large community hall and a popular, award-winning vegetarian restaurant. Devotee families have bought and beautifully renovated some twenty nearby houses in the working-class, mostly Hispanic neighborhood. They have developed successful businesses, a primary school, programs for

higher education, and a congregation numbering in the thousands.

Śrīla Prabhupāda sent disciples to Dallas, installed Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa there, and trained the devotees to worship Them. How has Kṛṣṇa consciousness blossomed from the seeds Śrīla Prabhupāda planted some twenty-five years earlier? The story unfolds in the lives of Rādhā-Kālacandajī's servants.



Brandy L. Rutland



Prajāpati Dāsa

In 1967, after graduating from Stanford University with a degree in fine arts, Prajāpati Dāsa took a turn for the philosophical and enrolled for a master's degree in Southern Methodist University's theology program. That same year he learned about Kṛṣṇa consciousness from devotees chanting in Tompkins Square Park in New York City. He continued chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa while at SMU, and after graduating in 1970 he encountered devotees at a Boulder, Colorado, festival.

"Why don't you start a temple in Dallas?" he asked.

Later that year, two couples did just that.

While Prajāpati and his wife (later initiated as Śatarūpā Dāsī) welcomed the devotees, they had no intention of joining them. But they soon became attached to the daily lunch *prasādam* and didn't care to eat anywhere else. Then the devotees began a series of classes on *Bhagavad-gītā*, which Prajāpati couldn't resist, having just finished an extensive study of the book during his master's degree work. Even their six-month-old son seemed to be pulling them to Kṛṣṇa. The baby would cry and fuss while his parents practiced silent meditation, but at the temple he remained content.

"I had studied phenomenology of religion," Prajāpati says, "and I admired how the devotees lived their religion twenty-four hours every day. I thought,

'Every spiritual person should live like this.'"

Finally the devotees asked Prajāpati, an actor, to perform the part of Lord Caitanya in a play. That led him to read Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, which in turn led him to dedicate his life to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

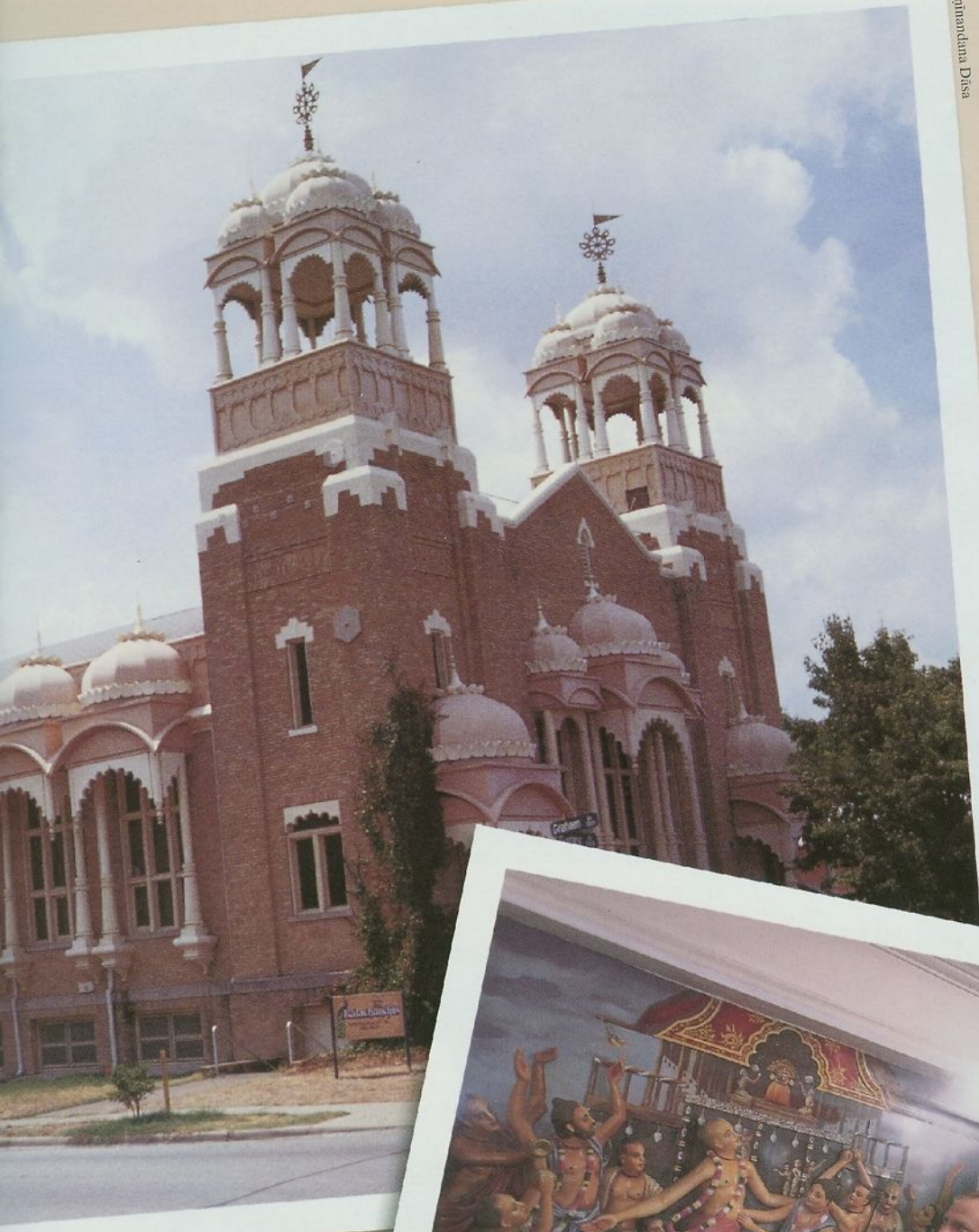
Prajāpati was astonished to realize the difference between the impersonal path he had been on and the path of personalism, bhakti-yoga.

"Lord Caitanya's teaching of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*," he explains, "reminded me of Charles Hartshorne's panentheism—the simultaneous existence of God as His creation and as a distinct individual. That was the only philosophy that had made sense to me in my theology studies."

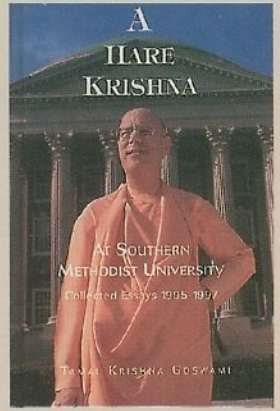
After some time Śrīla Prabhupāda initiated Prajāpati and suggested that as a theology graduate he approach members of other religions. "Get them to agree there is one God," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. "Then establish that God and His name have an intimate connection. Next point out that whatever name of God one chants should bring transcendental pleasure. If they are lacking transcendental pleasure, invite them to try chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa."

These days Prajāpati is active in Thanks-Giving Square, the renowned Dallas interfaith group directed by the internationally recognized Elizabeth Esperson. He also serves as a member of the Dallas independent school district's religious task force.

"This experience has given us all a more liberal attitude toward other faiths," says Prajāpati. "We're appreciating how Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to different groups according to different scriptures and different mentalities. I've gained a broader understanding of love of God or worship of God. Our interfaith work has similarly opened up many new people to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kālacandajā and Their devotees."

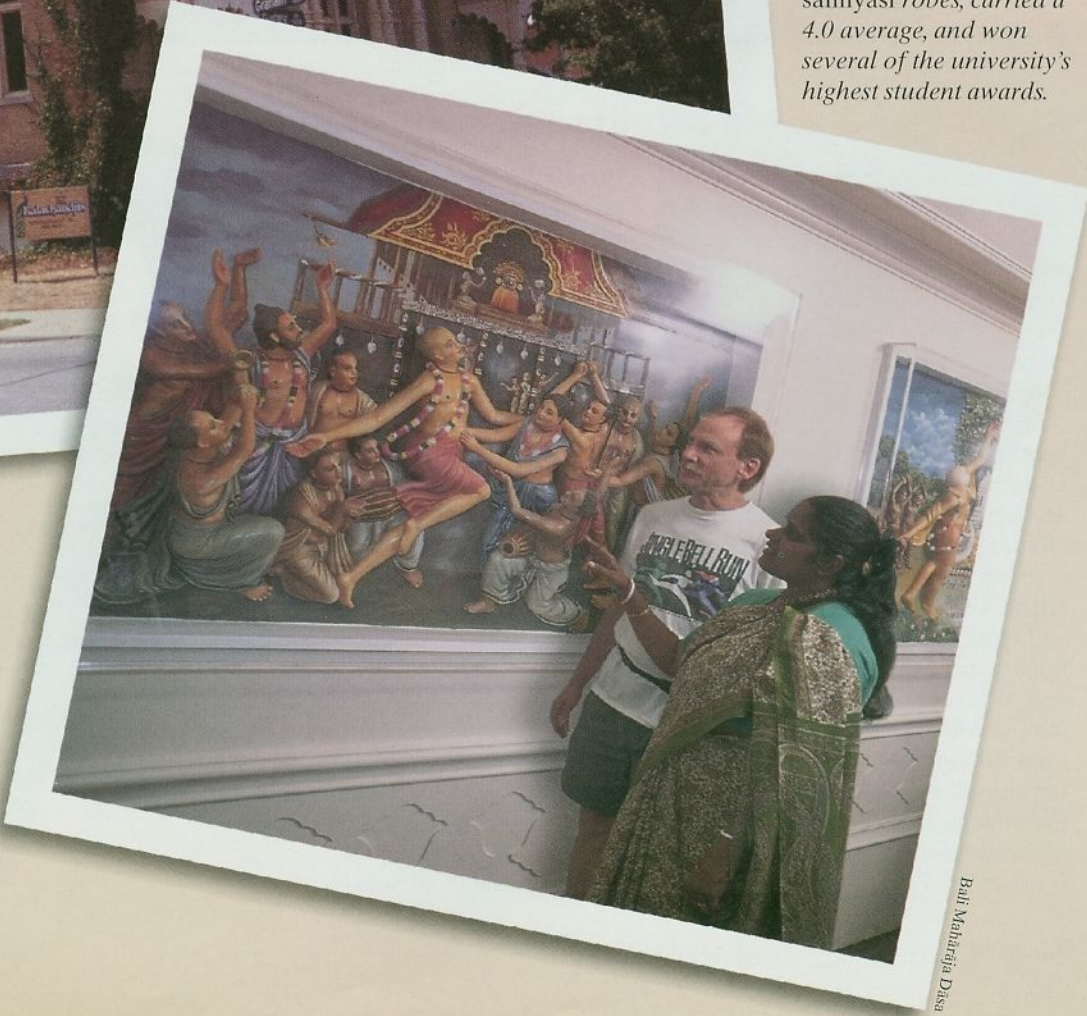


Robinmandana Dasa



Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami recently completed undergraduate studies at Southern Methodist University, while still overseeing ISKCON Dallas, as he has for nearly twenty years. His book A Hare Krishna at Southern Methodist University includes academic essays and articles on his university experiences. He attended classes in shaven head, tilaka, and sannyāsī robes, carried a 4.0 average, and won several of the university's highest student awards.

The neo-Vedic domes (above) of the remodeled Dallas temple are visible to motorists on busy Interstate 35. In the temple hallway (right), guests admire new bas-reliefs of Lord Caitanya.



Bali Mahapatra Dasa



Rādhā Vinoda Dāsa & Indra-nīla-maṇī Devī Dāsi

After marrying in their native Argentina, Rādhā Vinoda and Indra-nīla-maṇī were traveling in Europe in 1980 when they met devotees.

“We were on our way back to America and decided to visit Bhaktivedanta Manor outside London for a couple of days,” Rādhā Vinoda explains. “I didn’t get off to a very good start. I woke up in the night feeling hungry, so I wandered down to the temple kitchen and ate some sweets meant for the Deities.”

Eventually they decided to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness more seriously and moved to the Dallas temple community in 1981. Since then they have served together as a team, first in the temple kitchen, then as salespeople for a community-run art business. Over the last several years, they have turned their talents to distributing Kṛṣṇa conscious literature. Indra-nīla-maṇī is consistently one of the top distribu-

tors in North America, while Rādhā Vinoda oversees all aspects of literature distribution for the community. They also enjoy helping their many contacts and friends develop their Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

When they received an inheritance in 1991, the couple used part of it to help build a new, artistic temple exterior, along with new temple offices, dormitories, and a guest house. Their four-year-old daughter, Śyāmali, attends the community preschool. The outgoing couple takes part in many outreach programs.

“Right now the temple attends to the local Indian population,” says Rādhā Vinoda. “We want to expand our outreach among the local Hispanic community as well. But our main contact with the public remains Kalachandji’s Restaurant.”

The popular all-vegetarian buffet



attracts a steady flow of customers for lunch and dinner six days a week. Many diners also take part in classes on yoga, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and vegetarian cooking.

Rādhā Vinoda keeps busy developing Kalachandji's and a variety of programs.

"My satisfaction is to see everything going on nicely and steadily improving over the years. Many families have been here for eighteen or twenty years, so we have developed a strong sense of direction and spiritual camaraderie."

Indra-nīla-maṇi describes raising a devotee child.

"It is a constant teaching engagement. Since the young child is always inquiring and observing, you have to

Rādhā Vinoda Dāsa, Indra-nīla-maṇi Devī Dāsī, and Śyāmālī at home (left). Below, guests enjoy a meal at Kalachandji's, one of Dallas's oldest and most popular vegetarian restaurants.



Robhindandana Dāsa

explain what you do as a devotee and why you do it. It makes me more introspective. Over the years you may start to overlook details in devotional service, but having a child has made me realize how important the details are. I work on my feelings for Kṛṣṇa. Children are very perceptive. If spiritual practice is mechanical, the children can tell. If you manifest real devotion for the Lord, the children will also invoke some love for Kṛṣṇa within their hearts. Being a parent has helped me be more serious about spiritual life."

Despite her family duties, Indra-nīla-maṇi actively distributes books and meets with interested people in their homes.

"The magic of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to see how people transform. You can see how they become peaceful and happy by reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and associating with devotees. That's what keeps me going. It's very satisfying."

Candrāvalī Devī Dāsī

A much loved and admired devotee, Candrāvalī Dāsī moved to the Dallas temple nearly twenty years ago and has never left. She tells about her early days in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"My ex-husband brought home a *Kṛṣṇa* book. I thought it was crazy. I read about Kṛṣṇa having sixteen thousand wives and thought it unbelievable. My ex-husband kept reading and bought a *Bhagavad-gītā*. I looked through that, but nothing sunk in. Later we had marital problems. He stopped reading the *Gītā*, and I picked it up. I was in distress and took shelter of Kṛṣṇa."

Candrāvalī was astonished when she first visited a temple.

"The Deities were so beautiful. And there were all these men in orange robes jumping and banging cymbals. I had never seen men so interested in God. In my upbringing, all the women went to church, but only a few of the men would go. I was amazed, so I knew that I had better pursue this."

Soon afterwards, Candrāvalī moved

to the Dallas temple community, where there would be more companionship for her young daughter. She took two vows: to devote her life to Kṛṣṇa without remarriage, and to stay in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kālacandajī in Dallas. She has kept these vows for nearly twenty years. How has she—and the Dallas temple—changed during that time?

"For several years I helped support the temple financially through distributing books and helping in a devotee-owned business. Later I became the head *pūjārī*, taking personal responsibility for the Deities' service. To my surprise, my years of dealing with the public helped prepare me for my Deity service, where I found myself working with an all-volunteer staff with quite different personalities. Keeping everyone happy required that I think like a psychologist. The experience sobered and matured me.

"I've found that Deity worship and book distribution should go hand in hand. Teaching the public helps focus the mind, and Deity worship, by allowing you to serve the Lord's form, erases all material desires."



Bali Mahārāja Dāsa

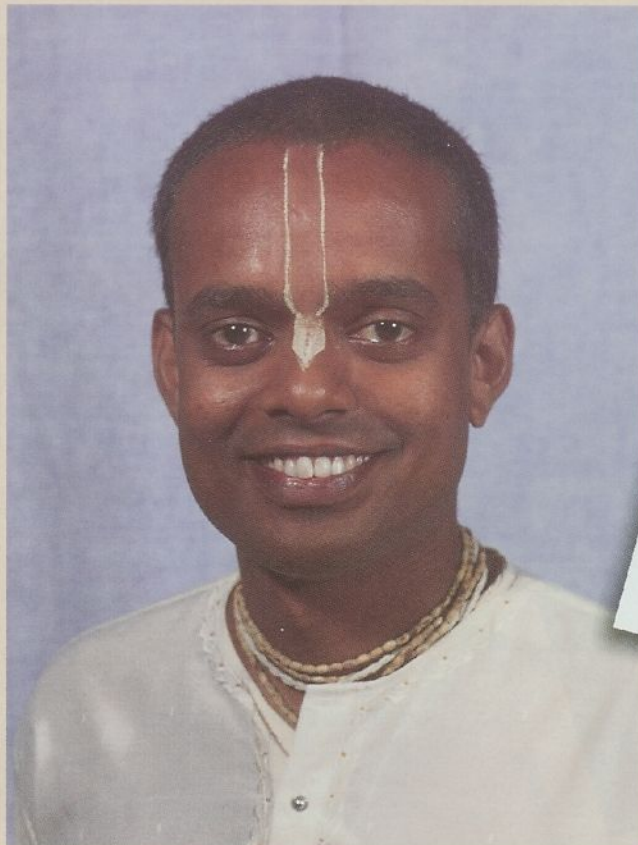


Rasikendra Dāsa

The son of South Indian immigrants in Singapore, Rasikendra Dāsa became interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness while pursuing a master's degree in aerospace engineering at the University of Texas in Arlington.

"I first met devotees at the campus Bhakti Yoga Club. Later, when I visited the temple, I was impressed to see devotees so at ease living a disciplined life and giving up material enjoyment. Their presence created a strikingly pure atmosphere around the temple. I had only heard of saintly persons, but now I was meeting many saintly devotees. And words cannot describe the beauty of the Deities. It was overwhelming. Having been born an Indian, I felt embarrassed that I was not following this Vedic culture."

Rasikendra earned a master's degree in 1995 and is now pursuing a doctorate. Shortly after graduation, he became an initiated devotee and volunteered to serve as the temple's direc-



Bali Maharaja Dasa



tor of congregational development.

“Our members attend the temple steadily and call us to their homes for chanting and classes. We must see that these sincere devotees become properly educated in the scriptures.

“I’m trying to train some members to take more active roles so that eventually they can run the temple. Some already help with the Sunday feast, and their support for the temple has increased. More congregational help al-

lows the more experienced devotees to develop new frontiers for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

“One of the reasons for the success of ISKCON are the bold initiatives Śrīla Prabhupāda took that were somewhat unorthodox by Hindu traditions. We should follow in his footsteps and tax our brains to find new ways to help this movement flourish.

“Keeping up my studies and my temple service can be a real balancing

act. I am also newly married and work as a teaching assistant at the university. But from the very beginning I always felt I should be useful to this movement. What is the value of human life if you don’t use it for the Lord? I pray to my guru and to the devotees that I can be useful in their service.

“I’m grateful to the Dallas devotees who trained and inspired and tolerated me. Now I want to help organize and make our efforts more effective.”

Candrāvalī Devī Dāśī (left) worships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kālacandajī. Below— Festival time! Borrowing from the tradition of Jagannātha Purī in India, devotees pull the traditional Rathayātrā chariot in procession through the streets of Dallas. At right, devotional music entertains the festival crowd, including a youngster all dressed up for the occasion (below right).



Phil Hollenbeck

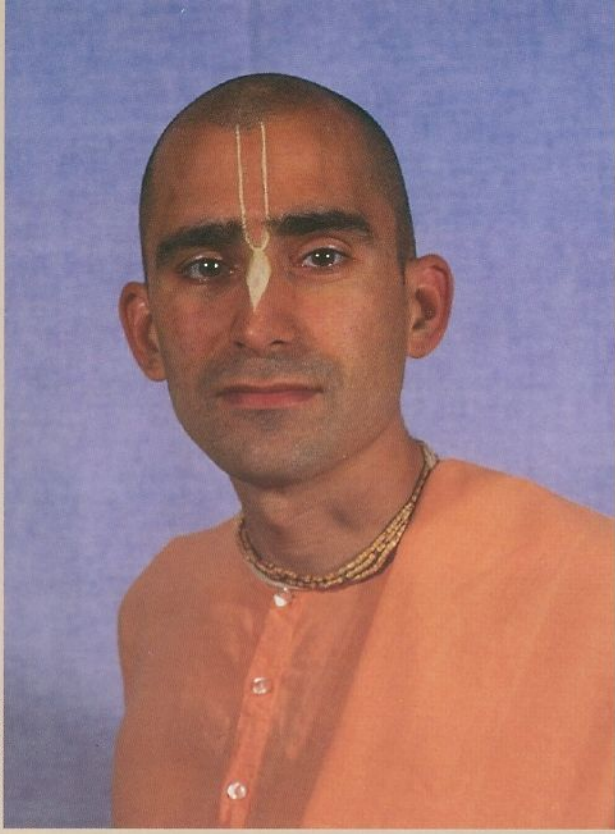


Phil Hollenbeck



Phil Hollenbeck

Bali Mahārāja Dāsa



Kaustubha Dāsa

Kaustubha Dāsa joined ISKCON in New York in 1987.

“I was twenty,” he says, “working here and there after high school, and not really doing much. I had always believed in God, but my religious readings always seemed to demand a great leap of faith. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books answered my questions in a logical and consistent way. When I studied the devotees’ way of life, I understood how one could practically apply the philosophy.

“After my basic training I decided to try distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, and I loved it. I liked the idea of sharing with people what I found most valuable. Distributing books gave me unlimited opportunities to practice the philosophy. Whatever sacrifices you make, whether your time or effort, or encountering harsh weather or people, it’s easy to have the sense of doing everything for Kṛṣṇa.

“Although I now spend much of my time training book distributors elsewhere, the Dallas temple is my base. During the fall and winter I travel with other distributors to college campuses, and in the summer we distribute at music concerts. To me it’s constant fun and adventure.

“At schools, we find young people very receptive. They no longer perceive Hare Kṛṣṇa as a cult. Many students are interested in Eastern ideas and buy five or six books at a time. They’re looking for answers to questions in life and not finding them in school or at home. They’re not willing to drop everything like young people in the 60s and 70s, but they’re eager to find out about spiritual life.

“Since we visit the same campuses and concert arenas each year, meeting past

customers is common. Their response is overwhelmingly positive. They’re happy to see us again, and they ask more questions and buy more books. Although the most interested people we meet aren’t usually inclined to move into an āśrama, they can play a large role in our movement. We have to help them find suitable ways to serve Kṛṣṇa.

“I’m also involved in developing and teaching courses on book distribution. The courses are not simply about techniques but deal with the values and principles of a book distributor. We want to see ISKCON representatives well prepared to handle all aspects of their service. The course helps book distributors better appreciate their service, and it makes them steadier and happier. And that’s important, because meeting a book distributor is perhaps the most common way for people to meet ISKCON.”

Jayantī Devī Dāśī

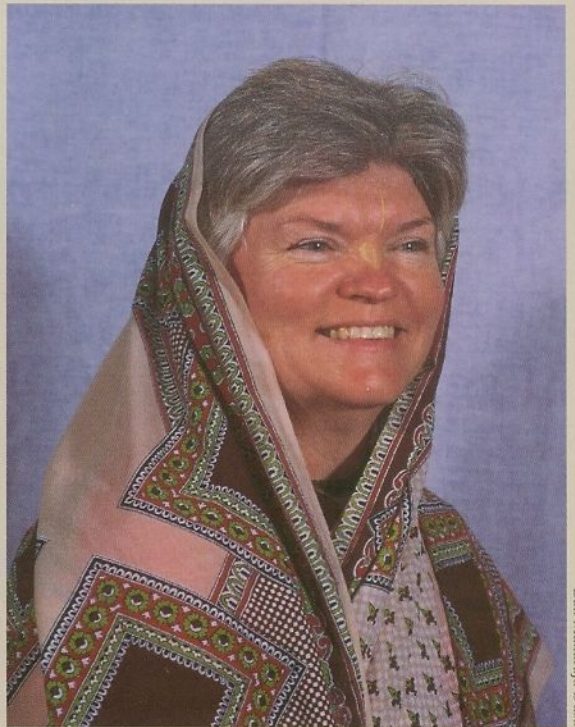
ISKCON’s primary school in Dallas began in 1972, and although it has been through some rough periods, it has

never stopped. Since 1985 the school has been directed by Jayantī Dāśī with help from her husband, Rūpānuga Dāsa. Both hold degrees in education. They love teaching the children.

“In the early days the city scrutinized us to make sure we met their codes,” says Jayantī. “Now city authorities and local educators recognize and appreciate us as a certified private school. Public-school teachers often tell us that our smaller student/teacher ratio and less restrictive curriculum requirements give our students a big advantage.

“Our students range in age from five to seventeen. Although we have several classrooms, we sometimes use the old one-room-schoolhouse techniques from the pioneer days. The older students help teach the younger ones, and discussions on some subjects can involve students ranging from grades four to twelve. The younger students are less intimidated by advanced subjects because they see the older students doing them. The older students treat the younger ones affectionately and like to set a good example for them. Everyone is quite used to the system, and it works well.

“We use a combination of curriculums, including some public-school



Bali Mahārāja Dāsa



At the ISKCON Dallas primary school (above), Jayantī Devī Dāsī helps a student master her writing skills.

texts and some wonderful home-schooling texts developed by a Christian organization. The children have two hours of scriptural classes each day. Whenever possible, we use Śrīla Prabhupāda's books for various subjects. For example, last semester we studied Darwinism and creationism using Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Life Comes from Life*.

"As is usually the case with devotee children, their scores in reading and writing are far above average for their age. With the curriculum we've selected, our students are very strong in math and the sciences as well. Achievement tests show that our students are above the norm in every subject area, many scoring above the ninetieth percentile.

"For the past several years we have accommodated all the children of the devotees who live in the immediate temple vicinity. Now we plan to focus on primary grades and expand our school to include children of our congregational members as well. Our good academic track record has brought a lot of interest. All of our students who have chosen to go on to public schools have graduated with honors.

"Besides the regular curriculum, our students learn music, theater, arts and crafts, and physical education. We take the children on field trips, including a three-day camping trip at the end of the term, which they earn by good grades, attendance, and behavior.

"I love watching the children make discoveries. I want the children to be able to learn in a safe, Kṛṣṇa conscious

atmosphere in which they can thoroughly prepare themselves to serve and remember Kṛṣṇa throughout their life. These children are our future." ❁

Kālakanṭha Dāsa writes, runs a small business, and oversees circulation for Back to Godhead. He and his wife, both disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, live with their two children in Gainesville, Florida.

Rohini Vandana Dasa

Assembling For the Rājasūya Sacrifice

*The leaders of the world arrive for a sacrifice
only a world emperor can perform.*

Translated from Sanskrit
by Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

• • •

The sage Vaiśampāyana is telling the history of the Pāṇḍavas to their great-grandson, King Janamejaya. As the narration continues, the Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira, now emperor of the world, prepares to perform the great Rājasūya sacrifice. [Abridged from the original translation.]

YUDHIṢṬHIRA WAS A KING of virtue, and because he protected the people, carefully guarding the truth and destroying his enemies, all creatures were free to perform their own duties. He took tribute in the right measure, and because he consistently ruled in accord with religious principles, Parjanya (the demigod Indra, controller of rain) sent rain as the people desired, and they grew rich. All endeavors succeeded, especially trade, agriculture, and cow protection, and all this manifested by the king's good work.

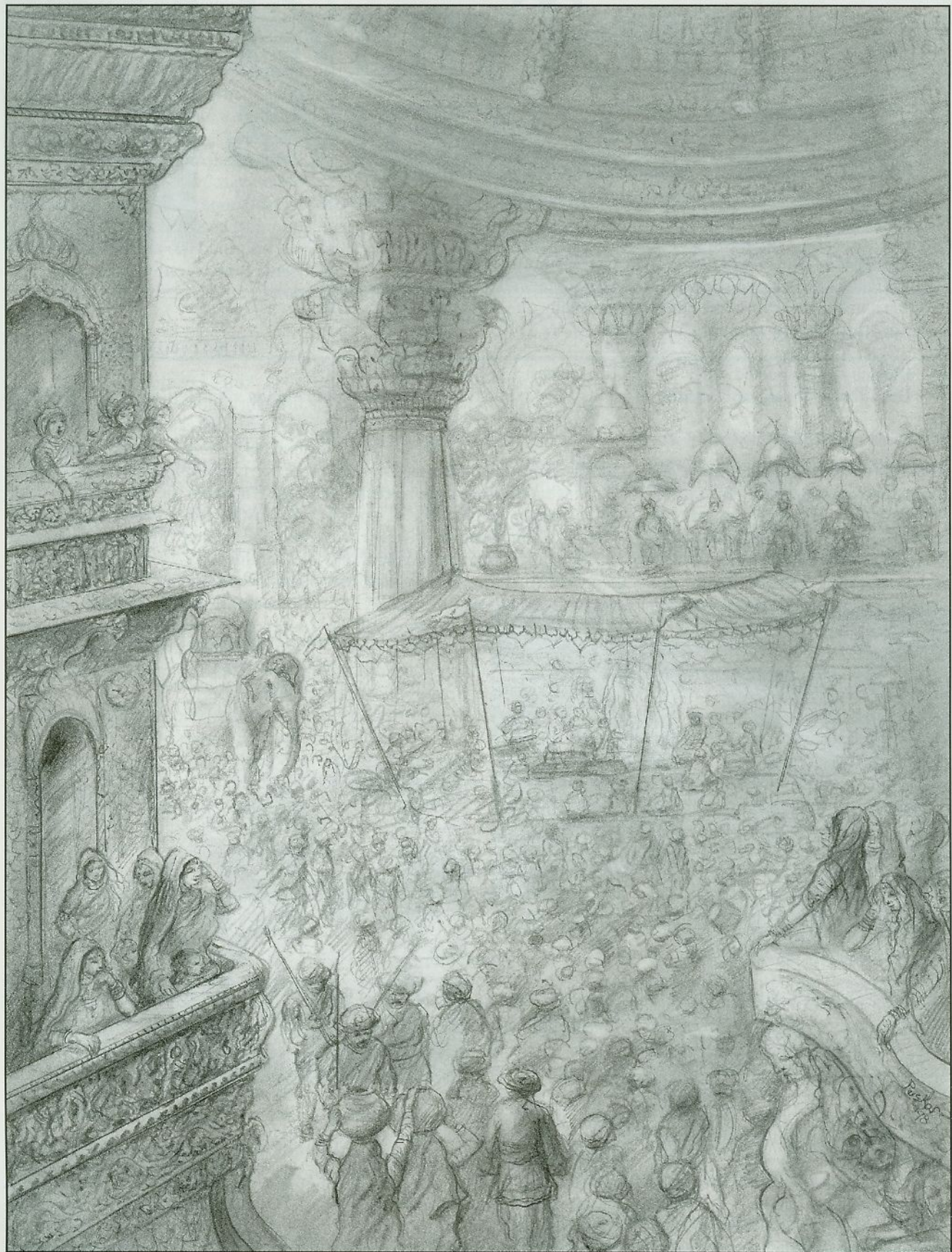
Neither from robbers nor cheaters nor those receiving royal gifts were false words ever heard about the king. There was no drought, flood, epidemic, or heavy wind when the ever-righteous

Yudhiṣṭhira was king. One by one the kings went to him, with no other duties but to spontaneously offer him tribute, to be near him, and to act for his pleasure. With the accumulation of lawful wealth, his store of riches grew so great that it could not have been exhausted even in hundreds of years. That king and lord of the earth, Kuntī's son, realizing the extent of his treasury and granary, set his mind firmly on sacrifice.

All his dear friends, individually and as a group, said to him, "O mighty one, it is your time to offer sacrifice. Let it now be properly executed here."

As they spoke in this way Lord Kṛṣṇa arrived, that primeval sage, the Soul of the Vedas and of all knowledge, He who is the object of vision for those who know and realize the truth. Of all moving and unmoving beings, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the best, for He is the generating source and the destruction of the world, the master of all that has existed, will exist, and exists at present. He is Lord Keśava, who as a child slew the demon Keśī. He is the bulwark of all the Vṛṣṇis, and in times of danger He gives fearless-

Illustration by Puṣkara Dāsa



King Yudhiṣṭhira's great sacrifice begins.

The Main Characters

The Pāṇḍavas—Though the name *Pāṇḍava* means “son of Pāṇḍu,” the five Pāṇḍavas were sired by demigods—the three eldest Pāṇḍavas (Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, and Arjuna) in the womb of King Pāṇḍu’s wife Kuntī, and the youngest (the twins, Nakula and Sahadeva) in the womb of Pāṇḍu’s wife Mādri. The Pāṇḍavas are sometimes called “Bhārata” or “best of the Bhāratas,” because they come in the dynasty of King Bharata.

The Kurus—The sons of both Pāṇḍu and Dhṛtarāṣṭra (the uncle of the Pāṇḍavas who because of blindness could not become the king) descended from King Kuru, but the name *Kurus* usually refers to Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s sons, the eldest of whom is Duryodhana.

Bhīṣma—A respected elder of the Kuru dynasty, he is the uncle of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu, and Vidura.

ness and destroys the enemy. After Lord Kṛṣṇa had approached His father, Vasudeva, and entrusted him with the command of His army, that tiger among men, Kṛṣṇa, had taken a mass of variegated wealth for Yudhiṣṭhira and come there surrounded by a vast military force.

The Lord announced that He had brought an unlimited mass of wealth in the form of an inexhaustible ocean of gems, and then with the sound of rolling chariots He entered that excellent city like the sun appearing in a sunless sky or the wind in a windless land.

When Kṛṣṇa arrived, the Bhārata city rejoiced. With great delight King Yudhiṣṭhira came forward to greet and honor Him in accordance with custom and to ask all about His welfare.

When Kṛṣṇa had been comfortably seated, King Yudhiṣṭhira, that bull of a man, together with Dhaumya, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, and other priests, and also with his brothers Bhīma, Arjuna, and the twins, said to Kṛṣṇa: “It is by Your doing, O son of Vṛṣṇi, that the whole world is now under my control, and by Your mercy much wealth has been collected. O son of Devakī, O Mādhava, I truly want to engage all that I possess in the fire of sacrifice, giving it to the best of the twice-born *brāhmaṇas*. O mighty-armed Dāśārha, I thus desire to offer a sacrifice together with You and my younger brothers. Kindly permit me. O Govinda, O mighty-armed Lord, ini-

tiate Yourself into the rite, for when You have performed the sacrifice I shall certainly become free of sin. Or if You like, almighty one, give me and my younger brothers permission, and then with Your consent, Kṛṣṇa, I shall complete this ultimate sacrifice.”

After extensively praising all the king’s good qualities, Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, “O tiger of a king, you alone are a worthy emperor. You should complete the great sacrifice, for when you complete it We shall have fulfilled Our duty. Offer this sacrifice you so much desire, now that I am here to help you. And please engage Me, for I shall execute your every command.”

King Yudhiṣṭhira said, “Dear Kṛṣṇa, my decision is now successful and my perfection assured, for You, Hṛṣīkeśa, are here with us, as we so much desired.”

Thus with Kṛṣṇa’s permission and the help of his brothers, the Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira arranged to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice.

King Yudhiṣṭhira, who could crush his enemies, then commanded Sahadeva, the best of fighters, and all the royal ministers: “Let men gather up and bring all the sacrificial instruments the *brāhmaṇas* prescribe for this ceremony, along with the paraphernalia and all the auspicious items. And let them bring all the sacrificial ingredients for this supreme rite as soon as the royal priest Dhaumya calls for them.

The men must supply everything in the proper sequence and as required. As a special favor to me, let Indrasena, Viśoka, and Arjuna’s charioteer, Pūru, bring grains and other foodstuffs. Most noble Kuru, all desirable things filled with flavor and fragrance, charming to the mind, and pleasing to the heart should be arranged for the twice-born *brāhmaṇas*.”

No sooner had those words been uttered than Sahadeva, the best of fighters, informed the great-souled king of virtue that everything was as good as done.

EXALTED PRIESTS

O king, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa then brought together the royal priests of sacrifice—all exalted souls and twice-born *brāhmaṇas*—and it seemed as if he were assembling the *Vedas* in person. That son of Satyavatī became Yudhiṣṭhira’s *brahma* priest, and Susāmā, the best of the Dhanañjayas, became the *sāma-ga* priest [and chanted the *Sāma Veda*]. The superlative *brāhmaṇa* named Yājñavalkya became an excellent *adhvaryu* priest, and Vasu’s son Paila became the *hotā* priest, along with [the Pāṇḍavas’ royal priest] Dhaumya.

O bull of the Bhāratas, all the disciples and sons of these priests were also masters of the *Vedas* and the Vedic supplements, and these disciples and sons also formed groups of sacrificing priests. All these priests, having arranged for the chanting of prayers for an auspicious and happy occasion, began the rule of rite, as stated in the authoritative books, and thus they undertook that great sacrifice to God.

Authorized craftsmen had built shelters and resting places for the guests—vast bejeweled mansions like those of the residents of heaven.

Then the king, who was the best of kings and the noblest Kuru, ordered his minister Sahadeva, “You must quickly send swift messengers to convey the invitations.”

Upon hearing the king’s word, Sahadeva sent off the messengers, saying, “You should all go to the various kingdoms and invite the *brāhmaṇas* and also the rulers of the earth, along with
(please turn to page 55)



EVERY TOWN & VILLAGE

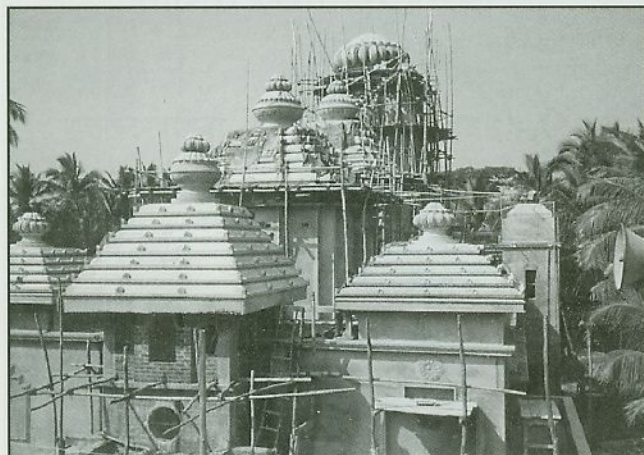
*The worldwide activities of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)*

WORLD NEWS

India An estimated half a million people attended the three-day celebration of Janmāṣṭamī (Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance anniversary) at Hare Krishna Land, Juhu (Mumbai), last August. Prominent entertainers performing for Lord Kṛṣṇa's pleasure included Jagjit Singh, Hema Malini, Anup Jalota, Hariprasad Chaurasia, and Shiv Kumar Sharma.

Congregation members prepared and distributed 16,000 kg (17.6 tons) of Kṛṣṇa-prasādam during the festival.

An ISKCON temple is under construction in Gadeigiri, Orissa, the birthplace of His Holiness Gour Govinda Swami, an ISKCON leader and spiritual master who departed this world in 1996. The temple is scheduled to open early this year.



The new temple in Orissa.

North America Mayor Marc Morial attended the Janmāṣṭamī celebration at the New Orleans temple. After respectfully viewing the Deities, the mayor gave a short address, expressing appreciation for the spiritual atmosphere of the temple

and encouraging the devotees to continue their good work in the city.

Devotees held a Rathayātrā ("Festival of the Chariots") in Seattle, Washington, last September.

Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa were installed in the Phoenix, Arizona, Hare Kṛṣṇa temple last August during a three-day festival.



Kṛṣṇa conscious art at Southern Illinois University.

The University Museum at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, presented a show of artwork last summer titled "Retrospective: 10 Years," featuring the art of Loetitia S. Lilot, also known as Śaradiyā Dāsī, an early disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda's. Running for six weeks, the 43-piece exhibit included portraits, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, statements on animal rights, and other subjects. Śaradiyā's paintings have appeared in *Back to Godhead* and publications of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

More than a hundred people have taken part in ISKCON Houston's adult education program since its inception in



Members of ISKCON Houston's adult education program.

September 1997. The school offers several courses leading to the Bhakti Sastri Certificate and has programs for children as part of the temple's Sunday School curriculum.

Guest speakers at the annual convention of the Religious Writers Association included ISKCON's Bhakti Tirtha Swami. The association was formed in 1949 to advance the professional standards of religious reporting in the secular press. It is primarily composed of religion editors for the major print and broadcast media in America. The 1998 convention was held in Atlanta, Georgia, in September.

In August, Bhakti Tirtha Swami was a guest speaker at the annual conference of the National Medical Association, held in New Orleans.

ISKCON Vancouver held its twenty-fourth annual Rathayātrā last August. About ten thousand people took part.



Vancouver Rathayātrā

Ireland An ISKCON temple recently opened in Cork, Ireland. The temple is five minutes from the center of Cork, population 150,000.

United Kingdom ISKCON's float won first prize last September in the Stanmore Parade (North London) with a beautiful swan float bearing the Deities of Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurasundara (Caitanya and

Nityānanda), pulled by the oxen Jai and Burfi. The swan was equipped with moving wings.

New Zealand Devotees at New Varshan Farm held their first fire sacrifice in their nearly completed temple on Rādhāṣṭhamī, the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, last August. The two-story octagonal temple sits on the highest point on the ninety-acre farm, overlooking an estuary of Waitemata Harbor.

PADAYĀTRĀ NEWS

Padayātrā England

Padayātrā England found a warm welcome at the Hertfordshire summer carnival, winning a prize for their oxen-drawn float. It was the Hertfordshire Council that had tried to close the Bhaktivedanta Manor, located near the upscale village. After years of appeals, ISKCON won the right to continue holding festivals at Bhaktivedanta Manor.

Padayātrā Europe

Sixty devotees took part last July in a ten-day Padayātrā ("walking festival") from Rotterdam to Amsterdam, The Netherlands.



Padayātrā in The Netherlands

ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

Rendered from Sanskrit into English,
with commentary,
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda,
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Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is teaching His mother, Devahūtī, about Sāṅkhya, the analytical study of all existence. As the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Lord Kapila describes the punishment after death for people who earn their livelihood by illegal means.

THIRD CANTO / CHAPTER 30

31 एकः प्रपद्यते ध्वान्तं हित्वेदं स्वकलेवरम् ।
कुशलेतरपाथेयो भृतद्रोहेण यद् भृतम् ॥३१॥

*ekaḥ prapadyate dhvāntam
hitvedam sva-kalevaram
kuśaletara-pātheyo
bhūta-droheṇa yad bhṛtam*

ekaḥ—alone; prapadyate—he enters; dhvāntam—darkness; hitvā—after quitting; idam—this; sva—his; kalevaram—body; kuśala-itarā—sin; pātheyaḥ—his passage money; bhūta—to other living entities; droheṇa—by injury; yat— which body; bhṛtam—was maintained.

He goes alone to the darkest regions of hell after quitting the present body, and the money he acquired by envying other living entities is the passage money with which he leaves this world.

PURPORT: When a man earns money by unfair means and maintains his family and himself with that money, the money

is enjoyed by many members of the family, but he alone goes to hell. A person who enjoys life by earning money or by envying another's life, and who enjoys with family and friends, will have to enjoy alone the resultant sinful reactions accrued from such violent and illicit life. For example, if a man secures some money by killing someone and with that money maintains his family, those who enjoy the black money earned by him are also partially responsible and are also sent to hell, but he who is the leader is especially punished. The result of material enjoyment is that one takes with him the sinful reaction only, and not the money. The money he earned is left in this world, and he takes only the reaction.

In this world also, if a person acquires some money by murdering someone, the family is not hanged, although its members are sinfully contaminated. But the man who commits the murder and maintains his family is himself hanged as a murderer. The direct offender is more responsible for sinful activities than the indirect enjoyer. The great learned scholar Cāṇakya Paṇḍita says, therefore, that whatever one has in his possession had better be spent for the cause of *sat*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because one cannot take his possessions with him. They remain here, and they will be lost. Either we leave the money or the money leaves us, but we will be separated. The best use of money as long as it is within our possession is to spend it to acquire Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

32 दैवेनासादितं तस्य शमलं निरये पुमान् ।
भुङ्क्ते कुटुम्बपोषस्य हृतवित्त इवातुरः ॥३२॥

*daivenāsāditaṁ tasya
śamalaṁ niraye pumān
bhuñkte kuṭumba-poṣasya
hṛta-vitta ivāturaḥ*

daivena—by the arrangement of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *āsāditaṁ*—obtained; *tasya*—his; *śamalam*—sinful reaction; *niraye*—in a hellish condition; *pumān*—the man; *bhuñkte*—undergoes; *kuṭumba-poṣasya*—of maintaining a family; *hṛta-vittaḥ*—one whose wealth is lost; *iva*—like; *āturaḥ*—suffering.

Thus, by the arrangement of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the maintainer of kinsmen is put into a hellish condition to suffer for his sinful activities, like a man who has lost his wealth.

PURPORT: The example set herein is that the sinful person suffers just like a man who has lost his wealth. The human form of body is achieved by the conditioned soul after many, many births and is a very valuable asset. Instead of utilizing this life to get liberation, if one uses it simply for the purpose of maintaining his so-called family and therefore performs foolish and unauthorized action, he is compared to a man who has lost his wealth and who, upon losing it, laments. When wealth is lost, there is no use lamenting, but as long as there is wealth, one has to utilize it properly and thereby gain eternal profit. It may be argued that when a man leaves his money earned by sinful activities, he also leaves his sinful activities here with his money. But it is especially mentioned herein that by superior arrangement (*daivenāsāditaṁ*), although the man leaves behind him his sinfully earned money, he carries the effect of it. When a man steals some money, if he is caught and agrees to return it, he is not freed from the criminal punishment. By the law of the state, even though he returns the money, he has to undergo the punishment. Similarly, the money earned by a criminal process may be left by the man when dying, but by superior arrangement he carries with him the effect, and therefore he has to suffer hellish life.

33 केवलेन ह्यधर्मेण कुटुम्बमरणोत्सुकः ।
याति जीवोऽन्धतामिस्रं चरमं तमसः पदम् ॥३३॥

*kevalena hy adharmeṇa
kuṭumba-bharaṇotsukah
yāti jīvo 'ndha-tāmisraṁ
caramaṁ tamaśaḥ padam*

kevalena—simply; *hi*—certainly; *adharmeṇa*—by irreligious activities; *kuṭumba*—family; *bharaṇa*—to maintain; *utsukah*—eager; *yāti*—goes; *jīvaḥ*—a person; *andha-tāmisraṁ*—to Andha-tāmisra; *caramam*—ultimate; *tamaśaḥ*—of darkness; *padam*—region.

Therefore a person who is very eager to maintain his family and kinsmen simply by black methods certainly goes

to the darkest region of hell, which is known as Andha-tāmisra.

PURPORT: Three words in this verse are very significant. *Kevalena* means “only by black methods,” *adharmeṇa* means “unrighteous” or “irreligious,” and *kuṭumba-bharaṇa* means “family maintenance.” Maintaining one’s family is certainly the duty of a householder, but one should be eager to earn his livelihood by the prescribed method, as stated in the scriptures. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is described that the Lord has divided the social system into four classifications of castes, or *varṇas*, according to quality and work. Apart from *Bhagavad-gītā*, in every society a man is known according to his quality and work. For example, when a man is constructing wooden furniture, he is called a carpenter, and a man who works with an anvil and iron is called a blacksmith. Similarly, a man who is engaged in the medical or engineering fields has a particular duty and designation. All these human activities have been divided by the Supreme Lord into four *varṇas*, namely *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* and in other Vedic literatures, the specific duties of the *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra* are mentioned.

One should work honestly according to his qualification. He should not earn his livelihood unfairly, by means for which he is not qualified. If a *brāhmaṇa* who works as a priest so that he may enlighten his followers with the spiritual way of life is not qualified as a priest, then he is cheating the public. One should not earn by such unfair means. The same is applicable to a *kṣatriya* or to a *vaiśya*. It is especially mentioned that the means of livelihood of those who are trying to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness must be very fair and uncomplicated. Here it is mentioned that he who earns his livelihood by unfair means (*kevalena*) is sent to the darkest hellish region. Otherwise, if one maintains his family by prescribed methods and honest means, there is no objection to one’s being a family man.

34 अधस्ताभरलोकस्य यावतीर्यातनादयः ।
क्रमशः समनुक्रम्य पुनरात्राव्रजेच्छुचिः ॥३४॥

*adhastān nara-lokasya
yāvātīr yātanādayaḥ
kramaśaḥ samanukramya
punar atrāvrajec chuciḥ*

adhastāt—from below; *nara-lokasya*—human birth; *yāvātīḥ*—as many; *yātanā*—punishments; *ādayaḥ*—and so on; *kramaśaḥ*—in a regular order; *samanukramya*—having gone through; *punaḥ*—again; *atra*—here, on this earth; *āvrajet*—he may return; *śuciḥ*—pure.

Having gone through all the miserable, hellish conditions and having passed in a regular order through the lowest forms of animal life prior to human birth, and having thus been purged of his sins, one is reborn again as a human being on this earth.

PURPORT: Just as a prisoner, who has undergone troublesome prison life, is set free again, the person who has always engaged in impious and mischievous activities is put into hellish conditions, and when he has undergone different hellish lives, namely those of lower animals like cats, dogs, and hogs, by the gradual process of evolution he again comes back as a human being. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that even though a person engaged in the practice of the yoga system may not finish perfectly and may fall down for some reason or other, his next life as a human being is guaranteed. It is stated that such a person, who has fallen from the path of yoga practice, is given a chance in his next life to take birth in a very rich family or in a very pious family. It is interpreted that "rich family" refers to a big mercantile family because generally people who engage in trades and mercantile business are very rich. One who engaged in the process of self-realization, or connecting with the Supreme Absolute Truth, but fell short is allowed to take birth in such a rich family, or he is allowed to take birth in the family of pious *brāhmaṇas*; either way, he is guaranteed to appear in human society in his next life. It can be concluded that if someone is not willing to enter into hellish life, as in *Tāmisra* or *Andha-tāmisra*, then he must take to the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is the first-class yoga system, because even if one is unable to attain complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this life, he is guaranteed at least to take his next birth in a human family. He cannot be sent into a hellish condition. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the purest life, and it protects all human beings from gliding down to hell to take birth in a family of dogs or hogs.

THIRD CANTO / CHAPTER 31

1 कर्मणा दैवनेत्रेण जन्तुर्देहोपपत्तये ।
स्त्रियाः प्रविष्ट उदरं पुंसो रेतःकणाश्रयः ॥ १ ॥

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
karmaṇā daiva-netreṇa
jantur dehopapattaye
striyāḥ praviṣṭa udaram
puṁso retaḥ-kaṇāśrayaḥ

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *karmaṇā*—by the result of work; *daiva-netreṇa*—under the supervision of the Lord; *jantur*—the living entity; *deha*—a body; *upapattaye*—for obtaining; *striyāḥ*—of a woman; *praviṣṭaḥ*—enters; *udaram*—the womb; *puṁsaḥ*—of a man; *retaḥ*—of semen; *kaṇa*—a particle; *āśrayaḥ*—dwelling in.

The Personality of Godhead said: Under the supervision of the Supreme Lord and according to the result of his work, the living entity, the soul, is made to enter into the womb of a woman through the particle of male semen to assume a particular type of body.

PURPORT: As stated in the last chapter, after suffering different kinds of hellish conditions, a man comes again to the human form of body. The same topic is continued in this chapter. In order to give a particular type of human form to a person who has already suffered hellish life, the soul is transferred to the semen of a man who is just suitable to become his father. During sexual intercourse, the soul is transferred through the semen of the father into the mother's womb in order to produce a particular type of body. This process is applicable to all embodied living entities, but it is especially mentioned for the man who was transferred to the *Andha-tāmisra* hell. After suffering there, when he who has had many types of hellish bodies, like those of dogs and hogs, is to come again to the human form, he is given the chance to take his birth in the same type of body from which he degraded himself to hell.

Everything is done by the supervision of the Supreme personality of Godhead. Material nature supplies the body, but it does so under the direction of the Supersoul. It is said in *Bhagavad-gītā* that a living entity is wandering in this material world on a chariot made by material nature. The Supreme Lord, as Supersoul, is always present with the individual soul. He directs material nature to supply a particular type of body to the individual soul according to the result of his work, and the material nature supplies it. Here one word, *retaḥ-kaṇāśrayaḥ*, is very significant because it indicates that it is not the semen of the man that creates life within the womb of a woman; rather, the living entity, the soul, takes shelter in a particle of semen and is then pushed into the womb of a woman. Then the body develops. There is no possibility of creating a living entity without the presence of the soul simply by sexual intercourse. The materialistic theory that there is no soul and that a child is born simply by material combination of the sperm and ovum is not very feasible. It is unacceptable.

2 कललं त्वेकरात्रेण पञ्चरात्रेण बुद्बुदम् ।
दश्राहेन तु कर्कन्धूः पेश्यण्डं वा ततः परम् ॥ २ ॥

kalalam tv eka-rātreṇa
pañca-rātreṇa budbudam
daśāhena tu karkandhūḥ
peśy aṇḍam vā tataḥ param

kalalam—mixing of the sperm and ovum; *tu*—then; *eka-rātreṇa*—on the first night; *pañca-rātreṇa*—by the fifth night; *budbudam*—a bubble; *daśa-ahena*—in ten days; *tu*—then; *karkandhūḥ*—like a plum; *peśi*—a lump of flesh; *aṇḍam*—an egg; *vā*—or; *tataḥ*—thence; *param*—afterwards.

On the first night, the sperm and ovum mix, and on the fifth night the mixture ferments into a bubble. On the tenth night it develops into a form like a plum, and after that, it gradually turns into a lump of flesh or an egg, as the case may be.

PURPORT: The body of the soul develops in four different ways according to its different sources. One kind of body,

that of the trees and plants, sprouts from the earth; the second kind of body grows from perspiration, as with flies, germs and bugs; the third kind of body develops from eggs; and the fourth develops from an embryo. This verse indicates that after emulsification of the ovum and sperm, the body gradually develops either into a lump of flesh or into an egg, as the case may be. In the case of birds it develops into an egg, and in the case of animals and human beings it develops into a lump of flesh.

**3 मासेन तु शिरो द्वाभ्यां बाह्वङ्घ्र्याद्यङ्गविग्रहः ।
नखलोमास्थिचर्माणि लिङ्गच्छिद्रोद्भवस्त्रिभिः ॥ ३ ॥**

*māseṇa tu śiro dvābhyāṃ
bāhv-aṅghry-ādy-aṅga-vigrahaḥ
nakha-lomāsthī-carmāṇi
liṅga-cchidrodभववस्त्रिभिः*

māseṇa—within a month; *tu*—then; *śiraḥ*—a head; *dvābhyāṃ*—in two months; *bāhu*—arms; *aṅghri*—feet; *ādi*—and so on; *aṅga*—limbs; *vigrahaḥ*—form; *nakha*—nails; *loma*—body hair; *asthi*—bones; *carmāṇi*—and skin; *liṅga*—organ of generation; *chidra*—apertures; *udbhavaḥ*—appearance; *tribhiḥ*—within three months.

In the course of a month, a head is formed, and at the end of two months the hands, feet, and other limbs take shape. By the end of three months, the nails, fingers, toes, body hair, bones, and skin appear, as do the organ of generation and the other apertures in the body, namely the eyes, nostrils, ears, mouth, and anus.

**4 चतुर्भिर्घातवः सप्त पञ्चभिः क्षुत्तृदुद्भवः ।
षड्भिर्जरायुणा वीतः कुक्षौ भ्राम्यति दक्षिणे ॥ ४ ॥**

*caturbhir dhātavaḥ sapta
pañcabhiḥ kṣut-tṛd-udbhavaḥ
ṣaḍbhir jarāyuṇā vītaḥ
kuḥṣau bhrāmyati dakṣiṇe*

caturbhiḥ—within four months; *dhātavaḥ*—ingredients; *sapta*—seven; *pañcabhiḥ*—within five months; *kṣut-tṛt*—of hunger and thirst; *udbhavaḥ*—appearance; *ṣaḍbhiḥ*—within six months; *jarāyuṇā*—by the amnion; *vītaḥ*—enclosed; *kuḥṣau*—in the abdomen; *bhrāmyati*—moves; *dakṣiṇe*—on the right side.

Within four months from the date of conception, the seven essential ingredients of the body, namely chyle, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow, and semen, come into existence. At the end of five months, hunger and thirst make themselves felt, and at the end of six months, the fetus, enclosed by the amnion, begins to move on the right side of the abdomen.

PURPORT: When the body of the child is completely formed at the end of six months, the child, if he is male, begins to move on the right side, and if female, she tries to move on the left side.

**5 मातुर्जग्धाभपानाद्यैरेधद्भ्रातुरसम्भवे ।
श्लेते विष्मूत्रयोर्गते स जन्तुर्जन्तुसम्भवे ॥ ५ ॥**

*mātur jagdhāna-pānādyair
edhad-dhātur asammate
śete viṣ-mūtrayor garte
sa jantur jantu-sambhaye*

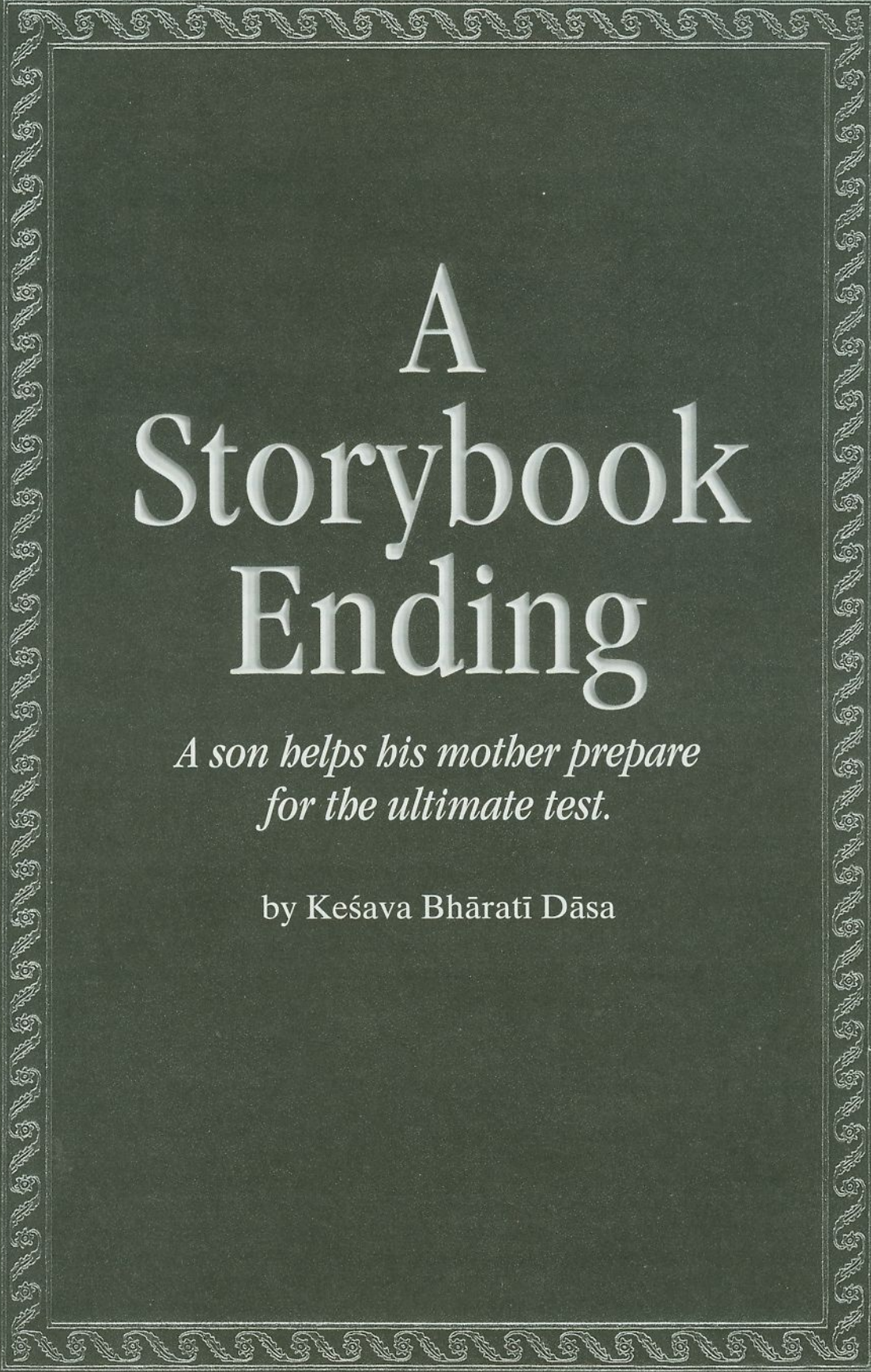
mātuḥ—of the mother; *jagdha*—taken; *anna-pāna*—by the food and drink; *ādyaiḥ*—and so on; *edhat*—increasing; *dhātuḥ*—the ingredients of his body; *asammate*—abominable; *śete*—remains; *viṣ-mūtrayoḥ*—of stools and urine; *garte*—in a hollow; *saḥ*—that; *jantuḥ*—fetus; *jantu*—of worms; *sambhaye*—the breeding place.

Deriving its nutrition from the food and drink taken by the mother, the fetus grows and remains in that abominable residence of stools and urine, which is the breeding place of all kinds of worms.

PURPORT: In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* it is said that in the intestine of the mother the umbilical cord, which is known as *āpyāyanī*, joins the mother to the abdomen of the child, and through this passage the child within the womb accepts the mother's assimilated foodstuff. In this way the child is fed by the mother's intestine within the womb and grows from day to day. The statement of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* about the child's situation within the womb is exactly corroborated by modern medical science, and thus the authority of the *Purāṇas* cannot be disproved, as is sometimes attempted by the *Māyāvādī* philosophers.

Since the child depends completely on the assimilated foodstuff of the mother, during pregnancy there are restrictions on the food taken by the mother. Too much salt, chili, onion, and similar food is forbidden for the pregnant mother because the child's body is too delicate and new for him to tolerate such pungent food. Restrictions and precautions to be taken by the pregnant mother, as enunciated in the *smṛti* scriptures of Vedic literature, are very useful. We can understand from the Vedic literature how much care is taken to beget a nice child in society. The *garbhādhāna* ceremony before sexual intercourse was compulsory for persons in the higher grades of society, and it is very scientific. Other processes recommended in the Vedic literature during pregnancy are also very important. To take care of the child is the primary duty of the parents because if such care is taken, society will be filled with good population to maintain the peace and prosperity of the society, country, and human race.

(continued in the next issue)



A Storybook Ending

*A son helps his mother prepare
for the ultimate test.*

by Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa



ARE YOU READY to hear about a miracle? Don't worry, I won't bore you with yet another story about some pseudo-miracle-worker. This story is about a seventy-nine-year-old woman completely set in her ways who, at the most difficult time of death, had a change of heart that brought her from the brink of terror to tears of joy.

The woman was my mother. Born Nadine Alma Eastlack, she was conservative to the extreme. Her early life read like a chapter from John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Her family narrowly escaped the dust bowl by migrating from Grinnell, Kansas, to the "Promised Land" of Southern California, landing in the fire of the Great Depression. After struggling to put herself through college and marrying a minor war hero, Leslie Waldo Beck, she attained middle-class status.

While raising me, their only child, in the northern California town of Oroville, my parents both worked—he as a parts manager of a local car dealership, and she as a high school teacher of sewing, cooking, and home economics. My parents watched with pride as their only son excelled in music, scholarship, and athletics, achieving numerous awards culminating in the "Young Man of the Year Award" for the class of 1964 at Oroville High. After high school, I attended UCLA, graduating with honors in 1968 and landing my first job as assistant to the studio manager at Columbia Pictures. About a year later, however, shortly after sweeping my mother off her feet with a whirlwind tour of the studio, I left that promising career, disillusioned with the superficiality of the Hollywood scene.

"My creative urges aren't being fulfilled," I thought, so I packed up and moved north to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district to pursue a career as a professional musician.

A Radical Change

After a year of grueling practice sessions, success emerged: I was part of a jazz-rock ensemble that toured the Bay Area with popular groups such as Boz Skaggs. Unfortunately, along with that so-called success reappeared the same falsities I had become disgusted with in Hollywood, only in a different dress: intoxicated people fighting over money, women, and power.

I began to withdraw from the mainstream of

social life to study philosophies, religions, and methods of self-improvement. After a string of events too coincidental to be accidental and far too lengthy to describe here, I came face to face with my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. By his mercy I began to realize what I had actually been missing: God consciousness. Imagine the reaction of my small-town-northern-California parents when I announced I had joined the Hare Kṛṣṇas to dedicate myself to spiritual life. They disowned me. I wasn't even allowed in their house. That was 1972.

I had always been closer to my mother than my father, and so for years, despite having been disowned, I wrote frequent letters to her, trying to keep our relationship alive. Finally I resigned myself to the occasional letter, mainly about the weather—she had taught me not to talk about politics or religion if I wanted to be happy. I gave up hope that her attitude toward my newfound way of life would ever change. I would simply keep her informed about my frequent travels.

A glimmer of hope came in 1977. I was on my way to India to join Śrīla Prabhupāda just before he passed away, and I needed my birth certificate to secure a passport. As I hurried to make a flight out of New York, my mother agreed to drive eighty miles to bring my birth certificate to me at the Sacramento airport. I thought she might be having a change of heart, since she'd gone out of her way to help me, but that brief encounter ended on a sour note—an argument about the value of worshiping the form of God through a living spiritual master. A devout Methodist, she genuinely thought I had sold my soul to Satan.



THE NEXT TIME I saw my mother was in 1981 when I went to see my father just two days before he passed away. She had withheld news of his condition until near the end, not wanting to be responsible for a possible premature death my suddenly showing up might cause. Only on my insistence did she reluctantly give me permission to come home. The resultant reunion, during which my father not only acknowledged my existence but expressed in his own way appreciation for what I was doing ("Hey, I hear you've become a big shot"), left my mother standing in the corner with her mouth gaping. After that the tone of our letters became slightly more familiar. I kept her more closely

informed of what I was doing, but she still refused to talk about my life's mission. Our relationship remained distant.

In the spring of 1995, having seen my mother only once, briefly, in fourteen years, I was living in Bombay when I heard from a friend that my mother was feeling neglected. She had mentioned that I wasn't writing. That seemed odd to me since we had been corresponding regularly for years. Still, in response to that news I called her and promised to visit her the following November.

Called to the Hospital

On October 7 I received a phone call. My mother had lost consciousness and had been found by friends two days later and taken to the hospital. She had been living alone since my father had passed away, but she had always seemed strong and fearless, at least from a distance. In her letters, she had never indicated having any problems, except for a persistent backache. I had never seen her weep or show any intense emotion. This was perhaps the first major health crisis in her life.

When I called from Bombay to her hospital room, she had to think before she could remember me. After some coaxing she recalled that she had a son and that he lived in India. Her power of recall returned somewhat with the sound of my voice, and she felt less anxious. I promised to be with her as soon as possible, which proved to be ten days later.

As soon as I walked into the hospital room, Mom motioned me to her. Embracing me, with tears in her eyes, the first I'd ever seen, she said, "Please forgive me for being so closed-minded."

Feeling ashamed, I begged her forgiveness for not being with her when she had most needed her only child. After two all-day visits, during which her condition improved dramatically, the hospital staff decided she would do better at home with me.

For two weeks I took care of the household chores and visited with my mother while a home-care staff from the hospital helped her get back on her feet. There were no signs of stroke or heart attack. The doctors concluded that she had fainted from malnutrition and dehydration. That in itself was amazing to me, since she was a retired cooking teacher and nutrition expert. The doctors said she was in the beginning stages of Alzheimer's

disease. It was no wonder she couldn't remember receiving my letters.

My mother and I had long talks about time, old age, and God. Her Christian faith seemed strong. Despite lapses of short-term memory, when we talked of spiritual issues she was lucid. She rose every morning, even when in pain, and read the Bible with a study guide from her church. She had always been an avid reader, but she mostly read magazines and novels. I tried to convince her to read the devotional books she had accumulated. I also tried to explain to her that the discomfort she was feeling from being withdrawn from the world was meant to encourage her to turn inward, to develop her internal, spiritual relationship with God.

As we spoke, she felt comforted and admitted she was feeling more favorable to what I was doing. She even admitted to having put me back into her living trust, although she had hesitated, not wanting to contribute anything, even indirectly, to the Kṛṣṇas. We had long since agreed to disagree, so there was no question of my trying to convince her about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But at least we were becoming closer again. The experience I had gained from twenty-three years of teaching and counseling others about spiritual life was paying off in an intensely personal way. She soon even insisted, strongly, that I return to India to continue my life's course, which she didn't want to interrupt.



SI WASTO REALIZE more clearly over the next two years, one of my mother's prominent characteristics was her intense aversion to giving anyone trouble or taking service from anyone, including her only son. An ascetic in her own way, she had grown to love living alone. And although she was shaken by the two-day complete memory loss, which had left her weak short-term memory even weaker, her determination to stay independent was unshakeable.

Return to Bombay

Reluctantly I returned to Bombay, carrying my mother's promise that I could come soon for another visit. I now found myself in a dilemma. For more than twenty years my life had been dedicated to the mission of my spiritual master. I was in a renounced position, wearing saffron

cloth, living in India as a monk detached from family responsibilities. I had administrative and teaching duties in one of our society's largest temples, a service that demanded full dedication, apparently ruling out frequent trips to the West to help my mother. And by choice I had no accumulated wealth or steady income.



AFTER PRAYING to Śrīla Prabhupāda for guidance, consulting my senior Godbrothers, and thinking deeply on the situation, I concluded that I had to do whatever was needed to help my mother, despite her strong opposing will. Not only was it my God-given, scriptural duty to assist my helpless mother, and not only was I probably the only one who could do it, but the performance of this duty would purify my heart, making me a more honest person. Later I would realize the potency created by taking the trouble to fully care for someone and by setting an example for others to follow.

I phoned my mother regularly from Bombay. During those conversations it became clear she was in an intense state of denial. She feared she was losing her independence. In that anxiety, considering me a possible threat, she began to subtly discourage me from coming by repeatedly reminding me how much she was enjoying being alone. Luckily, her explicit letter asking me not to come arrived in Bombay while I was on my next flight to Oroville, in January 1996.

In Need of Help

There she was, sitting on her spot on the couch, surrounded by stacks of opened and unopened mail, looking helpless. Her credit card had expired, and she had received notices for unpaid utility bills. Normally an extraordinarily organized and tidy person, she tried to explain the situation away by insisting she had thought I was coming the next day and was sorting things that needed to be thrown away. But when I found the refrigerator empty, she could no longer hide that she needed help.

I began to organize her affairs, arranging automatic payments, establishing relationships with her banker, lawyer, doctor, and the local merchants with whom she shopped. I cooked for her and arranged for meals to be delivered when I wasn't present. In between expressions of self-pity and anger, she regularly broke down in tears

of love in appreciation for what I was doing.

This time I brought my worshipful Deity, Gīri-Govardhana, a small piece of Govardhana Hill. (Kṛṣṇa had lifted Govardhana like an umbrella to protect the residents of His village from a devastating rainstorm. Learned authorities accept Gīri-Govardhana as spiritually the same as Kṛṣṇa Himself.) The morning procedures I followed were elaborate compared to any religious service my mother had seen. At first she was suspicious and skeptical. She thought the paraphernalia was material and you couldn't worship God with material things. I explained that everything belongs to God and should be offered to Him with love and devotion. After a few days her tone changed slightly.

"You certainly go to a lot of trouble to do that every morning, don't you?" she said.

"Well," I replied, "I'm serving God; don't you think I should take some trouble?"

Shortly after that, while passing by she asked, "Need any help with the dishes?"

Her devotional service had begun.

Spiritual Inquiry in Oroville

During the next year and a half I made four more visits to Oroville from Bombay. During that time a childhood classmate of mine (since kindergarten), Jean Mather, who was also my mother's ex-student, began to take serious interest in what I was doing. Apparently my presence was creating somewhat of a sensation around town. Jean, appreciating my answers to her questions, arranged programs in her home and lectures in a comparative religion class at a local college.

Among the professionals I was dealing with, some became impressed that I was coming all the way from Bombay just to help my mother. Jackie Pogue, my mother's banker, was especially helpful in reacquainting me with a financial system I hadn't used in the eighteen years I had been living outside the country. She extended herself in special ways, even visiting my mother at home to make sure her accounts were in order.

I didn't preach to anyone. I just tried to be as friendly, conscientious, and caring as I could, but in my normal attire as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. And the local people responded. As they became accustomed to seeing me doing everyday chores, whatever resistance the conservative residents of that small northern-California town had to an

orange-clad, shaven-headed Hare Kṛṣṇa monk with stripes on his forehead melted away, and I found myself mostly absorbed in explaining Kṛṣṇa consciousness wherever I went. A group of interested people began meeting once a week to hear seriously about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I promised my mother that whatever adjustments to her life we were making together were simply meant to keep her at home. She had saved enough for professional care, if required, but was adamant about not going into a nursing home. Neither did she want to become bedridden. But with each visit, I watched her slowly deteriorate. And yet at the same time I also witnessed an intensely powerful effort on her part to stay regulated and active against tremendous odds. She began to feel secure as she saw for herself that I was simply trying to help her execute her own will, and our relationship flourished. I learned to appreciate more deeply the value of her association, especially in my formative years when she had instilled within me values that later enabled me to take spiritual life seriously.



W HENEVER I WAS back in Bombay, I kept in touch with Jean to monitor the situation. On April 14, 1997, she informed me by e-mail that she had discovered that my mother had been bleeding for “who knows how long.” Mom had been afraid of going to the doctor, thinking he would put her into the hospital. So Jean had taken her to her doctor, and the preliminary report wasn’t good. There appeared to be a growth in her uterus, but the condition of the mass had to be analyzed. I decided to be with her when she went back to the doctor.

I arrived on April 17 and the next day took my mother to receive the results of her tests. Sure enough, she had a huge malignant tumor. Anemic from loss of blood, she was weak and underweight, since the tumor had been taking most of her energy. Still, my mother’s reaction was consistent with her character. She refused to submit to any treatment. She declared in no uncertain terms that she wanted nature to take its course. Even if she had requested treatment, Dr. Joy admitted that he could not in good conscience prescribe the necessary treatment for such a large growth unless her anemia could be corrected and she gained some weight and strength; otherwise, any treatment could be fatal. He was forced by his oath to reveal to us that she was

terminally ill, with probably no more than one year to live.

The next day my mother couldn’t remember having had the appointment, what to speak of the diagnosis. For more than a year our conversations had prepared us for this inevitability, but it was coming much sooner than expected. Following a few days of unconscious denial and deep philosophical and emotional exchanges, she finally understood and accepted that she was terminally ill. Not that she was a particularly philosophical person. She was simple in her approach to matters of life and death. But being completely honest, she could grasp the truth when it was presented straightforwardly.

After consulting with Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Śivarāma Swami, my two best friends, with whom I had been keeping in touch almost daily, I decided to stay on as her caretaker until the end. Being officially a terminal patient, she was now eligible for hospice care, which provided essential backup services. And so Kṛṣṇa began making arrangements for my dear mother beyond either of our expectations.

While talking, my mother stayed alert and lucid, apparently in good spirits. But as soon as we stopped she either fell asleep or became overwhelmed by lamentation. To no avail, I tried again to convince her to read her own spiritual books. Finally, she confessed a crisis of faith. She didn’t know what she was supposed to be doing. She had become overly dependent on her daily routine. Forced to abandon it, she couldn’t focus her mind and had doubts about God’s existence. Her pastor had visited her once in the hospital, but since then he’d been busy preparing to transfer to another church. She felt as if living in a spiritual vacuum.

I decided to make an experiment by reading to her the *Kṛṣṇa* book, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which describes the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Her first reaction was, “What are you reading to me, a fairy tale or a nursery rhyme?”

I explained that these were the pastimes of God, descriptions of what was happening in His kingdom. Her only duty now was to hear about these things, the only subject matter powerful enough to absorb her mind. She sat back and listened. I began reading for one half hour daily, gradually increasing to three hours. Difficult as it was to keep her attention, I strained to read

loudly and forcibly, with as much dramatic flair as I could.

One day, about thirteen chapters later, I looked up from the book to see her practically on the edge of her seat, eyes wide like saucers, her face changed.

“Mom, it looks like you’re enjoying this story,” I said.

“Oh yes, it’s wonderful!” she replied. “I’ve never experienced anything quite like this. And you’re reading it so nicely.”

“Maybe we should go back to the beginning of the book,” I suggested.

“Oh yes, please do,” she implored. “I have so many questions.”



HEARING KṚṢṆA’S pastimes from Śrīla Prabhupāda had lifted her out of her body. I got out my laptop and went to the beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the Bhaktivedanta Archives folio program, reading from the Preface, pausing while she asked questions. I carefully explained whatever I had learned from Śrīla Prabhupāda about the science of KṚṢṆA consciousness. This went on for hours each day until May 30, when the crisis arrived.

The growth began intruding on her bladder, causing complications I couldn’t deal with. Despite my promise that I wouldn’t take her to the hospital, she allowed me to call an ambulance. I stayed up with her that night in the emergency room and the next day in the hospital. The emergency team and her family doctor concluded that not much could be done except to keep her as comfortable as possible. They agreed to allow her to go home. While the hospital staff arranged for her discharge, I ordered a hospital bed and the necessary paraphernalia to care for her. I also bought a CD player, thinking that I should introduce her to devotional songs chanted by Śrīla Prabhupāda. On June 2, 1997, she went home.

A Strong Connection

The thing my mother had dreaded most had happened. She was bedridden. But she was thankful to be in her own home and to have me as her caretaker. We took up where we had left off in our reading, and her questions became more personal. The loving feelings exchanged between my mother and me during her last few days are difficult to describe. They are rare in this

world and testify to the power of KṚṢṆA consciousness and the association of KṚṢṆA’s devotees.

On the evening of June 5, a name—Nandārānī—popped into my mind while I was chanting with my mother.

Then it dawned on me that my mother had become a devotee.

“This is amazing,” I thought.

Before retiring that night, I looked at her and said, “Hare KṚṢṆA, Mom.”

She responded without hesitation, saying for the first time in her life “Hare KṚṢṆA!”

The sound was so powerful I felt moved by its force.

Mom and Her Guru

I had been keeping in touch with Śivarāma Swami by e-mail, and the next day I received a message from him. He assured me I was doing the best thing by staying by my mother’s side. KṚṢṆA had lightened my responsibilities in Bombay so that I could do this.

“This will mend your relationship with your mother,” Śivarāma Swami wrote, “and help you in your emotional and hence spiritual life. I’m a hundred percent clear that you should continue what you are doing. . . . I hope that when I pass away I will have the kind of loving care she has.”

Śivarāma Swami then asked me to give the following message to my mother:

Dear Mrs. Beck,
Hare KṚṢṆA

You don’t know me, but I have heard a lot about you and know you indirectly. Your son, Keśava Bhārati, is one of my closest friends and we’ve been acquaintances for the last twenty years. So I guess you and I are also related in that way. I have heard about your terminal situation and am praying for you. I think KṚṢṆA has really looked after you, due to some great fortune of yours. You have such a loving son, who is also an elevated Vaiṣṇava, to care for you and give you spiritual guidance in the last moments of your life. This type of opportunity is rare and unique. You are very, very lucky.

Since you really have nothing to do at this point other than think about KṚṢṆA, try to focus your mind on His name, form, activities—whatever attracts you the most. By your son’s association and such effort, no doubt you will achieve a most glorious destination soon. I am a bit far away, here in Budapest, but I think we are close

spiritually. I will pray for your success at this momentous hour and intently follow your progress closer to Kṛṣṇa. If I can be of any other help, please let me know.

Your well-wisher,
Śivarāma Swami

Then Śivarāma Swami suggested to me that my mother be initiated.

“She should get every spiritual boost she can,” he wrote. “If she takes it seriously, I will give her a name. What do you think?”

I wrote back, telling him that the name Nandarāṇī had come into my mind the night before.

“I’m convinced that Kṛṣṇa arranged that we both simultaneously thought the same thing,” I wrote. “When I read your letter to her, she was amazed at how, having never met her, you could write such a personal letter. I explained to her that the meaning of the conversations we’ve been having are coming to life now and that it was natural for her to come in contact with a bona fide spiritual master. When I told her that you and I were both thinking about her connecting with a spiritual master for gaining support and strength at this crucial time, in tears she immediately accepted, saying, ‘Yes, this is just what I need and want. Please arrange it.’”

I asked Śivarāma Swami to send a letter accepting her as his disciple. I told him that she knew exactly what she was doing and I would help her with the chanting.

In Śivarāma Swami’s letter to my mother accepting her as his disciple, he wrote: “I am always amazed at how Kṛṣṇa works—so mysteriously. . . . Śrīla Prabhupāda said that a good child indicates that the parents must be good. You have such a good son, so you must also be a good person. Now that you are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, that makes you perfect. Therefore, why should I not accept you and let our eternal relationship begin?”

After explaining the meaning of her new name, Śivarāma Swami continued:

We are servants and eternal family members of the Lord. You should try to understand that we have no other identification.

The world we live in is temporary. Our eternal, original home is the spiritual world. From there Lord Kṛṣṇa descends to attract us lost souls back to His service. In that place, all speaking is song, all walking a dance, and all

beings live eternally in full happiness. There everyone lives in harmony, accepting their position as a servant of the Lord. . . .

Try to absorb yourself in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa. That is possible by always chanting God’s holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. As much as possible chant aloud or in your mind to yourself. If you do so carefully, you will understand that Kṛṣṇa is not different from His name, and by this chanting He will transport you back to Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “This is the test. If one chants Kṛṣṇa’s name at the time of death, he is guaranteed to go back to Him.” So try to concentrate on this chanting until the last breath. Kṛṣṇa has sent Keśava Bhārati there to help remind you when the time comes to chant. Remember to follow his direction when he instructs you.

Keśava Bhārati is not just your son. He is your guru. He has saved you at the last minute and given you the greatest treasure, Kṛṣṇa. He is a fitting son, for he has repaid his debt to you. Now you are indebted to him. That debt you can repay by chanting always. I am your initiator and he is your instructor guru. So now we are together. May you receive the full blessings of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I feel happy that we have met like this, and I leave you in the capable hands of my good friend, your son and well-wisher.



THE DAY OF HER initiation, my mother had another crisis. Nurses from the hospice twice had to help her eliminate, because the tumor was intruding. She lost a lot of energy, so when I read her Śivarāma Swami’s letter, it was difficult for her to reply. But she managed to say that she was eternally indebted to him and was trying to do the right thing. While in agony, she called out “Hare Kṛṣṇa” again and again. When she woke up in the evening, after resting for some time, she could barely speak but asked me who was God. I replied confidently that Kṛṣṇa is God.

Shaking her head affirmatively, she repeated again and again, “Kṛṣṇa is God. Kṛṣṇa is God.”

After I told her that hearing is the same as chanting, all she wanted to hear was Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting.

The next day, I read Śivarāma Swami’s letter to my mother again to see if she remembered what had been happening. Before reading it, I said I wasn’t sure if she would remember what had happened the day before. She quickly

replied that of course she remembered.

As I read the letter again, I became overwhelmed by emotion and began weeping like a baby. She took my hand and looked at me in a very knowing, loving way.

When I finally made it through the letter, she had tears in her eyes as she repeated her name a few times. Then she said over and over, "This is so nice." She told me to tell Śivarāma Swami that she is happy to have met him.

I taught her the mahā-mantra just after she received her new name, and she began chanting as much as possible. I could see that Śrīla Prabhupāda was pouring mercy on her, giving her a well-deserved peace at the end. She said that she only wanted to be with me, that I should politely tell everyone she wasn't receiving visitors.

She asked me to play Śrīla Prabhupāda's tapes constantly, and I chanted out loud to her. The hospice people commented on how strong the spiritual atmosphere was surrounding us. They were professionals who deal with family members and death every day, but without exception they testified that they had never experienced anything like this.



ONE MORNING, when I said "Hare Kṛṣṇa" to my mother, she at once responded with "Haribol" ["Please chant the names of God"] and smiled a kind of knowing smile. I was speechless. I wondered where she had heard that phrase. Then I remembered that my son had stayed with her for a few months while attending college nearby. She must have heard it from him because his habit is to say Haribol more than Hare Kṛṣṇa. I was shocked to witness her transformation.

My mother became sweet and charming company. I moved the weekly program to our home, and after hearing me lead *kīrtana*, lecture, and answer questions for the first time in a public program, my mother made me promise that I would "go on and on preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

A few days after her initiation, my mother completely withdrew, even from me. At first she showed symptoms that made us all think she would pass away peacefully during the night. But the next morning she seemed disturbed and in severe pain. She spoke, but her words indicated she was bewildered and disoriented. The hospice nurses told me those were symptoms

of a person close to death.

My mother began calling out Kṛṣṇa's name over and over when she was in pain. That inoffensive chanting was making her eligible to go back to Godhead.

I wrote to Śivarāma Swami:

It's amazing how powerful the material energy is. The hospice people say that the cancer has entered the bones and therefore managing her pain is increasingly difficult. She seems peaceful and free from pain for hours, but if you slightly move her she's immediately in crisis pain. I may be forced to slightly sedate her to make her comfortable. Her anxiety is making it very difficult for her to hear as she had been hearing just before she accepted her initiation.

Nandarāṇī doesn't have the years of practice we've had. Her newfound feelings and commitment to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, while real and meaningful, are undeveloped and therefore hard to maintain under the extreme circumstances she's in. The only thing she responds to is constant preaching and the sound of Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting. Let's see how she responds when the pain is under control again. All the descriptions in the scriptures about the time of death are coming alive.

Please pray that her memory doesn't fail and that she can keep remembering to the end.

By June 10 my mother had withdrawn almost completely. I played Śrīla Prabhupāda's tapes to her constantly, and she had become most attached to hearing him chant before she withdrew. Her vital signs were strong because she had lived a fairly clean life. I lamented that she hadn't cultivated Kṛṣṇa consciousness more in this life.

I kept reading to her descriptions of the spiritual world and trying to convince her to let go of the miserable material body and give herself to Kṛṣṇa.

"All right, Nandarāṇī," I kept saying, "the runway is cleared for takeoff. You've taxied enough. Push down on the throttle and just go back to Kṛṣṇa."

She would sometimes move her mouth to indicate she wanted Śrīla Prabhupāda's chanting to continue. I knew everything was in Kṛṣṇa's hands, but I kept trying to absorb her in transcendental sound until her last breath. I read to her Śivarāma Swami's letter numerous times, and that helped her regain her focus while she was conscious. She cried out Kṛṣṇa's name in help-

lessness a number of times. I had complete faith that she had become eligible for a much better situation, even if she didn't go back to Godhead.



Y DEAR mother, Śrīmatī Nandarāṇī Devī Dāsī, departed peacefully sometime between 1:30 A.M. and 2:30 A.M. on July 11, 1997. I had dozed off, being emotionally and physically exhausted, so she was alone, which was consistent with her character as a very private person. Śrīla Prabhupāda was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa during her departure, and I had just put water from Rādhā-Kuṇḍa, the most sacred of all holy lakes, in her mouth before I dozed. She had already received the water of Rādhā-Kuṇḍa a few times earlier that evening when she seemed about to leave. She was decorated with Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* and *tulasī* neck beads.

Just a few hours before departing, my mother seemed to be leaving while I was dancing and chanting to a loud *kīrtana* on Śrīla Prabhupāda's "Happening" album. We were alone in her house, exactly as she had wanted. She looked quite beautiful. The weather had been hot—more than a hundred degrees, without a cloud in the sky. But in the evening, just before dusk, it began to rain gently, as if someone were pouring water from a big sprinkling can. I could understand that my mother was not an ordinary person. All glories to Nandarāṇī Devī Dāsī!

I wrote again to Śivarāma Swami, giving him the news and thanking him for initiating her before her departure: "I know that she has your full mercy and the mercy of so many other great Vaiṣṇavas and, as a result, has attained either the spiritual world or an exalted position before returning to Vraja—the eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa."

Memorial Service

About fifty people attended a memorial service in my mother's church. Before she departed she had told me she didn't want a memorial service, but when her friends insisted, I agreed for their sake.

After the service, the pastor had me speak to the congregation. The first words he spoke in his remembrance of Nandarāṇī were that she was a saint. I was surprised. I had been thinking to start my talk in a similar way, but I was concerned that it be too much for such a conservative crowd.

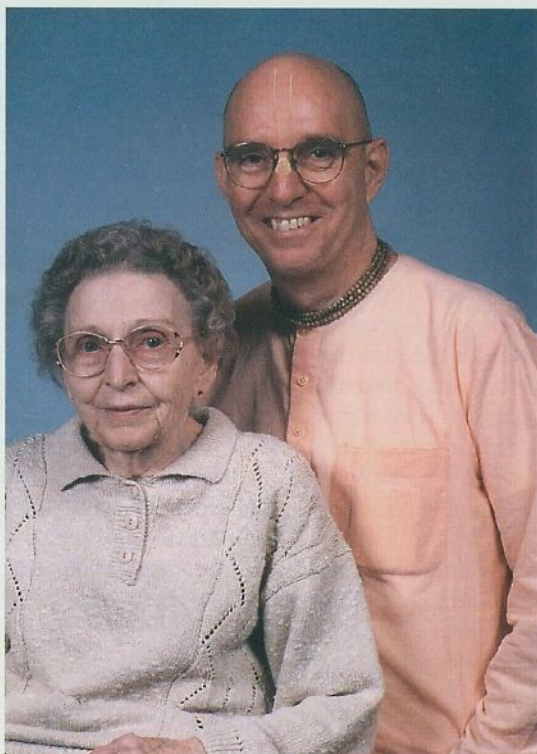
Still, in my talk I listed the divine qualities in *Bhagavad-gītā* and gave examples of my mother's behavior and character to confirm that she was indeed a saintly person.

Then I shared with the congregation how our relationship had come to a deep level of communion from an extremely estranged condition, how we had called on the names of God together, achieving a rare state of oneness I likened to a miracle. We had realized together that there was only one God. I ended by saying that to me our relationship symbolized a simple solution for a world in dire need of oneness amid cultural differences.

After the service, whatever doubt I'd had about having spoken too intimately to such a conservative Christian audience was removed by my mother's friends, who all expressed how much they had enjoyed the message.

There was no funeral. My son, Rāma, and I went alone to the gravesite and chanted together Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. ❀

Keśava Bhārati Dāsa is presently serving Lord Kṛṣṇa at an ISKCON temple near Govardhana Hill, in Vṛndāvana, India.



“I Have Found the Future”

The Story of Rasikānanda Prabhu

by Satyarāja Dāsa

RASIKA MURĀRI PATNAIK, also known as Rasikānanda Prabhu, was born in 1590, fifty-six years after Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had ended His earthly pastimes. Rasikānanda was born into a powerful zamindar (landowner) family in Royni, on the Suvarnarekha River in what is now the Medinipur district of southwest Bengal. This was a glorious time in the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, the disciplic succession of devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: The six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana had built a veritable storehouse of Sanskrit literature, in the form of poetry, history, aesthetics, and philosophy, unlike any the world has ever seen.

At this time, too, Jīva Gosvāmī had established a large Vaiṣṇava community in Vṛndāvana and had sent his three best disciples—Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and Śyāmānanda Prabhu—throughout northern India to spread the Gosvāmīs’ teachings. While on this noble mission, Śyāmānanda met eighteen-year-old Rasika Murāri and initiated him into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, giving him the name Rasikānanda. The Gosvāmīs’ teachings touched the heart of this pious young landowner, who gave his life to Kṛṣṇa the moment he met his illustrious guru.

The meeting of Śyāmānanda and the youthful Rasikānanda is retold in Gopījanavallabha’s *Rasika Maṅgala*, a standard seventeenth-century text about the life of Rasikānanda. Basically, Śyāmānanda and Rasikānanda saw each other and recognized a connection that transcended time itself.

Rasika ran up to his future guru and

fell flat at his feet, saying, “You are my eternal savior, and Kṛṣṇa has finally sent you to redeem me.”

Śyāmānanda Prabhu smiled with great pleasure. “I have found the future of Vaiṣṇavism!”

Rasikānanda, like his guru, was a married man, and so his wife, Icchā Devī, also took initiation from Śyāmānanda Prabhu, receiving the name Śyāmā Dāsī.* Śyāmānanda told them to always chant the mahā-mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Soon after Śyāmā Dāsī’s initiation, the couple left Royni for nearby Kāśīpur, a popular city with a large influx of wealthy people. Sometime later, Śyāmānanda visited his two disciples in Kāśīpur and brought a beautiful Deity of Kṛṣṇa for them: Gopījanavallabha.

Seeing how much his disciples loved their newly installed Deity, Śyāmānanda renamed the city Gopīballabhpur (“Gopīvallabha’s town”) and blessed all of the townspeople to develop the same love for the Deity that Rasikānanda and his wife had. He asked Rasikānanda to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness vigorously and made Śyāmā Dāsī head priest of the temple.

Śyāmānanda then left, but he had planted a seed. Rasikānanda thrived, building an unparalleled organization for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He and his wife worked as a team, and to-

gether they are said to have brought hundreds of thousands of pious people to the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

ŚYĀMĀNANDĪ VAIṢṆAVAS

According to historian Ramakanta Chakravarti, “Rasikmurari was perhaps more successful in converting people into Vaiṣṇavism than any other Vaiṣṇava leader of his time.” His enthusiasm was so pronounced that by the time of his passing away, the region of Medinipur had developed a distinct sect of Vaiṣṇavas in the mood of Śyāmānanda, his guru. These “Śyāmānandī Vaiṣṇavas,” as they came to be called, developed their own style of dress, cooking, *tilaka* markings,** and temple construction. Rasikānanda popularized Vaiṣṇavism to the point of creating an entire subculture based on its principles.

With Gopīballabhpur as the seat of Śyāmānandī Vaiṣṇavism, Rasikānanda spent forty years helping people see the good sense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He made disciples among great kings and impious rogues, among *brāhmaṇas* and lowborn *sūdras*. He completely ignored caste and outer qualifications (or disqualifications) and gave everyone a taste for Vaiṣṇavism.

The classic histories of the period, such as *Śyāmānanda Prakāśa* and *Rasika Maṅgala*, tell how he and his wife, with the help of influential disciples, put an end to animal sacrifice in non-Vaiṣṇava areas and convinced people throughout Orissa and its bordering

* Narahari Cakravartī’s *Bhakti-ratnākara* gives evidence that Śyāmā Dāsī was as important to the mission in Medinipur as her illustrious husband. She may have been the first Bengali woman to write religious verse in the vernacular.

** The clay markings devotees wear on their bodies to remind themselves and others that the body is a temple of the Lord.

ture of Vaiṣṇavism”



This painting, done in a traditional style of Orissa, shows Rasikānanda Prabhu (left) with his spiritual master, Śyāmānanda Prabhu. The painting hangs on the wall of Rasikānanda's Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in Gopiballabhpur.

villages of the validity of Mahāprabhu's message. With his knowledge, purity, and charisma, he engaged Muslims, Buddhists, and various sects of Hindus in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

Late in his life Rasikānanda wrote a Sanskrit epic about the life of the person who had taught him all he knew. It was called *Śyāmānanda Śatakam*, and it remains the most authoritative work on Śyāmānanda's life. Rādhānanda, Rasikānanda's eldest son, who inherited the Gopivallabha temple (from his mother), wrote a famous book called

Rādhā-Govinda Kāvya, a beautiful devotional poem modeled after Jayadeva's *Gīta-govinda*. His eldest son was Nayānanda, who, although like his grandfather an enthusiastic teacher, left no literary work for posterity.

Toward the end of his life, Rasikānanda settled in Remuna, Orissa, where he was fascinated by the Deity of Gopīnātha (Kṛṣṇa). It is said that he would spend day and night just gazing at the beautiful Deity. He would utter the mahā-mantra and sit transfixed, stuttering, shedding tears of love. He

would point to the Deity as if to say to others, "Don't you see?" But no one could see what he saw. After having spent his life spreading the teachings of Lord Caitanya and establishing a firm basis for the future of Vaiṣṇavism, he was content to spend his time in the company of the Lord of his life. ☀

Satyaṛāja Dāsa is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a regular contributor to Back to Godhead. He has written several books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He and his wife live in New York City.

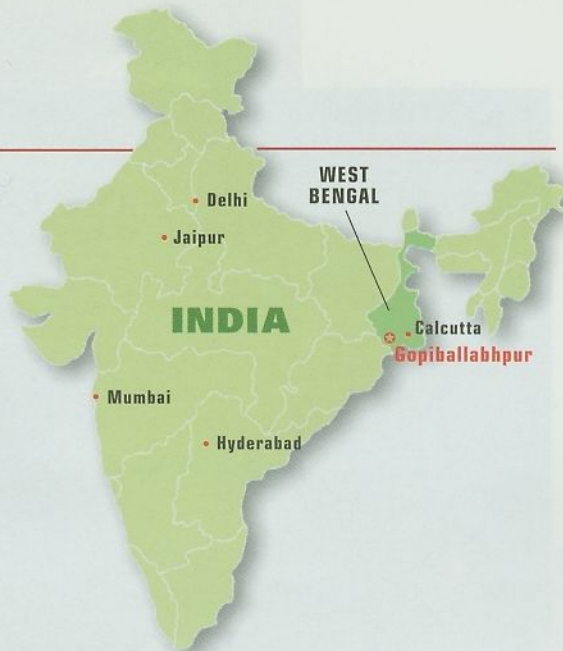
SPIRITUAL PLACES

GOPIBALLABHPUR

*An entrance to
Rasikānanda
Prabhu's
Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa
temple in
Gopiballabhpur.*



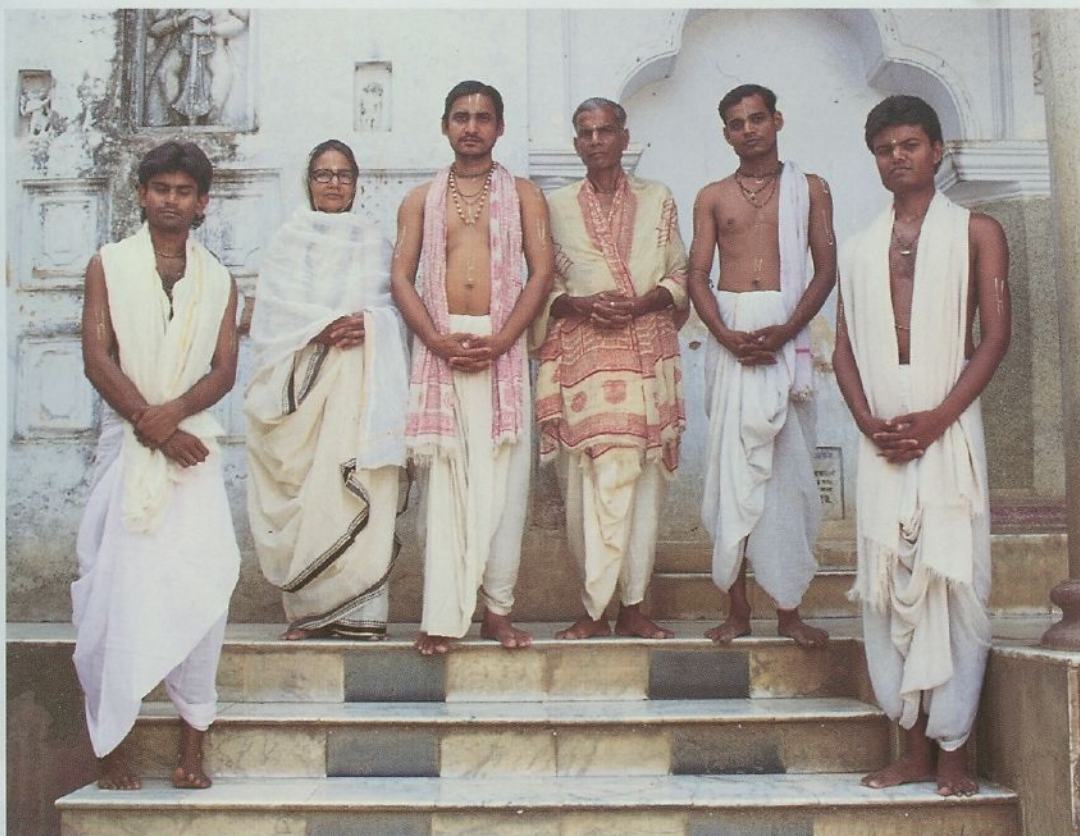
OUR TODAY



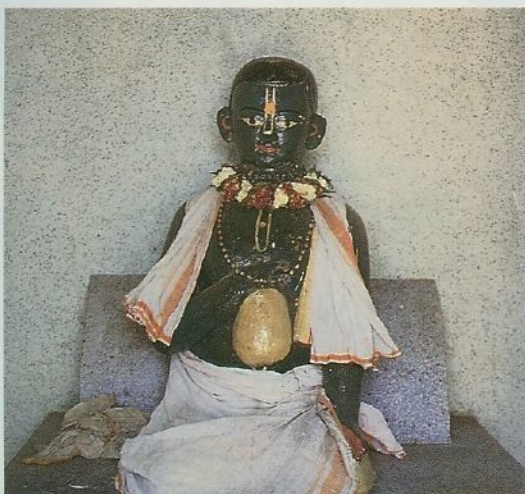
A look at the temple founded by Rasikānanda Prabhu nearly four hundred years ago.

by Bhaktivikāśa Swami

photos by Mahā Viṣṇu Dāsa

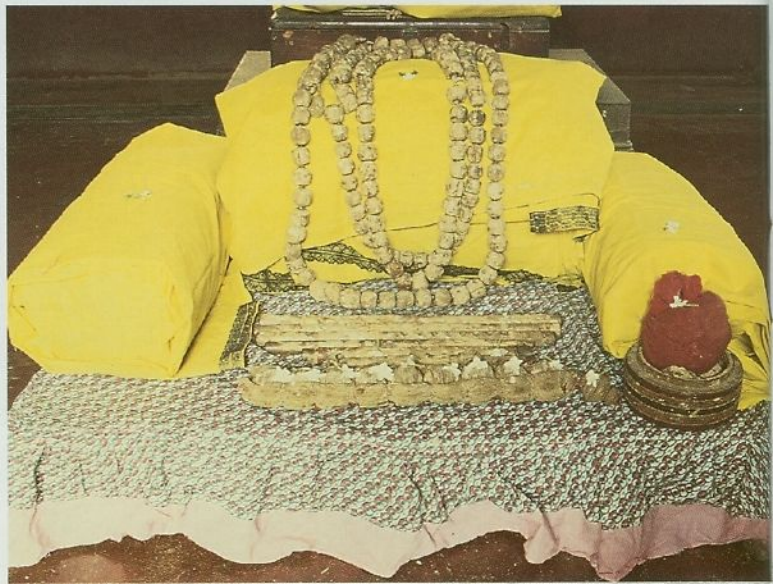
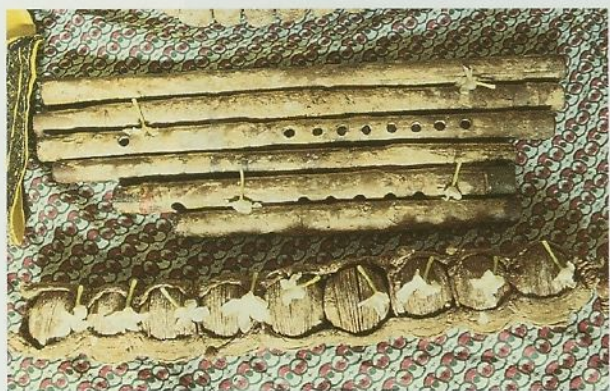


Members of the Dev Goswami family, which has managed the Gopiballabhpur temple for many generations.



This deity of Rasikānanda Prabhu resides at the Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha temple in Remuna, Orissa.

GOPIBALLABHPUR is situated in the southwest corner of the Medinipur district in southwest West Bengal, near Orissa and Bihar. Nearly four hundred years after Rasikānanda Prabhu started the Kṣṛṇa temple at Gopiballabhpur, the temple is still being managed by his descendants. Known as the Dev Goswamis, they continue to initiate disciples into the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They also oversee several other temples, including the





The temple courtyard (above) is quiet while the Deities rest in their closed chambers in the afternoon. At left and far left, flutes, beads, and a Bhagavad-gītā written on palm leaves, articles that belonged to Śyāmānanda Prabhu and Rasikānanda Prabhu, are preserved and worshiped in the temple.



Śyāmānanda's footprints (left), imprinted in stone, are worshiped daily with fresh flowers and other articles. Below, the main Deities at Gopiballabhpur: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. (Gopivallabha, the original temple Deity, who is quite small, also resides within the temple.)



Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha temple in Remuna and Śyāmasundara temple in Vṇḍāvana, started by Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Rasikānanda's spiritual master.

The family keeps up the Vaiṣṇava traditions of their ancestors. They perform *kīrtana*, decorate themselves with the clay *tilaka* markings of the Śyāmānanda line, oversee the Deity worship and festivals, and like to talk about Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They know Caitanya's philosophy and pastimes as given in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*. And they know

and love the songs of the great devotees in Lord Caitanya's line. Though the Gopiballabhpur temple is small compared to many of India's opulent and well-known temples, it is an attractive place, under the care of a family that upholds the spirit of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism. ☸

Bhakti Vikāśa Swami comes from England, but has lived in India for many years. He now teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness at the ISKCON center in Baroda, Gujarat.

LETTERS (continued from page 5) your question. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that one's mentality at the time of death determines the next birth. One soul may go upward to a heavenly birth among higher beings, another soul may stay in human society, and yet another may descend to a birth as an animal. In each case, the soul's subtle coverings of mind, senses, and intelligence undergo conditioning appropriate to make the transition to the next life.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that the Lord directs the soul into its next body according to the karma the soul has accumulated. Even if an infant

dies, the soul is still subject to past karma and gains a suitable new body. If a group of people die at once, the Lord is not overworked; He has established the incontrovertible laws of nature to handle unlimited numbers of individual souls coming or going in this world.

Kṛṣṇa advises that rather than trying to untangle the intricacies of karma, we should understand how to escape the cycle of birth and death.

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You are doing a wonderful job with BTG. For students like me who are always in the lap of māyā, BTG offers

a ray of hope we can cling to. I have been going through the past issues, and they are really wonderful to read every time. You may not be aware, but BTG helps sustain our Kṛṣṇa consciousness through difficult times. Thank you.

Preetesh S. Nair
Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India ❁

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Yamaraja Dāsa

Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare
Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare

“America Has to Stop Demonism”

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in Los Angeles on the morning of December 13, 1973, during a walk along the Pacific shore.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Today, the intelligentsia and government men think that to exist, one needs a material body. They do not know that for the soul, the real person, the material body is extraneous—simply a contamination. It is like when a person is diseased, his body produces many extraneous chemicals. It is not that those chemicals are the agents maintaining his life.

Try to understand. Originally the living entity is pure; only when he becomes impure does he take on a material body. And by way of analogy, originally the material body is healthy, but when the body becomes unhealthy it produces extraneous chemicals. When the body becomes contaminated, infected with some disease, you will find so many extra chemicals. So these extra chemicals—they do not cause the body’s symptoms of life.

Rather, because the body’s condition has somehow become awkward, these things have been produced by it.

To your society’s leaders we say, “You

cannot see anything but material chemicals, because you have no eyes to see the soul. That is why you simply see the chemicals produced by the soul.” Your leaders are mistaking these chemical products as the cause of life. The chemicals are not the cause; they are effects. Try to convince these rascals like this. Tell them, “You are seeing only these extraneous chemicals. They are not the cause of our existence. Just the opposite. They are effects.”

But these people cannot understand these two things: what is the cause and what is the effect. They misunderstand the cause as the effect, and the effect as the cause. That is imperfect knowledge. Illusion. Taking the effect, the material body, as the cause of our existence—that is their mistake.

So the foundation of these fools’ “knowledge” is a mistake. Due to their imperfect senses, these rascals have made this blunder. And more, they have solidified their blunder into a grand illusion. And still more, they insist on teaching their grand illusion to us all. In other words, these illusioned rogues are simply cheating. And yet, totally without knowledge, they have become teachers. So these rascal leaders are not teachers but cheaters.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, the leaders in the communist countries are upholding this very same idea, that we simply evolved from material chemicals. When Stalin, as a young student, first read Darwin’s theory of evolution, he boasted to his classmates, “Now I have the proof—there is no God.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. The first principle of demonism is to banish God. Yet your leaders do not see this sameness between

between



their demonism and the communists' demonism. What reason do these rascals give for sending you to fight in Vietnam?

Disciple: They say they want to stop communism.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. But now, more broadly, America has to stop demonism. Then your nation will be the real leader of the world. You understand your duty somewhat; you say, theoretically, "In God we trust." Now it is your business to actually trust in God and work for Him.

As I have explained already, you cannot simply stop communism. You have to stop demonism. That is your real business. Communism is simply one form of demonism. So if you yourselves remain demons, what is the use of stopping just one form of demonism?

You recall the example I have given so many times: After being in the sun, the upper side of a piece of stool may become drier than the lower side. But you cannot say, "This side is better," because it is still stool. Moist or dry, stool is stool.

For instance, in Moscow, Professor Kotofsky was telling me that societies must have revolutions to stop oppressive authorities. I had been saying that as long as you are in this material world, you will have to accept some oppressive authority or other. So he said that first we must have a revolution, and then we shall see whether we have to accept some authority.

But after the Russian revolutionaries had gotten rid of one oppressor, the Czar, they accepted another oppressor, Lenin. So I said, "In your present materially embodied condition, you have to accept one oppressive authority or another. That you cannot change."

He said, "Yes. That I accept, but

somehow, the oppressive authorities have to be changed."

And I said, "Yes. We accept that. When you change the mood of the world's leaders and they accept the authority of Kṛṣṇa, then there will be no more need for change." *Yam labdhvā cāparam lābham manyate nādhikamataḥ:* Everyone is trying to achieve the greatest profit, but when one gets Kṛṣṇa, one is actually satisfied. That is the ultimate profit—no further profit is even possible. So with Kṛṣṇa acknowledged and a truly Kṛṣṇa conscious authority in charge, there will be no more need for revolution, because that will be the ultimate peaceful condition.

Of course, if you do not come to this ultimate condition of peace, then your revolutionary business will continue. In fact, there will be no cessation of revolutions—one after another. These repeated revolutions are māyā, illusion. Simply a mirage.

We think, "A few steps farther and I'll surely get that water." But there is no water at all. Simply illusion. As soon as you go those few steps farther, you see that the "water" has also gone a few steps farther. When you go forward again, again you see that the water has moved—still just out of reach. This is going on. Now, animals—they'll keep going forward after the mirage. But a sensible man knows, "This is not water. It appears like water, but it is not water."

In the same way, we are making revolutions, changing from one authority to another, but we do not know they are not real authorities. The real authority is our source and sustainer, Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, our forgetful situation is called māyā, or illusion. We are thinking, "We shall be happy by chang-

ing from this 'ism' to that 'ism.'" For instance, the French people had their revolution, but they are not happy; still there is unhappiness. Similarly, the Russian people had their revolution, but as we have seen in Moscow, nobody is happy. This phenomenon is going on all over the world. Until people accept the authority of Kṛṣṇa, there cannot be happiness. Real happiness flows from accepting Kṛṣṇa. People should know this.

And this attempt your big men are making to establish that we came from dead material chemicals—this is also māyā. They are thinking, "By further improvement of our investigative techniques, we are almost coming to the point."

Tell these rascals, "This 'almost coming to the point'—this will continue. You will never come to the point. This is your position. You'll never come to the right point."

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, this concept that we evolved from material chemicals—this will surely fail. So, then, perhaps these people will have to accept that there is a Supreme Being. After all, their life-from-matter concept will fail.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Will fail." It has already failed.

Disciple: Yes, but these big men are still hoping.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because they are fools and rascals, they are hoping against hope. That's all. Their nonsensical concept has already failed.

Disciple: But they are not convinced yet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because they are not intelligent. When one who is intelligent sees things happening, he understands, "Oh, from those types of action, these are the consequences." On the other hand, one who is a fool cannot learn until he actually undergoes the consequences himself. Now, just consider. One man learns simply by seeing, and the other man learns only by experiencing. So which one is intelligent?

Disciple: The one who learns simply by seeing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. So, long before he experiences the death of his own body, the intelligent person sees that these material things have a beginning

(please turn to page 55)

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Glossary

- Ācārya**—a spiritual master who teaches by example.
- Balarāma**—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.
- Battle of Kurukṣetra**—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.
- Bhagavad-gītā**—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.
- Bhakti**—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.
- Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura**—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
- Bhakti-yoga**—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.
- Caitanya Mahāprabhu**—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.
- Dharma**—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).
- Godhead**—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.
- Gurukula**—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally “the place of the guru”).
- Hare Kṛṣṇa**—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.
- ISKCON**—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- Japa**—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.
- Kali-yuga**—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.
- Karma**—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.
- Kīrtana**—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).
- Kṛṣṇa**—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendent form (see “Godhead”).
- Mahābhārata**—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.
- Māyā**—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.
- Māyāvādī**—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal or void.
- Modes of nature**—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.
- Nityānanda**—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- Prasādam**—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally “mercy”).
- Purāṇas**—Vedic histories.
- Rādhārāṇī**—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.
- Rathayātrā**—“chariot festival”: a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Purī, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, “the Lord of the universe”).
- Sannyāsa**—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.
- Śrī**—an honorific meaning “opulent” (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).
- Śrīla Prabhupāda**—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.
- Supersoul**—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.
- Upaniṣads**—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas*.
- Varṇāśrama**—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacāris* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).
- Vṛndāvana**—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.
- Vaiṣṇava**—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).
- Vedas**—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.
- Vedic**—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.
- Viṣṇu**—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see “Godhead”); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

This calendar is calculated for Śrīdhām Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. Dates may vary by one day for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

Month of Mādhava

(January 3–31)

JANUARY

6 — Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

7 — Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, a great spiritual master and author of *Gīta-govinda*.

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

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

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

24 — 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.

26 — Disappearance anniversary of

Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

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

28 — Bhaimī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Appearance anniversary of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation. Fasting till noon, feasting tomorrow.

29 — 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 yesterday, feasting today.

31 — 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 1–March 2)

FEBRUARY

5 — 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.

12 — Vijayā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

15 — Śrī Śiva Rātri, a day in honor of Lord Śiva.

17 — Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābāji, the great devotee in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

26 — Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

27 — Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

MARCH

2 — 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 a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.

Month of Viṣṇu

(March 3–March 31)

10 — Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

14 — Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

22 — Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the eleventh century.

25 — Śrī Rāma Navamī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till sunset, followed by feasting.

27 — Kāmadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

31 — Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's springtime *rāsa* dance. Balarāma Rāsa Yātrā, Lord Balarāma's *rāsa* dance. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

DEMONISM

(continued from page 52)

and an end. Every day we observe this fact. For instance, we see, "My father's body was here for some time, and then—finished." From this observation, I can conclude that the body of my child and, of course, my own body will go

through the same process. This is real knowledge, from careful observation.

Based on careful observation from time immemorial, we know that for the material body, there is no possibility of immortality. So if some modern rascals say, "We shall not die—by chemical evolution we shall become immortal,"

that is foolishness. Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement proposes that human life is meant for factual knowledge. Ultimate knowledge—so that the soul can see himself apart from this temporary body and, in time, return to Kṛṣṇa's eternal world. But your rascal leaders are checking that progress.

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SACRIFICE (continued from page 28)

the respectable merchants and laborers. Bring them all here."

At Yudhiṣṭhira's order the messengers carried invitations to all the rulers of the world, and also to others who would be worthy participants.

THE SACRIFICE BEGINS

Then, O Bhārata, at the proper time the learned *brāhmaṇas* initiated Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira into the stately Rājasūya sacrifice. Yudhiṣṭhira, the king of religious principles, then went to the sacrificial arena in the midst of thousands of learned *brāhmaṇas*, his brothers and other relatives, his friends and ministers, royal warriors who had come from so many lands, and his royal counselors, O lord of mankind. That most glorious monarch thus went forth like the god of virtue himself.

From many regions came *brāhmaṇas* learned in all the sciences, masters of the *Vedas* and the Vedic corollaries. At the order of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, thousands of expert craftsmen constructed a separate residence for each *brāhmaṇa* and his party and equipped the residences with abundant stocks of food, beds, and the amenities of all seasons. Greatly honored, the *brāhmaṇas* dwelled in those abodes, O king, telling many stories and watching the actors and dancers.

The learned *brāhmaṇas* were delighted [with their facilities], and as those great souls went on eating and conversing, a steady clamor was heard from their residential area: "Take this gift! Take this gift! Please come and eat! Please eat!" Such sounds were constantly heard from them as they talked among themselves. O Bhārata, to each *brāhmaṇa* the king of virtue gave hundreds of thousands of cows and beds, along with gold and women. Yudhiṣṭhira was a great soul—a unique

The residences of visiting kings were draped with gold lattice, and the floors shone with inlaid jewels.

• • •

hero on earth, as Indra is in heaven—and thus his sacrifice began.

Then, O best of the Bharatas, King Yudhiṣṭhira sent the Pāṇḍava Nakula to Hastināpura to invite Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura, Kṛpa, and those of his cousin-brothers who were attached to Yudhiṣṭhira.

The Pāṇḍava Nakula had met and conquered his enemies in battle. Now he journeyed to Hastināpura and invited Bhīṣma and Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Hearing in detail about Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrifice, and knowing its significance, they all departed with joyful hearts, placing the *brāhmaṇas* in the front of their delegation. And hundreds of other rulers came, O best of men, with satisfied minds, eager to see Yudhiṣṭhira and the great assembly hall. O Bhārata, the kings arrived from all directions, bringing with them varieties of treasure.

THE GREAT KINGS ARRIVE

There was Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma, the high-minded Vidura, and all the brothers headed by Duryodhana, along with all the monarchs who had been invited with honors and who were devoted to their holy teachers. There was Subala, King of Gāndhāra; the very mighty Śakuni; Acala; Vṛṣaska; Karṇa, that best of chariot fighters; Āta; Śalya, the King of Madra; the *mahāratha* Bāhlika;

Somadatta the Kauravya; Bhūri; Bhūriśravā; Śala; Aśvatthāmā; Kṛpa; Droṇa; and the Saindhava king Jayadratha.

There was Yajñasena with his son, and Śālva, an overlord of the abundant earth; and Bhagadatta, the greatly heralded ruler of Prāgjyotiṣa, who came with all the uncivilized Mlecchas who dwell throughout the ocean islands. And there were the mountain kings and King Bṛhadbala.

There was Pauṇḍraka, who called himself Vāsudeva; Vaṅga and a prince of the Kaliṅgas; Ākaṣa; Kuntala, the ruler of Vānavāsī; and rulers of the Andhra country. The Draviḍas came, as did the Siṃhalas and the king of Kaśmīra; Kuntibhoja, of great splendor, and the very powerful Suhma; the other Bāhlikas, who were all heroes and kings; Virāṭa with his sons; the *mahāratha* Mācella; and many kings and princes who ruled various lands. O Bhārata, the greatly potent Śiṣupāla, furious to do battle, came with his son to the sacrifice of Pāṇḍu's son. And there were Rāma and Aniruddha and Babhru with Sāraṇa; Gada, Pradyumna, Sāmba, and the mighty Cārudeṣṇa; Ulmuka, Niśaṭha, and the heroic son of Pradyumna; and all the other Vṛṣṇis, each one a *mahāratha*. All of them came there. Indeed, these and many other kings born in Madhya-deśa came to the great rite, the Rājāsūya of Pāṇḍu's son.

RESIDENCES FOR ROYALTY

O king, at Yudhiṣṭhira's order his men gave all the visiting royalty dwellings furnished with many chambers and inner apartments and landscaped with trees and oblong lakes. Yudhiṣṭhira offered unparalleled honor to those kings, and after being so respectfully welcomed, the kings went to their assigned residences. Each of these resembled the peak of Mount Kailāsa, being delightful to the mind, well furnished, and encircled by towering white walls of expert construction. The residences were also draped with gold lattice, and the floors shone with inlaid jewels. The stairways rose with gradual, easy steps, and the rooms boasted magnificent seats and furnishings. The homes were covered with wreaths and garlands and perfumed by the finest aloe. As white as a shining swan, those abodes could be clearly seen for eight miles.

The residences were not crowded together, their gates and doors were of a pleasing symmetry, and they were endowed with all sorts of artistry and craftsmanship. Decorated with varieties of colorful minerals, the dwellings shone like the Himalayan peaks.

When the earthly rulers had rested and refreshed themselves, they looked at Yudhiṣṭhira, the king of virtue, encircled by many members of his sacrificial assembly. They saw that he was inclined to generously reward the participants in his sacrifice. Now, O king, that sacred assembly, filled with kings and great-souled *brāhmaṇas*, truly shone forth like the very vault of heaven, filled with the immortal gods.

Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami, who holds a Ph.D. in Indology from Harvard University, occasionally teaches at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and has been a visiting lecturer at the University of California at Los Angeles.

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 Tel. +61 (07) 3854-1016/ E-mail: brisbane@com.bbt.se
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Nkwakaw — P.O. Box 69
Sunyani — South Ridge Estates, P.O. Box 685
Takoradi — New Amanful, P.O. Box 328
Tarkwa — State Housing Estate, Cyanide

RURAL COMMUNITY

Eastern Region — Hare Krishna Farm Community, P.O. Box 15, Old Akraide

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- Cochabamba** — Resataurant Tulasi, Av. Heroínas E-262
- La Paz** — Restaurant Imperial, Calle Sagarnaga No. 213
- Oruro** — Restaurant Govinda, Calle 6 de Octubre No. 6071
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- Guatemala, Guatemala** — Callejor Santandes a una cuadra abajo de Guatel, Panajachel Solola
- San Salvador, El Salvador** — 25 Avenida Norte 1132

Strange But True

I FIRST SAW HARE KṚṢṆA devotees in Denver, 1969 or '70, during my first year at the U.S. Air Force Academy. They were chanting on the street, and one of them gave me a *Back to Godhead* magazine. I flipped through it, but I couldn't bring myself to read it. It seemed too strange—as strange as the devotees looked. I had no idea the magazine dealt with the essential questions of life.

Now I'm the editor of that magazine. About four years after my first contact with devotees, I received a small book—Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure*. This time I was ready for it. I was sincerely searching for the meaning of life, and Prabhupāda's message made so much sense. I wasn't bothered that it came in a foreign package.

Now I'm a member of a team trying to present the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in interesting and inspiring ways to readers old and new. One challenge we face is reaching people who are like I was thirty years ago, people for whom *Back to Godhead's* message seems so foreign they won't give it a second thought. They look at devotees and think, "What could those weird-looking Hare Kṛṣṇas possibly have to say that's relevant to me?"

When I finally started to listen, I realized that everything devotees said reinforced and expanded on the religious instruction of my youth. I found that the basic message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is universal and easy to understand. Simply stated: God exists, we're subordinate to Him, and our duty is to love and serve Him.

Because most people believe in God, they

would probably agree with this statement. So what does Kṛṣṇa consciousness have to offer them? More Knowledge. Even the God-fearing seem to know little about God and lack inspiration to love and serve Him, nor do they know how. Our God-fearing world grows increasingly ungodly. *Back to Godhead* aims to deepen our understanding of God and our loving relationship with Him. It presents the science of God from the most comprehensive books on the subject: the Vedic literature.

Because everyone is a child of God, information about Him is relevant to all of us. People who sincerely want to understand God and their own place in the cosmos can get help from the time-honored information available in the Vedic literature. The true seeker accepts knowledge even if it apparently comes from a foreign source. The *Vedas* are no more eastern than the sun, which also rises in the east but shines on people all over the world.

Back to Godhead is concerned with eternal, universal truths, with complete reality. Whether you're from China, Europe, India, or America, the same natural laws propel you from childhood to youth to old age and, finally, to death. Do you know what's going to happen then? Unfortunately, that's a piece of information most people don't have. Fortunately, it's part of the vast knowledge easily available from the Vedic literature and the pages of *Back to Godhead*.

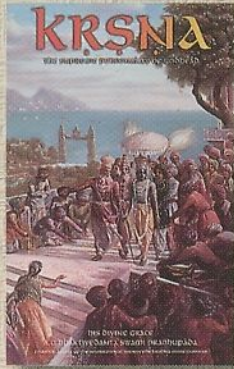
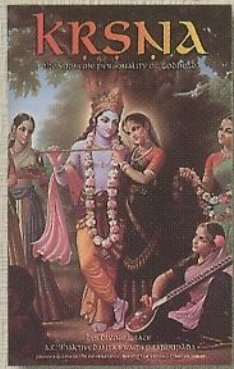
If you have any suggestions on how we at BTG can improve our presentation of this information, please let us hear from you.

—Nāgarāja Dāsa

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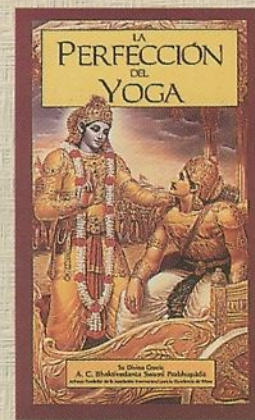
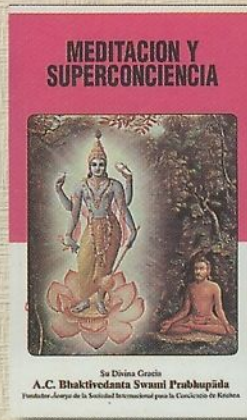
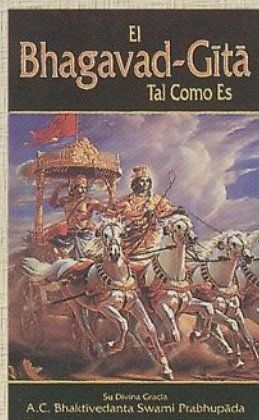
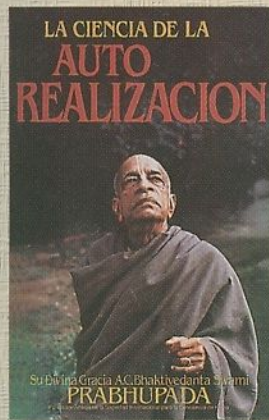
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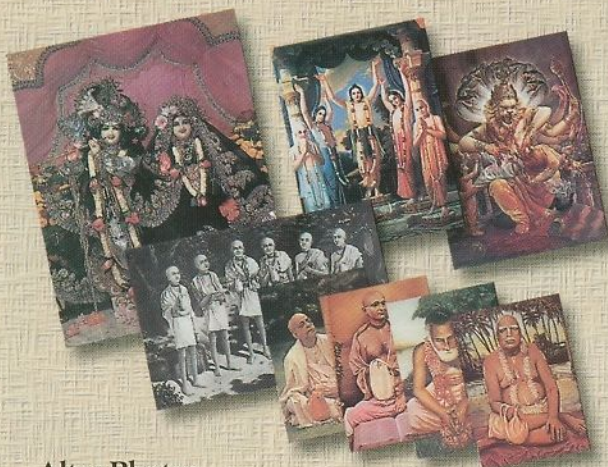
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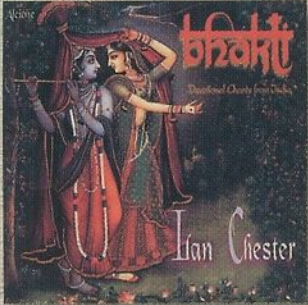
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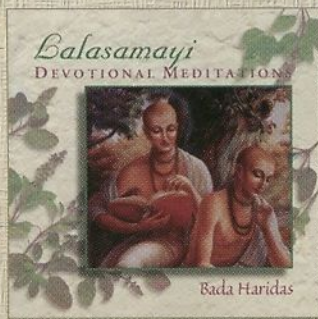
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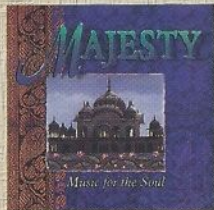
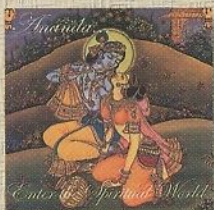
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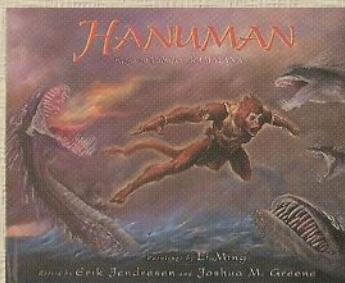
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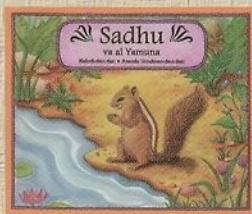
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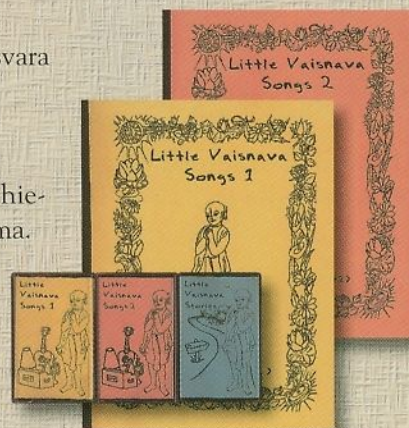
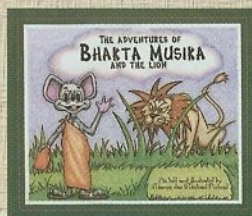


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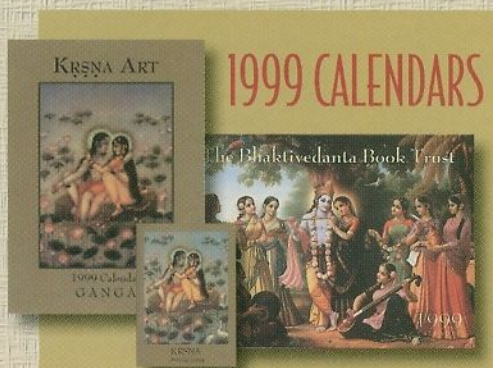
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Devotees whose tongues are decorated always with prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa are always given respect even by the great saintly persons and sages, and such devotees are actually worshipable by the demigods.

Skanda Purāṇa

Whoever knows Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without doubting, is the knower of everything. He therefore engages himself in full devotional service to Me, O son of Bharata.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 15.19

When the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa dance, their steps crush the inauspiciousness of the earth, their glances destroy the inauspiciousness of the ten directions, and their raised arms push away the inauspiciousness of the demigods' planets.

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 20.68

By scrutinizingly reviewing all the revealed scriptures and judging them again and again, it is now concluded that Lord Nārāyaṇa [Kṛṣṇa] is the Supreme Absolute Truth, and thus He alone should be worshiped.

*Skanda Purāṇa, Padma Purāṇa,
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All heads of state should themselves be bona fide representatives of God and should cut down all irreligious systems. Unfortunately they are cowards who declare a secular state. Such a mentality is a way of compromising religious and irreligious systems, but because of this citizens are generally becoming uninterested in spiritual advancement. Thus the situation deteriorates to such an extent that human society becomes hellish.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.19.26, Purport

Service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original nature of the individual spirit soul. Situated in that service, the individual soul is happy eternally. Rejecting that service, the individual soul becomes attracted to material illusions and suffers the threefold miseries of material life.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura
Śrī Datta-kaustubha, Text 29

In this Age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 17.22

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