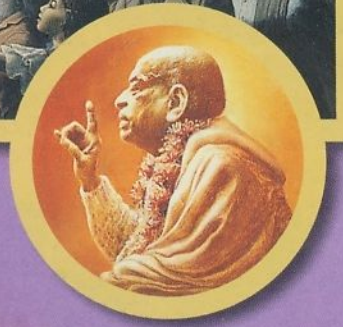


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • July/August 1999 • \$4.00/£4.50



Dharma
In the
Bhagavad
Gītā

Lessons
From a
Boy Saint

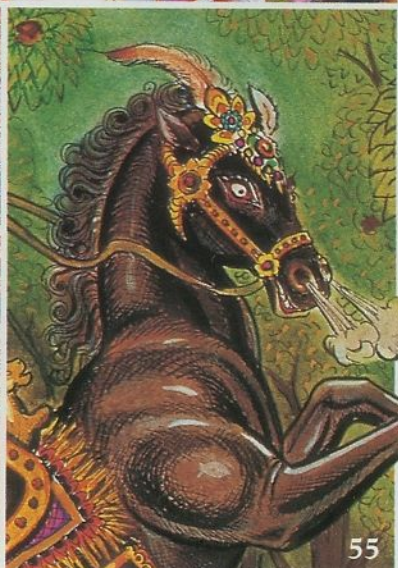
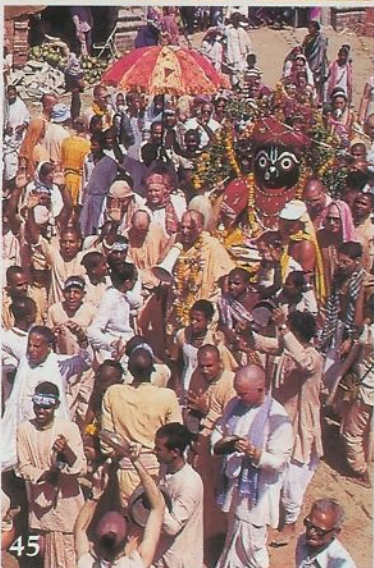
A Village Home for

THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 33, No. 4 • July/August 1999



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"Servant" Is a Good Word

COVER The Deity known as Jagannātha ("Lord of the universe") is a form of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, originally worshiped in Puri, India, and now all over the world. To read about Jagannātha's appearance in Bengal, please see the article beginning on page 45. (Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa.)

WELCOME



Do you ever find yourself wanting to see God, just to assure yourself He exists? We at *Back to Godhead* want to help you see God. That may sound presumptuous, but consider that

God, being omnipotent, can appear in ways we might not expect. We simply have to qualify ourselves to see Him.

Bhagavad-gītā, the foundation of India's spiritual culture for thousands of years, tells us that God repeatedly comes to this world to promote religion and favor His devotees. In this issue we hear how the Lord appeared thousands of years ago to a determined young prince. We read about an episode that took place during the Lord's appearance five hundred years ago as Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And we learn about a wonderful form of the Lord present on earth right now—the Deity known as Lord Jagannātha. Like thousands of other Deities worshiped around the world, He is available for all to see.

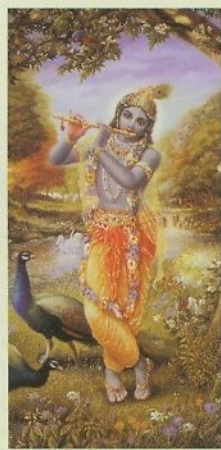
You might not at once accept that the Deity is God Himself. But there's more to seeing than reflected light and optic nerves. May *Back to Godhead* help you develop the purified vision to see God as He reveals Himself.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Nāgarāja Dāsa
Editor

OUR PURPOSES

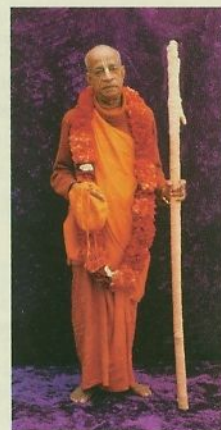
- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God 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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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta
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Letters

Safari Ready

I very much appreciated the article
“Ganga Safari” in your March/April
issue. It was like a documentary or
being there. The photographs were
brilliant. Great composition and per-
spective, particularly the long shots.
I would like to know if anyone can go
on that same boat tour, as I’m plan-
ning a trip to Vṛndāvana in the fall.

Vaikuṅṭha Dāsa
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Jayapatāka Swami is
planning to lead an excursion down
the Ganges, from Māyāpur to the sea,
during the upcoming month of
Kārttika (October 25–November 23).
For more information, contact Vidvān
Gaurāṅga Dāsa, Shree Mayapur
Chandrodaya Mandir, P. O. Box
10279, Ballyganj, Calcutta 700 019.
vidvan.gauranga.jps@com.bbt.se

The Basics of Womanhood

I very much appreciated Viśākhā
Devī’s article “What’s a Women to
Do?” [March/April] However, I’m
concerned about what might happen
if senior devotee women minister to
women in general by putting an em-
phasis on what they could do rather
than what tradition or scripture has
emphasized. The tendency, as I see it,
is that women no longer confined to
their traditional roles become ego-
centric, compete with men, fall into
promiscuity, and give up the modesty
and chastity of the Vedic women.
Viśākhā Devī was very to the point
about a woman always needing the
protection of a father, husband, or
son, and I have not overlooked that. I
just consider that if the senior women
in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness move-
ment are not mindful enough to teach
the younger generation about the
basics of womanhood, then we’ll
witness illegitimacy and divorce
unchecked.

Yogīndra Vandana Dāsa
Carriere, Mississippi, USA

VIŚĀKHĀ DEVĪ DĀSĪ REPLIES:

I agree that the senior women in the
Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should
teach—by their words and examples—
the basics of womanhood to the
younger generation. Those basics
include modesty and chastity, as you
indicate, as well as using their talents to
serve the Lord. These basics are not
contradictory or conflicting; it is simply
a matter of proper training and atti-
tude. If the women (or the men)
become egocentric and overly com-
petitive, that’s surely an indication of
improper training and attitude.

Hare Kṛṣṇa and Hinduism

I have read your magazine, and I have
enjoyed it. I wish to compliment you
on it. I have learned many of the Vaiṣ-
ṇava beliefs. However, I have a ques-
tion. Are there any Vaiṣṇava beliefs
(Hare Kṛṣṇa beliefs) that are different
from or contrary to Hindu beliefs?

VedicGer108
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: The problem here is in
defining “Hindu beliefs.” The word
Hindu itself comes from Persian
languages, not from the Sanskrit Vedic
scriptures upon which “Hinduism” is
based. So there is no part of the *Vedas*
that says, “A Hindu believes such and
such.” The word *Hindu* is not found
anywhere in the Vedic scriptures.

The Vedic scriptures are a vast body
of literature with great diversity of
presentations that suit a variety of
spiritual interests. According to schol-
ars, the absence of a commonly accept-
ed core belief system characterizes
Hinduism.

For these reasons it is sometimes
said that there are 900 million Hindus
and 900 million varieties of Hinduism.

Scholars of Hinduism generally
divide Hindus into two philosophical
groups: those who seek oneness with
an impersonal Supreme represented by
many Deities, and those who seek the
eternal service of a single, personal
God.

As Vaiṣṇavas, or devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, we are personalists. We chant Kṛṣṇa's names and pray for Him to accept our eternal service. We worship Kṛṣṇa's Deity form, recite and study Sanskrit scriptures, and observe sacred festivals with roots in the Vedic tradition. Such practices are common to virtually all those who consider themselves Hindus.

At the same time, since the scriptures say the soul is eternal and defies such designations, we do not consider ourselves "Hindus." The soul is not Hindu, Christian, or Jew. The soul is part of God. When the body dies, the soul lives on, rewarded according to the relationship one establishes in this life with Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In short, we are devotees of Kṛṣṇa, not Hindus. Yet we worship Kṛṣṇa side by side with millions who consider themselves Hindus. Scholars consider us part of that hard-to-define Hindu religion. We have no problem with either point of view.

Sometimes we see some ill-informed people claiming, out of sectarian concerns, that personalism is not Hinduism. In so doing, they defy not only the views of most scholars of Hinduism but also most Hindus, who easily relate to and take part in the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

BTG at the Gym

Your magazine has a broader appeal than you may think. The other day I took BTG with me to read while walking the treadmill at the local gym. After my walk, I left the BTG perched on the back of a weight machine while I lifted weights. During my thirty-minute program three people picked up the BTG and stood reading it for about five minutes each. Realizing it was mine, two of them asked me questions about local Kṛṣṇa conscious gatherings.

Just that morning I had been wondering if my plan to acquire land for Kṛṣṇa's Kauai temple was appropri-

ate and in line with Kṛṣṇa's plan. I found the interest in the BTG during that thirty minutes very encouraging.

Melissa Shaw
Hanalei, Hawaii

Guiding Light

I immensely enjoy reading your marvelous magazine. It is enlightening and spiritual. Thank you for bringing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to this demonism stricken world. May Lord Kṛṣṇa always be your guiding light.

Michael Boruch
Via the Internet

Do You Value Life?

I have just started to read "The Song of God: Bhagavad-gītā," translated by Christopher Isherwood. On page 36 Śrī Kṛṣṇa says all this great stuff about why Arjuna should fight. But then I am wondering: once you find out about all this great wisdom, do you still value life?

D. C. Stryk
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: It's extremely important that you read an edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā* translated by someone who has realized its teachings. We suggest you get a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

One who follows Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings certainly values life. You seem concerned that Kṛṣṇa is inciting Arjuna to kill on the battlefield. As Prabhupāda explains in his *Gītā* commentary, sometimes violence is necessary for the upkeep of society. He gives the example of a surgeon, who has to cut the patient—apparently a violent act—for the patient's benefit. To commit violence whimsically or for one's selfish interests is a grievous wrong, but Arjuna was being guided by the Lord Himself, who, as we see later in the *Gītā*, gives and takes
(please turn to page 30)

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 **r** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **c** 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

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

Take Perfect Know



Painting by Bharadvaja Dasa

ledge from Kṛṣṇa



*“By education you prepare for the future.
But how are you preparing for the next life?”*

Adapted from a lecture given in Bombay, India, on March 21, 1974, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*śrī bhagavān uvāca
imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ
proktavān aham avyayam
vivasvān mānave prāha
manur ikṣvākuve 'bravit*

The Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.

• • •

TODAY WE ARE speaking on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. This preliminary study of the science of Godhead was originally spoken by Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The word *bhagavān* comes from the word *bhaga*, which we know here in India as *bhāgya*, or “opulence” and “fortune.” An opulent person is called *bhāgyavān*.

Bhaga especially refers to six opulences: wealth, strength, fame, knowledge, beauty, and renunciation. These opulences make a person attractive. A wealthy person is attractive. Similarly, if a person is very strong or influential or learned or beautiful, others are attracted. Or if a person has renounced everything for the public's benefit, naturally we have some attraction. So in the material world we find some wealthy and famous people, some strong man,

some beautiful woman, some wise and renounced persons, but they possess only a fragment, or a small quantity, of these opulences.

Take a rich man. He may be very rich in comparison to other people in the world, but he cannot claim, “I have all the wealth.” No one can claim that. And no one claims, “I am the wisest man.” No one can even claim, “I am the strongest man,” because however strong he may be, he is under the laws of material nature and cannot go beyond that. Therefore we cannot find any supreme person, or *bhagavān*, possessing all these opulences. That is not possible.

But here it is said, *bhagavān uvāca*: “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” That means He, Kṛṣṇa, is the richest, the strongest, the most beautiful, the wisest, the most famous, and the most renounced. When Kṛṣṇa was present in the material world, He proved His supremacy by His actions. Therefore we take lessons from Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the all-perfect. What will be accomplished by hearing from this rascal or that rascal? Try to hear from the perfect Supreme Personality, without any deviation.

There are four kinds of defects in conditioned life: making mistakes, being illusioned, cheating, and acting with imperfect senses. We are all infected with these four deficiencies. That is the material condition of life. Therefore unless one is liberated from these

At left: Arjuna praises Lord Kṛṣṇa as the supreme truth, the supreme abode, and the supreme purifier, and accepts Him as the source of perfect knowledge.

People do not know whether there is a next life or not. There is no education on that point.

defects, he cannot give you perfect knowledge. That is not possible.

With imperfect senses, how can someone gather perfect knowledge? He can simply say, “perhaps,” “it may be,” “most probably,” that’s all—theories. Nobody can say, “It is like this.”

But the *Vedas* give perfect knowledge. For example, the *Vedas* say exactly how many varieties of life forms there are: nine hundred thousand varieties of life in the water, two million types of trees and plants, eleven hundred thousand types of insects, one million types of birds, three million types of animals, and four hundred thousand types of humankind. Everything is exactly calculated. That is Vedic knowledge.

Here Kṛṣṇa says that the knowledge He is giving is perfect. If you want perfect knowledge, you have to hear from Kṛṣṇa. *Bhagavān uvāca*: “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” *Bhagavān* means “the supremely wise, the most powerful, most influential, most beautiful, most learned, most renounced.”

Just see Bhagavān’s renunciation! If we construct a building, we become attached to it, but Kṛṣṇa has constructed the whole universe and still He does not claim it for Himself. Actually, we have practically no idea what the universe is. We tried to go to the moon, but we have no exact idea even of the moon. And there are innumerable heavenly bodies. Each is of a different type, with a different climate, different facilities, and different standards of life. You cannot even count all the planets. And this is only one universe. There are millions of universes.

So Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, is the creator of all these universes. Still, He does not come here, except occasionally. And He does not claim them for Himself. He has given them to you to use:

“You wanted to enjoy the material world. All right, I give it to you. Enjoy.”

MISSING EDUCATION

Beginning from Brahmā, the engineer of the universe, down to the ant, we living entities are enjoying. We create the fruits of our activity, and therefore we get another body: sometimes the ant’s body, sometimes Brahmā’s body, sometimes a cat’s body, sometimes an American body, sometimes an Indian body, sometimes a monkey’s body. In this way we are wandering all over the universe.

One who is wise, learned, should try to understand how to get out of the cycle of repeated birth and death. We may now have an American body or an Indian body, but what will the next life be? That point people do not know. By education you prepare for the future. But how are you preparing for the next life? People do not know whether there is a next life or not. There is no education on that point.

We are such fools that we do not know about the next life. Therefore we have to hear from the perfect person, Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa says, *dehino ’smin yathā dehe kaumāraṇi yauvanāṇi jarā/ tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*: “As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death.” This is the beginning of spiritual education—*dehāntara-prāptiḥ*: we have to change this body, transmigrate from this body to another body. No university teaches how the soul is transferred from one body to another, or what kind of body we are going to get next. There is no such science taught nowadays. But transmigration is the real problem of human life. Therefore we have to hear

from Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, the Supreme—who can give us perfect knowledge.

Kṛṣṇa is so kind He comes personally and gives instruction and He leaves the instruction recorded. Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna, and Sañjaya recorded it, by the grace of Vyāsadeva, Sañjaya’s spiritual master.

Then Vyāsadeva put the conversation in the *Mahābhārata*. Formerly the whole planet was called Bhārata, or Bhāratavarṣa, and the history of the planet is called the *Mahābhārata*. In the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is set, for the information of all human beings.

Bhagavad-gītā is not meant only for Hindus, Indians, or *brāhmaṇas*. No. It is meant for everyone. Take perfect knowledge from Kṛṣṇa and be happy. If you want to become happy, then accept Kṛṣṇa’s instruction.

Try not to deviate—to interpret the *Bhagavad-gītā* in your own whimsical way. Rascals do that. Simply try to understand what Kṛṣṇa says. That’s all. Then your life will be perfect. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, “Try to understand the *Bhagavad-gītā* according to the process by which I gave it.”

What is that process? *Imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān aham avyayam*: “I first spoke this science to the sun-god, Vivasvān.” No one, including so-called scientists and philosophers, knows what is in the sun. But it is possible to talk with the sun-god personally, provided you become qualified by Kṛṣṇa’s grace. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He can go anywhere. It is not that because the sun is a fiery planet, Kṛṣṇa cannot go there.

The bodies on the sun are made of fire. Just as here the bodies are made of earth, there are places where the bodies are made of water or of fire. Space,

earth, water, fire, air—these are all material things. So I have a suitable body to live on this earthly planet. The fish has a body to live in the water. You cannot live in the water. The fish cannot live on the land. That does not mean it is impossible to live in the water. Similarly, because you cannot live in the fire, that does not mean it is impossible for others. To think it is impossible is foolishness. The sun planet is made of fire, and those who have fiery bodies can live there.

The atmosphere is different on every planet, just as the atmosphere in the water is different from the atmosphere on the land. But we know there are living entities within the water, on the land, in the air, in the earth, in the sky. Everywhere there is life. The bodies are different, but the spirit soul—the life force—is the same. Your spirit soul and my spirit soul are the same. But your body is called an American body, and my body is called an Indian body. That is the difference. Our bodies are like different dresses for the soul.

THE ESSENTIAL LESSON

So the first spiritual lesson is this: “I am not this body.” Then spiritual knowledge begins. Otherwise there is no possibility of spiritual knowledge. One who thinks, “I am this body,” is a rascal, an animal. That’s all. This rascal animalism is going on all over the world. “I am American,” “I am Indian.” You have to go above this. Then there is spiritual knowledge. That is bhakti-yoga.

Only by bhakti-yoga can you come to the spiritual platform. Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the greatest teacher of bhakti-yoga, expressed our spiritual identity when He said, “I have nothing to do with any designations related to the body. I am an eternal soul, an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.” That is our identity. We are all eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. The servants who have rebelled against Kṛṣṇa have come to the material world. To reclaim these servants, Kṛṣṇa comes. He’s so kind.

So let us take advantage of Kṛṣṇa’s coming here and leaving behind the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Let us read it perfectly and make our life perfect.

Thank you very much. ☀

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Taking Kṛṣṇa Personally

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

MOST PEOPLE READING this magazine understand, at least theoretically, that Kṛṣṇa is God and we are His servants. Many of us have learned to be pessimistic about achieving material happiness and optimistic about attaining spiritual happiness. We aspire to attain Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and serve Him personally. He whose names we have chanted, whose activities we have praised, whose form we have worshiped, to whom we have offered countless obeisances—that all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we know, can become ours if we develop pure love of God. If we are neophytes in spiritual life, we know that the first step is to dovetail our desires by offering our work to Kṛṣṇa.

What we are looking for is a personal exchange with Kṛṣṇa. We have heard that there is a direct relationship between our Kṛṣṇa conscious practices and our receipt of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Therefore, we strive for sincerity, to act properly, to chant purely, to understand what it means to be a devotee—and we do all this for years. We wait expectantly, hat in hand, for Kṛṣṇa to appear.

But He doesn't. Kṛṣṇa does not appear on demand but only by His own sweet will. No mechanical process—no yoga, no rote prayers, no mantras—can induce the Lord to appear.

Perhaps as the years pass we feel our patience wearing thin. When will we see Him? What does it actually take to induce Him to appear? And we feel the weight of life in this world. Our children are growing and need our attention, our careers are pulling at us, and while we wait for Kṛṣṇa, we find it necessary to tend to

these concerns. Our initial fervor wavers under the double demand of patience and a busy life. Sometimes we adjust our aspirations and learn to settle for a distant relationship with Kṛṣṇa. The edge on our spiritual hankering softens. We stop taking Kṛṣṇa so personally.

Fortunately, Kṛṣṇa doesn't stop taking us personally. Rather, He feels obliged to help us come to the point of perfect love. Kṛṣṇa takes the devotees under His care providing them with life experiences by which they can learn to evoke their love of God.

If Kṛṣṇa takes us so personally, then we should reciprocate by following His lead. Hearing the *Bhāgavatam*, chanting the holy name, and associating with pure devotees are essential activities for those who wish to hone their spiritual desires. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "By sincere efforts to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* one realizes his constitutional relationship with the Lord in the transcendental humor . . . and by such self-realization one becomes situated at once in the transcendental service of the Lord. . . . By such actions the accumulated material lusts, etc., become cleansed by the personal endeavor of the Lord within the heart. The Lord is always within the heart of the living being, but He becomes manifest by one's devotional service." (*Bhāg.* 2.8.5, Purport)

All devotees want to see Kṛṣṇa. Although Kṛṣṇa's appearance before a devotee may be reserved for top-most lovers of God, beginners who see the Lord acting in their lives can maintain the enthusiasm to penetrate into His presence. Hearing how great devotees succeeded in this

attempt can also inspire us with confidence.

Kṛṣṇa tells us in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pṛthā." (Bg. 4.11). Every soul has a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, although not all souls recognize that fact. For those who do, Kṛṣṇa personally comes forward to reciprocate. How Kṛṣṇa reciprocates is not within our control. His response to our prayers will take a course perfectly designed to increase our love for Him. In a famous story of the devotee Nārada Muni, Kṛṣṇa appeared before him and then chose to disappear. Kṛṣṇa wanted to increase Nārada's hankering for Him. That hankering burns off the dross separating the devotees from their own pure love of God. Therefore, however Kṛṣṇa chooses to respond, devotees are satisfied. They know they have the Lord's personal attention.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a mere exercise in spirituality; its practice is intensely relevant to our condition. We are meant to take Kṛṣṇa personally. Our predicament in the material world is really a predicament; devotional service really is the only means of deliverance. The goal of love of Kṛṣṇa is really within our reach. We can choose to see these truths from an academic distance, or we can live them in our lives subjectively and with the faith that Kṛṣṇa is always present before us in one way or another.

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



Clean Clear Through

by Ravi Gupta

MY FATHER remembers his grandmother's cleanliness in the kitchen. She would set up a traditional stove on the floor, and when she cooked there was an understood line around the area, which no family member could cross without taking a shower. She had a special sari she would wear only while cooking. And after every meal, she'd wash and scrub the entire kitchen.

Practices such as this are familiar to almost every Indian. In every sphere of life Indians traditionally followed different rules and regulations to ensure cleanliness.

From the bathroom to the temple, the Vedic culture's standards of cleanliness are demanding. Even the local health department would endorse the Vedic rules of cleanliness; they're excellent measures for controlling disease and maintaining health. But the *Vedas* themselves have a larger purpose in prescribing these standards of cleanliness: to make ourselves fit to approach God.

India's original culture is a spiritual culture, and spiritual life depends on cleanliness. Cleanliness is one of the four pillars of religion and the chief quality of a *brāhmaṇa*. As the common saying goes, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Or, as Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "Unless we are clean, unless we are pure, how we can approach the Supreme?"

Even to this day, people in the villages of India follow a routine of cleanliness and spiritual life. Prabhupāda describes, "In India, especially in the villages, you'll find cleanliness. [The villager has] one cloth, . . . but that one cloth is washed daily. And early in the morning, even in chilly cold, they will take bath, taking water

from the well, . . . then go to some temple and see *maṅgala-ārati* [early-morning worship]. Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Ring the bells. . . In the shops also, they'll cleanse everything very nicely. Even the weighing scale they will wash every day."

But as the spiritual focus in life diminishes, so does the level of cleanliness. Many Indian families are now giving up these habits as outdated, in favor of a more Western way of life. Instead of getting up in the morning and showering at once, people get up and head to the kitchen for tea and breakfast. Cooks routinely taste food while cooking, and mix dishes used for eating with those used for cooking. People forget to wash their mouths after eating, and don't shower after evacuating. All these habits make a person *mucī*, or unclean.

When life has a spiritual focus the regulations for cleanliness become natural and enjoyable. We'll want to take a shower after rising, so we can go to the temple and present ourselves before the Deity. We'll automatically refrain from tasting food while cooking, because we know we're cooking for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. And we'll naturally keep our home clean, making it an inviting place for the Lord to reside.

To approach Kṛṣṇa, however, external cleanliness is not enough. "If you remain unclean within the heart," Prabhupāda says, "simply washing your external body and cleansing your cloth is not complete cleanliness. That may be called hygienic. But real cleanliness is internal and external." After all, how can we approach Kṛṣṇa, the purest, when we have things like lust, avarice, and envy in our hearts?

To clean the heart there is a simple, one-step process: chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka* prayers, "Glory to the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of material life." The holy name of the Lord is the best cleansing agent for all unwanted desires in the heart.

Before worshiping Deities of the Lord, devotees often chant this verse from the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*:

*apavitraḥ pavitro vā
sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣaṇi
sa bāhyābhyantare śuciḥ*

"Whether one is pure or contaminated, and regardless of one's external situation, simply by remembering the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead one can internally and externally cleanse one's existence." The holy names make one fit to approach the Lord.

And what is the ultimate benefit of cleanliness? We can become qualified to go back home, back to Godhead. Prabhupāda says, "By following this principle of cleanliness, it will one day be possible to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face."

So while we wash the dishes and mop the floor, let us chant: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Ravi Gupta turned seventeen in April. In May he graduated from Boise State University with a B.A. in mathematics and philosophy. He'll now attend Oxford University in England for his post-graduate studies.

QA on the & GĪTĀ

Compiled by Krishan B. Lal



Detail from a painting by Rāmanātha Dasa

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna sound their conchshells at the beginning of the Battle of Kurukṣetra.

PART 2

The Gītā, or Bhagavad-gītā (“The Song of God”), was spoken five thousand years ago by Lord Kṛṣṇa to the prince Arjuna. It contains the essence of Vedic knowledge.

The compiler has applied a question-and-answer format to the Introduction to Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

For what purpose did Lord Kṛṣṇa speak *Bhagavad-gītā*?

The purpose of *Bhagavad-gītā* is to deliver humankind from the ignorance of material existence. Everyone is in difficulty in so many ways, as was Arjuna in having to fight the Battle of Kurukṣetra. Every one of us is full of anxieties because of this material existence. In the material world we are caught in the repeated cycle of birth and death. Thus our very existence remains in constant jeopardy in the atmosphere of non-existence. Actually we are not meant to be threatened by nonexistence. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā* our existence is eternal. But somehow or other we are put into *asat*. *Asat* refers to that which does not exist.

What distinguishes human beings from animals?

In this world, human beings are not meant for quarreling like cats and dogs. Human beings must be intelligent to realize the importance of human life and refuse to act like ordinary animals. A human being should realize the aim of life. This direction is given in all Vedic literature, and the essence is given in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Vedic literature is meant for human beings, not for other forms of life. Out of so many human beings who are suffering, there are a few who are actually inquiring about their position, as to what they are, why they are put into this awkward position, and so on. Unless a person is awakened to questioning his suffer-

ing, unless he realizes that he doesn't want suffering but rather wants to make a solution to all suffering, then he is not to be considered a perfect human being.

Humanity begins when this sort of inquiry is awakened in one's mind. Every activity of the human being is to be considered a failure unless he inquires about the nature of the Absolute.

Who is the proper student of the *Gītā*?

Those who begin to question why they are suffering or where they came from and where they shall go after death are proper students for understanding *Bhagavad-gītā*. The sincere student should also have a firm respect for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such a student was Arjuna.

What subject does the *Bhagavad-gītā* cover?

The subject of *Bhagavad-gītā* entails the comprehension of five basic truths: the science of God, the constitutional position of the living entities (*jīvas*), material nature (*prakṛti*), time (*kāla*), and activity (*karma*).

Who does the *Bhagavad-gītā* say is God?

Bhagavad-gītā establishes that the Supreme Godhead is Kṛṣṇa. He is the supreme controller, the greatest of all. No one is greater than Him or equal to Him.

Who is controlling nature?

Bhagavad-gītā explains that the Lord has control over the universal affairs of material nature. Material nature is not independent. She is acting under the directions of the Supreme Lord. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram*: “The material nature is working under My direction.”

When we see wonderful things happening in the cosmic nature, we should know that behind this cosmic manifestation there is a controller. Nothing could be manifested without

When we see wonderful things happening in the cosmic nature, we should know that behind it is a controller. Nothing could be manifest without being controlled.

being controlled. It is childish not to consider the controller. For instance, a child may think that an automobile is quite wonderful to be able to run without a horse or other animal pulling it, but a sane person knows the nature of the automobile's engineering arrangement. He always knows that behind the machinery there is a person, a driver. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is the driver under whose direction everything is working.

How does Arjuna describe Kṛṣṇa as God?

The manner of Arjuna's acceptance of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is given in the Tenth Chapter (10.12–14) of *Bhagavad-gītā*: “Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest, the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn, the greatest. All the great sages such as Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyāsa confirm this truth about You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me. O Kṛṣṇa, I totally accept as truth all that You have told me. Neither the demigods nor the demons, O Lord,

can understand Your personality.”

After hearing the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Brahman. Every living being is Brahman, or spirit, but the supreme living being, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the Supreme Brahman.

How does Arjuna support his claim that Kṛṣṇa is God?

One may think that because Kṛṣṇa was the friend of Arjuna, Arjuna was calling Him God by way of flattery. But Arjuna, just to drive out this kind of doubt from the minds of the readers of *Bhagavad-gītā*, substantiates these praises when he says that Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead not only by himself but by authorities like Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyāsadeva. These are great personalities who distribute the Vedic knowledge as it is accepted by all great teachers in the Vedic tradition. Therefore Arjuna tells Kṛṣṇa that he accepts whatever He says to be completely perfect.

Does God have a form and personality, or is God formless or void?

Bhagavad-gītā explains that God is the complete whole, and all manifes-

tations are due to His different energies. The complete whole comprises the supreme controller, the controlled living entities, the cosmic manifestation, eternal time, and karma, or activities, and all of these are explained in the *Gītā*. All of these taken completely form the complete whole, and the complete whole is called the Supreme Absolute Truth. The complete whole and the complete Absolute Truth are the complete Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All manifestations are due to His different energies. He is the complete whole.

People with insufficient intelligence consider the Supreme Truth to be impersonal, but He is a transcendental person. This is confirmed throughout the Vedic literature. As we are all individual living beings, the Supreme Absolute Truth is also, in the ultimate issue, a person, and realization of the Personality of Godhead is realization of all of the transcendental features in His complete form. The complete whole is not formless. If He were formless, or if He were less than any other thing, then He could not be the complete whole. The complete whole must have everything within and beyond our experience.

What does Lord Kṛṣṇa say in the *Gītā* about demigod worship?

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, worship of demigods or rendering service to them is not approved. Verse twenty of the seventh chapter states: “Those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures.” Here it is plainly said that those who are directed by lust worship the demigods and not the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Lord Kṛṣṇa descended to the material world to show His pastimes in Vṛndāvana, He even discouraged His father Nanda Mahārāja from worshipping the demigod Indra, because He wanted to teach that people need not worship any demigod. They need only worship the Supreme Lord, because their ultimate goal is to return to His abode.

Do we own anything?

The Lord is *pūrṇam*, all-perfect, and there is no possibility of His becoming subjected to the laws of material nature. One should therefore be intelligent enough to know that the Lord is the only proprietor of everything in the universe and that He is the original creator—the creator of Brahmā, who is ordinarily understood to be the creator of the universe. In the eleventh chapter Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *prapitāmaha* because Brahmā is addressed as *pitāmaha*, the grandfather, and Kṛṣṇa is the creator of the grandfather.

So no one should claim to be proprietor of anything; one should accept only things set aside for him by the Lord as his quota for his maintenance.

There are many examples of how we are to use those things set aside for us by the Lord. This point is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*. For example, animals can kill other living animals, and there is no question of sin on their part, but if a man kills an animal for the satisfaction of his uncontrolled taste, he must be responsible for breaking the laws of nature. ❀

(continued in the next issue)

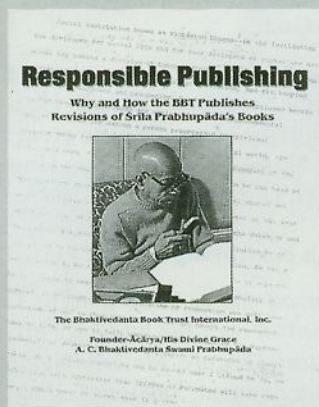
Krishan B. Lal, an ISKCON Life Member, is retired and lives in Huntington Beach, California.

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“Your Leaders Are Thinking Like Cats and Dogs”

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now it is our choice: “Am I going to get a dog’s body or a god’s body?” That choice you can make. That is the meaning of having the human form of body. A dog cannot choose to elevate himself in his next life. He has no such discriminatory power. But you can do that. So if you do not do that, then you are missing your real opportunity. *Yānti deva-vratā devān piṭṛn yānti piṭṛ-vratāḥ:* “Those who worship the demigods will go to the planets of the demigods. Those who worship Me will come to My abode.” This is what Kṛṣṇa assures us in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Anywhere you like you can go. So you must use the human form of body properly.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, does the government also have the responsibility to protect people from having to take a dog body?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. That is the government’s duty—to see that the citizens do not degrade themselves. For example, a responsible father thinks, “Now these children are under my protection. So I must see that they get a proper education and make advancement in their lives.” This is the father’s duty. Of course, today the father thinks, “Let them go to hell.” That’s all. Today fathers are acting in that way. Nevertheless, their duty still remains.

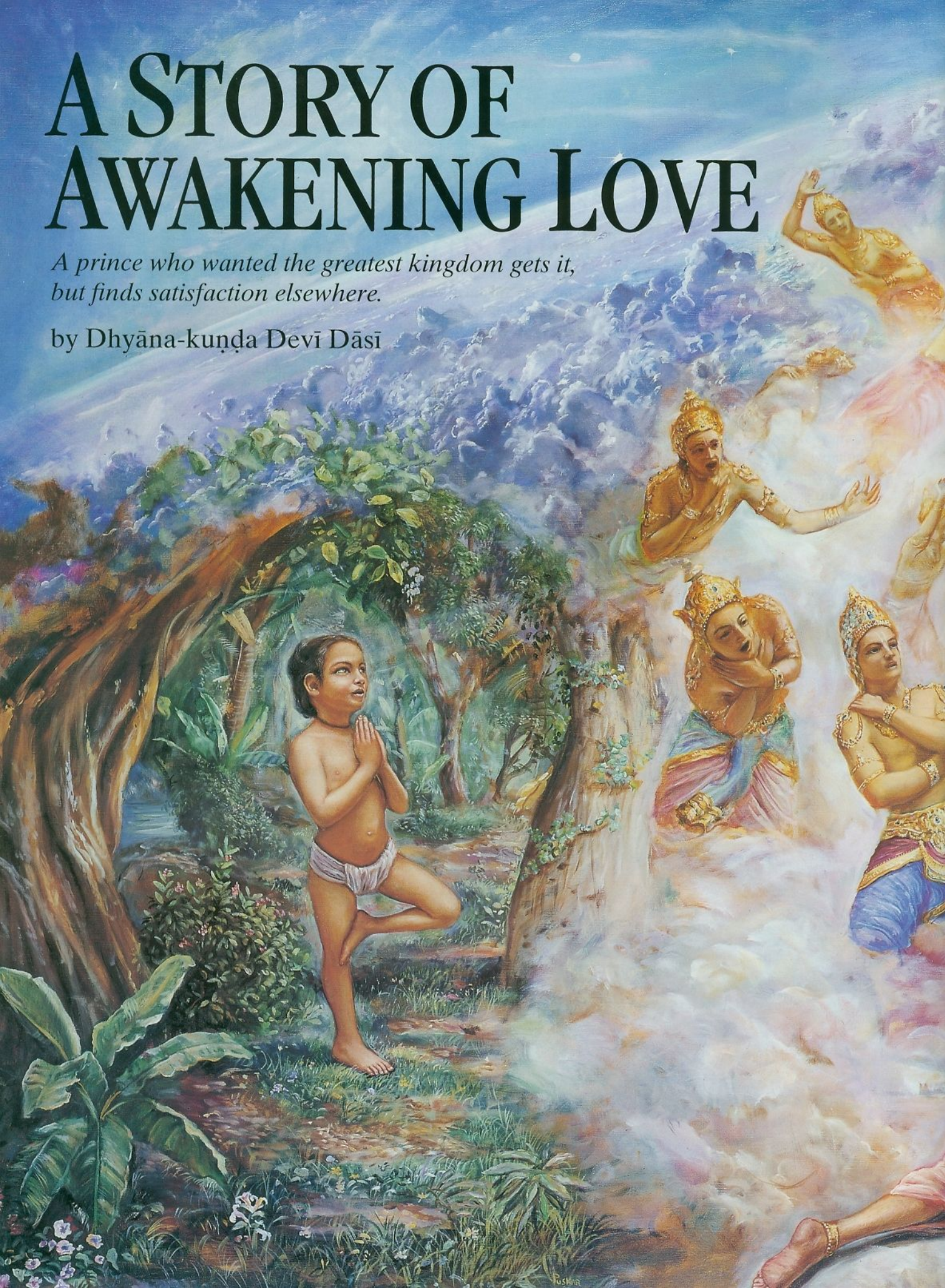
Similarly, the government’s duty is to see that the citizen makes progress. Unfortunately, your modern government leaders do not know what is meant by progress—what is the real aim of human life. They do not know. So how will they guide? They think, like cats and dogs, “If you can eat more and more, then your life is successful.” Their thinking is very poor. Simply physical strength—they think that is success. They do not reflect that the elephant has so much physical strength, the tiger has so much physical strength, but what is the meaning of their lives? What

(please turn to page 36)

A STORY OF AWAKENING LOVE

*A prince who wanted the greatest kingdom gets it,
but finds satisfaction elsewhere.*

by Dhyāna-kunḍa Devī Dāsī





ONE OF THE most touching histories in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* comes in the Fourth Canto. It concerns the little prince Dhruva and his great adventure, and it contains many lessons about love.

Dhruva was five years old when he left home for the forest in search of God. Some people he met on the way tried to persuade him to go back.

“It’s certainly glorious to search for God,” they said, “but aren’t you too young for such a serious undertaking? And isn’t God everywhere anyway? Why do you have to go to the wild jungle full of ferocious animals?”

Dhruva was not sure why. But he had heard that great sages who wished to find the Supreme Lord would leave home and go to the forest. Apparently, that was the thing to do. If God was really there, Dhruva would surely find Him.

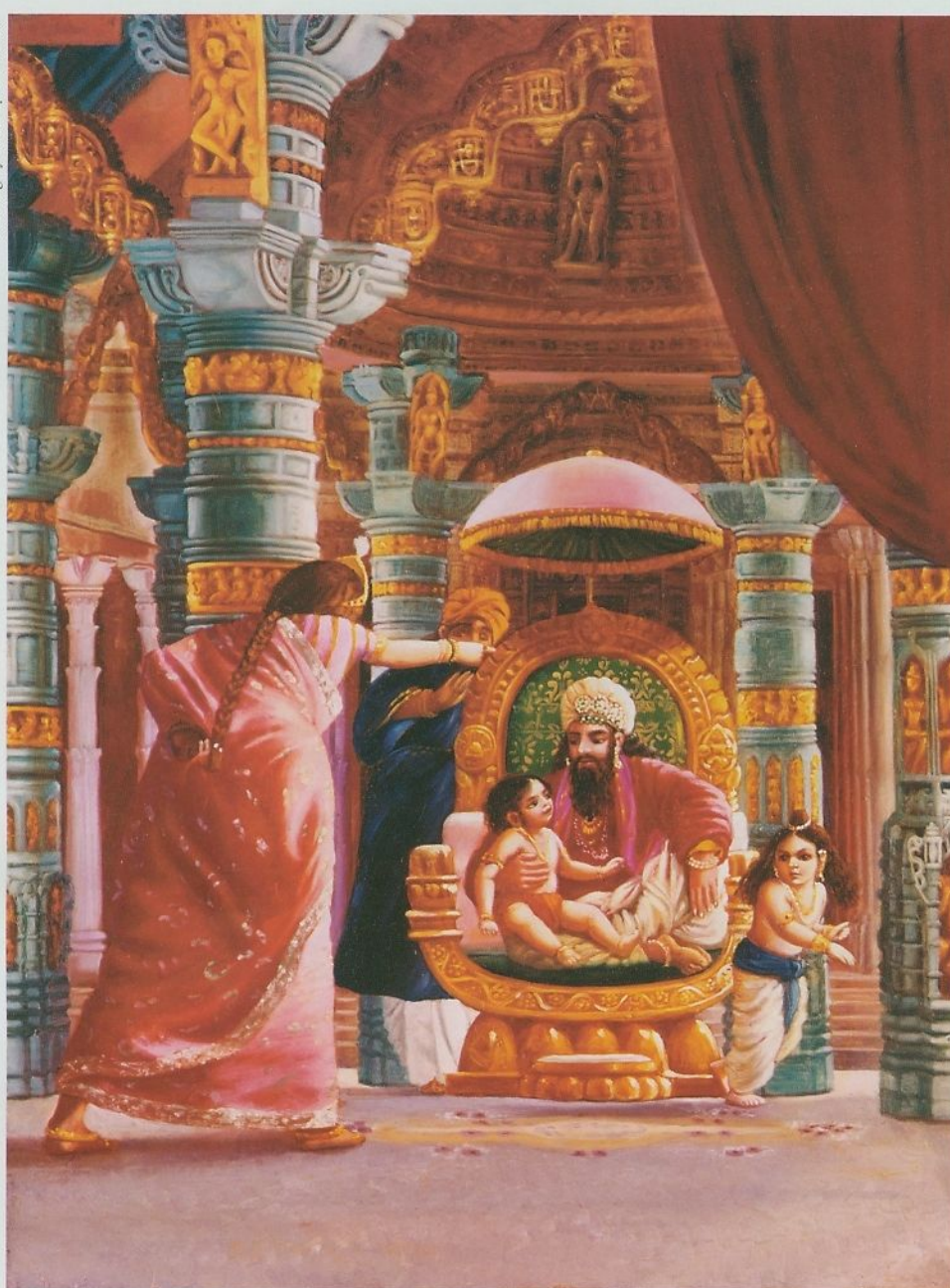
What does God look like? The little prince didn’t know that exactly either. One thing he knew: God was the only person who could fulfill his secret desire. For this Dhruva had the word of his mother. She prayed to God every day, so she certainly knew what she was talking about.

Dhruva’s story has a happy ending. He meets Nārada Muṇi, a spiritual teacher, who tells him how to reach God through devotion. All alone in the jungle, the boy undergoes spiritual disciplines with determination that truly gives justice to the meaning of his name: “persevering.” Tigers and jackals spare Dhruva. And not only does he survive, but he meets Kṛṣṇa’s expansion Lord Viṣṇu face to face and ultimately becomes famous as one of the greatest devotees of his time. He gets his secret desire fulfilled, too. That’s the story’s glorious ending. But the beginning is sad.

A STEPMOTHER’S CRUEL WORDS

Dhruva’s father, King Uttānapāda, had two wives, Suniti and Suruci. Suniti was Dhruva’s mother, and Suruci was

When Dhruva’s powerful austerities stop the breathing of beings throughout the universe, demigods approach Lord Viṣṇu for relief.



Dhruva is enraged when his stepmother forbids him to sit on his father's lap.

Uttama's. The boys played together, and they equally had their father's heart, unlike their mothers. The king neglected Suniti, not even allowing her near him, while Suruci was his favorite—maybe because of her beauty. She was beautiful. But she was jealous too.

Once, the king was sitting on the throne with Uttama on his lap, patting him affectionately. Dhruva too wanted to get on his father's lap, but Suruci didn't like the idea.

"No, you can't sit on the king's seat," she said. "You may be the king's son,

but that's not enough. You would have to be *my* son as well. And this, my dear boy, you can achieve only by worshipping the Supreme Lord. If He is pleased with you, He may grant you the precious boon of taking your next birth from my womb."

She had said, "My dear boy," but her words hit Dhruva like a stick. She wished him to die! His body stiffened. Breathless, he turned to his father. But the king looked away, at Suruci, his beautiful queen. Dhruva turned around and ran to his mother.

What could Suniti do, other than cry with her little son?

"Your stepmother is right," Suniti said. "Your father does not consider me his wife anymore. She is right, too, in telling you to worship the Supreme Lord. If you wish to sit on the same throne as your stepbrother Uttama, don't be envious of him. Just turn to the Supreme Lord. By worshipping Him you can achieve things never dreamed of by those who put their faith in demigods. My son, just worship the Lord. I do not find anyone else who can ease your distress."

Dhruva made up his mind. He would go to the forest, find God, and tell Him, "My dear God, I am the king's son, but I will not be the heir to the throne. Please make me a king greater than my father. I want to have a kingdom like no one ever had. If You are satisfied with my worship, please grant me this desire."

VISION IN THE FOREST

Dhruva knew finding God would be difficult, but he was determined. Alone in the forest, he practiced yoga for concentration, chanted a mantra he received from Nārada, and meditated on the Lord dwelling in the heart.

Six months passed. One day, as Dhruva entered meditation and fixed his inner vision on Lord Viṣṇu, the image he had already grown

accustomed to contemplating disappeared suddenly. Dhruva's concentration broke. He opened his eyes and saw Lord Viṣṇu standing before him. The Lord looked exactly like the form Nārada had described to him. Dhruva had so often contemplated that form in his heart—majestic, four-armed, adorned with all the insignia of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His whole form brilliant like lightning.

This time, however, Dhruva's eyes were wide open, and before him was not an image in the mind but a living

person, smiling at Dhruva. Overwhelmed, the boy fell to Lord Viṣṇu's feet. Even while lying flat on the ground, he could not take his eyes off the Lord.

Pleased with Dhruva, the Lord asked whether he had any wish to fulfill. Everything was going as Dhruva had hoped. His impossible goal was now within reach.

CLASSICAL CONFLICT

Before we hear Dhruva's reply, let's go back to the scene with Dhruva's being forbidden to join Uttama on the king's lap. Both the story and the conflict are classical. On one side: the father, the stepmother, and the "good son"; on the other: the unwanted son,

excluded from the love and happiness these three are sharing.

But are King Uttānapāda, Suruci, and Uttama really sharing love and happiness? No. None of them is really happy, and all three have reasons to feel insecure.

Suruci will feel safe in the king's devotion only as long as she has the youthful charm of her body. She fears she'll suffer Sunīti's fate and lose the king's affections.

The king, although fond of both his sons, can't risk losing Suruci's favor. He may rule everyone in the kingdom, but in Suruci's hands he's a pet. She denied her favor to Dhruva and didn't care about crushing the boy's heart. The king might be thinking, "Suruci, my

tender one, would you be able to do this to me?"

Finally, Uttama is too small to understand what's going on. All he knows is that he was playing on his father's lap and his brother Dhruva was punished for trying to do the same. Glad that he has been spared, and feeling special, he nevertheless fails to see Dhruva's fault. "If neither of us did anything bad and he got punished this time, will I be the one next time? Daddy?"

None of these three persons is receiving real love, which is selfless, unconditional, and free-flowing. Fortunate are those who know love early in life and learn the joy of sharing it. Most people offer and receive things like sex, wealth, and power in the name of love. And along with that kind of "love" come lust, anger, greed, envy, illusion, and madness. The six enemies of the self, the Vedic teachers call them. And, in the background, there's fear. For example, Suruci is fearful because of material attachments. As Dhruva climbs onto his father's lap, she sees him not as an innocent child but as her son's rival trying to seize the throne.

People who really love do not fear losing anything material. Nor do they feel wanting; they're self-satisfied. They may be married or alone, beggars or kings, but they're free. Sex, wealth, power, or anything material holds no sway over them.

What about Dhruva's quest for love? In anger, he risks his life to gain a kingdom greater than his father's. A whole planet to rule will surely be a fair compensation for a place on his father's lap.

Like Dhruva's family, in seeking love we hurt and push away one another. Sad are the ways of love in the world of matter.

Saddest of all is losing even the hope that real love exists. Our unfulfilled dreams for the perfect father, mother, lover, and friend make us think that God—the supreme perfect lover—can't exist either.

Dhruva was lucky. The force of his frustration, channeled into spiritual practice by the advice of his mother and his spiritual teacher, Nārada Muni, carried him beyond the world of fear. On meeting Lord Viṣṇu face to face, Dhruva found not only the love he



Nārada Muni teaches Dhruva mystic devotional meditation and then reports to the king.



Moved by transcendental ecstasy upon seeing the Lord (accompanied by His bird-carrier, Garuda), Dhruva falls to the ground in love of God.

Dhruva said, "I was searching for a piece of broken glass, but instead I have found a most valuable jewel."



had lost but his own capacity to give love in the same way. Loving is his nature, as it is for all of us. He had forgotten that, just as every living being does when turning away from God and His love. But Dhruva's original nature had never changed. And that loving nature is the same in every living being. It seeks expression. It motivates one to search. It doesn't allow one to feel satisfied with the ordinary, the temporary, the limited. Dhruva was satisfied only when he found the unlimited.

DHRUVA'S REPLY

Throughout all the risks he took and austerities he performed, Dhruva believed his heart's desire was to gain the kingdom. What could he be more sure of than his own heart? Yet Dhruva discovered he'd been wrong. When he finally got up from the ground, he addressed Lord Viṣṇu with a prayer. His words, coming from the heart, were different than those he had prepared. To this day, devotees of Lord Viṣṇu repeat Dhruva's spontaneous prayer, which captures both his surprise with himself and his overwhelming joy.

"O my Lord," said Dhruva, "I wanted to be a great king and was performing severe austerities so that You would grant me this desire. Now I have gotten You, who are very difficult even for the demigods, saints, and kings to attain. I was searching for a piece of broken glass, but instead I have found a most valuable jewel. I am completely satisfied, and I do not wish to ask You for anything."

LOVE EXPANDS

Love for God is not for God alone. It does not diminish the affection we feel for others. It deepens affection because we are able to love others not

for external things like their body, not for anything they give us, and not only as long as they fulfill their part of the contract. A pure devotee, who has developed his loving relationship with God, can see beyond others' material conditioning, beyond their pleasant and unpleasant features, even beyond their cruelty, and relate to everyone as a unique spiritual person, part of God. Pure devotees develop the kind of intuition we admire in stories of great saints and spiritual teachers. Since a pure devotee feels safe in his own personal exchange of love with God, he doesn't crave others' appreciation or feel hurt by their aggression. These qualities place him in a unique position to help others.

Sunīti, Dhruva's mother, could accept her fate without hating it and could convince her son to accept the valuable instruction in Suruci's hateful words, without himself becoming a slave to hatred. Does that mean a devotee of the Lord should allow himself or herself to be trampled upon? No. Neither aggression nor meek submission in itself indicates spiritual advancement. What counts is one's motive.

A devotee doesn't seek selfish satisfaction either by oppressing others or by being oppressed and "enjoying" victim status. Whether a devotee chooses to be aggressive or meek, his motive is to serve God and help others find their path back to Godhead. He can assist others by instruction, example, or even mere presence. Those who have had the privilege to come in contact with someone endowed with genuine love of God, of any religious faith, know that the presence of such a person lifts others onto the same plane.

That's what happened to Dhruva's family members. Upon hearing the news of Dhruva's return, King Uttānapāda rushed out of the palace to meet him. Along with the king came Uttama,

Sunīti, and Suruci. Without reservation, Dhruva honored both mothers by prostrating himself on the ground.

Suruci picked him up.

"My dear boy, long may you live!"

With tears of joy in her eyes she blessed him.

Sunīti then affectionately embraced Dhruva, as did his brother Uttama.

AN HONORABLE KING

This history has a classical ending: Dhruva grew in a happy, caring family and ultimately became a great monarch, loved by everyone in his kingdom—a kingdom greater than any that had ever existed.

The narrator of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* concludes: "Dhruva was not the same as before; he was completely sanctified due to having been touched by the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unto one who has transcendental qualities due to friendship with the Supreme Lord, all living entities offer honor as naturally as a stream flows down from a mountain."

One person with love and devotion for God can make a difference for many. Those of us who have little hope for finding God, who cannot seem to muster enough courage to approach Him, meditate on Him, or serve Him, may derive strength from knowing that others will gain from our love of God: our families, friends, and enemies; passersby in the street; every living being in the world. ☸

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A Meeting in Varanasi

*Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu points out
Śaṅkarācārya's error in contradicting Vyāsadeva.*

by Mathureśa Dāsa

PART 3 (CONCLUSION)

Early in the year 1514, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was staying at the home of Candraśekara Vaidya in Varanasi, India, then a great center of learning. Lord Caitanya's associates heard that one of the chief scholars of Varanasi, a sannyāsī named Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, was complaining to his followers that Caitanya Mahāprabhu was a sentimentalist who engaged in chanting the names of the Lord rather than in studying Vedānta, the proper duty of a sannyāsī. Greatly disturbed by Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī's criticism, Śrī Caitanya's associates were pleased when the Lord accepted an invitation for lunch at the home of the brāhmaṇa. Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī and his followers would also be there, so Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī could see for himself the ideal character of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Caitanya's meeting with Prakāśānanda began with Prakāśānanda's asking the Lord why He chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya replied that He was doing so on the order of His spiritual master.

LORD ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA Caitanya Mahāprabhu stressed to Prakāśānanda the importance of chanting the holy names under the guidance of a qualified spiritual master. The chanting

of Hare Kṛṣṇa cleanses Māyāvāda (impersonalist) pollution from the heart and mind and gives the chanter a taste of the nectar of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya's process of *saṅkīrtana*, the chanting of the Lord's names, is thus the most direct method for understanding Vedānta and the only method recommended for the present age, known as the Age of Quarrel. A disciple who hears the transcendental vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa from a spiritual master in disciplic succession and tries to chant with sincerity achieves the goal of Vedānta study: service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Perceiving the eternal happiness of love of God through devotional service, the disciple is naturally inclined to chant and dance, not caring for public opinion.

"I never chanted and danced to make an artificial show," Lord Caitanya explained to Prakāśānanda. "I dance and chant because I firmly believe in the words of my spiritual master. Compared to the ocean of transcendental bliss tasted by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, the pleasure derived from the impersonal Brahman realization touted by Śaṅkarācārya is like the shallow water in a canal."

Seated around Lord Caitanya at the brāhmaṇa's house, the Māyāvādīs were moved by His words. Their minds changed and they spoke pleasingly.

"Dear Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu,"



they began, "what You have said is true. Only a fortunate person attains love of Godhead. We have no objection to Your being a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But why do You avoid discussion of the *Vedānta-sūtra*? What is the fault in it?"

While the Māyāvādīs appreciated Lord Caitanya's description of Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana* as superior to the pleasure of impersonal Brahman realization, they were still under the impression that *Vedānta-sūtra* was synonymous with Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, known as *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*. There are in fact many definitive commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra* written by great devotional scholars. The original commentary is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva Himself, the author of *Vedānta-sūtra*. Foreseeing the havoc created by perverted Māyāvāda commentaries, Vyāsadeva compiled His own commentary. The Māyāvādīs recognize none of the devotional commentaries, and Śaṅkarācārya even faulted Vyāsadeva's compilation of the *Vedānta-sūtra* itself. So although Lord Caitanya had been commenting on Vedānta all along, the assembled *sannyāsīs* requested Him to comment specifically on the verses of the *Vedānta-sūtra* in relation to the *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*.

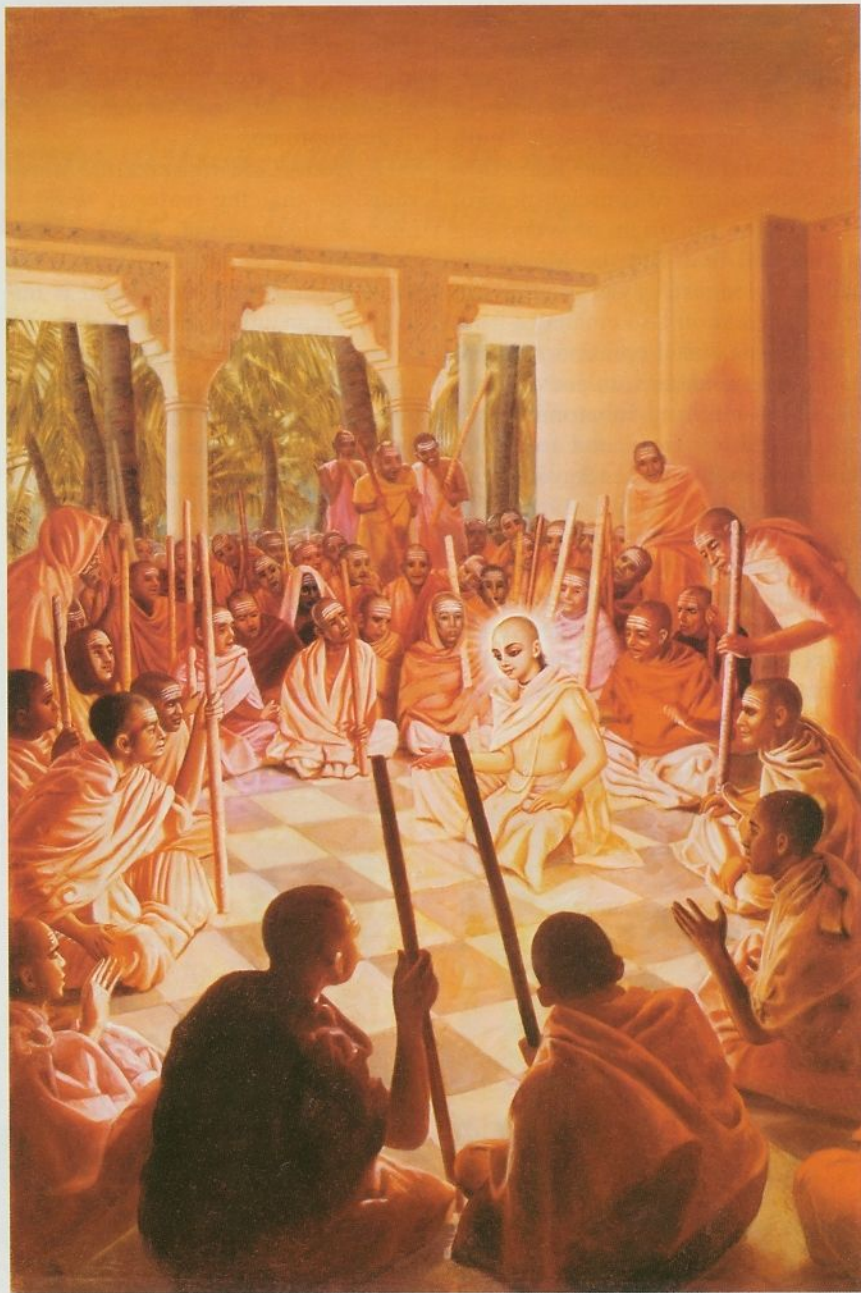
"Totell You the truth," the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* continued, "we are greatly pleased to hear Your words and behold Your extraordinary beauty. We see that You are just like Nārāyaṇa, God Himself. Whatever You say, we shall be very glad to hear patiently."

CONTRADICTING VYĀSADEVA

With the Māyāvādīs eager to listen, the Lord began by indicating that Śaṅkarācārya had no business correcting Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

"Vedānta philosophy," He said, "consists of words spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His literary incarnation as Śrīla Vyāsadeva. The four material defects do not exist in the words of the Supreme Lord."

The four defects of an ordinary person are (1) he must make mistakes, (2) he must fall into illusion, (3) he must have a tendency to cheat, and (4) his senses must be imperfect. These de-



Glowing with divine effulgence, Lord Caitanya teaches Vedānta philosophy to the impersonalists of Varanasi.

fects make our own knowledge unreliable, and their absence makes the *Vedas* authoritative. If we cannot accept, at least theoretically, that as an incarnation of God Vyāsadeva is above the four defects, then there is no reason to give special attention to His *Vedānta-sūtra* or any of the Vedic books. Certainly Śaṅkarācārya, whose very mission was to reestablish the Vedic authority, weakened his position by correcting Vyāsadeva. It is the Buddhists he was working to reform who

believe that the *Vedas* were compiled by ordinary defective beings. Śaṅkarācārya contradicted Vyāsadeva only because the *Vedas* are clearly theistic and personal, something Śaṅkarācārya's Buddhist audiences would not have been able to swallow.

"Śaṅkarācārya has misled the world," Lord Caitanya explained, "by commenting that Vyāsadeva was mistaken. Thus he has raised great opposition to theism throughout the world."

What, according to Śaṅkarācārya,

was Vyāsadeva's big mistake? The *Vedānta-sūtra* begins by defining God or the Absolute Truth as the changeless origin of everything, the cause of all causes. *Janmādy asya yataḥ*. That's fine, the Māyāvādīs think. The Absolute is the origin of consciousness, of life, of spirit, the origin of everything eternal and real. But the Māyāvādīs balk at Vyāsadeva's assertion that the material creation also emanates from God. The material creation, with all its oceans, mountains, creatures, planets, and atomic and subatomic particles, is infinite, varied, and complete. If all this stuff is the energy of God, they reason, then He has either greatly depleted Himself in its creation, or has transformed Himself into the creation. In either case the changeless Absolute would have changed, making it a relative, illusory thing, like the material world itself. Vyāsadeva,

the literary incarnation of God, was therefore obviously mistaken, the Māyāvādīs contend, in saying that the universe is composed of the energies of the Supreme.

To rectify God's mistake, the Māyāvādīs say that the material world is false. *Brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā*. Brahman, or eternal spirit, is truth, while the temporary material world is untruth. It is an unreal dream. It does not exist and so does not need to be accounted for. We ignorantly mistake the material universe as real just as in the dark we might mistake a rope for a snake. Absolutely everything here is illusion, the Māyāvādīs believe, with the one tiny exception of their own words.

Cut off from authorized disciplic succession, the Māyāvādīs are victims of their defective material reasoning. Material things change or dissipate as

they give off energy. Your gas tank and your bank balance reduce to nothing as you spend money and drive your car. The original tree disappears as it is sawed into lumber and further transformed into furniture and houses. But the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is not material. The *Upaniṣads* describe Him as a transcendental person with unlimited, inexhaustible energies. Because He is infinite and complete, His creations, such as the phenomenal material world, are also infinite and complete.

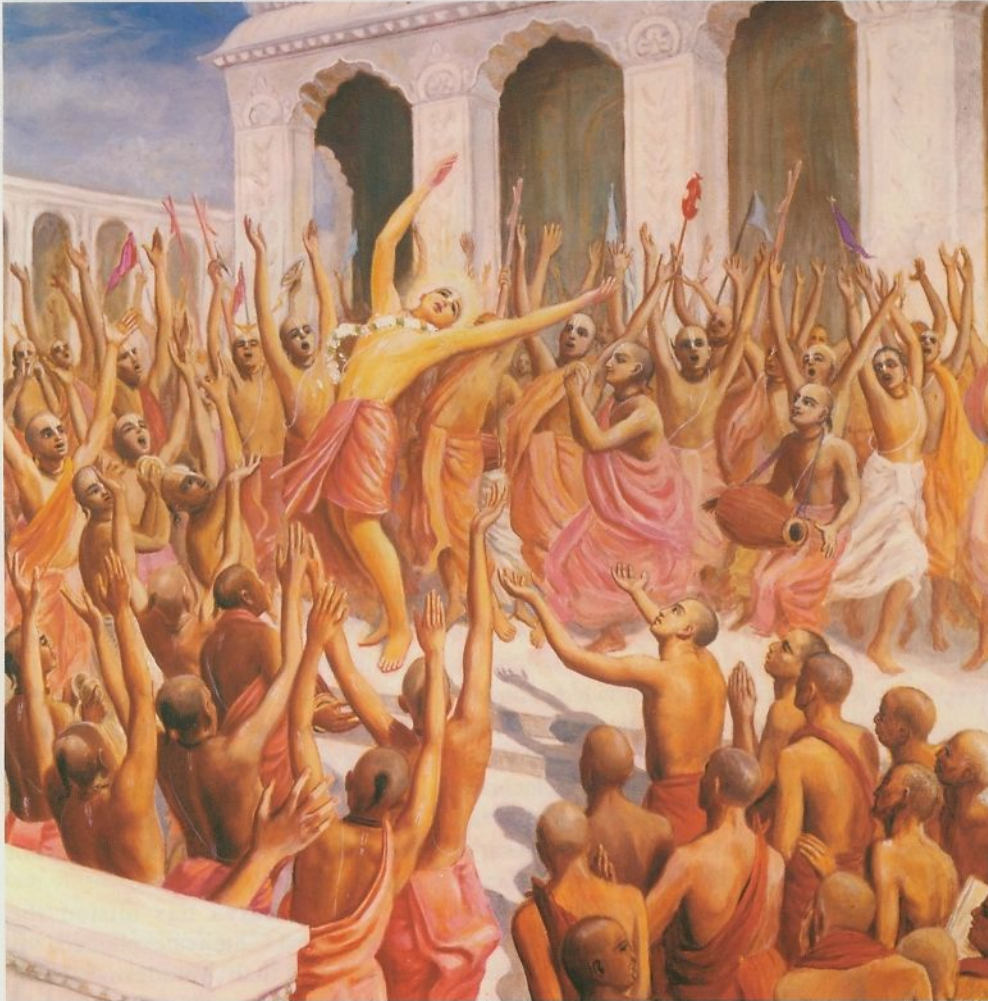
*om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate*

“The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from

Him, such as this phenomenal material world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.”

Despite the vastness of His creations, Lord Kṛṣṇa remains complete and unchanged. As a businessman spreads his limited financial and managerial assets to run a corporation, so the Supreme expands His unlimited potencies to create the material and spiritual worlds. That is what it means to say that God is omnipotent. The unlimited and inconceivable potencies of the Supreme is the central point of the Vaiṣṇava, or personalist, philosophy taught by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Like spirit, the material universe is also true, because it is composed of the energies of the Supreme



After their meeting with Lord Caitanya, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī and his disciples see the Lord's ecstatic chanting and dancing. They all joined in, charmed by His transcendental beauty.

Painting by Locana Dāsa

We may want to commit spiritual suicide by ending our personalities, and the Dr. Kevorkians of spiritual life are here to help us.

• • •

Truth. This world is not false, as the Māyāvādīs say. Although temporary and in flux, the universe is real. We are eternal spiritual individuals, distinct from our temporary bodies, and part of Kṛṣṇa's superior spiritual energy. The material elements that make up our bodies and the rest of the universe are part of Kṛṣṇa's material energy. Nothing but these two categories of Kṛṣṇa's energy, spiritual and material, make up the universe. Both energies, both the rope and the snake, to use the Māyāvādī example, are real. It is mistaking one for the other that is false. It is false to mistake our selves for our bodies, as the gross materialists do, because the bodies are temporary vehicles for our eternal selves. And it is false to think of our individuality as a product of the soul's contact with the body, as the Māyāvādīs do, because we are eternally individual parts of the supreme individual, the Supreme Brahman, Kṛṣṇa.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MĀYĀVĀDĪ

"In all the Vedic *sūtras* [codes] and books, Lord Kṛṣṇa is to be understood," Lord Caitanya explained to the assembled Māyāvādīs. "To prove their philosophy, the followers of Śaṅkarācārya have covered the real meaning of the *Vedas* with indirect explanations based on their imaginative powers."

Māyāvādīs, or materialists trying to imagine an eternal blissful life, have had a tough time in the material world. Things here are temporary and full of misery. Suffering comes from our own bodies and minds, from the forces of nature, and especially from other people, including loved ones. People here are full of faults and even the most picture-perfect storybook love affair must realistically end in old age, dis-

ease, and death. All the endless varieties of personalities and situations produce tiny bits of pleasure on a background of pain. So when we turn our imaginative powers to spiritual life, we imagine that it must be a life without people and without variety. We find comfort in the idea of losing our individuality and merging with an eternal impersonal spirit. No personality. No variety. No suffering.

A patient long suffering from a painful physical disease sometimes asks a doctor to end his life. He wants to destroy the disease, but out of hopelessness he thinks killing the body is the only solution. In the same way, because our material personalities give us pain, we want to commit spiritual suicide by ending our personalities, and the Māyāvādīs, the Dr. Kevorkians of spiritual life, are here to help with their imaginative impersonal interpretations of Vedānta.

Lord Caitanya admonished the Kevorkian Vedāntists of Varanasi.

"Brahman," He said, "is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the reservoir of ultimate truth and absolute knowledge."

WON OVER BY THE LORD

Prakāśānanda and the other Māyāvādīs had always vigorously rejected such an explanation of Vedānta, but here was the Personality of Godhead Himself sitting before them and directly exhibiting His unlimited potencies, in particular His humility, His extraordinary beauty, His truthfulness, and His transcendental knowledge. Lord Caitanya explained each *sūtra* of the *Vedānta-sūtra* in terms of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, with the former Māyāvādīs pleased to hear everything He said. Before lunch they happily joined the Lord in the formerly scandalous

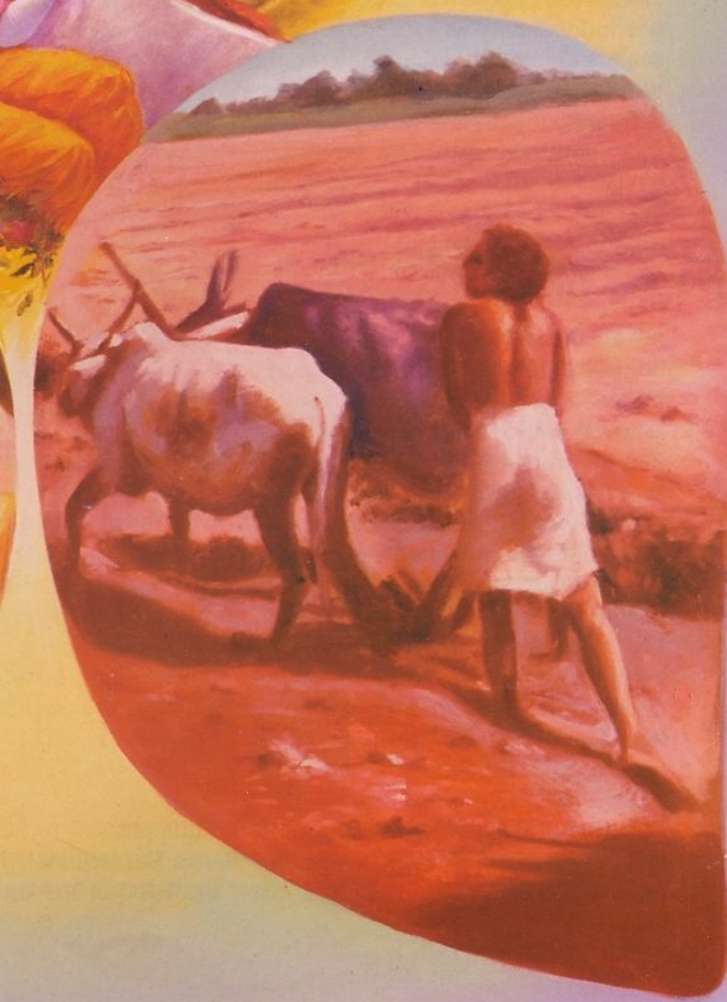
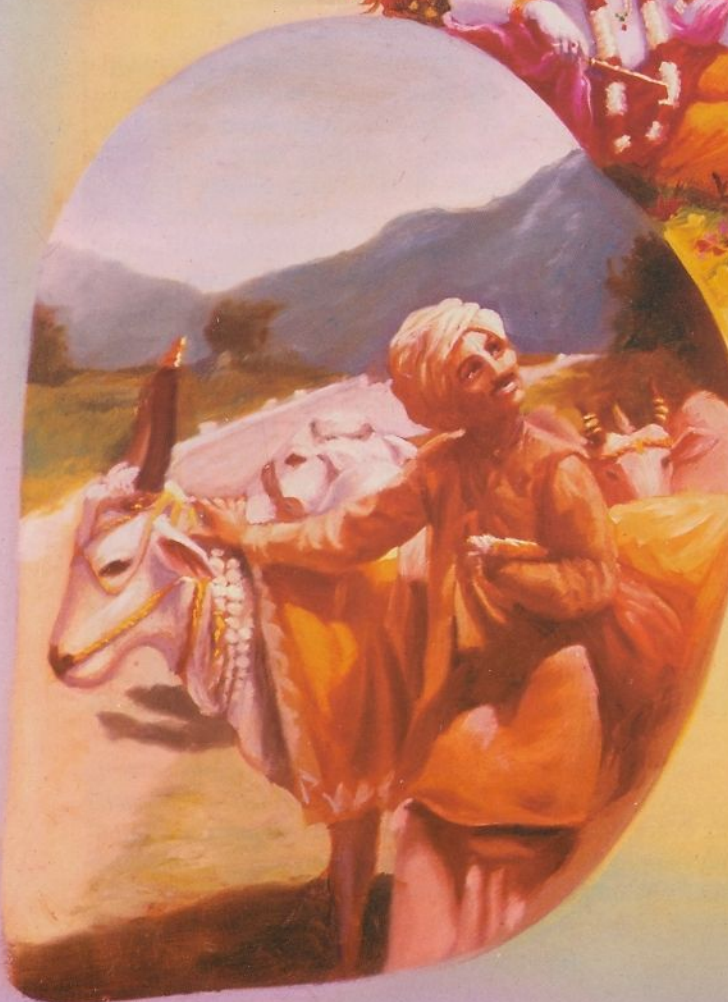
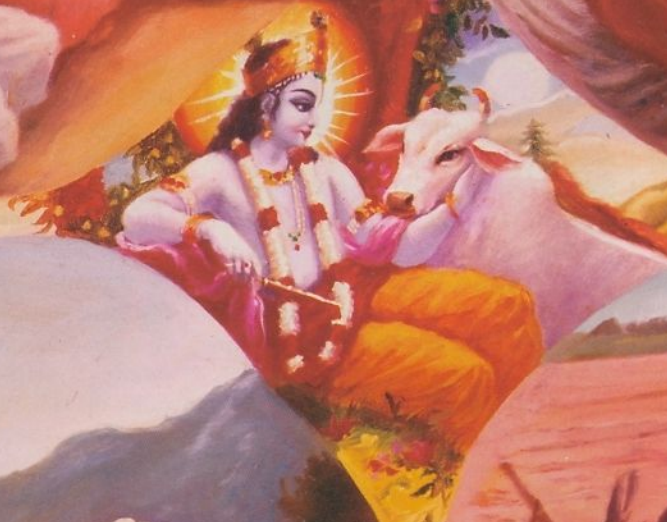
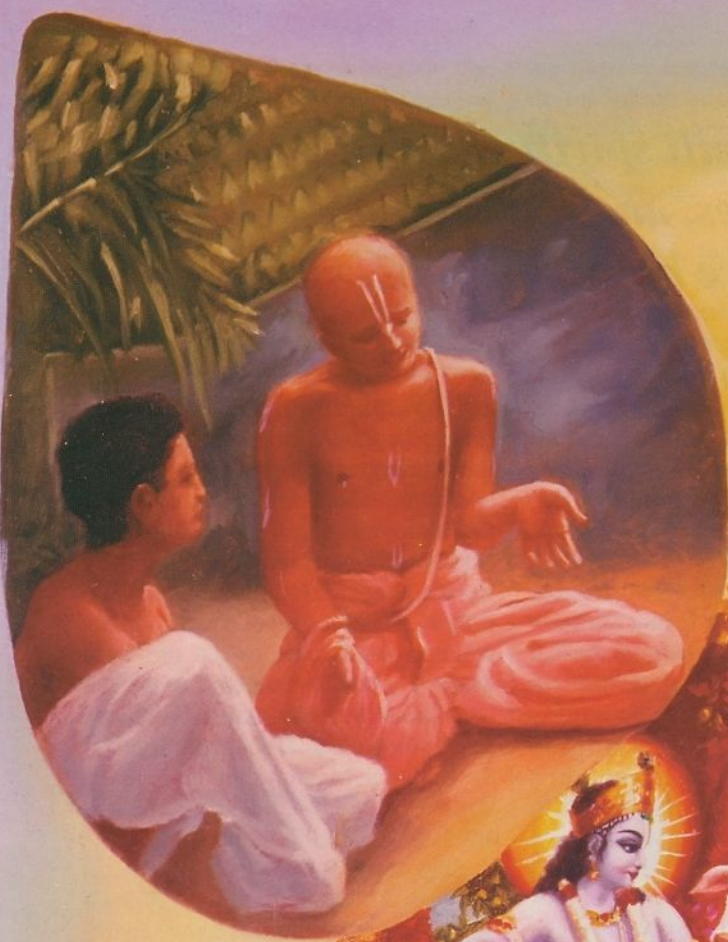
activity of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Then, seating the Lord in their midst, they took their meal together.

After this incident, word spread that Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī and the other Māyāvādīs of Varanasi had embraced Lord Caitanya's path of chanting the holy names. Many scholars and curious people would come to see the Lord where He was staying. As all of them could not crowd into Candrasekhara's house, they used to line the streets as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu daily made His way to the temples of Viśvanātha and Bindhu Mādhava.

One day shortly after the luncheon meeting, Prakāśānanda and his disciples joined a tumultuous crowd chanting and dancing with Lord Caitanya in the courtyard of the Bindhu Mādhava temple. Noticing Prakāśānanda, the Lord stopped the chanting to greet him affectionately, and at Prakāśānanda's request they had further talks on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Not long after that, Lord Caitanya returned to His headquarters in Jagannatha Puri, where He remained from then on.

Today in Varanasi there is a big banyan tree near the temple of Bindhu Mādhava, the same tree in whose shade Lord Caitanya used to rest after lunch. The old temple of Bindhu Mādhava was dismantled by Emperor Aurangzeb and replaced by a mosque, but a new temple was built nearby. There is no sign of the houses of Candrasekhara or Tapana Miśra, where Lord Caitanya stayed, nor any sign of the fortunate and humble *sannyāsī* Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who discussed Vedānta with the Supreme Brahman over lunch. ☀

Mathureśa Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, has written many articles for Back to Godhead and other publications. He and his wife and their four children live in Alachua, Florida.



DHARMA

In the Bhagavad-gītā

*Lord Kṛṣṇa changes Arjuna's understanding—
and ours—about religion and duty.*

by Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

The Sanskrit word “dharma” has joined “yoga” and “karma” in common English usage. Dharma is often taken to mean “religion” or “duty.” But these meanings are incomplete. In the Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa refers to dharma in progressively deeper ways, shedding light on the meaning of the term and its importance for personal spiritual growth.

In life we all encounter ethical conflicts, although perhaps less dramatically than Arjuna. As we shall see, the Gītā helps us make intelligent decisions by showing how ordinary piety fails to deliver the endless satisfaction of service to God.

DHARMA IS THE first word in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The great work begins when the blind old king Dhṛtarāṣṭra asks his secretary, Sañjaya, about the battle that was to take place at “the field of dharma” (*dharma-kṣetra*). Dhṛtarāṣṭra, knowing his sons to be evil, worried that the spiritual influence of the dharma field would favor the pious Pāṇḍavas. As the *Gītā*'s first chapter unfolds, Arjuna also grows wary of the influence of dharma. He fears that his, and Kṛṣṇa's, participation in the war will lead to a violation of dharma and perpetual residence in hell.

In the name of dharma, Arjuna argues for non-violence by assuming that to attack and kill so

many leading men, nearly all of whom are fathers and husbands, will destabilize the important families and communities for which these men are responsible. The families themselves are vital to the peace and virtue of society. Arjuna's argument, literally translated, proceeds as follows:

On destruction of the family, the perennial family dharmas perish. When dharma perishes, *adharmā* [the opposite of dharma] overwhelms the entire family. From the predominance of *adharmā*, O Kṛṣṇa, the family women are polluted. When the women are polluted, O Vārṣṇeya, a confusion of social orders arises. This confusion leads only to hell both for the destroyers of families and for the family. Certainly the forefathers fall [from heaven] since the ritual offerings of rice balls and water are suspended. By these crimes of the family killers, who propagate a confusion of social classes, community dharmas and the everlasting family dharmas are devastated. We have always heard, O Janārdana, that those men who devastate family dharmas have their residence fixed in hell.

—*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.39-43

Arjuna has sounded a familiar theme from many Vedic books, namely that dharma protects when it is protected, but injures when it is injured. Arjuna would be killing kings in the battlefield,

*Left: One meaning of dharma is “occupation,”
which finds perfection in the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord.*

Painting by Muralīdhara Dāsa

Dharma is meant to assist the real goal of life: understanding the eternal soul and its relationship with the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa.



virtually all of whom protected at least the basic rules of dharma in regard to ethics, social order, and traditional, worldly religious rites.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is about to teach His friend Arjuna that above even dharma is God, who, for His own reasons, desires this battle. Lord Kṛṣṇa rejects Arjuna's argument as mere "weakness of heart" (*hṛdaya-daurbalyam*) and "impotence" (*klaibhyam*) and urges Arjuna to fight.

Despite his previous arguments on the basis of dharma, Arjuna now admits that he is actually "confused in mind about dharma" (*dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ*). (Bg. 2.7) Arjuna then gives up his arguments and surrenders to Lord Kṛṣṇa as his spiritual master, and Lord Kṛṣṇa begins teaching the *Bhagavad-gītā* in earnest.

FIRST SOME LESSONS ON THE SOUL

Lord Kṛṣṇa does not at once address Arjuna's argument about dharma, as we would expect in a typical debate. Rather, the Lord first reveals to Arjuna, in twenty verses (Bg. 2.11–30) the eternal nature of the soul. Then the Lord comes back to the topic of dharma, to show that it is Arjuna who is neglecting his dharma by refusing to fight: "And even considering your personal dharma as well, it is not right for you to hesitate. There is nothing better for a warrior than a fight based on dharma." (Bg. 2.31)

It is significant here that after a thorough explanation of the eternal soul, the Lord mentions dharma as an additional point to consider. From other scriptures one may get the impression that life is meant to practice dharma. But we find in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that dharma itself is meant to assist the real goal of life: understanding the eternal soul and its relationship with the Su-

preme Soul, Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes this brief reference to dharma as one's personal duty by saying, "Now if you do not execute this battle, then having given up your personal dharma and reputation, you shall incur sin." (Bg. 2.33)

Arjuna previously argued that if he and Kṛṣṇa were to fight the Battle of Kurukṣetra, they would be destroying dharma and incurring sin. Now Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that the truth is just the contrary. By not fighting, Arjuna would be rejecting dharma—in fact, his personal dharma—and thus incurring sin.

Throughout the rest of the *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks of dharma in terms of His own teaching of spiritual knowledge and not directly in response to Arjuna's argument about dharma as ordinary religious and moral practices.

Having explained the soul as distinct from the material body, Lord Kṛṣṇa now states (Bg. 2.39) that what He has just taught Arjuna is "real intelligence or understanding" (*buddhi*), and that He has taught it "in a philosophical sense" (*sāṅkhye*). Now, says the Lord, He will talk about the same *buddhi*, or spiritual intelligence, but "in practice" (*yoge*). And it is precisely this applied spiritual understanding (*buddhir yoge*) to which Lord Kṛṣṇa now gives the name dharma: "Even a very small amount of this dharma saves one from great danger, for there is no loss in such an endeavor, and it knows no diminution." (Bg. 2.40)

ONE'S OWN DUTIES

Lord Kṛṣṇa's next reference to dharma reinforces his earlier statement that Arjuna must perform his own dharma, and not neglect it in the name of dharma. Arjuna can neither protect dharma nor keep himself on the spiritual platform if he abandons the duties born of his

nature. Thus the Lord says: "One's own dharma, performed imperfectly, is better than another's dharma well performed. Destruction in one's own dharma is better, for to perform another's dharma leads to danger." (Bg. 3.35)

In the fourth chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals that He appears in this world to protect the principles of dharma and curtail the destructive influence of *adharmā*: "Certainly whenever a decline of dharma occurs, O Bhārata [Arjuna], and an uprising of *adharmā*, I then manifest My Self. To deliver the saintly and vanquish the evil-doers, to reestablish dharma, I appear in every age." (Bg. 4.7–8)

It is clear in this context that a *sādhu*, a saintly or good person, is one who follows dharma, whereas an evil-doer, *duṣkṛt*, is one who practices and promotes *adharmā*. So Kṛṣṇa Himself vows to reestablish dharma, upholding those who support dharma and vanquishing those who oppose it.

Thus the complete picture begins to emerge. An effective government must not only create laws but enforce them as well. Similarly, the Supreme Lord brings forth His law as dharma. When obedience to His law collapses and human beings propagate instead their own illicit "law," the Lord descends to protect the good citizens of His kingdom, vanquish the outlaws who practice *adharmā*, and reestablish in human society the prestige and power of His will.

We can now see why Arjuna's initial argument, that to obey Lord Kṛṣṇa and fight would go against dharma, cannot be correct. Dharma is nothing but the Lord's will. For Arjuna to fight, then, is true dharma.

As further emphasis of this point, Lord Kṛṣṇa later states that even activities that appear to be most mundane, such as fighting or sexual intercourse, can be performed on the spiritual plat-

form if done according to dharma: "And I am the strength of the strong, devoid of lust and attachment. O best of the Bhāratas, I am sex not contrary to dharma." (Bg. 7.11)

DHARMA AND SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

Lord Kṛṣṇa again speaks of dharma in the ninth chapter when he declares that spiritual knowledge of Himself is *dharmya*, or conducive to and consistent with dharma: "I shall speak to you, who are free of envy, this most confidential knowledge, together with its realized discernment, knowing which you shall be freed of the inauspicious. This knowledge is the king of sciences, the king of secrets, and the supreme purifier. Understood by direct perception, it is conducive to dharma, very easy to perform, and everlasting. People who do not place their faith in this dharma, O burner of the foe, do not attain Me but return to the path of death and material existence." (Bg. 9.1-3)

It is significant that Lord Kṛṣṇa here repeats the words "this dharma" (*asya dharmasya*) noted earlier: "Even a very small amount of this dharma saves one from great danger, for there is no loss in such an endeavor, and it knows no diminution." (Bg. 2.40)

Clearly Lord Kṛṣṇa reserves the phrase "this dharma" for discussions of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, pure devotion to the Lord. In Chapter Nine "this dharma" refers to the supreme process, which Lord Kṛṣṇa calls "very easy to perform" (*susukham kartum*): the devotional service of the Lord—the only process praised in the chapter. In marked contrast, Lord Kṛṣṇa criticizes the ordinary Vedic dharma by which one seeks residence in Indra's heaven: "Those who follow the science of the three *Vedas* and drink the Soma, their sins purified, aspire to go to heaven through sacrifices. Having reached the pious world of the king of gods, they partake in heaven of the celestial enjoyments of the gods. Having enjoyed the vast world of heaven, they fall to the mortal world when their piety is exhausted. Thus those who desire sense gratification, and who have consistently resorted to the dharma of the three

Vedas, achieve only going and coming." (Bg. 9.20-21)

Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa starkly contrasts the ordinary dharma of the *Vedas* with "this dharma," which is pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa concludes the important ninth chapter by showing the power of this dharma, unalloyed Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to purify and save the soul: "Even if a man has grossly misbehaved, if he worships Me and is devoted to Me exclusively he is certainly to be considered a *sādhu* [good person], for he has actually come to a perfect determination. Quickly he becomes a righteous soul [*dharmātmā*] and attains to lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, proclaim that My devotee is never lost!" (Bg. 9.30-31)

It is simply on the strength of devotion to Kṛṣṇa that even a man of terrible conduct quickly becomes devoted to dharma. There is no corresponding assurance in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that practice of ordinary Vedic dharma will make one a pure devotee of the Lord. Rather, the fruit of *trayi-dharma*, the religious duties of the three *Vedas*, is that one goes up to the mundane heaven and falls again to the mortal earth.

Thus for one exclusively devoted to God, Kṛṣṇa (*bhajate mām ananya-bhāk*), a solid standing on the highest platform of dharma comes automatically.

EVERLASTING DHARMA

Now that Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained "this dharma" (*asya dharmasya*), which leads to His eternal abode, we can better understand Arjuna's statement in the eleventh chapter that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the protector of "everlasting (*śāśvata*) dharma": "You are the indestructible, the supreme object of knowledge. You are the transcendental receptacle of this universe. You are inexhaustible, the protector of everlasting dharma. I conclude that You are the eternal person." (Bg. 11.18)

Lord Kṛṣṇa later declares as much in the fourteenth chapter: "Indeed, I am the foundation of Brahman [spirit], and of unending immortality, and of everlasting dharma, and of the ultimate happiness." (Bg. 14.27)

In the last verse of the twelfth chapter also, Lord Kṛṣṇa indicates that there

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is a truly eternal dharma: "But those who fully honor this immortal nectar of dharma as it has been spoken [by Me], having faith, taking Me as supreme—those devotees are exceedingly dear to Me." (Bg. 12.20)

The eighteenth and final chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* summarizes the entire text. In this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa refers three times to dharma, the first being a reaffirmation of His earlier admonition to perform one's own, and not another's, dharma: "It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly." (Bg. 18.47)

But beyond this, we have seen that

the *Bhagavad-gītā* begins where ordinary Vedic dharma leaves off. Lord Kṛṣṇa has indicated this in various ways. Here, at the end of His teaching, the Lord most dramatically declares that full surrender to the Supreme Lord stands above the entire range of sacred duties known generally as dharma: "Renouncing all dharmas, take refuge in Me alone. Have no regret, for I shall free you from all sins." (Bg. 18.66)

Thus, surrender to Kṛṣṇa, as declared in the ninth chapter, is the highest duty of the soul and therefore the supreme dharma. All other dharmas are preliminary duties, meant to bring one to the highest spiritual understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such conven-

tional dharmas are useful until one comes to the point of utter surrender to God. So there is nothing incoherent when the Lord finally declares that the entire *Bhagavad-gītā* is conducive to dharma, in all its aspects: "And if one will study this *dharmya* conversation of ours, he will indeed worship Me by the sacrifice of knowledge. That is My opinion." (Bg. 18.70) ❀

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.

LETTERS (continued from page 5) away all life. So there is no question of Arjuna's acting irreligiously or with disregard for life.

Out-of-Touch Priests

I am a student in Southern California, as well as a regular attendee at my local ISKCON temple. I have attended the temple for as long as I can remember, and as I have always been brought up in the ISKCON/Hindu lifestyle, I have never really questioned it. I follow all the basic religious teachings I have learned over the years, though as I get older, I have begun to wonder about certain aspects of my life, not because I dislike them, but because I feel that it is important to know why I believe in something, instead of blindly believing in it.

Over the last few years, I've begun to resent some things I hear the temple priest say. For years I've listened to the priest talk about how it's important to live life in a certain way, and I've always been told that the way he tells me to live is the ideal. However, I've had some time to think about it, and I now find myself questioning what the priest lectures about. What right does this man have to tell people how to live life? After all, most temple priests have nothing else to do in life but to live at the temple and pray to God. They know nothing about what it's like to work, pay taxes, have desires, and endure temptation. What gives them the right

to tell us how to live life when they don't know what real life is really like?

I am very interested in what you have to say about this issue.

Mihir Upadhyaya
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: We commend you for asking questions, because a proper philosophical understanding is essential if we want to maintain spiritual practices. In most ISKCON temples, at least those with more than a handful of devotees, many devotees are likely to give lectures. And although some of the lecturers may be temple priests, some are probably devotees with families and regular jobs—devotees living in the "real world."

A lecturer can take many approaches in presenting the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and no doubt some lecturers are more skillful or tactful than others. Maybe you are regularly hearing from someone who seems out of touch with the pressures of day-to-day life. If the lecturer you've been hearing is a celibate living in the temple, he might not have to work and pay taxes. Still, like everyone else in this world, he is certainly faced with temptations and desires.

We all tend to resist being told what to do, and it seems you don't like to hear about some of the restrictions ISKCON recommends. But these restrictions are not rules for the sake of rules. They are meant to help us advance in spiritual life. The goal is to

become Kṛṣṇa conscious, to re-awaken our innate love for Kṛṣṇa. Naturally, how we live affects our consciousness. So we have to set priorities. If spiritual realization is of utmost importance to me, then I should arrange my life for it. I have to ask myself whether I want to add complications to my life, or simplify and leave myself more time for spiritual practices.

There are members of ISKCON from all walks of life, including college students who face the same pressures you do. But those serious about spiritual life protect it by being careful whom they associate with and what they do with their free time. They may also sometimes feel that those living in the temple are out of touch. On the other hand, they may appreciate reminders about the urgency of spiritual life. While it's true that some ISKCON preachers would do well to tone down the rhetoric, please don't let that divert you from hearing the essential message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Devotees present Kṛṣṇa consciousness as Prabhupāda teaches it in his books. If you study them, you'll have a good basis for evaluating any lecture on Kṛṣṇa consciousness you may hear in the temple. ❀

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CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Vāmana

(June 29–July 28)

JULY

8—Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya.

9—Yoginī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

14—Guṇḍicā-mārjana. Festival of cleansing the Guṇḍicā temple in Jagannātha Purī, India. Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā in Jagannātha Purī. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

24—Śayanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

28—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one

of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

Month of Śrīdhara

(July 29–August 26)

AUGUST

2—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

5—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

6—Anniversary of the incorporation of ISKCON, in New York City, 1966.

8—Kāmikā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

22—Pavitropanā Ekādaśī, fasting from grains and beans. Jhulana Yātrā (swing festival) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda begins.

23—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

27—Jhulana Yātrā ends. Appearance anniversary of Lord Balarama. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting. Second month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from yogurt).

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa

(August 27–September 25)

SEPTEMBER

3—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting

tomorrow. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for a schedule of events.

4—Appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

6—Annadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

15—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

18—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

21—Parśvā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Fasting till noon for the appearance of Lord Vāmanadeva (tomorrow).

22—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmanadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

23—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English.

24—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

25—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

THE VEDIC OBSE

KARMA KICKS A COACH

by Kṛṣṇa Dharma Dāsa

ON JANUARY 30 this year, Britain woke up to unusual headlines in the newspapers. "Hodde says disabled are paying for sins of previous life," announced the more serious press, while the tabloids went for variations of "Hodde goes mad."

The story made headlines for two reasons: First, the man in question was Glenn Hodde, coach of the England football (soccer) team; and second, just about all observers thought his views utterly outrageous. Who did he think he was to pass such harsh judgment on a disadvantaged class of people? Had he no sensitivity? The sports minister for Britain, Tony Banks, said Hodde was "from another world."

"I have listened carefully to Glen Hodde's views," said Banks. "They are totally unacceptable. If his theory is correct, he is in for real problems in the next life. He will probably be doomed to come back as Glenn Hodde."

It had been a fairly innocent state-

ment by the unfortunate Hodde, made during a sports interview. Most of the interview had been about England's footballing prospects. But the interviewer, obviously with an eye to a hot story, knew about Hodde's beliefs and questioned him accordingly.

When asked about his belief in karma, Hodde replied, "You and I have been physically given two hands and two legs and half-decent brains. Some people have not been born like that for a reason. The karma is working from another lifetime. I have nothing to hide about that. It is not only people with disabilities. What you sow, you have to reap."

The interviewer had struck gold. That short section of his interview, cleverly headlined by him, made the headlines in every other newspaper. For days afterward a debate raged. Calls for Hodde's sacking came from all quarters. Eventually Hodde's authorities bowed to the pressure and forced him to resign.

Among a host of other pejorative descriptions, Hodde's beliefs were labeled "potty," "crackpot," and "barmy." I was astonished at the blatant hypocrisy: People were tearing Hodde to pieces for his "slur on the disabled,"

while at the same time dismissing someone's religious beliefs as nonsense.

But what about those beliefs? Are they nonsense? Did Hodde get it right? Does the concept of karma include the idea that those suffering disability are receiving the results of former sins? Surely that's a hard pill to swallow for those so afflicted, especially, of course, if one has no belief that there ever was a former life. And even if there was, what terrible sins did I commit? Looking around me, I don't see that disabled folk are any more "sinful" than others. Some seem a whole lot more pious.

Who defines sin? Who decides what reaction should follow our actions? Can reactions be changed, or is everything predetermined? Unless you can answer all these questions, then your belief in karma and reincarnation will be rather hollow.

Of course, even if he could answer any of the above questions, Hodde was given little chance. After his declaration of faith, he was carried by the wave of indignation to his sure fate. But if he had been given a fair trial, perhaps he could have called upon the evidence of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. This ancient Vedic scripture clearly explains the teaching of karma and answers



RIVER

Transcendental Commentary On the Issues of the Day

all the above questions.

Followed by hundreds of millions, the *Gītā* is the basis of Hinduism, which accepts karma and reincarnation as central tenets. So too do Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and other philosophies coming out of the central strand of Hinduism. We're talking about almost half the world's population.

So what does the *Gītā* say about karma? The first principle is that every living being is an eternal soul, moving from life to life until achieving ultimate liberation. The *Gītā* helps us recognize our eternality with a simple explanation: "As the soul travels from childhood to youth to old age, it similarly travels to another body after death." In other words, reincarnation takes place at every moment, not just at death. Even in one lifetime, the soul is constantly changing bodies. In adulthood we can see that our childhood body is gone, but we're still the same person. We all know the joke "You must have been a beautiful baby—but, baby, what went wrong?" It should be obvious that we, the person, are different from the body we inhabit.

Perhaps also this is where the disabled can take some comfort: They know that despite their physical dis-

**Who decides what reactions
should follow our actions?
Can reactions be changed, or is
everything predetermined?**

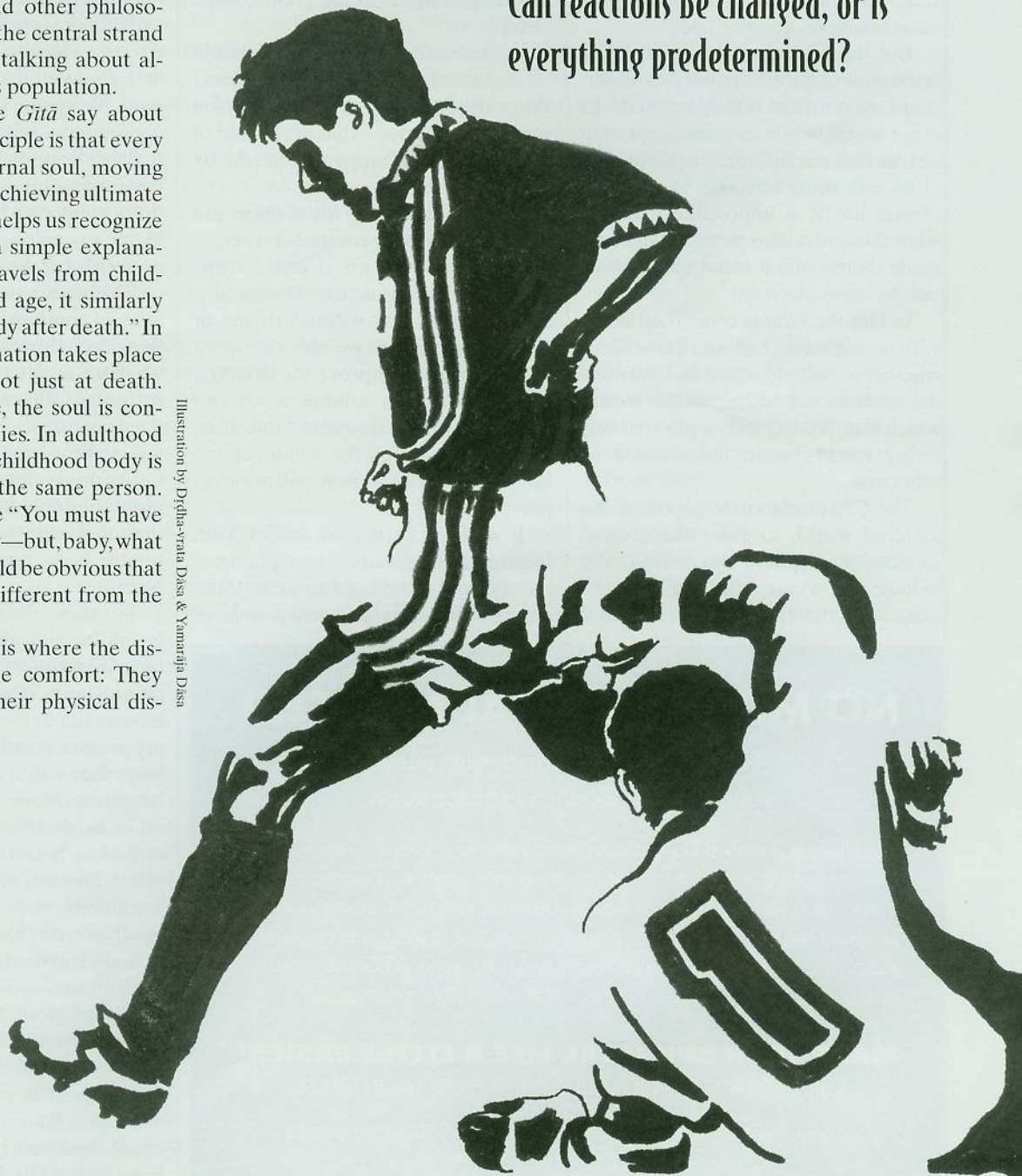


Illustration by Dridha-vrata Dasa & Yamaraja Dasa

ability, they are no less a person than anyone else. If a man loses an arm or a leg, he does not feel he has become only three-quarters whole. He is still the same person within. It should thus be obvious that the body is not the self.

But now we come to the tricky bit. Why is it that some souls get a body like, say, actress Pamela Anderson, while others are consigned to a frame wracked by disease, or even that of a dog, or a worm, or a cockroach? "As you sow, so shall you reap," quoted Hoddle, and the *Gītā* does not demur. It agrees that all our actions will produce reactions, good or bad.

But the *Gītā* also points out, "The intricacies of karma are hard to understand even for the highly learned." In other words, while in principle it may be true that our suffering in this life has at its root some mistakes in this or a former life, it is impossible to know what those mistakes were or when we made them—and it is not very important to know anyway.

In fact the *Gītā* is concerned more with permanently ending all reactions, whether so-called good or bad. We eternal souls do not belong in this world, which is ultimately only a place of suffering for everyone, able-bodied or otherwise.

The *Gītā* teaches us to get out of the material world, to enter the eternal spiritual atmosphere where we really belong, and where suffering does not exist. And the *Gītā* makes clear that

anyone can achieve this, regardless of bodily condition. All souls are equal, the body nothing more than the soul's temporary covering.

Perhaps Hoddle understands this well enough. I don't know. But his brief mention of karma has certainly given the concept a bad name. That's a shame. For me at least, the alternative belief of things just happening by chance, with all its apparent unfairness and injustices, is unacceptable. It is a belief in helplessness and can only lead to despair. The poor souls suffering in this life are just losers in the great cosmic lottery.

And if we believe that, why should we display any compassion or concern? What use is it anyway? One person wins, another loses—that's it. It's out of our control and happening purely by chance.

Even if we say no, God is there and in control, still our compassion seems pointless if we do not accept karma. If God is simply acting whimsically, dishing out misery without rhyme or reason, what can we do about it? Our attempts to improve the situation can be dashed in a moment by this capricious and malevolent God. If he wants us to suffer, for whatever unfathomable reason, how will we ever prevent it?

If we deny karma, we are left with frightening alternatives to explain our misery. It may be hard to accept, but seeing suffering as the consequences of

our own acts is the only sensible explanation. And this, after all, is the way we run our lives. We want to hold people responsible for their acts. Would we release a criminal who pleaded, "But, your honor, the knife in my hand stabbed him purely by chance"? As parents, do we not constantly tell our children they must accept the consequences of their acts? Does it not therefore make sense that the supreme authority, God, should work by the same principle? It seems natural to me that we should be responsible for what we do.

So I was surprised to see the hue and cry over Hoddle's statements. When I first discovered karma, I felt empowered. Accepting that my misery was a consequence of my own acts made me realize an important fact: I can change those consequences. My fate lies entirely in my own hands. I don't need to blame my environment, other people, or events outside my control.

This understanding is the only basis for real compassion. We can do something to help a suffering person only when we understand the cause of that suffering. Otherwise, without negating the root cause, our attempts to help will at best be makeshift. While it is fine to do whatever we can to make life more tolerable for the afflicted, surely the most important assistance we can render is to remove the affliction—forever.

For those disabled or afflicted, this is a philosophy of liberation. My actual identity is different from my external, painful body. Whatever mistakes I may have made in the past that resulted in my present condition, I can now act in ways that will lead to my permanent happiness. No more pain. That goes for all of us, disabled or otherwise. Each one of us is suffering one way or another. Disease, old age, and death will eventually visit us all—followed by another birth in who knows what kind of body. But the *Gītā* describes how we can end that cycle once and for all.

I hope poor Mr. Hoddle's abrupt removal from office will at least have stimulated some deeper thinking about what are, after all, some pretty deep concepts. Karma and reincarnation surely deserve a better press than they have had of late. ☸

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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 Ṭhākura**—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 *brahmacārīs* (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.

“LEADERS ARE THINKING”

(continued from page 15)

spiritual realization can they attain? After all, they are animals. And yet your leaders are thinking like them. “If you simply get strength like an elephant or a tiger, then your life is successful.”

These leaders think like that because they do not know the actual aim of life. A dog does not know the aim of life. Even if I say, “Self-realization is the aim of life,” the dog will not understand, because his body is unsuitable for higher, spiritual understanding. But a human being can understand. That is why there are so many books of knowledge. So if people do not get this proper knowledge, they are missing the point of life. *Parābhavas tāvad abodha-jāto yāvan na jijñāsata ātmattvam*: As long as one does not come to the point of understanding the spirit soul, whatever he is doing is being defeated, because the main point is missing.

Just like cats and dogs, people are accepting the temporary material body as the self, and they are working on that platform. Therefore, their lives are being spoiled. So our mission is to save the human being from wasting his life like that of the animals. This is our mission. It is the greatest humanitarian work.

Disciple: But, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Kṛṣṇa has given us free will, by which we can accept or reject the godly life. Should the government take away that free will, that choice?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. That is not possible. Free will cannot be taken away and cannot be granted. It is always there within us. Kṛṣṇa says that from all eternity, He has given us free will. But

His personal advice is, “I am now telling you these most confidential words. Control your so-called free will. Just surrender to Me.” This understanding is the most confidential. “If you surrender to Me, that is good for you. But if you go on simply reveling in your free will, you’ll not be happy.”

In spiritual life there is still free will. When you rise to the Kṛṣṇa conscious platform, you serve Kṛṣṇa with free will. Not that you become a stone. There is free will. For instance, in the temple the devotees are dressing Kṛṣṇa’s form very artistically. Is there no free will? And in the kitchen, they are also creating sumptuous preparations for Kṛṣṇa. Is there no free will? Free will is there.

The Māyāvādī philosopher or the Buddhist philosopher says, “Stop this free will and then you’ll become happy.” But our proposition is not to stop our free will but to purify our free will. Purify.

For instance, if your eye is suffering from a cataract, cure the cataract. Keep the eye. But the impersonalist or Buddhist proposition is, “Get that eye out and throw it away. Then there will be no more bother in seeing what is right and wrong, what is pure and impure.”

This is the impersonalists’ proposition. *Nirviṣeṣa-vādī*. *Nirviṣeṣa* means no individuality, no personality, no variety: “Everything is one.” And the Buddhists’ proposition: *śūnyavādī*. *Śūnya* means, “Everything is zero.” If ultimately everything is one or zero, then there is no question of right and wrong.

So our philosophy is neither of these. There is no “All is one”; there is no “All

is zero.” We don’t say such things. There are varieties. But they’re purified varieties. *Tat-paratvena nirmalam*. *Nirmalam* means “purified.” So our process is to purify everything. We don’t want to stop everything. That is not our proposition. The impersonalists and Buddhists cannot find any solution to the world’s problems. That is why they want to put everything to a stop: “Stop this business.”

Suppose a business is not going very nicely. It is operating at a loss. So somebody says, “Close it.”

But an experienced man comes and says, “Why should you close it? All right. I shall do it properly. You’ll get a profit.”

So which man is better? The first, who says, out of disappointment, “Close this business. There is no profit”? Or the second, who says, “No, don’t close it. We shall show a profit. Just manage it properly”?

This is our proposition. We don’t say, “Stop all these material activities.” No. “Just do it properly, so that you get real profit and real benefit.” That is our program. We don’t want to make everything zero. No. Why shall we make it all zero? Everything can be taken and fully spiritualized.

For instance, in the typical firm the workers are not thinking about the proprietor. Nearly everyone is putting some of the firm’s assets into his pocket. So with the assets being stolen, how will the firm go on nicely?

Similarly, these rascal government leaders have no idea who is the proprietor of the world. So they are acting in their nonsensical, stealing way, and therefore there is confusion. The business is not profitable.

On the other hand, if the workers accept—“No, the real proprietor is such-and-such gentleman, and he wants us to perform our work like this”—then the business will be profitable.

Similarly, every one of us in the material world is thinking he is the proprietor. So how will this “firm” profit? This is the real situation. Everyone is thinking he is the proprietor. He forgets he is a worker. He is not the proprietor. That is the mistake. Therefore, the “firm” is being mismanaged, and there is no profit—simply chaos. That is the situation. ☸

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Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāna*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

THE EMBRYO'S DESIRE

Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is relating the prayers of a spiritually awakened child within the womb.

CANTO 3: CHAPTER 31

19 पश्यत्ययं धिषणया ननु सप्तवध्रिः

शारीरके दमशरीर्यपरः स्वदेहे ।

यत्सृष्टयासं तमहं पुरुषं पुराणं

पश्ये बहिर्हृदि च चैत्यमिव प्रतीतम् ॥१९॥

*paśyaty ayam dhiṣaṇayā nanu sapta-vadhriḥ
śārīrake dama-śārīry aparāḥ sva-dehe
yat-sṛṣṭayāsaṁ tam ahaṁ puruṣaṁ purāṇaṁ
paśye bahir hṛdi ca caityam iva pratītam*

paśyati—sees; *ayam*—this living entity; *dhiṣaṇayā*—with intelligence; *nanu*—only; *sapta-vadhriḥ*—bound by the seven layers of material coverings; *śārīrake*—agreeable and disagreeable sense perceptions; *dama-śārīri*—having a body for self-control; *aparāḥ*—another; *sva-dehe*—in his body; *yat*—by the Supreme Lord; *sṛṣṭayā*—endowed; *āsam*—was; *tam*—Him; *ahaṁ*—I; *puruṣaṁ*—person; *purāṇam*—oldest; *paśye*—see; *bahir*—outside; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *ca*—and; *caityam*—the source of the ego; *iva*—indeed; *pratītam*—recognized.

The living entity in another type of body sees only by instinct; he knows only the agreeable and disagreeable

sense perceptions of that particular body. But I have a body in which I can control my senses and can understand my destination; therefore, I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by whom I have been blessed with this body and by whose grace I can see Him within and without.

PURPORT (continued from last issue): Real self-realization by means of controlling the senses is explained herein. One should try to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead and one's own self also. To think oneself the same as the Supreme is not self-realization. Here it is clearly explained that the Supreme Lord is *anādi*, or *purāṇa*, and He has no other cause. The living entity is born of the Supreme Godhead as part and parcel. It is confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, *anādir ādir govindaḥ*: Govinda, the Supreme Person, has no cause. He is unborn. But the living entity is born of Him. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *mamāi-vāṁśaḥ*: both the living entity and the Supreme Lord are unborn, but it has to be understood that the supreme cause of the part and parcel is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Brahma-saṁhitā* therefore says that everything has come from the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*). The *Vedānta-sūtra* confirms this also. *Janmādy asya yataḥ*: the Absolute Truth is the original source of everyone's birth. Kṛṣṇa also says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavaḥ*: “I am the source of birth of everything, including Brahmā and Lord Śiva and the

living entities.” This is self-realization. One should know that he is under the control of the Supreme Lord and not think that he is fully independent. Otherwise, why should he be put into conditional life?

20 सोऽहं वसन्नपि विभो बहुदुःखवासं
गर्भान् निर्जिगमिषे बहिरन्धकूपे ।
यत्रोपयातमुपसर्पति देवमाया
मिथ्यामतिर्यदनु संसृतिचक्रमेतत् ॥२०॥

*so 'ham vasann api vibho bahu-duḥkha-vāsaṁ
garbhān na nirjigamiṣe bahir andha-kūpe
yatropayātam upasarpati deva-māyā
mithyā matir yad-anu saṁsṛti-cakram etat*

saḥ aham—I myself; *vasan*—living; *api*—although; *vibho*—O Lord; *bahu-duḥkha*—with many miseries; *vāsam*—in a condition; *garbhāt*—from the abdomen; *na*—not; *nirjigamiṣe*—I wish to depart; *bahih*—outside; *andha-kūpe*—in the blind well; *yatra*—where; *upayātam*—one who goes there; *upasarpati*—she captures; *deva-māyā*—the external energy of the Lord; *mithyā*—false; *matih*—identification; *yat*—which *māyā*; *anu*—according to; *saṁsṛti*—of continual birth and death; *cakram*—cycle; *etat*—this.

Therefore, my Lord, although I am living in a terrible condition, I do not wish to depart from my mother's abdomen to fall again into the blind well of materialistic life. Your external energy, called *deva-māyā*, at once captures the newly born child, and immediately false identification, which is the beginning of the cycle of continual birth and death, begins.

PURPORT: As long as the child is within the womb of his mother, he is in a very precarious and horrible condition of life, but the benefit is that he revives pure consciousness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord and prays for deliverance. But once he is outside the abdomen, when a child is born, *māyā*, or the illusory energy, is so strong that he is immediately overpowered into considering his body to be his self. *Māyā* means “illusion,” or that which is actually not. In the material world, everyone is identifying with his body. This false egoistic consciousness of “I am this body” at once develops after the child comes out of the womb. The mother and other relatives are awaiting the child, and as soon as he is born, the mother feeds him, and everyone takes care of him. The living entity soon forgets his position and becomes entangled in bodily relationships. The entire material existence is entanglement in this bodily conception of life. Real knowledge means to develop the consciousness of “I am not this body. I am spirit soul, an eternal part and parcel of the Supreme Lord.” Real knowledge entails renunciation, or nonacceptance of this body as the self.

By the influence of *māyā*, the external energy, one for-

gets everything just after birth. Therefore the child is praying that he prefers to remain within the womb rather than come out. It is said that Śukadeva Gosvāmī, on this consideration, remained for sixteen years within the womb of his mother; he did not want to be entangled in false bodily identification. After cultivating such knowledge within the womb of his mother, he came out at the end of sixteen years and immediately left home so that he might not be captured by the influence of *māyā*. The influence of *māyā* is also explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* as insurmountable. But insurmountable *māyā* can be overcome simply by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14): *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etān taranti te*. Whoever surrenders unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa can get out of this false conception of life. By the influence of *māyā* only, one forgets his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa and identifies himself with his body and the by-products of the body—namely wife, children, society, friendship, and love. Thus he becomes a victim of the influence of *māyā*, and his materialistic life of continued birth and death becomes still more stringent.

21 तस्मादहं विगतविक्लव उद्धरिष्य
आत्मानमाशु तमसः सुहृदात्मनैव ।
भूयो यथा व्यसनमेतदनेकरन्ध्रं
मा मे भविष्यदुपसादितविष्णुपादः ॥२१॥

*tasmād ahaṁ vigata-viklava uddhariṣya
ātmānam āśu tamaśaḥ suhṛdātmanaiva
bhūyo yathā vyasanam etad aneka-randhraṁ
mā me bhaviṣyad upasādita-viṣṇu-pādaḥ*

tasmāt—therefore; *aham*—I; *vigata*—ceased; *viklavaḥ*—agitation; *uddhariṣye*—shall deliver; *ātmānam*—myself; *āśu*—quickly; *tamaśaḥ*—from the darkness; *suhṛdā ātmānā*—with friendly intelligence; *eva*—indeed; *bhūyaḥ*—again; *yathā*—so that; *vyasanam*—plight; *etat*—this; *aneka-randhram*—entering many wombs; *mā*—not; *me*—my; *bhaviṣyat*—may occur; *upasādita*—placed (in my mind); *viṣṇu-pādaḥ*—the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu.

Therefore, without being agitated any more, I shall deliver myself from the darkness of nescience with the help of my friend, clear consciousness. Simply by keeping the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu in my mind, I shall be saved from entering into the wombs of many mothers for repeated birth and death.

PURPORT: The miseries of material existence begin from the very day when the spirit soul takes shelter in the ovum and sperm of the mother and father, they continue after he is born from the womb, and then they are further prolonged. We do not know where the suffering ends. It does not end,

however, by one's changing his body. The change of body is taking place at every moment, but that does not mean that we are improving from the fetal condition of life to a more comfortable condition. The best thing is, therefore, to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Here it is stated, *upasādita-viṣṇu-pādaḥ*. This means realization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One who is intelligent, by the grace of the Lord, and develops Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is successful in his life because simply by keeping himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he will be saved from the repetition of birth and death.

The child prays that it is better to remain within the womb of darkness and be constantly absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness than to get out and again fall a victim to the illusory energy. The illusory energy acts within the abdomen as well as outside the abdomen, but the trick is that one should remain Kṛṣṇa conscious, and then the effect of such a horrible condition cannot act unfavorably upon him. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that one's intelligence is his friend, and the same intelligence can also be his enemy. Here also the same idea is repeated: *suhṛdātmanaiva*, friendly intelligence. Absorption of intelligence in the personal service of Kṛṣṇa and full consciousness of Kṛṣṇa always are the path of self-realization and liberation. Without being unnecessarily agitated, if we take to the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by constantly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, the cycle of birth and death can be stopped for good.

It may be questioned herein how the child can be fully Kṛṣṇa conscious within the womb of the mother without any paraphernalia with which to execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is not necessary to arrange for paraphernalia to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu. The child wants to remain within the abdomen of its mother and at the same time wants to become free from the clutches of *māyā*. One does not need any material arrangement to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One can cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness anywhere and everywhere, provided he can always think of Kṛṣṇa. The mahā-mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, can be chanted even within the abdomen of one's mother. One can chant while sleeping, while working, while imprisoned in the womb, or while outside. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be checked in any circumstance. The conclusion of the child's prayer is: "Let me remain in this condition; although it is very miserable, it is better not to fall a victim to *māyā* again by going outside."

कपिल उवाच

22 एवं कृतमतिर्गर्भे दशमास्यः स्तुवन्नृषिः ।
सद्यः क्षिपत्यवाचीनं प्रसूत्यै स्रतिमारुतः ॥२२॥

kapila uvāca
evam kṛta-matir garbhe
daśa-māsyah stuvann ṛṣiḥ

sadyaḥ kṣipaty avācīnam
prasūtyai sūti-mārutah

kapilaḥ uvāca—Lord Kapila said; *evam*—thus; *kṛta-matiḥ*—desiring; *garbhe*—in the womb; *daśa-māsyah*—ten-month-old; *stuvan*—extolling; *ṛṣiḥ*—the living entity; *sadyaḥ*—at that very time; *kṣipati*—propels; *avācīnam*—turned downward; *prasūtyai*—for birth; *sūti-mārutah*—the wind for childbirth.

Lord Kapila continued: The ten-month-old living entity has these desires even while in the womb. But while he thus extols the Lord, the wind that helps parturition propels him forth with his face turned downward so that he may be born.

23 तेनावसृष्टः सहसा कृत्वावाक् शिर आतुरः ।
विनिष्क्रामति कृच्छ्रेण निरुच्छ्वासो हतस्मृतिः ॥२३॥

tenāvasṛṣṭaḥ sahasā
kṛtvāvāk śira āturaḥ
vinīṣkrāmati kṛcchreṇa
nirucchvāso hata-smṛtiḥ

tena—by that wind; *avasṛṣṭaḥ*—pushed downward; *sahasā*—suddenly; *kṛtvā*—turned; *avāk*—downward; *śiraḥ*—his head; *āturaḥ*—suffering; *vinīṣkrāmati*—he comes out; *kṛcchreṇa*—with great trouble; *nirucchvāsaḥ*—breathless; *hata*—deprived of; *smṛtiḥ*—memory.

Pushed downward all of a sudden by the wind, the child comes out with great trouble, head downward, breathless and deprived of memory due to severe agony.

PURPORT: The word *kṛcchreṇa* means "with great difficulty." When the child comes out of the abdomen through the narrow passage, due to pressure there the breathing system completely stops, and due to agony the child loses his memory. Sometimes the trouble is so severe that the child comes out dead or almost dead. One can imagine what the pangs of birth are like. The child remains for ten months in that horrible condition within the abdomen, and at the end of ten months he is forcibly pushed out. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord points out that a person who is serious about advancement in spiritual consciousness should always consider the four pangs of birth, death, disease, and old age. The materialist advances in many ways, but he is unable to stop these four principles of suffering inherent in material existence.

24 पतितो भुव्यसृञ्चिभ्रः विष्ठाभूरिव चेष्टते ।
रोरूयति गते ज्ञाने विपरीतां गतिं गतः ॥२४॥

*patito bhuvy asṛṅ-miśraḥ
viṣṭhā-bhūr iva ceṣṭate
rorūyati gate jñāne
viparītām gatim gataḥ*

patitaḥ—fallen; *bhuvi*—on the earth; *asṛk*—with blood; *miśraḥ*—smeared; *viṣṭhā-bhūḥ*—a worm; *iva*—like; *ceṣṭate*—he moves his limbs; *rorūyati*—cries loudly; *gate*—being lost; *jñāne*—his wisdom; *viparītām*—the opposite; *gatim*—state; *gataḥ*—gone to.

The child thus falls on the ground, smeared with stool and blood, and plays just like a worm germinated from the stool. He loses his superior knowledge and cries under the spell of māyā.

25 परच्छन्दं न विदुषा पुष्यमाणो जनेन सः ।
अनभिप्रेतमापन्नः प्रत्याख्यातुमनीश्वरः ॥२५॥

*para-cchandam na viduṣā
puṣyamāṇo janena saḥ
anabhipretam āpannaḥ
pratyākhyātum anīśvaraḥ*

para-chandam—the desire of another; *na*—not; *viduṣā*—understanding; *puṣyamāṇaḥ*—being maintained; *janena*—by persons; *saḥ*—he; *anabhipretam*—into undesirable circumstances; *āpannaḥ*—fallen; *pratyākhyātum*—to refuse; *anīśvaraḥ*—unable.

After coming out of the abdomen, the child is given to the care of persons who are unable to understand what he wants, and thus he is nursed by such persons. Unable to refuse whatever is given to him, he falls into undesirable circumstances.

PURPORT: Within the abdomen of the mother, the nourishment of the child was being carried on by nature's own arrangement. The atmosphere within the abdomen was not at all pleasing, but as far as the child's feeding was concerned, it was being properly done by the laws of nature. But upon coming out of the abdomen the child falls into a different atmosphere. He wants to eat one thing, but something else is given to him because no one knows his actual demand, and he cannot refuse the undesirables given to him. Sometimes the child cries for the mother's breast, but because the nurse thinks that it is due to pain within his stomach that he is crying, she supplies him some bitter medicine. The child does not want it, but he cannot refuse it. He is put in very awkward circumstances, and the suffering continues.

26 शायितोऽशुचिपर्यङ्के जन्तुः स्वेदजदूषिते ।
नेशः कण्डूयनेऽङ्गानामासनोत्थानचेष्टने ॥२६॥

*sāyito 'śuci-paryanke
jantuḥ svedaja-dūṣite
neśaḥ kaṇḍūyane 'ṅgānām
āsanothāna-ceṣṭane*

sāyitaḥ—laid down; *aśuci-paryanke*—on a foul bed; *jantuḥ*—the child; *sveda-ja*—with creatures born from sweat; *dūṣite*—infested; *na īśaḥ*—incapable of; *kaṇḍūyane*—scratching; *aṅgānām*—his limbs; *āsana*—sitting; *utthāna*—standing; *ceṣṭane*—or moving.

Laid down on a foul bed infested with sweat and germs, the poor child is incapable of scratching his body to get relief from his itching sensation to say nothing of sitting up, standing or even moving.

PURPORT: It should be noted that the child is born crying and suffering. After birth the same suffering continues, and he cries. Because he is disturbed by the germs in his foul bed, which is contaminated by his urine and stool, the poor child continues to cry. He is unable to take any remedial measure for his relief.

27 तुदन्त्यामत्वचं दंशा मशका मत्कुणादयः ।
रुदन्तं विगतज्ञानं कृमयः कृमिकं यथा ॥२७॥

*tudanty āma-tvacam daṁśā
maśakā matkuṇādayaḥ
rudantaṁ vigata-jñānaṁ
kṛmayāḥ kṛmikaṁ yathā*

tudanti—they bite; *āma-tvacam*—the baby, whose skin is soft; *daṁśāḥ*—gnats; *maśakāḥ*—mosquitoes; *matkuṇa*—bugs; *ādayaḥ*—and other creatures; *rudantaṁ*—crying; *vigata*—deprived of; *jñānam*—wisdom; *kṛmayāḥ*—worms; *kṛmikam*—a worm; *yathā*—just as.

In his helpless condition, gnats, mosquitoes, bugs and other germs bite the baby, whose skin is tender, just as smaller worms bite a big worm. The child, deprived of his wisdom, cries bitterly.

PURPORT: The word *vigata-jñānam* means that the spiritual knowledge which the child developed in the abdomen is already lost to the spell of *māyā*. Owing to various kinds of disturbances and to being out of the abdomen, the child cannot remember what he was thinking of for his salvation. It is assumed that even if a person acquires some spiritually uplifting knowledge, circumstantially he is prone to forget it. Not only children but also elderly persons should be very careful to protect their sense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and avoid unfavorable circumstances so that they may not forget their prime duty.

(continued in the next issue)

Gatherings

The people listed here hold Kṛṣṇa conscious gatherings regularly in their homes—or they'd like to start. You're invited. Just give a call to find out when and where. If you hold Kṛṣṇa conscious gatherings and you'd like to be added to the list, please send your name, city, and phone number to Gatherings, BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA.

USA

CALIFORNIA: To find out about programs in **Anaheim Hills, Buena Park, Corona, Cerritos, Diamond Bar, Granada Hills, Laguna Niguel, Long Beach, Redlands, Santa Ana, Simi Valley**, and other southern California locations, call Svayambhuva Dāsa at (310) 837-2430. **Burlingame** — Vaiṣeṣika Dāsa & Nirākula Devi Dāsi, (650) 344-2446; **Ojai** — Māyēśvara Dāsa & Urvaśi Devi Dāsi (William & Joan Roberts), (805) 640-0405; ***Penn Valley** — Rick & Judy Gross, (530) 432-0854; **Placentia** — Sri Radha Raman Temple, (714) 996-7262; **Redwood Valley** — Prasanna Yoga Ashram (Ikṣvāku Dāsa), (707) 485-5592; **San Jose/ Santa Cruz** — Akrūranātha Dāsa & Jagarīni Devi Dāsi, (408) 353-9099; **Santa Rosa** — Jagannātha Puri Dāsa & Tripurāri Devi Dāsi, Bus. phone: (707) 526-7211; **South Central Los Angeles** — Kṛṣṇa Bhavana Dāsa, (213) 295-1517

FLORIDA: **Cocoa Beach** — Bhāgavata Dharma Dāsa & Śyāmā Devi Dāsi, (407) 633-7664; **Coral Springs** — Institute for Gaudiya Vaishnavism, (954) 345-3456; **Orlando** — Raghunātha Puri Dāsa (Ron Jermakian), (407) 291-3069; ISKCON Sunday Program, Shanti Mandir, [call Dīpa: (407) 788-7009]; **Tampa** — Kṛṣṇa Mandir, (813) 273-8744; ***West Palm Beach** — Śreṣṭha Devi Dāsi, (561) 712-8470

GEORGIA: **Athens** — Guru-Gauranga Hare Krishna Center, (706) 353-8180

HAWAII: **Waimanalo Bay** — Above Heaven's Gate, (808) 259-5429

ILLINOIS: **Dekalb** — ISKCON Youth Ministry, Manu Dāsa & Jaya Rādhe Devi Dāsi, (815) 754-4563

INDIANA: **Indianapolis** — Steve W. Bausch (Śyāmasundara Dāsa), (317) 357-9051

IOWA: **Iowa City** — Dan & Sylvia Lindberg, (319) 339-7768

KANSAS: **Lawrence** — Ankotta Dāsa & Gopimātā Devi Dāsi, (913) 865-5080

KENTUCKY: **Lexington** — Mr. Mallella Prasad, (606) 323-2286; **Louisville** — Krishna House, (502) 683-9352

MARYLAND: ***Baltimore** — Dr. Jagdish & Kamud Patel (Jaya Gaurasundara & Kaumodaki Devi Dāsi), (410) 788-5947; **Potomac** — Devaprasṭha Dāsa & Padmālini Dāsi, (301) 299-1326; **Silver Spring** — Mr. & Mrs. Sankha & Jāhnavī Devi Dāsi, (301) 236-0564; Anuttama Dāsa & Rāma Tulasi Dāsi, (301) 570-6422

MASSACHUSETTS: **Quincy** — Charran Mahadeo (Caitya Guru Dāsa), (781) 471-7911

MICHIGAN: **Lansing** — Palaka Dāsa & family, (517) 484-7431

MINNESOTA: **Minnetonka** — Jimmy and Terry Devine, (612) 933-5408; **New Hope** — Shashikant Bhojraj, (612) 537-6395

MISSISSIPPI: **Cleveland** — K. P. & Bhama Sridharan, (601) 846-4132

MONTANA: **Bozeman** — Laura Marino, (406) 586-1699

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NEW MEXICO: **Albuquerque** — Suresh Vyas, (505) 833-5453; **Los Alamos** — Dr. Arvind Sharma, (505) 661-1939; **Santa Fe** — Jambavatī Devi Dāsi, (505) 466-4345

NEVADA: **Las Vegas** — Gopal De, (702) 458-6973; Dan Roberts, (702) 452-3817

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NORTH CAROLINA: **Belmont** — Kantilal & Sushila Patel (Satyavrata Dāsa & Kṛṣṇa Kumārī Devi Dāsi), (704) 825-3753; **Sandy Ridge** — Adī Kartā Dāsa & Rucīrā Devi Dāsi, (910) 593-9058

OHIO: **Athens** — contact: Krishna House, (614) 421-1661; **Cincinnati** — Braja Kumārī Dāsi, (513) 742-5725; contact: Krishna House, (614)

421-1661; **Cleveland** — Kṛṣṇanandini Devi Dāsi, (216) 681-2934 or Kāma-giri Devi Dāsi, (216) 761-3954; **Kent** — Regular programs at Kent State University (contact Krishna House, [614] 421-1661); Jim Kelley, (330) 297-5353; **Wellston** — Mādhavi Devi Dāsi, (740) 384-7102

PENNSYLVANIA: **Erie** — Lilā Kumāra Devi Dāsi, (814) 676-1791; **Norristown** — Radha Krishna Mahajan, M.D. (Kaivalya Dāsa), (215) 539-3221

TENNESSEE: **Nashville** — Nitāi Gaurasundara Dāsa (Dr. Ravi Singh), (615) 896-3425

VIRGINIA: **Charlottesville** — The Bhaktivedanta Center, Amitācāra Dāsa & Māyāpriyā Devi Dāsi, (804) 823-8223

WASHINGTON: **Pullman** — Rathi & Ashika Sewsunker, (509) 333-6525

WEST VIRGINIA: **Moundsville (New Vrindaban)** — (304) 843-1600 or 843-1409/ Fax. (304) 843-9819/ E-mail: nityodita@juno.com; **Parkersburg** — Pramod & Mala Mathur, (304) 295-8362

OTHER COUNTRIES

AUSTRALIA: **Tasmania** — David Gould, (03) 6228-2717 (Hobart); Malcolm Walsh, (03) 6343-2477 (Launceston)

BELGIUM: **Ghent** — Centrum voor Bhakti-yoga, (09) 238-3344

BRAZIL: **Curitiba** — Gaura-Natarāja Dāsa, +55 (041) 263-4163

BRITISH ISLES (Jersey): **St. Helier** — Jean Nicolle, (01534) 610081

CANADA: **Edmonton, Alberta** — Onīkāra Dāsa and Jadurāṇi Devi Dāsi (Om & Jyoti Sharma), (403) 434-7343; **London, Ontario** — Rādhika Parbhoo, (519) 474-2153; **Markham, Ontario** — Prabhupāda Dāsa (V. B. Sharma), (416) 294-9431; **Salmon Arm, B.C.** — Mukunda Mādhava Dāsa & Yaśodā Priyā Devi Dāsi, 6191 Trans-Canada Hwy. NW, Salmon Arm, B.C. V1E 4M2 (no phone); **Toronto** — Rāmānanda Rāya Dāsa & Viśākhā Devi Dāsi, (416) 297-6131

COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES: Programs are held in more than 100 cities. Contact ISKCON Moscow.

FRANCE: **Paris** — Centre Culturel Hare Krishna, (01) 40469523

GERMANY: **Hamburg** — Jayagaura Dāsa, +49 (40) 410-2848 or +49 (4105) 12347; Vedic Cultural Mission, (040) 655 23 72; **Weimar** — Katharina Rauch, Am Jakobsfriedhof 1, D-99423

GREECE: **Greater Patras Area** — Pānagādi-tīrtha Dāsa, (06) 963-2930

HUNGARY: **Liter** — Torok Zoltan, Bajesy Zs. u. 56, Liter 8196

ITALY: **Belforte del Chienti** — Centro Culturale Govinda Bhavan, Mahāvākya Dāsa & Divya Kathā Devi Dāsi, (0733) 951102; **Rome** — Hare Kṛṣṇa Forum, (06) 6832660

JAMAICA, W. INDIES: **Kingston** — Bhāgavatānanda Dāsa, (809) 925 8332; **Trelawny** — ISKCON Farm, Troy P. O.

JAPAN: **Odawara** — Jayānanda Dāsa and Bhaktin Kana, (0465) 42-3749; **Osaka** — Satsvarūpa Dāsa and Jalāṅgi Devi Dāsi, (06) 352-0729

MALAYSIA: **Pasir Gudang** — Narasiṃha Dāsa, +60 (07) 251-3822

MEXICO: **Tijuana** — Centro Cultural Hare Krishna, (66) 83-7599

NEW ZEALAND: **Hamilton** — Rāghava Caitanya Dāsa, (07) 856-7608

Tauranga, Bay of Plenty — ISKCON Tauranga, (07) 549 1807

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SOUTH AFRICA: Programs are held in more than 50 locations. For information contact one of the centers in South Africa listed on page 60.

SWEDEN: **Vasteras** — Jonas Andreasson, (021) 88007

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*New or revised listing.



Children as a Blessing

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

CARING FOR CHILDREN in the service of the Lord is a great blessing, a gift from the Lord given out of mercy. One can hardly claim to deserve such a gift, whether by educational achievements, spiritual dedication, or even just the willingness to do the work.

A blessing? Sure, children can be smiling and glowing, but just as often they're fighting and moping. Their growth in knowledge and skills, which gives parents and teachers a wave of satisfaction, depends on the parents' earning a livelihood, cleaning messes, doing laundry, soothing hurt feelings, and tackling all the other complications children bring.

"I never want to have kids!" a young woman tells me, and I think about how modern society increasingly views children as a burden. Contraception, abortion, day care, after-school care, and more, seem the keys to personal freedom. Certainly caring for children with love, making sure they're properly educated both spiritually and materially, is no simple task. We may think of all we could do with our lives without children, such as how we could have more freedom to travel or serve Lord Kṛṣṇa in more exciting ways.

Few want a job as teacher anymore. Teaching and working with children are no longer esteemed positions. Teachers are often underpaid and given substandard support. Things are so bad that even spiritually minded people, who tend to possess the good qualities and motives required of a teacher, may never

consider working with children.

Like teaching, being a parent is also unfashionable. Today's women often prefer career and prestige over motherhood. And men avoid marriage and supporting the children they father, seeing the responsibility to raise children as an impediment to fulfilling their own desires.

When society was more simple and agrarian, children were an economic asset—more hands to help with farm chores, more caretakers when the parents became old. In that pre-industrial culture, children were a practical kind of blessing, one that even a self-centered materialist could appreciate.

The ancient stories of the *Vedas* and other scriptures often tell of people who greatly desired children, who felt that having many children was a gift from God. We might be inclined to credit such an attitude simply to a different culture. "Sure, kids were fine for them, but today kids are mostly a burden."

No doubt, for a materialist caught up in modern life, children are no gift. They cost money, lots of money. They may interfere with the parents' careers, do little to help the family, and get involved in things that bring them and their families anxiety and grief.

But children with lives connected to Kṛṣṇa are radiant with a simple yet deep faith that God is a person, a cloud-colored cowherd boy who reciprocates with His devotees in loving activities. The connection such children feel with Kṛṣṇa is real and natural. It is the reality for which childhood faith is designed. And, of

course, a child sheltered from the nastier elements of the world has an innate purity.

Children devoted to Kṛṣṇa are the kind of associates described in the scriptures as best for one's own spiritual advancement. By working with children to insure their spiritual success, we gain the best hope for our own, because the qualities of our associates greatly affect our own qualities.

And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself guarantees pure devotional service, the supreme spiritual goal, to those who teach the science of God to devotees of God. That gift, the fulfillment of all genuine religion, brings true freedom—freedom from selfish desire and the suffering it brings.

Do the spiritual peace, happiness, and satisfaction that come from caring for Kṛṣṇa's children mean freedom from life's difficulties? No, the spiritual path includes a struggle too. But the quality of that struggle is quite different. The struggle to bring our children spiritual knowledge and bliss is a source of happiness because that struggle is a measure of our real love not only for the children but for God as well. When we show our love for God, He is pleased and we, as part of Him, feel pleasure too. When we truly give our children Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we can say of them, "What a blessing!"

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.



Cowgirl Sign-Off

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

WHILE GOING through some old photos recently, I found a picture of myself at age four, wearing a cowgirl outfit. To a kid growing up in the U.S. in the early 1950s, cowboys and cowgirls were the embodiment of heroic qualities. I wanted to be a cowgirl.

I gradually forgot that dream, but I kept looking for a champion to save people from injustice and violence. The champion, it turned out, was Śrīla Prabhupāda, who, unlike Western cowboys, started farms around the world where devotees could protect cows and advance spiritually in a peaceful environment. At his Gītā Nāgarī Farm in Pennsylvania, for a number of years I had the good fortune to live and take care of Kṛṣṇa's cows.

One sunny day as I herded the cows to pasture after milking, I realized, "This is it! Kṛṣṇa fulfilled my

desire! I'm a cowgirl!"

But Kṛṣṇa had fulfilled my desire in a way much better than I could have imagined.

By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement I had learned that cows have personalities and killing a cow is just as wrong as killing a human being. I had also learned one can fight injustice by setting an example of peaceful living and God consciousness. Many visitors to Gītā Nāgarī decided to give up meat-eating after seeing the cows giving milk and the oxen working in the field, after petting them and seeing how loving and gentle they are.

Finally, I had learned from Prabhupāda that having a world with peace and justice requires training people to take pride and satisfaction in offering their work to Kṛṣṇa. And one important type of work is farming and protecting cows.

I eventually had to leave Gītā Nāgarī, but I've had the opportunity to write about the importance of cow protection and farming in a Kṛṣṇa conscious society. Since 1992, part of that writing has been for this column. Now *Back to Godhead* is formulating a fresh presentation, leaving aside the columns. I've been invited to keep submitting articles, so I'm happy about that. But this column, which I share with you, is coming to an end. I wanted to note the occasion by saying thanks so much for your response and encouragement over the years and for letting me spread the word about just how wonderful it is to be a cowgirl (or cowboy) for Kṛṣṇa.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī is compiling a five-volume series of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings on varṇāśrama and farm community development.



Lord Jagannātha



s Māyāpur Home

*How a famous Deity
of Lord Kṛṣṇa came to be worshiped
in a remote Bengali village.*

Māyāpur, West Bengal, the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is home to the largest center of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. In 1978, ISKCON Māyāpur assumed responsibility for the worship of Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā in a nearby temple.

The unique deities of Jagannātha (Kṛṣṇa, “the Lord of the universe”), His brother, Balarāma, and sister, Subhadrā, have been worshiped in Purī, on the coast of Orissa, for thousands of years. According to tradition, five thousand years ago, when Lord Kṛṣṇa was present on earth, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Subhadrā were once transformed in spiritual ecstasy on hearing a devotee relate Lord Kṛṣṇa’s adolescent pastimes. The sage Nārada, who happened by, became enthralled by their ecstatic features. He asked that they allow worship of deities of them as they were now appearing. Those deities—Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā—now reside in a magnificent temple in Purī and attract pilgrims from all over India, especially from Orissa and Bengal.

The following narration tells how Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā came to be worshiped in Māyāpur.

MANY HUNDREDS of years ago, in what is now the Indian state of Orissa, a wicked man named Raktabāhu destroyed temples and created panic in the hearts of pious people. When the devotees of Lord Jagannātha in Purī learned of Raktabāhu’s rampage, they became fearful and approached Lord Jagannātha.

“O worshipful One,” the devotees prayed, “we are in great anxiety on hearing that evil Raktabāhu is destroying temples and Deities. He is traveling this way and may come at any moment to attack Your temple. If that happens, we will have to give up our lives, because we’ll never be able to tolerate any action against You.

Please save us from this danger by arranging to protect Your divine form and the temple, O almighty Lord.”

That night, Jagannātha appeared in the dream of the head priest and told him, “I am overwhelmed by the ardent love and devotion of My devotees. You all love Me more than your own self. No one can harm My divine form or My temple. Just by My will I can keep all nondevotees away. But to bless My devotees and reciprocate with them, I often willingly accept what appear to be hardships, and so My devotees’ love and attachment for Me increases many times.

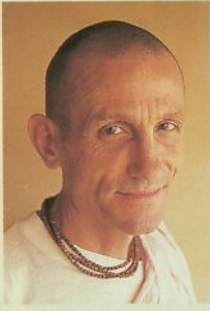
“Tomorrow, therefore, please remove Balarāma, Subhadrā Devī, and Me from

In Māyāpur, West Bengal, ninety miles north of Calcutta, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness built this temple after accepting responsibility for the worship of Lord Jagannātha (at right, inset photo), Subhadrā Devī (center), and Lord Balarāma.

Photos by Yamarāja Dāsa

Lord Jagannātha's Pastimes

The Vedic scriptures tell us that the Lord appears in the form of the Deity to accept our worship and service. So the Deity is not different from the Lord Himself. It is not surprising, then,



that the Deity sometimes does things that a mere statue could not.

The Vedic scriptures and histories of many temples tell of Deities speaking,

walking, appearing in dreams, and so on. Some Deities gain a reputation for reciprocating with Their devotees in directly perceivable ways. Lord Jagannātha in Māyāpur is one such Deity. Pañkajāṅghri Dāsa, the head priest of ISKCON Māyāpur, related the following pastimes during a festival at the Jagannātha temple.

Lord Jagannātha Goes for Walks

The people living in the first house here said that Lord Jagannātha would go for walks. They never actually saw Him, but they could hear Him, especially Saturday nights. They would see a glow coming from the temple, they could hear the jingling of ankle bells, and a sweet fragrance would fill the air.

Why Go to Purī?

Once a pilgrim traveling from the north on his way to Purī to worship Jagannātha fell asleep on the train. The Lord spoke to him in a dream.

"My dear devotee, you need not go all the way to Purī, because I reside very near here. Just get off at the next station and walk northwest. There you'll find a temple where you can have My audience to your full satisfaction."

The pilgrim did as instructed and happily found his way to this temple.

Lord Jagannātha Refuses to Leave Some brāhmaṇas from another

village felt they could worship Lord Jagannātha better in their village, so one day they stole Him from the temple. While carrying the Lord across the fields, they all suddenly felt the need to answer nature's call, so they put Him down. Upon returning, they could no longer lift Him. They brought more men to help, but they just could not budge the Lord.

They finally realized He didn't want to leave, so They returned to the temple and regretfully told the priest, "Your Deity is out in the field and wants to come back."

So two priests went and picked Him up and carried Him back home.

The Lord Brings Medicine

One time there was a severe epidemic in this area. A lot of people were getting sick, and some of them were dying. Lord Jagannātha appeared in a dream to the *pūjārī* and told him of a medicine that would cure the disease. In the morning the priest called all the villagers and told them to gather the ingredients to make the medicine. But they were missing one ingredient, which doesn't grow in this area.

Later in the day, a small boy came with a branch and gave it to the priest's wife. When the priest returned and saw the branch, he became very excited.

"Oh! That's just what we needed. Who brought this?"

"A very charming little boy brought it," the wife replied. "I don't think He was from this village; I've never seen Him before."

The villagers made the medicine, and everyone was cured. From that day Lord Jagannātha has earned great respect here, even from the non-Hindus.

Missing Tulasī Leaves

When the temple was first handed over to ISKCON, we used to bring the deities' noon meal from Māyāpur Chandrodaya Mandir [the main ISKCON temple]. At that time we didn't have enough devo-

tees to keep cooks here. Riding a bicycle, the *pūjārī* would carry the meal here and offer it to Lord Jagannātha.

One day, while setting the meal before Lord Jagannātha, the *pūjārī* realized he had forgotten to bring *tulasī* leaves, which must be placed on each dish.

"What should I do?" the *pūjārī* thought. "Should I go and pick some *tulasī* leaves and put them on the dishes? Since the door is broken, if I go then a dog or some children might come in."

Thinking like this, he apologized to Lord Jagannātha for not being able to offer any *tulasī* leaves.

After making the offering, he sat outside the door and chanted mantras while the deities ate. Upon opening the doors, he saw in the middle of the plate of rice a big branch of *tulasī* leaves.

"They Have Nice Prasādam Down There"

When ISKCON was first given this temple and land, there were many joint owners, and most of them had already signed it over to us. But [ISKCON Māyāpur leader] Jayapatāka Swami stressed that he didn't want full worship to begin until everyone had signed the deeds.

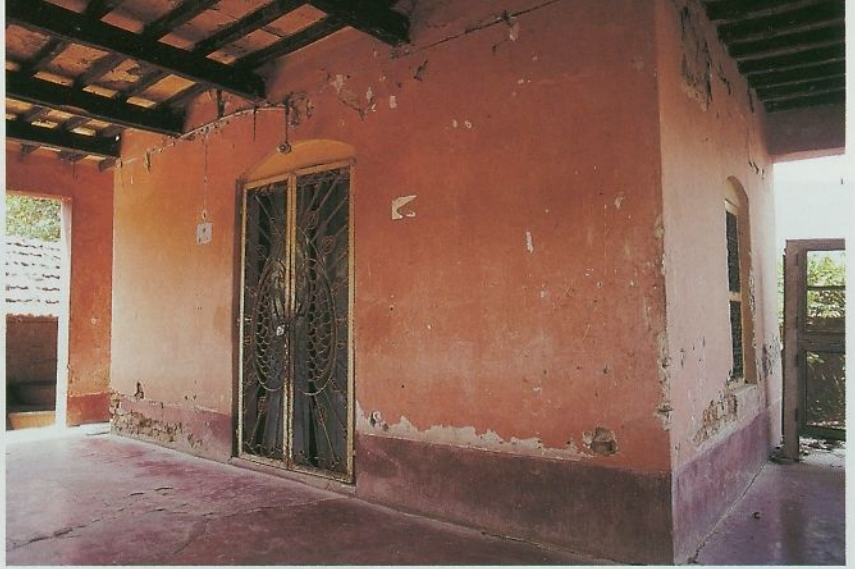
Unknown to him, the *pūjārī* had already been offering meals brought from the main temple. So upon hearing this instruction, the *pūjārī* stopped the offerings. But the next night he dreamed that when he was going to wake the deities, he found they were not there. Frantic, he ran outside and spotted them walking across the fields.

"Jagannātha! Baladeva! Subhadrā!" he shouted, "Where are You going?"

"You are not feeding us, so we are going to the Māyāpur Chandrodaya Mandir," they replied. "They have nice *prasādam* there, lots of *prasādam*."

When Jayapatāka Swami heard about the dream, he instructed the *pūjārī* to continue taking the deities their meals.

When ISKCON took over the worship, the deities were living in this temple (right). In 1985, during ISKCON's annual world convention in Māyāpur, devotees carry Lord Jagannātha in procession (below) from the old temple to the new one.



the temple and set out for Bengal. You should take the path through the jungle to avoid Raktabāhu, who is coming by the main road. Do not fear. I will always protect you.”

The Lord then disappeared from the dream. The priest woke up and spread the message.

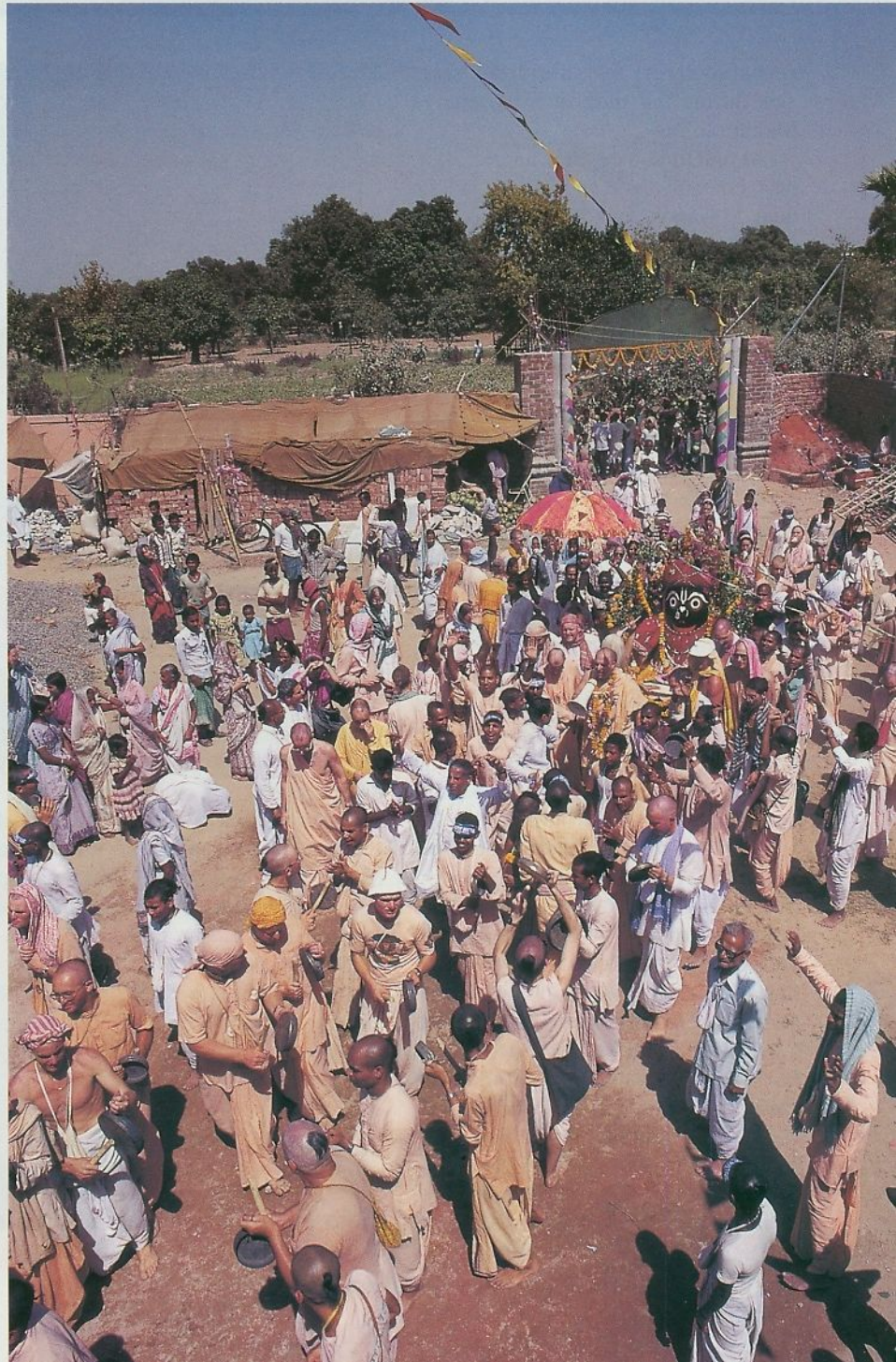
The devotees at once began to arrange the Lord's journey. The traditional system in Jagannātha Purī is that devotees from different sections of society are assigned specific services for the Lord. Devotees from the group known as the *śābaras* always carry the deities when they leave the temple to attend certain festivals. So when the Lord's message reached the *śābaras*, they arranged to travel the next morning.

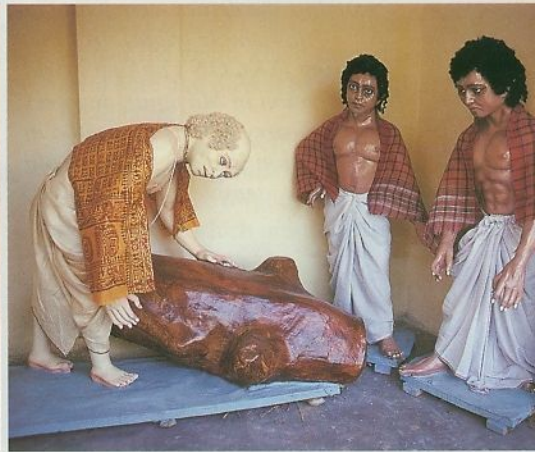
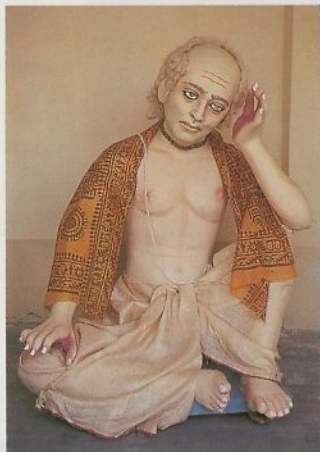
The *śābaras* walked with the deities all day, and just before dusk they settled in a suitable place. They collected fruits, flowers, and leaves from the jungle and worshiped Their Lordships. The next morning, after worshiping the deities, the *śābaras* started for their next destination. In this way they spent eleven days. On the twelfth day they arrived in Simantadvīpa, one of the nine islands of Navadvīpa Dhāma, the holy land of Lord Caitanya's pastimes, in West Bengal.

That night, Lord Jagannātha appeared in the dream of the *śābaras* and expressed His desire to settle on that very spot. It was a most suitable place, He said, transcendental in all respects. The *śābara* devotees fulfilled the Lord's desire to remain there.

THE DEITIES DISCOVERED

The *śābaras* served the Lord for generations. But gradually the deities and the temple disappeared. The Lord never left the place, however, as was





revealed later, five hundred years ago, during the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

At that time, a devotee named Jagadīṣa Ganguli lived in a small village near Māyāpur. Jagadīṣa was a highly elevated devotee, and even though very old, every year he would walk nine hundred kilometers to attend Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā ("chariot festival") in Purī.

One day Jagadīṣa was stricken with a disease that left him blind. When he realized he could no longer see the divine forms of Lord Caitanya and the Jagannātha Deities, he became depressed. Worse yet, his friends considered the annual pilgrimage to Purī too long and dangerous for him and refused to take him with them. Jagadīṣa stayed home in constant lamentation and despondency.

Then one night Lord Jagannātha appeared to Jagadīṣa in a dream. The Lord told him that the next morning, when he would go for his daily bath in the Ganges, a log would touch his head and restore his vision. The Lord said that Jagadīṣa should take the log and go to a nearby village where a devotee-carpenter lived. He should ask the carpenter to make a Deity of Lord Jagannātha. The Lord said that the carpenter would refuse the work because he was a leper and had deformed hands. Jagadīṣa would have to insist and convince the leper-carpenter to do the work. And when the job would be finished, the Lord assured him, the carpenter's leprosy would vanish.

Just as the Lord had predicted, when

Jagadīṣa bathed in the Ganges the next morning a log touched his head and restored his vision. He took the log to a nearby village, where he searched until he found a leper-carpenter. Jagadīṣa implored the leper to carve a Deity of Lord Jagannātha from the wood, but the carpenter refused.

The leper showed Jagadīṣa his deformed fingers and asked him, "How can I carve the divine form of the Lord with these hands?"

But Jagadīṣa insisted. He told the leper that his leprosy would be cured once he finished the carving. Finally the leper agreed.

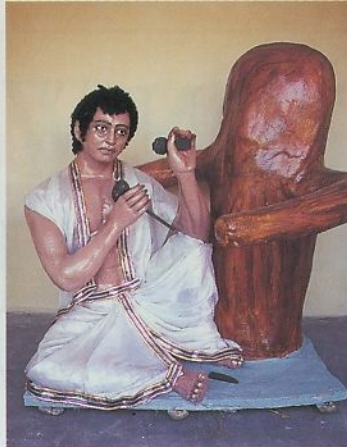
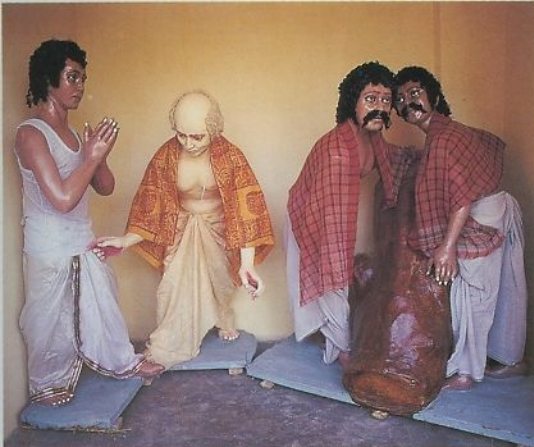
Jagadīṣa stayed with the leper as he worked and saw him suffering terribly. Blood and puss oozed from the stumps that were once his fingers, and he kept wanting to quit the work. But Jagadīṣa encouraged him and enabled him to forget his agony long enough to finish the Deity of Lord Jagannātha. The moment he finished, his leprosy disappeared.

Jagadīṣa took the Deity to the site of the present Jagannātha temple in Māyāpur and established His worship there. A few nights later, Jagadīṣa had another dream. This time Lord Jagannātha told him to have the same carpenter make neem-wood deities of Balarāma and Subhadrā Devī. Jagadīṣa did so and installed them in the temple next to Lord Jagannātha.

A NEW TEMPLE

After Jagadīṣa passed away, the worship of the Deities diminished over





A diorama exhibition (above) on the temple grounds depicts the history of the deities' appearance in Māyāpur. At left, His Holiness Bhakti Cāru Swami, a leader of ISKCON Māyāpur, worships the deities in their new temple.

the years. Eventually Jagannātha, Subhadrā, and Balarāma were forgotten, and their temple fell down around them. Some sixty years ago, residents of the nearby village noticed a beautiful unique blue flower growing on top of a termite hill. When they went near the hill, they heard a voice calling, "Please give Me water. I'm thirsty."

The villagers unearthed the deities of Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā. Although the deities had been residing in the middle of a termite hill, their wood was unharmed. The worship started again.

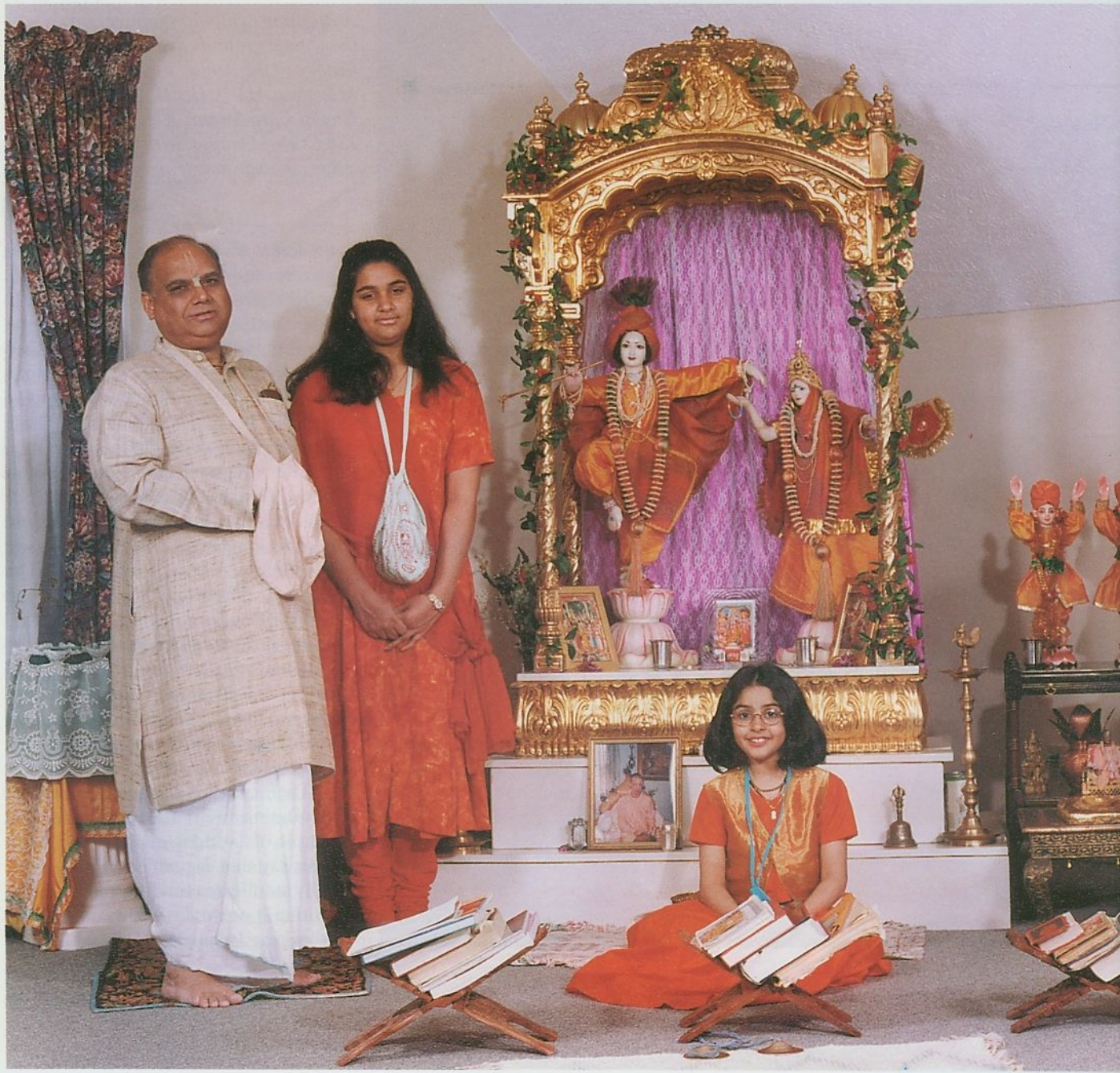
In 1978 Lord Jagannātha's aging *pūjārī* (priest) felt unable to go on for long with the worship of his beloved deities. He gave the temple and property to ISKCON, which built a gorgeous temple surrounded by flower gardens and mango groves.

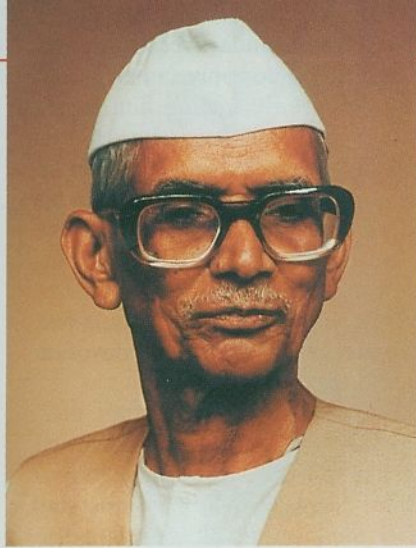
The managers of the temple invite all pilgrims to Śrī Māyāpur to visit the temple of Lord Jagannātha. The scriptures say that Jagannātha Purī is eternally manifest in this holy place, and by visiting it one gains the same benefits as visiting Jagannātha Purī. ☀

CARRYING ON HIS FATHER'S TRADITION

After learning from his father, a young Indian doctor finds more spiritual guidance in a new land.

by Dr. Ravi Singh





WHEN DR. RAVI SINGH WAS a young man growing up in a village near Naimisaranya, Uttar Pradesh, India, his father, Dr. Chandraprakash Singh, insisted he and his siblings rise early, bathe, and attend to their Deities before breakfast. In his family of Vaiṣṇava *kṣatriyas*, Dr. Singh Sr. was particularly devout. He was the first in his family to break the tradition of hunting game and eating meat.

“My father brought us a book about Lord Caitanya,” Ravi says, “and from it we learned how the Lord ate only *prasādam*. In our house everything cooked was vegetarian, and it was offered to the Lord.”

Ravi vividly remembers his father reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the family each morning. Young Ravi could not understand why his father, a renowned scholar, seemed so moved by the reading.

Later, as a medical student in Jodhpur, Ravi organized a philosophy and religion club. Some faculty and students complained, concerned about protecting the university’s scientific objectivity. But Ravi was determined, and the controversial club continued.

In 1970 Ravi’s father returned from a visit to Calcutta with a large book entitled *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Ravi’s father praised the Western-born Vaiṣṇavas who had given him the book, but Ravi was skeptical; he’d become committed to the idea of an impersonal God.

WESTERN HELL

Ravi’s father encouraged him to go to America to further his medical training. So Ravi went West in 1975, only to find America “pure hell.” He found the materialistic values of the Western society shockingly foreign and mindless. After a difficult year, he was surprised

to encounter Western-born devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Washington, D.C. Although he did not at first grasp the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he found himself strongly drawn to the devotional services at the Washington ISKCON temple. He attended often.

“Theoretical understanding of God came from my family,” Ravi says, “but my first practical understanding came from ISKCON devotees. I was accustomed to hearing so many *sādhus* in India give their opinions. But when I started listening to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s tapes, I quickly noted that he never said, ‘I think.’ He always quoted scripture to back up his points. He compared himself to a postman who delivers the message without adulteration. To me this was the biggest realization: don’t manufacture; just repeat what Kṛṣṇa said.”

In July 1976, Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Washington. By now Ravi was an avid reader of his books, and he eagerly attended Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lectures, morning walks with disciples, and informal talks with guests. Śrīla Prabhupāda addressed Ravi in Hindi, and Ravi felt blessed. Once, as Ravi was about to enter the room where Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking to a gathering of devotees and guests, the temple president gently suggested that Ravi, who had attended every event, stay outside to make room for others. As Ravi sat on the doorstep chanting, a devotee suddenly stepped out and said, “Śrīla Prabhupāda would like you to come in and translate a Hindi letter aloud for him.”

Ravi eagerly complied, then kept his seat in the room. He took the opportunity to ask Śrīla Prabhupāda a question.

“My father is a scholar and a devotee, and he has just retired. Could he offer some service?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda inquired about his

The Singh family (left) has dedicated a large room in their home for use as a temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Naṭabara (Rādhā with Kṛṣṇa, “the best dancer”). Above: Dr. Chandraprakash Singh, Dr. Ravi Singh’s father.

age. Ravi replied that his father was 65.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was 75 at that time, replied, "He is too young to retire. He has a lot of Hindi translation work to do for me."

Ravi's father was pleased to offer this service, and equally pleased to see his son taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness so seriously. He told his son he had never expected him to become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa in America.

With encouragement from Ravi and his father, other family members began practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In 1981, Ravi accepted formal initiation into Kṛṣṇa consciousness from Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami, an American-born disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and received the name Nitāi Gaurasundara Dāsa ("servant of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda").

ARRANGED MARRIAGE

In 1983, while Nitāi Gaurasundara was still in America, his family arranged his marriage to Meena, a young woman from West Bengal. He wrote that he could marry Meena only if she became a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Meena was unsure. Her family's religious tradition was a little different, and her only contact with ISKCON had come when she was twelve, when ISKCON leader Jayapatāka Swami had visited her village. She had been impressed with

his fluent Bengali but was uncertain about foreign-born devotees.

Meena began reading the Kṛṣṇa conscious literature Nitāi Gaurasundara sent her, and she too became impressed with Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. She accepted initiation and received the spiritual name Matsya Devī Dāsī. In time they married and settled in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where Nitāi Gaurasundara is today a clinical psychologist specializing in care for the elderly.

"In my practice," says Nitāi Gaurasundara, "I'm constantly applying the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. My patients are so afraid of death and are suffering greatly because of attachment to sensual pleasure. Whether it's schizophrenia or depression, the problems always trace back to a false identification with the body."

EXEMPLARY PASSING

Recently while visiting Nitāi Gaurasundara, Dr. Singh Sr. became seriously ill. After a surgery proved unsuccessful, Dr. Singh Sr. asked to stay at his son's home rather than be on life support at the hospital. At Nitāi Gaurasundara's home several devotees would visit and read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to him, fulfilling the dying man's desire. Before he passed away, his physician commented that Dr. Singh's religious

conviction was so strong, his spirituality so advanced, that it was "infectious."

Nitāi Gaurasundara recalls: "A couple of hours before my father passed away, I was encouraging him to get better and go back to India. He was too weak to speak, but he looked up and pointed to the sky. Then with his frail hand he wrote two lines in Hindi: 'I want the dust of Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet on my forehead. The lake of devotion will blossom in every home and courtyard and the flower of devotion will flourish.'

"While watching my father die," Nitāi Gaurasundara says, "I learned that, like it or not, we all have to prepare for death. Somehow we must stay Kṛṣṇa conscious, as he did. I realize that the association of devotees is very important at all times, but especially at the critical time of death.

"Living far from an ISKCON temple as we do, we try hard to associate with devotees. As soon as you go out of the house, there is so much temptation, not only by materialism but by deviant philosophies. My Guru Mahārāja suggested we establish a Deity of Kṛṣṇa in our home and hold programs there, so we have been doing that for the past twelve years. My father used to greatly value the visiting devotees who came to help out with our programs.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda said that his spiritual master fulfilled the spiritual ideas inculcated in him by his father. My father also gave me a basic understanding of God, and I was attracted to devotees because of this. Back in India I was involved with impersonalism, but Prabhupāda saved me. I am sure that if I had stayed in India I would have been a pious vegetarian who would be afraid of God but ignorant of His loving service. I'm indebted to my father, my Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and many, many devotees."

Nitāi Gaurasundara's three children (Śruti, 13; Abhiṣeka, 12; and Mañjari, 9) are also carrying on their father's tradition. Recently Abhiṣeka's social studies teacher asked him to prepare a report on a person of his choice who had changed the world. Abhiṣeka chose Śrīla Prabhupāda. The teacher appreciated his work and put it on display in the school hallway so other students could learn about Prabhupāda. ❀

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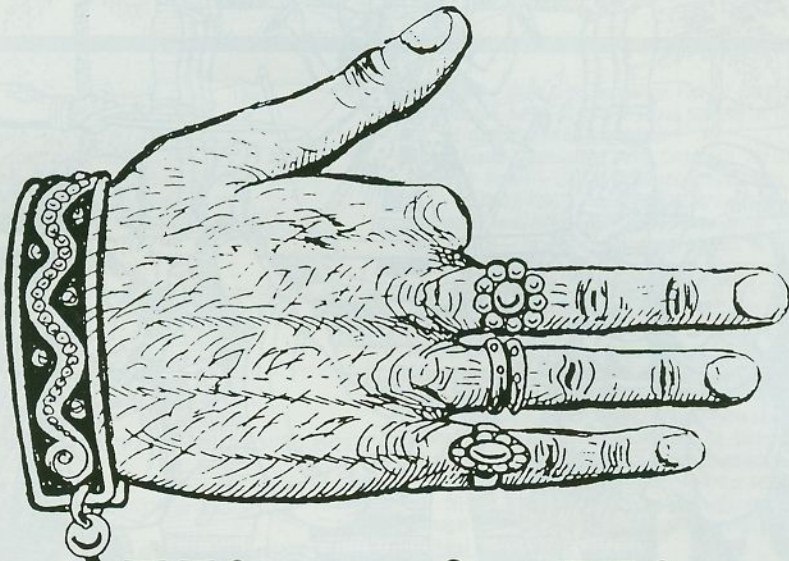
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Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION: *Ha-ray, krish-na, raw-ma* (rhymes with "drama")





The King's Finger

Retold and illustrated by Ananta Śakti Dāsa

ONCE UPON A TIME there lived a king and his minister. The king, though strong and generous, possessed a short temper. His minister was wise, patient, and devoted to God. In everyday affairs the king usually thought he was the one making everything happen. The minister, however, saw the hand of God everywhere. Despite these differences, the king appreciated the minister, and they were firm friends.

To protect his citizens from dangerous beasts, the king, armed with bow and arrow, would often ride into the forest with a small party of men. His minister would always go with them.

One day while they were out hunting, the king proudly charged through a thicket on his fine steed. But a large cobra slithered in front of the horse, spitting poison from its fangs. The frightened horse kicked up violently, hurtling the king through the air. The king crashed to the ground beside the snake. The snake promptly sank its fangs into the king's finger, and then slithered back

into the undergrowth.

The king realized that unless his finger was quickly removed, the poison would travel through his body, reach his heart, and kill him. Without hesitating, he unsheathed his sharp sword and chopped off his finger.

The king's minister bandaged his hand and tried to pacify him with wise words.

"Take this as simply the mercy of the Lord. Accept it as part of His plan."

The king, shaken and upset, did not appreciate the minister's view.

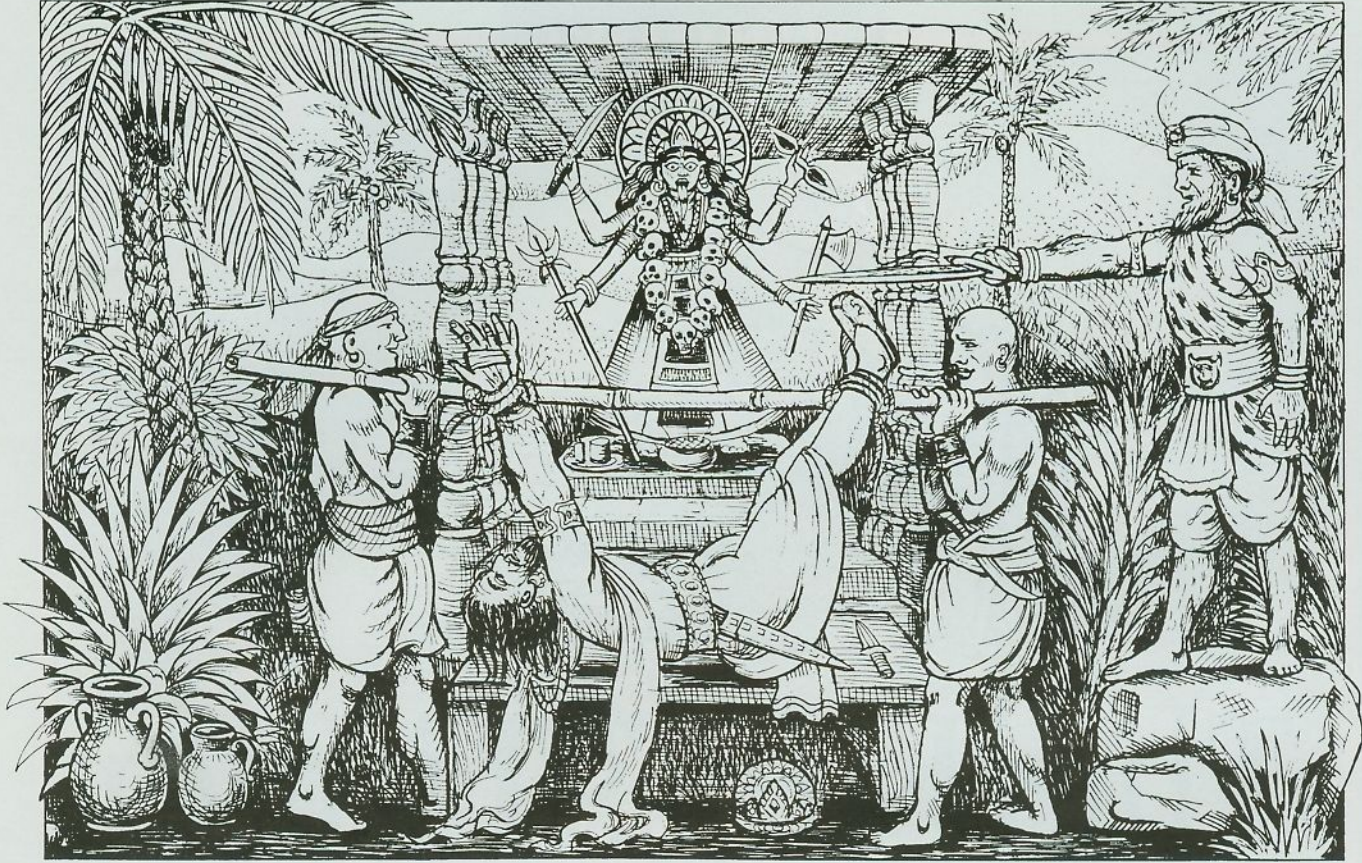
"Be quiet!" he snapped.

But the minister continued to speak of the Lord's mercy.

This enraged the king so much that he ordered his men, "Take this foolish minister back to the city and cast him in the dungeon."

Determined not to change his hunting plan for the day, the king, his hand neatly bandaged, continued alone through the forest searching for wild beasts.

A short while later he was ambushed by a gang of bandits. They captured and bound



**Their leader, grinning broadly, spoke in a gruff voice.
 “This is your lucky day; I am going to sacrifice you to the Goddess Kālī.
 It’s not everyday she enjoys royal blood!”**

him. Their leader, grinning broadly, spoke in a gruff voice.

“This is your lucky day; I am going to sacrifice you to the Goddess Kālī.* It’s not every day she enjoys royal blood!”

The king, however, considered himself most unlucky. Bound with ropes, he had no way of saving himself from a bloody death on Kālī’s altar.

Pointing at the king, the leader ordered his men, “Our human offering should be stripped, washed, and wrapped in a new cloth.”

*Goddess Kālī, the controller of the material energy, neither wants nor accepts human sacrifices. Unfortunately, uncivilized, wicked persons sometimes concoct such a method of “worship.”

As the men stripped him, one cried out, “Look, there’s a finger missing.”

Inspecting the king’s hand, the leader of the gang was disappointed.

“We cannot possibly offer an incomplete human to Kālī,” he grunted. “Release him, you fools, and find someone else.”

Unexpectedly freed from his bonds, the king mounted his horse and sped back to the city. Going straight to the dungeons, he ordered the release of the minister. Embracing his friend, the king apologized.

“By the mercy of the Lord I lost a finger. And as a result I had my life spared!”

After explaining the incredible incident to his minister, the king paused thoughtfully.

“I’m still a little puzzled. If every-

thing that happens is the mercy of the Lord, what is the point in your being thrown in the dungeon?”

With a knowing twinkle in his eye, the minister replied, “If you hadn’t ordered me to be thrown in the dungeon, I would have been with you when you were captured. Finding me with no parts missing, the gang would undoubtedly have used me as the human offering.”

The king and his minister laughed loudly, tears streaming down their faces. Glad to be alive, they agreed that it certainly was all the mercy of the Lord. ☀

Excerpted from *Vedic Stories from Ancient India*. Available from The Hare Kṛṣṇa Bazaar, pages 63–66.

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Patna, Bihar — Rajendra Nagar Road No. 12, 800 016/ Tel. (0612) 50765
Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapur Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (0212) 667259
Puri, Orissa — Sipsasurbull Puri, Dist. Puri/ Tel. (06752) 24592 or 24594

- Puri, Orissa** — Bhakti Kuthi, Swargadwar, Puri/ Tel. (06752) 23740
◆ **Secunderabad, A.P.** — 27 St. John's Road, 500 026/ Tel. (040) 780-5232/ Fax: (040) 781-4021/
E-mail: sahadeva.brs@com.bbt.se
Silchar, Assam — Ambikapatti, Silchar, Cachar Dist., 788 004
Siliguri, W. Bengal — ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Gitalpara, Siliguri 734406/
Tel. (0353) 426619/ Fax: (0353) 526130/ E-mail: iskcon@dtc.vsnl.net.in
Sri Rangam, Tamil Nadu — 16A Thiruvadi Street, Trichy, 620 006/ Tel. (0431) 433945
Surat, Gujarat — Rander Rd., Jahangirpura 395 005/ Tel. (0261) 685516 or 685891
Surat, Gujarat — Bhaktivedanta Rajavidyalaya, Krishnalok, Surat-Bardoli Rd. Gangapur,
P.O. Gangadhara, Dist. Surat, 394 310/ Tel. (0261) 667075
Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum), Kerala — T.C. 224/1485, WC Hospital Rd., Thycaud,
695 014/ Tel. (0471) 328197/ E-mail: sarvaisvarya.jps.com.bbt.se
◆ **Tirupati, A.P.** — K.T. Road, Vinayaka Nagar, 517 507/ Tel. (08574) 30114 or 30009
Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, Prabhupada Marg, Prabhupada
Nagar, Udhampur 182 101/ Tel. (01992) 70298
Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat — ISKCON Hare Krishna Land, 338 120/ Tel. (02692) 30796
Varanasi, U.P. — Annapurna Nagar, Vidyapith Rd., Varanasi 221 001/ Tel. (0542) 362617
◆ **Vrindavana, U.P.** — Krishna-Balaram Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti,
Mathura Dist., 281 124/ Tel. (0565) 442478 or 442355/ Fax: (0565) 442596/
E-mail: 105146.1570@compuserve.com; (Gurukula) vgrukula@com.bbt.se
Warangal — Mulugu Road, Aiyappa Pidiipaly, Warangal 506007/ Tel. (08712) 26182

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Ahmedabad District, Gujarat** — Hare Krishna Farm, Katwada (contact ISKCON Ahmedabad)
Assam — Karnamadhu, Dist. Karimganj
Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78 Krishnanagar Dham, Dist. Gadchiroli, 442 603/ Tel. (0218) 623473
Hyderabad, A.P. — P. O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Tq., R.R. Dist., 501 401/ Tel. 552924
★ **Indore, M.P.** — Hare Krishna Vihar, Nipania Village, Indore/ Tel. (731) 572794
Karnataka — Bhaktivedanta Eco-Village, Nagodi P.O., Voller Valley, Hosanagar Taluq, Shivmoga
District, Karnataka 577 425 (mail: Garuda Guha, Kollur, D.K. District, Karnataka 576 220)
Mayapur, West Bengal — (contact ISKCON Mayapur)

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

- Calcutta** — Hare Krishna Karma-Free Confectionary, 6 Russel Street, Calcutta 700 071

OTHER COUNTRIES

- ★ **Cebu, Philippines** — Hare Krishna Paradise, 231 Pagsabungan Road, Basak, Manduae City, Cebu/
Tel. (63) 32-345-3590
Chittagong, Bangladesh — Caitanya Cultural Society, Sri Pandurik Dham, Mekhala, Hathzari
(mail: GPO Box 877, Chittagong)/ Tel. +88 (031) 225822
Colombo, Sri Lanka — 188 New Chetty St., Colombo 13/ Tel. +94 (01) 433325/ E-mail: iskcon@sit.lk
Dhaka, Bangladesh — 5 Chandra Mohon Basak St., Banagram, Dhaka 1203/ Tel. +880 (02) 236249
◆ **Hong Kong** — 27 Chatham Road South, 6/F, Kowloon/ Tel. +852 (2) 739-6818/
Fax: +852 (2) 724-2186/ E-mail: iskconhk@intercon.net
Jakarta, Indonesia — P.O. Box 2694, Jakarta Pusat 10001/ Tel. +62 (021) 489-9646
Jessore, Bangladesh — Nitai Gan Mandir, Kathakhali Bazaar, P. O. Panjia, Dist. Jessore
Jessore, Bangladesh — Rupa-Santanana Smriti Tirtha, Ramsara, P. O. Magura Hat, Dist. Jessore
Kathmandu, Nepal — Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu (mail: P. O. Box 3520)/ Tel. +977 (01) 371743/
Fax: +977 (01) 414409 (Attn: ISKCON)
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — Lot 9901, Jalan Awan Jawa, Taman Yari, off 5th Mile, Jalan Kelang
Lama, Petaling/ Tel. +60 (03) 780-7355, -7360, or -7369/ Fax: +60 (03) 781-1644/
E-mail: simheswar.jps.com.bbt.se
Manila, Philippines — 92 Champagnat St., Corner Narra St., Marikina Heights, Marikina City/
E-mail: irma@skynet.net
Phnom Penh, Kampuchea — 49ZE Preah Sotheasok St., Sankat Tunle Bassac, Khan Chamcar Mon/
Fax: +855 (023) 721742
Taipei, Taiwan — (mail: c/o ISKCON Hong Kong)
Tel Aviv, Israel — 16 King George St. (mail: P. O. Box 48163, Tel Aviv 61480)/
Tel. +972 (03) 528-5475 or 629-9011/ Fax: +972 (03) 629-9011
Tokyo, Japan — 4-19-6 Subaru 1F, Kamatikada, Nakano, Tokyo 164-0002/ Tel. +81 (03) 5343-9147/
Fax: +81 (03) 5343-3812
Yogyakarta, Indonesia — P.O. Box 25, Babarsari YK, DIY

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Indonesia** — Govinda Kunja (contact ISKCON Jakarta)
Malaysia — Jalan Sungai Manik, 36000 Teluk Intan, Perak/ Tel. +63 (032) 83254
ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — Govinda's, 16-1 Jalan Bonus Enam, Masjid India/
Tel. +60 (03) 780-7355, -7360, or -7369

NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

- Calgary, Alberta** — 313 Fourth Street N.E., T2E 3S3/ Tel. (403) 265-3302/ Fax: (403) 547-0795/
E-mail: sahadevs@cadvision.com

Note for international phone calls: When dialing from outside the country, drop the "0" that begins most city codes (the numbers shown in parentheses). **Exceptions:**

For Spain, the number to drop is the initial "9," for Russia, "8." Telephone numbers include country codes, identified by a +. To save space, we've skipped the codes for North America (1) and India (91).

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

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

- Edmonton, Alberta** — 9353 35th Ave., T6E 5R5/ Tel. (403) 439-9999/
E-mail: jsharma@mail.awinc.com
- Montreal, Quebec** — 1626 Pie IX Boulevard, H1V 2C5/ Tel. & fax: (514) 521-1301/
E-mail: iskconmontreal@sprint.ca
- ◆ **Ottawa, Ontario** — 212 Somerset St. E., K1N 6V4/ Tel. (613) 565-6544/
Fax: (613) 565-2575/ E-mail: 102623.2417@compuserve.com
- Regina, Saskatchewan** — 1279 Retailack St., S4T 2H8/ Tel. (306) 525-1640
- ◆ **Toronto, Ontario** — 243 Avenue Rd., M5R 2J6/ Tel. (416) 922-5415/ Fax: (416) 922-1021/
E-mail: toronto@com.bbt.se
- ◆ **Vancouver, B.C.** — 5462 S.E. Marine Dr., Burnaby V5J 3G8/ Tel. (604) 433-9728/
Fax: (604) 431-7251/ E-mail: jaygo@direct.ca; Govinda's Restaurant:
Tel. (604) 433-2428/ Fax: (604) 431-7251/ E-mail: jaygo@direct.ca

RURAL COMMUNITY

Ashcroft, B.C. — Saranagati Dhama (mail: P.O. Box 99, V0K 1A0, attn: Uttama Devi Dasi)/
Tel. (250) 453-2397/ Fax: (250) 453-2622 [attn: (250) 453-2397]/
E-mail: devadeva@mail.netshop.net

U.S.A.

- ◆ **Atlanta, Georgia** — 1287 South Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E., 30306/ Tel. (404) 378-9234/
Fax: (404) 373-3381/ E-mail: 76415.175@compuserve.com
- Austin, Texas** — 807-A E. 30th St., 78705/ Tel. (512) 320-0372/ Fax: (512) 320-0477/
E-mail: 74024.3203@compuserve.com
- Baltimore, Maryland** — 200 Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville, 21228/ Tel. (410) 744-4069
or 719-6738/ Tel. & fax: (410) 744-1624
- Berkeley, California** — 2334 Stuart Street, 94705/ Tel. (510) 540-9215/ E-mail: berkeley@com.org
- Boise, Idaho** — 1615 Martha St., 83706/ Tel. (208) 344-4274/
E-mail: arun_gupta@hp-boise-om.hp.com
- Boston, Massachusetts** — 72 Commonwealth Ave., 02116/ Tel. (617) 247-8611/
Fax: (617) 266-3744/ E-mail: iskoston@aol.com
- **Chicago, Illinois** — 1716 W. Lunt Ave., 60626/ Tel. (773) 973-0900/ Fax: (773) 973-0526/
E-mail: chicago@iskcon.net
- Columbus, Ohio** — 379 W. Eighth Ave., 43201/ Tel. (614) 421-1661/ Fax: (614) 294-0545/
E-mail: malati.acbsp@com.bbt.se
- ◆ **Dallas, Texas** — 5430 Gurley Ave., 75223/ Tel. (214) 827-6330/ Fax: (214) 823-7264/
E-mail: bkkrishnas@aol.com
- ◆ **Denver, Colorado** — 1400 Cherry St., 80220/ Tel. (303) 333-5461/ Fax: (303) 321-9052/
E-mail: nmd@com.org
- ◆ **Detroit, Michigan** — 383 Lenox Ave., 48215/ Tel. (313) 824-6000/ Fax: (313) 822-3748/
E-mail: fmansion@flash.net
- Eugene, Oregon** — 426 E. 12th Ave., 97401/ Tel. (541) 345-9053/ E-mail: eugene@com.bbt.se
- Gainesville, Florida** — 214 N.W. 14th St., 32603/ Tel. (352) 336-4183/ E-mail: krishna@afn.org
- Gurabo, Puerto Rico** — P.O. Box 1338, 00778/ Tel. (787) 737-3917/ E-mail: nrshingha@aol.com
- Hartford, Connecticut** — 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, 06108/ Tel. & fax: (860) 289-7252/
E-mail: bhaktirasa@poboxes.com
- ◆ **Honolulu, Hawaii** — 51 Coelho Way, 96817/ Tel. (808) 595-3947/ Fax: (808) 595-3433/
E-mail: iskcon@aloha.net
- Houston, Texas** — 1320 W. 34th St., 77018/ Tel. (713) 686-4482/ Fax: (713) 686-0669/
E-mail: mbalar@hal-pc.org
- ◆ **Laguna Beach, California** — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (714) 494-7029/ Fax: (714) 497-9707/
E-mail: jagai@rupa.com
- Long Island, New York** — 197 S. Ocean Avenue, Freeport, 11520/ Tel. (516) 223-4909/
E-mail: nimainitai@aol.com
- ◆ **Los Angeles, California** — 3764 Watseka Ave., 90034/ Tel. (310) 836-2676/
Fax: (310) 839-2715/ E-mail: svavasa.acbsp@com.bbt.se
- ◆ **Miami, Florida** — 3220 Virginia St., 33133 (mail: P.O. Box 337, Coconut Grove, FL 33233)/
Tel. (305) 442-7218/ Fax: (305) 444-7145/ E-mail: kesava.swami@com.bbt.se
- New Orleans, Louisiana** — 2936 Esplanade Ave., 70119/ Tel. (504) 486-3583/
E-mail: kmkdas@aol.com
- ◆ **New York, New York** — 305 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, 11217/ Tel. (718) 855-6714/
Fax: (718) 875-6127/ E-mail: ramabhadr@aol.com
- New York, New York** — 26 Second Avenue, 10003 (mail: P.O. Box 2509, New York, NY 10009)/
Tel. (212) 420-1130/ E-mail: dayananda@msn.com
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — 41 West Allens Lane, 19119/ Tel. (215) 247-4600/
Fax: (215) 247-8702/ E-mail: vrndavana@netreach.net
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — 1408 South St., 19148/ Tel. (215) 985-9335/
E-mail: savecows@aol.com
- Phoenix, Arizona** — 100 S. Weber Dr., Chandler, 85226/ Tel. (602) 705-4900/ Fax: (602) 705-4901
- Portland, Oregon** — 5137 N.E. 42 Ave., 97218/ Tel. (503) 287-3252/
Fax: (503) 284-8350 (call first)/ E-mail: ksetra@aol.com
- ◆ **St. Louis, Missouri** — 3926 Lindell Blvd., 63108/ Tel. (314) 535-8085/ Fax: (314) 535-0672/
E-mail: stl@com.org
- San Diego, California** — 1030 Grand Ave., Pacific Beach, 92109/ Tel. (619) 483-2500/
Fax: (619) 483-0941/ E-mail: dmraj@ix.netcom.com
- San Jose, California** — 2679 New Jersey Ave., 95124/ Tel. (408) 559-3197
- Seattle, Washington** — 1420 228th Ave. S.E., Issaquah, 98027/ Tel. (206) 391-3293/
Fax: (206) 868-8928/ E-mail: haribol@iskcon.net
- Tallahassee, Florida** — 1323 Nlyic St., 32304/ Tel. & fax: (850) 681-9258/
E-mail: frr2897@garnet.acns.fsu.edu
- Towaco, New Jersey** — P.O. Box 109, 07082/ Tel. & fax: (973) 299-0970/
E-mail: samik-rsi.acbsp@com.bbt.se
- ◆ **Tucson, Arizona** — 711 E. Blackledge Dr., 85719/ Tel. (520) 792-0630/

- Fax: (520) 791-0906/ E-mail: 105613.1744@compuserve.com
- Washington, D.C.** — 3200 Ivy Way, Harwood, MD 20776/ Tel. (301) 261-4493/
Fax: (301) 261-4797/ E-mail: btswami@ibm.net
- Washington, D.C.** — 10310 Oaklyn Dr., Potomac, Maryland 20854/ Tel. (301) 299-2100/
Fax: (301) 983-5451/ E-mail: potomac.temple@usa.net

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Alachua, Florida (New Raman Reti)** — P.O. Box 819, 32616/ Tel. & fax: (904) 462-2017/
E-mail: iskcon@afn.org
- Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan)** — 31492 Anner Road, 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/
Fax: (601) 799-2924/ E-mail: talavan@datastar.net
- Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill)** — (contact ISKCON Gurabo)
- Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka)** — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/
Tel. (919) 732-6492/ Fax: (919) 732-8033/ E-mail: bkgoswami@compuserve.com
- Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka)** — Rt. No. 1, Box 146-A, 37359/ Tel. (615) 759-6888/
Fax: (615) 759-5785/ E-mail: 104400.3353@compuserve.com
- Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 839, 17082/ Tel. & fax: (717) 527-4101/
E-mail: acyutadasi@acsworld.net

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

- Eugene, Oregon** — Govinda's Vegetarian Buffet, 270 W. 8th St., 97401/ Tel. (503) 686-3531
- Fresno, California** — Govinda's, 2373 E. Shaw, 93710/ Tel. (209) 225-1230
- Gainesville, Florida** — Balaji Indian Cuisine, 2106 SW 34th St., 32608/ Tel. (352) 378-2955
- San Juan, Puerto Rico** — Gopal, 201B Calle Tetuan, Viejo San Juan, 00901/ Tel. (787) 724-0229

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

- Belfast, Northern Ireland** — Brooklands, 140 Upper Dunmurray Lane, BT17 OHE, Northern Ireland/
Tel. +44 (0)1232 620530
- Birmingham, England** — 84 Stanneg Rd., Edgbaston, B16 9TB/ Tel. +44 (0)121 420-4999
- Bristol, England** — Alberta Cottage, Wraxhall Road, Nailsea, BS19 1BN/ Tel. +44 (0)1275 853788
- Cardiff, Wales** — 18 Greenfield Place, Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan/ Tel. +44 (0)1222 831579
- Coventry, England** — Sri Sri Radha Krishna Cultural Centre, Kingfield Rd., Radford, West Midlands
(mail: 19 Gloucester St., CV1 3BZ)/ Tel. +44 (0)1203 552822 or 555420/
E-mail: haridas.kds@com.bbt.se
- Glasgow, Scotland** — Karuna Bhavan, Bankhouse Rd., Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire ML11 0ES/
Tel. +44 (0)1555 894790/ Fax: +44 (0)1555 894526/ E-mail: 106225.2716@compuserve.com
- Leicester, England** — 21/21A Thoresby St., North Evington, Leicester LE5 4GU/
Tel. & fax: +44 (0)116 236-7723/ E-mail: gauranga.sundara@com.bbt.se
- **Liverpool, England** — 114A Bold St., England, Merseyside, L1 4HY/ Tel. +44 (0)151 708-9400 or
643-8817/ E-mail: titiku@com.bbt.se
- ◆ **London, England (city)** — 9/10 Soho St., W1V 5DA, England/ Tel. +44 (0)171 437-3662;
(residential/pujaris/shop): 439-3606/ Fax: +44 (0)171 439-1127; Govinda's Restaurant:
Tel. +44 (0)171 437-4928; (office): 437-5875/ E-mail: london@com.bbt.se
- London, England (country)** — Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Lane, Watford, Herts,
WD2 8EZ, England/ Tel. +44 (0)1923 857244/ Fax: +44 (0)1923 852896/
E-mail: bhaktivedanta.manor@com.bbt.se
- London, England (south)** — 42 Enmore Road, South Norwood, London SE25/
Tel. +44 (0)181 656-4296 or 654-3138
- **Manchester, England** — 20 Mayfield Rd., Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8FT/
Tel. +44 (0)161 226-4416/ Tel. & fax: +44 (0)161 860-6117/
E-mail: krishna.dharma@com.bbt.se
- Newcastle upon Tyne, England** — 304 Westgate Rd., Tyne & Wear, NE4 6BR/ Tel. +44 (0)191 222-0150
- Plymouth, England** — 5 Erme Park, Ermington, Devon PL2 9LY/ Tel. +44 (0)1548 830085
- Romford, England** — 3 Rowan Walk, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2JA/ Tel. +44 (0)1708 454092

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- ◆ **County Wicklow, Ireland** — Rathgorragh, Kiltegan/ Tel. & fax: +353 (0)508 73305 or 73292/
E-mail: pragosa@connect.ie
- Lisnaskea, Northern Ireland** — Govindadvipa Dhama, ISKCON Inisrath Island, BT92 9GN Lisnaskea, Co.
Fermanagh/ Tel. +44 (0)13657 21512 or 22682/ E-mail: 105400.2653@compuserve.com
- London, England** — (contact Bhaktivedanta Manor)
(Krishna conscious programs are held regularly in more than twenty other cities in the U.K. For
information, contact Bhaktivedanta Books Ltd., Reader Services Dept., P.O. Box 324, Borehamwood
Herts WD6 1NB/ Tel. +44 [0181] 905-1244.)

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

- Dublin, Ireland** — Govinda's Restaurant, 4 Augier St., Dublin 2/ Tel. +353 (0)1 475-0309/
E-mail: pragosa@connect.ie

GERMANY

- Abentheuer** — Boecking Str. 8, 55767 Abentheuer/ Tel. +49 (0)6782 6494 or 2214/
Fax: +49 (0)6782 40981/ E-mail: visvadeva.hks@com.bbt.se
- Berlin** — Johannisthaler Chaussee 78, 12259 Berlin (Britz)/ Tel. +49 (0)30 631-2400/
Fax: +49 (0)30 618-9112/ E-mail: haribalalabha.hks@com.bbt.se
- ◆ **Cologne** — Taunusstr. 40, 51105 Köln/ Tel. +49 (0)221 830-1241/ Fax: +49 (0)221 837-0485/
E-mail: asanga.acbsp@com.bbt.se
- Flensburg** — Hoerup 1, 24980 Neuhoerup/ Tel. +49 (0)4639 7336/ E-mail: rudra.hks@com.bbt.se
- ◆ **Heidelberg** — Kurfürsten-Anlage 5, D-69115 Heidelberg/ Tel. +49 (0)6221 160128 or 165101/
Fax: +49 (0)6221 160103/ E-mail: bhagavat.dharma.ss@conjobuj
- Munich** — Wachenheimer Strasse 1, München 81539/ Tel. +49 (0)89 6880-0288/
Fax: +49 (0)89 6880-0289/ E-mail: arjuna.hks@com.bbt.se
- Nuerenberg** — Kopernikusplatz 12, 90459 Nürnberg/ Tel. +49 (0)911 453286

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

RURAL COMMUNITY

Jandelsbrunn — Nava Jiyada Nrsimha Ksetra, Zielberg 20, 94118 Jandelsbrunn/
Tel +49 (08583) 316/ Fax: +49 (08583) 1671

HUNGARY

- Budapest** — Mariaremetei ut. 77, Budapest 1028 II/ Tel. & fax: +36 (01) 275-8140/
E-mail: 100263.3167@compuserve.com
- Debrecen, Hungary** — Szechenyi u. 55, Debrecen 4025/ Tel. +36 (052) 413-370/
E-mail: 100263.2131@compuserve.com
- Eger** — Szechenyi u. 64, Eger 3300/ Tel. +36 (036) 410-515/ E-mail: 100263.2454@compuserve.com
- Szolnok** — Baratsag u. 6, Szolnok 5000/ Tel. +36 (056) 412-124/
E-mail: 100324.3045@compuserve.com

RURAL COMMUNITY

Somogyvamos — Krsna-völgy, Fö u. 38, Somogyvamos 8699/ Tel. +36 (085) 340-185/
Email: 100324.3044@compuserve.com

ITALY

- Asli** — Frazione Valle Reale, 20, 14018 Roatto (AT)/ Tel. +39 (0141) 938406
- Bergamo** — Villaggio Hare Krishna, (da Medolago strada per Terno d'Isola) 24040 Chignolo d'Isola (BG)/ Tel. +39 (035) 494-0706/ Fax: +39 (035) 494-0705/
E-mail: villaggio.hare.krsna@com.bbt.se
- Bologna** — Via Ramo Barchetta, 2, Castagnolo Minore, 40010 Bentivogolio (BO)/
Tel. +39 (051) 863924
- Brescia** — Hare Krishna Club, Via Gabriella Rosa, 17, 25121 Brescia/ Tel. +39 (030) 240-0995
- ◆ **Milano** — Centro Culturale Govinda via Valpetersa, 5, 20123 Milano/ Tel. +39 (02) 862417
- Palermo** — Viale della Regione Siciliana di Nord Ovest, 4441, 90145 Palermo/
Tel. +39 (091) 670-0385
- Rome** — Sri Gaura Mandala, Via Mazzanese km. 0,700-Plan del Pavone 01036 Nepi (VT)/
Tel. +39 (0761) 527038 or 527251
- Rome** — Hare Krishna Forum, Piazza Campo de' Fiori, 27, 00186 Rome/ Tel. +39 (06) 683-2660
- Vicenza** — Prabhupada-desa, Via Roma 9, 36020 Albetone (VI)/ Tel. +39 (0444) 790573/
Fax: +39 (0444) 790581/ E-mail: rohini@pronto.bbt.se

RURAL COMMUNITY

◆ **Florence (Villa Vrindavan)** — Via Scopeti, 108, 50026 San Casciano in Val di Pesa (FI)/
Tel. +39 (055) 820054/ Fax: +39 (055) 828470

POLAND

- **Gdynia** — (mail): P.O. Box 364/ Tel. & fax: +48 (058) 29-5188/ E-mail: vara-nayaka.bvps@com.bbt.se
- Krakow** — ul. Wyzynna 2, 30-617 Krakow/ Tel. & fax: +48 (012) 654-5824/ E-mail: krakow@com.bbt.se
- Warsaw** — Mysiadlo, k. Warszawy, 05-500 Piaseczno, ul. Zakret 11 (mail: MTSK, 02-770,
Warszawa 130, P.O. Box 257)/ Tel. +48 (022) 750-7797 or -8248/
Fax: +48 (022) 750-8249/ E-mail: warsaw@com.bbt.se
- Wroclaw** — ul. Bierutowa 23, 51-317 Wroclaw (mail: MTSK 50-900, Wroclaw 2,
P.O. Box 858)/ Tel. & fax: +48 (071) 345-7981/ E-mail: ratibharta.hks@com.bbt.se

RURAL COMMUNITY

● **New Santipura** — Czarnow 21, 58-424 Piszarzowice, gm. Kamienna Gora/ Tel. +48 (07574) 128 92/
E-mail: raghu@friko5.onet.pl

SPAIN

- Barcelona** — Plaza Reial 12, Entlo 2, 08002 Barcelona/ Tel. +34 (93) 302-5194
- Madrid** — Espíritu Santo 19, 28004 Madrid/ Tel. +34 (91) 521-3096
- Málaga** — Ctra. Alora, 3, Int., 29140 Churrriana, Málaga/ Tel. +34 (95) 262-1038
- Santa Cruz de Tenerife** — C/ Castillo, 44, 4°, Santa Cruz 38003, Tenerife/ Tel. +34 (922) 241035
- Tenerife** — C/ La Milagrosa, 6, La Cuesta, La Laguna, Tenerife/ Tel. +34 (922) 653422

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- **Lund** — Bredgatan 28 ipg, 222 21 Tel. +46 (046) 399500; Restaurant: +46 (046) 120413/
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- Basel** — Bhakti-yoga Zentrum, St. Jakob-Strasse 33, 4132 MuttENZ/ Tel. & fax: +41 (061) 462-0614/
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Millfield, NSW — New Gokula Farm, Lewis Lane (off Mt. View Rd., Millfield, near Cessnock [mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock]), NSW 2325/ Tel. +61 (049) 981800/ Fax: (Sydney temple)

Murwillumbah (New Gourdhana) — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella, via Murwillumbah (mail: P.O. Box 687), NSW 2484/ Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6672-6579 or -3047

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Brisbane — Govindas, 1st floor, 99 Elizabeth St., Brisbane, QLD 4000/ Tel. +61 (07) 3210-0255

Brisbane — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 190 Brunswick St., Fortitude Valley, QLD/ Tel. +61 (07) 3854-1016/ E-mail: brisbane@com.bbt.se

Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., Melbourne, VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-2939/ E-mail: crossways@iskcon.net

Melbourne — Gopals, 139 Swanston St., Melbourne, VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-1578

Perth — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 200 William St., Northbridge, WA 6003/ Tel. +61 (08) 9227-1684/ E-mail: perth@com.bbt.se

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Lautoka, Fiji — Gopal's, Corner of Yasawa St. and Naviti St., Lautoka/ Tel. +679 662990

● **Suva, Fiji** — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 18 Pratt St./ Tel. +679 314154/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj

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Kumasi — P.O. Box 101, U.S.T., Kumasi

Nkawkaw — P.O. Box 69, Nkawkaw

Sunyani — South Ridge Estates, P.O. Box 685, Sunyani

Takoradi — New Amanful, P.O. Box 328, Takoradi

Tarkwa — State Housing Estate, Cyanide

RURAL COMMUNITY

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

NIGERIA

Abekuta — Ibadan Rd., Obanatoka (mail: P.O. Box 5177)

Benin City — 108 Lagos Rd., Uselu/ Tel. +234 (052) 247900

● **Enugu** — 56, Destiny Layout, Old Abakaliki Rd., Near Enugu Airport, Emene (by Efemeluna Bus stop)

● **Ibadan** — 700 meters from Iwo Rd., Ibadan-Lagos Express Way, (mail: IJPO Box 9996), Ibadan/ E-mail: gboyega@ibadan.skannet.com

● **Jos** — Hare Krishna Center, Airforce Base, Abattoir Rd., by Nammua, Ginrgng Village (mail: P.O. Box 6557), Jos

● **Kaduna** — Federal Housing Estate, Abuja Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 1121), Goningora Village, Kaduna

● **Lagos** — 12, Gani Williams Close, off Osolo Way, Ajao Estate 7/8 Bus stop, International Airport Express Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 8793, Marina), Lagos/ Tel. & fax +234 (01) 876169/ E-mail: adolphus@nipost.pinet.net

● **Port Harcourt** — Umuebule 11, 2nd tarred road (mail: P.O. Box 4429), Trans Amadi

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“Servant” Is a Good Word

THE PHILOSOPHY OF Kṛṣṇa consciousness is vast and deep. After twenty-five years of study I’ve yet to master all its subtleties. Still, I’ve found that contemplating even the basic concepts can be highly satisfying.

Śrīla Prabhupāda stressed the importance of studying the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa every day. Just the other day I was reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* when one of Prabhupāda’s explanations struck me as so self-evident I just had to chuckle: “Of course. How could anyone argue with that?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda was making the point—as he did over and over again—that we are all eternal servants of God and by realizing that we attain perfection.

“Everyone must serve someone,” Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out. We can’t exist without serving. We serve our family, friends, pets, boss, country. Even if we manage to avoid all those services, we can’t escape serving the demands of our own body and mind and, ultimately, the forces of nature that ravage and destroy our very bodies.

We all must serve. This point is an example of what Prabhupāda meant when he used to say that he was not teaching a sectarian religion. Hindu, Muslim, Christian, or Jew; American, Indian, European, or Asian—we all must serve.

“So what?” you might ask.

So it follows that since we’re servants by nature, we’re subordinate to a higher power. And to control, that higher power must have intelligence, and must therefore be a person.

God is the only person not under anyone else’s control. We’re not God. Unlike us, God

doesn’t have to serve anyone. We’re subordinate to Him; we’re His servants.

Realize that one simple point, and all our problems will be solved because we’ll stop fighting our real nature.

Because our original consciousness, now in touch with the material energy, is polluted, we resent being told we’re “eternal servants.” We don’t want to serve; we want to be served. (That’s probably why people like going to restaurants.) We’re all here trying our best to be God. Even in our self-styled attempts at spirituality we want to keep God out of the picture.

There’s another reason we resent being told we’re servants: Our experience of serving in this world tends to be unsatisfying.

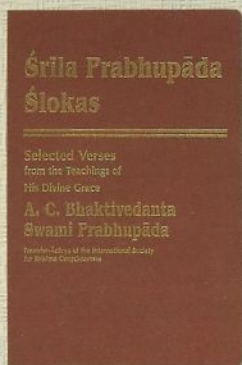
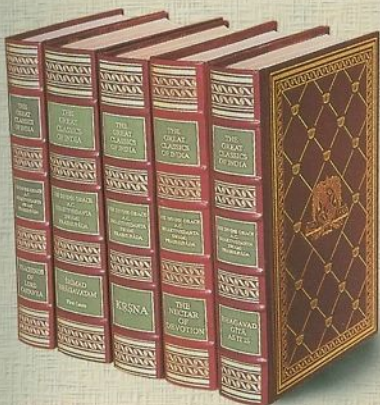
Yet selfless service, which we glimpse in, for example, a mother’s loving service to her child, is highly satisfying. And great philanthropists no doubt derive pleasure in sacrificing for others. Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out that the philanthropists’ urge to serve others without reward indicates our eternal nature as servants of God.

Service in devotion is not drudgery. Limitless bliss awaits us in serving God. Because God, Kṛṣṇa, is a person, in our liberated state we can serve Him as playmates, family members, even girlfriends. To me, this is one of the most wonderful aspects of the Kṛṣṇa conscious explanation of our position as servants of God. He wants us to serve Him the way a friend serves a friend, a lover serves a lover. We simply have to give up our stubborn insistence on trying to take His place.

— Nāgarāja Dāsa

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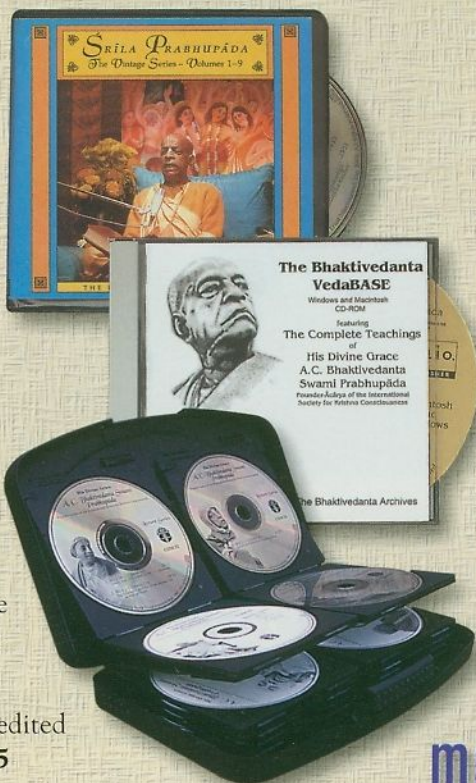
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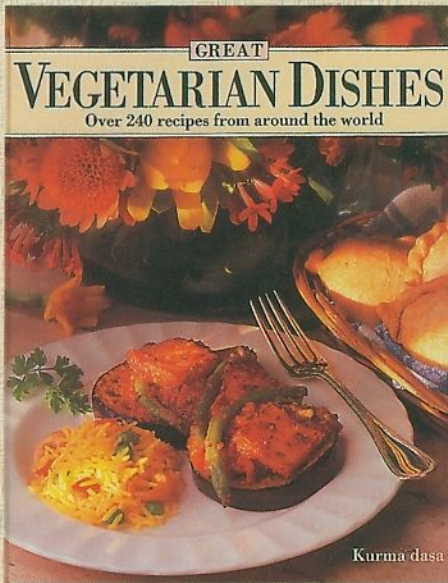
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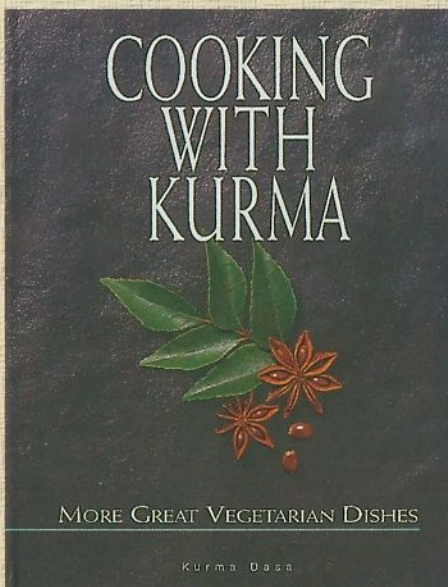
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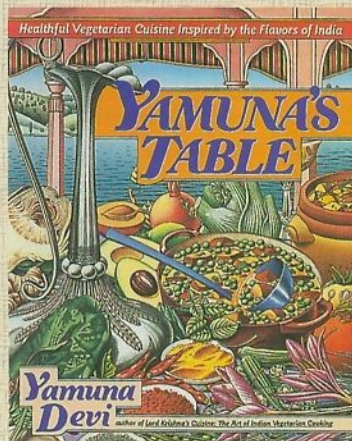
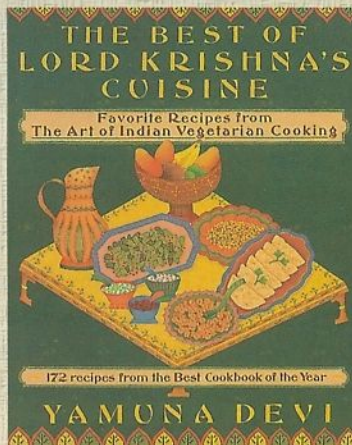
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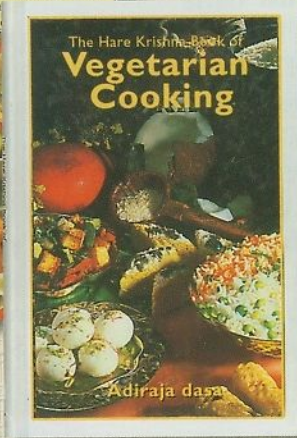
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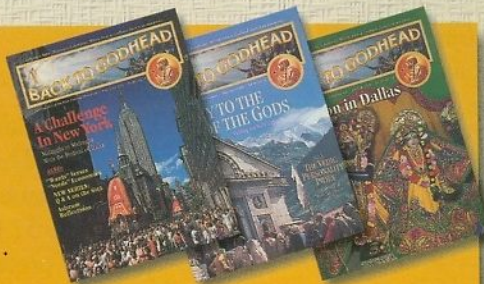
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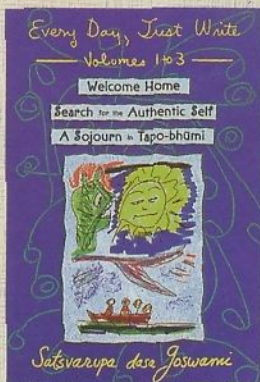
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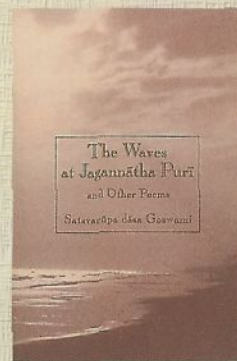
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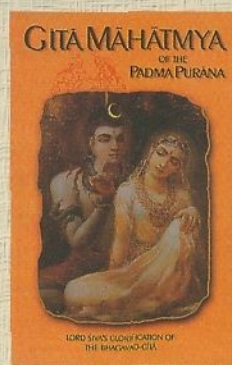


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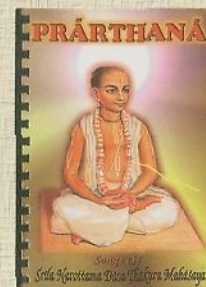
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Vedic Thoughts

What is night for all beings
is the time of awakening for the
self-controlled; and the time
of awakening for all beings is night
for the introspective sage.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 2.69

The servants of the Lord
are actually the servants of society. . . .
They are interested in imparting
knowledge of the relationship
of the living being with the
Supreme Lord, the activities in that
transcendental relationship,
and the ultimate goal of human life.

That is the real knowledge
which can help society achieve
the real aim of human welfare.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.4.25, Purport

Actual speech is that
which describes the qualities
of the Lord, real hands are those
that work for Him,
a true mind is that which
always remembers Him dwelling
within everything moving
and nonmoving, and actual ears
are those that listen to
sanctifying topics about Him.

King Parikṣit
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.80.3

The impersonal Brahman
is Lord Kṛṣṇa's bodily effulgence. . . .
As fireflies seem brilliant
when the sun does not shine,
so the impersonal Brahman is glorious
only when Lord Kṛṣṇa's form
remains unseen.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura
Kalyāna-kalpataru 1.8.5

The son of Devakī, Kṛṣṇa,
is the Supreme Personality.

Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad 4

I worship the Personality
of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa],
who by one of His
plenary portions enters every
universe and every atom
and thus unlimitedly manifests
His infinite energy
all over the material creation.

Lord Brahmā
Brahma-saṁhitā 5.35

Even the worms, birds,
and beasts are assured of
elevation to the highest perfected life
if they are completely
surrendered to the transcendental
loving service of the Lord,
so what to speak of the philosophers
among the human beings.

Garuḍa Purāṇa

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September 2: Vancouver

Sri Krishna Janmastami

(Sri Krishna's Appearance Day)

September 3: Vancouver

Srila Prabhupada's Vyasa Puja

(Srila Prabhupada's Appearance Day)

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Sri Krishna Janmastami

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