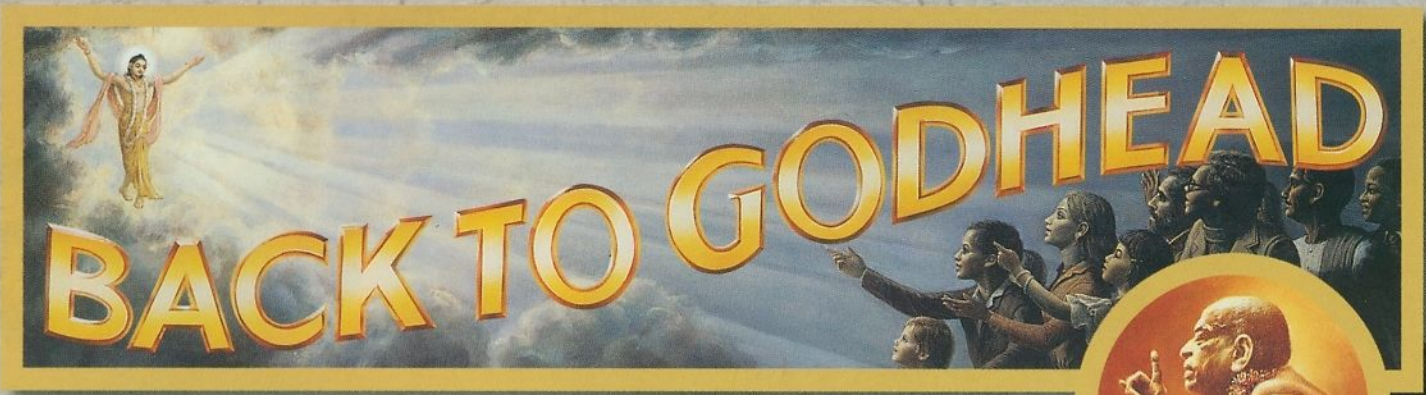
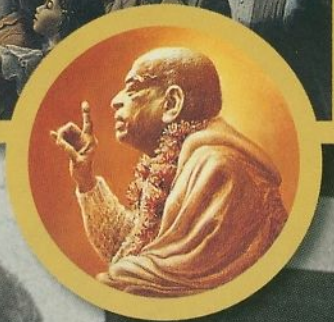


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

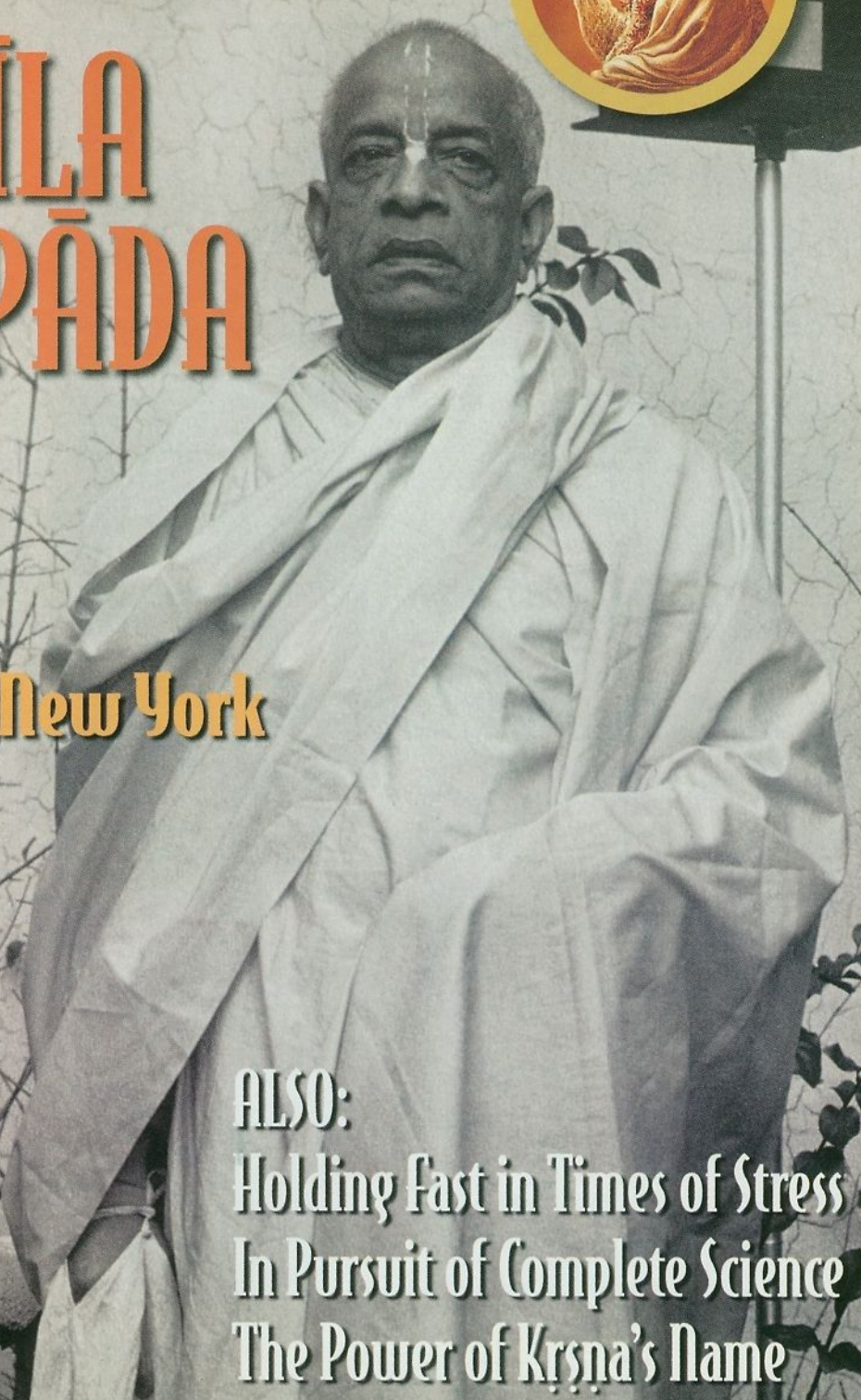


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WITH ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA IN 1966

A Disciple Recalls
The Early Days in New York

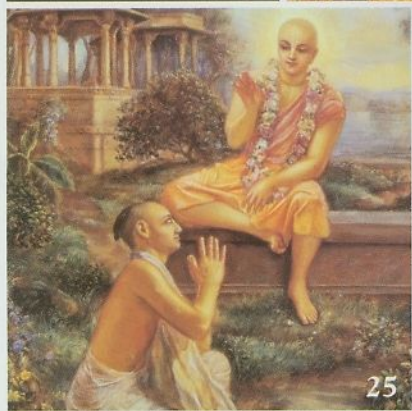
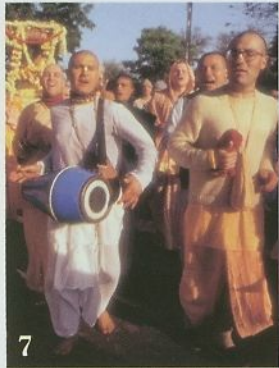


ALSO:
Holding Fast in Times of Stress
In Pursuit of Complete Science
The Power of Kṛṣṇa's Name

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 34, No. 3 • May/June 2000



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COVER

Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1966 in the courtyard of 26 Second Avenue, New York City, his first temple. See page 11 for a memoir of those days by one of his first disciples.

WELCOME



IN THIS ISSUE,

Dāmodāra Dāsa, one of the first disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, remembers

with fondness Prabhupāda's pioneer days in New York City. As one of only a handful of followers, Dāmodāra witnessed Śrīla Prabhupāda up close and gained a devotion to him that brought meaning to his life and sustains him today.

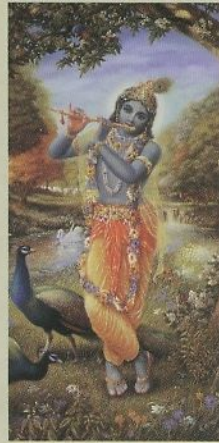
As a great spiritual teacher, Śrīla Prabhupāda transformed lives by inspiring people to pursue spiritual goals. He lived what he taught, and he made the timeless wisdom of the Vedic literature accessible to the modern world. In his lecture in this issue, "The Power of Kṛṣṇa's Name," we see how he homes in on the essential problem of our existence and offers the simplest yet most profound solution.

On the basis of Vedic authority, Śrīla Prabhupāda promoted the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa as the solution to all problems, material and spiritual. Chanting forms the essence of the daily spiritual program Prabhupāda prescribed, and in Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami's "Holding Fast in Times of Stress," we hear how sticking to that program can get us through the most trying of times.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

OUR PURPOSES

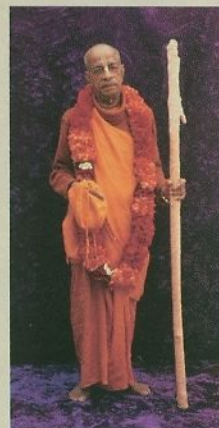
- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God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



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



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



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

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
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Letters

Encouraged Student

I would like to express my gratitude to all the devotees who contribute to BTG magazine. Each time I receive a new issue in the mail, I am always greatly inspired to do as much devotional service as I can.

As a first-year student pursuing a career in sociology, I found the Jan./Feb. issue particularly interesting. I had been wondering for a while how I could practically apply such a degree to a Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life, when, lo and behold, the article by Kālakāṅṭha Dāsa (“Putting Kṛṣṇa to the Test”) came before my eyes! It was very encouraging to see a devotee able to integrate the philosophy into his university studies, with incredible results. Prabhupāda wanted highly educated people to become devotees, and we should all strive to fulfill his wish in any way possible.

Rina Daya
Toronto, Canada

Satisfying Kṛṣṇa

I would first like to congratulate and thank you for the wonderful issue of Jan./Feb. 2000. I read the magazine cover to cover, which I normally do not do. I really enjoyed reading articles such as “Why We Must Know Who God Is” and “Putting Kṛṣṇa to the Test.” To put it simply, I enjoyed everything.

Just one question regarding the article “Why We Must Know Who God Is.” It relates to how you determine if Kṛṣṇa is satisfied. The test is performed by way of your spiritual master: If your spiritual master is satisfied, then Kṛṣṇa is. What if I am not initiated yet and don't have a spiritual master? Who do I look to, to see if I'm satisfying Kṛṣṇa?

Asita Albert
Fort Kent, Maine

OUR REPLY: To accept initiation from a spiritual master is required for steady progress in spiritual life. But if you accept Śrīla Prabhupāda's

teachings even before initiation (as well as after), then he is also your spiritual master—technically called *śikṣā-guru*, or instructing guru. By following his instructions, as received through his books, disciples, and grand-disciples, you undoubtedly satisfy him, and Kṛṣṇa is satisfied.

Organized Knowledge

I very much appreciated Kālakāṅṭha Dāsa's chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the first half of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in the March/April issue. I have been reading and worshipping Śrīla Prabhupāda's gift of the *Bhagavad-gītā* for twenty-five years. I am enlivened by your presentation. My knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā* is now becoming organized.

Bibhatsu Dāsa
Austin, Texas

Bhāgavatam Questions

Thank you for adding questions to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* section. I have to admit that I tended to skip that section before, but now the questions draw me in. They help me focus on the important philosophical points that Prabhupāda always makes in his purports. I hope other readers are taking advantage of this valuable addition to the magazine.

Richard Wells
Via the Internet

Questions About Offenses

I was reading the Jan./Feb. issue of BTG, and I have two questions about the offenses in chanting God's name, listed on page 28.

Offense 7: Teaching the glories of the Lord's names to the faithless.

I thought that was something that we should do: By teaching and preaching about the Lord, we can try to bring faith to those who don't have it.

Offense 9: Being inattentive while chanting the holy name.

When I tell devotees that I'm struggling while chanting my rounds

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

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

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

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

Pronunciation

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

Spiritual Names

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

because I can't concentrate, some devotees say, "Don't think! Just chant and be happy. Chant any place, anytime."

These two offenses confuse me. Can you clarify them?

Patricia Medici
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Our predecessor guru Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī teaches that devotees should teach the innocent and avoid the demoniac. So we take "faithless" here to mean those who are clearly antagonistic toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We avoid trying to teach such persons, because they will offend Kṛṣṇa. Innocent persons, on the other hand, can hear without offense, even if their faith has not yet been awakened.

We should try to concentrate when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. It seems devotees are just trying to encourage you by saying, "Don't worry about it too much. We all have a hard time concentrating. Just do your best."

Good Passion

I'm writing in reference to Dhīra Govinda Dāsa's mahā-mantra experiment, where chanters showed increased qualities in the mode of goodness. As children of Kṛṣṇa, it is natural to live every moment in goodness. Yet to live with passion and to be passionate should not be misunderstood. Passion is actually a driving force for our existence. Our desires and goals are driven by our inner passion to succeed—whether spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically, socially, politically, academically, or financially. We should be passionate and eager about developing and perfecting the above spheres of our life to the highest degree possible.

Unesh Kallideen
Ladysmith, South Africa

OUR REPLY: The philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness promotes simple living and high thinking. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* tells us to earn only enough to live comfortably and consi-

ders a person who takes more than he needs a thief.

"Passion," as it refers to one of the modes of nature, generally includes the strong desire for sense gratification. You may intend the word to mean simply ardent endeavor. But Lord Kṛṣṇa tells us in the *Gītā* that focusing our energy on spiritual perfection is best. Other things will come of their own accord. We should, of course, perform all our duties the best we can, but we should avoid the feverish pursuit of material goals. ☀

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CORRECTIONS

• On the "Letters" page in the January/February issue, under the heading "Paying for Māyāpur," there are some errors in the reply.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's will says nothing about funding the Māyāpur temple and nothing about royalties from books. The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust funds the building and renovating of temples because that is one of its functions, as stated in the documents by which Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the Trust. Funds for temple renovation and construction have little to do with royalties; the BBT allots a percentage of its income for this purpose.

• The photos in the Dvārakā article (March/April) credited to Mahā-Viṣṇu Dāsa were taken by Rāmānuja Dāsa of ISKCON Jaipur.

• The cover painting for the March/April issue was done by Rāmanātha Dāsa, not Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa.

• In the article "What Exactly is 'Vedic'?" (March/April), the chart listing the divisions of the Vedic literature mistakenly puts the tāmasic *Purāṇas* in the rājasic category, and vice versa.



THE POWER OF KṚṢṆA'S NAME

Chanting the Lord's name purifies our polluted consciousness, the source of all our problems.

A lecture given in Montreal, Canada, on June 15, 1968

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

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant for reviving our original consciousness. At present, owing to our long association with matter, our consciousness has become contaminated, just as rain water becomes contaminated when it falls from a cloud. Originally the water is pure, distilled, but as soon as it falls onto the earth, it becomes mixed with many dirty things. Similarly, originally, as spirit soul, our consciousness is uncontaminated, but because of our present association with matter, our consciousness is contaminated. Therefore we have so many varieties of consciousness.

Disagreements between one person and another are due to contaminated consciousness. I think some way; you think otherwise. Therefore we do not agree. But originally, your consciousness and my consciousness were one. And what is that "one"? That pure consciousness is to think, "God is great, and I am His eternal servant." That is pure consciousness.

As soon as we want to imitate God or artificially become one with God, the contami-



nation begins. A Bengali verse states,

*kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha hañā bhoga-
vāñchā kare
nikāṭa-stha māyā tāre jāpaṭiyā
dhare*

"When an individual soul forgets his eternal relationship with God and tries to lord it over the material nature, that forgetful condition is called *māyā*, or illusion." So at present, especially in this age, forgetfulness of our eternal relationship with God is very strong. But by chanting the transcendental sound Hare Kṛṣṇa, the first result is that our heart or mind becomes cleansed of all dirty things. This is not a theoretical proposition; it is a fact.

Chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is not difficult. Although it is in the Sanskrit language, everyone can chant it. In this meeting we began to chant, and you joined with us. All my students are Americans. None of them are Indians, but still they have learned the mantra very nicely. That is not difficult. And there is no cost.

So what is Hare Kṛṣṇa? *Hare* means the energy of the Lord, and *Kṛṣṇa* means the

Actually we are not the body. If we chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, we can understand what we are.



Supreme Personality of Godhead. So it is a prayer. There are only three words—Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma—arranged as sixteen words: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. We request you to take up these three words: Hare, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma. Anyone can learn the mantra by heart and chant it. It is universal.

If you think, “Oh, Kṛṣṇa is the name of a Hindu god”—if you have any objection—then you need not chant Kṛṣṇa, but you must have a name for God. The Muslims call God Allah, the Jews call Him Jehovah. That does not matter. Lord Caitanya says that there are millions and billions of names of God. If you think that the name *Kṛṣṇa* is not very suitable, you can accept any name. That doesn’t matter. Our proposal is that you chant God’s name.

Is it very difficult? It is not at all difficult. Lord Caitanya said that there are innumerable names of God according to different languages, different countries, different societies. And each of the names has the potency of God Himself. God is Absolute; therefore there is no difference between His name and He Himself. In the material world, the world of duality, there is a difference between the name *water* and the substance water. The name *water* is different from the substance water. If you are thirsty and you simply chant, “Water, water, water, water,” your thirst will not be quenched. You require the substance water. That is the nature of matter. But spiritually, the name *Kṛṣṇa* or the name *Allah* or the name *Jehovah* is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

You may ask why we specifically chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. This name was chanted by Lord Caitanya, who introduced this movement five hundred years ago in India. We are following the footprints of Lord Caitanya. Be-

cause He chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. But Lord Caitanya recommended that any one of God’s innumerable names can be chanted.

There are no hard and fast rules for chanting. It is not that for chanting you have to prepare yourself or educate yourself or adjust yourself. No. We began to chant, and you were not prepared, but you joined us—you clapped with us, you danced with us. There are no rules or regulations. You simply chant. It is very easy. While walking you can chant whatever name you like. We like Kṛṣṇa. We chant always Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. While walking on the street, while going on the bus, even while working with your hands, you can chant. There is no loss on your part, there is no expense on your part, but the gain is very great. Why don’t you try it? That is our request.

THE BENEFIT OF CHANTING

The benefit will be that gradually you will understand what you are. The whole modern civilization is going on under the wrong impression that “I am this body.” In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said, “One who goes on in the concept of the body as the self is no better than an ass or a cow.” Actually we are not the body. If we chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, we can understand what we are.

As soon as I understand that I am not the body, my activities become different. At present I am acting on the concept that I am the body. Because this body was born in a particular place in a particular country, I say, “I am American,” or Indian, or Chinese, or German. And because this body has a relationship with some woman, I accept that woman as my wife. There are hundreds of thousands of women, but

the woman who has a relationship with this body is my wife. There are thousands and millions of children, but one child who has an intimate relation with this body, I call my son. So if we are falsely identifying with the body, our identification with this world is also false.

Our real identity is, as stated in the Vedic literature, *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*: “I am Brahman.” That means “I am spirit soul; I am not matter.”

The misconception that I am the body has to be removed. Of course, it is not possible for everyone to understand this, but if even a percentage of human society can understand, so many problems will be solved. The solution to so many problems is to understand *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*: “I am spirit soul.”

The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains how the solutions take place. As soon as this realization is there—*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*—then other things follow. *Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*: one at once becomes cheerful. As long as we are in the bodily concept of life, we cannot be cheerful. We are full of anxiety. And as soon as we understand “I am not this body; I am spirit soul,” we become cheerful. There will be no anxiety.

We are full of anxiety because of the bodily concept of life. Consider a man with a very costly car. When driving on the street, he is careful to avoid an accident that would damage the car. He is in so much anxiety. But a man walking on the street has no such anxiety. Why is the man in the car so anxious? Because he has identified himself with the car. If the car is damaged in an accident, he thinks, “Oh, my car is gone; I am gone.”

Although he is different from the car, he thinks like that because of false identification. Similarly, because we falsely identify with the body, we have so many problems. So if we want to solve the problems of life,

we have to understand what we are. And unless this question arises in our mind, then we must consider that whatever we are doing brings defeat, because we are doing everything in false consciousness.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said, *parābhavas tāvad abodha-jātaḥ*. *Abodha-jātaḥ* refers to one born a fool. Every one of us is born a fool. Why? Because from the beginning of life we think, “I am this body,” although we are not the body. Therefore, according to Vedic civilization one has to take a second birth. One birth is made possible by the father and mother. That birth is considered an animal birth. *Janmanā jāyate sūdraḥ*. Everyone by birth is a *sūdra*, or the lowest class of person. But *saṁskārād bhaved dvijaḥ*: “By reformation, one becomes twice-born.” And what is that reformation? One understands what one is. Then, *veda-pathād bhaved vipraḥ*: “After the second birth, one who tries to understand the spiritual science, the science of God, is called a *vipra*.” *Vipra* means “quite cognizant.” Finally, *brahma jānāti brāhmaṇaḥ*: “When one understands that he is Brahman, spirit soul, he becomes a *brāhmaṇa*.”

Perhaps you have heard that in India the *brāhmaṇas* are called the top-most men of the society. Why? Because they know, “I am Brahman; I am not matter.”

By understanding Brahman, your position will be *prasannātmā*, “joyful.” *Na śocati na kāṅkṣati*: you will never lament any loss, nor will you hanker after any so-called gain. *Samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu*: you will see every living entity on the same level. *Mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*: in that stage of realization, you can understand God and your relationship with God.

UNDERSTANDING OUR IDENTITY

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant for understanding who we are. The answer, of course, is very simple. The other day I lectured at a Sunday school. I called a small boy forward and, pointing to the different parts of his body, I asked him, “What is this?” He said, “It is my hand, it is my head, it is my leg, it is my body, it is

my shirt, it is my . . .” Then I asked him, “Where are you? You are saying ‘my, my, my,’ but where are you?”

Everyone can understand what he is. If you ask yourself, “Am I this hand?” you will say, “No, it is my hand.” “Am I this leg?” “No, it is my leg.” “Am I this head?” “No, it is my head.” Then where are you? You are the person thinking within, “It is my hand, it is my head, it is my leg, it is my shirt, it is my coat.” But have you seen

that person? You think you have seen your father, your mother, your son. But have you seen the real father within the body of the father? Have you seen the real son within the body of the son? No.

Then your whole conception of life and of the problems of this world is false. Therefore this movement is required at the present moment. *Ceto darpaṇa-mārjanam*: the chanting of (please turn to page 56)



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Spiritual Bongos And Neighborhood Beats

*“If I had not been there with Śrīla Prabhupāda
for days and weeks and months, my life would
be nothing but dry, tattered scraps.”*



by Dāmodāra Dāsa

Adapted by Nandimukhī Devī Dāsī from *Remembering Śrīla Prabhupāda* (© 1998 Daniel Clark).

HIS DIVINE GRACE A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, my spiritual master, enacted his life's activities from his birth in 1896 to his passing in 1977. I knew him for the last eleven years of his exemplary pastimes. But to say I knew him is going too far. I watched him. I listened to him. I talked with him and corresponded with him. I followed him and obeyed him—and disobeyed him. I learned from him. I bowed down before him and prayed to him. I loved him, and still do. Through those eleven years, that person I first knew as the Swami, then as Swamiji, and then as Śrīla Prabhupāda guided my life.

My first contact with Śrīla Prabhupāda was in April of 1966. I saw a *New York Times* photograph with a long caption. The Swami, pictured sitting, was giving classes on *Bhagavad-gītā* in a loft on the Bowery. For the Swami, first and foremost, God is a person, the caption stated. The best way to attain God realization, he said, is through devotion—and specifically by chanting names of God in a congregational setting. The name of God preferred by the Swami: Kṛṣṇa.

In July, Swami Bhaktivedanta and his students moved into a small storefront on Second Avenue. It was seven blocks south of my apartment. I often rode the bus south to a friend's place, and it took me by 26 Second Avenue, where a sign above the window bore the name "Matchless Gifts." Early one evening the lights were on. Through the window I could see a half dozen people sitting on straw mats with their backs to the street. Facing them and me, at the far end of the room, was a golden glow—that's all I saw at first. It was the Swami, in yellow cloth.

I was scared. Scared because I was attracted, and I knew what that attraction meant. I would have to stop having sex! I would have to give up all kinds of things. These impressions came to me in the

Left: Chanting in Thompkins Square Park, October 1966.

three or four seconds allowed me by the fast-moving bus.

During the late summer, the Kṛṣṇa conscious people were the subject of many conversations on the Lower East Side. Most of the neighborhood “beats” kept their distance. I too hesitated to walk through the storefront door into that other world. Then a neighborhood avant-garde newspaper, *The East Village Other*, published a long article on Swami Bhaktivedanta and his disciples. Included was an announcement that the Kṛṣṇa people would hold outdoor gatherings every Sunday at the park. My wife and I decided to go the next Sunday.

The day was sunny and mild, and

the park, as usual, was busy with colorful bohemians celebrating the weekend.

The Swami was dressed in a traditional wrapped cloth. He was sitting down, batting on a little wooden bongo drum. The inner circle of adepts included several enraptured disciples dancing at a stately pace around and around in a circle perhaps ten feet in diameter. Their arms were raised in supplication. Around the dancers sat two dozen or so cross-legged meditators buried deep in the sound of the mantra they sang. Around them stood a crowd of a hundred people. They were a cross-section of the Lower East Side population: students, Ukrainians,

Puerto Ricans, bohemians, blue-collar workers, and kids. Many of the on-lookers, helped by leaflets passed out by a disciple, sang along with the exotic spiritualists at the center. My life changed at that moment. I was catapulted into a new world.

The Swami modestly kept himself out of the spotlight. He allowed the words and the music of the mantra to work its sacred effect. After a while he stood to speak. I was too far away to hear much of what he said. He spoke with intensity—that was clear. I wanted to hear more.

I attended the next evening meeting at 26 Second Avenue. Once again, the chanting, which I learned was



In the late 1960s, Śrīla Prabhupāda takes a morning stroll in Manhattan (right). Below, early New York devotees pose in front of 26 Second Avenue. (Dāmodara Dāsa is third from the right in the back row.)



Śrīla Prabhupāda at the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa (above). This deity, Madana-Mohana, originally in New York, is now worshiped at the ISKCON temple outside Washington, D.C. At left, Śrīla Prabhupāda rides the New York City subway.

*I had expected a smiling,
light-hearted wizardly fellow. Instead,
the Swami was dead serious.*

• • •

called *kirtana*, was deeply fulfilling to me.

After a *kirtana* of twenty minutes or so, the Swami spoke. I had expected a smiling, light-hearted wizardly fellow. Instead, the Swami was dead serious. His lecture concentrated on the evils of sex, which he railed against with vigor. During the question-and-answer period, he employed a quickness of wit and startling perceptiveness in his responses. It was plain he dwelled in a world of mystics and saints who were completely real to him. No matter how much grief it caused me, I was determined to proceed further along this path. I became a regular at the storefront.

The experience of being with the Swami was unsettling. It forced us to question our assumptions about every move we made. Yet to be with him was also the most comforting and reassuring event of our lives. We used to chant on our beads, speaking the mantra aloud, in the courtyard right under his apartment window. Sometimes he would look out and smile. To be so close to him was like being at the center of the universe. We felt no fear or anxiety. He was our eternal protector.

PERFECT TEACHER

Do you wonder about his authenticity? One young man attending a lecture in New York did. He asked Prabhupāda, in a rude, sarcastic tone of voice, "Can you see God?" The answer came swiftly: "Yes, but you're in the way!"

The movements of his hands were decisive yet supple. In 1966, before the Society had a treasurer, Prabhupāda kept the meager fund of petty cash in his little snap-clasped purse. His disciple Brahmānanda asked him for fifty cents. Prabhupāda picked up the purse with a slow-motion sweep and elevated it to his eye level with his arms outstretched. He deftly unsnapped the

clasp with one hand as his other hand descended into the purse, thumb and forefinger together like a bird's beak, the other fingers straight out like wings. Somehow the beak immediately found a fifty-cent piece. The graceful bird flew out of the purse holding it as if it were a golden coin from a king's treasure chest and released it into Brahmānanda's hand.

"This typewriter is not different from Kṛṣṇa," he taught us in his apartment at 26 Second Avenue. He patted the gray metal machine he was using to type out his purports to *Bhagavad-gītā*. Thus we learned one of the central principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: matter engaged in the service of God becomes spiritualized. "When you place an iron poker in the fire, it becomes just like fire."

Among his perfections was his gentlemanly behavior. In preparation for his return to New York in 1969, the devotees worked hard to fix up his apartment. As Prabhupāda climbed the stairs and saw the rooms through the open door, he said, "This is my old home" and melted our hearts. He knew we wanted him to stay there and never leave. He couldn't give us that, but he gave us his love. At every moment he won us over again and again.

If I had not been there with Śrīla Prabhupāda for days and weeks and months, my life would be nothing but dry, tattered scraps. The sound of the words from his mouth was like a ripe, delicious mango, and it drove you mad for more and more. His hands danced, and the sight of him blessed our eyes with spiritual vision, for on seeing him we gazed into the kingdom of God.

That is why I bow down before him and offer him songs of praise. ☸

Dāmodara Dāsa lives with his wife, Vajreśvarī Devī Dāsī, in Sebastian, Florida. He works as an electronic media specialist at the local public library.

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“Kṛṣṇa Is the Unifying Agent”

Here we continue an exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and the poet Allen Ginsberg. It took place on May 12, 1969, in Columbus, Ohio.

Allen Ginsberg: How far beyond special study centers can a Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement or any religious movement grow? Because the need is for a large single, unifying religious movement in America.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. So here is Kṛṣṇa—all-attractive. You now have to find out as much as possible about Him. Of course, you can say, “Why shall I accept Kṛṣṇa?” You can talk like that. But your first question is about finding the right unifying agent. So I say, “Here is Kṛṣṇa.”

Now we can analyze. You may ask, “Why shall we accept Kṛṣṇa?”

Then I shall reply, “Why shall you not?”

First, what do you expect from the Supreme Being or the perfect unifying agent? Everything is there in Kṛṣṇa. Wealth—Kṛṣṇa. Beauty—Kṛṣṇa. Wisdom—Kṛṣṇa. Fame—Kṛṣṇa. Renunciation—Kṛṣṇa. Strength—Kṛṣṇa. You’ll find everything in Kṛṣṇa. Whatever you want you’ll find in Kṛṣṇa. He is the unifying agent, the center. And of that I will convince you.

Kṛṣṇa is the unifying center, actually. And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* He says, *mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*: “Everyone is trying to come to Me.” Everyone is trying to come to Kṛṣṇa. Then He adds, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante*: “But some are realizing Me not directly but indirectly, through My various energies. Still, everyone is trying to come to Me.”

We are talking about Kṛṣṇa as the perfect unifying agent. Insofar as His unifying power is concerned, He appeals, in His various manifestations, to all varieties of truth seekers. Essentially, there are three varieties of truth seekers: mental speculators, meditators or yogis, and devotees. The mental speculators are trying to understand the Absolute Truth in an impersonal way, without a personal form. And the meditators or yogis are trying to find Kṛṣṇa within their heart, through meditation. Finally, the devotees are

trying to find the Absolute Truth through personal activity, through reciprocation of loving service. Now, all three of these manifestations—impersonal all-pervasiveness, personal presence in the heart, and active personal reciprocation—are in Kṛṣṇa. And *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that it is the only business of the human being to search out this Absolute Truth.

Now, in the *Bhāgavatam*’s second chapter, the Absolute Truth is explained, analyzed. *Vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam*. First, the Absolute Truth must be one entity. The Absolute Truth cannot be two different entities. Two different entities would mean rela-

tive truths. No, the Absolute Truth must be one.

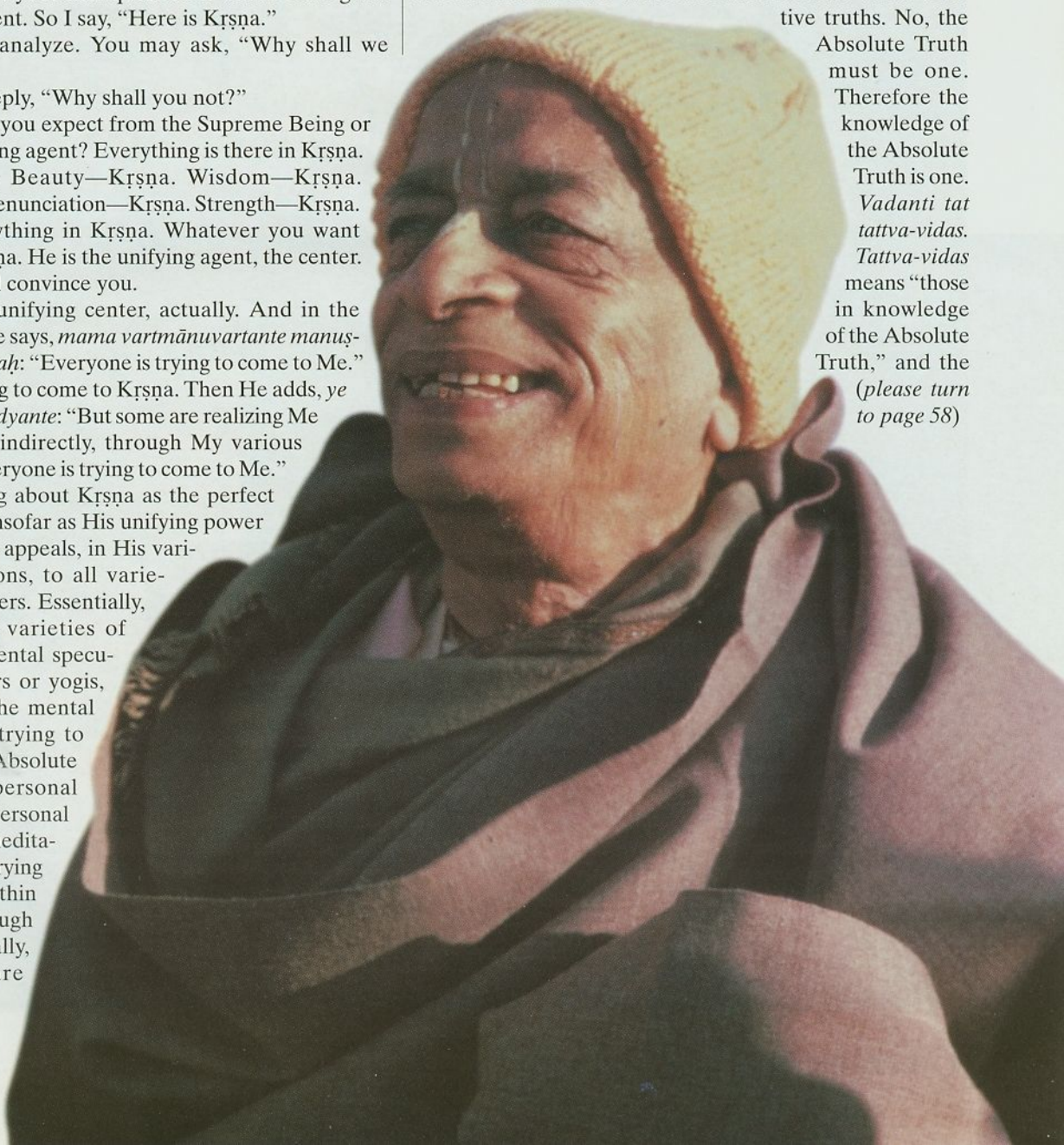
Therefore the knowledge of the Absolute Truth is one.

Vadanti tat tattva-vidas.

Tattva-vidas means “those

in knowledge of the Absolute Truth,” and the

(please turn to page 58)





Alarnath

Abode of Spiritual Longing

This small, remote temple can inspire appreciation for the highest devotional sentiments.

by Bhakti Vikāśa Swami

ALTHOUGH ALARNATH is a little known holy place, I had always been fascinated with the idea of going there. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would stay at Alarnath during *anavasara*, the two-week period when Lord Jagannātha rests in seclusion before the annual Rathayātrā (chariot festival) in Jagannatha Puri. Lord Caitanya couldn't bear staying in Puri without seeing His beloved Lord, and at Alarnath He would reveal the highest spiritual emotions, pining in ecstatic separation.

I'm traveling with a group of five others to Bentpur, the village near the Alarnath temple, seventeen kilometers west of Puri and about five kilometers inland. To reach Alarnath, Lord Caitanya would walk along the beach, but today most pilgrims take a bus.

We're traveling by jeep, and the ride along the flat, winding road gives us beautiful views of agricultural fields and large coconut-palm forests. The

NOTE: Some of the information for this article was taken from *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kathāmṛta*, published by ISKCON Bhubaneswar/ Gopal Jiu Publications.



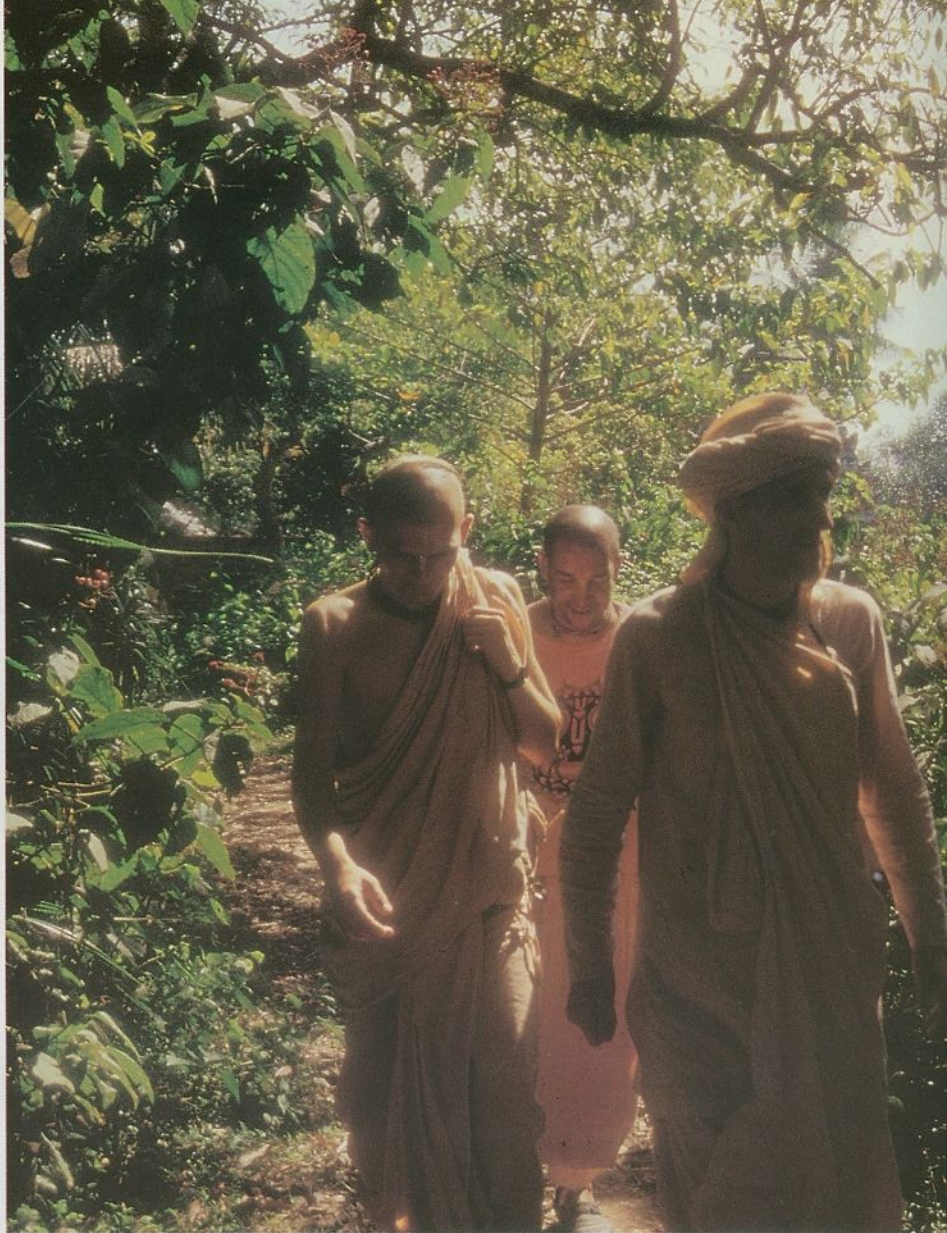
Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa

Above: The temple of Lord Alarnath, where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would go when unable to see Lord Jagannātha in Puri. At left: Lord Alarnath, decorated with sandalwood paste for the annual festival known as Candana Yātrā.

The author and two members of his party walk to the temple pond (right). Below, the deity known as *Ṣaḍ-bhuja* is the combined form of *Caitanya*, *Rāma*, and *Kṛṣṇa*. In front of the deity is a stone that bears the impression of Lord *Caitanya*'s body.



Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa



rich land of the coastal plain supports many people, and we pass quite a few villages during the one-hour ride. It's seven in the morning, and people are rising to bathe in ponds and rivers, as they have for thousands of years.

Along the way we see many palanquins that house deities from area villages. The deities are on their way to Bentpur for an annual festival that brings together deities of each of the five Pāṇḍava brothers, the pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa whose lives are central to the epic *Mahābhārata*. According to local tradition, anyone who sees all five deities in one day attains liberation. Because the deities' temples sit some distance from one another, visiting them all in one day is impossible. In former times a king once tried on horseback but failed. Now once a

year the five deities gather at Bentpur and pilgrims come from all over the area with deities from their villages. More than a hundred deities—Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, other *devas*—will be arriving for this year's festival, to be held tomorrow.

We arrive in Bentpur in a typical Indian bazaar with blaring cinema music. It's a small village with a few hundred houses. Although it's still early, merchants are opening their small shops and kiosks to sell their produce, grain, spices, cloth, hardware, stainless-steel pots and pans—just about anything you'd need.

THE ALARNATH TEMPLE

We walk a hundred yards or so to the Alarnath temple and find our-

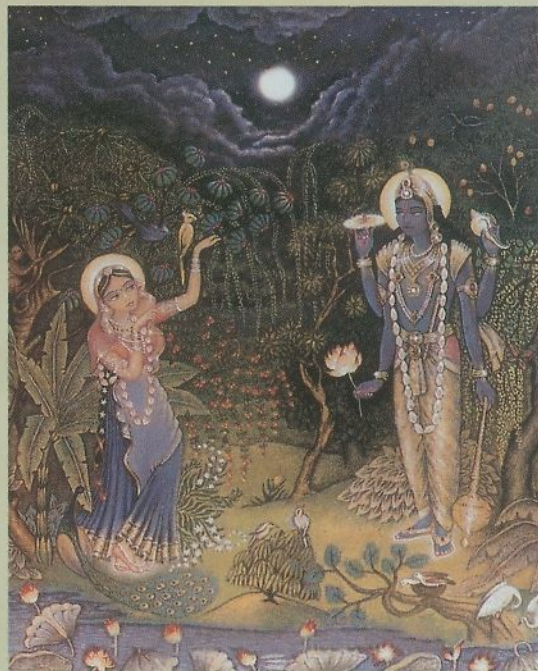
selves in a peaceful, serene setting amid palm trees moving gently in the breeze. We imagine what the place must have been like when Śrī Caitanya Mahā-prabhu stayed here five hundred years ago (a blessed time without loud-speakers).

As with the Jagannātha temple in Puri, Westerners are not allowed inside for an audience with Lord Alarnath. Because it's a fairly small temple, we can see the deity from outside, although not clearly. Lord Alarnath is a four-armed Viṣṇu deity. At His feet kneels *Garuḍa*, His eagle-carrier, hands folded in prayer. The Lord's consorts Śrī and Bhū also accompany Him. The temple also contains small Deities of Lord Kṛṣṇa's queens *Rukmiṇī* and *Satyabhāmā*. Bas reliefs of Lord *Brahmā* and Lord *Śiva* grace the ceil-



Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa

Lord Alarnath: Four Arms or Two?



Painting by Bhaktin Aleksandra

Śrī Rādhā finds Lord Kṛṣṇa disguised as Lord Nārāyaṇa.

WHEN LORD CAITANYA would come before Lord Alarnath, He would see Him not as Viṣṇu, or Nārāyaṇa, but as Kṛṣṇa, playing a flute. Therefore devotees in the line of Lord Caitanya consider Lord Alarnath to be two-armed Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya's ecstasy of seeing Lord Alarnath in this way has its parallel in a pastime of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Once, when Lord Kṛṣṇa was enjoying with Rādhā and the other *gopīs* (cowherd girls) in Vṛndāvana, He playfully hid from them. When the *gopīs*, without Rādhā, found Him, He disguised Himself by displaying His four-armed form. The *gopīs* didn't recognize Him and kept searching. But when Rādhā found Him, He couldn't hide from Her intense love and resumed His all-attractive two-armed form as flute-playing Kṛṣṇa, the only object of Rādhā's pure devotion.

Left: Lord Nṛsimhadeva, one of the sculptures placed in the temple's outer walls under the direction of Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

ing of one of the halls leading up to the main chamber.

The temple also holds a deity of Lord Caitanya known as Ṣaḍ-bhuja, or "Six-armed," signifying Lord Caitanya's identity with both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma. A stone slab in front of the deity bears impressions from Lord Caitanya's body. When Lord Caitanya first lay in full obeisance before Lord Alarnath, the stone beneath Lord

Caitanya melted from His ecstatic touch.

The government of Orissa manages the temple, and *brāhmaṇas* from about fifty families take turns serving the deities. Each family specializes in one aspect of the deity service, the tradition passing from generation to generation. Some families cook for the deities, while others offer the deities their meals, worship them, decorate them,

Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa





The author holds a sword that once belonged to Rāmānanda Rāya (left). Opposite page, (top), deities attend the annual festival in Bēntpur. Below, these government manuscripts date from the time of Rāmānanda Rāya, about five hundred years ago.



In 1996 ISKCON Bhubaneswar did some renovations on the Alarnath temple and built a large hall (above), a new kitchen, a small temple for Lord Śiva (the protector of the holy site), and a welcome gate on the main road.



and so on. The temple owns about sixty acres of land, some used for the deities and some for their servants.

Near the Alarnath temple is the Brahmā Gauḍīya Maṭh, established by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in 1926. The temple houses deities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (Gopī-Gopinātha), and a small Lord Alarnath. A priest of the Alarnath temple had found the small deity during excavation and had installed Him in the temple. One night the deity appeared to the head priest in a dream and told him that He wanted to be worshiped by Bhakti-

siddhānta Sarasvatī. The next day the priest presented the deity to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, who happened to be staying at the Gauḍīya Maṭh temple.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, who was born in Puri, loved Alarnath. He said that the place is the same as Vṇḍāvana and that the small lake there—on whose banks Lord Caitanya would rest—is the same as Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the most sacred of lakes. In 1929 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta arranged renovation of the Alarnath temple and construction of a boundary wall. It is said that he was so eager to see the work completed that he would roll cigarettes for

The Lord Eats to Please a Child

ONCE, A BRĀHMAṆA named Śrī Ketana, whose service was to offer food to Lord Alarnath, had to go out to beg provisions for the Lord. He gave his young son Madhu the responsibility for making offerings in his absence, instructing Madhu to place the Lord's meals before Him and pray to the Lord to accept them.

When the time came to make the first offering, Madhu brought the food to the Lord and prayed, "O my dear Lord, please accept this offering. I'm just a boy and don't know how to offer it properly."

Madhu then went out to play with his friends. When he returned, he saw that all the food was still on the plate.

"O my Lord," he said, "why haven't you eaten? If my father hears of this, he'll be angry with me. Please eat."

Madhu left, only to return and find the food still on the plate. With tears in his eyes, he again begged the Lord to eat.

When Madhu returned the third time, the Lord's plate was empty.

Madhu happily carried the empty plate to his mother.

"Where is the *prasādam*?" she asked.

"Lord Alarnath ate everything!" Madhu replied.

For three days Madhu and his family fasted because whenever Madhu offered the Lord His meal,

He ate everything.

When Śrī Ketana returned and heard of the situation, he scolded his son.

"What have you done with Lord Alarnath's *prasādam*?"

"He ate it, father. I offered it just like you taught me."

"He can't eat," Śrī Ketana replied. "He's just a stone deity."

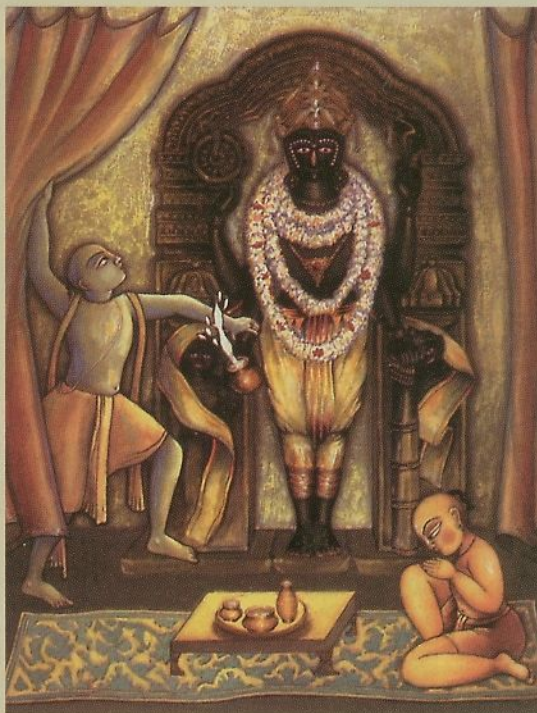
Śrī Ketana decided to see what was going on, so he hid behind a pillar while his son made an offering to the Lord. After Madhu had left, Śrī Ketana saw the Lord reach down and pick up a bowl of sweetrice. Śrī

Ketana jumped from behind the pillar and caught hold of the Lord's arm, spilling hot sweetrice on the Lord's body.

"Stop!" Śrī Ketana yelled. "What are You doing? Who ever heard of a deity eating? If You eat everything, how will we live?"

Lord Alarnath replied, "O materialist in the guise of a *brāhmaṇa*, I never accept offerings from a faithless person like you, devoid of devotion. I accepted the offerings of Madhu because he offered them with simplicity and love."

Today, the priests of Lord Alarnath point out several scars on the Lord's body where He was scalded by the sweetrice.



Painting by Bhaktin Aleksandra

the workers to keep them on the job. He also placed sculptures of Vāmana, Nṛsiṃha, and Varāha (three incarnations of Lord Kṛṣṇa) in alcoves in the temple's outer walls.

RĀMĀNANDA RĀYA'S HOME

After visiting the Alarnath temple and the Brahmā Gauḍīya Maṭh, we go to the other end of Bentpur village to the birthplace of Rāmānanda Rāya, one of Lord Caitanya's chief associates. We meet Mr. P. K. Pattnaik, a descendant of Gopinatha Pattnaik, a brother

of Rāmānanda Rāya. Mr. Pattnaik and his family show us a ceremonial sword that belonged to Rāmānanda (a governor) and old government documents written on palm leaves.

Across a dirt path from the Pattnaik's home is a temple of Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, depicting their meeting on the bank of the Godavari River.

AN IMPORTANT SITE

Alarnath is not a big or famous holy place and probably never will be. Yet

Lord of the Ālvārs



Mādhavananda Dāsa

A bas relief on Bentpur's main gate, erected by ISKCON, shows Brahmā worshiping Nārāyaṇa.

ACCORDING TO LOCAL tradition, the history of Alarnath goes back millions of years. Here in Satya-yuga, the first of the four great ages, Lord Nārāyaṇa spoke to Lord Brahmā from the sky, describing in detail the form of a deity Brahmā should carve and worship.

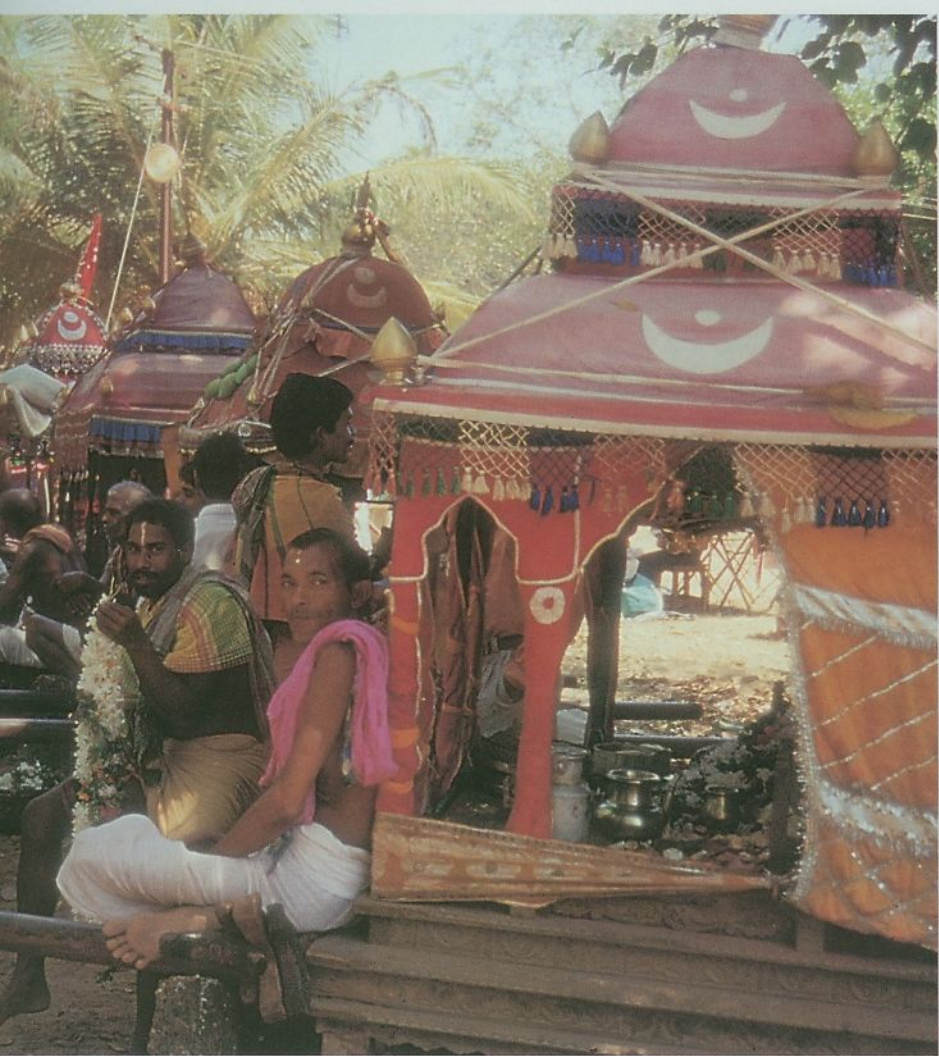
"Because you have worshiped Me here," Lord Nārāyaṇa said, "This place will be known as Brahmagiri ['Brahmā's Hill']."

Much later, Brahmagiri became known as Alarnath. The present temple was built about eleven hundred years ago, and some *brāhmaṇas* from South India performed the worship. Because they were in the disciplic line of the great spiritual teachers known as the Ālvārs, the deity became known as Ālvārnātha ("Lord of the Ālvārs"), which in time became Alarnath. Today, the place is also commonly known as Brahmagiri.

Area residents bring their deities (right and below) to the annual festival that unites the Pāṇḍava brothers.



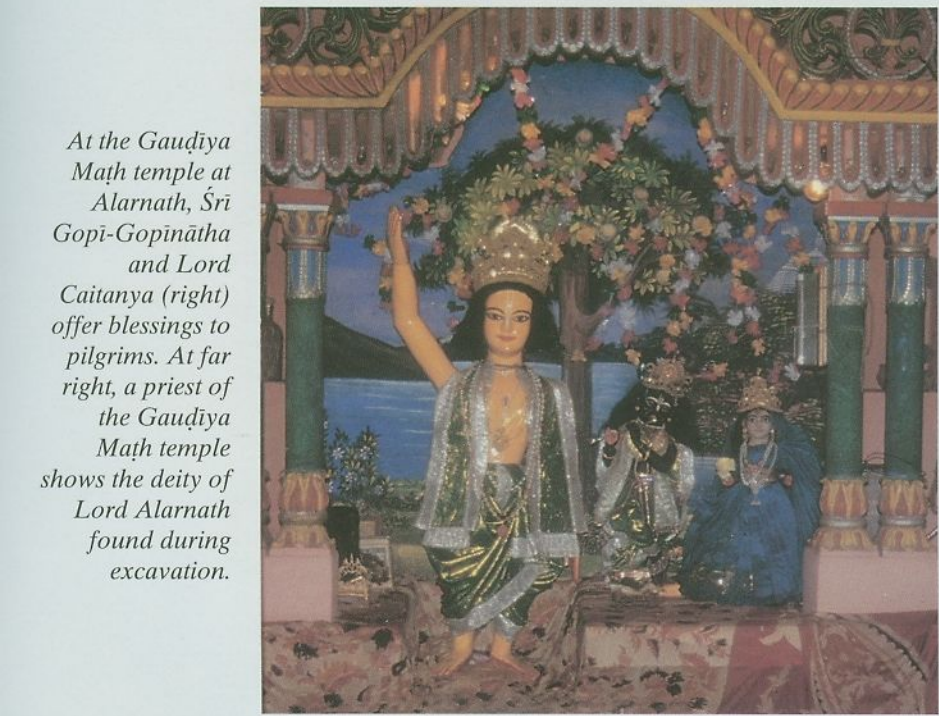
Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa



Dhruva Maharāja Dāsa

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the followers of Lord Caitanya, revere it as an important site of Lord Caitanya's pastimes. The great Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava spiritual master Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung, *gaur āmāra, je saba sthāne, karalo bhramaṇa raṅge, se-saba sthāna heribo āmi, praṇayi-bhakata-saṅge*: "I aspire to see, in the company of loving devotees, all the places visited by Lord Caitanya." And Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "A devotee should make a point of visiting all the places where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed His pastimes. Indeed, pure devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu even want to see the places He simply visited for only hours or minutes." How important, then, is a place where Lord Caitanya stayed every year, exhibiting the most intense mood of separation from His beloved Kṛṣṇa! ❁

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

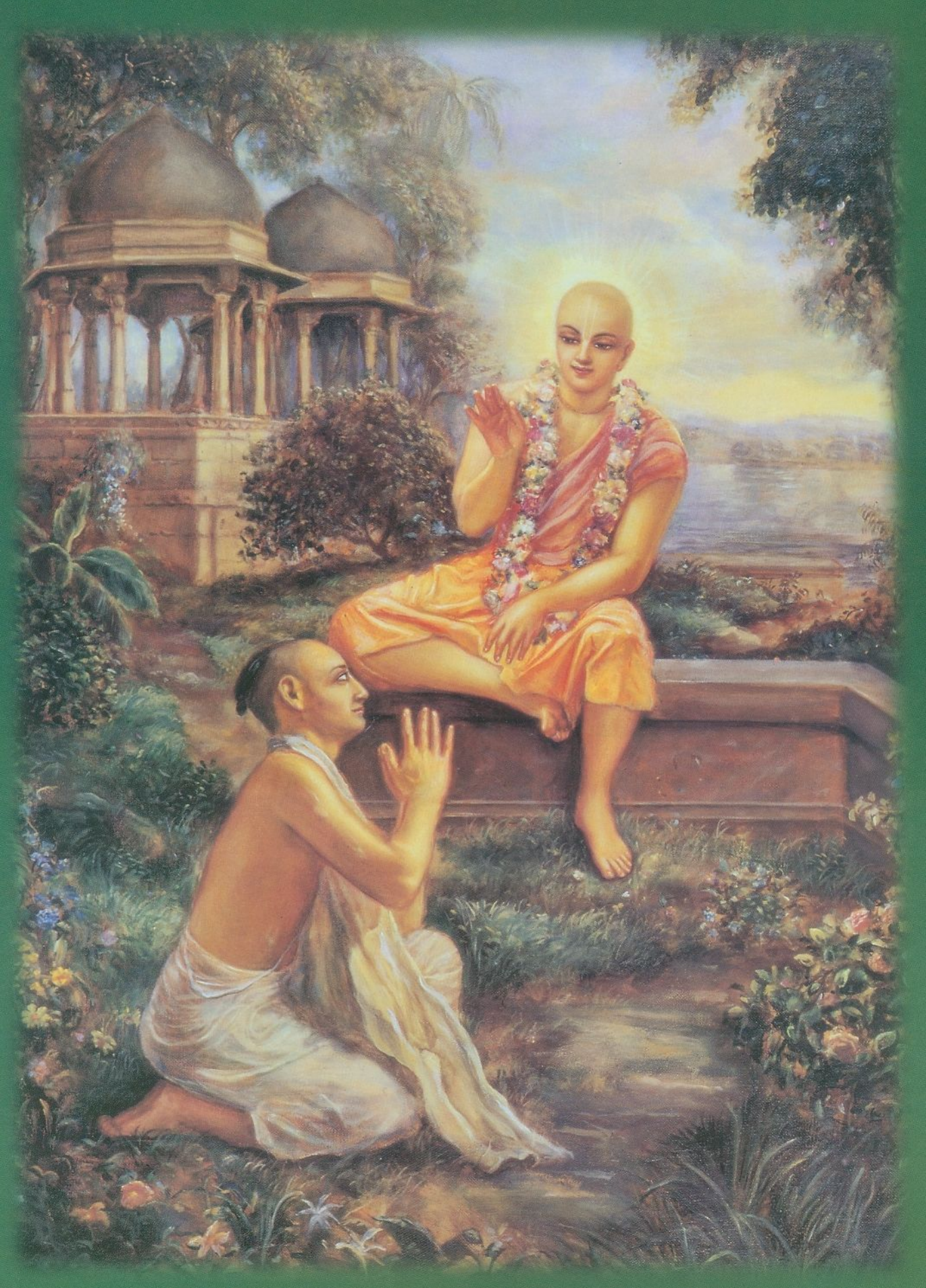


At the Gauḍīya Maṭh temple at Alarnath, Śrī Gopī-Gopinātha and Lord Caitanya (right) offer blessings to pilgrims. At far right, a priest of the Gauḍīya Maṭh temple shows the deity of Lord Alarnath found during excavation.

Dhruva Maharāja Dāsa



Dhruva Maharāja Dāsa



Lord Caitanya's Teachings to Rūpa Gosvāmī

*Lord Caitanya clarifies, among other things,
the origin and evolution of the species.*

by Mathureśa Dāsa

As related in the last issue, Rūpa Gosvāmī and his brother Sanātana Gosvāmī have resigned their ministerial posts in the Muslim government of sixteenth-century Bengal, having decided to dedicate their lives to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. Now we follow Rūpa Gosvāmī as he travels to meet Lord Caitanya in Allahabad and then learns from Him the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

AFTER GIVING AWAY HIS FORTUNE at Bakla Chandradvipa in the district of Yashohara, Bengal, where he and his brothers had grown up, Rūpa Gosvāmī sent two messengers to Jagannatha Puri to find out when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu planned to leave for Vṛndāvana. By the time the messengers returned to inform Rūpa that the Lord had already started for Vṛndāvana through the forest of Madhya Pradesh, Rūpa's older brother Sanātana had been imprisoned by the Nawab (governor). Rūpa sent Sanātana a letter, informing him of Lord Caitanya's whereabouts and encouraging him to buy his release with ten thousand gold coins on deposit with a local business. Rūpa wrote that he was leaving with their younger brother, Anupama, to join Lord Caitanya.

"You must also somehow or other get released and come meet us in Vṛndāvana," he urged Sanātana.

Vṛndāvana is in north central India, about one hundred miles south of modern Delhi. Both Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rūpa Gosvāmī were traveling on foot

Painting by Puṣkara Dāsa

from the eastern side of the Indian subcontinent, Lord Caitanya from Puri on the Bay of Bengal, Rūpa Gosvāmī from an area of Bengal that today is about a day's drive northeast of Puri. Lord Caitanya, setting out with one assistant in early autumn of the year 1513, had a head start. Leaving late at night to escape notice, the Lord avoided the better-known public roads, passed just to the south of present-day Cuttack, and entered on a forest path. After much traveling, He stopped briefly at Varanasi on the bank of the Ganges, then moved on to Prayaga, near Allahabad, and finally reached Vṅdāvana.

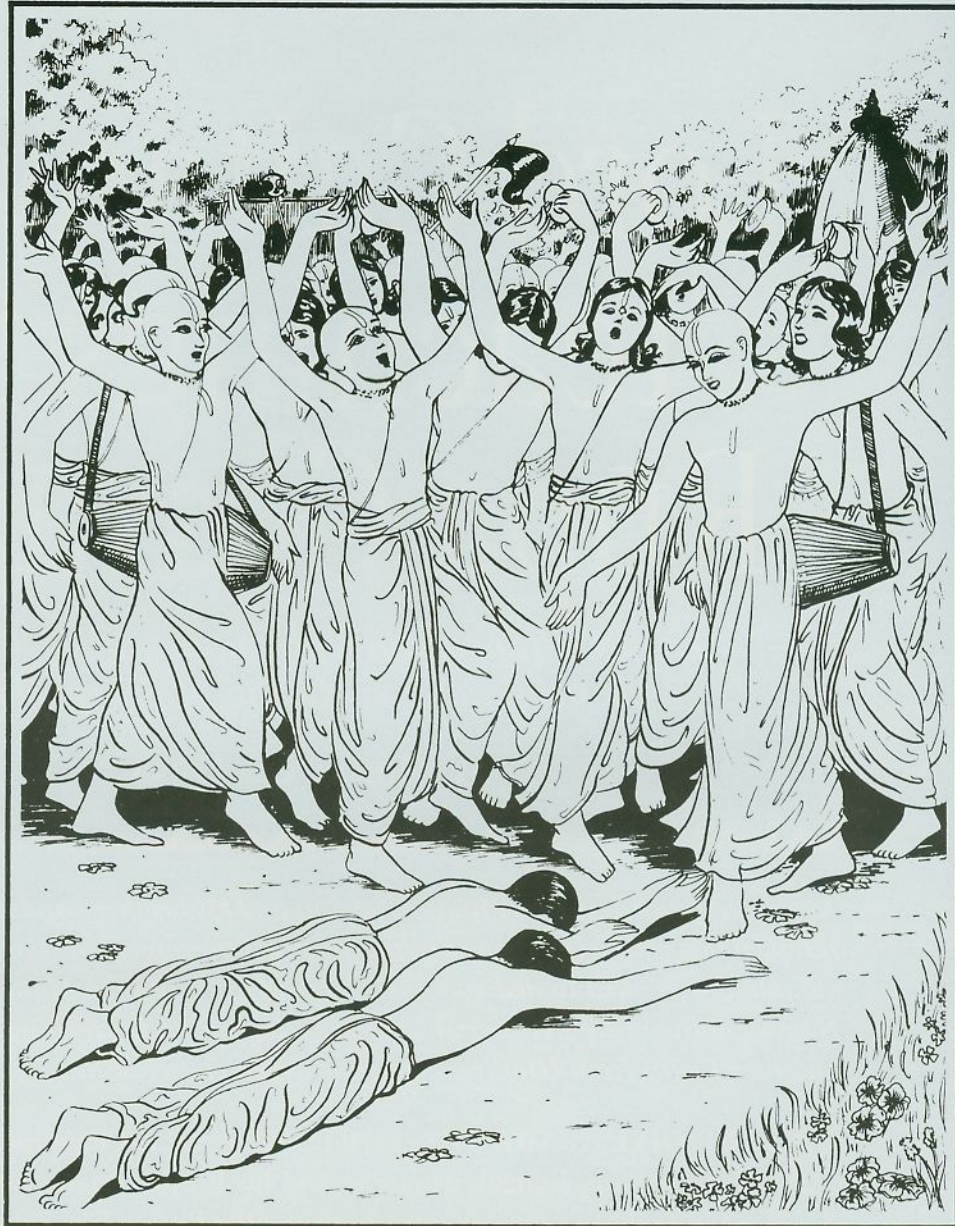
After Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Vṅdāvana sojourn, when He returned to Prayaga in February of 1514, Rūpa and Anupama, having followed the path of the Ganges from Bengal, caught up with the Lord. When Rūpa and Anupama arrived, Lord Caitanya was on His way to visit Prayaga's temple of Bindu Mād-hava, followed by many hundreds and thousands of people eager to meet Him. As the Lord proceeded, loudly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing, the people following Him joyously laughed, danced, and chanted along with Him, creating an ecstatic uproar.

The brothers watched the wonderful scene from an uncrowded place and later went to meet the Lord at the home of a *brāhmaṇa*. Seeing Rūpa and Anupama bowing down to Him at a distance, Lord Caitanya welcomed and embraced them. The brothers offered many prayers to the Lord, culminating with, "O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and You are widely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You."

As Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāpra-

bhu, Kṛṣṇa adopts the mood of His greatest devotee, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, to understand and relish Her feelings towards Him and to teach by His own example the exalted position of devotional service.

Eager to learn from the Lord, Rūpa Gosvāmī followed Him and stayed with Him wherever He moved around Prayaga. To avoid crowds, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu went to Dashashvamedha Ghat on the bank of the Ganges and there for ten days instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī on the science of devotional service.



Rūpa Gosvāmī and his younger brother Anupama meet Lord Caitanya at Prayāga (Allahabad).

LIFE IS EVERYWHERE

"My dear Rūpa, the science of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is like a great ocean of nectar," Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu began. "It is impossible to show you this entire ocean, but to give you an idea of its length and breadth, I will try to describe just one drop."

The universe, Lord Caitanya informed Rūpa Gosvāmī, is filled with countless living beings in 8,400,000 species of life. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* confirms the Lord's statement, elaborating that there are 900,000 species of aquat-

*If we were one with God in all respects,
there would be no question of our being encaged
as we are in the material elements.*



ics, 2,000,000 species of plants and trees, 1,100,000 species of insects and reptiles, 1,000,000 species of birds, 3,000,000 species of four-legged animals, and 400,000 species of human beings. These 8,400,000 species are not all present on the earth but are spread throughout the universe, as every planet is inhabited. As on this planet living creatures have bodies adapted to living on land or in the water, in tropical heat or in arctic cold, so all over the universe the bodies of the living entities are suitable for the planets on which they reside.

According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, five categories of material elements make up the universe: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (or space). Since we find living entities all over this planet, in all kinds of elements, there is no logic to denying the statement of the Vedic literature that living entities live on all planets in the universe, whatever the arrangements of the elements on a particular planet. We human beings on earth are like a colony of ants occupying one tiny point on a vast continent. We possess little capacity to understand on our own the extent of life in the universe. We have to take assistance from the Lord and the Vedic texts to learn that what may look to us like barren space is in truth a universe teeming with varieties of life, both human and nonhuman.

Our bodies may not survive elsewhere in the universe, but other bodies do, and in any case the living entity is only the proprietor of a particular body, not the body itself. The living entity is an indestructible individual particle of spirit seated in the body as driver of the bodily machine.

“The size of the living entity is one ten-thousandth the size of the tip of a hair,” Lord Caitanya continued. The Lord quoted a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “If we divide the tip of a hair into a hundred parts and then take

one of these parts and divide it again into a hundred parts, that very fine particle is the size of but one of the numberless living entities. They are particles of spirit, not matter.”

As the sun spreads its light throughout the sky, so the minute living entity spreads its consciousness throughout a particular body. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa states that the numberless living entities within the universe are eternally fragments of Him. He is the supreme, all-pervading spirit, and we are all tiny particles of spirit, in quality one with Him. If we were one with God in all respects—if we were all-pervading and all-powerful—there would be no question of our being caged as we are in the material elements, forced to do battle against material nature. When we give up trying to be lord of the universe and submit ourselves as servants of the Supreme Lord, material nature begins to release us from the hard struggle for existence and we become happy.

EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In the 8,000,000 species of life below the human species there is an evolution not of bodies or of species, as the Darwinians say, but of the consciousness of the minute particles of spirit. At the creation of the universe, Kṛṣṇa creates all 8,400,000 species to accommodate 8,400,000 varieties of desires and qualifications of the minute spiritual sparks who want to imitate Him as Lord. From the species of plants and trees where consciousness is very covered and dim, up through the millions of species of birds and quadrupeds, material nature automatically promotes us as we transmigrate from one body to another, one planet to another, in the cycle of repeated birth and death. Consciousness gradually emerges from the covering of


matter, until upon reaching the human form of life we have the capacity to question our existence: Who am I? Why am I suffering? What is this universe? What is life?

This inquisitive human being is only a tiny portion of the universal population. Lord Caitanya explained to Rūpa Gosvāmī that the population can be divided in two: those that can move and those that cannot. Trees and plants are nonmoving living entities, while aquatic, birds, and animals move in the water, in the air, and on land. Among the millions and trillions of living beings moving on land, human beings are a numerically minuscule section. Then in this small human community, most members are completely ignorant of spiritual life and have no faith in the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Among those few who do have faith in God and the scriptures, at least half give only lip service while engaging in all kinds of activities against religious principles, or even against basic moral standards. The activities of the faithless and the lip servers eventually degrade to the point where they fully resemble the activities of animals or worse, and these living entities, their consciousness again covered by their own will, descend again to the lower species in their next lives to start over in the evolutionary cycle.

Above the lip servers, among the sincere followers of religious principles, most people aspire to profit from the business of piety. These people are called fruitive workers, because they want to enjoy the results, or fruits, of their good work. They want something back for their devotion: wealth, fame, a comfortable life for themselves and for those they love, either here or in heaven. Out of millions of fruitive workers one is wise enough to see that no matter how rich the results of our

(please turn to page 56)





Holding Fast In Times Of Stress

The practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness do not exempt us from the turbulence of the material world, but they can surely help us get through it.

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

THERE IS A LOT of talk these days about how to relieve stress. We often feel stress because of change, and change comes under the larger headings of fate and time, and of Kṛṣṇa's will. How does a devotee of Kṛṣṇa handle the stress of feeling his life suddenly subject to upheaval?

A devotee turns to the scriptures for shelter. The *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are full of advice about how to think and act in times of difficulty, and they are also filled with descriptions of the inevitability of change in the material world.

In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa speaks a series of verses to answer Arjuna's question about the nature of the transcendentalist. I remember reading in Gandhi's autobiography that he used to read daily that particular section (from verse 2.55 to the end of the chapter). The instructions contained in those verses are universally applicable for those wishing to stay fixed in transcendence while living in the material world.

Verse 2.57 is particularly relevant: "In the material world, one who is unaffected by whatever good or evil he may obtain,

Showing an example of spiritual perserverence in hard times, Śukhānanda Dāsa chants Hare Kṛṣṇa on his beads in war-torn Grozny, Chechnya.

Whatever faith we have invested in matter we should invest in Kṛṣṇa so that we can develop the ability to turn to Kṛṣṇa always.



neither praising it nor despising it, is firmly fixed in perfect knowledge.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport begins, “There is always some upheaval in the material world which may be good or evil.” This is a classic statement by Śrīla Prabhupāda. I have had this line reverberating in my mind ever since I first read it, and it seemed to address my life at different times when there were upheavals. Upheavals can be anything from government collapse to tidal waves and earthquakes to losing our job or our particular service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Here Śrīla Prabhupāda calls such unfortunate occurrences “normal.”

Prabhupāda told us, “Don’t expect smooth sailing in this world.” He meant that being devotees of Kṛṣṇa doesn’t protect us from rough seas. Arjuna certainly didn’t enjoy smooth sailing as he fought against friends and family in the Battle of Kurukṣetra. Kṛṣṇa’s only promise was that He had already accomplished what He wanted Arjuna to do; Arjuna should act as His instrument, and Kṛṣṇa would stand before him on the chariot.

Śrīla Prabhupāda continues: “One who is not agitated by such material upheavals, who is unaffected by good and evil, is to be understood to be fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

There it is, how we should respond to inevitable change: When, after years of peace, we or someone we know is suddenly afflicted with disease or loss of income or some other drastic change, we should remain unaffected.

“As long as one is in the material world there is always the possibility of good and evil because this world is full of duality. But one who is fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not affected by good and evil, because he is simply concerned with Kṛṣṇa, who is all-good absolute. Such consciousness situates one in a perfect transcendental position, called, technically, *samādhi*.”

Kṛṣṇa is the anchor in any storm. He will never change. Therefore, if we are fixed on Kṛṣṇa, then we will remain fixed in the face of any calamity. Otherwise, if our attachment and fixity are on matter, and our faith was based on the idea that matter won’t change in our particular situation, then when our small world dissolves and our plans go spinning off into meaninglessness, our complete sense of identity will also spin off. A devotee is fixed on Kṛṣṇa, not on matter. And Kṛṣṇa doesn’t change.

Of course, saving ourselves from unnecessary stress is not the main reason to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, but a rewarding dividend of practicing devotional service is to be able to hold on to the one trustworthy person, and to a realized sense of identity. Thus whatever faith we have invested in matter we should invest in Kṛṣṇa so that we can develop the ability to turn to Kṛṣṇa always, and to live in remembrance of Him. Kṛṣṇa finishes His answer to Arjuna’s question by saying, “This is the way of the spiritual and godly life, after attaining which a man is not bewildered. If one is thus situated even at the hour of death, one can enter into the kingdom of God.” (2.72)

STICKING TO OUR PRACTICES

It’s a shame, therefore, that we see devotees undergoing change who give up their *sādhana*, their daily spiritual practices. Often the stress doesn’t have to be so calamitous. It can simply be a new, more hectic schedule or a temporary illness. In one sense, it’s not so unusual to neglect *sādhana* at such times because *sādhana* is based on regulation. When regulation is disturbed, *sādhana* seems more difficult to perform. Still, it’s a shame. Kṛṣṇa is the anchor in our lives. If during a storm we let go of our anchor, what shelter do we have? Of course, it’s not that we

really let go of Kṛṣṇa, but we abandon our method of connecting with Him. When things change, we suddenly give up the shelter we need most.

Perhaps we each need to examine whether giving up *sādhana*, or even reducing *sādhana*, is really required. Another way to see our lives is to say, “If I do anything during this difficult time, let it be chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.” Everything else can come after. Chanting is not a luxury for a devotee; neither is hearing about Kṛṣṇa. Hearing and chanting are how we sustain our spiritual lives.

THE GREATEST GAIN

Since Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned *samādhi*, let’s examine another reference to that state. In the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.20–23), Kṛṣṇa explains:

In the stage of perfection called trance, or *samādhi*, one’s mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This perfection is characterized by one’s ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, realized through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.

Samādhi is the greatest gain because it rests on the real happiness of the self living in the truth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Having attained *samādhi*, a person is not shaken by difficulty. In the last paragraph of his purport, Prabhupāda writes, “As long as the material body exists, one has to meet the de-

mands of the body. . . . But a person who is in pure bhakti-yoga . . . does not arouse the senses while meeting the demands of the body. Rather, he accepts the bare necessities of life, making the best use of a bad bargain, and enjoys transcendental happiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is callous toward incidental occurrences—such as accidents, disease, scarcity, and even the death of a most dear relative—but he is always alert to execute his duties in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

Our *sādhana* is not a selfish act. I remember that when I was in charge of ISKCON’s first temple in Boston, I sometimes had to counsel devotees who had had some calamity in their families. I often referred to this support. A relative’s death is not a signal that we should abandon our spiritual lives. Our obligation is different. Prabhupāda says that a devotee is callous toward incidental occurrences, and he lists all the typical sources of misery—accidents, disease, scarcity, and the death of a relative. “He endures all such incidental occurrences because he knows that they come and go and do not affect his duties. In this way he achieves the highest perfection in yoga practice.”

Callous means tough. We should be tough, not shaken by every whimsical wind passing through the material world. Our hearts should not feel tugged at by every grief and happiness. Matter changes; that is its nature. A transcendentalist does not become affected by it.

How do we come to the platform of *samādhi*? It takes knowledge. Prabhupāda has made that knowledge accessible to us in his books. Here he states that not only do we need knowledge, we need to stay fixed in our duty. That is the key. If we are fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then we will stick to our Kṛṣṇa conscious duty.

Devotees may then ask, “What about when our duty changes because of some upheaval in the material world?”

Then we may have to examine what really constitutes our duty. The basis of our duty is our *sādhana* and the un-

derstanding that we are the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. We tend to allow ourselves to identify with what has become the status quo for us, the work for which we are often appreciated. We think of ourselves as writers or managers or cooks or mothers. Kṛṣṇa may, at any time, change that designation, however. Therefore, we must see our ultimate duty as taking shelter of the holy names and following the four regulative principles* according to our vows, and we should embrace this duty no matter in what condition of life we find ourselves. We must also regularly hear about Kṛṣṇa. These activities con-

hearing the voice of God as He presents it in scripture, we can develop the understanding and steadiness required.

NOT EMOTIONLESS

Of course, we are not stone, and we have not achieved *samādhi*. We will feel emotion about the things happening around us. I have felt assured that Kṛṣṇa did not condemn Arjuna for crying or shaking before the battle, nor for his fears or attachments. Rather, Kṛṣṇa condemned Arjuna for not acting on His order despite those obstacles. To grieve and feel afraid

Elements of Sādhana

BECAUSE WE HAVE turned away from Kṛṣṇa, the material energy now covers our original consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Purifying our consciousness of lifetimes of contamination takes time and practice. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda set up a program of spiritual practices for those under his guidance.

In summary, Prabhupāda instructed his followers to rise early (ideally, before 4:00 A.M.); to worship the spiritual master, the deities (at home or in the temple), and Tulasī Devī (Kṛṣṇa’s devotee in the form of a sacred bush); to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* on beads at least a

set number of times daily (16 rounds, or 1,728 mantras, for initiated devotees); to read and attend classes daily on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*; and to eat only *prasādam* (food prepared for and offered to Kṛṣṇa).

Each of the elements of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s program has immense spiritual power, and he repeatedly stressed the program’s importance for anyone who wants to make steady spiritual progress. Therefore, serious students of Kṛṣṇa consciousness try their best to stick to their *sādhana* in the face of any obstacles the material energy may present.

stitute a devotee’s unchanging duty. If our service to Kṛṣṇa is changed, we can take up a new service. After all, we are servants. Such dutifulness will provide real shelter. It is a tangible way in which to connect with Kṛṣṇa.

The upheavals: scarcity (of money or food); disease (which comes in so many varieties); accidents (to the body, to our property); and death. A devotee continues to do his service.

Ultimately, Kṛṣṇa is behind whatever changes take place in this world. We can remember that and quicken our philosophical perception of life by carrying through with all the items of *sādhana*. By associating with devotees, taking shelter of the holy name, and

or insecure in the midst of upheaval is human. We don’t have to pretend to be unmoved if we are quaking inwardly. Neither should we pretend we are callous if we’re actually upset. What is required of us is not pretense but steadiness. We should not give up our duty under any condition.

There is real shelter in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As Gandhi said about his own turning to scripture, “When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to *Bhagavad-gītā* and find a verse to comfort me. I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the

*No meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, or gambling.

Gītā will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day.”

We have that access to Kṛṣṇa and to solace. By opening the scriptures and reading something, we come in touch with something sublime, with the voice of God.

We can become Kṛṣṇa conscious. That means we can see Kṛṣṇa’s hand in every situation. If we see Kṛṣṇa’s hand, we won’t be bewildered into laying blame on others for our misfortune. We can achieve that freedom, but we have to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness to achieve it. All the items of *sādhana* will give us the strength and knowledge to function as devotees.

Seeing Kṛṣṇa’s hand doesn’t mean that we can or even need to always understand the reasons behind His actions. We simply accept that His plans are inconceivable to us. We don’t even need to inquire into them. Our faith is that Kṛṣṇa is our well-wishing friend; everything is happening by His arrangement for our own good.

Of course, that requires faith, and times of difficulty must especially become times of faith. Faith means to place our trust in something sublime. It means we cannot always see the way; it’s too dark ahead. It means that even though Kṛṣṇa is not always showing us the goal and the solution to the obstacles we will encounter on our way to the goal at every instance, we follow Him anyway. It means following Him even when He is not revealing Himself to us. If we go before the deity and don’t see Kṛṣṇa, if we chant the holy name and don’t hear “Kṛṣṇa,” and in the absence of any other form of revelation, we continue to follow, then that is faith.

Somehow, therefore, serve Kṛṣṇa with body, mind, and words. Our duty is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although practicing our *sādhana* and performing our service may sometimes take creativity, we should never lose sight of our real position as Kṛṣṇa’s eternal servants. ☸

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s first disciples, is a former editor of Back to Godhead and the author of many books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, including a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

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

QUALIFIED FOR LIBERATION

*Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa,
explains to His mother, Devahūti, how Brahmā
and other elevated souls attain liberation.*

CANTO 3: CHAPTER 32

९ क्षमाम्भोऽनलानिलवियन्मनइन्द्रियार्थ-
भूतादिभिः परिवृतं प्रतिसञ्चिहीर्षुः
अव्याकृतं विशति यर्हि गुणत्रयात्मा
कालं पराख्यमनुभूय परः स्वयम्भूः

*kṣmāmbho-'nalānila-viyan-mana-indriyārtha-
bhūtādibhiḥ parivṛtam pratisañjihīrṣuḥ
avyākṛtam viśati yarhi guṇa-traya-ātmā
kālam parākhyam anubhūya paraḥ svayambhūḥ*

kṣmā—earth; *ambhaḥ*—water; *anala*—fire; *anila*—air; *viyat*—ether; *manaḥ*—mind; *indriya*—the senses; *artha*—the objects of the senses; *bhūta*—ego; *ādibhiḥ*—and so on; *parivṛtam*—covered by; *pratisañjihīrṣuḥ*—desiring to dissolve; *avyākṛtam*—the changeless spiritual sky; *viśati*—he enters; *yarhi*—at which time; *guṇa-traya-ātmā*—consisting of the three modes; *kālam*—the time; *para-ākhyam*—two *parārdhas*; *anubhūya*—after experiencing; *paraḥ*—the chief; *svayambhūḥ*—Lord Brahmā.

After experiencing the inhabitable time of the three modes of material nature, known as two *parārdhas*, Lord Brahmā

closes the material universe, which is covered by layers of earth, water, air, fire, ether, mind, ego, etc., and goes back to Godhead.

PURPORT: The word *avyākṛtam* is very significant in this verse. The same meaning is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, in the word *sanātana*. This material world is *vyākṛta*, or subject to changes, and it finally dissolves. But after the dissolution of this material world, the manifestation of the spiritual world, the *sanātana-dhāma*, remains. That spiritual sky is called *avyākṛta*, that which does not change, and there the Supreme Personality of Godhead resides. When, after ruling over the material universe under the influence of the time element, Lord Brahmā desires to dissolve it and enter into the kingdom of God, others then enter with him.

10 एवं परेत्य भगवन्तमनुप्रविष्टा
ये योगिनो जितमरुन्मनसो विरागाः
तेनैव साकममृतं पुरुषं पुराणं
ब्रह्म प्रधानमुपयान्त्यगताभिमानाः

*evaṁ paretya bhagavantam anupraviṣṭā
ye yogino jita-marun-manaso virāgāḥ
tenaiva sākam amṛtam puruṣam purāṇam
brahma pradhānam upayānty agatābhimānāḥ*

evam—thus; *paretya*—having gone a long distance; *bhagav-antam*—Lord Brahmā; *anupraviṣṭāḥ*—entered; *ye*—those who; *yoginaḥ*—yogīs; *jīta*—controlled; *marut*—the breathing; *manasaḥ*—the mind; *virāgāḥ*—detached; *tena*—with Lord Brahmā; *eva*—indeed; *sākam*—together; *amṛtam*—the embodiment of bliss; *puruṣam*—unto the Personality of Godhead; *purāṇam*—the oldest; *brahma pradhānam*—the Supreme Brahman; *upayānti*—they go; *agata*—not gone; *abhimānāḥ*—whose false ego.

The yogīs who become detached from the material world by practice of breathing exercises and control of the mind reach the planet of Brahmā, which is far, far away. After giving up their bodies, they enter into the body of Lord Brahmā, and therefore when Brahmā is liberated and goes to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the Supreme Brahman, such yogīs can also enter into the kingdom of God.

PURPORT: By perfecting their yogic practice, yogīs can reach the highest planet, Brahmāloka, or Satyaloka, and after giving up their material bodies, they can enter into the body of Lord Brahmā. Because they are not directly devotees of the Lord, they cannot get liberation directly. They have to wait until Brahmā is liberated, and only then, along with Brahmā, are they also liberated. ❶ It is clear that as long as a living entity is a worshiper of a particular demigod, his consciousness is absorbed in thoughts of that demigod, and therefore he cannot get direct liberation, or entrance into the kingdom of God, nor can he merge into the impersonal effulgence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such yogīs or demigod worshipers are subjected to the chance of taking birth again when there is again creation.

11 अथ तं सर्वभूतानां हृत्पद्मेषु कृतालयम्
श्रुतानुभावं शरणं ब्रज भावेन भामिनि

*atha taṁ sarva-bhūtānām
hṛt-padmeṣu kṛtālayam
śrutānubhāvaṁ śaraṇam
vraja bhāvena bhāmini*

- (1) Why can't demigod worshipers attain direct liberation?
- (2) What is the difference between the oneness of the Māyāvādīs and the oneness of the Vaiṣṇavas?
- (3) Why did Lord Kapila advise His mother against accepting an indirect process of liberation?

atha—therefore; *taṁ*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *sarva-bhūtānām*—of all living entities; *hṛt-padmeṣu*—in the lotus hearts; *kṛta-ālayam*—residing; *śruta-anubhāvam*—whose glories you have heard; *śaraṇam*—unto the shelter; *vraja*—go; *bhāvena*—by devotional service; *bhāmini*—My dear mother.

Therefore, My dear mother, by devotional service take direct shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated in everyone's heart.

PURPORT: One can attain direct contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness and revive one's eternal relationship with Him as lover, as Supreme Soul, as son, as friend, or as master. One can reestablish the transcendental loving relationship with the Supreme Lord in so many ways, and that feeling is true oneness. ❷ The oneness of the Māyāvādī philosophers and the oneness of Vaiṣṇava philosophers are different. The Māyāvādī and Vaiṣṇava philosophers both want to merge into the Supreme, but the Vaiṣṇavas do not lose their identities. They want to keep the identity of lover, parent, friend, or servant.

In the transcendental world, the servant and master are one. That is the absolute platform. Although the relationship is servant and master, both the servant and the served stand on the same platform. That is oneness. ❸ Lord Kapila advised His mother that she did not need any indirect process. She was already situated in that direct process because the Supreme Lord had taken birth as her son. Actually, she did not need any further instruction because she was already in the perfectional stage. Kapiladeva advised her to continue in the same way. He therefore addressed His mother as *bhāmini* to indicate that she was already thinking of the Lord as her son. Devahūti is advised by Lord Kapila to take directly to devotional service, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because without that consciousness one cannot become liberated from the clutches of māyā.

12-15 आद्यः स्थिरचराणां यो वेदगर्भः सहर्षिभिः
योगेश्वरैः कुमाराद्यैः सिद्धैर्योगप्रवर्तकैः
भेददृष्ट्याभिमानेन निःसङ्गेनापि कर्मणा
कर्तृत्वात्सगुणं ब्रह्म पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभम्
स संसृत्य पुनः काले कालेश्वरमूर्तिना
जाते गुणव्यतिकरे यथापूर्वं प्रजायते
ऐश्वर्यं पारमेष्ठ्यं च तेऽपि धर्मविनिर्मितम्
निषेव्य पुनरायान्ति गुणव्यतिकरे सति

*ādyah sthira-carāṇām yo
veda-garbhah saharṣibhiḥ*

*yogeśvaraiḥ kumārādyaiḥ
siddhair yoga-pravartakaiḥ*

*bheda-dṛṣṭyābhimānena
niḥsaṅgenāpi karmaṇā
karṭṛtvāt saḡuṇaṁ brahma
puruṣaṁ puruṣarābham*

*sa saṁsṛtya punaḥ kāle
kāleneśvara-mūrtinā
jāte guṇa-vyatikare
yathā-pūrvam praajāyate*

*aiśvaryaṁ pārameṣṭhyaṁ ca
te 'pi dharmā-vinirmītam
niṣevya punar āyānti
guṇa-vyatikare sati*

ādyah—the creator, Lord Brahmā; *sthira-carāṇām*—of the immobile and mobile manifestations; *yah*—he who; *veda-garbhah*—the repository of the Vedas; *saha*—along with; *ṛṣibhiḥ*—the sages; *yoga-īśvaraiḥ*—with great mystic yogīs; *kumāra-ādyaiḥ*—the Kumāras and others; *siddhaiḥ*—with the perfected living beings; *yoga-pravartakaiḥ*—the authors of the yoga system; *bheda-dṛṣṭyā*—because of independent vision; *abhimānena*—by misconception; *niḥsaṅgena*—nonfruitive; *api*—although; *karmaṇā*—by their activities; *karṭṛtvāt*—from the sense of being a doer; *sa-guṇam*—possessing spiritual qualities; *brahma*—Brahman; *puruṣam*—the Personality of Godhead; *puruṣa-rābham*—the first *puruṣa* incarnation; *sah*—he; *saṁsṛtya*—having attained; *punaḥ*—again; *kāle*—at the time; *kālena*—by time; *īśvara-mūrtinā*—the manifestation of the Lord; *jāte guṇa-vyatikare*—when the interaction of the modes arises; *yathā*—as; *pūrvam*—previously; *prajāyate*—is born; *aiśvaryaṁ*—opulence; *pārameṣṭhyam*—royal; *ca*—and; *te*—the sages; *api*—also; *dharmā*—by their pious activities; *vinirmītam*—produced; *niṣevya*—having enjoyed; *punaḥ*—again; *āyānti*—they return; *guṇa-vyatikare sati*—when the interaction of the modes takes place.

My dear mother, someone may worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead with a special self-interest, but even demigods such as Lord Brahmā, great sages such as Sanat-kumāra, and great munis such as Marici have to come back to the material world again at the time of creation. When the interaction of the three modes of material nature begins, Brahmā, who is the creator of this cosmic manifestation and who is full of Vedic knowledge, and the great sages, who are the authors of the spiritual path and the yoga system, come back under the influence of the time factor. They are liberated by their nonfruitive activities and they attain the first incarnation of the *puruṣa*, but at the time of creation they come back in exactly the same forms and positions as they had previously.

PURPORT: That Brahmā becomes liberated is known to everyone, but he cannot liberate his devotees. Demigods like Brahmā and Lord Śiva cannot give liberation to any living entity. ④ As it is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, only one who surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can be liberated from the clutches of *māyā*.

Brahmā is called here *ādyah sthira-carāṇām*. He is the original, first-created living entity, and after his own birth he creates the entire cosmic manifestation. He was fully instructed in the matter of creation by the Supreme Lord.

⑤ Here he is called *veda-garbhā*, which means that he knows the complete purpose of the Vedas. He is always accompanied by such great personalities as Marici, Kaśyapa, and the seven sages, as well as by great mystic yogīs, the Kumāras, and many other spiritually advanced living entities, but he has his own interest, separate from the Lord's.

⑥ *Bheda-dṛṣṭyā* means that Brahmā sometimes thinks that he is independent of the Supreme Lord, or he thinks of himself as one of the three equally independent incarnations. Brahmā is entrusted with creation, Viṣṇu maintains, and Rudra, Lord Śiva, destroys. The three of them are understood to be incarnations of the Supreme Lord in charge of the three different material modes of nature, but none of them is independent of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Here the word *bheda-dṛṣṭyā* occurs because Brahmā has a slight inclination to think that he is as independent as Rudra. ⑦ Sometimes Brahmā thinks that he is independent of the Supreme Lord, and the worshiper also thinks that Brahmā is independent. For this reason, after the destruction of this material world, when there is again creation by the interaction of the material modes of nature, Brahmā comes back. Although Brahmā reaches the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the first *puruṣa* incarnation, Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is full with transcendental qualities, he cannot stay in the spiritual world.

The specific significance of his coming back may be noted. Brahmā and the great *ṛṣis* and the great master of yoga (Śiva) are not ordinary living entities; they are very powerful and have all the perfections of mystic yoga. But still they have an inclination to try to become one with the Supreme, and therefore they have to come back. ⑧ In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is accepted that as long as one thinks

(4) Who can be liberated?

(5) Why is Lord Brahmā called *veda-garbhā*?

(6) What does *bheda-dṛṣṭyā* mean in reference to Lord Brahmā?

(7) Why does Lord Brahmā sometimes not attain liberation?

(8) Why do some great souls return to this world in spite of going to Mahā-Viṣṇu?

that he is equal with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is not completely purified or knowledgeable. In spite of going up to the first *puruṣa-avatāra*, Mahā-Viṣṇu, after the dissolution of this material creation, such personalities again fall down or come back to the material creation.

9 It is a great falldown on the part of the impersonalists to think that the Supreme Lord appears within a material body and that one should therefore not meditate upon the form of the Supreme but should meditate instead on the formless. For this particular mistake, even the great mystic yogis or great stalwart transcendentalists also come back again when there is creation. 10 All living entities other than the impersonalists and monists can directly take to devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness and become liberated by developing transcendental loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such devotional service develops in the degrees of thinking of the Supreme Lord as master, as friend, as son, and at last, as lover. These distinctions in transcendental variegatedness must always be present.

16 ये त्विहासक्तमनसः कर्मसु श्रद्धयान्विताः
कुर्वन्त्यप्रतिषिद्धानि नित्यान्यपि च कृत्स्नशः

*ye tv ihāsakta-manasaḥ
karmasu śraddhayānvitāḥ
kurvanti apratiśiddhāni
nityāny api ca kṛtsnaśaḥ*

ye—those who; *tu*—but; *iha*—in this world; *āsakta*—addicted; *manasaḥ*—whose minds; *karmasu*—to fruitive activities; *śraddhayā*—with faith; *anvitāḥ*—endowed; *kurvanti*—perform; *apraśiddhāni*—with attachment to the result; *nityāni*—prescribed duties; *api*—certainly; *ca*—and; *kṛtsnaśaḥ*—repeatedly.

Persons who are too addicted to this material world execute their prescribed duties very nicely and with great faith. They daily perform all such prescribed duties with attachment to the fruitive result.

PURPORT: In this and the following six verses, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* criticizes persons who are too materially attached. It is enjoined in the Vedic scriptures that those who are attached to the enjoyment of material facilities have to sacrifice and undergo certain ritualistic performances. They

(9) What particular mistake causes impersonalists to return to this world?

(10) Who is disqualified from accepting direct devotional service to the Lord?

have to observe certain rules and regulations in their daily lives to be elevated to the heavenly planets. It is stated in this verse that such persons cannot be liberated at any time. Those who worship demigods with the consciousness that every demigod is a separate God cannot be elevated to the spiritual world, what to speak of persons who are simply attached to duties for the upliftment of their material condition.

17 रजसा कुण्ठमनसः कामात्मानोऽजितेन्द्रियाः
पितृन् यजन्त्यनुदिनं गृहेष्वभिरताशयाः

*rajasā kuṅṭha-manasaḥ
kāmatmāno 'jitedriyāḥ
pitr̥n yajanty anudinam
gṛheṣv abhiratāśayāḥ*

rajasā—by the mode of passion; *kuṅṭha*—full of anxieties; *manasaḥ*—their minds; *kāma-ātmānaḥ*—aspiring for sense gratification; *ajita*—uncontrolled; *indriyāḥ*—their senses; *pitr̥n*—the forefathers; *yajanti*—they worship; *anudinam*—every day; *gṛheṣu*—in home life; *abhirata*—engaged; *āśayāḥ*—their minds.

Such persons, impelled by the mode of passion, are full of anxieties and always aspire for sense gratification due to uncontrolled senses. They worship the forefathers and are busy day and night improving the economic condition of their family, social, or national life.

18 त्रैवर्गिकास्ते पुरुषा विमुखा हरिमेधसः
कथायां कथनीयोरुविक्रमस्य मधुद्विषः

*trai-vargikās te puruṣā
vimukhā hari-medhasaḥ
kathāyām kathaniyoru-
vikramasya madhudviṣaḥ*

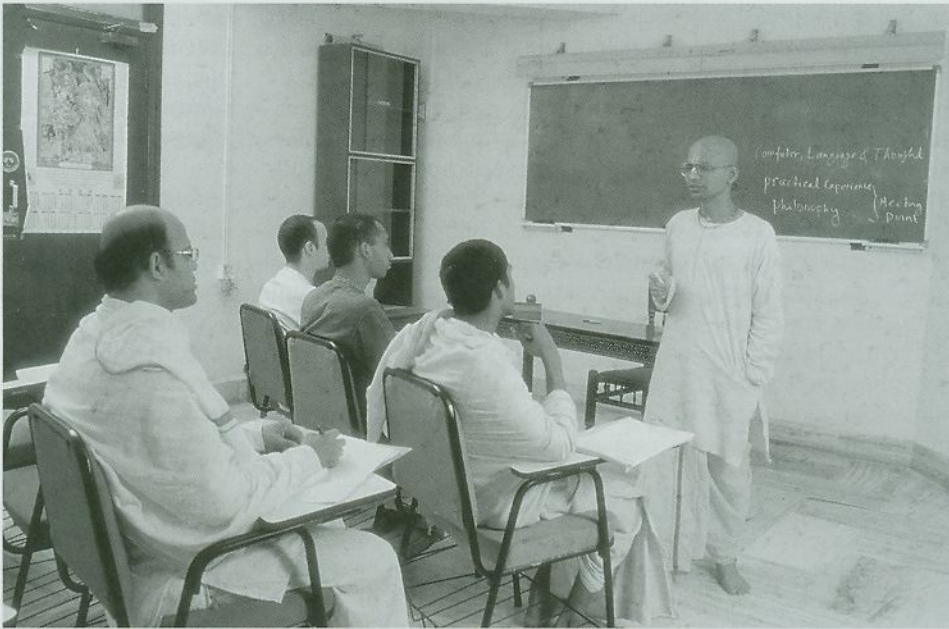
trai-vargikāḥ—interested in the three elevating processes; *te*—those; *puruṣāḥ*—persons; *vimukhāḥ*—not interested; *hari-medhasaḥ*—of Lord Hari; *kathāyām*—in the pastimes; *kathaniya*—worth chanting of; *uru-vikramasya*—whose excellent prowess; *madhu-dviṣaḥ*—the killer of the Madhu demon.

Such persons are called *trai-vargika* because they are interested in the three elevating processes. They are averse to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who can give relief to the conditioned soul. They are not interested in the Supreme Personality's pastimes, which are worth hearing because of His transcendental prowess.

(continued in the next issue)

IN PURSUIT OF COMPLETE SCIENCE

Why a distinguished scientist left the faculty of one of India's most prestigious universities to join ISKCON's team of scientists.



Lilā Puruṣottama Dāsa points out some parallels between Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the world of science.

Lilā Puruṣottama Dāsa earned his Ph.D. in electrical engineering (robotics and intelligent systems) from IIT Delhi. He is a former faculty member of the Birla Institute of Technology, Pilani, India (BITS Pilani), now working full time with the Mumbai branch of the Bhaktivedanta Institute (BI), the scientific arm of ISKCON.

Lilā Puruṣottama has published in some thirty refereed journals and conference proceedings. In 1998 he received a career award for Young Teacher from the All India Council for Technical Education. His name is listed in the Marquis Who's Who, which records distinguished professionals in science and engineering. He has carried out two sponsored research projects in intelligence control.

Vṛndāvanēśvarī Devī Dāśī, a reporter for the annual Janmāṣṭamī Souvenir of ISKCON Mumbai (Juhu), conducted the following interview.

Ṛndāvanēśvari Devī Dāsi: What inspired you to accept the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Lilā Puruṣottama Dāsa: I was always searching for the Truth. I was born in Orissa, where through the causeless mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra had been distributed. In my childhood I would hear the *mahā-mantra* chanted in my village, especially when villagers would hold 24-hour chanting sessions. I was philosophical from childhood. Mundane glamour never attracted me.

After receiving my B.Sc. in engineering, I read the *Bhagavad-gītā* and was inspired to pray to the Lord to use me as an instrument in His service. After joining the faculty at Regional Engineering College, Rourkela (Orissa), I felt dissatisfied professionally. I took to chanting the *mahā-mantra* without anybody asking me to do so. I didn't chant in a regulated fashion, but I derived joy from chanting while walking or sitting leisurely.

When I shifted to IIT Delhi (Indian Institute of Technology) to pursue my doctoral degree, I led an isolated and regulated life. I would get up early in the morning, attend yoga classes, eat only pure food, and stick to my research. In 1992, during the Hindu-Muslim riots, I enrolled as a social worker in the Sadbhav Mission, but I still felt something was missing. I at-

tended a lecture in the IIT Delhi hostel by Dr. P. V. Krishnan (Kṛṣṇa Smaraṇa Dāsa) from ISKCON. When he explained the real purport of *Bhagavad-gītā*, I was instantly attracted to Kṛṣṇa.

Soon after, I joined a group of IIT students for a visit to Ṛndāvana with Kṛṣṇa Smaraṇa Dāsa. While there I realized the futility of material endeavors and lost interest in pursuing my Ph.D. I wanted to join as a full-time devotee in Ṛndāvana. But Kṛṣṇa Smaraṇa Dāsa inspired me to continue with my Ph.D. work. "It can be used in Kṛṣṇa's service," he argued. So I completed it.

VDD: People think that science means facts whereas religion is sentiment or fanaticism. Can there be a synthesis of the two?

LPD: Before coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I looked on religionists with suspicion. I'd see Indians going to temples only for material benefits, and I'd see how priests and sadhus often exploit people's blind sentiments. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness involves the study of spirit and matter and their relationship, so it is not blind sentiment but complete science. Modern science tries to unravel the laws of material nature. If pursued in its true spirit, it is a subset of the complete science, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So there need be no contradiction between science and Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

VDD: What did your colleagues think of your change of philosophy and your Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life? How are you viewed in scientific circles?

LPD: Since I'm well accomplished professionally, my colleagues give me due respect. But most of my friends didn't keep their relationship with me, because I couldn't stick to their way of life. One intimate friend, however, who is pursuing a Ph.D. from Sheffield University in England, chants sixteen rounds of the *mahā-mantra* on beads. He regularly asks me questions about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and has adopted all its principles.

VDD: How did you balance your professional life with your devotional life?

LPD: Kṛṣṇa Smaraṇa Dāsa taught me how to balance the two. At BITS Pilani I converted my quarters on campus into a temple. I kept the standards that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us, namely *maṅgala-ārati* at 4:30 A.M., *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class in the morning, and *Bhagavad-gītā* class in the evening. And I strictly followed all the other regulative principles.

In the beginning I invited some of my project students to my house to hear about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They became convinced and started inviting their friends. We had a nice group of boys and girls who practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously. I tried to inspire them by keeping to a high standard of spiritual practice and by being efficient in my profession as a teacher and researcher and in guiding projects.

VDD: Why did you give up your BITS Pilani job and join the Bhaktivedanta Institute?

LPD: I met Rāsārāja Dāsa in 1997 and was inspired by his vision for the BI. He wants to give a new thrust to scientific research that will ultimately attract scientific people to read *Bhāgavata* philosophy. Śrīla Prabhupāda very much emphasized BI research, not only to increase the prestige of ISKCON but also to contribute to science in such a way that scientists may look to the BI for assistance. Although I had many other professional options, I understood in my heart that the BI is more important. I felt that Prabhupāda would be more pleased if I committed myself to the Bhaktivedanta Institute. ☸



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Glossary

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

Spreading the In Bengal

by Bhakti Puruṣottama Swami

photos by Nitya-tṛptā Devī Dāśī

Bhakti Puruṣottama Swami has been active with ISKCON Māyāpur's Nāma Hāṭṭa program since its inception in 1981. The program helps people in towns and villages throughout Bengal practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness in their homes and among themselves.

A former science student, Bhakti Puruṣottama became a Kṛṣṇa devotee in 1978 and accepted sannyāsa, the renounced order of life, in 1985. Today, as a member of the Māyāpur temple's administrative council, he oversees a variety of projects, including book distribution, college programs, correspondence courses, as well as the Nāma Hāṭṭa. Here Bhakti Puruṣottama Swami comments about the growth of Māyāpur's extensive Nāma Hāṭṭa network.

NĀMA HĀṬṬA LITERALLY means “the marketplace of the holy name.” Lord Nityānanda (Lord Caitanya's chief associate) initiated the Nāma Hāṭṭa program, and it was later revived by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. His son Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura started five hundred Nāma Hāṭṭa centers. Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers began the Māyāpur Nāma Hāṭṭa during early 1980s, with by-laws based upon Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's book *Godruma Kalpatavi*.

Today eighteen hundred Nāma Hāṭṭa centers are registered with our office. About forty-five *brahmācārīs* (celibate students) serve these centers as field preachers and office staff. Fifteen to twenty thousand people are connected to ISKCON through the Māyāpur Nāma Hāṭṭa. Among them, about one thousand



Bliss

*Devotees in Māyāpur
have organized nearly
two thousand Kṛṣṇa conscious
groups throughout Bengal.*



*Nāma Hāṭṭa
members
(above and
left) from
throughout
Bengal and
other states
chant enthusiastically
during their
annual
pilgrimage
to Māyāpur.*

are initiated or ready for initiation and on a waiting list.

Nāma Hāṭṭa members learn to do everything one does while living in a full-scale Kṛṣṇa temple. We teach them how to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, perform *maṅgala-ārati*, offer food, put on *tilaka*, and sing *bhajanās*. They also learn Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy in depth, because here in Bengal people are often misled by the philosophy “all paths lead to the same destination.” And many bogus new “Gods” take advantage of innocent people in the name of religion. We train our Nāma Hāṭṭa members carefully so they will be protected.

In the winter I enjoy three to four months traveling with sixty devotees to put on Nāma Hāṭṭa festivals. In each location, we conduct a festival program arranged by local Nāma Hāṭṭa members. The programs include *bhajana*, *kirtana*, *ārati*, *Bhagavad-gītā* class, Kṛṣṇa conscious cinema and drama, *prasādam* distribution, and even a Rathayātrā. The programs last two days, with ten to fifteen thousand people attending each day. Local Nāma Hāṭṭa members cover all the costs.

Many of the countless villages of Bengal still have no Nāma Hāṭṭa, but where only one family practices Kṛṣṇa consciousness we establish a Śraddhā

Kuṭīr, or “faith center,” which can develop into a Nāma Hāṭṭa. Often these people began their connection with the program during a visit to Māyāpur. Guests usually attend the morning *kirtana* in the temple, and we invite them to chant one round of *japa*. Those who want more information leave their address, and we’re now in touch with about seven hundred people by letter and phone.

Often young people from Nāma Hāṭṭa families want to move into the temple for more intensive training. Later, if they return to their village, there is no problem, because their family also practices Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is nice protection for their devotional lives.

One year we began involving our Nāma Hāṭṭa members in book distribution. Since then, with their help, our team of seventy full-time book distributors have distributed more of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books than any other ISKCON center.

The Nāma Hāṭṭa program is now spreading to cities, including Calcutta. We are building a special building to accommodate all the Nāma Hāṭṭa members visiting Māyāpur.

Overall, the Māyāpur temple is expanding very rapidly. Since Prabhupāda’s Samādhi opened in 1996, thousands of tourists come every day. Over seven hundred devotees serve full time in the temple, including three hundred *brahmacāris*. The temple offers support programs both for those who want to remain lifetime celibates and for those who want to marry. In this way devotees are feeling more secure and can practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness without anxiety.

I feel more than ever that Māyāpur is manifesting as a Kṛṣṇa conscious city, and I am very happy to be part of it. At first I was attracted to devotional service to protect myself from material bondage. I saw ISKCON as the best way to stay engaged in serving the Lord. Now the greatness of the philosophy Śrīla Prabhupāda taught has encouraged me to help teach it. The taste of the philosophy is sweet, and to teach it is even sweeter. It is *kevala ānanda kanda*—“simply filled with bliss.” ❀

VIHE 2000

Vṛndāvana Institute for Higher Education

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Fees are lower for students who take fewer classes or don’t attend *parikramās*. Payment is made when registering in Vṛndāvana.

To apply: Confirm attendance by September 18.

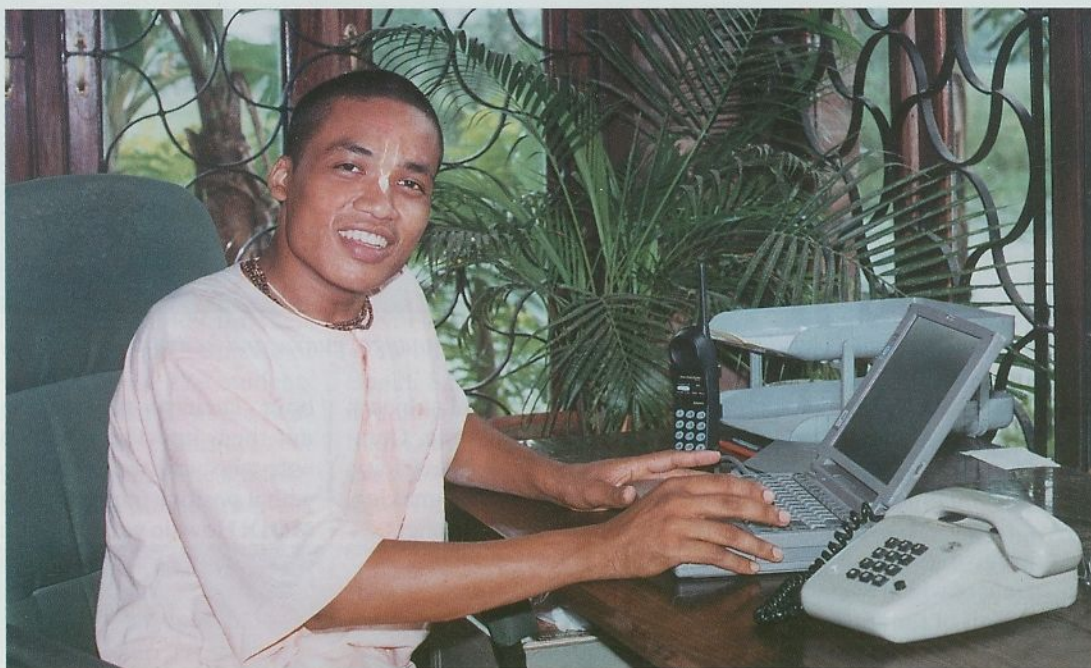
Registration: In Vṛndāvana, September 20–24.

All courses are well researched and taught by senior devotees who have a deep understanding of the subject.

For more information, contact VIHE, c/o Krishna Balaram Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Vrindavan, Mathura Dist., 281 124, U.P., India; phone: +91(0565) 445002 or 445053; vihe@pamho.net; www.iskcon.net/vihe

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VIŠAKHĀ DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Vedasāra Dāsa, principal of the Bhaktivedanta Gurukula.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA would often speak of ISKCON as an educational institution, and education will be an essential function of the Śrī Māyāpur Project. A beginning for developing education in Māyāpur has been in place for some time in the form of the Bhaktivedanta Gurukula, a boys boarding school. In line with the traditional Vedic model, the Bhaktivedanta Gurukula gives boys both spiritual and occupational training. Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī spoke with Vedasāra Dāsa, the school's principal, about the school today and its plans for the future.

Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī: Can you say something about the history of the *gurukula*?

Vedasāra Dāsa: Śrīla Prabhupāda started the Bhaktivedanta

Gurukula here in 1974. He brought a few Nepali *brāhmaṇas* to teach a dozen or so students. At that time the *gurukula* was located in what is now Śrīla Prabhupāda's *bhajana kuṭīr*.^{*} Since then four schools have developed on the Māyāpur property. Three are day schools. Our school, which is a boys' boarding school, is called the Bhaktivedanta Gurukula Village (BGV). It's next to the *goshala* [fields and barns where cows are tended].

MDD: What is your service in the *gurukula*?

VD: I have been the BGV principal for the last two years. Most of my life was spent in the *gurukula*. I was a student

^{*} "Place of worship." This was the original thatched-walled building on the property.



The Bhaktivedanta Gurukula Village sits amid groves of mango, guava, and kadamba trees.

for twelve years, after which I became an ashram teacher and eventually the ashram coordinator.

MDD: How many boys are in the school now?

VD: We have thirty-five students, ages eight to eighteen, out of which twenty-six are teenagers. Half of the students are from India, half from abroad.

MDD: What subjects are taught?

VD: Because it's a boarding school, we teach academic subjects and, in the ashram, give devotional training. The ashram subjects are Temple Mantras, Vedic Mantras, Deity Worship, Philosophical Debate, Vaiṣṇava Etiquette, Bhakti Śāstrī [scripture study], *Bhagavad-gītā* Verses, and Cāṇakya Nitiśāstra [moral instructions of the sage Cāṇakya]. We have four ashram teachers.

The academic subjects are English, French, Spanish, Italian, Sanskrit, Bengali, Arts, Science, Geography, Mathematics, World History, and World Religions. We have seven academic teachers.

We also teach vocational subjects: Cooking, Carpentry, Tailoring, Computer, Mṛdaṅga [drum], Electricity, Harmonium, and Deity Dressmaking. We have eight vocational teachers.

MDD: What are the boys' days like?

VD: They get up at 3:30 in the morning to begin their spiritual program. They have academic classes during the day, and extracurricular activities from 4:00 to 5:30. We have full-size basketball and volleyball courts, a soccer field, a simple exercise room, and a swimming pond. The boys regularly go to the Ganges. I think it's important that teenage boys engage in sports to release their excess energy in a healthy way.

MDD: What are the school's plans for the future?

VD: We want to be better equipped to help the older teenage boys find an identity.

MDD: How do parents feel about enrolling their sons in the school?

VD: We have a waiting list of about thirty Western boys and fifty Indian

boys. Their parents are eager to admit them into the school. Most parents who visit the school come away with a positive impression.

MDD: How do you view Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions on *gurukula*?

VD: Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted us to produce high-quality devotees with excellent character and also basic academic qualifications. I think Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions will be most effective when the entire ISKCON social infrastructure is stable and healthy. To fulfill Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision for a class of high-quality devotees, we must bring up our children in an emotionally and spiritually stable family environment.

MDD: Are you committed to this project?

VD: Yes, I would certainly like to spend a good part of my life in education, building up a nice *gurukula* for the upcoming generation. My special interest is in working with older teenage boys and helping them to get situated after graduation. Dedicated and

mature devotees are getting involved and showing commitment to the project. One thing that keeps me going is the heartfelt appreciation of both parents and kids. I want to give the next generation a positive Kṛṣṇa conscious experience.

MDD: What is the involvement of the parents of the boys? Do you have a parent/teacher association?

VD: Because we're an international school with parents scattered far and wide, a PTA per se is not practical. But we keep in close contact with the parents. We strongly encourage all parents and children to keep in regular touch. Parents are advised to write at least every two weeks and telephone once a month. Several parents are working with the school as teachers or administrators.

MDD: Tell me about the older boys and their program—taking the GCSE, their vocational training, and so on.

VD: Senior students study for their British GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). The students take the exams in Calcutta at the British consulate, and the exams are sent to England for marking. The students receive the same diploma from the



One of the area's many expert drummers teaches students to play the traditional Bengali drum, used for accompanying the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and other devotional songs.

University of London as any student in Britain. This is an internationally recognized high school diploma. One of our recent graduates, Nārāyaṇa Dāsa, went straight into an American university.

In addition, the seniors take the Bhakti Śāstri exam, a six-hour examination on four of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Eight boys recently took this exam; four passed with honors, and the other four with high honors.

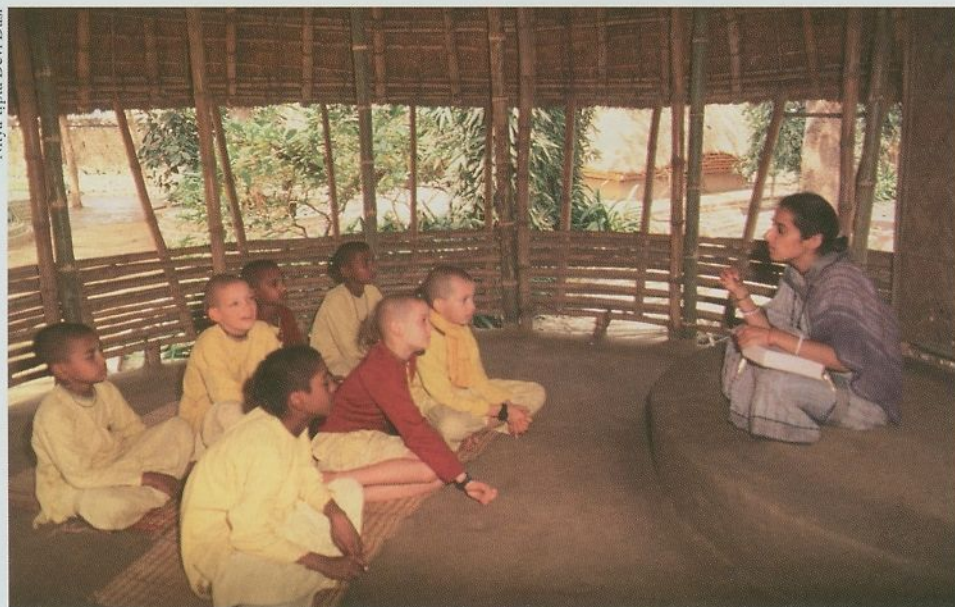
We try our best to equip the students for life after the *gurukula* by training them according to their propensities. With their learned skill, trade, or profession, they can offer service to ISKCON or support themselves and their future families.

Vocational training comes in three stages. In the first stage, the boys spend about two years experimenting with the options available. When they have settled on their chosen skill, they receive another two years of

more serious training in that area. Stage three is an apprenticeship with a senior skilled devotee. For example, a recent Indian graduate, Gautama Dāsa, is in a two-year apprenticeship course with Dīna Caitanya Dāsa, a Swiss devotee, learning all about construction management.

These three divisions are an integral part of the BGV's efforts to meet the individual needs of the boys. ☸

Twenty-two-year-old Veda-sāra Dāsa was born in Bhutan, India (near China), and raised in Assam. He joined the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula at age six and has been there ever since.



This school building, made from local natural materials, creates a pleasant atmosphere for learning in Bengal's moderate climate.

The Light of The Gītā

A Summary of the
Bhagavad-gītā – PART 2

by Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa

Illustrations by
Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa



Kālakaṅṭha Dāsa writes, runs a small business, and directs the Māyāpur Foundation U.S.A. He and his wife, both disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, live with their two daughters in Gainesville, Florida. This summary, along with Kālakaṅṭha Dāsa's 700-verse poetic rendering of the Gītā, will be published this fall by Torchlight Publishing. Titled Bhagavad-gīta—The Song of God, it will be available from The Hare Kṛṣṇa Bazaar.

CHAPTER 10: How to See and Serve God

LORD KṚṢṆA HAS ADVISED Arjuna to become His devotee. Now Kṛṣṇa tells him how to do so. Great commentators consider verses 8 through 11 of this chapter the essence of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In these four seminal verses, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes how His devotees think of Him and enjoy a relationship with Him.

Arjuna then asks how he should think of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa

devotes the rest of the chapter to answering this question. He says that He can be perceived in the best and most powerful of every creation. Among stars He is the moon; among fish, the shark. After listing many such comparisons, Lord Kṛṣṇa reminds Arjuna that whatever one can perceive with material senses reflects just the inferior, material portion of His creation.

CHAPTER 11: The Terrifying Form of God

PLEASED TO HEAR of Lord Kṛṣṇa's presence in so many ways, Arjuna now asks Kṛṣṇa to show His feature known as the universal form, consisting of the entire material creation. Since the material universe comes from Lord Kṛṣṇa, it is yet another one of His forms.

Kṛṣṇa endows Arjuna with divine eyes to view this unprecedented display. A dazzling vision suddenly overwhelms Arjuna. The brilliant, powerful radiance frightens him as it threatens to burn the whole creation. Arjuna grows terrified as the mouth of the universal form—the omnipotent crush of death—consumes the assembled warriors, and everyone

else. Arjuna cries, "Who are You?" Lord Kṛṣṇa's answer (verse 11.32) is the famous *Bhagavad-gītā* verse quoted by scientist Robert Oppenheimer as he watched the explosion of the first atomic bomb in the deserts of New Mexico: "Time I am, the great destroyer of the worlds. . . ."

Having seen Lord Kṛṣṇa's limitless, deadly power, Arjuna understands his intimate friend in a new light. He begs to see again the friendly, familiar form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa reappears in His original form, He assures Arjuna that He can always be known in this more pleasing way.

"I am the source
of all spiritual and
material worlds.
Everything emanates
from Me. The wise
who perfectly
know this engage
in My devotional
service and worship Me
with all their hearts."

(10.8)

"My dear Arjuna, only by undivided
devotional service can I be understood
as I am, standing before you,
and can thus be seen directly. Only in this
way can you enter into the mysteries
of My understanding." (11.54)

CHAPTER 12: Perfection Through Loving God

LORD KṚṢṆA'S UNIVERSAL form filled Arjuna with awe and fear, but KṚṣṇa prefers the love of His devotees. So in this chapter, the shortest in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord KṚṣṇa elaborates on the theme begun at the end of Chapter Eleven: bhakti-yoga, or personal devotional service to Him. Lord KṚṣṇa makes this point just after showing His universal form lest Arjuna, or anyone else, mistake the fearsome universal form for His ultimate manifestation.

The chapter begins with Arjuna asking about the comparative value of bhakti-yoga and realization of

Brahman, Lord KṚṣṇa's impersonal feature. KṚṣṇa calls the Brahman path valid but difficult, while promising to personally deliver the faithful *bhakta*.

Lord KṚṣṇa then evaluates various practices of spiritual life. He declares that to think of Him spontaneously, out of love, is best. For those who lack such love, practice of regulated bhakti-yoga ranks next. For those who decline bhakti, working for Lord KṚṣṇa is next, followed by working for some charitable cause. KṚṣṇa concludes the chapter by describing the many desirable qualities of His loving devotee.

**“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said:
Those who fix their minds on My personal form
and are always engaged in worshiping Me
with great and transcendental faith
are considered by Me to be most perfect.” (12.2)**

CHAPTER 13: Body, Soul, and Supersoul

THIS CHAPTER, which begins the final third of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is dedicated to *jñāna-yoga*, or knowledge of God that leads to devotional service to Him. Arjuna asks about the body, the soul, the Supersoul, and the meaning and object of knowledge. Lord KṚṣṇa refers Arjuna to the *Vedānta-sūtra*, an essential Vedic text, for a full explanation of the soul and matter. He then provides His own summary. He explains that both the soul and the Supersoul occupy the body, a vehicle made of dull

matter. The soul knows only his body, but the Supersoul sits in every heart and knows everyone's pains and pleasures. While pursuing his illusory hope to enjoy matter, the soul encounters endless varieties of bodies and suffers and enjoys through them all. The Supersoul accompanies the soul on this painful journey. Lord KṚṣṇa concludes that those who learn the truth of their situation attain freedom from bondage to matter.

**“O son of Bharata,
as the sun alone illumines all this universe,
so does the living entity,
one within the
body, illuminate the
entire body by
consciousness.” (13.34)**

CHAPTER 14: Beyond the Three Modes

LORD KṚṢṆA HAS JUST explained that matter entangles the soul and causes it to suffer. Now He elaborates. Matter exerts control over the souls through three qualities or modes: goodness, passion, and ignorance. In earlier chapters, Lord Kṛṣṇa often referred to these three modes. In this chapter He explains them in detail. More discussion of the modes follows in chapters seventeen and eighteen.

Lord Kṛṣṇa begins by identifying Himself as the father of all living beings. He then defines the three

modes, their relationship with the soul, and their general characteristics. He next describes the results of actions in each of the modes, both immediate and in terms of future lifetimes. He then advises Arjuna to learn to transcend the modes of nature. Arjuna asks how one can transcend the modes, and how to know a person who has done so. Lord Kṛṣṇa answers both questions, and concludes the chapter by declaring Himself to be the basis of all spiritual existence, beyond the modes.

“It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntî, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.”

(14.4)

CHAPTER 15: Supreme Personal Yoga

LORD KṚṢṆA BEGINS THIS chapter with an allegory, comparing the material world to a banyan tree. In India and other tropical climates, banyans sometimes grow to be huge. They drop roots from their branches, and the roots form new trunks with new branches and roots. Banyans can fill acres, and finding where they begin can be very difficult.

The allegorical tree has roots going up and branches going down. Such a tree exists only in a reflection, as on a lake, and this is the point of the allegory. One might reach for a reflected apple on a reflected tree and end up with nothing but a wet arm.

Similarly, the material world reflects the spiritual world, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s abode, capturing it in shape and color but not in substance. The soul’s natural love for God becomes misdirected and caught up in the

temporary leaves and branches of this reflected material tree. Lord Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to cut his relationship with it. After making such a cut, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, one attains His abode. Unlike the dark material universe, light prevails there, without the help of sun or electricity. A person infatuated with the material world misses the chance to return to the spiritual world and forcibly takes birth again.

As stated earlier, detachment from matter and attachment to Lord Kṛṣṇa are one and the same. Thus, for Arjuna’s benefit, Kṛṣṇa again describes Himself. In verse 15 Lord Kṛṣṇa specifically describes his intimate relationship with each soul as well as His presence in scriptures. Concluding the chapter, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains that knowing Him engages one in yoga of the Supreme Person.

“That supreme abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by fire or electricity. Those who reach it never return to this material world.” (15.6)

CHAPTER 16: The Divine and the Demoniatic

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa distinguished the soul from the body. He then introduced the modes of nature and their various effects on the embodied souls. At Arjuna's request, He explained how to transcend the modes of nature. Now He describes the actions of a person under the lower modes—the lower branches of Chapter Fifteen's banyan tree—as opposed to the actions of one who has transcended the three modes.

After summarizing the divine qualities, belonging to those who have surpassed even the mode of goodness, Lord Kṛṣṇa details the qualities of demons, who act only

out of passion and ignorance. Filth, pride, atheism, dishonest action, and preoccupation with sexual enjoyment characterize such persons. Their wrong-headed perspective leads them to build horrible, destructive weapons. They aspire only to gratify their senses by any means, and yet they make a show of charity and piety. In the end, they revile and make a mockery of true religion. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes their destination as the hell of life in subhuman species. A sane person thus gives up lust, anger, and greed—the three gates to hell. Abiding by the scriptures, such a person avoids the fate of demons.

“He who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.” (16.23)

CHAPTER 17: Faith, Food, and Sacrifice

AFTER HEARING ABOUT both followers and detractors of the scriptures, Arjuna now wants to know about persons who worship God without reference to the scriptures. Such persons have faith, but lacking scriptural basis they may worship men or *devas*. Arjuna wants to know their destination.

Lord Kṛṣṇa answers that faith not guided by scripture is another product of the three modes of nature. The modes influence how one eats, worships, and performs sacrifice, penance, and charity.

After detailing all these activities

in the different modes, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the transcendental approach. By directing to the Supreme Lord any sacrifice, penance, or charity, one rises above the influence of the modes of nature. Learned souls thus begin any sacrifice by chanting *om tat sat*, referring to the Supreme Absolute Truth. Reciting any name of the Supreme Lord has the same effect.

Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes that anything done without an effort to please the Supreme is but the floundering of a conditioned soul. It has no value.

“Austerity of speech consists in speaking words that are truthful, pleasing, beneficial, and not agitating to others, and also in regularly reciting Vedic literature.” (17.15)

CHAPTER 18: Breaking the Bonds of Matter

THIS CHAPTER, the longest in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, summarizes the teachings of the entire text. Arjuna has just heard about the effects of the three modes of nature and the importance of directing one's work toward God. Lord Kṛṣṇa rejected his superficial plan to renounce by leaving the battlefield. Now Arjuna asks how to truly renounce worldly affairs and dedicate his work to the Lord's service.

Lord Kṛṣṇa analyzes renunciation according to goodness, passion, and ignorance, the three modes of nature. Although Kṛṣṇa applauds detachment from the fruits of work, He specifies that no one benefits by renouncing sacrifice, charity, and penance. To show Arjuna why renunciation makes sense, Lord Kṛṣṇa identifies five factors—mostly beyond Arjuna's control—that determine the result of any action. He goes on to evaluate action, the actor, knowledge, determination, understanding, and happiness, all according to the three modes of nature. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in summary that no one in the universe is exempt from the influence of the modes.

To clarify the influence of the modes on human society, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the system of *varṇāśrama*, or enlightened social organization. *Brāhmaṇas* (priests) are in the mode of goodness, *kṣatriyas* (warriors) in passion, *vaiśyas* (farmers and merchants) in mixed passion and ignorance, and *śūdras* (workers) in ignorance. *Varṇāśrama* designations are determined by inclination, not

by birth (as in the caste system of India today). Although people have different inclinations, by pursuing renunciation through service to Lord Kṛṣṇa anyone can become perfect. Kṛṣṇa explains exactly how this can be done and the symptoms of one who has done it.

Lord Kṛṣṇa now begins to conclude the *Bhagavad-gītā* by declaring that His servant will come to Him and be protected under all circumstances. He bluntly tells Arjuna that giving up on the battle would be the wrong kind of renunciation and that Arjuna's nature would force him to fight anyway. Advising complete surrender to His will and promising all protection, Lord Kṛṣṇa at last tells Arjuna to choose his course of action.

Kṛṣṇa has described numerous options for Arjuna. He has outlined the paths of piety, mystic yoga, and *jñāna* (knowledge). Through them all, He has consistently emphasized the paramount importance of Arjuna's fighting as an expression of surrender to Him. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa has also declared and displayed His omnipotent divinity, He concludes by telling Arjuna that the choices are now his. He blesses the speakers and hearers of *Bhagavad-gītā* and asks Arjuna if his illusions are now gone.

Arjuna emphatically answers, "Yes!" and Sañjaya, the visionary narrator, concludes the *Gītā* with expressions of personal gratitude and ecstasy. In his rapture, he also must disclose the harsh truth of the battle to his blind master, Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.” (18.66)

QUEEN KUNTĪ

The Incarnation Of Success

*She was the queen of a world emperor,
the mother of the mighty Pāṇḍavas,
the aunt of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and an exalted
pure devotee of the Lord.*

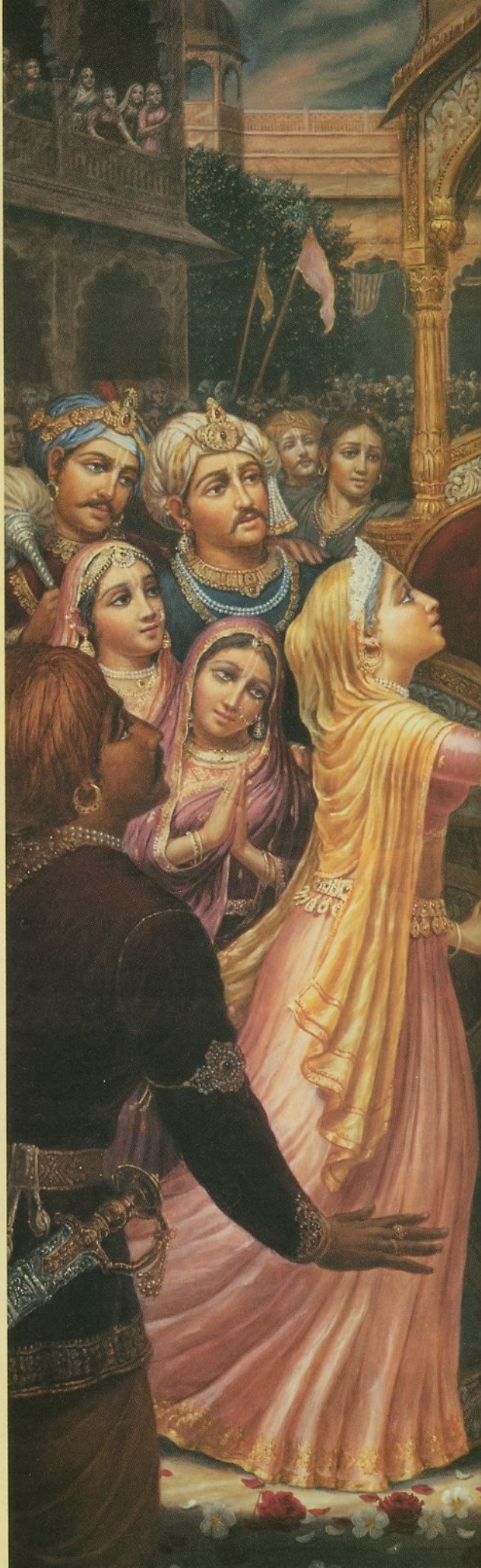
by Satyarāja Dāsa

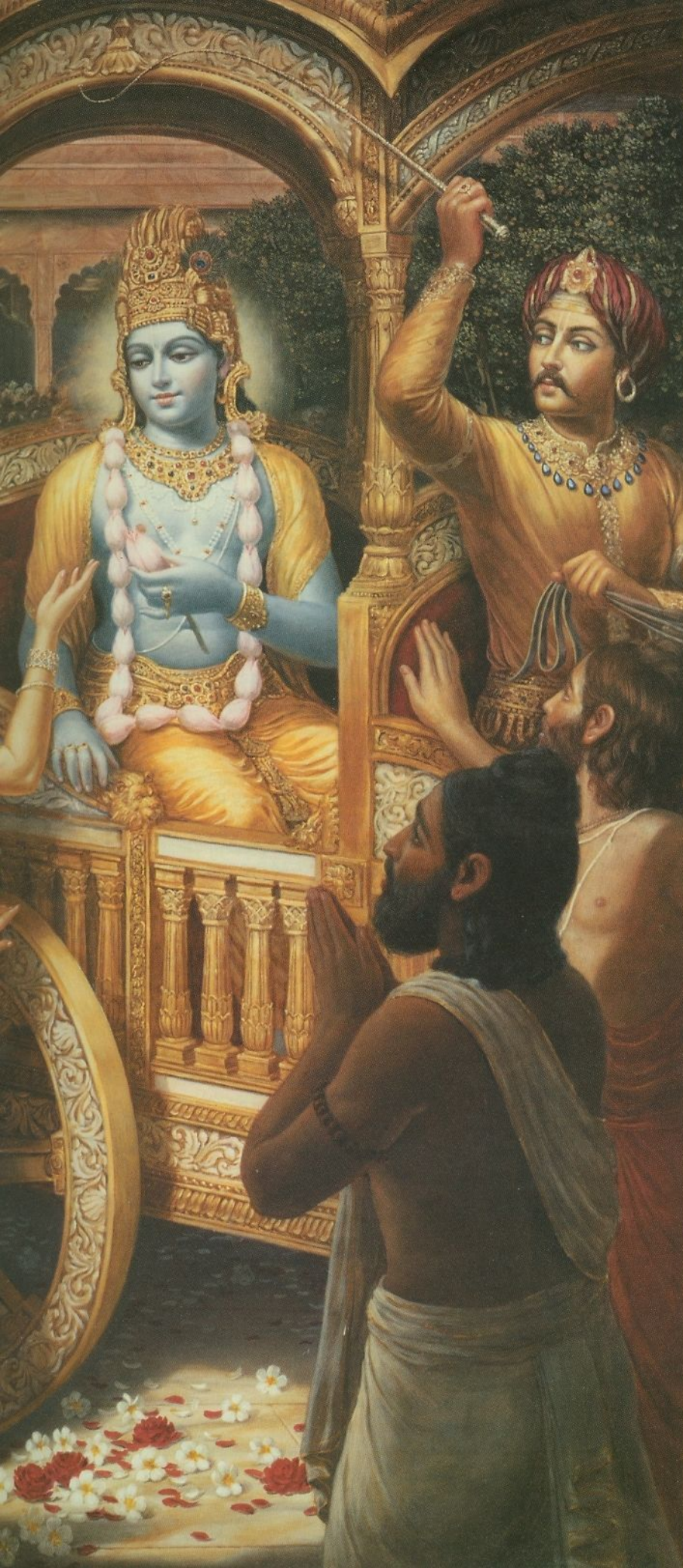
THE RICH VAIṢṆAVA TRADITION from which the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement arises includes many great female devotees. But few are as illustrious and heroic as Queen Kuntī, whom Śrīla Prabhupāda glorified as “the incarnation of the success potency of the Personality of Godhead.”

Queen Kuntīdevī emerges as a preeminent figure in ancient India and a central player in the epic *Mahābhārata*. Not only was she the sister of Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa’s father, making her Kṛṣṇa’s aunt) and the mother of the brave and virtuous Pāṇḍava brothers, but she was the very emblem of courage and wisdom—qualities of hers that helped her family and friends endure a civil war that took the lives of millions.

Originally called Pṛthā, Kuntī was the daughter of the great Mahārāja Surasena, chief of the glorious Yadu dynasty. Political and family complications forced Surasena to place her in the care of his nephew, Kuntibhoja (hence her name), who raised her as his own. In King Kuntibhoja’s palace she learned to host important guests—such as the denizens of heavenly planets—

Right: Queen Kuntī approaches Lord Kṛṣṇa to offer heartfelt prayers as He is about to leave Hastināpura.





with a culture and style now all but lost.

Once, the great sage Durvāsā attended festivities in the palace and, being pleased with young Kuntī's faithful service, gave her a powerful mantra by which she could summon any *deva* (demigod) she chose. Curious about the power of the mantra, she tried to conjure up Surya, the *deva* of the sun. Suddenly, Surya appeared.

"O beautiful Pṛthā," he said, "your meeting with the demigods cannot be fruitless. Therefore, let me place my seed in your womb so that you may bear a son. I shall arrange to keep your virginity intact, since you are still an unmarried girl."

As a result of their union, Karṇa was born. Realizing that no one would understand the nature of Karṇa's birth, and fearing the wrath of her parents, Kuntī arranged to put the child in a basket of reeds and set it afloat in the Yamunā, hoping that someone would find her child and give him a good home. A charioteer named Adhiratha rescued the child and raised him.

MARRIAGE TO PĀṆḌU

When Kuntī came of age, she married Pāṇḍu, king of Hastināpura (now Delhi), who had another wife, named Mādri. One day, while hunting in a forest, Pāṇḍu came upon two copulating deer. Taking bow and arrow in hand, he heartlessly aimed and fired. But as his arrows pierced their bodies, they showed their true forms as forest sages. The sages cursed Pāṇḍu: If he were to ever try to have intercourse with either of his wives, he would die.

Grief-stricken, Pāṇḍu decided to take *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. But Kuntī and Mādri threatened to commit suicide if he did so. Still, without the ability to father children, Pāṇḍu felt he could not rule. He knew the importance of producing an heir to continue the dynasty. Perplexed, Pāṇḍu and his wives prayed for a solution to their dilemma.

Finally, Kuntī told Pāṇḍu and Mādri of the boon she had received from Durvāsā Muni. She would call *devas*, she said, to sire children in her womb. Pāṇḍu would have divine children, and the kingdom would be saved.

First, Pāṇḍu asked her to call the

CALENDAR

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

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

Month of Madhusūdana

(April 19–May 18)

MAY

4—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

6—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing Lord Jagannātha with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

12—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sitā Devī, consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

14—Mohiṇī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

15—Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādiśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

16—Disappearance anniversary

of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhu-pāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

17—Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting.

18—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Parameśvara Purī, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Trivikrama

(May 19–June 16)

23—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

30—Trisr̥ṣṭā Mahā-dvādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans for Aparā Ekādaśī. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

JUNE

11—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a prominent spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (disciplic succession), and the author of *Govinda Bhāṣya*, an important commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmī, a prominent woman spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

12—Pāṇḍava Nirjalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

14—Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's chipped-rice-and-yogurt festival at Pāñihāṭī.

Month of Vāmana

(June 17–July 16)

17—Disappearance of Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, one of the principal followers of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

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

28—Yoginī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

JULY

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

2—Guṇḍicā-mārjana. Festival of cleansing the Gundicha temple in Jagannatha Puri, India.

3—Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā in Jagannātha Puri. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

12—Śayanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

16—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

deva Dharmarāja, and Yudhiṣṭhira was born. She then called for Vāyu (air), and Bhīma was born. When she called for Indra, the king of heaven, Arjuna appeared in this world. Pāṇḍu wanted Mādri to have children too, and so, using Kuntī's mantra, she gave birth to twins, Nakula and Sahadeva.

Pāṇḍu died at an early age, and Mādri followed him, leaving Kuntī to care for the five children, known as the Pāṇḍavas.

As the boys grew into manhood, they trained as *kṣatriyas*, members of the warrior class. When their cousins—the one hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, known as the Kauravas—unlawfully contended for the throne, the Pāṇḍavas showed patience and tolerance. But when the Kauravas persisted, the Pāṇḍavas could tolerate no more, and the great *Mahābhārata* war ensued.

On the eve of the war, Kuntī realized that any real danger to her five sons would come from Karṇa, who was as qualified as the Pāṇḍavas and was fighting in the opposing army. She therefore spoke to him, her first child, telling him the truth of his birth, which until then had been her secret. She begged him to change affiliation and fight on the side of his half-brothers. But Karṇa refused to do this on principle: he had vowed to kill Arjuna.

Still, Karṇa swore that he would not kill any of the other Pāṇḍavas. He tried to console his mother by explaining that if he or Arjuna died in battle, she would still have five sons, the number to which she had become accustomed. Naturally, as a mother, Karṇa's words hardly consoled her.

Only after the war, in which Karṇa was slain, did Kuntī reveal to the Pāṇḍavas the truth of Karṇa's birth, and she made them vow to give him a fitting farewell. The shocked but victorious Pāṇḍavas did what they could to satisfy their grieving mother.

Though Queen Kuntī endured poignant and heart-rending pain—the curse of her husband, his early demise, the death of her firstborn at his brother's hands, the secret of his identity, which she had kept from her children—she lived as an exemplary queen, with honor, culture, and wisdom.

Although Queen Kuntī was Lord

Kṛṣṇa's aunt, she knew that He was in fact the Supreme Personality of Godhead, she knew of His mission to rid the earth of demonic military powers and establish righteousness (as explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.7–8), and she knew that He would fulfill His mission through the *Mahābhārata* war. Kuntī's eloquent soliloquies in this regard are recorded in scripture.

Kṛṣṇa accomplished His purpose by orchestrating the destruction of the evil Kauravas and placing Yudhiṣṭhira on the throne, allowing the Pāṇḍavas many years of righteous rule.

His work done, Kṛṣṇa prepared to leave Hastināpura, adding to Queen Kuntī's heartbreak. She approached Kṛṣṇa on His chariot and tried to persuade Him to stay with her and her family, on the pretext of His protecting the Pāṇḍava government from vicious reprisals. In fact, though, it was out of pure love that she wanted Him to stay.

“O my Lord,” she prayed, “are You leaving us today, though we are completely dependent on Your mercy and have no one else to protect us, now when all kings are at enmity with us?” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.37)

Kuntī proceeds to explain the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Her prayers to the Lord have since become famous, echoed by saintly persons in the Vaiṣṇava tradition throughout history. Rather than beseech the Lord for mercy, to obliterate her pain or assuage

her suffering, Kuntī begs for repeated miseries to befall her, assuring her of the Lord's company.

“My dear Kṛṣṇa, Your Lordship has protected us from poisoned cake, from a great fire, from cannibals, from the vicious assembly, from sufferings during our exile in the forest, and from the battle where great generals fought. . . . I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we could see You again and again, for seeing You means that we will no longer see repeated births and deaths.” (1.8.24–25)

In Queen Kuntī's simple outpouring of devotion, recorded in both the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Mahābhārata*, one can find the essence of Kṛṣṇa conscious wisdom. Even in just the two verses quoted above we see dependence on the Lord, knowledge of His identity as Kṛṣṇa, and knowledge of the soul and reincarnation. Her single-minded devotion has served as the ideal for devotees of Kṛṣṇa throughout history: “O Lord of Madhu [Kṛṣṇa], as the Ganges forever flows to the sea without hindrance, let my attraction be constantly drawn unto You without being diverted to anyone else.” (1.8.42) ☀

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

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KṚṢṆA'S NAME

(continued from page 9)

Hare Kṛṣṇa will cleanse your mental condition. *Bhava-mahā-dāvāgnī-nirvāpaṇam*: as soon as you understand yourself, then all problems—social, political, economic, everything—will be solved. *Śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam*: and gradually you shall realize your transcendental life.

Your transcendental life is joyful. *Ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt*. That is our nature. We are hankering after joyful life, but we do not know how to get it. Our joyfulness is covered by our material understanding. We have to remove the material understanding; then again we shall become joyful.

THE NEED FOR AUTHORITY

This movement is very scientific. We have authoritative statements. You cannot defy authority. From the beginning of your life, when you were a child, you asked your parents, “Mother, father, what is this?” You cannot go even a step without authority. You are governed by authority. You are driving your car by authority. “Keep to the right.” Why? Why don't you defy it?

We have to obey authority. But the difficulty is, who is the authority? We must learn who is actually the authority. The authority is one who makes no mistakes, has no illusion, does not cheat, and whose senses are perfect. That is the definition of authority. A conditioned soul is sure to commit mis-

takes. However learned he may be, however advanced he may be, he must commit mistakes. Therefore it is said, “To err is human.” And everyone must be illusioned and have the propensity to cheat.

Even a child wants to cheat. The mother asks, “Oh, what is in your hand?” The child says, “No, mother, nothing,” although the mother can see he has something. So the cheating propensity is there.

And above all, your senses are imperfect. You are proud of your eyes: “I want to see.” What can you see? If the light is off, your seeing power is immediately gone. If there is no sun, your seeing power is gone. We can see only under certain conditions; therefore our power to see is imperfect.

You cannot get perfect knowledge by imperfect senses, by speculative endeavor. You have to accept authority. When you want to know who your father is, the authority is your mother. The mother says, “Here is your father.” You have to accept. You cannot do research. Your mother is the final authority on who your father is.

Similarly, we have to accept an authority to get real knowledge. And if the authority is not a conditioned soul, if he is a liberated soul, if he is not a cheater, if his senses are not imperfect, if he does not make any mistakes, if he is not in illusion—if you receive knowledge from that authority, then your knowledge is perfect. That is the process.

We have authoritative literature:

the Vedic literature. You can test it by your reasoning, by your arguments, by your philosophical talks—everything. Religion without a philosophical basis, without a scientific basis, is sentiment. Religion based on philosophy and science is right.

Bhagavad-gītā is an authoritative book. It nicely answers any question, any inquiry, any doubt. For example, in one place in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya
mūrtayah sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir
ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

The Vedic literature says that there are 8,400,000 species of life: aquatics, plants, trees, worms, germs, birds, beasts, and at last, the human species. So Kṛṣṇa says, “I am the seed-giving father of all living entities.” If you can understand this one verse, then you can have some idea of universal brotherhood. If you want to have universal brotherhood, you must find the center—the universal father.

Such questions and answers are there in *Bhagavad-gītā*. And we have the education of the science of God: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. These books are meant for human society. If you take advantage of the knowledge imparted in them and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, you will see how your life improves, how you become full of knowledge, full of bliss, and how you advance in your eternal life.

Thank you very much. 🌸

RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ

(continued from page 27)

piety, we continue suffering birth and death in the material universe without any true satisfaction of the soul.

These rare wise persons have a preliminary understanding that they are eternal spirit, not matter, and they desire liberation from material suffering by losing themselves in eternal spiritual existence. With their rudimentary knowledge, these spiritualists are inclined towards monism, or merging with the Absolute Truth. There is an eternal distinction between ourselves, our knowledge of the Absolute Truth, and the Absolute Truth itself. The mo-

nist makes futile attempts to dissolve this distinction in favor of oneness, then falls back in frustration to activities for material enjoyment.

Out of millions of wise persons, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu informed Rūpa Gosvāmī, it is difficult to find one who has avoided the trap of monism to become a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the origin of both material and spiritual existence. A primary quality of pure devotees is that they are peaceful. They are not agitated by desires for material enjoyment or by the desire to merge with the Supreme. Their only wish is to serve Kṛṣṇa. Depending on

Kṛṣṇa as a small child depends on its parents, without expecting assistance but always feeling protected, the devotee is personally desireless.

THE CREEPER OF DEVOTION

The platform of desireless devotion, the summit of evolution, is the gift of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Lord Caitanya informed Rūpa Gosvāmī that after wandering in the evolutionary cycle from planet to planet all around the universe, from animal and plant life up to the stage of human wisdom and back down over and over again, a liv-

ing entity by good fortune gets the chance to meet a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is situated in everyone's heart, and when He sees that the living entity desires to return to Him, He sends His empowered representative to offer the living entity instruction in devotional service. The Supreme can be known only by devotional service cultivated under the guidance of an expert and authorized devotee. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa one gets a bona fide spiritual master, and by the mercy of the spiritual master one gets Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu likened devotional service to a vine, or a creeper. Training under the spiritual master in the methods and regulations of devotional service is the seed of this creeper. When one associates with devotees, hears from one's devotee spiritual master, and chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, the seed of devotion sprouts in one's heart. As one waters the creeper of devotion by faithfully serving the spiritual master and hearing about Kṛṣṇa from him, the creeper expands so vigorously that it grows out of the material universe into the spiritual sky, reaching the planets of the transcendental kingdom of God. On the topmost spiritual planet the creeper takes shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and produces fruits of love of God.

Sitting with Rūpa Gosvāmī on the bank of the Ganges at Dashashvamedha Ghat, Lord Caitanya described in detail how with watering, care, and protection the living entity's devotional creeper continues to expand in the spiritual world. Having surpassed the material sky with its evolution of consciousness in 8,400,000 species, the eternal living entity undergoes a blissful transcendental evolution through the many ecstatic stages of love of God.

AN OCEAN OF NECTAR

After these detailed instructions Lord Caitanya concluded, "My dear Rūpa, I have simply given a general description of the science of devotion. You can consider how to adjust and expand upon this. When one thinks of Kṛṣṇa constantly, one can reach the shore of the ocean of transcendental love by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy."

Rūpa Gosvāmī absorbed the elaborate descriptions of transcendental love from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by His mercy, and twenty-eight years later, in the year 1542, completed his definitive work on spiritual evolution entitled *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, or "The Ocean of the Nectar of Devotional Service." This great work remained little known and far less understood, in India or the West, until His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda published a summary study of the work in 1970 as *The Nectar of Devotion*.

The morning after completing His teachings to Rūpa Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya rose and prepared to leave Prayaga and return to the city of Varanasi. Rūpa Gosvāmī begged to go with Him, but the Lord ordered him to continue on to Vṛndāvana.

"Later," the Lord promised, "you

can travel from Vṛndāvana to Jagannatha Puri by way of Bengal and meet Me again."

Extremely distressed at losing the Lord's company, but eager to carry out His mission, Rūpa Gosvāmī watched as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu boarded the boat taking Him to Varanasi.

As Rūpa and Anupama resumed their journey to Vṛndāvana and Lord Caitanya traveled down the Ganges towards Varanasi, Sanātana Gosvāmī too was nearing Varanasi, having escaped from prison in Bengal. ❀

(In an upcoming issue we'll hear about Lord Caitanya's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī.)

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

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UNIFYING AGENT

(continued from page 15)

verse goes on to say that such persons confirm that the Absolute Truth is one.

But He's realized in three phases. *Brahmeti paramāmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate*. Brahman means His impersonal all-pervasiveness, through His effulgent energies; Paramātmā or Supersoul means His personal presence within the heart; and Bhagavan means His overt personal presence as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So, these are different stages of realization.

For instance, you go through different stages in realizing the sun. In the first stage, you experience the sun's impersonal effulgence all over the sky. But that effulgence is not more important than the sun globe—because it is from the sun globe that the effulgence is coming. So anyone will understand, "This sunshine is not as important as the sun globe." And if you approach the sun globe and penetrate into the sun—if you have really got the scientific power to go within the sun globe—then you'll find there is a sun-god. That information we get from *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān aham avyayam*. Kṛṣṇa says, "I first taught this science of God realization to Vivasvān, the sun-god." So, therefore, behind the sunshine and the sun globe there is a person. And why not a person? Our imagination is not the ultimate truth. We have to get information from Kṛṣṇa, and He explains that behind these other manifestations there is a person, the sun-god.

So, as far as sun realization is concerned, there is a person—he's sitting there. Now, if we consider these different stages one passes through in realizing the sun—sunshine, sun globe, and sun-god—which is the most important? Which is the most important?

Allen Ginsberg: The person, the globe, or the sunshine?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Allen Ginsburg (laughing): I don't know.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why don't you know? You cannot say which of these three manifestations is the most important? The sunshine, the sun globe, and within the sun globe, the sun-god. Now, which is the most important?

Allen Ginsberg: If we could apprehend it in terms of person, the person.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Allen Ginsberg: But if we could apprehend it only in terms of the globe, then the globe.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So that means your own realization may extend only up to the globe, but that realization is not complete.

Allen Ginsberg: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That realization is not complete. You have to go further. As we learn in the *Upaṇiṣads*, we should pray, "O Lord, please withdraw Your effulgence, so that I can see Your true face." *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* says this. You will see it in *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*. The author, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, is praying, "Please wind up this glaring effulgence of Yours, so that I can see Your real face."

So the Lord's real face is there. And in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *brah-*

maṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham: "This impersonal Brahman effulgence is resting on My personal existence." And *Brahma-saṁhita* says,

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṅḍa-koṭi-koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnam tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam aham bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who has great power. The impersonal Brahman is simply the glowing effulgence of His transcendental form." And so forth.

So this Brahman effulgence is nothing but the effulgence emanating from Kṛṣṇa's body. You see, Kṛṣṇa has a very powerful bodily effulgence. And within that bodily effulgence, all creation has manifested. Just as within the sun's effulgence all these planets are moving and all this vegetation is growing—everything is existing within the sunshine—so, similarly, *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*: Everything is existing within the *brahmajyoti*, Kṛṣṇa's effulgence. And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā*: "This impersonal exhibition of this whole manifestation—it is I." *Mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni*: "Everything existing is within Me." But *na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ*: "And yet I am not directly there."

So we have to study everything intelligently. I want some intelligent persons from America to study this great science and share it with the whole world. Then it will be nicely done. ❀

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")

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Blessings

READING DĀMODARA Dāsa's memoir about Śrīla Prabhupāda makes me wish I'd been there. But my time came later, in 1974. My head bowed to the floor in the San Francisco temple, I looked up briefly and saw, just inches away, Śrīla Prabhupāda's feet in rust-colored socks gliding by. He had come for the annual Rathayātrā festival. The next day, dancing onstage, arms raised high, he inspired ten thousand souls to joyfully sing out the names of Kṛṣṇa.

Most of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples had little opportunity for personal audience with him. We didn't expect it. He would say that to be with him didn't require physical proximity. If we followed his instructions, we would feel his presence.

The *Vedas* say that the company of great souls opens the door to liberation. Though Śrīla Prabhupāda has left this world, we have unlimited access to him. He's here in dozens of books and thousands of hours of recorded lectures and conversations, in video images and photographs. From the spiritual perspective, these are identical with Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.

I cherish the priceless moments when I was in Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence. Still, I understand that getting his blessings is more important than being with him. When asked for his blessings, Śrīla Prabhupāda would say that they were available in the form of his instructions, especially in his books. Whether or not we had Prabhupāda's personal association, if we take his instructions to heart we'll reap their full benefit: love for Kṛṣṇa.

Getting the blessings of the spiritual mas-

ter is sometimes referred to as "receiving the dust of his lotus feet." The spiritual master's feet are called "lotus" because just as a lotus sits above the water, the spiritual master, untouched by the material energy, lives in the world but is not part of it.

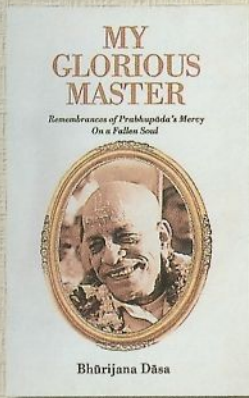
A disciple once asked Śrīla Prabhupāda what we mean when we say that the spiritual master is not an ordinary man. Śrīla Prabhupāda had just been disparaging atheistic scientists and philosophers, and he replied, "He is not moved by the rascal scientist." Scriptures and self-realized spiritual teachers of the past, not the ever-changing views of popular leaders, guide the spiritual master.

Bowing to the lotus feet of the spiritual master (figuratively or literally) is a sign of humility, which is essential for spiritual life. Humility is closely tied to faith. With faith and humility we approach a spiritual master whom we accept to be greater than us in spiritual knowledge and realization.

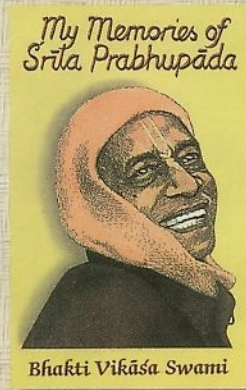
Like many others, I had little problem accepting Śrīla Prabhupāda in that way. He was a spiritual teacher with more to say about God—both in quantity and quality—than anyone I had ever heard. And he so clearly lived an ideal spiritual life. His devotional service to the Lord never stopped. He barely slept, so intent was he on spreading Kṛṣṇa's glories.

Ultimately, the spiritual master is above the world because He sits at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. By following Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, we can also get Kṛṣṇa's shelter. From the vantage point of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet, we can see the spiritual world.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

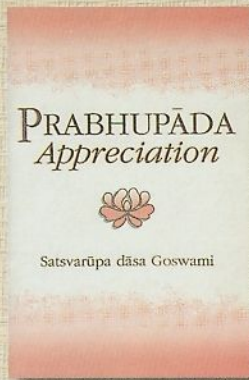
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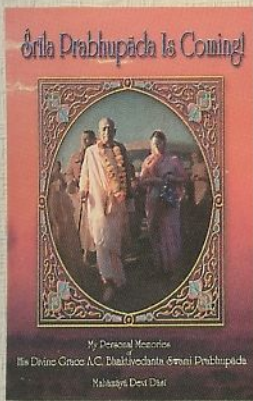
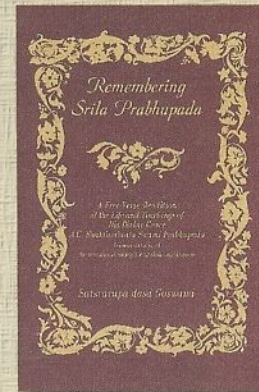


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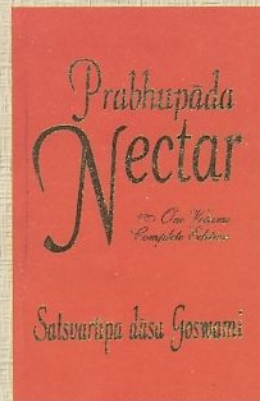


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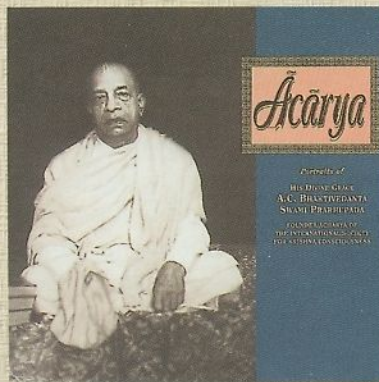
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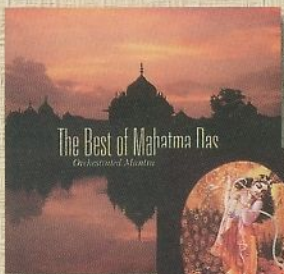
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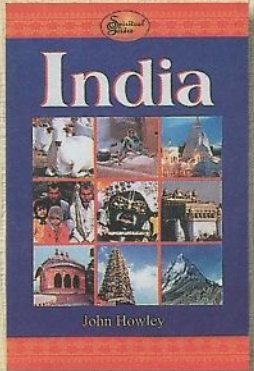
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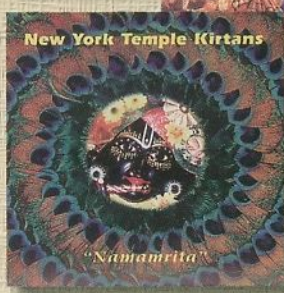
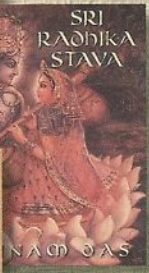
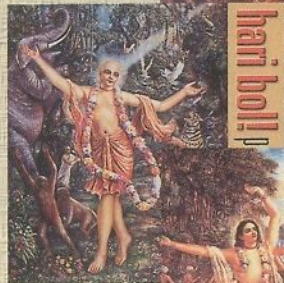
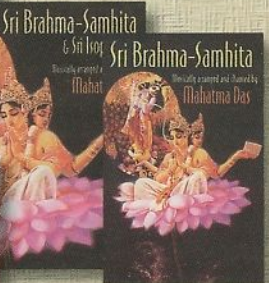
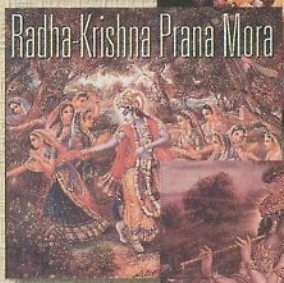


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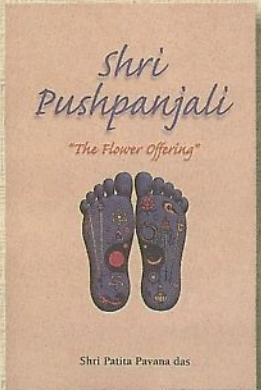
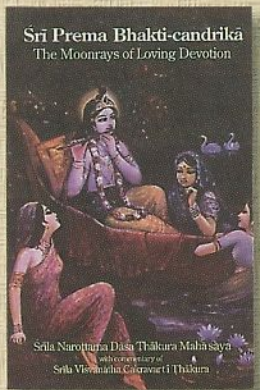
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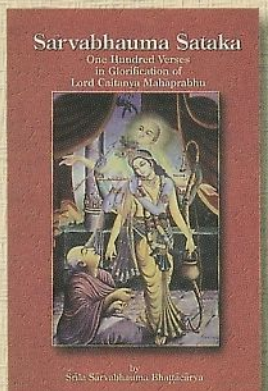
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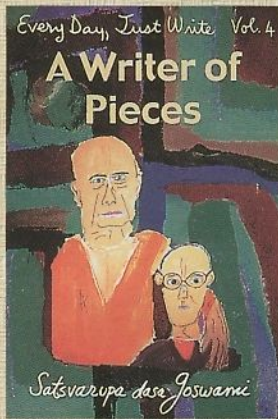
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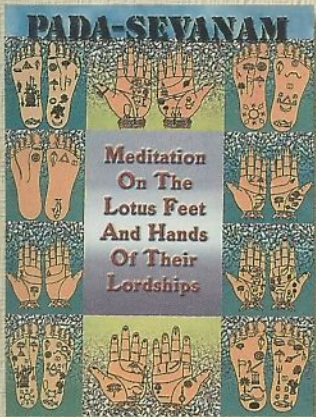
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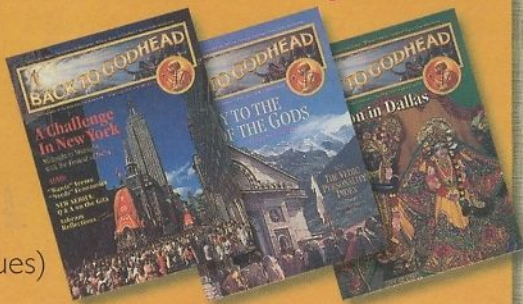
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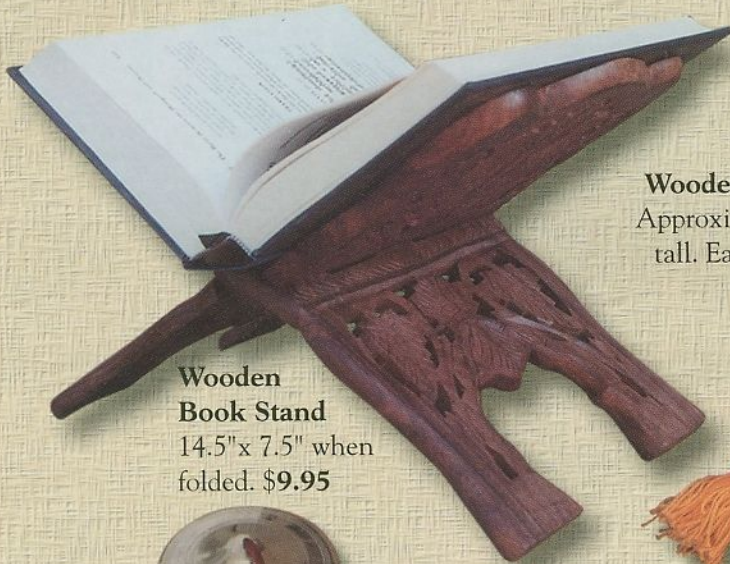
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Vedic Thoughts

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa unequivocally declares that He is the Supreme Absolute Truth and that it is the duty of everyone to render Him loving devotional service.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* was revealed for the sole purpose of explaining these two principal points.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
Renunciation Through Wisdom, p. 46

The highest devotion is attained by slow degrees by the method of constant endeavor for self-realization with the help of scriptural evidence, theistic conduct, and perseverance in practice.

Lord Brahmā
Brahma-saṁhitā 5.59

Devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is performed when the heart no longer desires any material benefit to be obtained in this life or the next. This is freedom from the bonds of karma.

Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad 1.14

The Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, is the Absolute Truth, whose lotus feet the demigods are always eager to see. Like the sun-god, He pervades everything by the rays of His energy. He appears impersonal to imperfect eyes.

Ṛg Veda 1.22.20

Lord Kṛṣṇa's chest is the abode of the goddess of fortune. His moonlike face is the drinking vessel for eyes which hanker after all that is beautiful. His arms are the resting places for the administrative demigods. And His lotus feet are the refuge of pure devotees who never talk or sing of any subject except His Lordship.

Sūta Gosvāmī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.11.26

It is true that by practicing restraint of the senses by the yoga system one can get relief from the disturbances of desire and lust, but this is not sufficient to give satisfaction to the soul, for this satisfaction is derived from devotional service to the Personality of Godhead.

Nārada Muni
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.6.35

With the dust of My devotees' lotus feet I desire to purify the material worlds, which are situated within Me. Thus, I always follow the footsteps of My pure devotees, who are free from all personal desire, rapt in thought of My pastimes, peaceful, without any feelings of enmity, and of equal disposition everywhere.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.16



Festival of India 2000

Schedule for North America

June 10: New York City Rathayātrā (Chariot Festival)

June 16–18: Atlanta Rathayātrā and Panihati Festival

June 24–25: New Jersey Rathayātrā

July 3–4: Washington, D.C., Rathayātrā

July 8–9: Montreal Rathayātrā

July 15–16: Toronto Rathayātrā

July 29–30: Los Angeles Rathayātrā

August 6: San Francisco Rathayātrā

August 12–13: Vancouver Rathayātrā

August 22: Vancouver Janmāṣṭami (Śrī Kṛṣṇa's
Appearance Day)

August 23: Vancouver Vyāsa Pūjā (Śrīla Prabhupāda's
Appearance Day)

September 2–4: Seattle Rathayātrā



NOTE: Some of these dates have not yet been confirmed, including the one for Los Angeles. For more information, get in touch with the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in the city where the festival will be held, or write to Festival of India, P. O. Box 108, Sandy Ridge, NC 27046, USA.