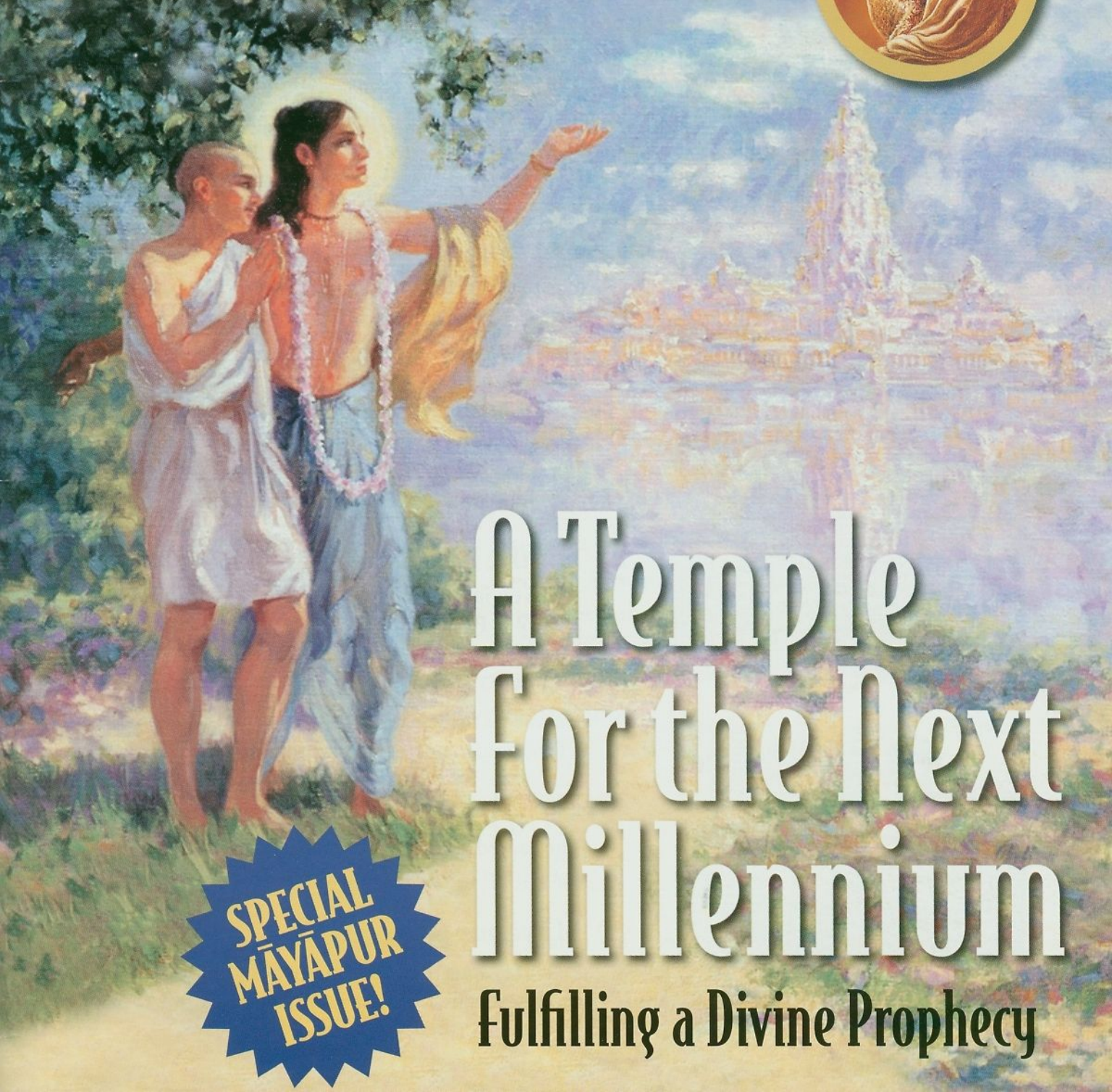


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Nov/Dec 1999 • \$4.00/£4.50



A Temple for the Next Millennium

Fulfilling a Divine Prophecy

**SPECIAL
MĀYĀPUR
ISSUE!**

Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 33, No. 6 • November/December 1999

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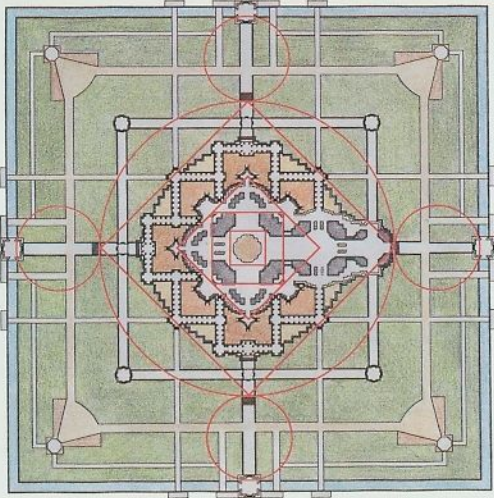
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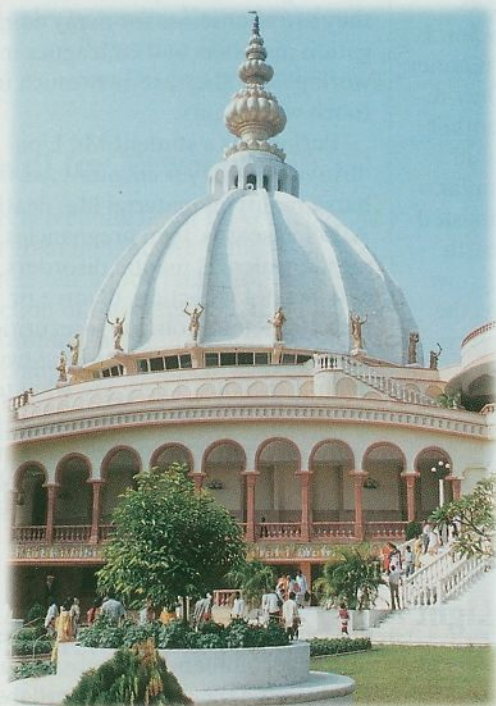
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COVER Five hundred years ago, Nityānanda Prabhu, the chief associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu (Lord Kṛṣṇa’s incarnation for this age), told the saint Jīva Gosvāmī that a magnificent temple would one day be built in Māyāpur, West Bengal. Members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement are working to fulfill that prophecy. (Painting by Dhṛtī Devī Dāsī.)

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

FOUNDER

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

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta
Swami Prabhupāda

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Letters

Living with Love

I wish to thank you and the special person who faithfully sends me your magazine. There are many books and journals in the marketplace. Yours is the one I save, the one I pick up first if I have a few minutes, and the one that nourishes my mind and heart.

I met some devotees several years ago when they came to see me as clients. I am a naturopathic doctor. I was impressed by their gentle manner and humble outlook on life. They reminded me of how my grandmother taught me as a child. I soon found that many of our beliefs are similar.

I believe you have greatly assisted in the spiritual healing of the earth and its people. We are learning how to live at peace and with love as the world becomes more violent every day. The devotees are seen everywhere giving a friendly sharing love and message to all passersby. They always have a welcoming smile.

Lois I. Weeks, N.D.
Tylertown, Mississippi, USA

Shining with Kṛṣṇa's Light

Thank you for sending me your beautiful magazine. Between BTG and the books I receive from ISKCON Prison Ministry, even the darkness of a prison is able to shine with Kṛṣṇa's light. If it wasn't for this I would be trapped in the endless cycle of violence and anger my life had seemed to run. Through the mercy I receive from Kṛṣṇa—through your magazine and ISKCON Prison Ministry—Kṛṣṇa has truly saved my life.

Bhakta Tainoel Araraya
Somerset, Pennsylvania, USA

In-Touch Priests

Mihir Upadhyaya [Letters, July/August] complains that ISKCON priests are out of touch with reality, but he seems to be the one out of touch. A good number of temple priests do not "have nothing else to do in life but to

live at the temple and pray to God." In the Houston ISKCON temple, for instance, all priests are financially independent working people. The temple supports no one. Yet these priests have families, raise children, and pay taxes, while following standard spiritual practices, doing *pūjā*, teaching *sāstra*, distributing free *prasādam*, preaching, and building a new temple. In addition, they are counselors for many congregation members and colleagues in the work place. They are very much in touch with reality.

Perhaps as a student Mr. Upadhyaya has not yet encountered the harsh reality of material life: death, AIDS, diseases, teen pregnancies, domestic violence, mental disorders, drug and alcohol addiction, divorce or parental separation, job insecurities or losses, single mothers working two jobs and raising kids. These are what temple priests face regularly, because the public comes to them with their problems. Lest he think that these problems are uncommon among the Hindus, let me say that our congregation is primarily Hindu.

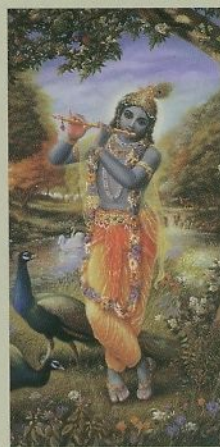
If we let things be, instead of preaching and living the ideals the *sāstras* recommend, the substandard will become the standard. Perhaps it's a sign of Kali-yuga that students, who are supposed to be idealistic, recommend substandards. Do they have to come face to face with real calamities, like the older generation, before they realize that they're indeed illusioned? If Mr. Upadhyaya still doubts that it is possible to live in the real world the way we recommend and live, we invite him to come live with us and give it a try.

Guru-bhakti Devī Dāsī
(Hansa B. Medley, MD)
ISKCON Houston

Personal Articles Best

I just wanted to compliment your staff for one of the nicest BTGs I have read lately (Sept./Oct.). All the articles are very well written and easy to under-

WELCOME TO OUR SPECIAL MĀYĀPUR EDITION



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



On the banks of the Ganges in Māyāpur, West Bengal, a region of tree-shaded villages and fertile farmland, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is planning to build a spiritual city, centered on a temple that will last a thousand years.

Māyāpur is where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa for this age, appeared five hundred years ago. Lord Caitanya's chief associate, Nityānanda Prabhu, predicted that a wonderful temple would rise in Māyāpur to inspire the whole world to serve Lord Caitanya.

In 1977, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, laid the cornerstone for the Māyāpur temple, which he named "The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium." Besides Deities, the temple will include a planetarium showing the universe as described in the Vedic literature. The Māyāpur Project will also include a city for up to fifty thousand residents and pilgrims, as well as many programs to benefit the people of the region.

Śrīla Prabhupāda showed great enthusiasm for the Māyāpur Project, and now a group of his followers is making steady progress in fulfilling his vision. With this issue of *Back to Godhead*, we invite you to take part in building a temple for the next millennium.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor



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

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.

stand. I remember over the past years since I became a devotee many ups and downs of BTG. Although BTG has been the best spiritual magazine ever for all time, I have my own preferences. I like the personal articles about everyday Kṛṣṇa conscious experiences. People can relate to the simple realizations and how a devotee overcame the difficulties of living in the world of matter by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Pavamāna Dāsa

San Diego, California, USA

Useful for Newcomers

We received the latest BTG (Sept./Oct.) with great delight. We wanted to express our appreciation for the new direction of the magazine. It is full of philosophy and information useful for newcomers. The book distributors in our temple were so inspired with the spirit pervading the latest issue that we will now include BTG with the books we distribute daily.

Jaya Śācinandana Dāsa
ISKCON Seattle

No Better Gift

I have been reading BTG magazine for over four years, and one of the many good things that I have noticed is that so consistently you have maintained the standard of this wonderful magazine. All my respects go to Śrīla Prabhupāda for starting this magazine and to all those devotees who have been and will be involved in maintaining it.

When time comes to give someone a gift, I can't think of a better gift than a subscription of BTG. ☸

Rahul Kunderan

Parsippany, New Jersey, USA

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CAITANYA MAHĀPRABHU

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Combined

A lecture in Māyāpur, India, on March 25, 1975

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*vande gurūn īśa-bhaktān
īśam īśāvatārakān
tat-prakāśāms ca tac-chaktiḥ
kṛṣṇa-caitanya-saṁjñakam*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto the spiritual masters, the devotees of the Lord, the Lord’s incarnations, His plenary portions, His energies, and the primeval Lord Himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.”

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.1)



leading disciples, is that Kṛṣṇa is one. There is no rival for Kṛṣṇa. God is one: *ekam brahma dvitīyam nāsti*. There cannot be many Gods.

When God, or Kṛṣṇa, wants to enjoy, He expands His pleasure potency, and that potency is Rādhārāṇī. As the *śāstra* [scripture] states, *śakti-śaktimatayor abhedah*: “There is no difference between the energy and the energetic.” *Śakti* means “potency,” and *śaktimat* means “one who possesses potency.” So Rādhā

and Kṛṣṇa are equal. There is no difference between Them.

The sun is a good example. The sun is the powerful, and the sunshine is the power. So there is heat in the sun, and there is also heat in the sunshine. There is light in the sun, and there is light in the sunshine also. Therefore, as far as heat and light are concerned, the sun and the sunshine are qualitatively one. But the temperature of the sun and the temperature of the sunshine are different. So there is a quantitative difference.

That is the basic principle of Lord Caitanya’s philosophy: *acintya-bhedābheda*. *Acintya* means “inconceivable,” *bheda* means “difference,” and *abheda* means “nondifference.” This describes the whole

LORD CAITANYA IS KṚṢṆA Himself. That was observed by Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, who composed one hundred verses praising the glories of Lord Caitanya. But because Caitanya Mahāprabhu was playing the part of a devotee, He threw away the verses. “Oh, this is not for Me.” That was Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s humbleness.

But the devotees know that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself: *mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya*. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is none other than Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined.” In the beginning there was Kṛṣṇa; then Kṛṣṇa divided into two—Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. And then They again combined. That combination is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The conclusion of the Gosvāmīs, Lord Caitanya’s

Left: Lord Caitanya reveals His identity as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya.

The guru does not think he is Kṛṣṇa, but he collects the devotional services of his disciples and offers them to Kṛṣṇa.



situation: there is one God, but He has expanded Himself in many ways (*eko bahu syām*). And these expansions are all one with Him and at the same time different from Him.

The *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy is described here in the first verse of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu expands Himself as *gurūn*, the spiritual masters. The spiritual master is directly Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *Sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair uktah*: “In all the *śāstras* the guru is accepted as Kṛṣṇa.” So when you offer your devotion and respects to the guru, you offer them to Kṛṣṇa. The guru does not think he is Kṛṣṇa, but he collects the devotional services of his disciples and offers them to Kṛṣṇa. That is the process.

We cannot approach Kṛṣṇa directly; we must approach Him through the guru. *Tasmād gurūṁ prapadyeta jīñāsuḥ śreya uttamam*. The injunction of the *śāstra* is that one should approach a guru who can accept the disciple's service and transfer it to the Supreme Person. Therefore one's first offering is to the guru—*vande gurūn*.

THE BUSINESS OF THE GURU

The guru's business is to canvass on behalf of the Supreme Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.66] Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ saraṇam vraja*: “Give up all material engagements and just surrender unto Me.” In the material world we have created so many so-called duties. This is our disease. Sociology, communism, nationalism, internationalism, this “ism,” that “ism”—many, many duties we have created. But they are all material. Therefore, out of His causeless mercy Kṛṣṇa descends to teach us our real duty.

Human life is meant for one thing: *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*—to inquire about the Supreme Absolute Truth. But instead of doing that, people have created so many “isms.” That is their misfortune. In this human life, nature gives us the opportunity to inquire about the Absolute Truth. We have the intelligence to inquire in this way, whereas the cats and dogs do not. The trees, the plants, the aquatics, the animals, the beasts, the uncivilized men—out of 8,400,000 species of life, only the civilized men can inquire into the Supreme Absolute Truth. It is such a rare opportunity.

Because we are part of God, naturally we have the qualities of God in minute quantity. But on account of our material association, those qualities are now covered by various designations. This is our material disease.

When a piece of gold is covered by dirt, it does not exhibit the qualities of gold. Similarly, because we are covered by our material designations, we are not exhibiting our godlike qualities. Actually, we are small Kṛṣṇas—very small. Because we are part of Kṛṣṇa, we are of the same quality. But that quality is now covered, and the covering is given various names—socialism, communism, and so on. “I am Indian.” “I am American.” “I am Hindu.” “I am Muslim.” “I am white.” “I am black.” All these designations cover our real nature as servants of Kṛṣṇa. It is the business of the guru to clear up these designations, these dirty things.

Therefore we first offer our respects to the guru, because he is the agent of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says, “Give up all designative dharmas and surrender to Me. That is your real dharma.” But Kṛṣṇa does not force us. And even upon the request of Kṛṣṇa we do not give up our designations. Kṛṣṇa said, “Surrender to Me,” but except for the Pāṇḍavas and

a few other devotees, practically no one took His order seriously.

UNADULTERATED KṚṢṆA

That was five thousand years ago, so what to speak of today? Now so many scholars speak on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but without stressing Kṛṣṇa. That is their business. These demons are teaching *Bhagavad-gītā* without Kṛṣṇa! Nobody says what Kṛṣṇa wants: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ saraṇam vraja*. Kṛṣṇa wants that everyone simply surrender to Him, but these so-called scholars misinterpret His words in various ways and divert people's attention most foolishly.

Many of you have come from Western countries. So for at least the last two hundred years *Bhagavad-gītā* has been popular in Europe and America, at least among scholars and theosophists and theologians. But nobody has understood Kṛṣṇa. That is the problem. But for the last, say, five or ten years, because we have presented Kṛṣṇa as He is, it has become very easy for you to understand Him. Unadulterated Kṛṣṇa. Before this, everything presented about Kṛṣṇa was adulterated. Therefore, there was no effect.

So if you push on this movement by presenting unadulterated Kṛṣṇa, it will go on. And as soon as you adulterate Kṛṣṇa, it will not go on. It will not be effective.

You may be a very good scholar or politician, this or that, but you'll never understand what Kṛṣṇa is. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.25], *nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ*: “I do not reveal Myself to everyone, being covered by My illusory energy.” In other words, if you pollute Kṛṣṇa, He will never be revealed to you. By the grace of Kṛṣṇa you have taken shelter of His lotus feet. It is a

great fortune for you. So do not adulterate Kṛṣṇa. That is my request. Try to understand Kṛṣṇa as He is.

And to help us understand and approach Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Himself appeared as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His life and teachings are described in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. *Caitanya* means “spiritual, living.” Since Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa, that means Kṛṣṇa is the supreme living force.

We reject the so-called scientific theory that life has come from chemicals. We have engaged our scientist students in proving that life does not come from matter but rather from the Supreme Spirit, Kṛṣṇa. Already one student has written a small book, *The Scientific Basis of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness*, and we are soon going to publish another book. What is the title?

Devotee: *Life Comes From Life.*

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Life comes from life. That is a fact. These so-called scientific theories that life comes from matter are all foolish.

We have all experienced what is living force and what is dead matter. Kṛṣṇa explains the living force in *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.20], *na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*: “The living force is not finished after the annihilation of the body.” When we are alive, our body is moving, and we can feel the presence of the living force. And when we see a dead body, one that is not moving, we should ask, “Why was the body moving before and why is it not moving now?” If we simply study this difference of condition, we can understand what the living force is. It is not difficult. Simply understand, “Now the living force has gone out of this body; therefore the body is no longer moving and is simply dead matter.” *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* talks of the living force, not dead matter. We should always remember this.

Now, the guru is part of that living force, and so are the Lord Himself, His incarnations, His expansions, His devotees, and His internal energies. All of them are on the spiritual platform, part of the living force (*caitanya-saṁjñakam*).

Therefore the personification of all living forces is Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Unfortunately, people mistake Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahā-

prabhu for an ordinary devotee or *sādhū* or yogī. That is a mistake. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the original living force, Kṛṣṇa.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya understood Lord Caitanya as He is. So did Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Similarly, the followers of Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya all understand Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And for one who understands or follows the path enunciated by Kṛṣṇa Caitanya

Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa is very easily obtained. This is all described in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

LORD CAITANYA'S MISSION

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya described Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission as follows:

vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga-sikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purānaḥ

Śrī Māyāpur Project At a Glance

Location:

Māyāpur, West Bengal, 140 km north of Calcutta, between the Ganges and Jalangi rivers

Significance of Māyāpur:

Also known as Navadvīpa, it is the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa for the present age.

Present ISKCON temple:

Māyāpur Chandrodaya Mandir

Deities:

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Aṣṭa-sakhī (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and eight cowherd-girl associates); Śrī Pañca-tattva (Lord Caitanya in five forms)

Most prominent current structure:

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhi (memorial), 180 feet high

Current number of residents:

700+, from 21 countries

Current number of pilgrims:

45,000–125,000 a month

Future temple:

The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (360 feet high)

Inspiration for the temple:

Predicted by Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu approximately five hundred years ago

Future Māyāpur city:

50,000 residents and pilgrims

***If you simply understand this—
that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead—
then you are advanced. It is not very difficult.***

• • •

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śārīra-dhārī
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye*

Here Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya says that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is *puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead. Why did Kṛṣṇa Caitanya appear? Sārvabhauma says, *vairāgya-vidyā . . . śikṣārtham*: to teach detachment and knowledge of devotional service.

Because we are suffering here on account of so many designations, out of His great mercy Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to purify us of all these nonsense designations. And the way is through *vairāgya-vidyā*. *Rāga* means “material attachment,” and *vairāgya* is “freedom from material attachments.” These false attachments we have to give up. How to do this in our practical life—how to love Kṛṣṇa, how to approach Him—is taught by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Caitanya is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, eleventh canto, as *kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam*. *Kṛṣṇa-varṇam* means either “one who belongs to the same category as Kṛṣṇa” or “one who is always describing Kṛṣṇa,” and *tviṣākṛṣṇam* means “with a nonblackish complexion.” Lord Caitanya’s only business is to describe Kṛṣṇa, and His complexion is not blackish. Kṛṣṇa has many colors. One of His colors is *pīta*, golden. So Lord Caitanya is known as the golden *avatāra*. Then, *sāngopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam*: “Lord Caitanya is always accompanied by His close associates.” These associates are described here in this first verse of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—the gurus, the Lord’s devotees, His incarnations, expansions, and energies.

Study this *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Now, following in the footsteps of our Guru Mahārāja, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, we have

published this very elaborately explained English edition. There is no other edition of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* like this, so elaborately explained. It can be understood by the advanced student.

Anyone can become advanced. “Advanced” means that at least you should understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If you simply understand this—that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead—then you are advanced. It is not very difficult. All Vedic literature is meant for understanding Kṛṣṇa. What is that understanding? That Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If you become convinced of this, your study of the *Vedas* is complete.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.7] Kṛṣṇa says, *mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya*: “My dear Arjuna, there is no authority or person or truth superior to Me.” If you simply have faith in these words of Kṛṣṇa’s, you become advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You may believe blindly or after careful study. It doesn’t matter. Whether you touch fire blindly or purposely, it will act. Similarly, even if you blindly accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Person, you become advanced. Take it from me: if you simply have this conviction—“Yes, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead”—you are an advanced student in spiritual life.

All the persons associated with Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya—Śrī Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara, and Śrīvāsa—are one, in the sense that they are all interested in pushing on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is personally trying, and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Prabhu, Śrīvāsa, and Gadādhara are helping Him.

QUALIFICATION OF GURU

To approach these five supreme persons, you require the help of a guru. Therefore the guru is offered respectful prayers first: *vande gurūn*. The word *gurūn* is in the plural, because there are many gurus. Still, the gurus are one. For example, Kṛṣṇa has many forms, but that does not mean He is many. No. Kṛṣṇa is one. Similarly, there are many gurus, but their philosophy must be one: to teach everyone that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is the test of a genuine guru. If someone is teaching something else, some nonsense, then he is not a guru. As stated in the *śāstra*,

*ṣaṭ-karma-nipuṇo vipro
mantra-tantra-viśāradaḥ
avaīṣṇavo gurur na syād
vaiṣṇavaḥ śva-paco guruḥ*

A *brāhmaṇa* is usually very expert in chanting Vedic mantras, understanding the *tantras* [rituals], and so on. That is the test of the *brāhmaṇa*—that he is very learned. But if he does not know what Kṛṣṇa is, or if he’s not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, he cannot become a guru. On the other hand, one who is coming from the family of dog-eaters, the lowest of human beings, can become a guru if he’s a Vaiṣṇava, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

So the guru is very important because he has accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he has seen the truth, and he is teaching pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the test of a genuine guru. The bona fide guru does not claim to be Kṛṣṇa Himself, but rather he canvasses door to door: “Please become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.” This is the sign of a genuine guru. Thank you very much. ❁

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S CHERISHED DREAM

*A disciple welcomes the challenge of fulfilling
a difficult order from his spiritual master.*

Ambarīṣa Dāsa (Alfred Ford) is the great-grandson of Henry Ford. He was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1973.

Yamarāja Dāsa



Back to Godhead: What is your connection with the Māyāpur Project?

Ambarīṣa Dāsa: I've been asked to be the honorary chair of the fundraising campaign, and I'm happy to bring to it whatever I can.

BTG: How does the Māyāpur Project fit into your life?

AD: Māyāpur is one of the main tasks for the rest of my life. Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me to do just a few projects, and among them I see the Māyāpur Project as the most challenging. It will challenge both me and ISKCON to keep growing. I look forward to it.

BTG: What did Śrīla Prabhupāda say to you about Māyāpur?

AD: Śrīla Prabhupāda talked to me about Māyāpur many times. In Detroit in 1976 he asked me to help finance the project—not only to donate but to go out and help raise funds and get other people involved.

BTG: Raising funds can be tough. What makes you look forward to raising funds for Māyāpur?

AD: I'm hoping we'll raise much money in the West from an entirely new group of people. I think people—wealthy, influential people—are waiting for a project like this. Spiritually, people in the West are very hungry. After many years of prosperity, they realize that their level of happiness

has not really improved. People are looking for something new, different. They're materially exhausted.

Throughout my life it's been my experience that having a lot of material facilities does not give one happiness. Sensible people are realizing that. Of course, there's a trend to minimize spiritual values, but segments of the population remain spiritually hungry.

BTG: What do you mean by minimizing spiritual values?

AD: There's a general trend toward more relaxed spiritual and ethical values. The media calls it "defining deviance

down." What's gone on in the White House recently is an example. Kali-yuga goes on, yet this very valuable knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is readily accessible. ISKCON has been limited to a very small number of people, but now the world has become so much more interconnected. So we can make a big impression on the world, even from Māyāpur. There will always be materialists, but for those in spiritual and emotional pain, we should be able to offer comfort.

BTG: Won't wealthy, influential Westerners view the Māyāpur Project as a sectarian cause?

AD: We have to teach that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a spiritual science that appeals to everyone. With our diverse international membership, we're in a good position to show that. We've been inclusive. Devotees have been willing to talk to other religious organizations. Śrīla Prabhupāda trained us



Ambarīsa Dāsa (left) with Śrīla Prabhupāda outside the Detroit ISKCON temple, 1975.

in that way. Even though we feel we have the absolute truth, we don't negate everyone else. We see that other religious seekers are on a constructive path. We encourage them.

BTG: How will the Māyāpur Project demonstrate this broad spiritual view?

AD: With science, grandeur, and manpower. In the West people have sometimes been disappointed with ISKCON temples because they lack manpower and do not show a very organized presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But in Māyāpur we have many young and energetic devotees. It makes a great difference.

BTG: What else makes Māyāpur different?

AD: It's the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who showed that Vaiṣṇavism is for everyone. Also, Śrīla Prabhupāda was the great world ambassador of Vaiṣṇavism, and he spent much time and energy there. He had

many hopes and visions for Māyāpur.

BTG: In your 25-plus years in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you've seen ISKCON have many ups and downs. What makes you confident about the Māyāpur Project?

AD: I tend to be forward-looking, to see what we can do now to make the future better. We may have failed in some ways, but we should not give up. If we can make Māyāpur a center that will attract people from around the world to come and learn about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it will become one of the most important places on the planet. Māyāpur can attract people from all over the world. It can be a window to the spiritual world or an exit from the material world—like an Internet portal to the kingdom of God. Kṛṣṇa doesn't make things so easy that they become cheap. Anything worth having is worth a fight. Real spiritual life doesn't come easily.

BTG: You seem to have a sense of urgency about this project. Why?

AD: I see that Kali-yuga is making great strides, with gambling, abortion, and all kinds of immorality going on at a feverish pitch. Māyāpur is a dike against this flood of sinful activity. If we fulfill Śrīla Prabhupāda's goals, Māyāpur will be a center for spiritual education unlike any on earth. Coming to Māyāpur will be a life-changing experience. A visitor can realize that he or she is not the body. Devotees can come and be strengthened.

BTG: Are you concerned that Māyāpur might become commercialized and lose its spiritual value?

AD: It will never be like Disneyland. The temple will be a tourist destination, because whenever you do something big it attracts attention. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted this temple to attract people, and it will be a work in progress for many generations. But

aside from the temple, the Māyāpur Project can become renowned for all Vaiṣṇava arts—education, farming, vegetarianism, cultural activities—all the things that Hare Kṛṣṇas are famous for. I think the town planners are doing a good job in making room for all aspects of a balanced community, including education, commerce, and culture.

BTG: The Māyāpur temple—the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium—places one of the most controversial parts of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* right in the middle of everything. Why?

AD: Śrīla Prabhupāda was always interested in smashing scientists. He saw reductionist, materialistic science as an evil force, brainwashing people about impersonalism and atheism. So he saw materialistic scientists as a force to be defeated, and he boldly challenged their conventional wisdom. Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium as a challenge to the godless “big bang” theory, evolution, and all the other materialistic scientific premises that many accept

without question. In other words, Śrīla Prabhupāda saw Māyāpur not in a sectarian way but as a theistic educational project for people at large.

BTG: What would you like to see Māyāpur become?

AD: I would like to see Māyāpur be similar to what the Vatican is to the Catholics. It will be a place where people come for a spiritual experience, not only by seeing great buildings but by hearing philosophy in good association. I want to see Māyāpur become an easier place to get to, with facilities for Westerners to stay comfortably. Perhaps there will be an airport and a port for boats from Calcutta.

In general I’d like to see Māyāpur become a world-renowned holy place. People will go there for spiritual knowledge and become refreshed by the Ganges. They will grow spiritually and tell others.

BTG: Building such a project is a real challenge.

AD: I’m so happy Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us this challenge. What would our life be without it? It’s very easy to be-

come self-absorbed and concerned only with my realization and my family. The Māyāpur Project challenges us to do something for the world, to be compassionate. It draws us out of our homes and our own temples to broadcast Śrīla Prabhupāda’s message to the world. To me, Māyāpur is not just bricks and mortar. It is my preaching—and a preaching project that will last thousands of years.

Building Māyāpur is not going to be a cakewalk, even if we have the money. It’s not a material endeavor. It will happen only by the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa.

BTG: How does one get that mercy?

AD: You’ve got me! It has to be thrust upon you. If you have the desire to help, somehow Śrīla Prabhupāda will engage you. I often remember that Śrīla Prabhupāda said we’d please him by cooperating. Unless we, his followers, cooperate as a society, building Māyāpur will take a very long time. If we learn to cooperate, we can see it in our lifetime.

(please turn to page 39)



In the early seventies, Śrīla Prabhupāda walks with disciples near the first major building constructed on the Māyāpur property.

A TEMPLE FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

by Abhirāma Dāsa, Managing Director* of the
Śrī Māyāpur Project Development Committee

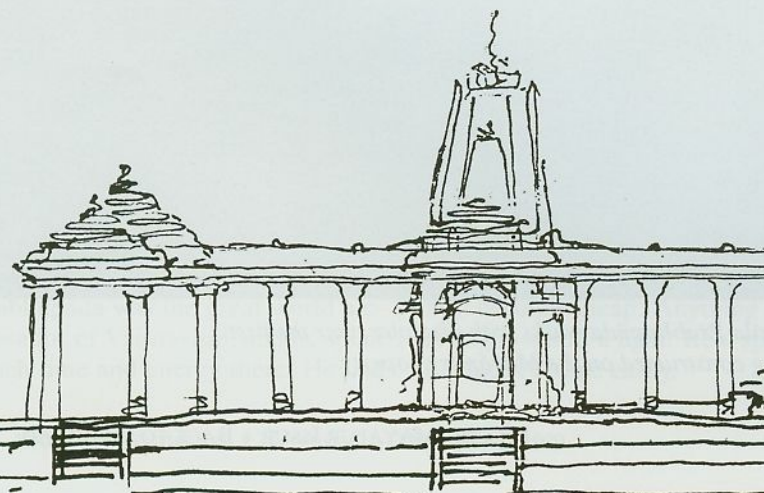
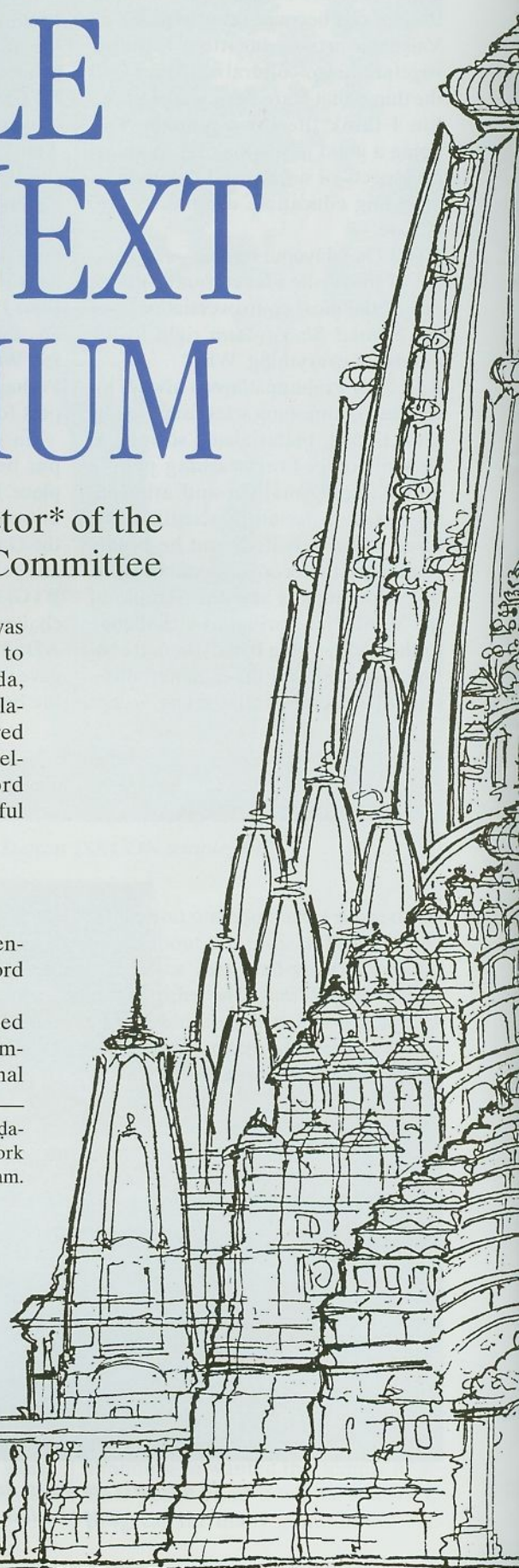
THE VISION of the Śrī Māyāpur Project was born from a seed (*bīja*) mantra spoken to Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī by Lord Nityānanda, whom we know as an incarnation of Lord Balārāma Himself. The mantra, spoken five hundred years ago, foretells the appearance of a marvelous temple dedicated to the service of Lord Caitanya—a temple destined to have a powerful influence on the world.

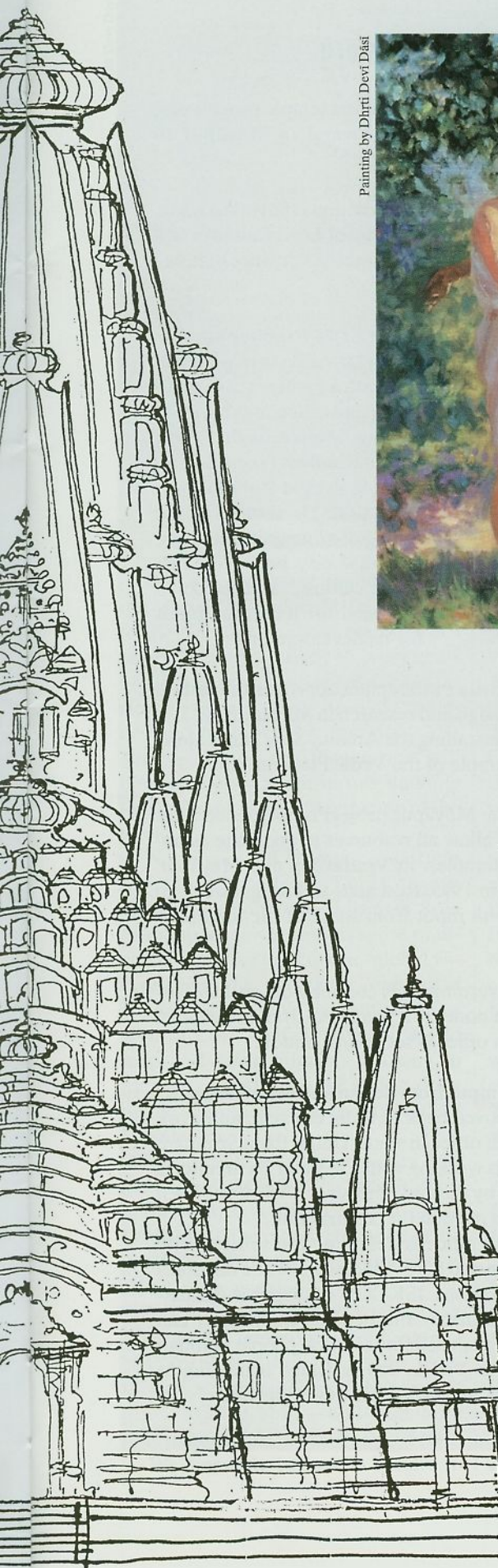
*eka adbhuta mandira ei haibe prakāśa
gaurāᅅga nitya-sevā haibe vikāśa*

“An astounding temple will appear and will engage the entire world in the eternal service of Lord Caitanya.”

As ripples spread out when a stone is dropped in a pool of water, the Śrī Māyāpur Project embodies the multiple emanations from the original

* The other directors are Jayapatāka Swami, Akhaᅇᅇdhī Dāsa, and Nareśvara Dāsa. They oversee the work of the one hundred current members of the project team.





Painting by Dhrti Devi Dāsi

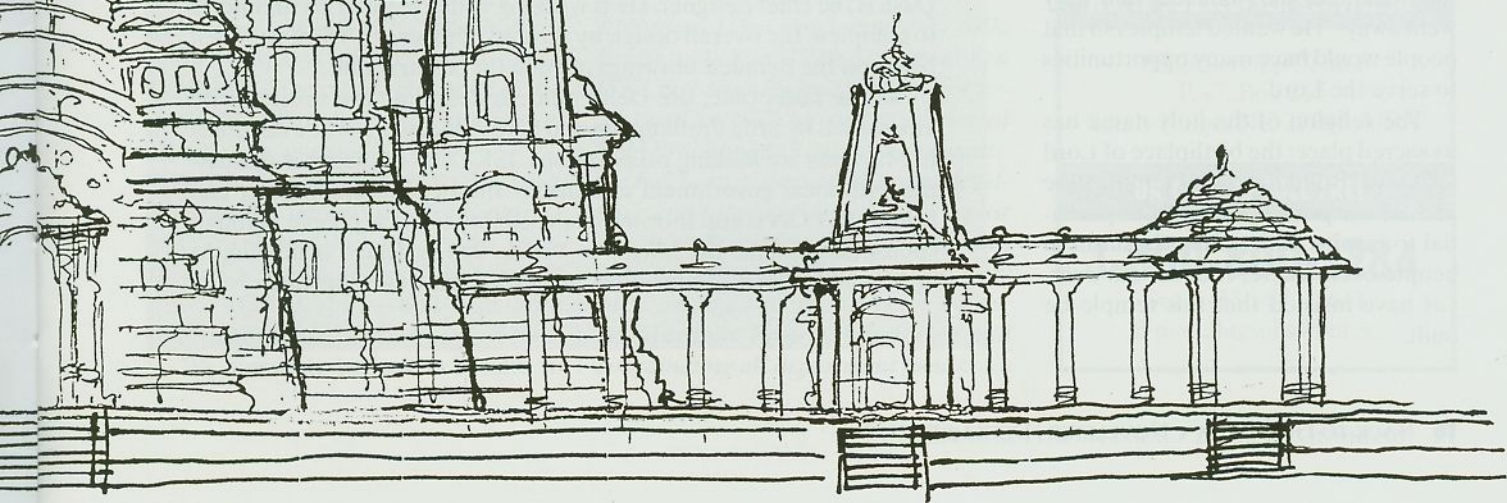


divine vibration spoken by Lord Nityānanda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, brought us the philosophy of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which states that the Lord's thinking, glancing, and speaking are the mysterious cause of creation. The Lord's words, which set in motion the process of creation, are a seed mantra that expresses His desire. Then the work of organizing matter into the shapes He desires is performed by His servants, such as Lord Brahmā.

Similarly, Lord Nityānanda's seed mantra revealed the vision for the great temple, and a succession of our saintly gurus has worked diligently to bring forth that vision. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838–1914) expanded the vision to include a temple town with residents from all countries. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (1874–1937) built a major temple at Lord Caitanya's birthplace. Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Above: Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu tells Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī that one day an astonishing temple will rise in Māyāpur.



(1896–1977) defined the size and design details of the temple and town. He also bought the land, laid the cornerstone, and left the royalties from his numerous books to help fund the construction.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his disciples the task of completing the Māyāpur Project. He described a glowing vision of “The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium,” a sacred structure that will not only be a great place of worship, but will also challenge the predominant atheistic doctrines of these times. The temple will house detailed exhibits showing a God-centered universe that provides opportunities for a personal relationship with the Supreme.

When an honest and intelligent person understands that he is a speck in the universe created by God, he naturally wants to connect with that God and understand his role in God’s plan. If you’re convinced that the universe functions without the hand of God or is created by a big bang, you have no sense of purpose. Modern science aims to convince you that the universe is functioning accidentally and without purpose. This concept divorces you from a sense of meaning in your life.

The Vedic Planetarium will describe all the physical details of the universe and their relationship to God. It will encourage a sense of wonder in the creation—and in the hand behind it.

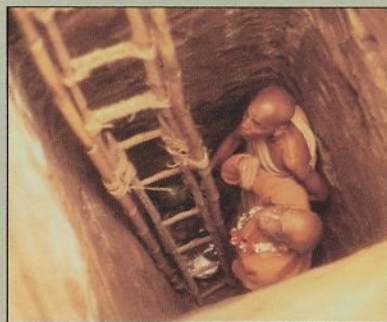
Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission was to establish the best method of God realization for this confused age, namely the glorification of the holy names of God. Constructing this temple helps strengthen the foundation of his spiritual movement and leaves a legacy of his work. Prabhupāda required his followers to build temples. He said, “I do not want people to say that they came, they chanted, they danced, and they went away.” He wanted temples so that people would have many opportunities to serve the Lord.

The religion of the holy name has its sacred place: the birthplace of Lord Caitanya. Building a great temple here at this focal point has enormous potential to inspire faith and enthusiasm in people everywhere. Indeed, our *ācāryas* have insisted that this temple be built.

Māyāpur Project History

1973: As construction of the guest house and first temple progresses, Śrīla Prabhupāda instructs Jayapatāka Swami in Māyāpur to purchase land “for developing a spiritual city.”

1974–75: Śrīla Prabhupāda stresses the international flavor he wants for Māyāpur. He tells devotees that the mercy of Lord Caitanya will radiate from Māyāpur, and that he will construct “a very nice temple” for the Lord.



Śrīla Prabhupāda sets the cornerstone for the original temple in 1972.

1976: Śrīla Prabhupāda explains his vision in more detail and with a greater sense of urgency. He articulates his ideas for the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium and speaks of attracting people from all over the world. He returns to the theme of a “magnificent international city based on this Vedic culture,” and speaks of the need for unlimited funds for its development.

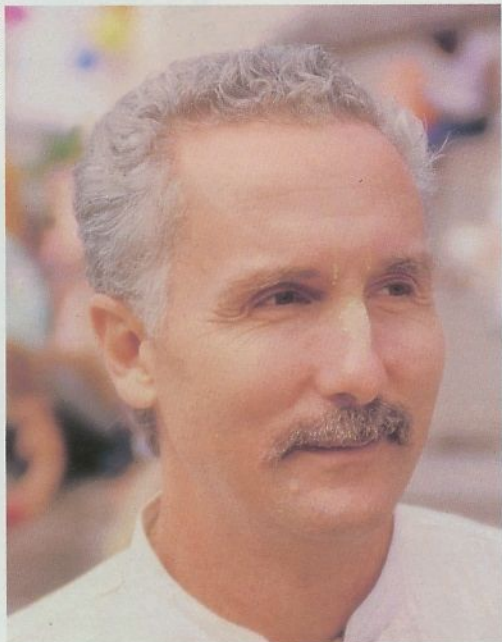
1977: Just before his passing, Śrīla Prabhupāda approves the setting up of the first committee for design and research in Māyāpur. He also directs his leading disciples in installing the Ananta-Śeṣa Deity along with the cornerstone of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.

1978–1995: Development of the Māyāpur project is postponed after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s passing, to allow all resources to go to the establishment of his two *samādhi* temples, in Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur. The latter opens to the public in 1995. Research and design work go on in the intervening years, with input from some of the top architects in India.

1994: The GBC, ISKCON’s governing body commission, enthusiastically approves a temple design done by a young Australian devotee, Pāda Sevanam Dāsa. A design office is set up in London.

After four years of work, with input from design and engineering experts in England, the design moved back to India last year, and work is now gathering pace in a small office in south Delhi. Pāda Sevanam Dāsa is the chief designer. He is working with a team of six architects to complete the overall design by the end of this year. Work will then begin on the detailed drawings needed for construction.

At the same time, the Delhi office is designing the spiritual city envisioned by Śrīla Prabhupāda and his predecessors, while devotees in Māyāpur are making preparations. ISKCON Māyāpur is discussing with local government authorities the benefits the project can bring. ISKCON is also showing responsibility for local people, through sponsorship of the Śrī Māyāpur Vikāśa Saṅga, which is helping to improve health care, education, and economic development.



Abhirāma Dāsa

What would Islam would be without Mecca? What does St. Peter's mean to the Catholics? These are not piles of bricks. They embody the very spirit of these religions and speak for centuries to each new generation of the values and faith of their founders. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium will be a wonderful and inspiring building that will capture the imagination of the world.

Nothing could be more important than for the teachings of Lord Caitanya to enter the global consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda never lost his sense of urgency. Daily we hear of the "global village" and the emerging one-world culture. This temple will put the message of Lord Caitanya on the world map and bring pilgrims flocking to Māyāpur to offer thanks and to draw on the age-old wisdom and strength of Vaiṣṇavism.

Speaking in Māyāpur at Gaura Pūrṇimā time in March 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda compared the Personality of Godhead to the moon. He spoke of the great task of spreading the moonshine all over the world.

"Of course we shall try to construct a very nice temple for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu," he said, "and from this place, this moon—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu—will distribute [His message]."

We sincerely believe it is time to

take this vision of Śrīla Prabhupāda and our *ācāryas* to heart. We do not want to waste this opportunity. This glorious temple can be built in our lifetimes. We have completed much of the design, planning, and preparation. We are ready to start building in the first few years of the new millennium. Now our most important task is ahead of us—to communicate with the world and enlist the support and contributions of devotees and pious souls.

We must first build this temple in our own hearts and minds. I feel great joy to have this opportunity to share in this shining vision of our saints and gurus. To work for the completion of the Lord's plan is the greatest adventure and satisfaction. Please, come onboard with us. We need your prayers and support.

We now have a team of nearly one hundred professionals and devotee volunteers. We are determined to bring this vision from the subtle plane of desire to the gross plane of existence. Our *ācāryas* saw the temple through their divine vision. Now we can all play our part to manifest it on the earthly plane. The beautiful Temple of the Vedic Planetarium has the power to attract even the most cynical to the message of Lord Caitanya. I know that future generations will look to Māyāpur and see a beacon of hope, even in the darkness of this age of Kali.

It is time for each of us to step forward and contribute something to this divine endeavor. With your support, we will see this through. It is within our reach! ☸

Abhirāma Dāsa was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1970. He managed ISKCON temples in America and India, and in 1977 he served as one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal assistants. He has been a successful resort developer and operator, as well as a senior executive in leading hotel companies, such as Hyatt and Oberoi. He is now fully engaged as the director of the Śrī Māyāpur Project, overseeing and coordinating all department heads.

BACK TO GODHEAD

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

*An overview of the three main aspects
of the Śrī Māyāpur Project.*

The chief architect for the Śrī Māyāpur Project is Pāda Sevanam Dāsa, a Ph.D. candidate at the Prince of Wales's Foundation of Architecture in England. Recently, he presented plans for the Māyāpur Project to Prince Charles, who founded and oversees the Foundation and is well known as an aficionado of sacred architecture. The following overview of the Śrī Māyāpur Project was adapted from Pāda Sevanam's presentation to Prince Charles.

SEVERAL OF Prabhupāda's disciples, working as the Śrī Māyāpur Project Development Committee (SMPDC), have accepted as their life's mission the development of Śrī Māyāpur and the building of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.

Says SMPDC director Abhirāma Dāsa, "A truly wondrous temple can neither stand in a vacuum nor rely on society's uncertainties to create an ap-

propriate setting." Thus the Committee's mission defines a united vision for the Māyāpur Project in three parts: the temple, the city, and the region.

THE TEMPLE: "To design and construct the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium with proportions, geometry, exhibits, and decor that express the Vedic cosmology while sheltering the Deities and the congregation."

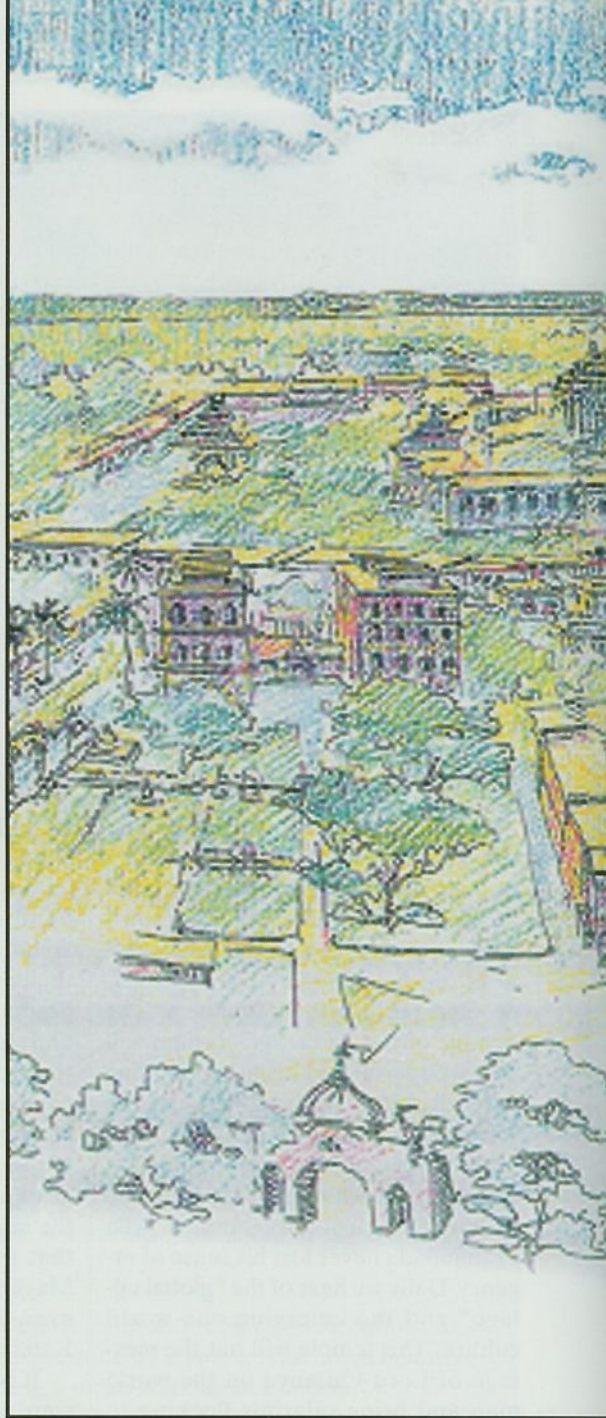
Though built from the mud and terra cotta of Bengal, the 360-foot-tall temple is designed to stand for millennia. It will be the mother temple to a worldwide congregation of Kṛṣṇa devotees. Its architecture will reflect grander aspirations and the sacred design principles of India.

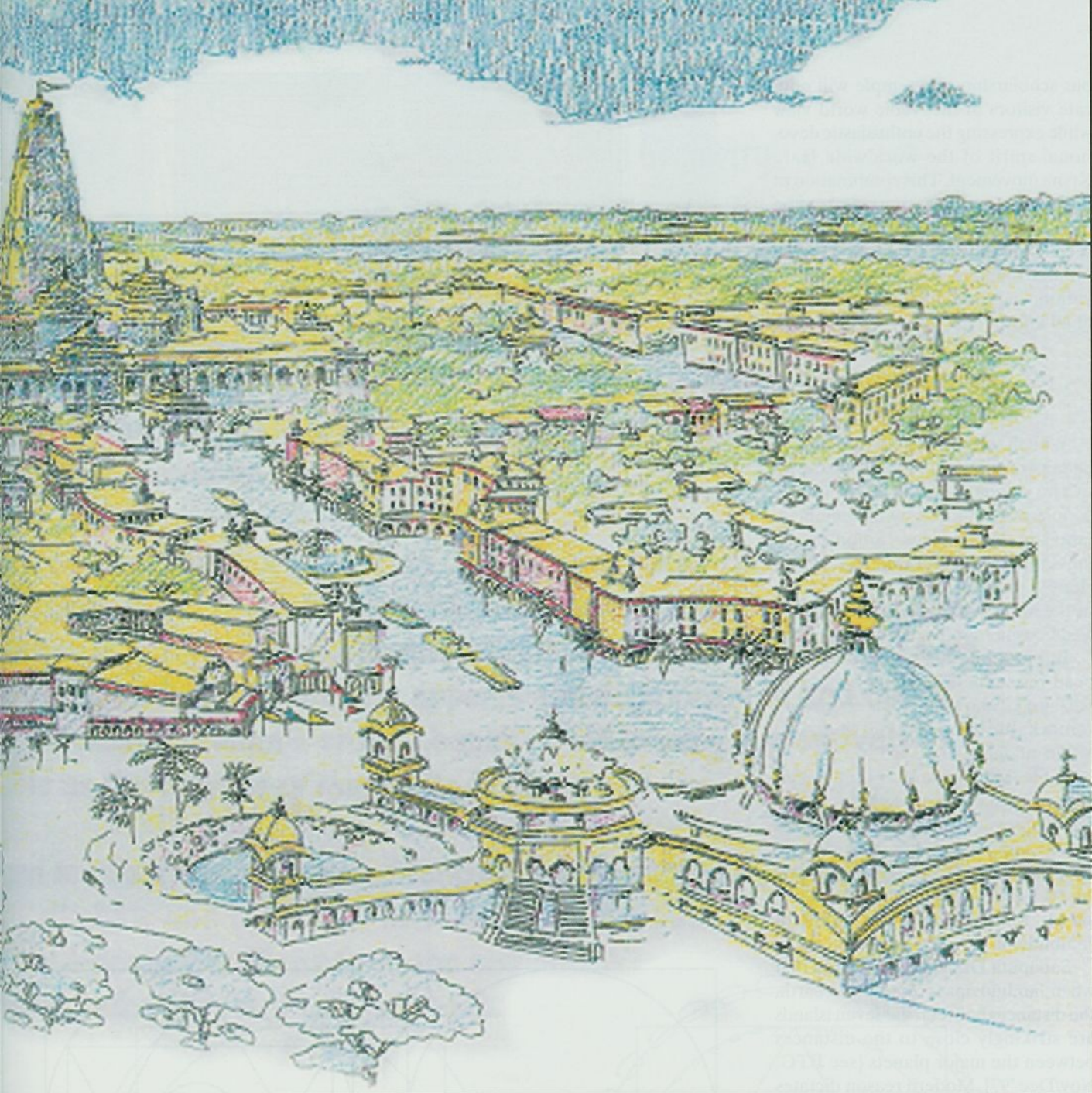
THE TEMPLE CITY: "To design the infrastructure to support pilgrims and residents while framing and comple-

menting the temple architecture."

To preserve the peace of two distinct communities (pilgrims and residents), town designers will knit together around the temple two towns within one. Using principles of simplicity, sustainability, and traditional Bengali design, they will put in place a standard architecture for residential, commercial, and institutional buildings that frames and reflects the original temple structure.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: "To develop sustainable livelihoods and living practices for the enduring benefit





of all people in the region.”

As the Māyāpur project unfolds, everyone in the region should enjoy an enriched quality of life. Besides providing educational and cultural opportunities, project leaders will seek to revive and enhance traditional trades such as weaving, agriculture, and handicrafts, bringing local products to national and international markets.

Abhirāma Dāsa explains: “Developing a world-class pilgrimage and tourism center in Māyāpur will unleash dynamic economic growth throughout the immediate region. The SMPDC

will aid that growth in this impoverished and flood-prone region while continuing to provide residents with generous emergency food and health care.”

Here are more details of the temple, city, and regional development.

THE TEMPLE

The central sacred space of traditional Hindu temples is relatively small, low, and dark, often requiring worshipers to stand in long lines for brief glimpses of the Deity. This design

deliberately represents a journey within. The *sankirtana* movement, however, originated in Māyāpur by Caitanya Mahāprabhu, emphasizes ecstatic congregational singing of God’s holy names. Such worship is by nature open, lively, and expressive. The large, well-lit, soaring spaces of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium reflect Lord Caitanya’s attitude of open congregational worship. Many thousands of devotees will be able to simultaneously enjoy the audience of the Deities.

Through exhibits based on rigor-

ous scholarship, the temple will educate visitors in the Vedic world view while expressing the enthusiastic devotional spirit of the worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. This combination of knowledge and devotion invokes the memory of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who received from his Godbrothers the title “Bhaktivedanta.” (Bhakti means “devotion,” and *vedānta* means “the end of all knowledge.”)

VEDIC COSMOLOGY IN THE TEMPLE

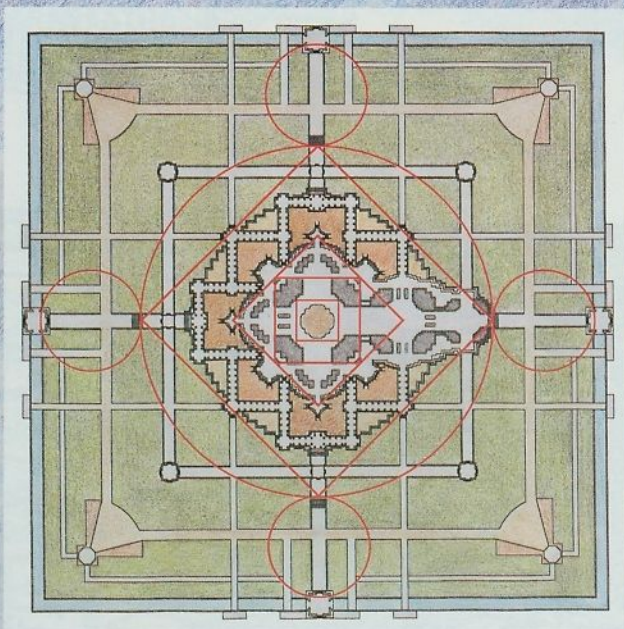
With the publishing of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s translation of the Fifth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, many people were startled by its seemingly fantastic detailed description of the universe. Yet Prabhupāda chose to include a planetarium as a centerpiece of the Māyāpur temple to express the Vedic cosmology for the common man.

In preparing for the planetarium, head researcher Sadāpūta Dāsa (Dr. Richard L. Thompson) has uncovered remarkable parallels between the Vedic model and modern science. For example, Vedic cosmology centers on Bhū-maṇḍala, a vast universal disc. A series of seven concentric ring-shaped oceans and islands mark the surface of Bhū-maṇḍala, surrounding a central island called Jambūdīvīpa. The colossal Mt. Meru stands in the middle of Jambūdīvīpa.

Sadāpūta Dāsa has discovered that when Jambūdīvīpa is centered on earth, the distances between the seven islands are strikingly close to the distances between the major planets [see BTG, Nov/Dec '97]. Modern reason dictates that the ancient Vedic sages had no means of calculating such distances so accurately. Yet the Vedic model of Bhū-maṇḍala provides a remarkably accurate map of our solar system.

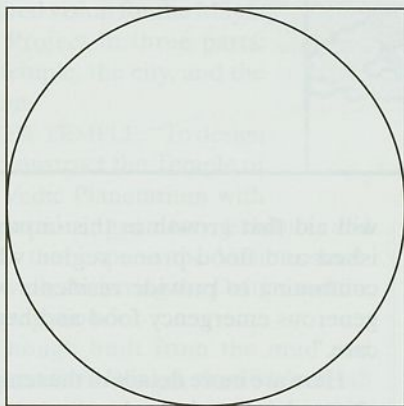
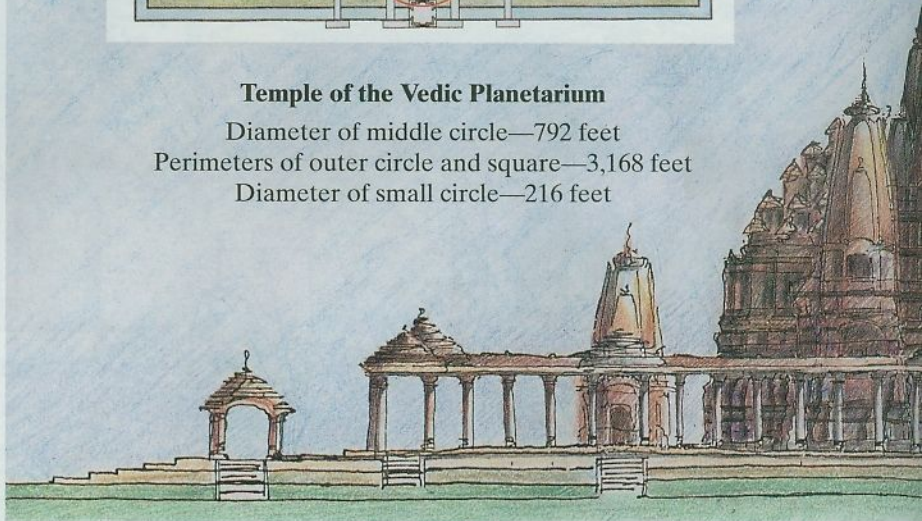
Sadāpūta has also discovered that the general description of Bhū-maṇḍala closely resembles descriptions of the universe found in many other ancient cultures in Asia, Europe, and South America.

The design of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium reflects the form of Bhū-maṇḍala. The tall central structure represents Mt. Meru, and the four surrounding buildings represent the



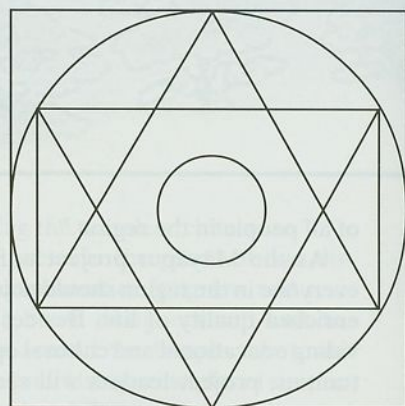
Temple of the Vedic Planetarium

Diameter of middle circle—792 feet
Perimeters of outer circle and square—3,168 feet
Diameter of small circle—216 feet



St. John's, New Jerusalem

Diameter—792 feet
Perimeter of square—3,160 feet



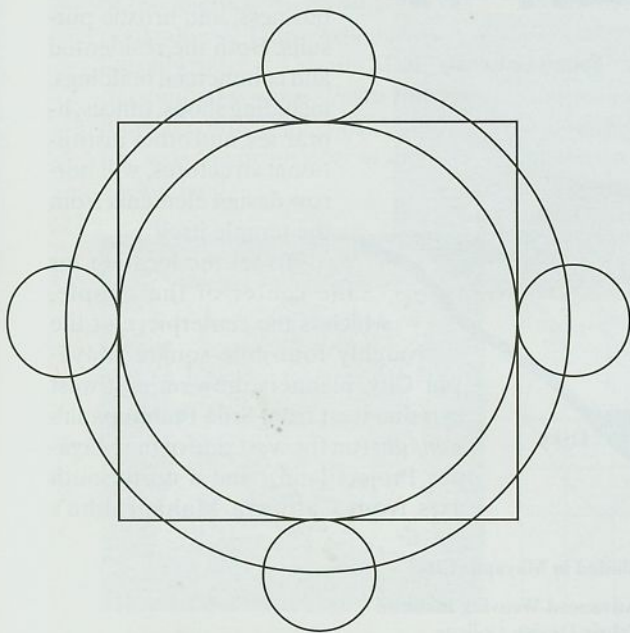
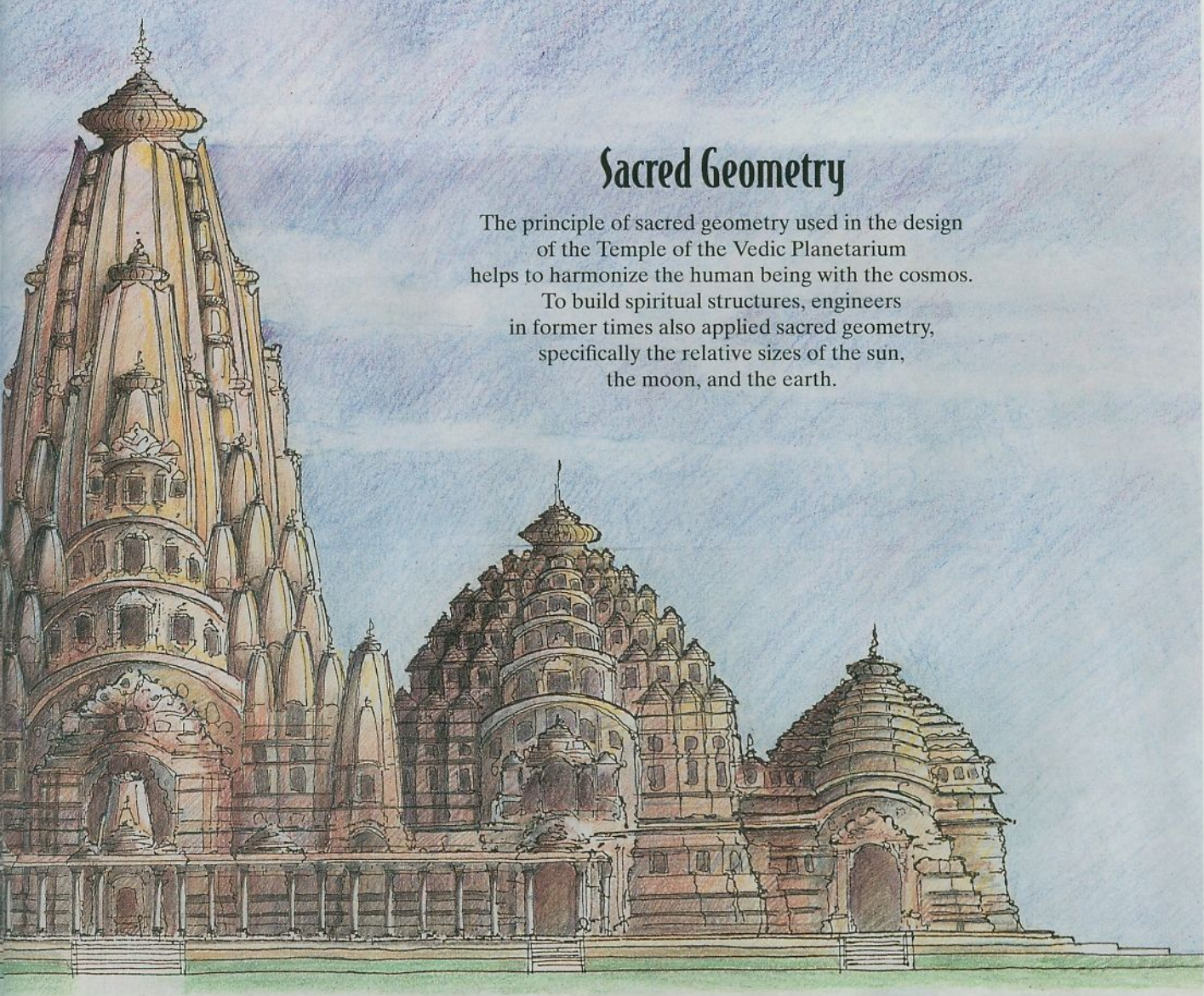
St. Mary's Chapel, Glastonbury

Diameter—79.2 feet
Perimeter of square—316.8 feet
Diameter of inner circle—21.6 feet

Sacred Geometry

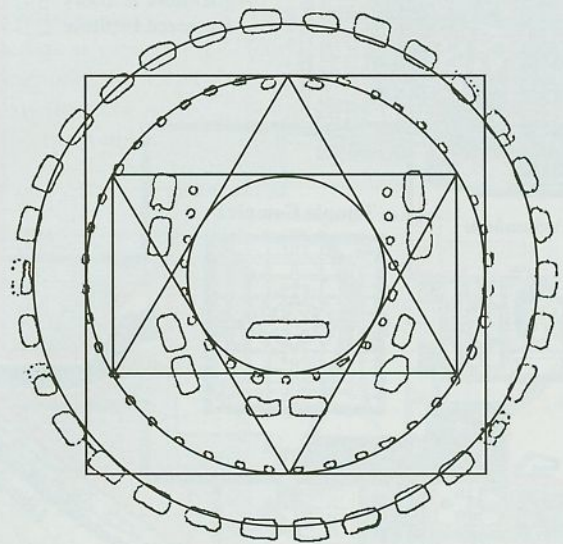
The principle of sacred geometry used in the design of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium helps to harmonize the human being with the cosmos.

To build spiritual structures, engineers in former times also applied sacred geometry, specifically the relative sizes of the sun, the moon, and the earth.



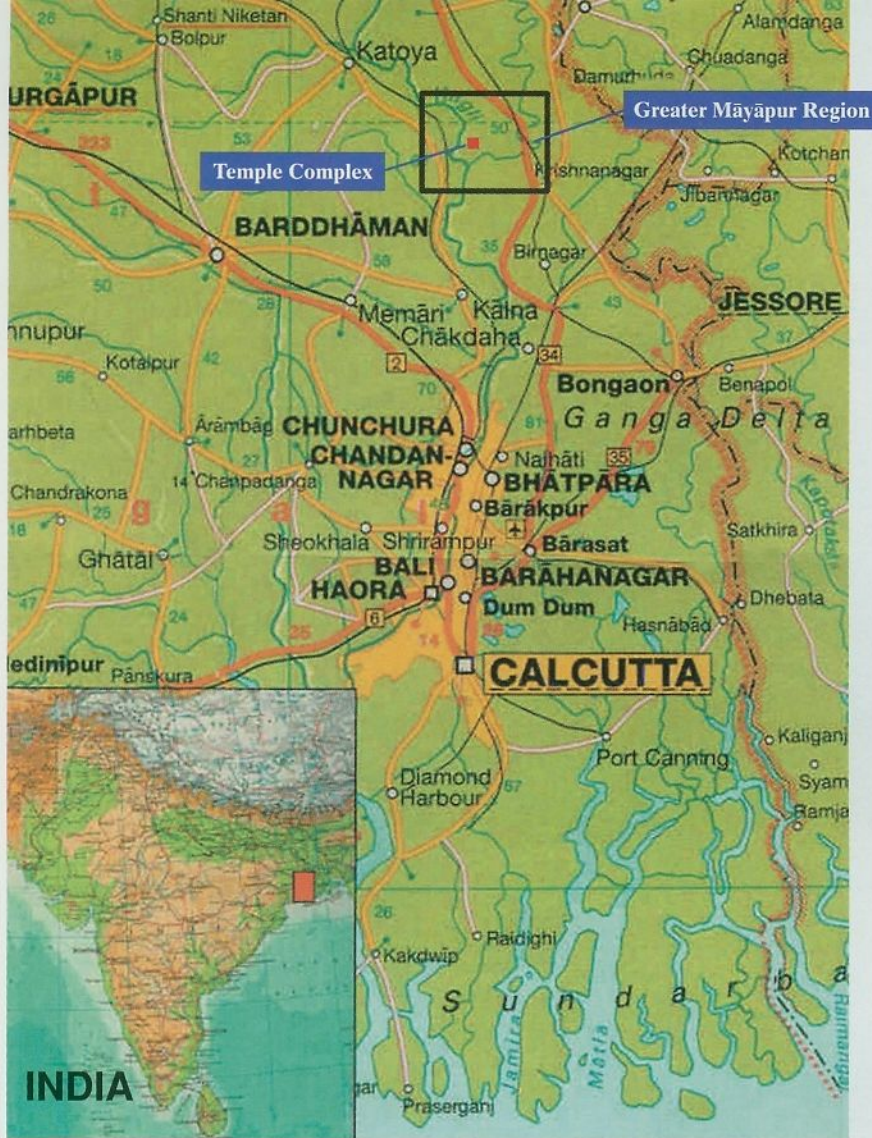
Earth and Moon

Diameter of Earth (inner circle)—7,920 miles
 Perimeters of outer circle and square—31,680 miles
 Diameter of Moon (small circles)—2,160 miles



Stonehenge

Diameter of circle within square—79.2 feet
 Perimeters of outer circle and square—316.8 feet



four mountain ranges surrounding Mt. Meru. Circling these central structures are seven rings in the form of pathways and gardens, drawing a parallel with the seven islands of Bhū-maṇḍala. The temple itself will also be a huge astrological instrument, carefully designed to harmonize with solar solstices and equinoxes.

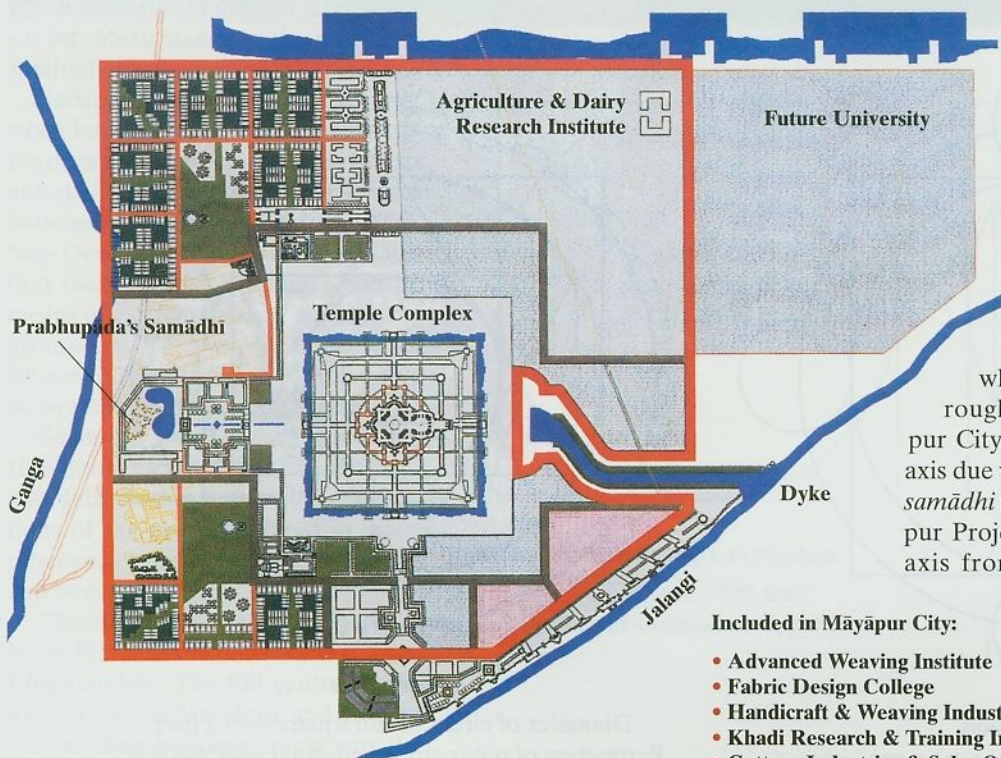
THE TEMPLE CITY

Śrī Māyāpur lies 140 km north of Calcutta on the plains of the Ganges in West Bengal. Followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu revere Śrī Māyāpur, His birthplace, as a sacred place of pilgrimage. The Ganges and Jalangi rivers converge at Śrī Māyāpur, creating an idyllic setting and natural boundaries surrounding the new temple. The temple's construction will naturally increase the number of Lord Caitanya's devotees who wish to visit or reside in this holy land.

Using traditional Vedic guidelines (see sidebar at right), project planners are designing a city of fifty thousand surrounding the temple. Pilgrims will find all necessary facilities, including many varieties of guest houses, dining rooms, educational opportunities, and places of worship. Residents will live

and work in sections of the city dedicated for intellectual, administrative, business, and artistic pursuits. Both the residential and commercial buildings, including shops, offices, libraries, and other institutional structures, will borrow design elements from the temple itself.

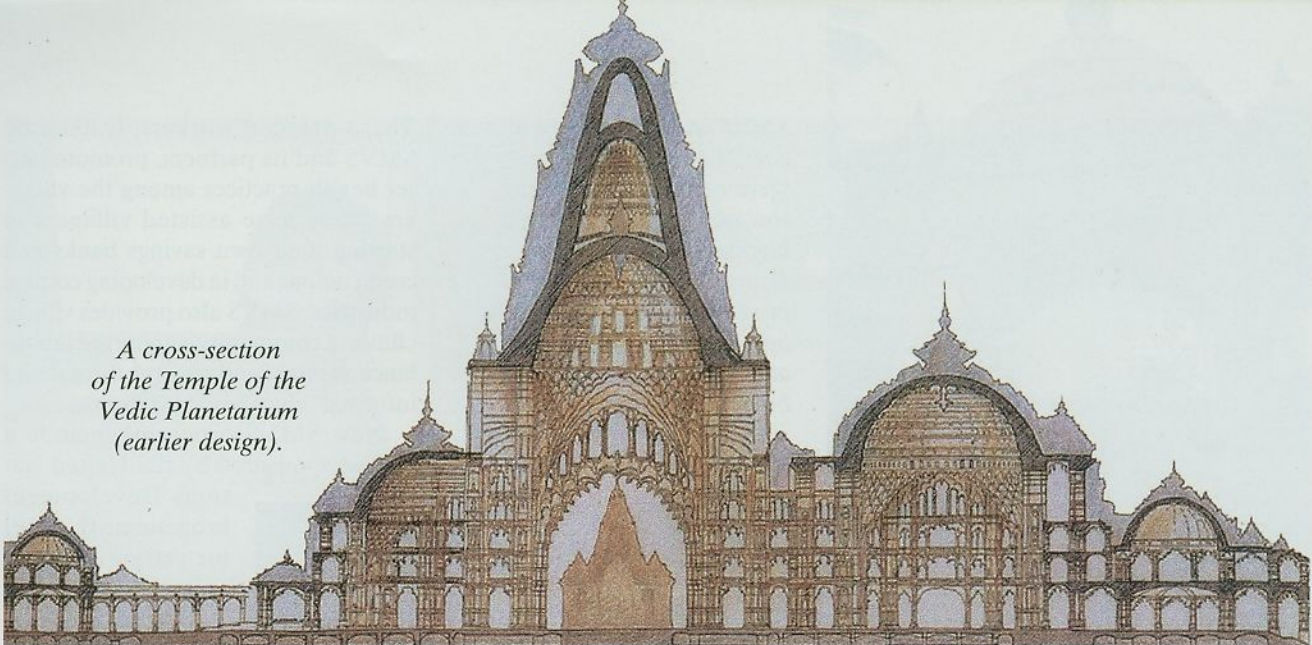
To set the location for the center of the temple, which is the centerpiece of the roughly four-mile-square Māyāpur City, planners drew an east/west axis due west from Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi* (on the west side of the Māyāpur Project land), and a north/south axis from Caitanya Mahāprabhu's



Included in Māyāpur City:

- Advanced Weaving Institute
- Fabric Design College
- Handicraft & Weaving Industrial Training Center
- Khadi Research & Training Institute
- Cottage Industries & Sales Outlet
- Art Studios

A cross-section of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (earlier design).



Foundations of Vedic Architectural Design

The following is an extract from *Pāda Sevanam Dāsa's* report to Prince Charles.

VEDIC TRADITION describes the *vastu puruṣa maṇḍala* as the magical diagram and form that defines the functions, proportions, and shapes of the built form along sacred principles. *Vastu* means “primary substance”—the ultimate particle of the macrocosmic universe and the subtlest particle of the microcosm. *Puruṣa* denotes personhood. Thus *vastu puruṣa* literally means “Cosmic Man,” the personified cosmos. *Vastu Puruṣa* himself controls all construction, for he is the proprietor of any vacant land.

As explained in *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, all emanations from Lord Kṛṣṇa are perfect and complete. The *Vedas* describe even the atom as a complete, whole unit. Modern science confirms the beautiful integral harmonic relationships of energy in the atom through refraction photography of atomic substance.

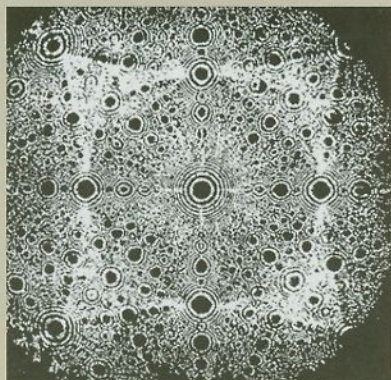
The basic design of harmonic, symmetrical expression found in the universe or in the atom is known in Sanskrit as a *maṇḍala*. *Maṇḍala* means “form” as a reduced image of the universe, or “shape” extended as any centered or bound space, usually drawn as a square. In construction, the *maṇḍala* precisely describes the build-

ing that is to follow. It is the structure’s cosmogenesis, figured geometrically.

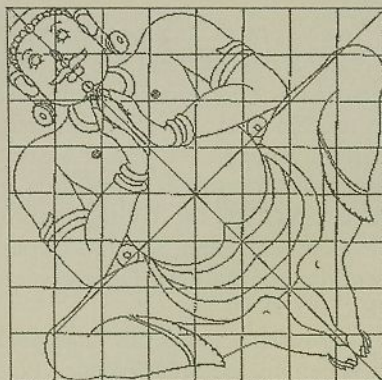
Thus the *vastu puruṣa maṇḍala* is the form or diagram that describes existence. In it one beholds the *vastu puruṣa*, contained by its geometric configuration, arrested by the gods in sixty-four subdivisions.

The Māyāpur town *maṇḍala*, a square with a perimeter of 5.2 km, is oriented due north/south and east/west.

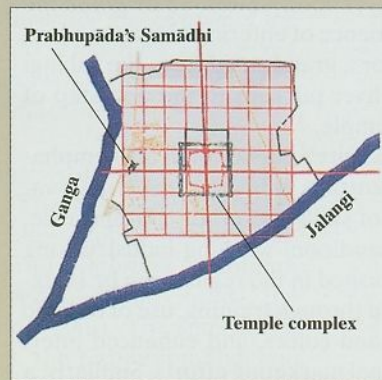
The town takes the form of an 8 x 8 *maṇḍala* comprising 64 *pādas* (sections) of 165 x 165 meters. According to Vedic texts, the grid for a town or village should consist of 64 *pādas*.



Symmetry of atomic substance.



Vastu Puruṣa maṇḍala.



Māyāpur town in 64 sections.



SMVS has introduced a low-cost 24-hour ambulance service (left). A village girl (below, left) learns to use a handloom in a program sponsored by SMVS for promoting sustainable livelihoods. Children (below), attend school in a building built with SMVS funds and run with support from SMVS and the local community.

These devoted workers, trained by SMVS and its partners, promote better health practices among the villagers. They have assisted villagers in starting their own savings banks and credit unions and in developing cottage industries. SMVS also provides village clinics, a community-supported ambulance service, and several formal and informal educational programs.

New SMVS programs include a project sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for setting up community financing of local health needs. SMVS is also working with the India-Canada Environment Facility in a crucial effort to purify arsenic-tainted drinking water that has sickened many in the region. The



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The international effort to build the Māyāpur temple and city will bring in fresh resources to one of the most impoverished regions on earth. Thus plans for the Māyāpur Project include the people of the surrounding region. In this regard, the SMPDC takes its lead from Śrīla Prabhupāda, who showed his compassionate spirit by starting regular massive distribution of *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa) in Māyāpur, a program that has continued uninterrupted for over twenty years.

To give practical shape to the vision of regional development, in 1997 members of the Māyāpur community set up the Śrī Māyāpur Vikāśa Saṅga (“Śrī Māyāpur Development Association”). International supporters include ISKCON, the United Nations Development Fund, and the Department for International Development, UK (DFID).

A growing network of village workers is helping the Śrī Māyāpur Vikāśa Saṅga (SMVS) address the health, educational, and vocational needs of some sixty thousand people in thirty villages.

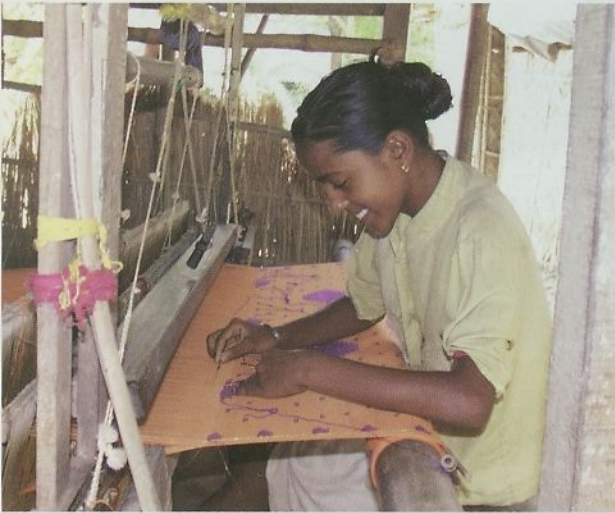
DFID has partnered with SMVS to increase the capacity of urban communities by helping them draw up their own indicators of sustainable development.

The leadership of the devotees involved in developing the Māyāpur Project has attracted diverse international investment in the Māyāpur region. By the Lord’s arrangement the devotees are thus able to bring both material and spiritual enrichment to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people who live in and near Māyāpur.

SUMMARY

By combining traditional building materials and modern engineering, the Śrī Māyāpur Project Development Committee will create one of the largest religious structures on earth. Already they are the first people in centuries to design a building meant to last more than one thousand years.

The SMPDC intends to join the divine with the practical and fulfill Śrīla Prabhupāda’s vision of a functional, harmonious, and sustainable spiritual city, centered on the precepts of Lord Caitanya, to benefit the region and the world. ☸



birthplace to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s house. The point where the two axes intersect will be the center of the temple.

The master plan for the city will unfold in phases. As in the famous Italian city of Venice, canals will be used to divert flood waters. To heighten the experience of entering Māyāpur, plans call for a grand canal from the Jalangi to deliver pilgrims to the doorstep of the temple.

The city’s master plan also emphasizes cottage industries involving a variety of skills and crafts. For instance, the handloom weaving industry, long diminished in the region, can be invigorated through training, use of organic dyes and colors, and enhanced international marketing efforts. Similarly, a research institute for sustainable dairy and agriculture will support these important local industries.



Abhirāma Dāsa (left), managing director of the Śrī Māyāpur Project, and Ian Stephenson, chief engineer for the temple.

Built to Last a Thousand Years

The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium will be a great feat of engineering that will attract worldwide attention.

The following general description of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is based on interviews with two members of the prestigious London engineering firm of Alan Baxter and Associates: Alan Baxter (founder) and Ian Stephenson (partner). Ian is the engineer for the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. The temple fits in with the firm's diverse portfolio. They have engineered contemporary construction, restored ancient stupas, and preserved and renovated such English landmarks as St. Paul's, the Tower of London, and the Houses of Parliament.

THE TEMPLE OF the Vedic Planetarium will be built five meters above the highest recorded flood level of the Ganges. The entire structure rests atop a poured concrete slab 2.5 meters thick covering roughly four acres. This slab will act as a raft to literally float the building on the muddy Gangetic delta which makes up Māyāpur. (Śrīla Prabhupāda first conceived of a large concrete raft as a foundation for the temple in August 1971.)

The temple consists of three connected domed structures. The first, the Exhibition Hall, will include many exhibits, a large planetarium, and a Garuḍa *stambha* (a column supporting the carved image of Garuḍa, the bird-carrier of Lord Viṣṇu). The smallest of the three structures, the Exhibition Hall will be about nine stories high.

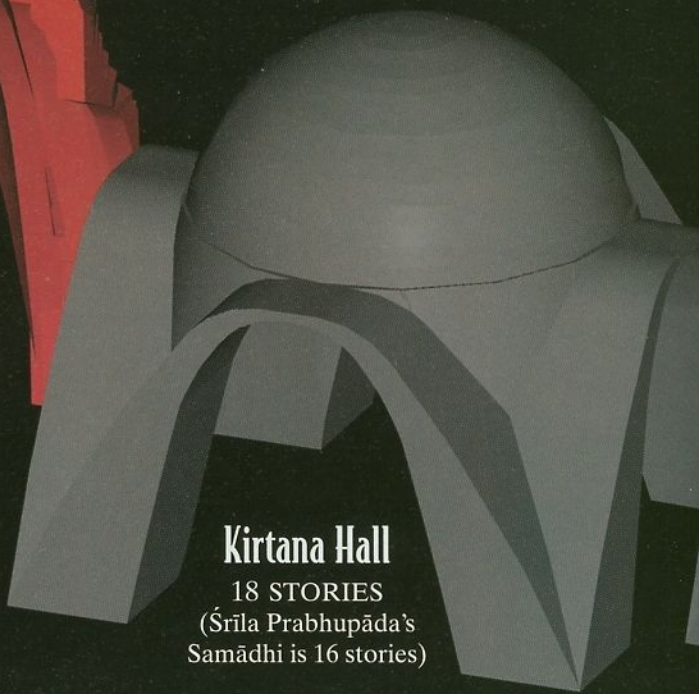
The second building, the Kīrtana Hall, will be approximately eighteen stories tall—two



Temple
35 STORIES



Structural Isometric Drawings of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium



Kirtana Hall
18 STORIES
(Śrīla Prabhupāda's
Samādhī is 16 stories)

stories taller than Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhī—and features an enormous *vyāsāsana* (seat of honor) for Śrīla Prabhupāda at its center. The third structure, the Shikar, or main temple, will stand about thirty-five stories tall. This building will house a magnificent Deity chamber, with altars for Rādhā-Mādhava, life-size Pañca-Tattva deities (Lord Caitanya and His four main associates), and the *guru-paramparā* (succession of past gurus). The spires and inner dome of this building will

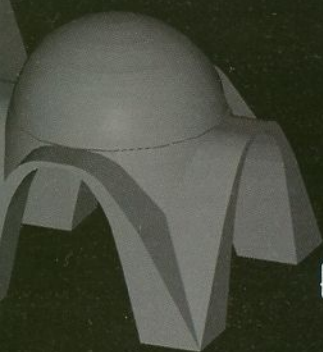
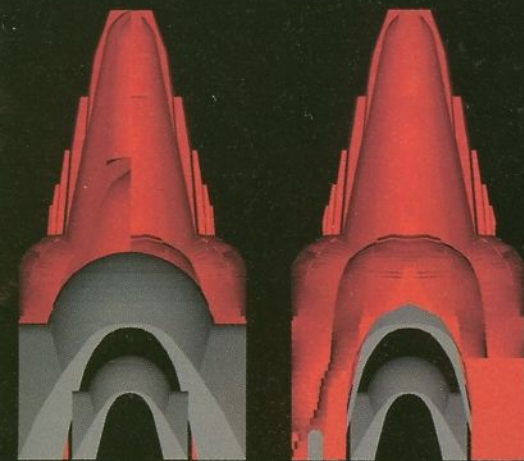
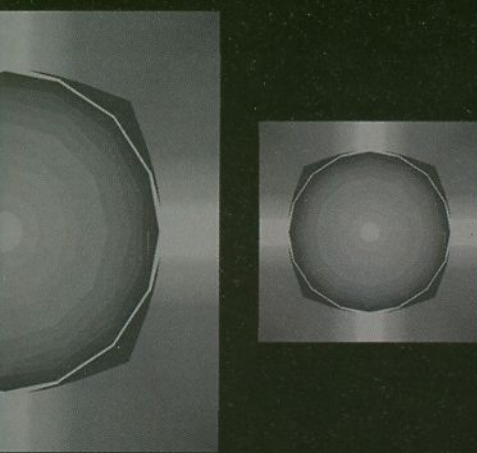
be on a scale with the largest religious structures on earth, including St. Paul's in London and St. Peter's in Rome. Simply entering the temple complex will overwhelm and inspire the visitor.

Construction of the Exhibition Hall will begin in 2001 and will be completed within three to four years. After this building goes up, it will be available for use while the rest of the construction continues. It will also give a chance for the engineers to test their building techniques.

BRICKS, CONCRETE —NO STEEL

The entire structure will be built with bricks fired from Ganges silt. Near Māyāpur an ancient Bengali palace built essentially the same way still stands after nine hundred years.

“One of the most unusual aspects of this project is that we must plan so carefully where we will acquire the building materials,” Ian says. “The temple will require a concrete mixing



Exhibition Hall
9 STORIES

factory built on site for the foundation, and we have yet to finalize exactly how we will acquire the bricks.”

Traditional construction, both in Bengal and in the West, often relied solely on bricks. Some ancient brick and lime structures, such as Roman aqueducts, are used even today. With the advent of steel and reinforced concrete, bricks were reduced to serving as non-load-bearing infill between steel or concrete columns. Much to the chagrin of their owners, such metal-

skeletal structures often deteriorate within a hundred years. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, built solely of bricks and concrete, will last a thousand years. If cared for, it will stand indefinitely.

To protect the temple from the possibility that the meandering Ganga herself could someday erode the foundation of the temple, the engineers have utilized the ingenious “rip-rap” system. Should water ever begin to undermine the ground near the temple, huge blocks of granite, pre-set around the foundation, will stop the erosion. Securing the building’s foundation, these granite blocks, in effect, create a barrier wall and would make the temple an island. Many long-standing bridges employ this system.

Constructing the temple complex will require workers to revive traditional building skills.

“We’ve encountered the same situation in England,” says Alan Baxter. “Buildings constructed by our fathers from steel and reinforced concrete fifty years ago are already coming down. British masons are now reviving the techniques used to build structures that have stood for centuries. Modern construction techniques engender less pride in construction and lead to less contact between the builder and the building.”

“In caring for ancient buildings as our firm does, we can see clearly what has gone wrong,” Alan continues. “Sometimes our predecessors used metal to repair old structures and ended up causing more harm than the original damage. Understanding this, we have omitted metal in the construction plans for the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.”

From his preservation work for the Sri Lankan government

on 1,600-year-old Buddhist *stupas*, Alan concludes, “Vegetation poses the greatest threat to buildings of this type. For that reason we’ll cover the temple with a skin of lime mortar, just as the Romans used.”

ROOTED IN TRADITION

Even from an engineering viewpoint, Alan expects that the Temple will be a highly significant building.

“There are other buildings under construction using traditional techniques, but nothing on this scale. It should have a catalytic effect on the building industry and architecture worldwide.”

“Much of twenty-first century architecture reflects excessive ambition and is simply overblown,” Alan continues. “This temple, built from local materials, is rooted deep in tradition. It is a building of world importance, not only in scale but in architectural techniques. I can foresee this temple becoming the center of a large town, just as twelfth- or thirteenth-century monasteries became the centers of towns still thriving today throughout Europe.”

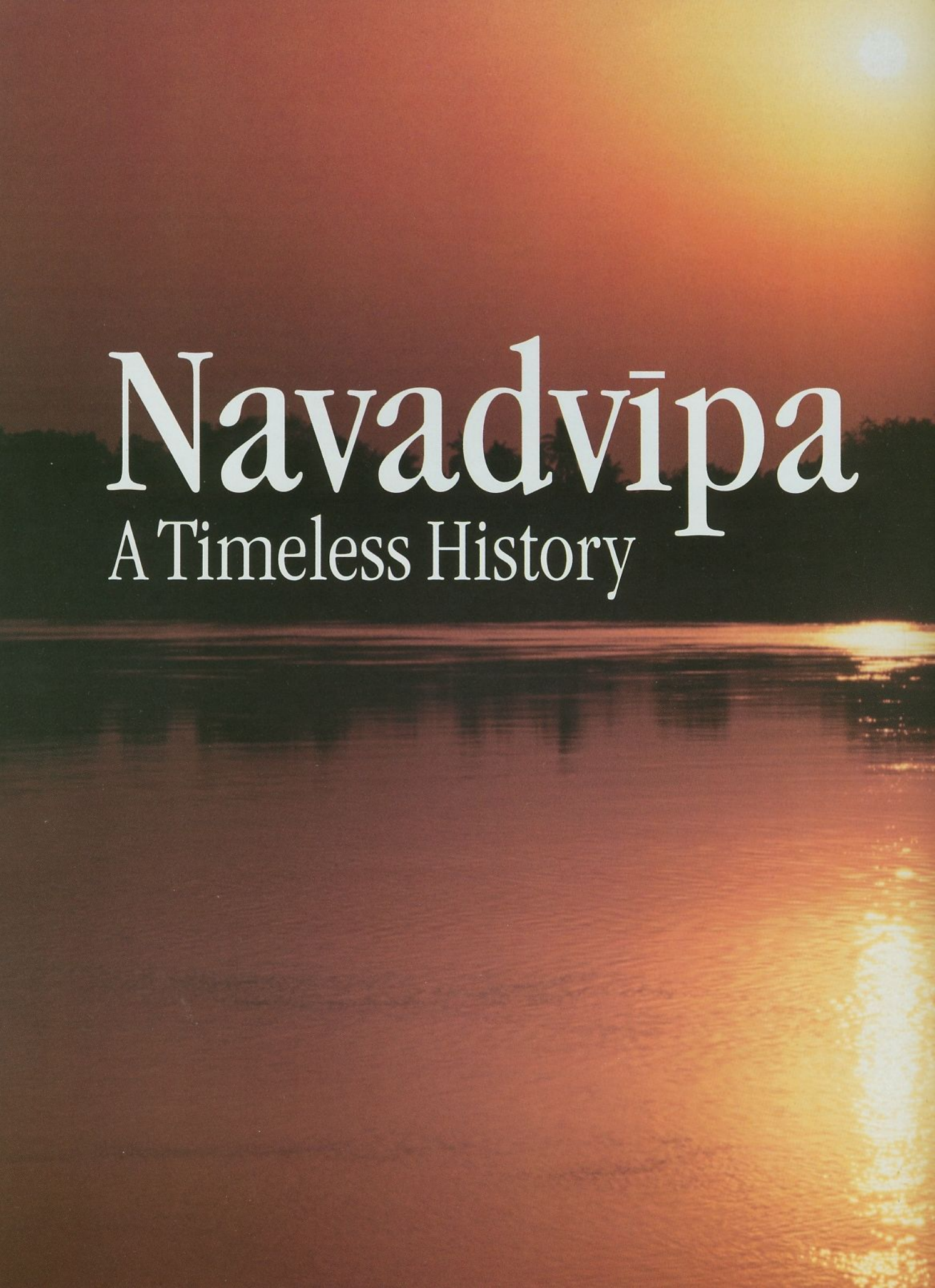
When asked if the lengthy design phase is unusual, Ian says strongly, “Not at all. There is always a long gestation period for religious buildings of this magnitude. The Washington Cathedral, for example, in the capital of the most prosperous nation on earth, took nearly a century to build and was finished only a few years ago.

“As the project engineers, we are naturally very eager to see the temple go up in our lifetimes.” ☀



Alan Baxter, founder of the engineering firm Alan Baxter and Associates.

Bhagavata Dharma Dasa

The image shows a sunset over a body of water. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon. The water reflects the colors of the sky, creating a shimmering effect. The title 'Navadvīpa' is written in a large, white, serif font, and 'A Timeless History' is written in a smaller, white, serif font below it.

Navadvīpa

A Timeless History

*By the will of the Lord and His pure devotees,
His eternal abode is visible to us today.*

by Mañjarī Devī Dāsī



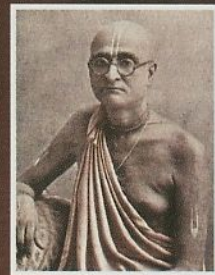
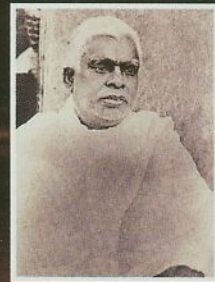
Nitya-triptā Devī Dāsī

IT IS JUST AFTER SIX o'clock in the evening, and the sun is setting on the horizon in Māyāpur. The beautiful red-orange hue of the evening sky reflects on the flowing waters of the Ganga and dominates the horizon. This is my favorite time of the day, and my favorite place—Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Marg, the main Māyāpur road—to walk while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on my beads. The road is lined with the Ganga on one side and temples on the other. As the temples begin their evening worship, I am drawn into a deep sense of peace and timelessness.

The air fills with the sounds of voices, bells, and hand cymbals as the devotees sing the Lord's glories. The eternal activity of worshipping the Lord saturates the atmosphere, and past, present, and future merge. Such a sense of eternal time is possible only here, in the holy *dhāma* (abode) of the Lord, which continues to exist even after this world is annihilated. And such an atmosphere naturally evokes contemplation on the amazing sequence of events, taking place over centuries, that have brought me here today, far from my native land.

While historians view the Māyāpur area in terms of the Muslim and Hindu kings who conquered and ruled here, devotees see it as a timeless spiritual realm of the Lord, Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma. For devotees, history is the eternal pastimes of the Lord recorded by His associates in various scriptures.

The creation of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma is recorded in the *Ananta-saṁhitā*. Lord Śiva,



Śrīla Prabhupāda (top) walks near the temple at the site of Lord Caitanya's appearance. Śrīla Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura (middle) discovered the site, and his son Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (bottom) developed the sacred circumambulation of Māyāpur.

The Discovery of Śrī Māyāpur

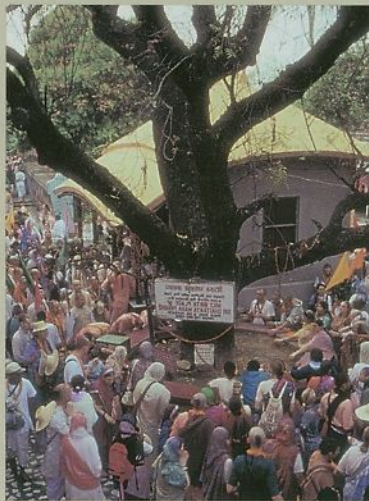
BY THE 1800s, the site of Śrī Caitanya's birth—Māyāpur, also known as Navadvīpa—had become obscured, and few people were aware of the importance of the Lord's life and mission. There were, however, those who were very aware.

One such person was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. Through preceptorial descent, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had inherited Lord Caitanya's teachings from his spiritual master, Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī. An avid follower of Lord Caitanya, Bhaktivinoda set out to find the Lord's birthplace.

To Bhaktivinoda's surprise, the village that his contemporaries in the late 1800s knew to be Navadvīpa was only one hundred years old, and so could not possibly be the same Navadvīpa in which Śrī Caitanya had appeared. There were diverse opinions, and some people even said that the Lord's birthplace was now under the Ganges, which had changed her course since the fifteenth century.

But Bhaktivinoda was relentless in his search, and he soon heard of a place northeast of the

town then considered Navadvīpa. This mysterious ancient village was governed by Muslims, and yet it was engulfed in seven large mounds covered by Tulasī, sacred plants dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Bhaktivinoda felt sure this was the actual Māyāpur, and he sought to confirm his theory with all available evidence. His search



Yamarāja Dāsa

The birth site of Lord Caitanya in Māyāpur, West Bengal.

led him to two maps that identified the spot as Māyāpur. British helmsmen had made the maps while navigating the Ganges just prior to Bhaktivinoda's research.

He also found important leads in regional scriptures. For example, he read in Narahari Cakra-

vartī's *Bhakti-ratnākara* that the courtyard of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, where Śrī Caitanya had inaugurated the congregational chanting of the mahā-mantra, was one hundred *dhanus* (two hundred yards) to the north of the "house of God." The courtyard of Śrīvāsa still existed, as it does today, so it was relatively easy to determine Śrī Caitanya's birth site.

Besides that, according to the *Caitanya-Bhāgavata*, the Muslim governor of Navadvīpa, disturbed to hear the chanting from Śrīvāsa's house while sitting at home, ordered his men to break the drums and instruments of the "Hindu heathens." This information, too, helped Bhaktivinoda discover Śrī Caitanya's birth site. The evidence tallied, and Bhaktivinoda added to it with his own geographical and archeological studies.

To get spiritual confirmation of the site's authenticity, Bhaktivinoda brought to the area his crippled guru, Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, who began to jump in ecstasy and cry profusely in love of God. Perhaps more than the hard, external evidence, this outpouring of divine love convinced Bhaktivinoda of the site's authenticity. The birth site was thus confirmed, both materially and spiritually.—*Satyarāja Dāsa*

speaking to his wife, Pārvatī, explains how Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī had heard on two occasions that Kṛṣṇa was enjoying with the *gopī* Virajā but that She had been unable to catch them together. Thinking of a way to entice Kṛṣṇa away from this girlfriend, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī gathered Her friends between the Ganges and Yamuna rivers. There She created a beautiful place decorated with creepers and trees filled with bumblebees. Bucks and does happily wandered about, and the fragrance of jasmine, *mallikā*, and *mālatī* flowers

filled the air. Forests adorned that transcendental land, and Tulasī plants decorated its various groves.

On Rādhā's order, the Ganges and Yamuna, with their pleasant water and banks, acted as a moat to protect the garden. Cupid, along with springtime itself, decided to reside there eternally, and birds constantly sang the auspicious name of Kṛṣṇa.

To attract Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī played a beautiful melody on a flute. On arriving, Kṛṣṇa understood Rādhārāṇī's mood and spoke with a love-choked

voice: "O lovely Rādhā, You are My very life. No one is more dear to Me than You. I will never leave You. Just for Me, You have created this wonderful place. Staying with You, I will transform this place, filling it with new cowherd girls and groves. The devotees will glorify this place as New Vṛndāvana [Nava Vṛndāvana]. As this place is like an island [*dvīpa*], the wise will call it Navadvīpa. By My order, all the holy places will reside here. Because You have created this place for My pleasure, I will live here eternally."

Lord Caitanya established the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa as the religious process for this age.

• • •

Kṛṣṇa then merged with the body of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Seeing this, the cowherd girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī excitedly shouted “Gaurahari!” (a name for Lord Caitanya meaning “golden Lord”) and changed their forms to male forms to continue their service to the divine couple, now appearing in Their most beautiful golden form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

LORD CAITANYA IN NAVADVĪPA

Although the appearance of Navadvīpa dates to an unknown time in the distant past, Lord Caitanya lived there fairly recently, from 1486 to 1510, until He was twenty-four. He then lived in Jagannatha Puri, where He ended His manifest pastimes at the age of forty-eight. In the book *Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma Māhātmya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes that soon after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya, Navadvīpa also became hidden.

Lord Nityānanda, speaking more than four hundred years ago, told Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī: “When our Lord [Caitanya] disappears, by His desire the Ganges will swell. The water will almost cover Māyāpur for a hundred years and then recede. For some time, only the land will remain, devoid of houses. Then, by the Lord’s desire, Māyāpur will again become prominent, and people will live here as before. All the ghats (bathing places) on the bank of the Ganges will again be visible, and the devotees will build temples. An exceedingly wonderful temple will appear, from which Lord Caitanya’s eternal service will be preached everywhere. . . . In this way, the devotees will reveal the lost places. Know this for certain. At the end of four hundred years, the task of recovering the lost holy places will begin.”

In the late 1800s, through extensive research of scriptures, old maps, and government records, Bhaktivinoda

Ṭhākura discovered many lost holy places in Navadvīpa Dhāma, including the site of Lord Caitanya’s birth. He also wrote extensively on the teachings of Lord Caitanya. Then shortly before leaving this world, he instructed his son and spiritual successor, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, to “develop Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma *parikrama* [circumambulation], for by its performance all people of the world can be liberated.”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta fulfilled his father’s desire. Upon setting up his headquarters in Navadvīpa in 1918, he initiated an annual *parikrama* of Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma. The *parikrama* was done in grand style, with elephants leading a huge parade of thousands of devotees carrying flags and dancing in *kīrtana*. Each day they walked to different holy places and gathered to hear Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta speak on the pastimes of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Following in the footsteps of his spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda established the headquarters of his ISKCON in Navadvīpa Dhāma. Each year thousands of devotees from all over the world perform Navadvīpa *parikrama* as part of ISKCON’s annual Gaura Pūrṇimā festival, honoring the appearance day of Lord Caitanya.

THE MISSION OF NAVADVĪPA

In *Caitanya Maṅgala*, Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura explains that Lord Caitanya appeared and preached in Navadvīpa just to establish the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra as the religious process for the age of Kali. Lord Caitanya said, “I want to flood the whole world with the chanting of the holy names. I will personally preach and flood India with the holy name. Later, my commander-in-chief devotee [*senapati bhakta*] will come, preach in distant countries, and flood the world with the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

Lord Caitanya left the mission of spreading the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa worldwide to future *ācāryas*, or prominent spiritual masters in His line. First, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura reestablished the teachings of Lord Caitanya and wrote on them extensively. In 1896, he sent to the West the first English book on Lord Caitanya—*Srī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu: His Life and Precepts*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta continued the mission by strongly preaching Lord Caitanya’s message all over India and sending his leading *sannyāsī* preachers to England. After some time, these *sannyāsīs* returned to India without any tangible success. They said it was not possible for Westerners to follow the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Then, just two weeks before he left this world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta instructed a young householder disciple to deliver the teachings of Lord Caitanya to the West. By taking this instruction to heart, that disciple inherited the spiritual legacy handed down by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the previous spiritual masters. He later became His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, and spread the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra to virtually every country. He thus made great strides in fulfilling Lord Caitanya’s prophesy: “In every town and village in the world, My name will be heard.”

By Śrīla Prabhupāda’s grace, one of the towns the holy name and the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu reached was my hometown. As a result, I am here today in the birthplace and holy abode of that *saṅkīrtana* mission, Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma. ☀

Mañjarī Devī Dāśī is originally from New Zealand. She joined ISKCON in France in 1985. For the last nine years she has lived in Māyāpur, where she serves as the secretary for ISKCON’s governing body commission.

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Exceptions: For Spain, the number to drop is the initial "9," for the CIS, "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

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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 *purāṇa*, 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 BASIS OF MATERIAL BONDAGE

Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, describes the power and danger of attraction to the opposite sex.

CANTO 3: CHAPTER 31

37 तत्सृष्टसृष्टसृष्टेषु को न्वखण्डितधीः पुमान् ।
अर्षिं नारायणमृते योषिन्मय्येह मायया ॥३७॥

tat-sṛṣṭa-sṛṣṭa-sṛṣṭeṣu
ko nv akhaṇḍīta-dhīḥ pumān
ṛṣim nārāyaṇam ṛte
yoṣin-mayyeha māyayā

tat—by Brahmā; *sṛṣṭa-sṛṣṭa-sṛṣṭeṣu*—amongst all living entities begotten; *kaḥ*—who; *nu*—indeed; *akhaṇḍīta*—not distracted; *dhīḥ*—his intelligence; *pumān*—male; *ṛṣim*—the sage; *nārāyaṇam*—Nārāyaṇa; *ṛte*—except; *yoṣit-mayyā*—in the form of a woman; *īha*—here; *māyayā*—by māyā.

Amongst all kinds of living entities begotten by Brahmā, namely men, demigods and animals, none but the sage Nārāyaṇa is immune to the attraction of māyā in the form of woman.

PURPORT: The first living creature is Brahmā himself, and from him were created sages like Marīci, who in their turn created Kaśyapa Muni and others, and Kaśyapa Muni and the Manus created different demigods and human beings, etc. But there is none among them who is not attracted by the spell of māyā in the form of woman. Throughout the entire material world, beginning from Brahmā down to the

small, insignificant creatures like the ant, everyone is attracted by sex life. That is the basic principle of this material world. Lord Brahmā’s being attracted by his daughter is the vivid example that no one is exempt from sexual attraction to woman. Woman, therefore, is the wonderful creation of māyā to keep the conditioned soul in shackles.

38 बलं मे पश्य मायायाः स्त्रीमय्या जयिनो दिशाम् ।
या करोति पदाक्रान्तान् भ्रूविजृम्भेण केवलम् ॥३८॥

balam me paśya māyāyāḥ
strī-mayyā jayino diśām
yā karoti pada-ākṛāntān
bhrūvi-jṛmbheṇa kevalam

balam—the strength; *me*—My; *paśya*—behold; *māyāyāḥ*—of māyā; *strī-mayyāḥ*—in the shape of a woman; *jayinaḥ*—conquerors; *diśām*—of all directions; *yā*—who; *karoti*—makes; *pada-ākṛāntān*—following at her heels; *bhrūvi*—of her eyebrows; *jṛmbheṇa*—by the movement; *kevalam*—merely.

Just try to understand the mighty strength of My māyā in the shape of woman, who by the mere movement of her eyebrows can keep even the greatest conquerors of the world under her grip.

PURPORT: There are many instances in the history of the world of a great conqueror’s being captivated by the charms

of a Cleopatra. One has to study the captivating potency of woman, and man's attraction for that potency. From what source was this generated? According to *Vedānta-sūtra*, we can understand that everything is generated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is enunciated there, *janmādy asya yataḥ*. This means that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or the Supreme Person, Brahman, the Absolute Truth, is the source from whom everything emanates. The captivating power of woman, and man's susceptibility to such attraction, must also exist in the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the spiritual world and must be represented in the transcendental pastimes of the Lord.

The Lord is the Supreme Person, the supreme male. As a common male wants to be attracted by a female, that propensity similarly exists in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He also wants to be attracted by the beautiful features of a woman. Now the question is, if He wants to be captivated by such womanly attraction, would He be attracted by any material woman? It is not possible. Even persons who are in this material existence can give up womanly attraction if they are attracted by the Supreme Brahman. Such was the case with Haridāsa Ṭhākura. A beautiful prostitute tried to attract him in the dead of night, but since he was situated in devotional service, in transcendental love of Godhead, Haridāsa Ṭhākura was not captivated. Rather, he turned the prostitute into a great devotee by his transcendental association. This material attraction, therefore, certainly cannot attract the Supreme Lord. When He wants to be attracted by a woman, He has to create such a woman from His own energy. That woman is Rādhārāṇī. It is explained by the Gosvāmīs that Rādhārāṇī is the manifestation of the pleasure potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the Supreme Lord wants to derive transcendental pleasure, He has to create a woman from His internal potency. Thus the tendency to be attracted by womanly beauty is natural because it exists in the spiritual world. In the material world it is reflected pervertedly, and therefore there are so many inebrieties.

Instead of being attracted by material beauty, if one is accustomed to be attracted by the beauty of Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa, then the statement of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*, holds true. When one is attracted by the transcendental beauty of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, he is no longer attracted by material feminine beauty. That is the special significance of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship. That is testified to by Yāmunācārya. He says, "Since I have become attracted by the beauty of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, when there is attraction for a woman or a memory of sex life with a woman, I at once spit on it, and my face turns in disgust." When we are attracted by Madana-mohana and the beauty of Kṛṣṇa and His consorts, then the shackles of conditioned life, namely the beauty of a material woman, cannot attract us.

39 सङ्गं न कुर्यात्प्रमदासु जातु
योगस्य पारं परमारुरुक्षुः ।

मत्सेवया प्रतिलब्धात्मलाभो
वदन्ति या निरयद्वारमस्य ॥३९॥

*saṅgam na kuryāt pramadāsu jātu
yogasya pāram param āruruksuḥ
mat-sevayā pratilabdhātma-lābho
vadanti yā niraya-dvāram asya*

saṅgam—association; *na*—not; *kuryāt*—one should make; *pramadāsu*—with women; *jātu*—ever; *yogasya*—of yoga; *pāram*—culmination; *param*—topmost; *āruruksuḥ*—one who aspires to reach; *mat-sevayā*—by rendering service unto Me; *pratilabdha*—obtained; *ātma-lābhaḥ*—self-realization; *vadanti*—they say; *yāḥ*—which women; *niraya*—to hell; *dvāram*—the gateway; *asya*—of the advancing devotee.

One who aspires to reach the culmination of yoga and has realized his self by rendering service unto Me should never associate with an attractive woman, for such a woman is declared in the scripture to be the gateway to hell for the advancing devotee.

PURPORT: The culmination of yoga is full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is affirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*: a person who is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa in devotion is the topmost of all yogīs. And in the second chapter of the first canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is also stated that when one becomes freed from material contamination by rendering devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he can at that time understand the science of God.

Here the word *pratilabdhātma-lābhaḥ* occurs. *Ātmā* means "self," and *lābha* means "gain." Generally, conditioned souls have lost their *ātmā*, or self, but those who are transcendentalists have realized the self. It is directed that such a self-realized soul who aspires to the topmost platform of yogic perfection should not associate with young women. In the modern age, however, there are so many rascals who recommend that while one has genitals he should enjoy women as much as he likes, and at the same time he can become a yogī. In no standard yoga system is the association of women accepted. It is clearly stated here that the association of women is the gateway to hellish life. The association of woman is very much restricted in the Vedic civilization. Out of the four social divisions, the *brahmacārī*, *vānaprastha*, and the *sannyāsī*—three orders—are strictly prohibited from the association of women; only the *gṛhasthas*, or householders, are given license to have an intimate relationship with a woman, and that relationship is also restricted for begetting nice children. If, however, one wants to stick to continued existence in the material world, he may indulge in female association unrestrictedly.

40 योपयाति शनैर्माया योषिद्देवविनिर्मिता ।
तामीक्षेतात्मनो मृत्युं तृणैः कूपमिवावृत्तम् ॥४०॥

*yopayāti śanaīr māyā
yoṣid deva-vinirmītā
tām ikṣetātmano mṛtyum
tṛṇaiḥ kūpam ivāvṛtam*

yā—she who; *upayāti*—approaches; *śanaīḥ*—slowly; *māyā*—representation of *māyā*; *yoṣit*—woman; *deva*—by the Lord; *vinirmītā*—created; *tām*—her; *ikṣeta*—one must regard; *ātmanah*—of the soul; *mṛtyum*—death; *tṛṇaiḥ*—with grass; *kūpam*—a well; *iva*—like; *āvṛtam*—covered.

The woman, created by the Lord, is the representation of *māyā*, and one who associates with such *māyā* by accepting services must certainly know that this is the way of death, just like a blind well covered with grass.

PURPORT: Sometimes it happens that a rejected well is covered by grass, and an unwary traveler who does not know of the existence of the well falls down, and his death is assured. Similarly, association with a woman begins when one accepts service from her, because woman is especially created by the Lord to give service to man. By accepting her service, a man is entrapped. If he is not intelligent enough to know that she is the gateway to hellish life, he may indulge in her association very liberally. This is restricted for those who aspire to ascend to the transcendental platform. Even fifty years ago in Hindu society, such association was restricted. A wife could not see her husband during the daytime. Householders even had different residential quarters. The internal quarters of a residential house were for the woman, and the external quarters were for the man.

Acceptance of service rendered by a woman may appear very pleasing, but one should be very cautious in accepting such service because it is clearly said that woman is the gateway to death, or forgetfulness of one's self. She blocks the path of spiritual realization.

**41 यां मन्यते पतिं मोहान्मन्मायामृषमायतीम् ।
स्त्रीत्वं स्त्रीसङ्गतः प्राप्तो वित्तापत्यगृहप्रदम् ॥४१॥**

*yām manyate patim mohān
man-māyām ṛṣabhāyatim
strītvam strī-saṅgataḥ prāpto
vittāpatya-grha-pradam*

yām—which; *manyate*—she thinks; *patim*—her husband; *mohāt*—due to illusion; *mat-māyām*—My *māyā*; *ṛṣabha*—in the form of a man; *āyatim*—coming; *strītvam*—the state of being a woman; *strī-saṅgataḥ*—from attachment to a woman; *prāptaḥ*—obtained; *vitta*—wealth; *apatya*—progeny; *grha*—house; *pradam*—bestowing.

A living entity who, as a result of attachment to a woman in his previous life, has been endowed with the form of a woman, foolishly looks upon *māyā* in the form of a man,

her husband, as the bestower of wealth, progeny, house, and other material assets.

PURPORT: From this verse it appears that a woman is also supposed to have been a man in his (her) previous life, and due to his attachment to his wife, he now has the body of a woman. *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms this: a man gets his next life's birth according to what he thinks of at the time of death. If someone is too attached to his wife, naturally he thinks of his wife at the time of death, and in his next life he takes the body of a woman. Similarly, if a woman thinks of her husband at the time of death, naturally she gets the body of a man in the next life. In the Hindu scriptures, therefore, woman's chastity and devotion to man is greatly emphasized. A woman's attachment to her husband may elevate her to the body of a man in her next life, but a man's attachment to a woman will degrade him, and in his next life he will get the body of a woman. We should always remember, as it is stated in the *Gītā*, that both the gross and subtle material bodies are dresses; they are the shirt and coat of the living entity. To be either a woman or a man only involves one's bodily dress. The soul in nature is actually the marginal energy of the Supreme Lord. Every living entity, being classified as energy, is supposed to be originally a woman, or one who is enjoyed. In the body of a man there is a greater opportunity to get out of the material clutches; there is less opportunity in the body of a woman. In this verse it is indicated that the body of a man should not be misused through forming an attachment to women and thus becoming too entangled in material enjoyment, which will result in getting the body of a woman in the next life. A woman is generally fond of household prosperity, ornaments, furniture, and dresses. She is satisfied when the husband supplies all these things sufficiently. The relationship between man and woman is very complicated, but the substance is that one who aspires to ascend to the transcendental stage of spiritual realization should be very careful in accepting the association of a woman. In the stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, such restriction of association may be slackened because if a man's and woman's attachment is not to each other but to Kṛṣṇa, then both of them are equally eligible to get out of the material entanglement and reach the abode of Kṛṣṇa. As it is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, anyone who seriously takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness—whether in the lowest species of life or a woman or of the less intelligent classes, such as the mercantile or laborer class—will reach the abode of Kṛṣṇa. A man should not be attached to a woman, nor should a woman be attached to a man. Both man and woman should be attached to the service of the Lord. Then there is the possibility of liberation from material entanglement for both of them.

**42 तामात्मनो विजानीयात्पत्यपत्यगृहात्मकम् ।
दैवोपसादितं मृत्युं मृगयोर्गायनं यथा ॥४२॥**

*tām ātmano vijānīyāt
paty-apatya-grhātmakam
daivopasāditam mṛtyum
mṛgayor gāyanam yathā*

tām—the Lord's māyā; *ātmanaḥ*—of herself; *vijānīyāt*—she should know; *patī*—husband; *apatya*—children; *grha*—house; *ātmakam*—consisting of; *daiva*—by the authority of the Lord; *upasāditam*—brought about; *mṛtyum*—death; *mṛgayoḥ*—of the hunter; *gāyanam*—the singing; *yathā*—as.

A woman, therefore, should consider her husband, her house, and her children to be the arrangement of the external energy of the Lord for her death, just as the sweet singing of the hunter is death for the deer.

PURPORT: In these instructions of Lord Kapiladeva it is explained that not only is woman the gateway to hell for man, but man is also the gateway to hell for woman. It is a question of attachment. A man becomes attached to a woman because of her service, her beauty, and many other assets, and similarly a woman becomes attached to a man for his giving her a nice place to live, ornaments, dress, and children. It is a question of attachment for one another. As long as either is attached to the other for such material enjoyment, the woman is dangerous for the man, and the man is also dangerous for the woman. But if the attachment is transferred to Kṛṣṇa, both of them become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and then marriage is very nice. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore recommends:

*anāsaktasya viṣayān
yathārham upayujjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe
yuktaḥ vairāgyam ucyate
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.255)*

Man and woman should live together as householders in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, only for the purpose of discharging duties in the service of Kṛṣṇa. Engage the children, engage the wife, and engage the husband, all in Kṛṣṇa conscious duties, and then all these bodily or material attachments will disappear. Since the via medium is Kṛṣṇa, the consciousness is pure, and there is no possibility of degradation at any time.

**43 देहेन जीवभूतेन लोकाह्लोकमनुव्रजन् ।
भुञ्जान एव कर्माणि करोत्यविरतं पुमान् ॥४३॥**

*dehena jīva-bhūtena
lokāl lokam anuvrajan
bhuñjana eva karmāṇi
karoty avirataṁ pumān*

dehena—on account of the body; *jīva-bhūtena*—possessed by the living entity; *lokāt*—from one planet; *lokam*—to another planet; *anuvrajan*—wandering; *bhuñjanaḥ*—enjoying; *eva*—so; *karmāṇi*—fruitive activities; *karoty*—he does; *avirataṁ*—incessantly; *pumān*—the living entity.

Due to his particular type of body, the materialistic living entity wanders from one planet to another, following fruitive activities. In this way, he involves himself in fruitive activities and enjoys the result incessantly.

PURPORT: When the living entity is encaged in the material body, he is called *jīva-bhūta*, and when he is free from the material body he is called *brahma-bhūta*. By changing his material body birth after birth, he travels not only in the different species of life, but also from one planet to another. Lord Caitanya says that the living entities, bound by fruitive activities, are wandering in this way throughout the universe, and if by some chance or by pious activities they get in touch with a bona fide spiritual master, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, then they get the seed of devotional service. After getting this seed, if one sows it within his heart and pours water on it by hearing and chanting, the seed grows into a big plant, and there are fruits and flowers which the living entity can enjoy, even in this material world. That is called the *brahma-bhūta* stage. In his designated condition, a living entity is called materialistic, and upon being freed from all designations, when he is fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, engaged in devotional service, he is called liberated. Unless one gets the opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of the Lord, there is no possibility of one's liberation from the cycle of birth and death in the different species of life and through the different grades of planets.

**44 जीवो ह्यस्यानुगो देहो भूतेन्द्रियमनोमयः ।
तच्चिरोधोऽस्य मरणमाविर्भावस्तु सम्भवः ॥४४॥**

*jīvo hy asyānugo deho
bhūtendriya-mano-mayaḥ
tan-nirodho 'sya maraṇam
āvīrbhāvas tu sambhavaḥ*

jīvaḥ—the living entity; *hi*—indeed; *asya*—of him; *anugaḥ*—suitable; *dehaḥ*—body; *bhūta*—gross material elements; *indriya*—senses; *manaḥ*—mind; *mayaḥ*—made of; *tat*—of the body; *nirodhaḥ*—destruction; *asya*—of the living entity; *maraṇam*—death; *āvīrbhāvaḥ*—manifestation; *tu*—but; *sambhavaḥ*—birth.

In this way the living entity gets a suitable body with a material mind and senses, according to his fruitive activities. When the reaction of his particular activity comes to an end, that end is called death, and when a particular type of reaction begins, that beginning is called birth.

(continued in the next issue)

CHERISHED DESIRE

(continued from page 13)

BTG: Is it the scale of the building that makes it difficult?

AD: No. It's the scale on an organizational level. It's the biggest thing Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers have ever attempted. And because it's a spiritual endeavor, *māyā* will try to thwart it at every turn. Here we are, more than twenty years after Prabhupāda's departure, and we've had many detours. I think Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers have been sincere in their endeavors, but there has been a lot of inevitable trial and error, and that has fostered questions of ability and credibility.

BTG: At this point, how do you feel about the project?

AD: I would like to have more information readily available. There's such a distance between here and India. I plan to spend more time there in the future. But in general I have confidence in Abhirāma [the project director]. He has done large-scale projects before, so he's qualified to carry out a lot of this work. And I think that as a society, ISKCON is ready. We need a project like this to unite us. But we may encounter more challenges.

BTG: What kinds of challenges?

AD: We can be our own worst enemies. Splintering is an example, which is common after the disappearance of a religious founder. It may get worse.

BTG: Can Māyāpur unite us?

AD: It has to. We're not getting any younger, and none of us want to end our lives without at least a good beginning in fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's order to build Māyāpur. We have to compartmentalize our differences, and if we do, we will realize that our differences are not that great.

BTG: Have you seen examples of that unity?

AD: Only in *kīrtana*, at festivals. But the same could happen with Māyāpur.

BTG: What gives Māyāpur such universality?

AD: Māyāpur is Śrīla Prabhupāda's cherished dream. The *ācāryas* envisioned the Māyāpur project. Lord Nityānanda predicted it. Māyāpur is the center of our heritage, like Rome or Mecca. Māyāpur should be important to everyone who chants Hare Kṛṣṇa.

BTG: Is money for Māyāpur well spent?

AD: Certainly it's well spent. In America the same amount of money wouldn't go nearly as far.

BTG: Do you see the temple taking a long time to build?

AD: Well, this is a long-term project. You have to see it like that. At the same time, once you get started with construction you can't stop; you have to keep the momentum going. We can't do this in fits and starts. Otherwise we'll struggle to build the temple over decades and centuries, like the Washington Cathedral or the Washington Monument. We're constrained by our short lifetimes. If we realize that, things will change drastically. We'll build this temple in short order, as Prabhupāda desired.

BTG: In addition to the temple, the Māyāpur Project leaders are working on social projects for the surrounding

region. How do you feel about that?
AD: I like the fact that the ecological and other non-religious aspects are being pursued. It gives people an opportunity to put money to benefit very poor people. One of the trends of the new millennium will be the continued divergence between the rich and the poor. The gulf grows every year, so people want to put their money where the poorest people are.

BTG: Isn't that akin to mundane welfare work, which Śrīla Prabhupāda criticized?

AD: There is nothing mundane about it. Māyāpur is not just any part of the world. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared there, and Śrīla Prabhupāda preached there. So by helping people in Māyāpur, the Lord is at the center. The center is different, and so the consciousness is different. That's our message: carry on with your activities, but put Kṛṣṇa in the center. ☸

MIHE*

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* Māyāpur Institute of Higher Education

Māyāpur Realizations

Māyāpur residents speak about life in the holiest of holy places.

Adapted from interviews by Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī

Originally from England, Kṛṣṇa Mādhurī Devī Dāsī joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Australia. She had lived in Vṛndāvana for a few years before moving to Māyāpur three years ago.

IN THE MORNINGS I assist the *pūjārīs*, the devotees directly attending the Deities. I take care of the Deities' paraphernalia, set up the jewelry trays, make new jewelry, iron Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva's clothes, clean the Deity paraphernalia rooms, grind sandalwood to make paste, and so on. In the afternoons I do secretarial service in the office of my spiritual master, His Holiness Jayapatāka Mahārāja.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood of compassion is very much predominant in Māyāpur. The dynamic energy of devotees engaged in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness enlivens the atmosphere. Traveling groups are always going out to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, and when they return there's a nice mood of appreciation from the other devotees.

Efforts to deliver Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others are always expanding. Bhakti Puruṣottama Mahārāja regularly organizes *Bhagavad-gītā* conferences, where people who have bought *Gītās* from the traveling book-distribution parties are invited for a three-day intensive course in bhakti-yoga. There are similar programs for students. Of course, guests are always



Kṛṣṇa Mādhurī Devī Dāsī

coming here just to visit, and devotees engage them in either chanting in the temple or writing the holy name in the park.

Because Māyāpur is near the Ganga, the breeze from the Ganga is always blowing over us. Gaṅgā-devī [the goddess of the river] is always chanting the holy names of the Lord. Therefore anyone who comes in contact with the Ganga or is touched by the breeze becomes enthusiastic to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

The emphasis on teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, while cultivating our own hearing and chanting, creates a healthy, balanced mood. We cultivate our attachment to the holy name and at the same time try our best to distribute the holy name to others.

It feels like we're in a spiritual oasis, insulated from the material world. Lord Caitanya is holding us up by His causeless mercy; therefore everything is so much easier here. As soon as we enter Māyāpur, we feel lightness and relief, having come under the cooling shade of the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya. Māyāpur is the spiritual world. When Lord Caitanya is pleased that we are sincerely taking shelter of and following the instructions of His pure devotees, then everything will be revealed to us.

Living in Māyāpur has helped me so much spiritually. I came here during an extremely stressful time in my life. I wanted to take shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya, who is so very merciful. And His *dhāma*, His sacred abode, is similarly merciful. When I came to Māyāpur I felt protected and sheltered. Wherever we are in Māyāpur, we can hear the holy name. Devotees chant round the clock in Śrīla Prabhupāda's original house, tapes of his chanting are played over loudspeakers in Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhi and in the park, and devotees are almost always singing for the Deities in the temple.

I have been able to appreciate

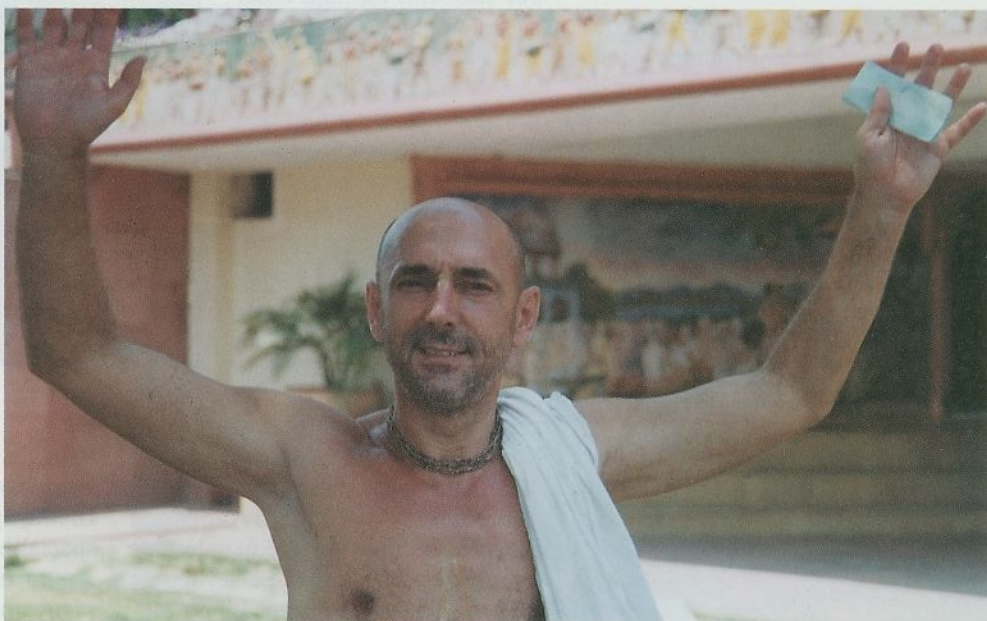
more and more the great value of the association and friendship of the Vaiṣṇavas. It's the most treasured thing. This society of devotees that Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us is a precious gift. In times of need, especially, we depend on the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas. It's through the Vaiṣṇavas that Kṛṣṇa extends His mercy and kindness. We're so much indebted to Śrīla Prabhupāda and also to all the devotees by whose mercy we're able to live here in Māyāpur and attempt to render some service.

Before I came to Māyāpur, Kṛṣṇa took everything away from me, even the persons most dear to me. Within the space of two weeks my husband died and I lost my previous spiritual master. So when I arrived in Māyāpur I was in a very wretched condition.

Uttama-śloka Dāsa is in charge of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhi in Māyāpur. Originally from Italy, he has been living in Māyāpur for ten years.

SINCE I FIRST CAME to Māyāpur, it's become much busier—more activities, many more devotees, many more pilgrims. Māyāpur is attracting the attention and interest of not only the people of West Bengal but of all of India. It's satisfying the spiritual quest of all the people who visit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhi receives an average of 125,000 pilgrims a month in the high season (winter), and 45,000 in the low season (rainy season). In the peak month of January, we have up to 350,000 pilgrims. On holy days such as Gaura Pūrṇimā, 50,000 people come in one day. We distribute



Uttama-śloka Dāsa

Somehow I became the object of the compassion of the devotees and received their mercy. By hearing from the Vaiṣṇavas I was able to accept everything that happened to me as Kṛṣṇa's mercy. By taking shelter of the Deities, who are so very merciful, and experiencing so much reciprocation from Them, I've been feeling increasing hope, faith, and conviction in my Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although by Kṛṣṇa's arrangement my life is much simpler now, I'm experiencing greater happiness and satisfaction than ever before.

700,000 pieces of *prasādam* a year.

Forty devotees serve full-time at the Samādhi, and another forty are staff members.

Donations from *prasādam* distribution and museum tours provide enough money to maintain the Samādhi and the grounds.

I'd like to encourage everyone to come to Māyāpur. It's a wonderful spiritual experience that's not to be missed.

I tried many times to stay in other temples, but I never could stay long. I don't think I'm very spiritual. But

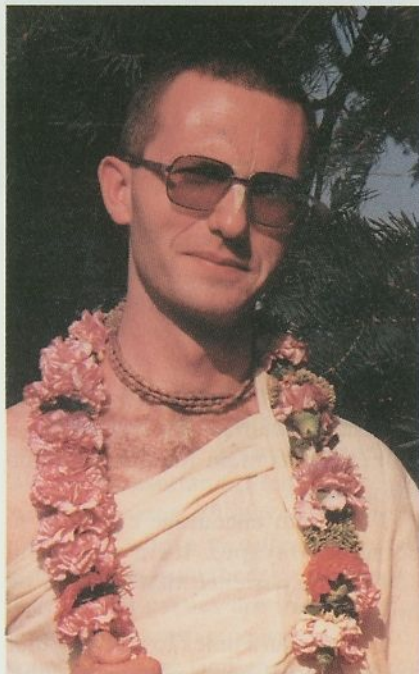
although I've often thought of leaving Māyāpur, I'm still here. So Māyāpur must be very good for spiritual life.

I can't compare living in Māyāpur with living in any other place. I feel cared for in Māyāpur. Despite my inability to dive deep into the essence of the *dhāma*, I do feel that Māyāpur offers a unique gift.

I have personal experience in Vṛndāvana and other holy places that it's so difficult to stay unless you're very Kṛṣṇa conscious. If you commit offenses in the other *dhāmas*, the reactions come to you like a ton of bricks. But in Māyāpur it seems that no matter what mistakes you make, the Lord doesn't kick you out. There's always a second chance. That mercy is very tangible. That is my experience in Māyāpur, and that's why I'm still here.

Śivānanda Dāsa, originally from Poland, received spiritual initiation at the age of thirteen. An accountant for the construction department, he has lived in Māyāpur since October 1996.

MĀYĀPUR IS THE most Kṛṣṇa conscious place I've ever lived. Everyone who comes here knows about Kṛṣṇa. I joined ISKCON in 1982, when Kṛṣṇa consciousness was underground in Poland. There was no question of giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness



Śivānanda Dāsa

to others. We could not even leave the house wearing a *dhōtī*.

Living in Māyāpur has made me more Kṛṣṇa conscious. You can't forget Kṛṣṇa here. And I've become more conscious of how Kṛṣṇa fulfills our desires, whether spiritual or material.

For example, one day my wife was telling me stories about our Deities, which she has worshiped since before we were married. She said that every time she ran out of incense, someone would give her some incense, even though she hadn't asked for it. This happened many times, not just with incense, but also with oils and other paraphernalia.

I was thinking, "I've taken care of these Deities for two years, but nothing like that has ever happened to me."

Then the very next day, I ran out of incense, and a *brahmacārī* gave me a gift of some incense. Kṛṣṇa fulfilled my desire so quickly, making His own arrangements for my service to Him.

I was a devotee for ten years before my first visit to Māyāpur. Once I came, I liked it so much I started coming every year. My desire now is to stay in Māyāpur and be an accountant for the new temple for the rest of my life. Let everyone come and get their desires fulfilled.

Yamānujā Devī Dāsī, the wife of Śivānanda Dāsa, is also from Poland. She is twenty-seven years old, has an infant son, and loves to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, a service she has done since the first day she joined ISKCON, nine years ago.

MĀYĀPUR IS AN easy place for those who want to distribute books for life. Just step out the door and people are there, always new people. The Indian people are eager to hear from us Westerners. They want to know why we took up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the West I often had to

Vrajabhūmi Devī Dāsī



Yamānujā Devī Dāsī

struggle just to get myself out of the house, and people weren't always nice. In Māyāpur you don't have to make a special endeavor to tell others about Kṛṣṇa consciousness; there are so many opportunities.

Even with a baby I've been able to continue distributing books. Mādhava is helpful. He takes time from me, but he also gets the attention of the people. They come to see the baby and end up with books.

One time I was speaking with a friend near the temple, and a group of villagers surrounded us.

The eldest man, the group leader, said in Bengali, "Look at the little Vaiṣṇava, and he has little *tilaka* [the clay mark on the forehead]."

Someone else noticed, "And he has little neck beads."

I took out a book, *The Life and Precepts of Lord Caitanya*, from between

Mādhava and his front pack and said, “And he also has a little *sāstra* [scripture]—for a little price.”

They liked the joke and bought the books I had with me. I had to go back to the box and get more so that they could each get one.

My desire to do this devotional service has been fulfilled in Māyāpur. I don’t know if I’d be able to do this in the West with a baby. Here I have to make an endeavor *not* to do it.

In Māyāpur if you make even a little endeavor, you feel very much rewarded. In the West I felt like I had to struggle more. In Māyāpur, Kṛṣṇa consciousness seems so natural.

One day I was thinking about how I had been neglectful in my chanting, and I decided to do something about it.

I prayed to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, “Please help me with my chanting,” and then I went to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class.

After class, a Bengali *brahmacārī* [male celibate student] I didn’t know said, “Did you lose your beads?”

I checked, and I didn’t have them. “Strange,” I thought.

He said, “They’re hanging on the gate in front of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva.”

As I retrieved them I thought, “The Lord must have heard my prayer.”

Since then I have really tried my best when chanting.

Any devotees with no particular mission in the West should come here. So many guests come that we can’t possibly speak to all of them. We need hundreds of devotees to answer questions, take the guests around, and make them feel welcome.

Originally from a village in West Bengal, Kamalapati Dāsa joined ISKCON in Māyāpur in 1992. He is the community’s leading distributor of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books.

THE DIFFERENCE between my life in Māyāpur and my former life is like the difference between heaven and hell. When I was at home, I didn’t have the association of devotees. I had no idea about the four regulative principles—no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, and no gambling. I didn’t know that Kṛṣṇa is

God. I didn’t recognize that the material world is full of misery.

When I was living at home, I had no idea that there is so much pleasure in living in an ashram. I knew only the stereotyped life—getting a job, getting married, and so on. After coming here, I could understand that there is a much better life, the life of devotional service.

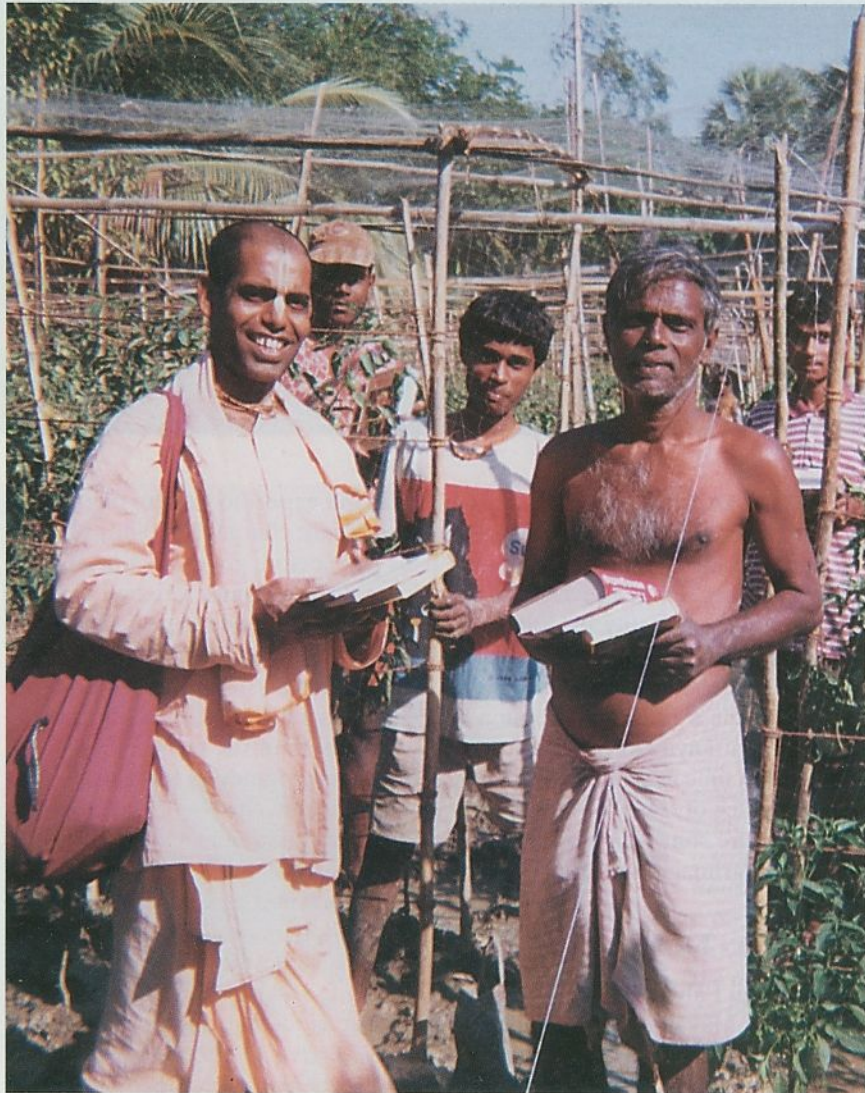
I find a clear distinction between material life and spiritual life. In material life people are envious of one another, always quarreling, fighting. In spiritual life those things are not there—or at least they are rare.

When I received my *brāhmaṇa* initiation, my spiritual master told me to live in Māyāpur and preach wholeheartedly. For the last six years I have been distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s

books. My main preaching areas are the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland. These places are in the Himalayan foothills northeast of Bengal, and they are all disturbed by terrorists. Though my service is sometimes dangerous, Kṛṣṇa always protects me.

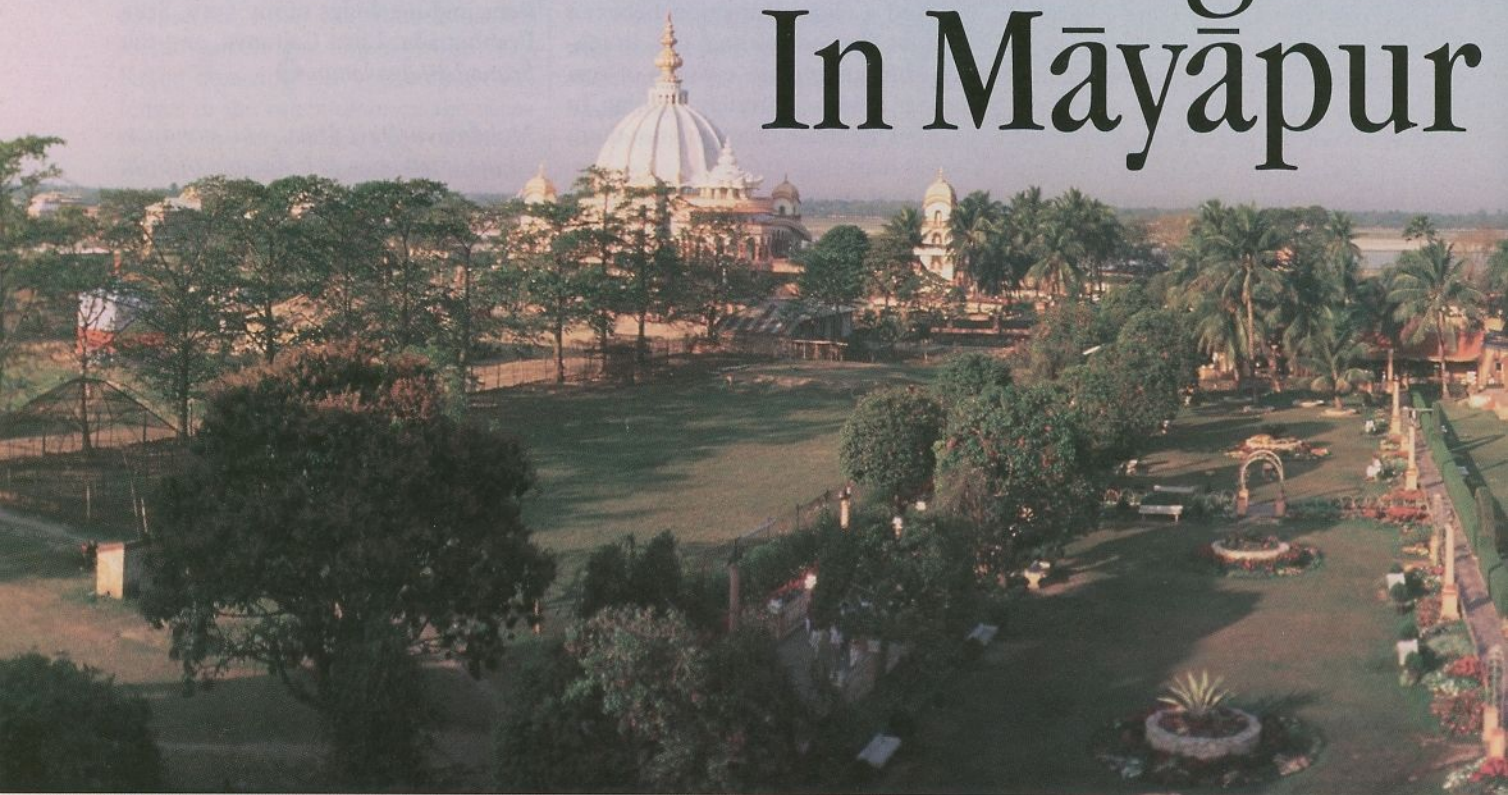
Living in Māyāpur and distributing books help me understand the instructions and teachings of my guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Caitanya, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. ☸

Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī, who conducted the interviews, is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Originally from the USA, she spends most of the year in Māyāpur. When she’s in the States, she proofreads for BTG. She is compiling a database of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples.



Kamalapati Dāsa (left)

A Western Pilgrim In Māyāpur



Nitya-trptā Devi Dāsi

CAITANYA Mahāprabhu appeared to deliver divine love of Kṛṣṇa to people all over the world, and Śrīla Prabhupāda made Lord Caitanya's mission a reality for fortunate people like me. Although I am a neophyte still steeped in mundane vision, by the kindness of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Caitanya I have been able to spend much time in Śrīdhām Māyāpur, the birthplace of Lord Caitanya Himself. Here are some impressions from a recent pilgrimage.

TRAVEL

Although I always love going back to Śrīdhām Māyāpur, I'm not looking forward to checking onto the airplane. My husband, Kṛṣṇa Prema Dāsa, and I are overloaded with equipment this

year and expect to have to pay a hefty overweight charge. The limit is 23 kilos per person, giving us a total of 46 kilos. Our baggage weighed in at 75 kilos, and we don't expect the airline to look the other way.

As we walk to the check-in at the Copenhagen airport, an airline official waves us from the crowded queue at the coach counter to the vacant first-class counter. The woman at the counter doesn't bat an eye at our being so much overweight. We save about \$500. I've heard that you can't buy a ticket to the holy *dhāma*, that you can go there only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy. I take the incident as a sign of Kṛṣṇa's mercy and an auspicious start to our pilgrimage.

We arrive in Calcutta just twenty minutes behind schedule. Although we had arranged for a jeep, it never shows

up. So we take one of the ubiquitous bright yellow Ambassador taxis, a '50s-style British sedan. After a half-hour ride through the grit and bustle of suburban Calcutta, we enter the lush, perfectly flat Bengali countryside. Meticulously attended rice paddies stretch to the horizon on both sides of the road. Aside from the screeching horns of the extravagantly painted lorries (trucks), it is a peaceful, if bumpy, three-hour ride north to Māyāpur.

Driving the final—and roughest—stretch of road, we pass the house of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, where Lord Caitanya began His *saṅkīrtana* movement. We then pass the *samādhis* (memorial tombs) of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī, great gurus in our line, and the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu



*“After a refreshing afternoon swim,
we relax on the shore of the Ganga
and discuss pastimes of Lord Caitanya.”*

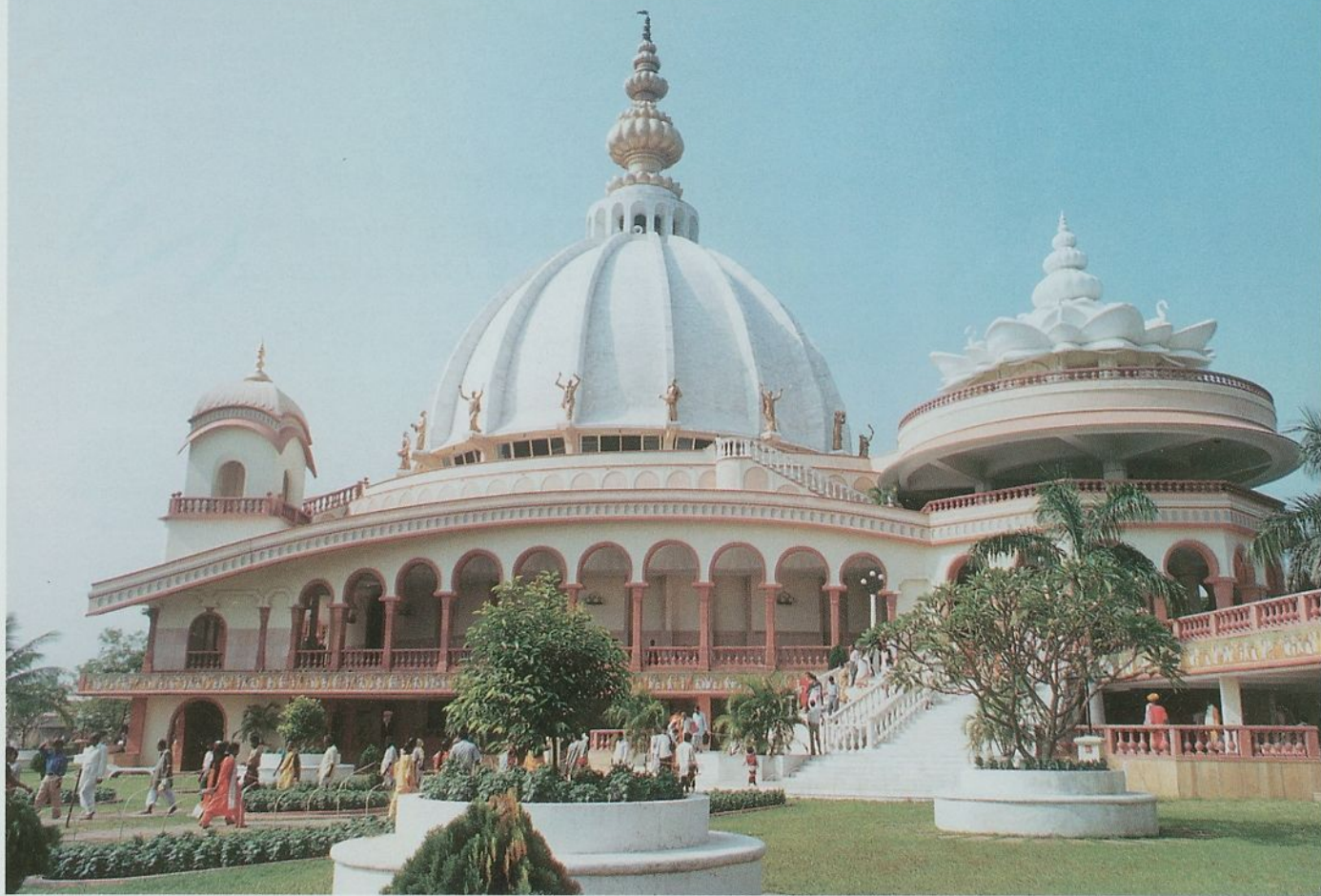
by Nitya-triptā Devī Dāsī



Nitya-triptā Devī Dāsī



*A view of the
ISKCON
Māyāpur com-
pound (top) as
one looks west
toward the
Ganges from
a temple guest
house. At left,
a farmer plows
ISKCON's land
the traditional,
earth-friendly
way. (The temple
is adjacent to
ISKCON's
property.)*



Nitya-ripita Devi Dasi

Himself. Its beautiful temple, built by the great Bhaktivisiddhanta Sarasvati (Śrīla Prabhupāda's guru), stands tall above the flat countryside.

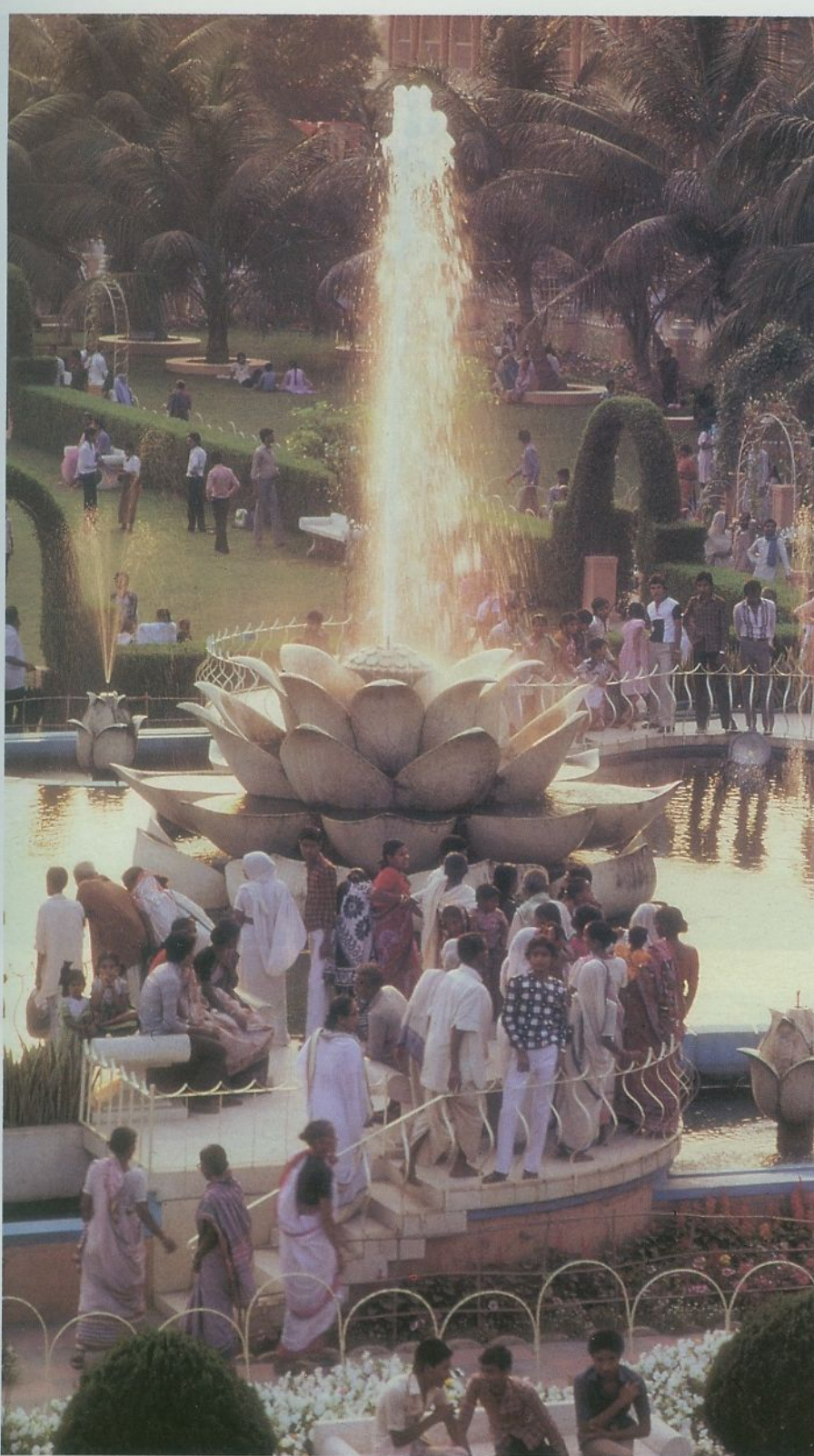
Finally we reach our destination: the ISKCON temple in Śrīdhām Māyāpur, the Māyāpur Chandrodaya Mandir, founded by our beloved guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda. After climbing from the cramped cab, we reverentially bow our heads to the ground, in the dust of the holy *dhāma*.

A PEACEFUL LIFE

Several hundred devotees representing all the continents live in the ISKCON Māyāpur complex, which covers many acres. A palpable, benevolent spiritual atmosphere and a simple way of life attract them to visit and stay. We make our way to our second-story flat in the *ghastha* (householder) colony, where some fifty families live in a variety of private homes and apartment buildings.



Yamrajita Dasa



Yamañja Dasa

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhi (above, left) receives 45,000 to 125,000 visitors a month. Above, a fountain adds to the beauty of the park near the temple. At left, a devotee from the Orient answers a pilgrim's questions.

I love ISKCON Māyāpur. From our flat you can take a short and healthy walk or bike ride to the beautiful temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. Every day Their Lordships and Their eight attendant *gopīs* (cowherd girls) sport beautiful outfits in endless varieties of colors and patterns. Before separate altars in the huge temple one can pray to Lord Nṛsimhadeva (Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation) and Śrī Pañca-tattva (Lord Caitanya in five forms). A *mūrti* (carved form) of Śrīla Prabhupāda surveys the entire temple room from a marble *vyāsāsana* (the seat of the guru). On the way back to my flat I often visit Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhi, its graceful 180-foot dome surrounded by elevated walkways, parks, and a lake.

Elsewhere on the Māyāpur property one finds schools for young and older children as well as a research institute for Vaiṣṇava studies. A huge kitchen area feeds thousands of guests. Shops and stalls selling beads, Deities, and other devotional necessities line the inner and outer walls of the compound. Doctors run both allopathic and Ayurvedic clinics, and the devotees operate a free ambulance service, the only one available to the people of the surrounding villages. Parks, snack bars, guest houses, and other facilities await the thousands of pilgrims who enter daily—up to fifteen thousand on weekends. Behind the temple stand two four-story ashrams accommodating the hundreds of young men training as Vaiṣṇava monks (*brahmacāris*). Beyond the guest houses lies the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust complex, where devotees publish hundreds of thousands of Prabhupāda's books, sold by the *brahmacāris* throughout Bengal.

Since Kṛṣṇa Prema and I have portable occupations (and no children), we often travel back and forth between Māyāpur and the West. This time we'd been gone for six months. Over the next week I went through all the cabinets, cleaning and washing and discarding old things no longer needed.

After a stint in the hectic West, the simple Māyāpur life refreshes the spirit. Uttam brings fresh milk to our door every morning, as he has for the past few years. He rides a bike with metal cans—filled with milk and straw—on



Some fifty families live in ISKCON Māyāpur's householder community (above), as do these two girls (above, right) from different parts of the world. At right, a deer in the compound's animal park gets some attention.





Nitya-ṭīpā Devi Dāsi



either side of the back wheel. The straw keeps the milk from splashing out. Milk costs eleven rupees a liter—about twenty-five U.S. cents. Each day I boil one liter, make it into fresh curd, press it into a flat round patty, salt it, and put it into our small refrigerator for use in salads and vegetable dishes.

Tomatoes and greens come from our neighbors' gardens, along with lots of basil. We either buy other vegetables at the local market or pay Arun from the neighboring village to go across the river and get our supplies. Our maid, Gauri, appears most days to wash the laundry and the floor. During this dry part of the year, the dusty air makes her services essential. She has many other houses on her list as well.

THE GANGA

The wide and powerful Ganga (Ganges) takes a long, sweeping turn

to come within a few hundred feet of ISKCON Māyāpur. This most sacred river originates from the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu, then flows from the Himalayas across northern India, past Māyāpur, and through Calcutta to the Bay of Bengal. To bathe in her cool, sacred waters cleanses the soul of past sins.

Almost every afternoon we bathe in the Ganga. The weather is hot, ranging from 75°F at night to 100 or more during the day, with high humidity. A refreshing afternoon swim is perfect. For the past few years we've gone to a nearby sandy shoal. This year it's gone, washed away in last year's rainy-season floods. So we go upriver to a set of steps built by ISKCON, leading to a calm inlet. To keep our towels dry we take a one-rupee boatride across the inlet and walk across another shoal to the river. Here the Ganga flows swiftly and eats away at the earth. All

across this 200-yard sandbar it's at least a four-foot drop to the water. Once you're in, the water becomes deep very quickly, and you have to be careful.

Clay lines the banks of the Ganga, with a creamy consistency that makes a great mudpack. We relax on the shore and discuss pastimes of Lord Caitanya. The gentle breeze and cooling waters of the mighty river offer welcome relief from the heat.

STORM SEASON

Spring brings strong and sudden showers from dark, thundering clouds. In this part of West Bengal high, cool winds accompany the storms. The rainy season has now arrived. It cools us down and wets the land. This year everyone welcomes the rain, as there has been none since October. The high winds knock down trees and sometimes blow away huts. Just before



the rain, winds blow in sand from the Ganga's banks.

Usually the storms roll in during the afternoon, though they come at other times as well. We keep a watchful eye on the sky, especially the northwest. Monsoon rains usually come from the southeast and bring no wind. A very dark cloud mass lets us know that a storm is on its way. The storms move fast, so when we see one we hurry home and close all the windows. If we are going out on a pilgrimage, we carefully secure our flat so the dust doesn't blow in everywhere.

Sometimes a storm springs up while we're in the Ganga. When that happens, we stay in the water near the edge

Devotees chant in the streets of Navadvīpa (left), one of the larger towns in the Māyāpur area. At right, a mṛdaṅga (drum) maker at work in his Navadvīpa shop. Below, ISKCON pilgrims take advantage of what is often the best way to reach holy places in the Māyāpur area.





instead of getting pelted by flying sand. The cool and sometimes icy-cold blasts of wind can be really refreshing in the heat. Our neighbors, a couple from Russia, often go out and sit on a bench to take the refreshing rains.

When the storms come at night,

we wake up suddenly and have to scramble to close all the windows. If it's too late and the winds are upon us, we're better off leaving the windows open, because closing them in the wind is really tough. With all the windows closed we wait and listen to

the wind and thunder, sometimes venturing to the roof to catch the cool wind and water. Then when the storm tails off, we open the southerly doors and windows and let the cool breeze refresh the house.

CALCUTTA

Spiritual life should be as simple as possible. Yet Lord Caitanya's great disciple Rūpa Gosvāmī also taught the principle of *yukta-vairāgya*—using everything in the service of the Lord. Kṛṣṇa Prema and I find ourselves needing computer equipment for our devotional service. So we ride back to Calcutta to buy a computer monitor and a power back-up—for continuous operation

when storms knock out the current. (This happens fairly often, although ISKCON Māyāpur does have its own backup generators.) We've done our research and lined up two stores that stock these items. We encounter no problems, although when it takes half





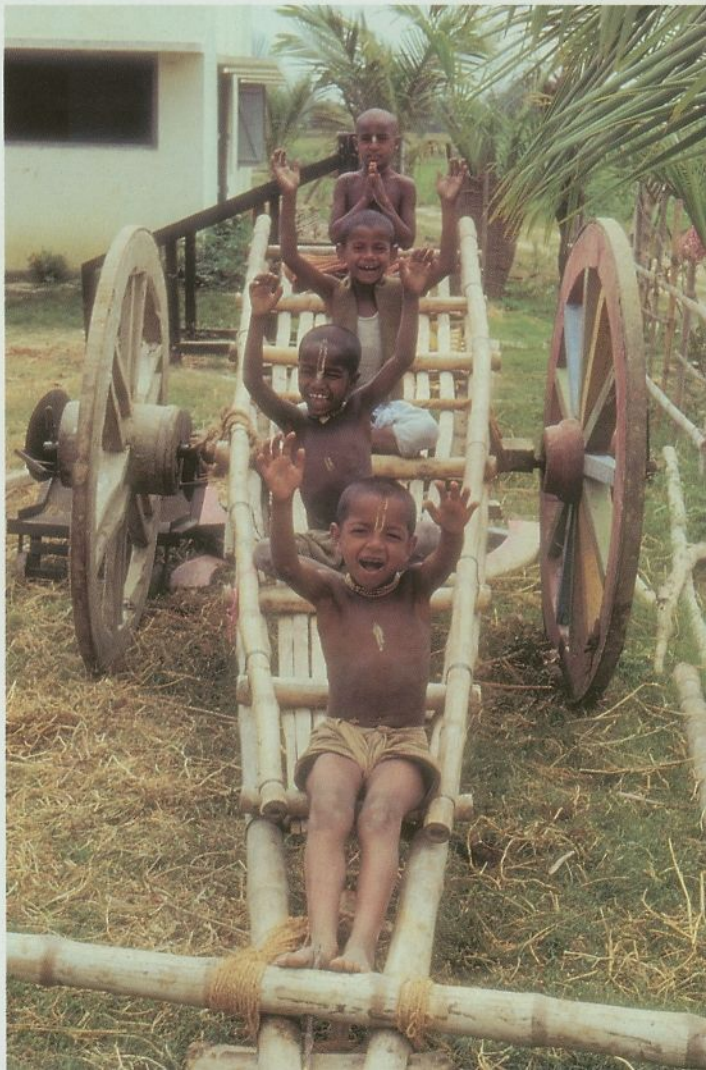
an hour to get a receipt, I feel like a harried, rushed Westerner.

Once the capital of British India, Calcutta retains a Victorian stateliness, under a thick veneer of smog, dirt, and urban chaos. While riding through the crowded streets, I remember that Śrīla Prabhupāda was born here and began his journey West from here. But for his journey, I would have never come to the land of Lord Caitanya.

On the way back to Māyāpur we notice the simple Indian way of doing modern work with human labor. Some road workers are extending the subway system and reinforcing the sides of a deep pit with long wooden piles. After rigging a tripod with bamboo poles, they sling a rope and a pulley over the top. Three men hoist and drop a huge steel flat-ended weight, driving the 25-foot piles into the ground. It seems to work without a hitch.

On the way back we pull in to New Market, an old but air-conditioned indoor market offering endless shops with everything from clothing to calculators. We stop for fruits and vegetables. Bengal has some interesting varieties. One fruit looks like a white

ISKCON Māyāpur's elephant (above), used for festivals, entertains a crowd of pilgrims. At right, local children relax on an ox-cart. At far right, farmers draw water from the Jalangi River to irrigate their fields.



pear, but is crunchy and full of fresh water. It has little taste but quenches the thirst. The rose-apple is a small round green fruit with a big ball of a seed. It's crunchy with a delicate sweet rose flavor. We offer some fruits to Lord Kṛṣṇa and then enjoy them as *prasādam*.

RESIDENTS OF THE DHĀMA

Although I'm from the West and materially privileged by comparison, I feel humbled by the natural devotion and spirituality of the residents of Māyāpur. At the temple's 4:30 A.M. *maṅgala-ārati* ceremony, one often sees dozens or even hundreds of local residents who have risen hours earlier and walked a great distance to attend. On the weekends tens of thousands of pilgrims flock to ISKCON Māyāpur to

take the blessings of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava* and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself spoke Bengali, and many important scriptures appear in the classical version of this pleasing and lilting tongue. Through tapes or live chanting, throughout Śrīdhām Māyāpur one constantly hears the divinely beautiful sound of Bengali *bhajanās* (devotional songs). Chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy names seems to come so naturally to these fortunate souls. I feel purified in their association.

It is said that one should see all residents of the holy *dhāma* as associates of the Lord, even the animals. Many diverse creatures reside in Māyāpur. Large silvery monkeys, with black

* See article about Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava starting on page 56.

faces, hands, feet, and tails, appear here and there, although they are much less numerous here than in other parts of India. They look part human, part Siamese cat, as they gracefully jump from tree to tree, scramble up the sides of buildings, or run along the ground. A large family of these monkeys visits every morning. Some of the devotees feed them, although sometimes they become mischievous, making a mess out of a garden or a load of laundry on a clothesline.

Last year in Vṛndāvana a small monkey jumped on my shoulder and snatched the glasses off my face. He darted up a wall and began chewing on them. A local boatman bribed the monkey with sweets to get back the glasses, badly chewed but usable. Fortunately, the monkeys in Māyāpur are neither so mercenary nor small enough



to jump on your shoulder.

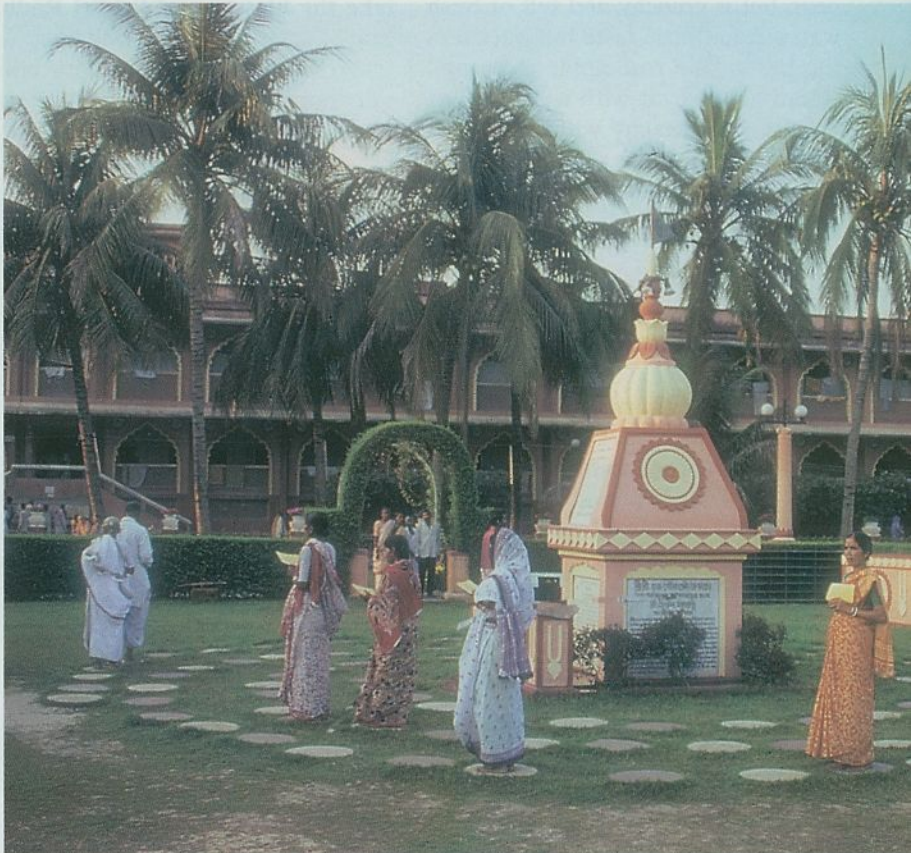
Many types of birds reside in Māyāpur. Beautiful white cranes wade in the river or in the flooded rice fields. Parrots fly by in chattering groups, and throughout the day one hears doves coo. I cannot identify the many other colorful birds, including the one who perches in a tree near our window every morning singing his song. This little fellow serves as our alarm clock. His tune is a three-note-up-and-down *doo dah doo*. With each set of the notes he ups the pitch until it's extremely high. In the evening he cannot go so high. I suppose he is hot and tired from the day's activities.

ISKCON Māyāpur keeps a deer park with about ten deer. The bucks have remarkably long horns. Walking past them through the central park one reaches the elephant shed. ISKCON Māyāpur's elephant is named Gulab, meaning "rose." She's an Indian elephant, much smaller and gentler than the African variety. She loves bananas and sweets. She also loves chest rubs.

Every Saturday night Gulab's keeper adorns her with paint, ornaments, and a fancy cloth. She then loads several priests and the processional Deities from the temple on her back for a one-hour walk around the Māyāpur compound. During frequent stops devotees bring offerings to the Deities. Gulab then takes the *prasādam* with her trunk and majestically strides on.

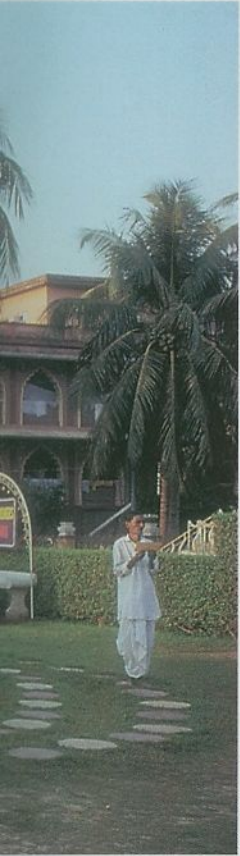
The deer and the elephant provide beauty and entertainment for the pilgrims in Māyāpur. On a more practical side are the cows and bulls. ISKCON Māyāpur maintains a *go-shalla*, a bovine sanctuary, with numerous milking cows and working bulls as well as young and retired animals. Local farmers use either bulls or water buffaloes to till the fields for wheat and vegetables and to prepare the watery patches for planting rice. On hot afternoons at the Ganga you often see farmers herd their buffaloes or bulls for a refreshing bath.

Many types of Indian cows differ sharply from those in the West. Unfortunately many of these indigenous species have been crossed with Western breeds to increase milk, usually unsuccessfully. Thus many types are becoming rare or even extinct. Brahma



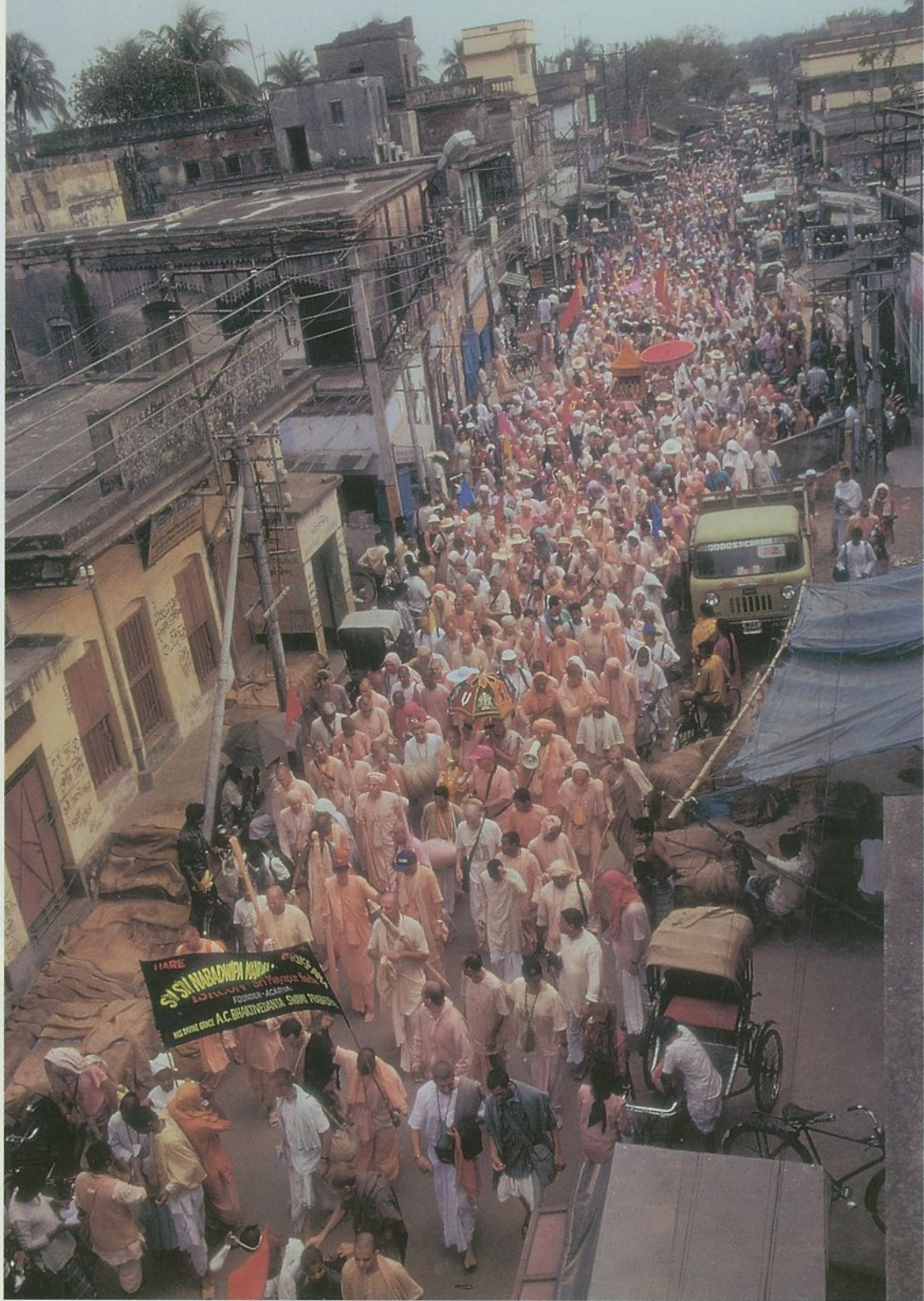
Nitya-īptā Devī Dāśī





Yamaraġa Dasa

Pilgrims (above) chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra 108 times (once on each stepping stone) as they circle a shrine commemorating ISKCON's India padayātrā (walking pilgrimage). At left, a cook prepares desserts for Rādhā-Mādhava. At right, devotees chant in Navadvīpa during ISKCON's annual Gaura Pūrṇimā festival.



Yamaraġa Dasa

bulls have a large hump behind their head and long, floppy ears. Sometimes I see a white pair of tall Brahma bulls looking majestic as they pull a gurney along the road.

In the western Indian state of Gujarat, bulls have massive, gradually tapering horns that curve out, then in, then out again at the top. Their shape resembles a vase. For several years two

such Gujarati bulls pulled Deities of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda on a walking *kīrtana* procession, or *padayātrā*, for tens of thousands of kilometers throughout India. They concluded their extraordinary journey in Māyāpur in 1986. A stone memorial marks the event, and it has become a favorite chanting site for pilgrims.

Other animals abound in Māyāpur,

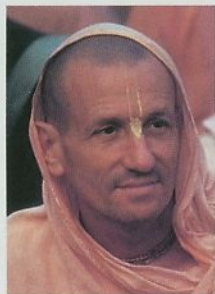
such as dolphins in the Ganga, unique and colorful lizards, and, yes, even some cobras and vipers. Though I have never seen one, such serpents are said to come out in the evenings. The other day Kṛṣṇa Prema saw two cobras dancing. For some time they sat facing each other in the grass, rising up, intertwining, then separating and slinking back

(please turn to page 65)

The Center of Attention: RĀDHĀ MĀDHAVA

by Jananivāsa Dāsa

At the heart of any Kṛṣṇa conscious community are the Deities. On the main altar of the Māyāpur Chandrodaya Mandir (ISKCON's temple in Māyāpur) stand Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) along with Rādhā's eight intimate gopī (cowherd girl) friends. Overseeing the worship is Jananivāsa Dāsa, who has been serving the Deities in Māyāpur for twenty-seven years. The following history of Rādhā-Mādhava was adapted from an interview with Jananivāsa conducted by Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsi.



Jananivāsa Dāsa

pāda then began regularly singing that song whenever he would speak on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

After the tour, Prabhupāda brought Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava to the Calcutta temple. When we had our first Gaura Pūrṇimā (Lord Caitanya's appearance day) celebration in Māyāpur in

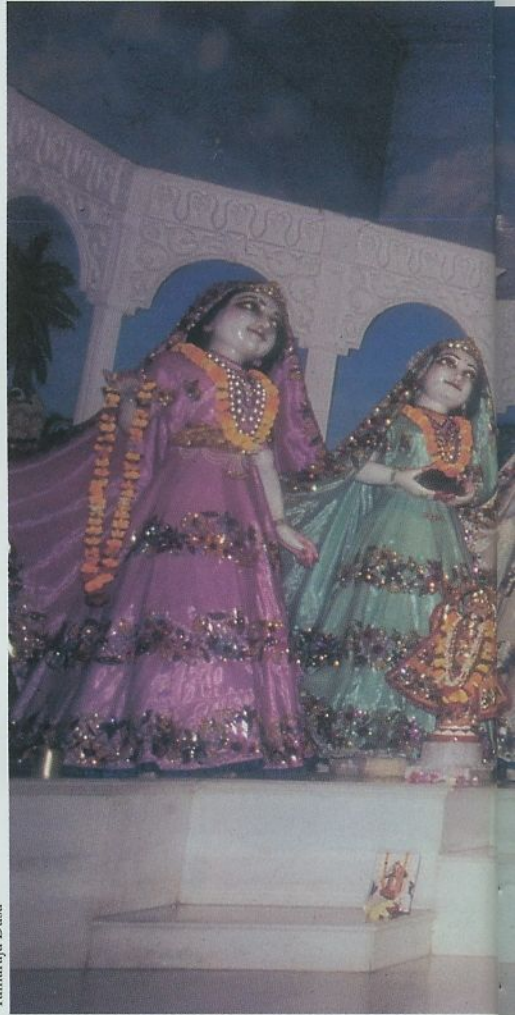
March 1972, Prabhupāda said that Rādhā-Mādhava should come to the program. We put up a tent (*pāṇḍāl*), and They stayed there, presiding over the festival.

When the program ended and the devotees were ready to take the Deities back to Calcutta, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the Deities should stay in Māyāpur.

A HUMBLE RESIDENCE

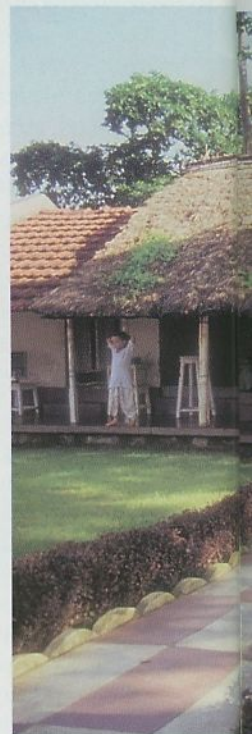
The only building on the ISKCON property at that time was a temporary structure of thatched split-bamboo walls, where Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples lived. Rādhā-Mādhava took up residence in the same building.

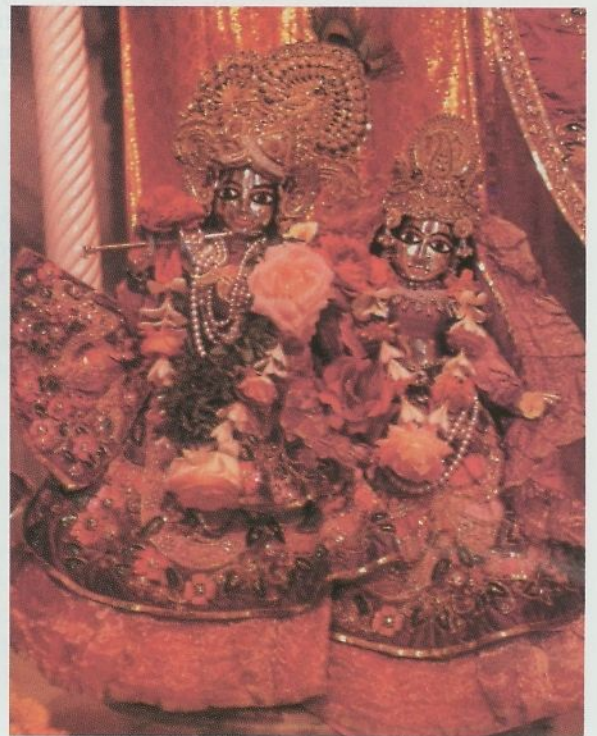
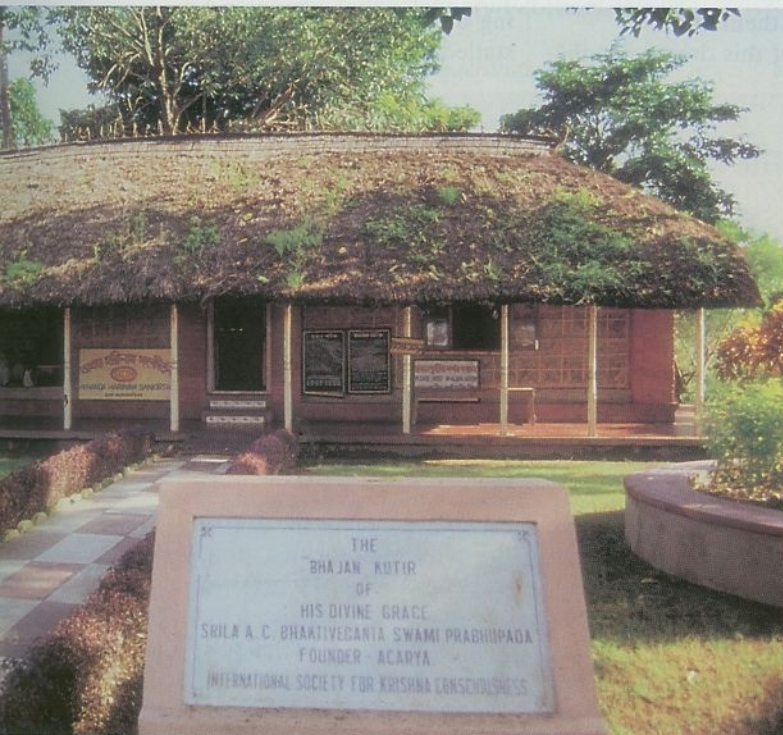
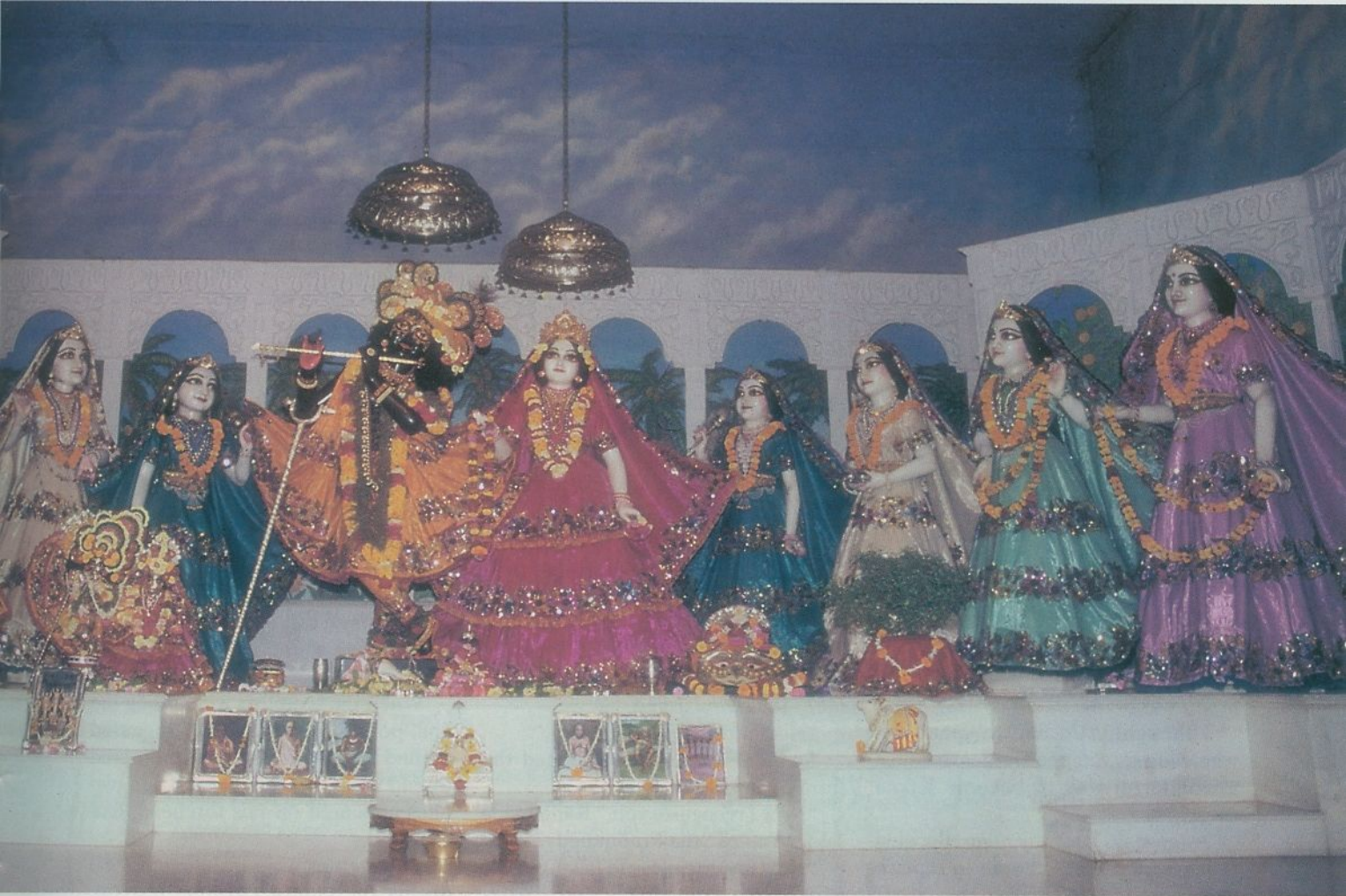
I had just received my second initiation, entitling me to worship the Deities. Because we were living so close to Rādhā-Mādhava in the thatched building, I could see everything the



Yamarāja Dāsa

The life-size deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and their gopī associates (above) grant their divine audience to Māyāpur pilgrims. At right, the Māyāpur Project's first building, once the temple of the original Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava (far right).





Serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava

THE VEDIC SCRIPTURES tell us that whenever we visit a temple we should offer something to the Deities. Anyone who presents a gift to the Lord in a holy place like Māyāpur is sure to get special mercy. So if you're planning a pilgrimage to Māyāpur, or know of someone who is, here are some gifts suggested by the devotees serving the Deities there: ghee, nuts, honey, saffron, dried fruits, and beads. The beads can be glass or crystal, any color, 4–7 mm (for small Deities), 10–15 mm (for the *gopīs*) and 15–40 mm (for big Rādhā-Mādhava), as well as pearls in gold, silver, and white

in those sizes.

The servants of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava have set up a service fund to ensure the perpetual care of the Deities. The fund's principal will grow while the interest pays for food offerings and *āratis*. Donors who give Rs. 2,000 to the fund will have an offering and an *ārati* performed in their name (or in another name of their choice) once a year for twenty years. Donors will also be sent *prasādam* from the offerings. Contact Pankajānghri Dāsa, c/o ISKCON Māyāpur, P. O. Box 10279, Ballyganj, Calcutta 700 019, India; e-mail: pankajangri.acbsp@bbt.se.

pāda said he wanted to buy Deities for ISKCON. When asked if he would pay for the large Deities of Rādhā-Mādhava for Māyāpur, he agreed.

INCOMPARABLE BEAUTY

The Deities were carved in Jaipur by the Pandays, a renowned family of sculptors. One day a member of the Brila family (India's wealthiest family) came and fell in love with the Deities. He offered to pay 100,000 rupees for Them, which at that time was about \$12,000—much more than ISKCON was to pay. The Pandays refused to sell the Deities, however, explaining that they had carved Them for ISKCON and would never be able to duplicate Them.

One of the sculptors told the devotees that the marble was different from any he had worked with before.

“When we carve,” he said, “a beautiful ringing sound comes out of the Deities.”

When the sculptors were doing the final polishing, a white line appeared around Mādhava's body, like the sacred thread worn by *brāhmaṇas*. Then two lines appeared on His forehead, like *tilaka*.

The Deities were installed in 1980 during the Gaura Pūrṇimā festival. Rādhāpāda then sponsored the carving of the eight *gopīs*. Four were installed in 1986, and four in 1992. ❁

pūjārī was doing.

I thought, “I'd like to spend my whole life serving the Deities. It's such a wonderful way to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.”

A few days later the *pūjārī* decided to leave, and I was chosen to replace him.

Rādhā-Mādhava are small Deities, but Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted big Deities for the permanent temple: Mādhava should be 5' 10" and black marble; Rādhārāṇī should be 5' 8½" and white marble. He said their pose could be like that of the small Deities.

PRABHUPĀDA ORDERS HELP

In 1978, while in Calcutta, Jayapatāka Swami paid a visit to Rādhāpāda Dāsa, a wealthy industrialist and ISKCON devotee, who told him that in a dream he had seen a young *sādhu* who asked him, “Do you recognize me?”

Rādhāpāda replied, “No.”

“Sometime ago you gave me some money,” the *sādhu* said, “and I've come to repay it.”

Rādhāpāda said, “If I give money to a *sādhu*, I don't expect it back. No, I cannot accept it.”

“Are you sure you don't recognize

me?” the *sādhu* asked.

“No,” replied Rādhāpāda.

Suddenly the *sādhu* assumed the form of an elderly man.

“Now I recognize you,” Rādhāpāda said. “You're Śrīla Prabhupāda.”

“Now my disciples are having problems,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said. “After a while everything will be all right, but you should help them now.”

As a result of this dream, Rādhā-

Śrīla Prabhupāda and Rādhā-Mādhava

ONCE I WAS STANDING in the Deity room near Śrīla Prabhupāda while he was viewing the Deities, and he said, “They're dancing.”

Another time he said, “You see how Rādhārāṇī is standing like this—” (imitating Her outstretched hand) “holding something out to Kṛṣṇa? Sometimes Rādhārāṇī is holding her hand up like this [in blessing pose]. When She's like that, Kṛṣṇa can leave Her. But when She's offering something to Him, He can never leave.”

Once a devotee asked, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, we're sitting in these rice fields, and you've asked us to build a city. Where is all the money going to come from?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed. “You are always worried about where the money will come from. Here we have Rādhā-Mādhava. ‘Mādhava’ means the husband of the goddess of fortune. You just worship Rādhā-Mādhava nicely, and everything will come by Their mercy. You don't have to worry about money.”

BTG Index, 1999

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

PRONUNCIATION: ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with "drama")

LORD CAITANYA'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS

*Understanding the significance of
Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance will help us
appreciate the importance of Śrī Māyāpur.*

by Bhānu Swami

LORD CAITANYA WAS BORN on February 27, 1486, at a time when India was suffering from rampant hedonism, spiritual stagnation, strict caste stratification, the prominence of logic over mystic experience, and domination by Islamic rulers. Socially, morally, spiritually, politically, and intellectually there was need for change.

Lord Caitanya was born in Navadvīpa, a large city straddling both sides of the Ganga. Praised in the scriptures as a holy place, Navadvīpa was famous during Lord Caitanya's time as a center of learning and culture.

At Lord Caitanya's birth, which fell on the full-moon night of the Bengali month of Phālguna, there was a lunar eclipse. As was the custom on such occasions, the people of Navadvīpa gathered at the Ganga to purify themselves by bathing and chanting the names of God. Thus Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was born amid the loud chanting of the Lord's names.

Because astrologers predicted that He would manifest superhuman qualities and deliver the world, His parents, Jagannātha Mīśra and Śacīdevī, gave Him the name Viśvambhara, or "support of the universe." And because He was born under a *nima* tree, He was given the nickname Nimai.

During His childhood He displayed mysterious powers by outwitting thieves, playing with a poisonous snake, and speaking philosophically with His mother. As He grew, His beauty and intelligence began to show more fully. He was a brilliant student who quickly mastered poetics, Sanskrit grammar, and the current fad, *navya nyāya*, a form

of logic. He would often play at defeating His fellow students using logic. While still young, He opened His own school and began teaching grammar and logic.

On the pretext of performing sacred rites on the anniversary of His father's death, Viśvambhara journeyed to Gaya, in Bihar, with a group of students. There, after receiving Vaiṣṇava initiation from Īśvara Purī, He became transformed. He lost all interest in logic and argument and absorbed Himself in chanting Kṛṣṇa's names in devotional ecstasy.

Back in Navadvīpa, Viśvambhara gathered a following of other Vaiṣṇavas, including Advaita Ācārya, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and started the *saṅkīrtana* movement. First, the movement was confined to the faithful. Doors were locked before the devotees began chanting and relishing the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. After a year, however, Viśvambhara ordered His followers to distribute the name of Kṛṣṇa and the ecstasy of love of God to all the people of Navadvīpa.

Viśvambhara's movement did not recognize the privileges of caste, and had no regard for ascetics involved in yoga, for impersonalists attempting to obtain liberation from the material world, or for the worship of demigods for material benefits. Thus Viśvambhara met with opposition from some sections of the local brahminical community and from Muslim rulers. But when He mobilized thousands of citizens in a *saṅkīrtana* procession to the Muslim magistrate's house, He succeeded in convincing the magistrate to sanction the movement.

Seeing the need to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness



Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted the greatest treasure to be given out to as many people as possible.



more widely, Viśvambhara decided to take *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. At the age of twenty-four He shaved His head and took the name Kṛṣṇa Caitanya from Keśava Bhārati in nearby Katwa. He also became known as Caitanya Mahāprabhu. To console His mother He promised to stay in Puri, at a moderate distance from Navadvīpa.

Apart from traveling to South India for four years, and to Prayag, Vṛndāvana, and Varanasi via Bengal for one year, He spent the rest of His life in Puri, absorbed in ecstatic vision of Kṛṣṇa, in the mood of Rādhā. He disappeared from mortal vision at the age of forty-eight in Puri.

DELIVERER OF THE RELIGION FOR THE AGE

According to the Vedic scriptures, time moves in continuous cycles of four ages, or *yugas*. In each *yuga* a specific method of spiritual practice (dharma) is effective. In Kali-yuga, the current age, the dharma is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. To distribute the *yuga-dharma*, the Lord descends in each *yuga*. In Kali-yuga, Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared to spread *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Apart from the function of spreading the *yuga-dharma*, Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to expose the world to the highest aspects of spiritual love (*prema*), which manifest in relation (*rasa*) to Kṛṣṇa in His original form in Vṛndāvana.

The highest expression of *rasa* is the conjugal *rasa* in *parakīya* (outside of marriage). The ideal person in this relationship is Rādhā. While other Vaiṣṇava lineages worship Kṛṣṇa, the unique contribution of Lord Caitanya is His detailed exposition of the higher modes of *rasa*, which He personified by acting as a devotee of the Lord, experiencing pure love in the mood of Rādhā. Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave a

complete revelation of God's love for the souls, and the souls' love for God. This is unparalleled in any movement or any religion.

How are we to attain this high stage of love? Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted that greatest treasure to be given out to as many people as possible. Therefore He has also taught a process—the simplest and most direct process: *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa does not require any qualification except faith. Birth, caste, race, country, profession, and education are not considerations in chanting God's names. The only requirement is a sincere acceptance of one's own position as the servant, offering service out of selfless love to the most attractive, deserving object: Kṛṣṇa. Adherence to chanting in a pure manner leads directly to the highest goal, pure love of Kṛṣṇa.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu encouraged His followers to distribute the name of Kṛṣṇa freely to all. He Himself desired that not only all of India, but the whole world, take up the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names and attain love of God. He ordered His followers to distribute the name and teach about Kṛṣṇa. His movement can be summarized as "Taste the name and distribute the name."

PHILOSOPHICAL CONTRIBUTION

Philosophically, Caitanya Mahāprabhu explained the relation of God to the world and souls in terms of *bheda* and *abheda*, simultaneous difference and non-difference, or oneness. "Difference" refers to the acceptance of (1) a real material world, (2) innumerable real souls, and (3) a God with perfect qualities, form, and action. "Oneness" refers to the acceptance of the existence of one supreme entity, with no differentiation of form, qualities, souls, or spiritual

and material world.

Bheda-abheda philosophies are usually rejected because oneness and difference are mutually contradictory: the proposition seems nonsensical. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained that mutual contradictions can coexist through the inconceivable power of God. Thus His world view is called *acintya-bheda-abheda*, or oneness and difference joined by the inconceivable (*acintya*) power of God. By accepting difference we can believe in our own individual existence, with the right to act and choose. By accepting oneness we can acknowledge the perfection that lies behind all the imperfection we perceive.

Only with difference can there be a relationship (*rasa*) between two objects—the soul and God. Only with difference can we relish the form, qualities, and activities of God. Difference, however, can put a great distance between God and the souls. But through oneness the distance becomes meaningless: the relationship of God to the soul becomes very close.

RECONCILING CONTRADICTIONS

The philosophy of *acintya-bheda-abheda* allows acceptance of seemingly contradictory statements in the *Upaniṣads*: statements of *abheda*, or impersonalism, and statements of *bheda*, or difference. Both types can be accepted, without resorting to indirect interpretation of either type of statement.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement therefore presents a complete picture of intimate loving relationships with God, a philosophy consistent with direct statements of scripture to support those relationships, and a simple, practical process to realize them. ☸

His Holiness Bhānu Swami is regional secretary for parts of ISKCON in South India.

WESTERN PILGRIM

(continued from page 55)

into the grass. He recalled Lord Caitanya's childhood pastime of horrifying His parents by playing with a cobra in His courtyard. The cobra turned out to be Ananta Śeṣa, the Lord's divine serpentine associate. The pastime reminded us that no creature in the holy *dhāma* is ordinary.

According to a neighbor who claims to have seen it first hand, our gardener knows the art of extracting poison from a snakebite. As far as I know, such bites have never occurred on ISKCON Māyāpur's land, but I shudder to think of myself in need of the gardener's skill. I calm my jitters by recalling the *Bhagavad-gītā's* instructions about the temporary nature of the material body and the auspicious benefit of leaving this world in the holy *dhāma*.

Lord Caitanya's appearance day, known as Gaura Pūrṇimā, comes on the full-moon day of the month of Phālguna, in late winter or early spring.

The government erects a tent city to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who flock to Māyāpur for this auspicious day, most of them visiting ISKCON Māyāpur. After the early-morning service, attending the temple on this day is virtually impossible. Never have I seen such an enormous crowd. Kṛṣṇa Prema and I spend the day peacefully chanting in our flat and watching the rising full moon from the rooftop.

Packed with our equipment and with gifts, and with incense for the Deities, we prepare to return to the West, perhaps even heavier than when we arrived. On our last evening I look at Śrīla Prabhupāda's towering *samādhi* dome, encircled by a ring of ten-foot metal sculptures of devotees in *kīrtana*. This calls to mind Śrīla Prabhupāda's determined effort to establish ISKCON Māyāpur as a place of pilgrimage for devotees of Kṛṣṇa from all over the world. We come here to gain spiritual strength, and we return to our

native lands to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others.

To strengthen us, and to make a place large enough for ten thousand devotees to gather at once in congregational chanting, in 1977 Śrīla Prabhupāda laid the cornerstone for the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. Over the next few years, this magnificent temple, one of the largest religious structures on earth, will rise from the Ganga plain as brilliantly as the red morning sun rises from the smooth Māyāpur horizon.

As we drive out, I recall that once you come to the holy *dhāma*, you never leave. You simply carry it elsewhere in your heart. ☸

Nitya-tṛptā Devī Dāsī, a photographer, and Kṛṣṇa Prema Dāsa, a musician, created Kṛṣṇa Vision, a multi-slide-projector presentation. Now they're moving more into the digital realm, developing CD-ROMs and computer presentations.

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, 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.

Month of Dāmodara

(October 25–November 23)

NOVEMBER

4—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

9—Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

12—Disappearance 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.

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

19—Utthānā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, the disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon.

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

Month of Keśava

(November 24–December 22)

DECEMBER

3—Utpannā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

19—Mokṣadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, the anniversary of the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Month of Nārāyaṇa

(December 23–January 21)

26—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Gour Govinda Swami, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda's and an ISKCON spiritual master.

JANUARY

2—Saphalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

Insight at St. Paul's

PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE my maternal English bloodline has become Americanized, but the idea of a church representing a particular nationality sits poorly with me. And yet, while in London researching for this issue of BTG, I saw an emblem of such a union—St. Paul's Cathedral—and I was impressed.

In St. Paul's one sees the history of a people. It stands on a prominent spot in London, overlooking the Thames, a spot on which four previous cathedrals have stood, dating back some 1,400 years. Vikings ransacked one of the earlier cathedrals; fires devastated the others. Architect Christopher Wren saw the present cathedral, his masterpiece, completed in 1710. It survived repeated bombing attacks by Nazi warplanes in World War II, when it remained a powerful symbol of English freedom.

Entering St. Paul's, I suddenly understand the scale of Māyāpur's Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. The two buildings are of similar size, each with huge thirty-plus-story domes. Construction plans for both call for masonry. It occurs to me that this massive cathedral was hand-built, without cranes, engines, or computers.

I pay a few pounds and climb hundreds of hand-hewn wooden steps up to the Whispering Gallery, the inner ring of the huge dome. Here one can clearly hear words spoken against the circular wall hundreds of feet away. Peering over the rail to the marble floor 150 feet below, I imagine legions of devotees dancing back and forth in ecstatic *kirtana*.

It's reassuring to look up and see scaffolding hanging from the pinnacle of the inner dome and know that Alan Baxter & Associates—the same firm engineering the Māyāpur temple—is renovating St. Paul's. The firm's experienced engineers are quite certain the Māyāpur temple can be built as planned.

There will be challenges. Māyāpur is something less of a commercial and industrial hub than London. Every brick, nail, and marble block must reach Māyāpur by barge or rugged road. Core samples hundreds of feet down reveal no bedrock under Māyāpur, only sand—calling for a huge concrete raft as a foundation. The requisite masonry arts stand on the edge of extinction. Yet the temple can be built. Now, after years of research, we know how to build it. Naturally, the bigger question comes next: *Why* build it?

Climbing another 180 feet to St. Paul's outer tower partially answers this question. From here I see bustling London spread in all directions. Most of the charm-

ingly crooked London streets seem to lead to St. Paul's. In a pounds-shillings-pence city, St. Paul's makes a powerful statement about the importance of the divine.

ISKCON has struggled to fulfill Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire to introduce *varṇāśrama-dharma*, the Vedic social system. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium will help by providing a spiritual focal point for a new city, creating natural civic, social, economic, and agricultural development with a Kṛṣṇa conscious center—the essence of *varṇāśrama*. With proper Kṛṣṇa conscious planning for families, schools, and jobs, Māyāpur city can become the long-missing model for *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Māyāpur will be for everyone, not just one race or nation.

As I join the many other visitors on the long spiraling walk back down, I hear voices and see clothing representing the styles and religions of a dozen distant countries. I envision the incongruous sight of a building this size on the rural plains of Māyāpur. Would these people not come to Māyāpur as well?

When asked by an English TV reporter about the concept of hell in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Prabhupāda startled the poor man—and made the papers—by replying, “London is hell.” Māyāpur he described as “the kingdom of God,” and he spent his days there “in great delight.” Most pilgrims to Māyāpur would agree. What an impression Śrīdhām Māyāpur, and the Māyāpur temple, will make on future visitors!

Many around me are Anglicans on pilgrimage from the U.K. and elsewhere. The Catholics have the Vatican, and the Islamic faithful have Mecca. The Māyāpur temple—sure to fire the spirit of kings and commoners alike—will anchor a world-class pilgrimage site. More than ever, Māyāpur will stir faith and pride in the hearts of devotees throughout the far-flung ISKCON realm. Just as the English, over the centuries, have filled the naves and crypts of this marvelous “national church” with their art, sculpture, and history, future devotees of Caitanya Mahāprabhu will express their devotion in the halls of the Māyāpur temple.

Only in Māyāpur does a cornerstone Śrīla Prabhupāda laid remain uncovered by a temple. I leave St. Paul's thinking that if I do little more with the rest of my life than help build the Māyāpur temple, I will have at least begun to address my enormous debt to Śrīla Prabhupāda and the previous *ācāryas*.

*Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa, Associate Editor, BTG
Director, Māyāpur Foundation U.S.A.*

Vedic Evidence that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Lord

The following quotations from Vedic scripture predict the incarnation of the Supreme Lord for the current age. The appearance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu fulfilled each of the prophecies given here.

In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself.—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.32

In His early pastimes He appears as a householder with a golden complexion. His limbs are beautiful, and His body, smeared with the pulp of sandalwood, seems like molten gold. In His later pastimes He accepts the *sannyāsa* order, and He is equipoised and peaceful. He is the highest abode of peace and devotion, for He silences the impersonalist nondevotees.

—*Mahābhārata, Dāna-dharma-parva, Chapter 189 (Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma)*

I shall appear in the holy land of Navadvīpa as the son of Śacīdevī.—*Kṛṣṇa-yāmala-tantra*

In the Age of Kali, when the *saṅkīrtana* movement is inaugurated, I shall descend as the son of Śacīdevī.
—*Vāyu Purāṇa*

Sometimes I personally appear on the surface of the world in the garb of a devotee. Specifically, I appear as the son of Śacī in Kali-yuga to start the *saṅkīrtana* movement.—*Brahma-yāmala-tantra*

The Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, who is the life of Śrī Rādhārāṇī and is the Lord of the universe in creation, maintenance, and annihilation, appears as Gaura, O Maheśvarī.—*Ananta-saṁhitā*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda, the supreme enjoyer, whose form is transcendental, who is beyond the touch of the three modes of material nature, and who is the all-pervading Supersoul residing in the hearts of all living entities, will appear again in the Kali age. Appearing as the greatest devotee, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will assume a two-armed form of golden complexion in His abode of Goloka Vṛndāvana manifested on the bank of the Ganges at Navadvīpa. He will disseminate pure devotional service in the world.—*Caitanya Upaniṣad* 5

In the first *sandhyā* [period] of Kali-yuga, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will assume a golden form. First He will be the husband of Lakṣmī, and then He will be a *sannyāsī* who stays near Lord Jagannātha at Puri.—*Garuḍa Purāṇa*

In the middle of that lotus-city is a place called Māyāpur, and in the middle of Māyāpur is a place called Antardvīpa. That place is the home of Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

—*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

In My original spiritual form, perfect and complete, I will become the son of Śacīdevī in Navadvīpa-Māyāpur at the beginning of Kali-yuga.

—*Garuḍa Purāṇa*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead will again appear in this world. His name will be Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, and He will spread the chanting of the Lord's holy names.

—*Devī Purāṇa*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead . . . will appear again in the Kali-yuga. His form will be golden, He will delight in chanting the Lord's holy names, and His name will be Caitanya.—*Nṛsimha Purāṇa*

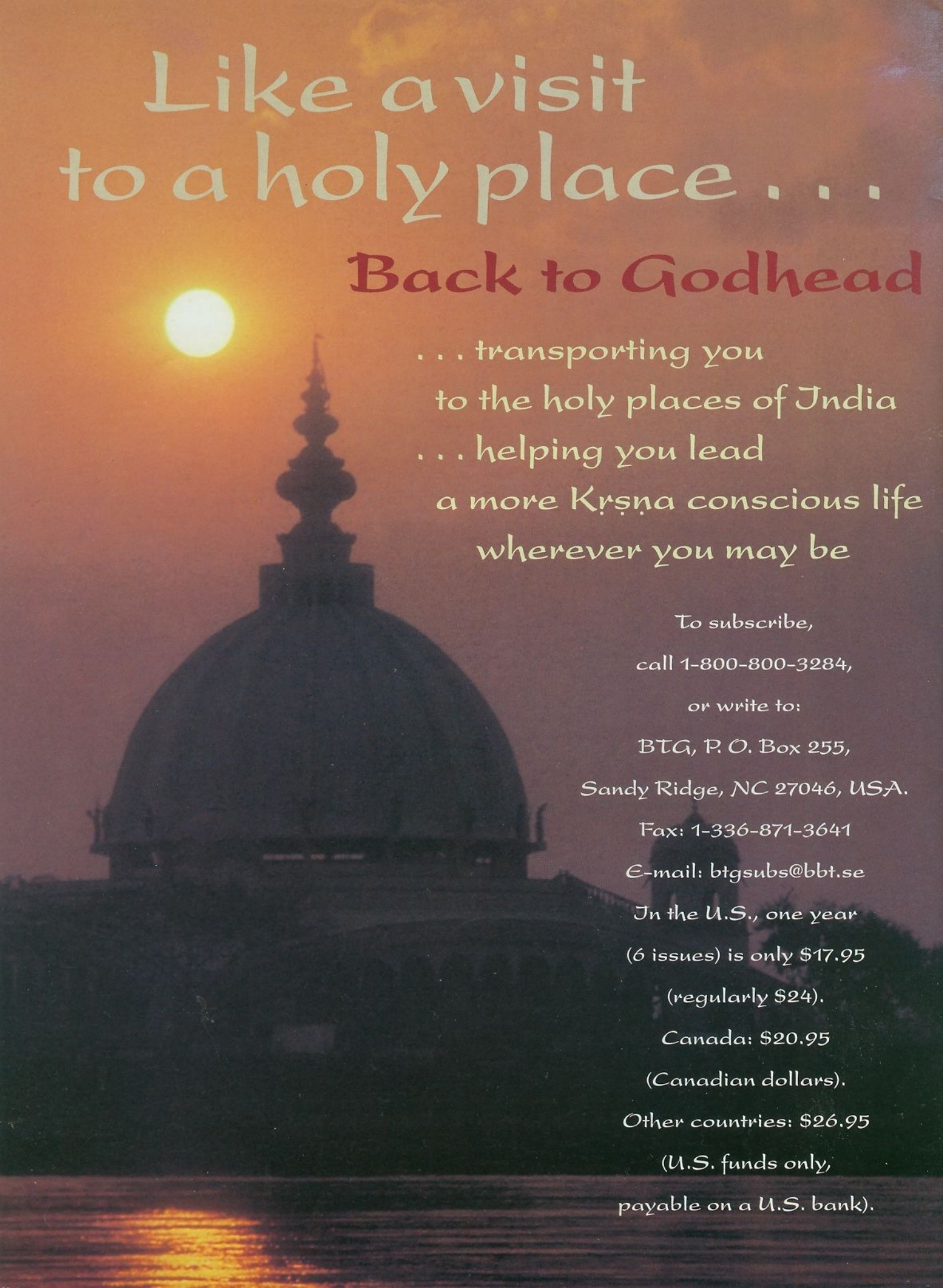
In the first *sandhyā* of Kali-yuga I will appear on the earth in a beautiful place by the Ganges' shore. I will be the son of Śacīdevī, and My complexion will be golden.—*Padma Purāṇa*

In the age of Kali I will appear disguised as a devotee of the Lord, and I will deliver all the worlds.

—*Nārada Purāṇa*

In the first *sandhyā* of the Kali-yuga I will reveal My eternal golden form by the shore of the Ganges on the earth.—*Brahmā Purāṇa*

At this time My names will be Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Gaurāṅga, Gauracandra, Śacīsuta, Mahāprabhu, Gaura, and Gaurahari. Chanting these names will bring devotion to Me.—*Ananta-saṁhitā*



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