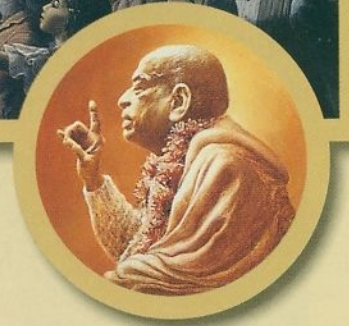


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

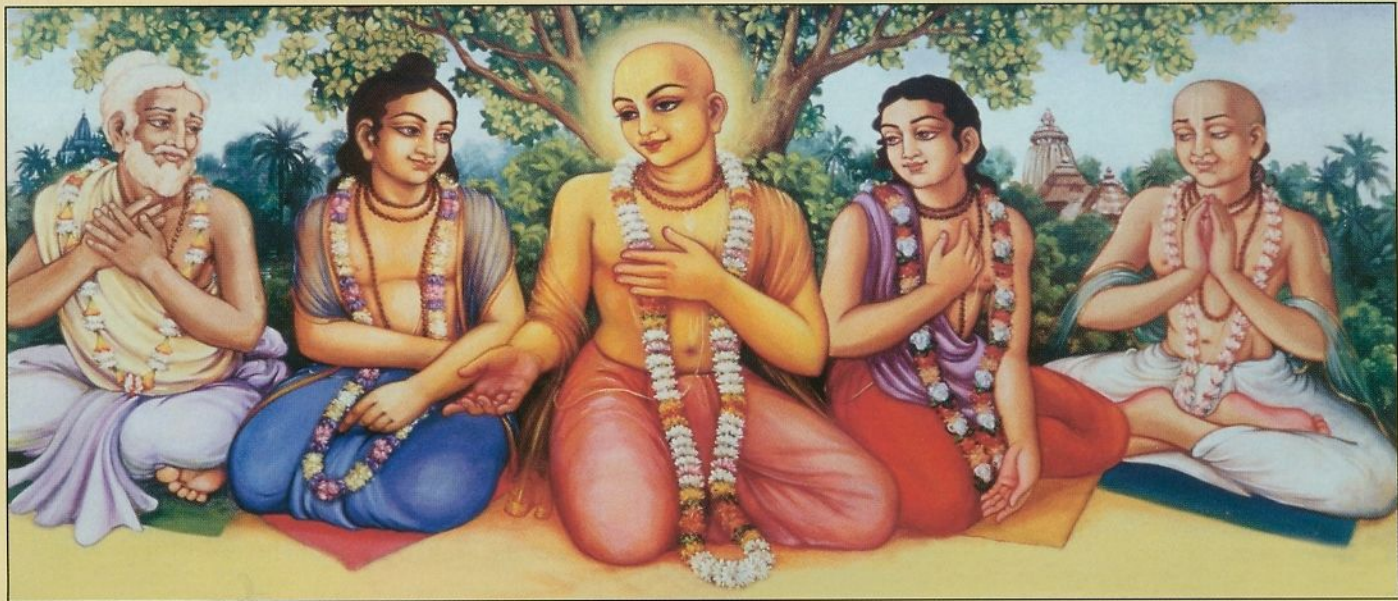


The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • March/April 2002 • \$4.00/£2.50



# Lord Caitanya The Devotional Form of God

## Why Kṛṣṇa Came As His Own Devotee



[www.krishna.com](http://www.krishna.com)  
Spotlight on a New Website

ALSO: Creating the Land of Kṛṣṇa in Hungary • “My Devotee Is Always Saintly” • A Prophecy Fulfilled  
Doctors of Body and Soul • Coming Back to Vṛndāvana • Karna’s Choice • My Mother’s Transformation

# Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 36, No. 2 • March / April 2002



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# ead

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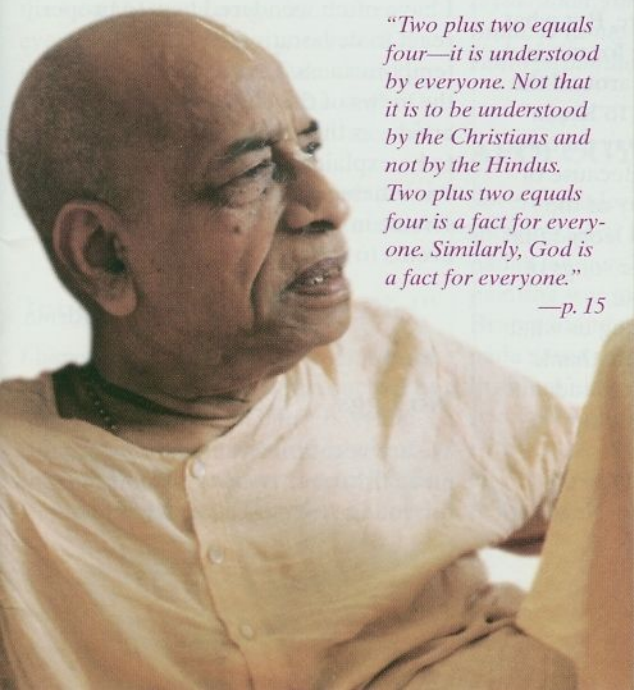
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*Getting to Know Kṛṣṇa*

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**COVER** This painting of the Pañca-tattva (Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His closest associates) graces the wall of the ISKCON temple in Somogyamos, Hungary. Please see the article beginning on page 45. (Painting by Tāralākṣī Devī Dāsī)



*“Two plus two equals four—it is understood by everyone. Not that it is to be understood by the Christians and not by the Hindus. Two plus two equals four is a fact for everyone. Similarly, God is a fact for everyone.”*

—p. 15

## WELCOME



**THIS ISSUE** coincides with one of our most important annual festivals: Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the anniversary of the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in

“The Devotional Form of Kṛṣṇa,” Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He made His divine descent in Māyāpur, West Bengal, in A.D. 1486 and started the movement centered on chanting the holy names of the Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda carried Lord Caitanya’s movement to the West. Today his organization, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has hundreds of farms, temples, and restaurants around the world.

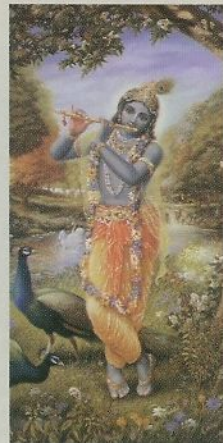
In this issue, we visit one of those farms, in western Hungary, where a growing community of 150 devotees is pursuing the simple life with Kṛṣṇa in the center.

We see the reach of Lord Caitanya’s movement in other articles in this issue. “Doctors of Body and Soul” tells of a devotee couple, both doctors, who are always ready to answer spiritual questions from their students and patients. In New York City, university students attend a series of lectures about “Lord Caitanya’s Eight Teachings.” And, thanks to Lord Caitanya’s representative in the form of her son, a mother finds Kṛṣṇa in the final months of her life.

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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TION DIRECTOR** Rādhikā Devī Dāsī • **ACCOUNTS**  
Punya Kirtī Dāsa • **WEBSITE** Manu Dāsa, Prāṇadā  
Devī Dāsī, Rādhā Devī Dāsī

**INDIA: PUBLISHING COORDINATOR** Yudhiṣṭhira  
Dāsa • **PRODUCTION** Sac-cid-ānanda Dāsa • **AC-  
COUNTS** Sahadeva Dāsa • **SUBSCRIBER SERVICES**  
Mañjarī Devī Dāsī, Trivikrama Dāsa

**EDITORIAL OFFICES** Send editorial correspondence  
to BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Phone:  
(386) 462-7794, Fax: (386) 462-1911. Or BTG, 33 Janki  
Kutir, Next to State Bank of Hyderabad, Juhu, Mumbai  
400 049, India. Phone: (022) 618-1718. Fax: (022) 618-  
4827. E-mail: editors@pamho.net

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** *Back to Godhead* is published six  
times a year. For a one-year subscription (US and Canada)  
send \$24 to Back to Godhead, P.O. Box 255, Sandy Ridge,  
NC 27046, USA. Or call toll-free: 1-800-800-3284.

For subscriptions outside the US and Canada add  
\$3. Payment in US funds (payable on a US bank) must  
accompany your order.

In the UK send £18.99 to BTG UK Ltd., Bhakti-  
vedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Lane, Watford,  
Herts. WD2 8EZ.

In South Africa send R240 to Back to Godhead, P.O.  
Box 56003, Chatsworth 4030, South Africa.

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clear up any questions about your subscription, write  
to BTG Service Center, P.O. Box 255, Sandy Ridge,  
NC 27046, USA. Or call 1-800-800-3284. Or use e-mail  
(btg\_subs@krishna.com). We can answer your questions  
faster if you send a recent mailing label or invoice. Please  
allow eight weeks for changes to show on your mailing  
label.

**PREPRESS & PRINTING** Interprint, Clearwater,  
Florida, USA

© 2002 The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Interna-  
tional. All rights reserved. (Trustee for The Bhakti-  
vedanta Book Trust: Svavāsa Dāsa.) *Back to Godhead*  
(ISSN 0005-3643, USPS 604-170) is published bi-monthly  
(six times a year) for \$24 per year by Back To Godhead,  
18024 NW 112th Blvd., Alachua, FL 32615. Periodicals  
postage paid at Alachua, Florida, and additional mailing  
offices.

CANADA POST AGREEMENT #: 0571016

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Back to  
Godhead, P.O. Box 255, Sandy Ridge, NC 27046.

# Letters

## Transcendental Gift

This transcendental gift that Śrīla  
Prabhupāda gave us—BTG—is a  
wonderful treasure. I feel ecstatic  
when I get my BTG. The article about  
our dear George [January/February]  
and the words by Śyāmasundara  
Prabhu gave happiness to my soul.  
Thank you for the wonderful service.  
Thank you millions of times.

Premānanda Gaura Dāsa  
Alachua, Florida

## Copies for Friends

Excellent issue. Especially the articles  
about George, and especially “My  
Sweet George.” Excellent writing. I  
am grateful to BTG for a job well  
done. I plan on ordering five copies  
for friends here in Lee County.

Robert Covington, Jr.  
Cape Coral, Florida

## What George Did for Us

I wanted everyone involved to know  
how much I enjoyed the January/  
February issue of *Back to Godhead*.  
One of the reasons, I admit, is your  
fine tribute to George Harrison.  
George was known throughout the  
world as a popular musician with the  
Beatles. As a musical group they  
changed the world in hairstyles,  
attitude, and youth culture. But what  
did George end up doing for me and  
for many other devotees around the  
world? He introduced us to Kṛṣṇa  
consciousness in such a way that we  
weren't reached before. Because of  
him I bought my first copy of the  
*Gītā*, and it was through George that  
I heard the chants and the songs of  
the Radha Krishna Temple.

Thank you for reminding us what  
George was like. I eternally thank  
George for being my true friend, and  
I hope Kṛṣṇa has blessed him with  
His presence.

Robert Koenig  
Mineola, New York

## Torchlight

Thanks for being the torchlight of mil-  
lions of aspiring devotees. The feelings  
after reading BTG are something really  
fascinating. I hope it maintains its  
uninterrupted and unmotivated service  
towards the fallen conditioned souls  
like me.

Vikramaditya Pandit  
Via the Internet

## Chanting Is for Everybody

I would like to congratulate you for  
the very nice picture [of two women  
chanting] on page 43 of the November/  
December issue. For the common peo-  
ple, it gives encouragement that every-  
body may join the *saṅkīrtana* move-  
ment of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and  
for devotees, it is a reminder of the sin-  
cerity in chanting everybody may get,  
whether in Vaiṣṇava or Western dress.  
Thank you.

Harīsa Rūpa Dāsa  
Via the Internet

## Perspective on Tragedy

The issue [November/December] ar-  
rived right on time to guide me through  
the spiritual travels of the Kṛṣṇa  
consciousness realm. I greatly enjoyed  
the article titled “Feelings and Philoso-  
phy: Reactions to the Terrorist Attacks.”  
I have often wondered how to properly  
react to devastation and loss due to  
temporariness. Thank you for sharing  
the views of the contributors of this  
article, as the tragedy of 9/11/01 needed  
to be explained from a Kṛṣṇa con-  
sciousness perspective concerning our  
service in the face of many more tragic  
events to come.

Kalki Dāsa  
Crescent City, California

## No Eggs

We are vegetarians and do not eat  
meat, fish, poultry, or eggs. Our question  
for you is: Are eggs acceptable to eat if

# 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 **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce ś and ṣ like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

## Spiritual Names

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."

they are unfertilized?

We have contacted some of the egg manufacturers here in the U.S., and they have told us that commercial eggs are unfertilized. So we were wondering if it is okay to eat these eggs, since they are not fertilized.

Ashvin and Falguni Patel  
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: It is Vaiṣṇava practice not to eat any eggs, fertilized or unfertilized, because in either case they are considered low-class food and detrimental to spiritual consciousness. We're not aware of a specific scriptural reference on this point, but Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual guide, told us not to eat any eggs. That is the tradition. He taught that fruits, nuts, vegetables, grains, and milk products are meant for human beings. These kinds of foods are indicated by Kṛṣṇa's request that we offer Him "a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water." Above all other considerations, our diet is dictated by what Kṛṣṇa wants.

## Sixteen-Year Reader

I have been receiving your magazine now for sixteen years, and I still have every copy. I read it from cover to cover, and over the years I have ordered tapes, CDs, and books from the Bazaar. I think this magazine is the best Vaiṣṇava magazine I have ever read. Keep up the good work. I think that Śrīla Prabhupāda would be extremely proud of what the staff of this magazine have achieved since his passing in 1977.

Ātmānanda Dāsa  
Via the Internet

## Touched by "Where to Die?"

I have been reading *Back to Godhead* for sometime. I was deeply touched by the article "Where to Die?: Is Vṛndāvana the only choice for devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa?" by Sārvabhauma Dāsa (January/February). Very few people

think about their own death, even though they see their kith and kin dying around them.

It brought tears of joy to my eyes when I read (on page 30) that His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda "considered it helpful when devotees chanted while he and others were departing from this world." This was also apparent when the spiritual Beatle, George Harrison, left this material world. News reports said that Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees kept chanting at his bedside in the hospital during his final hours.

His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda concludes his purport to verse 2.11 in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* by stating, "The body is not as important as the soul. One who knows this is actually learned, and for him there is no cause for lamentation, regardless of the condition of the material body." Sārvabhauma Dāsa affirms in his article (in the sidebar on page 29) that His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda "seems to have confirmed that one's consciousness, or *bhāva*, at the end of life is ultimately more important than one's physical whereabouts."

Thank you for carrying out the blessed task of spreading Kṛṣṇa's holy names.

Suk Shah

Woodbury, Minnesota ❀

Please write to us at: BTG, P.O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Or: BTG, 33 Janki Kutir, Next to State Bank of Hyderabad, Juhu, Mumbai 400 049, India. [Phone: (022) 618-1718.] E-mail: editors@pamho.net.

## APOLOGY

Several readers objected to the painting showing Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda (January/February). Although the painting was meant to be symbolic, Brahmānanda Dāsa, one of Prabhupāda's first disciples, informed us that Prabhupāda said that in our disciplic succession the *ācārya* is never shown with Kṛṣṇa. We regret the error and apologize to readers disturbed by the painting.



বাধা কুরু প্রণয় বিকৃত  
দেবাত্মানাবপি ৩

# THE DEVOTIONAL FORM OF KṚṢṆA

*Learning how to love and serve God is so important  
that God Himself comes to teach it.*

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*yad advaitam brahmopaniṣadi tad apy asya tanu-bhā  
ya ātmāntar-yāmī puruṣa iti so 'syāmśa-vibhavaḥ  
śaḍ-aiśvaryaīḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhagavān sa svayam ayaṁ  
na caitanyāt kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvaṁ param iha*

“What the *Upaniṣads* describe as the impersonal Brahman is but the effulgence of His body, and the Lord known as the Supersoul is but His localized plenary portion. Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, full with six opulences. He is the Absolute Truth, and no other truth is greater than or equal to Him.”—*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 1.3

THE AUTHOR OF *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, is establishing with great stress that there is no greater truth than Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. We are after truth. The author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is asserting, “Here is the Supreme Truth: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

Kṛṣṇa has appeared as Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. We explained this truth yesterday, according to Sārva-bhauma Bhaṭṭācārya's declaration:

*vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga-  
śikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ  
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dhārī  
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye*

“Let me take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has descended in the form of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach us real knowledge, devotional service to Him, and detachment from whatever does not foster Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He has descended because He is an ocean of transcendental mercy. Let me surrender unto His lotus feet.”

The *puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ*, the oldest person, is Kṛṣṇa. *Govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*: “I worship Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], the primeval Lord.” In many

*Left: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu*

# *We cannot accept anyone as an authority if he does not follow the paramparā, the disciplic succession of ācāryas.*

• • •

Vedic scriptures Kṛṣṇa is described as the *purāṇaḥ puruṣaḥ*, the oldest person. *Purāṇaḥ puruṣam nava-yauvanam ca*: “Although He is the oldest of all, still He is always a fresh youth.”

How is this possible? People are trying to understand God. Sometimes they paint a picture of God as a very old man. “Because He is the original person, by this time He must have become very old.” That is imagination. That old man is not actually the form of the Lord. The form of the Lord is described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* and other Vedic scriptures. Even Śaṅkarācārya, an impersonalist, has accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa as the supreme Nārāyaṇa, the Personality of Godhead. Commenting on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śaṅkarācārya says, *nārāyaṇaḥ paraḥ avyaktāt*: “Nārāyaṇa is beyond the material creation.” And while describing Nārāyaṇa, he has affirmed, *sa bhagavān svayam kṛṣṇaḥ*: “Nārāyaṇa is Kṛṣṇa.” To confirm this he has clearly mentioned, “Now He has appeared as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva,” because a person’s identity is confirmed when his father’s name is given.

Kṛṣṇa is accepted as *para-tattva*, the Supreme Truth, by all the *ācāryas*, the great spiritual teachers in the Vedic tradition. We are not talking of the fools and rascals who theorize without any knowledge. We are concerned with the authorities. In India, people follow the Vedic system under the authority of the *ācāryas*. *Ācāryavān puruṣo veda*: “One who follows the path of the *ācāryas* has real knowledge.” We cannot accept anyone as an authority if he does not follow the *paramparā*, the disciplic succession of *ācāryas*. That is the Vedic system.

## **PROOF BY VEDIC EVIDENCE**

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is emphatically asserting, *na caitanyaṭ kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvam param iha*:

“There is no greater truth than Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.” According to the Vedic system, if you say something emphatically you must prove it by Vedic evidence. Otherwise, you can go on talking, but nobody will listen. Sometimes people ask us about Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya Mahāprabhu—“What are the Vedic evidences?” The Vedic evidences are given in later chapters of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Kavirāja Gosvāmī is not falsely asserting. He is a very, very advanced devotee and scholar, not an ordinary human being. To write *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* he was empowered by Madana-mohana, a Deity of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

No ordinary person should try to write Vedic literature. Vedic literature means the *śruti*, the *smṛti*, the *Purāṇas*, and so on. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has confirmed this:

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-  
pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā  
aikāntiki harer bhaktir  
utpātāyaiva kalpate*

“Devotional service to the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literature like the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, and *Nārada-pañcarātra* is simply a needless disturbance in society.” *Utpāta* means “simply a disturbance.” People claim, “I can manufacture my own way.” But this rascaldom has been condemned by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. You will find many so-called *bhaktas*, devotees, imitating the ecstasy of advanced devotees by crying, falling on the ground, and so on. But immediately after their exhibition you will see them smoking. Why? Because they do not follow the injunction of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. They chant very loudly, dance, and after the performance is finished—I have seen it—“Can you give me a *bīḍi* [cigarette]?” You see? “My throat is now dried up.” This is *utpāta*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described this kind of so-

called devotional attitude as simply a disturbance.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has condemned these imitators. There are so many *apa-sampradāyas*, deviant sects, pretending to be Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s devotees. Who are they? *Āula, bāula, kartābhajā, neḍā, daraveṣa, sāni, sahaijyā, sakhibhekī, smārta, jāta-gosāni, ativādi, cūḍadhārī*, and *gaurāṅga-nāgarī*. Bhaktivinoda says, “I do not associate with these classes of men.” After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, many *apa-sampradāyas* sprang up. We should be very careful not to be fooled by them.

*Sampradāya* means those who carefully follow the Vedic principles. Therefore Kavirāja Gosvāmī, although asserting the truth, is prepared to give Vedic evidences. Now with today’s verse he has begun, by citing the *Upaniṣads*. The Vedic literature includes the four *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Vedānta-sūtra*, then the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the explanation of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Therefore at the end of each chapter of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Vyāsadeva states, *brahma-sūtrasya bhāṣya*: “The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*.” *Brahma-sūtra*, or *Vedānta-sūtra*, gives the gist of the Vedic literature in codes. And the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains these codes. The *Vedānta-sūtra* begins, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: “Now is the time to inquire into the Absolute Truth.” And the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states, *jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā*: “The only business for living beings is to inquire about the Absolute Truth.”

That is the only business. People are in trouble because they have given up their real business. Human life is meant for this business—*brahma-jijñāsā*, to inquire about the Absolute Truth. We human beings have been given so many



facilities by nature. There are so many living entities who must stand rooted to the ground for many years—the trees, the plants. The aquatics are in the water for many, many years. The flies and insects remain in their condition for many, many years. And gradually, by the soul's evolution, we come to this form of human life.

The Āryans, especially—the advanced, civilized human beings—have all the necessary facilities for inquiry about the Absolute Truth. Uncivilized men, such as those living in the jungle, cannot utilize such resources. Therefore Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, in a simple Bengali song, says, *hari hari biphale janama goñānu*: “O Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa, I've wasted my life.” This is our position. We have the human form of life, but we are simply spoiling it. In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we are traveling all over the world, and according to our view, how people are spoiling their very valuable human life in the false identification that “I am this body”! Under big, big names—“I am American,” “I am Indian,” “I am German”—they are spoiling their life by this bodily conception.

According to *sāstra*, scripture, anyone who identifies himself with his body is a fool. That is the first instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa brought Arjuna to fight with the Kurus, and because Arjuna identified himself as the body, Arjuna thought, “Killing my cousin-brothers will not be good, because I have a bodily relation with them.” So to dissipate that conception of life, Kṛṣṇa rebuked him, *aśocyān anvaśocas tvam prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase*: “While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief.”

We are talking very big talks and plans, but actually we are nothing better than cats and dogs. This is our position, because we identify with the body. “My country, my community, my society, my family.” This is the basic ignorance. *Aham mameti*: “I and my.” People do not know the truth. They are thinking, “I am this body, and anything in relationship with the body is mine.” This is ignorance. But this ignorance is going on all over the world.

Therefore in the beginning of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* the author says:

*vande śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-  
nityānandau sahoditau  
gauḍodaye puṣpavantau  
citrau śandau tamo-nudau*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Nityānanda, who are like the sun and moon. They have arisen simultaneously on the horizon of Gauḍa to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and thus wonderfully bestow benediction upon all.” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu have come to deliver the fallen souls of the material world who are in the darkness of false conceptions. Somebody just told me that the king of Saudi Arabia has been killed by his own nephew. This is going on. Even in family affairs it is going on. Why? Because of this darkness: *aham mameti*, “I and mine.”

### THE FIRST LESSON

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu along with His associates—Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaita Prabhu, Gadādhara Prabhu, Śrīvaṣa, and other devotees—are trying to dissipate the darkness of this false identification. Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna about Arjuna's darkness as to his identity. Kṛṣṇa chided him, “You are talking very big, big words, but you are lamenting about a subject for which no learned person laments.” Then Kṛṣṇa said, *gatāsīn agatāsūmś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*: “You are fool number one. No learned person talks like that. Now try to understand the real position.”

Kṛṣṇa then said:

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe  
kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā  
tathā dehāntara-prāptir  
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

“As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.” Or in other words, “First of all try to understand what you are.”

That is the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Bhagavad-gītā* is not politics. It is knowledge, pure knowledge. The

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politicians take advantage of it, and the sociologists and the so-called swamis and yogis take advantage of it to try to prove their nonsensical theories. But what they present is not at all *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Bhagavad-gītā* “as it is” is pure knowledge, beginning with the first knowledge one has to understand: that we are not the body. Because the basic principle of ignorance is this: “I am this body,” “I am American,” “I am Indian,” “I am a *brāhmaṇa*,” “I am this,” “I am that.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu points out the same ignorance in a different way. He says, “I am not a *brāhmaṇa*. I am not a *kṣatriya* [warrior]. I am not a *vaiśya* [merchant]. I am not a *sūdra* [laborer]. I am not a *brahmacārī* [celibate student]. I am not a *grhastha* [householder]. I am not a *vānaprastha* [retired person]. I am not a *sannyāsī* [renunci-ant].” These are negations. Then what is the positive? He says, *gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*: “I am the servant of the servant of the servant of the *gopī-bhartuḥ*, Kṛṣṇa, who maintains the *gopīs*, His cowherd girlfriends.”

So this is also our identity, but we have forgotten. We have forgotten our real relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and we

are trying to be happy by material adjustments. This is modern civilization. One is thinking, “If I get a nice house, a nice motorcar, a nice business, a nice bank balance, a nice wife, nice children . . .” This is material civilization. But people do not know that this way they will never be happy. Now, you Europeans and Americans have a good qualification: As I have described many times, you are no longer very much interested in all these “nice” things. The real nice thing is spiritual understanding. That nice thing begins, *ahamī brahmāsmi*: “I am not this body.” That is the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa is instructing Arjuna, “You are not this body. You are spirit soul. Try to understand.”

### UNCHANGED MESSAGE

We should learn from Kṛṣṇa. We should learn from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Therefore the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says, “Accept this authority.”

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared five hundred years ago, people had already become fools and rascals. They did not care for the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore

He came as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa to teach us how to serve Kṛṣṇa, how to love Kṛṣṇa. This is Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s cult. When Kṛṣṇa appeared He said, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: “Give up everything, all your rascaldom. Just surrender to Me.” And Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as a devotee, said the same thing. *Yāre dekha, tāre kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa*: “Whomever you meet, tell him about Kṛṣṇa’s instructions.” Lord Caitanya said nothing new. That is the sign of authenticity. Those who say “I have manufactured some way” are all rascals. In your country it is said, “Old wine in a new bottle.” Similarly, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is teaching the same thing as Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says, *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya*: “There is no truth superior to Me.” Caitanya Mahāprabhu says the same thing: *yāre dekha, tāre kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa*. And we are saying the same thing, *na caitanyāt kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvam*: “There is no truth superior to Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.” Why? Because He is the same truth as Kṛṣṇa. This is called the *paramparā* system: We are repeating what Kṛṣṇa said and what Caitanya Mahāprabhu said.

So it is not difficult to understand the Absolute Truth. Kṛṣṇa says directly, “Surrender to Me.” And Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Preach Kṛṣṇa’s message.” We are not going to teach anything but what is spoken by Kṛṣṇa and supported by Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva. This is our principle. This is the principle of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Kṛṣṇa preached about Himself, Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached the same principle, and we are preaching the same thing. We do not preach anything else. We do not manufacture anything. That is not our business.

By the grace of Kṛṣṇa, by the mercy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, you European boys and girls joined this movement at my soliciting. I went to your country with this word only. I did not show you any magic, nor do I have any knowledge of how to play magic. I simply repeat the same message: “Here is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Here is Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva, the devotional form of Kṛṣṇa. Accept Them, and your life will be successful.”

Thank you very much. 🌸



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Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday—for regulars as well as newcomers. Come by and relish the taste of the world’s oldest cultural tradition. Call your nearest center to find out the schedule for the Sunday Feast. (See “Centers,” pages 59–61.)

# 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 Kurukshetra**—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.
- Bhagavad-gītā**—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.
- Bhakti**—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.
- Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura**—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. 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.
- 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 Puri, 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*.
- Varṇāśrama**—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacāris* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).
- Vṛndāvana**—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.
- Vaiṣṇava**—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).
- Vedas**—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.
- Vedic**—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.
- Viṣṇu**—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

# My Mother's Transformation

*"I once asked her if she believed in God, and she replied, 'Something may be out there.'"*

by Indradyumna Swami

March 7–14, 2001

FROM THE MUNDANE view, I was flying home. I was born and raised in San Francisco before joining the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1970. But there's nothing left for me there now. Both my parents have passed away, and my brothers and sisters are scattered throughout the country. Nevertheless, as I looked out of the plane window, memories of my childhood came to mind, bringing with them sentiments not worthy of my attention. I quickly caught myself and came back to reality, remembering the written words of my spiritual master—reflections on his own family members with the passing of time:

*Where have my affectionate  
Father and mother gone now?  
And where are all my elders and other relatives,  
Who were my own folk?*

*Who will give me news of them now?  
I ask you—tell me who?  
All that is left of this so-called family  
Is a list of their names.*

*As the froth upon the sea water  
Arises for a moment and then subsides,  
The play of māyā's worldly illusion  
Is exactly like that.*

*No one is actually a mother or father,  
A family member or relative.  
Everyone is just like foam on the sea water,  
Remaining in view for only a few moments.*

*But all of us are actually relatives,  
O brothers, on the platform of pure spirit soul.  
These eternal relationships are not tinged  
With the temporary delusions of māyā.*

*The Supreme Lord is Himself  
The ultimate soul of everyone.  
In their eternal relationship to Him,  
Everyone in the universe is equal.*

—Śrīla Prabhupāda, *Vrindavan Bhajan*, circa 1958

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that no one is our "mother or father" but rather "everyone in the universe is equal." In other words, all of us are equal as brothers and sisters because we have one common father, God. A devotee of the Lord takes every opportunity to remind all conditioned souls of this fact. Therefore, although a devotee may renounce the idea that he is part of a particular family, society, or nation, he is not at all averse to helping even his own "mother and father" in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In fact, simply having a devotee in one's family benefits that family immensely. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī writes:

When a great saint, a pure devotee, appears in a family, his ancestors and descendants for a hundred generations are elevated. When a devotee of middle stature (*madhyam bhāgavat*) appears in a family, his ancestors and descendants for fourteen generations are elevated. When a neophyte devotee appears in a family, his ancestors and descendants for three generations are elevated.

—Śrīla Prabhupāder *Upadeśāmṛta*  
(“The Nectarean Instructions of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda”)

I tried my best to help my own mother in spiritual life. Unfortunately, throughout most of her life she never showed the slightest interest in religion. I once asked her if she believed in God, and she replied, "Something may be out there." Whenever I visited her we would often debate the existence of the soul, life after death, karma, and similar topics. Throughout the years I continued cultivating that little "something" in her heart by sending her Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, which invariably ended up in a pile at the back of her garage collecting grease and dust.

A few years ago she telephoned me late one night. It was an unusual hour to call, and I was surprised to hear from her. She began the conversation by asking if I would take her to Vṛndāvana, India.

I was shocked. I thought, "Mother wants to go to Vṛndāvana, the land of Kṛṣṇa's birth! What is this? How does she even know what Vṛndāvana is?"

But she insisted and wanted to know when we could go. Although intrigued at the prospect of taking my mother to Vṛndāvana, because it was late (and I was very tired) I told her I'd call her back early the next morning and we could discuss the matter in detail. I woke up refreshed the next day, and after my shower excitedly dialed her phone number. My brother answered.

I said, "Pete, can I speak to Mom?"

There was a prolonged silence, and I sensed something was wrong. Finally, his voice choked with emotion, he replied, "Mom passed away last night."

I was stunned.

"What happened?" I asked. "I talked to Mom only last night!"

"I know," he said. "She had been battling cancer for six months. She didn't want to tell you."

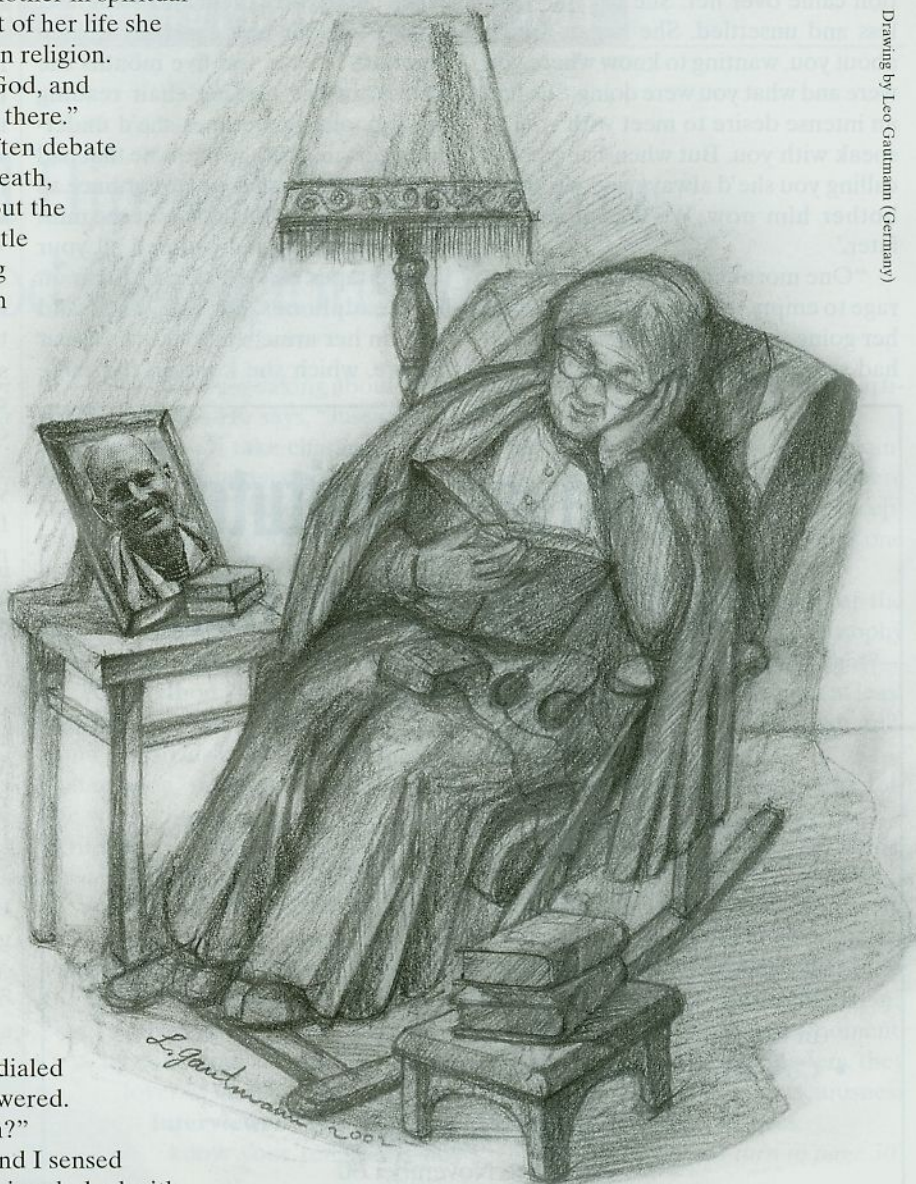
Collecting myself, I said, "Cancer! Did she say anything at the end?"

"Yes, she did," he replied. "She said, 'Don't lament for me! I'm not this body. I'm eternal spirit soul. I'll never die. I'm going to Kṛṣṇa!' With those words on her lips, she passed away."

I couldn't believe it. My mother, the intellectual who never went to church, who never inquired about God—debated His very existence—was "going to Kṛṣṇa"!

I asked my brother, "But how is it possible Mom said those things at death?"

He replied, "When Mom learned she had cancer and



**"Whenever I visited her, we would often debate the existence of the soul, life after death, karma, and similar topics. Throughout the years I continued cultivating that little 'something' in her heart by sending her Prabhupāda's books."**

was going to die, a strange transformation came over her. She became restless and unsettled. She began asking about you, wanting to know where you were and what you were doing. She had an intense desire to meet with you, to speak with you. But when I suggested calling you she'd always say, 'No, don't bother him now. We'll contact him later.'

"One morning I went out to the garage to empty the garbage, and I found her going through all those books you had sent her during the past twenty-

five years. She looked up at me and asked me to carry them into the house. That afternoon she carefully dusted them off. For the last five months she just sat in her rocking chair reading those books. Sometimes she'd underline a certain passage or quote that had particular relevance or importance to her. She also contacted your tape ministry in London and ordered all your lecture tapes. She'd listen to them on her headphones, rocking back and forth in her armchair, looking at your picture, which she kept on the table

nearby. She must have listened to at least three a day.

"Gradually her condition deteriorated, but she wasn't afraid. I think there was something in those books that made her fearless. Then last night she sensed she was going to die. She told me to call you. Her last request was that you take her to a place called Vṛndāvana."

I put the phone down and cried—not out of mundane sentiment or attachment, but in appreciation that my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, had extended his mercy to my mother and delivered her from material existence.

I went home for the memorial service and arranged her estate. Just before I was leaving to return to Europe, my brother and sister approached me and asked what they should do with her ashes. Remembering my last conversation with her, I smiled and took the ashes with me. Several weeks later one of my disciples placed them in the sacred waters of the Yamuna River in Vṛndāvana, India. I had fulfilled my mother's last request to me, a request that I pray will also be on my lips the day I leave this world.

May the land of Śrī Vṛndāvana, where Subala and the other wonderful cowherd boys, who are all dear friends of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, play, where Lalitā and the other splendidly beautiful young *gopīs*, who are all filled with love for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, enjoy transcendental bliss, and where Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa thirst to enjoy wonderful transcendental amorous pastimes day and night, become manifest in my heart.

—Vṛndāvana Mahimāṃṛta,  
Introduction, Text 15 ❁

*His Holiness Indradyumna Swami travels around the world teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Poland each summer he oversees dozens of festivals. Since 1990 these festivals have introduced Kṛṣṇa to hundreds of thousands of people.*

From the unpublished *Diary of a Traveling Preacher*, Volume 3. To receive chapters as they come out regularly on e-mail, write to [indradyumna.swami@pamho.net](mailto:indradyumna.swami@pamho.net). (Volume 1 is available from the Hare Kṛṣṇa Bazaar. Please see page 64.)

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## “God Himself Is Teaching God Consciousness”

Here we continue an exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a television interviewer. It took place in Gainesville, Florida, on July 29, 1971.

**Interviewer:** Your Divine Grace, you mention that you and your followers are following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya. He’s the one who appeared on earth five hundred years ago?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** In India.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** India, yes. So He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and He is teaching how to love Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, His process is most authorized. For instance, in this establishment you are the expert. If some new person is doing something and you personally teach him, “Do like this,” that is very authorized. So when God appears as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, God Himself is teaching God consciousness.

Or take the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Kṛṣṇa—God—is speaking about Himself, and at last He says, “Just surrender unto Me. I’ll take charge of you.” But people misunderstood. So Kṛṣṇa came again as Lord Caitanya, to teach people how to surrender. And because we are following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, this method is so sublime that even foreigners who never knew Kṛṣṇa—they’re following it.

This method is so potent. So that was my purpose in coming here. We don’t say, “This religion is better than that religion” or “My process is better.” We want to see by the result. In Sanskrit there is a phrase—*phalena parīcīyate*: “A thing is judged by the result.”

You can say, “My method is very nice.” You can say your method is very nice. But we have to judge by the result. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, “A process of religion is very good if, by following it, one becomes a lover of God.”

**Interviewer:** Yes. But, you know your religion is not

the only one which teaches this particular precept.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That I am explaining—that this is not the only one. There may be many that teach the precept “Become a lover of God.” But this one is practically effective.

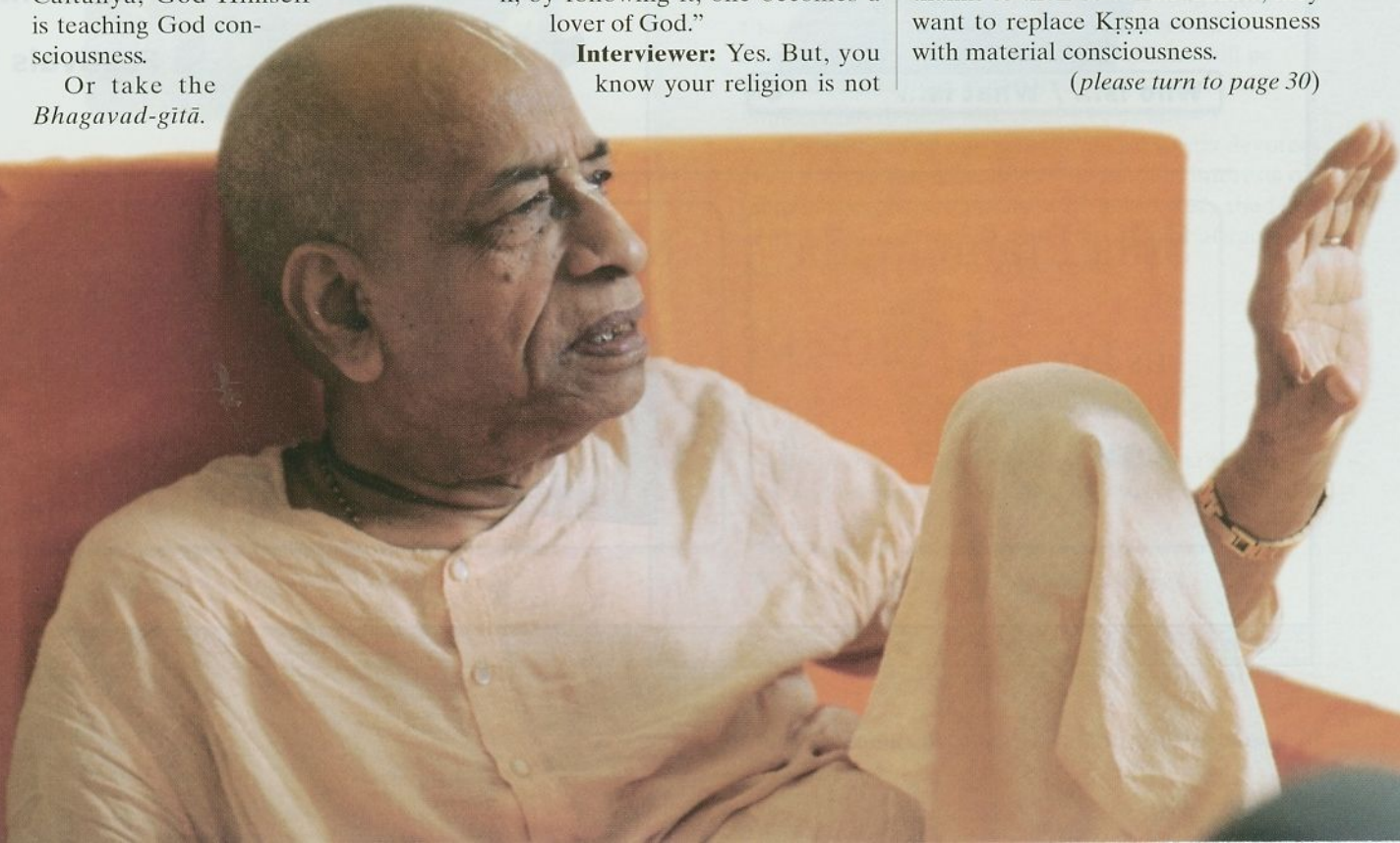
**Interviewer:** Now, in the part of the world where this particular philosophy originates—which is in India, right?—in the Eastern part of the world, at least as we look at it, is it successful there?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes.

**Interviewer:** Do you have a large following there?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. Recently, I was in India. I held two meetings that lasted for ten days each, and twenty to thirty thousand people were attending daily. The Indian people’s position is that they’re naturally Kṛṣṇa conscious, but at the present moment, thanks to their so-called leaders, they want to replace Kṛṣṇa consciousness with material consciousness.

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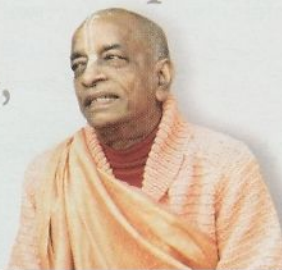
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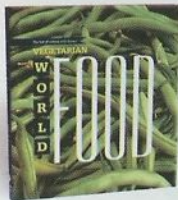
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## Srila Prabhupada

His Life,  
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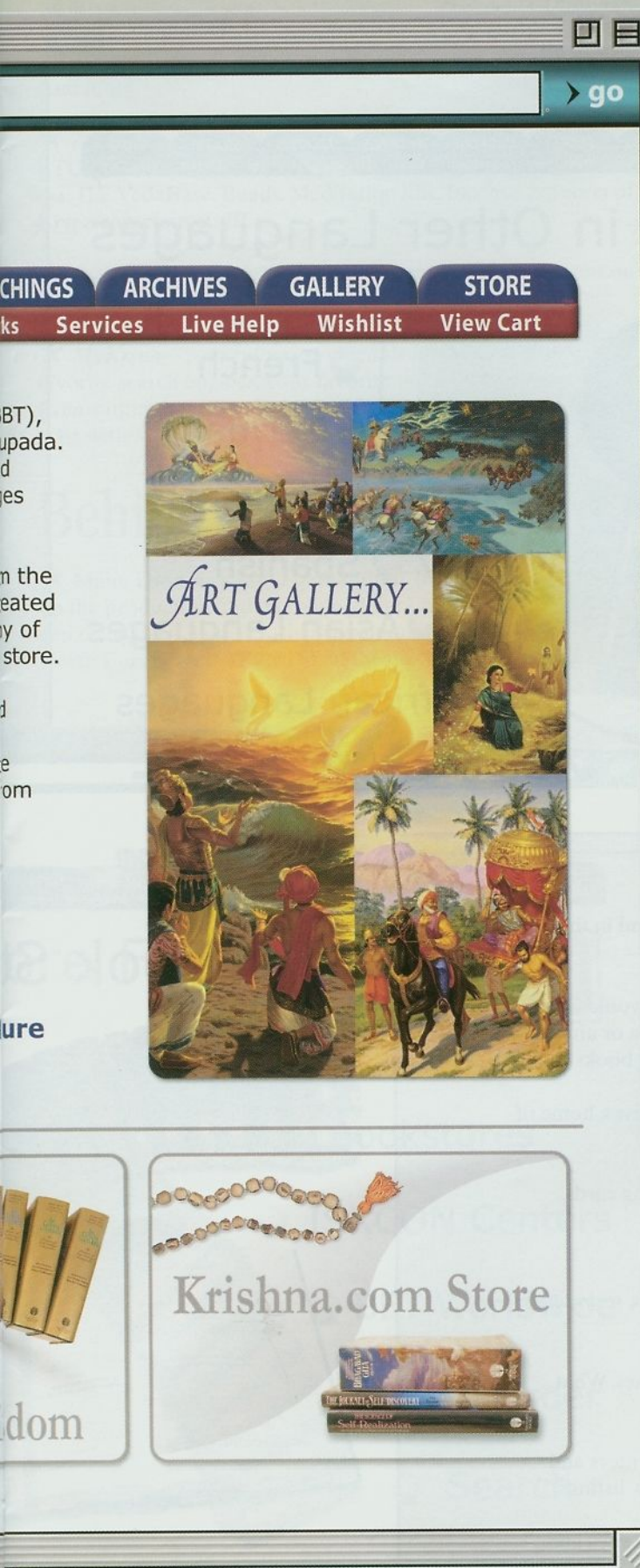


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# A New Web Site

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,  
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**I**F YOU GET ONLINE and you're interested in Kṛṣṇa—or anything that has to do with Kṛṣṇa . . . well, read on.

In April of 2002, we're launching a major new site—[www.krishna.com](http://www.krishna.com). That's the same web address that BTG has had for years now, but the site, top to bottom, is a whole new story: new people, new resources, new purposes, new ideas.

The new site will be the combined home for the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, the Bhaktivedanta Archives, and BTG. All three are putting their energy into it—everything in one place.

We're not just "putting up a site." It will be kinetic, dynamic, growing. What you'll see in April should be good—but it will just be what we're starting out with. After that, you'll see a lot happening in the next few months. And continuously after that.

The site will be multi-lingual. The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust publishes in about seventy languages, and the site will be available in many of them. After English, early on the list of new languages will be Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese. And more will come. (Like to help with one? Let us know.)

This will not be a site just for Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. It's meant to serve the diverse needs and interests of students, teachers, scholars, spiritual seekers, the Hindu community, and anyone who's devoted or attracted to Kṛṣṇa, or just wants to know more.

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## Behind the Scenes

★ *Manu Dāsa, a "second-generation" ISKCON devotee,* heads up the production and tech side. Balarāma, one of his second-gen colleagues, helped with programming. Govinda (second gen, North European BBT) tweaked the design on the navigation bar.

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★ *Rādhā—second gen again—is taking charge of getting the word out about the site, prepping and designing web pages, and serving you with the Krishna Store.*

★ *Kṛṣṇa Kīrtana Dāsa—generation two—is providing our site hosting.*

★ *Dave, who lives in China, responded to our call for help at our VirtualSeva site (www.backto godhead.com). He and Aitendra Mahajana are working on the MyKrishna part of the site.*

★ *Damodar Mahajan is working on bringing you eCards, MP3s, and a virtual gallery exhibition.*

★ *Meera Khurana, a computer professional in the UK—again that second generation—is guiding us with our database architecture.*

★ *And for the next phase of the site, a team of programmers are working for us in Chennai—all pro bono, courtesy of Ashok Dudakia (Ādya Dāsa Adhikārī) of Omnitek Info Systems, USA, and Ganapathy Subramaniam of Swatee Systems, Chennai.*

★ *Prāṇadā Dāsī is helping the team pull all the pieces together as one of the project managers.*

## Get Involved

Log on. Take advantage of the goodies. Upload your own goodies to share with others. Tell your friends about us. If you've got a site of your own, put up a link to us. Offer your comments and suggestions.

And if you've got web skills, editorial skills, artistic skills, or anything else you'd like to contribute—by all means let us know! Hare Kṛṣṇa. 🌸



*Outside Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's  
sacred tomb at the Rādhā-  
Dāmodara Temple, the author  
writes a tribute to Śrīla  
Prabhupāda.*

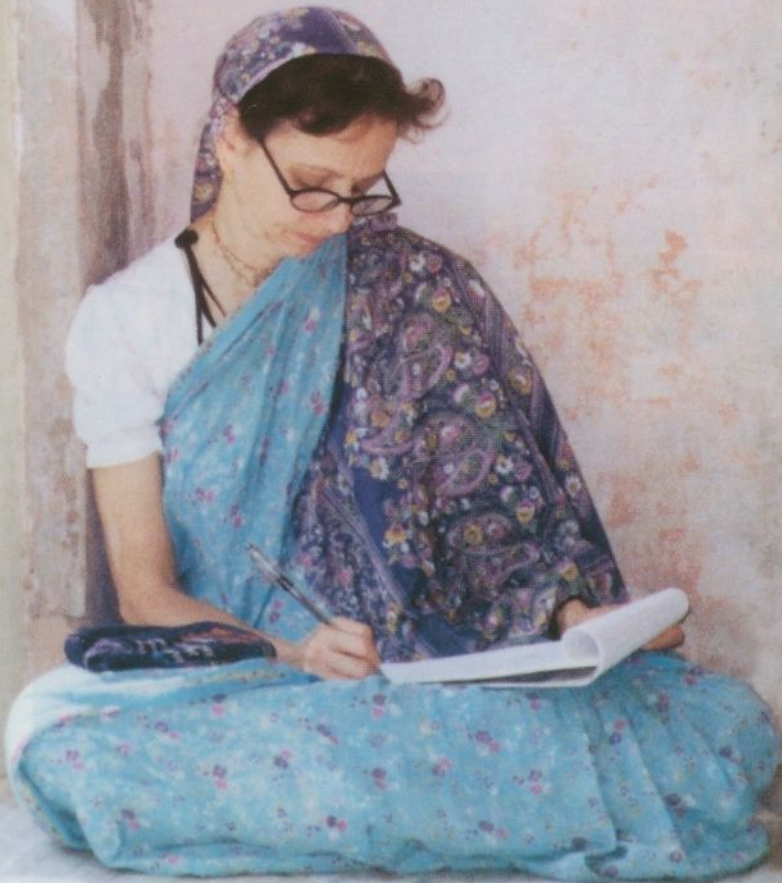
# COMING BACK TO VRNDĀVANA

*Twenty years after her first visit,  
a pilgrim tries to enter deeper into the  
mood of this best of holy places.*

by Arcana-siddhī Devī Dāsī

I FEEL ANXIOUS AS our taxi careens in and out of traffic—made up of cows, human beings, motorbikes, and bicycle rickshas. Incessantly blowing the horn, our driver maneuvers past slower conveyances, barely squeezing by without collision. This ride through Vr̥ndāvana's commercial center surpasses any of my past encounters with amusement park thrill rides.

My body begins to relax as we exit the bazaar and come onto a wider, less congested road. Familiar smells of open-





Karuntika Dasa

air cow-dung fires mixed with hot cooking oil bring back memories of my last visit, twenty years ago.

I never thought I'd return to India. The expense, my weak health, and a bout last time with amoebic dysentery all factored into my general indifference about returning. But one evening, feeling particularly moved after reading about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, I felt a stirring of desire to go back. Perhaps the twenty years of devotional service I had done since my last visit would help me get a glimpse of the Vṛndāvana Prabhupāda describes in his book *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*.

Vṛndāvana is more than a geographical location; it is a replica of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual home. It descended in preparation for His coming to this world five thousand years ago. The Lord enjoyed His earthly activities for 125 years and then returned to His original spiritual home. Kṛṣṇa's place of pleasure pastimes, Vṛndāvana, stays on

earth and keeps its spiritual potency. But only with a pure heart can one see the actual Vṛndāvana. That vision is a rare commodity in this world. It comes only to a very sincere practitioner of devotional life who has attracted the mercy of the Lord.

### SEEING THE REAL VṚNDĀVANA

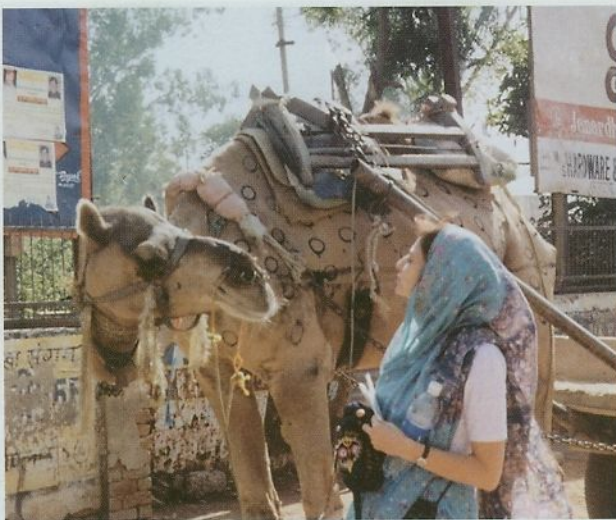
Most people see Vṛndāvana with material vision. In the commercial section they see the narrow lanes lined with shops, the open sewage, the beggars, and the hogs, cows, and dogs competing for refuse piled high on the side of the street. Further out they see many ashrams and temples, as well as flat agricultural fields dotted with grass and mud huts.

One may be repulsed, attracted, or indifferent to this landscape. But to love Vṛndāvana, one must have spiritual vision to see past the material covering.



Haripaṣṭha Dasa

The author (left) visits Kusum Sarovara near Govardhana Hill. Below, left, she and her husband, Karṇāmṛta Dāsa, pay their respects at the site known as “the sixty-four samādhis area.” At right: making friends with a camel on a Vṛndāvana thoroughfare. Below: the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma deities at ISKCON’s Vṛndāvana temple.



Karṇāmṛta Dāsa

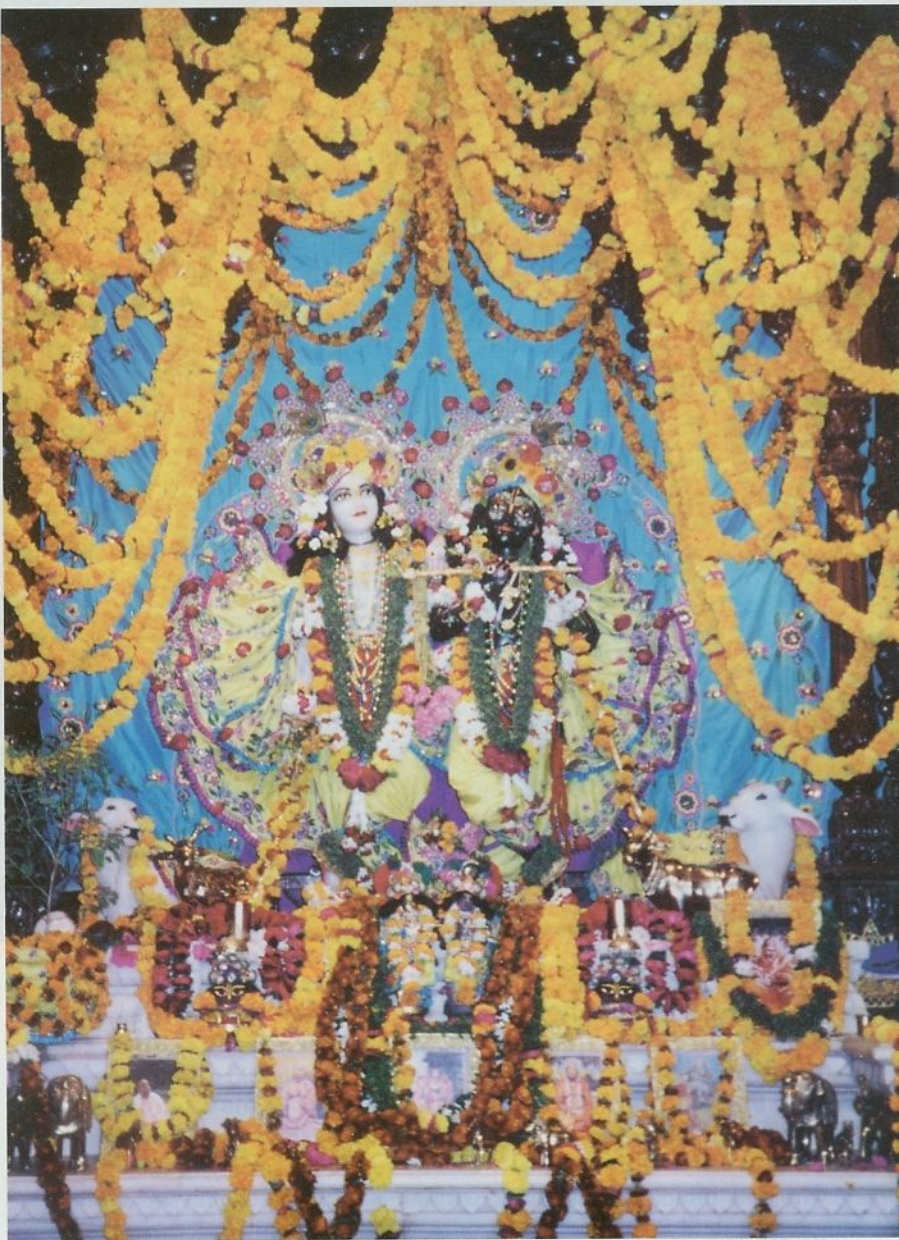
I for one don't have such spiritual vision. After twenty years I reenter Vṛndāvana with mixed emotions. I haven't transcended the material plane. I'm put off by some features and charmed by others. But I believe that with purified vision one can see the real Vṛndāvana beyond the external covering, the Vṛndāvana of spiritual *cintāmaṇi* gems and wish-fulfilling trees.

Because I've become a little purified from practicing *bhakti-yoga* for the past twenty-five years, I can detect the increased intensity of spiritual energy at this holy place. When we arrive at the Krishna-Balarāma Temple, I'm flooded with feelings of gratitude at having been allowed to come despite my disqualification. I enter the *samādhi* (shrine) of my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda. After paying respects and gazing at the bright brass form of Prabhupāda, I pray to deepen my relationship with him and Kṛṣṇa's holy name. I pray to develop humility and compassion for others. That's why I've come to this holy place: to receive spiritual blessings from my spiritual master and all the eternal residents of Vṛndāvana.

I also pray that I can accept whatever form of mercy the Lord gives me here. We have a tendency to discriminate between mercy we like (e.g., receiving a plate of delicious *prasādam* sweets) and mercy we don't like (e.g., getting sick or injuring our body). I expect to get both kinds of mercy and remind myself that everything Kṛṣṇa does is for our highest good.

After praying to Prabhupāda, my husband and I go to see the gorgeous deities in the Krishna-Balarāma Temple. The temple is in the section of Vṛndāvana known as Raman Reti, where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Their cowherd boyfriends, would play as children. For this reason, the center altar sports beautiful black Kṛṣṇa and His older brother, Balarāma, who rests His graceful white arm on Kṛṣṇa's dark shoulder. On the left altar stand the most merciful incarnations of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma: Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. Flanking Them are nearly life-sized white marble forms of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

(please turn to page 35)



Karṇāmṛta Dāsa

# KARNA'S CHOICE

*A tragic figure of the Mahābhārata had to decide between Kṛṣṇa's pleasure and his own prestige.*

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

**W**HY DID MY FATHER have me serve sage Durvāsā?" Princess Kuntī wondered as she prepared to put her firstborn son into a basket in the river.

Durvāsā had been a difficult guest to host. He would ask for a meal to be ready at 2:00, but then he wouldn't arrive until midnight. Or he'd ask for something and then refuse it. Always unpredictable and irritable, he had stayed with Kuntī's family for a year. He had great powers, and if even slightly displeased, he might curse his host. The stories of his curses were legendary. But Princess Kuntī, her heart full of love for the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, was able to peacefully tolerate the sage's moods and earned his gratitude.

"What gift would you like?" asked Durvāsā, who had extraordinary powers to bless.

"I am content," Kuntī replied, "but maybe in the future I'll need something. Please give me something that will benefit me."

The sage gave her a mantra and told her, "The celestial controllers will be forced to come to you when you chant this."

Sometime later, as she sat alone, Princess Kuntī thought, "Let's see."

She recited the mantra while thinking of the sun. To her surprise its deity appeared, his radiance filling the room. To her greater surprise he told her that the mantra obliged him to have a child with her.

Now, remembering all this as her baby floated down the river, the young Kuntī cried.

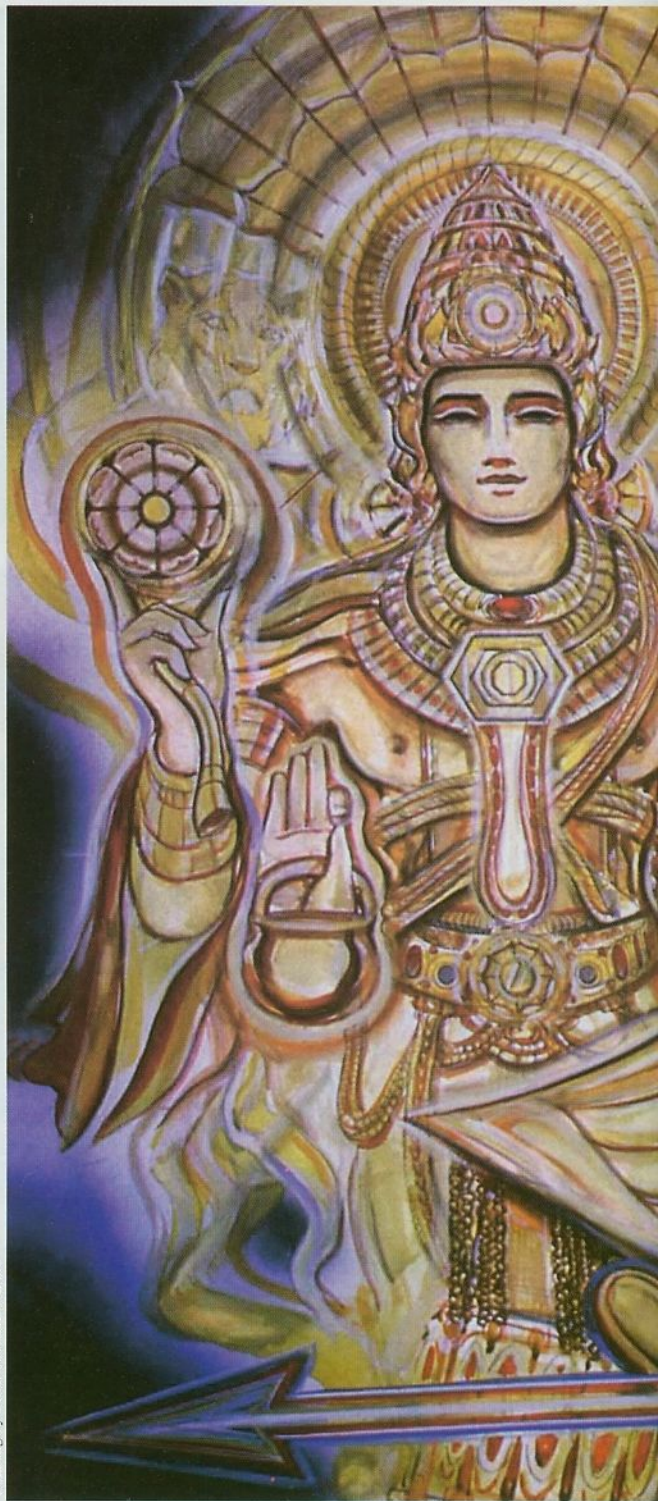
The sun-god had transformed her back into a maiden and arranged for the child to be born with mystical armor and earrings as part of his body. He would be known as Karṇa.

After her marriage to Emperor Pāṇḍu, Kuntī used her mantra again. Pāṇḍu was cursed to die if he attempted to have a child. So he requested Kuntī to have children by *devas* (demigods) on his behalf, and she agreed.

When King Pāṇḍu died, Kuntī lived with their five young sons under the care of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu's older brother, who was blind. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was acting regent until Pāṇḍu's oldest

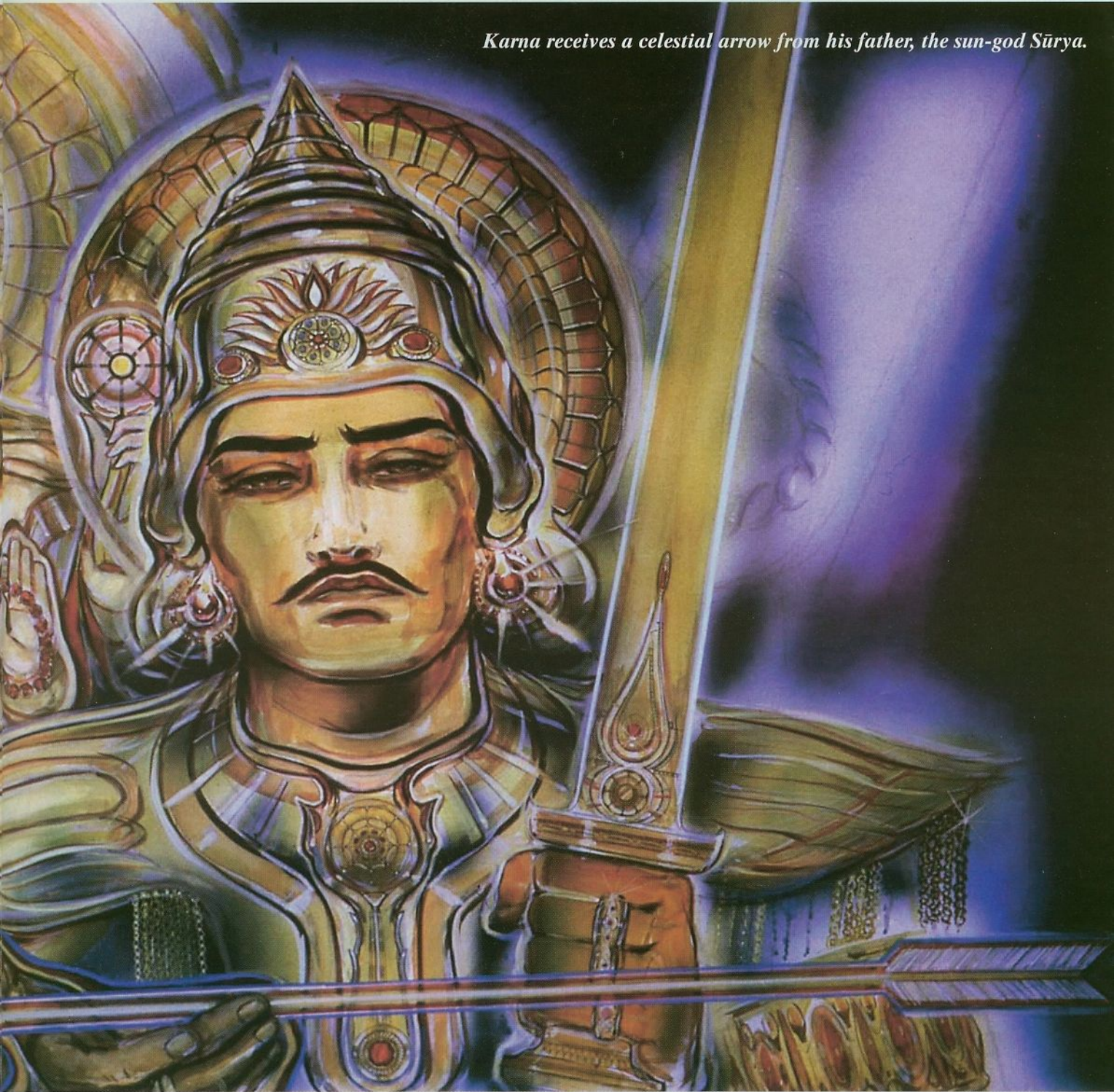
son, Yudhiṣṭhira, would come of age. But Dhṛtarāṣṭra had his own sons, and the oldest, Duryodhana, felt that he, not Yudhiṣṭhira, should get the throne.

The cousins—Pāṇḍu's and Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons—had as their graduation exercise a public display of their skill with weapons, including mystic, subtle ones unknown to our modern, suppos-



Painting by Bhaktisiddhanta Dāsa





edly more advanced, technology. Kuntī's son Arjuna showed such extraordinary skill that the people were entranced.

Then Karṇa, his bodily luster noticeable even in the bright sunlight, sauntered into the arena, proclaiming that he could show skill greater than Arjuna's.

"Who are you?" the teachers asked. "Who is your family?"

Karṇa looked down. He would not be permitted to show his skills unless he was royalty, but he had been raised as the son of a charioteer.

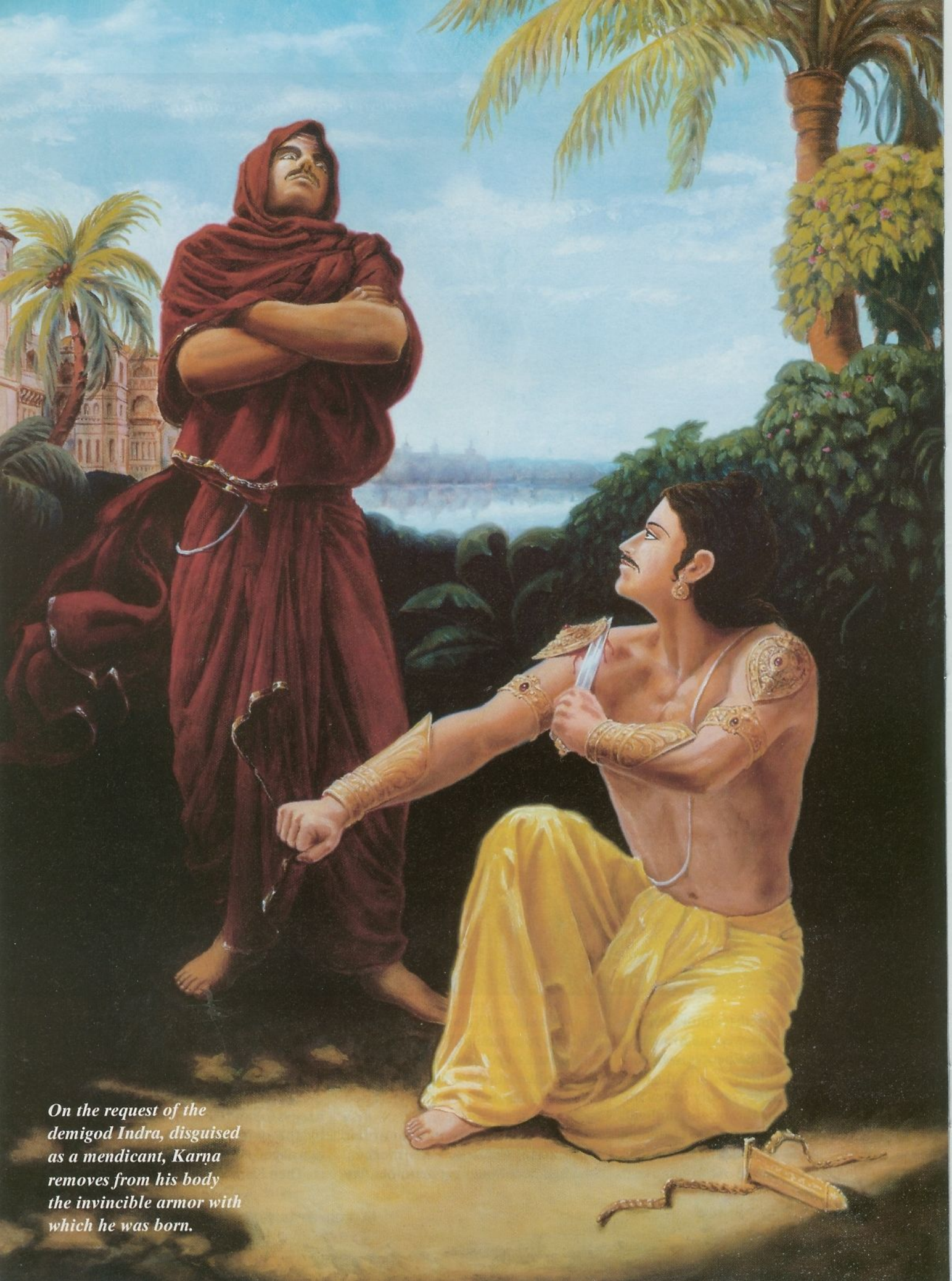
Karṇa's distinctive natural armor and earrings shocked his mother, who had been watching her other five

sons in their glory.

"My son!" she thought. "Oh, he is alive—a young man asking to be recognized as royalty!"

But out of shame, she couldn't bring herself to say, "He is my son, conceived by the deity of the sun before my marriage."

Then Karṇa's fortunes changed.



*On the request of the demigod Indra, disguised as a mendicant, Karna removes from his body the invincible armor with which he was born.*

Duryodhana came into the arena and declared, "As the acting king's oldest son, I award this son of a charioteer kingship over the province Anga."

Kuntī ached to know the story of her son, now a king. He didn't know how much she pined for him. But, then, he didn't know her at all. The parents he knew lived by the Ganges and had found him floating in a basket. His natural armor, earrings, and luster were unusual. Yet the childless couple raised him as their own with affection. His adoptive father was a servant to warriors, a chariot driver. But Karṇa wanted to be more than that. He wanted to be a warrior, or even a king.

But a chariot driver couldn't dream of governing. Although the sacred *Vedas* and their corollaries state that inclination and training, not birth and family, should determine one's occupation and social status, the cycle of ages was shifting into our present time of materialism and ignorance, and superficial bodily considerations were replacing knowledge of the inner self. Society would dictate that Karṇa, like the man everyone thought was his father, was to be a servant, at best a warrior's servant.

But Karṇa's nature was stronger than circumstances, and his adoptive father had found a teacher to impart military and political skills to the boy. Karṇa had learned those arts well. But he often thought of those born into royalty. How lucky they were! How the public adored them! When Karṇa had finished his training, he had heard of the graduation of the famous Pāṇḍava princes.

"Let me go there," he had thought, "and I will show the public that I am as qualified as these much-praised princes."

Now Karṇa was royalty by decree!

His voice quavering and his eyes moist, Karṇa turned to Duryodhana, confident that now all his desires would be fulfilled. He placed his massive, muscular arms around his benefactor and swore lifelong devotion.

Unfortunately, Duryodhana wasn't a benefactor in the true sense. He gave to get in return. He wanted Kuntī's sons to have no chance to rule, and he thought that Karṇa could help him win a military coup if necessary. Karṇa

had promised loyalty without knowing the nature of his new friend.

Meanwhile, Kuntī felt trapped. If she had revealed Karṇa's identity, he'd not have sworn allegiance to Duryodhana. What kind of a man would Duryodhana be when even as a child he had attempted to poison her children to secure his own position? What joy to see her lost child, now a king! But what sorrow to have him in such company.

"Why was my son so eager for a kingdom that he would make friends with whoever would give it to him? A noble person cares more for pleasing Lord Kṛṣṇa than for personal reputation."

Seeking Kṛṣṇa's guidance and protection, and wishing the best for Karṇa, Kuntī returned with her other sons to the palace.

## DURYODHANA'S TREACHERY

As the many years passed, Duryodhana tried to kill his cousins and Kuntī. He had a flammable palace built for them, and arranged to burn it when they slept. But they escaped, and with the help of a powerful king, they returned for the kingdom.

Karṇa stood by his friend Duryodhana and suggested that the returning princes be given some useless land to rule. But Kuntī's sons turned that land into a place like heaven, because they were friends of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who had incarnated to establish governments of righteous people. Duryodhana could burn a palace and give the pious, rightful rulers a desert to govern, because the Lord does not interfere with our freedom.

## To Lord Kṛṣṇa

(during the fight between Karṇa and Arjuna)

The bowstrings twang  
Flash! Arrows sang  
Your glory as the fight's begun—  
Arjuna fights the sun-god's son.  
The weapons blaze upon the sky  
As soldiers, stunned, are standing by  
And cowards flee away from fear  
While You, Kṛṣṇa, are sitting near.  
No one's plans can conquer You  
Or anyone who serves You true  
For what You want will come to pass  
While plans of demons cannot last.  
Your face far brighter than the moon  
Shines benediction on Arjuna  
But also graces Kuntī's son  
Who is not known to anyone.  
As wheels rumble the dusty ground  
Hardly anyone is found  
Who cannot help but stop and stare  
As divine weapons clash in air.  
Who will You save and who defeat?  
Both conquer fear with no retreat.  
Then! Ground bites Karṇa's chariot wheel,  
Knowledge of war his guru does steal.  
Arjuna remembers the death of his son—  
For dharma another battle is won.

—*Ūrmilā Devi Dāsī*

Yet Kṛṣṇa's desire always triumphs, regardless of our actions. Yudhiṣṭhira not only became king of a paradise, but later received the recognition of all kings as world emperor.

Then Duryodhana, Karṇa beside him, challenged Yudhiṣṭhira to gamble. The warriors' code forbade refusing a challenge. And because Yudhiṣṭhira's uncle Dhṛtarāṣṭra invited him, playing meant obeying an elder. Duryodhana was obviously cheating, and Yudhiṣṭhira gambled away all—his empire, his brothers, and his wife, Draupadī. Gloating, Duryodhana and Karṇa mocked Draupadī as their slave. Yudhiṣṭhira then won back his family, but they were obliged to go into exile for thirteen years.

Karṇa and Duryodhana took over Yudhiṣṭhira's palaces, including the famous hall of illusions. They usurped his kingdom and wealth. Kuntī, who stayed at the palace, would hear how

they would laugh and tell each other, “When they finish their exile, let’s arrange to send them back to the forest for thirteen more years!”

Lord Kṛṣṇa helped Kuntī’s sons many times during their exile, and then Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers returned, asking for their kingdom. Kṛṣṇa was their messenger for peace, humbly begging Duryodhana for at least five villages, one for each of the brothers to rule.

“Not enough land for them to stick a pin into!” Duryodhana replied. “Let them fight for it if they want it! With

fighters such as Karṇa on my side, who can defeat me?”

If Karṇa could be induced to break his bond with Duryodhana, then perhaps the usurper’s confidence would be eroded. So Kṛṣṇa showed Duryodhana and his court, including Karṇa, His form as the universe, encompassing all time and space and blazing with searing light. But Duryodhana remained unmoved. Let the Lord of all give support to his enemies! He would conquer through strength and cleverness.

Then Kṛṣṇa privately approached Karṇa.

“Do you know who you are?”

Karṇa stood straight and looked at the Lord.

“A chariot driver’s son,” he replied. “The king of Anga, and the friend of Duryodhana.”

“Do you know your real family?” Kṛṣṇa asked.

Karṇa shifted and looked down.

“You are the elder brother of Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, whom Duryodhana has envied and cheated. You were born to their mother before her marriage.”

His lifelong enemies—enemies be-

## Mysteries of Karṇa’s Life and Death

KARṂA IS AN enigmatic figure in the *Mahābhārata*, the ancient world history. An illegitimate child abandoned at birth and scorned for his supposed lower-caste status, he seems an innocent victim. He is sometimes praised for his loyalty to Duryodhana, which continued even after he understood that his mentor was an envious, ruthless murderer who would lose everything. Karṇa’s spiritually glorious death in Kṛṣṇa’s presence seems a vindication of his life’s choices, but it is a further mystery: Why would Kṛṣṇa grant salvation to such an evil man?

First, no one is truly a victim. Our birth and circumstances result from our own actions in previous lives. If one commits a crime and is put in jail, the bad atmosphere there is no excuse to continue or worsen one’s behavior. Yes, it is harder to be virtuous in jail, but the hardship is self-imposed.

Next, no praiseworthy quality can be judged independently of circumstances. Karṇa pledged fealty to Duryodhana not because he thought he had found a worthy master, but because Duryodhana granted him the honor and respect he craved. Here is a lesson to those

throughout history who have blindly sworn allegiance to a leader for personal gain, or perhaps thinking they would benefit their society. “I was following orders” or “I swore to obey” are not proper defenses against criminal charges. Better to break one’s vow than to continue to serve evil in the name of truthfulness.

Finally, Kṛṣṇa’s liberation of Karṇa operates on a platform of spiritual logic. Salvation is not the result of having done good or evil deeds. Rather, both good and evil deeds lead to further rebirth, not freedom. Freedom from rebirth and attainment of one’s original spiritual form result from having Kṛṣṇa as the focus of one’s attention and love. Generally, only one who gives up evil can have such a focus. In fact, we could define evil as that which turns one away from Kṛṣṇa. But in rare cases a person concentrates on the Lord in spite of his or her demonic actions. Absorption in Kṛṣṇa is so powerfully purifying—especially at death—that it can turn to love of God in a moment and nullify all previous evil. One must not intentionally live a bad life with the hope of remembering Kṛṣṇa at the end; such a plan is an offense to the Lord and will be unsuccessful. But Kṛṣṇa’s greatness is revealed by the examples of those who became perfect in their last mo-

ments when their ill-motivated attention on Him suddenly turned to devotion.

In Karṇa’s case, the pure devotee Kuntī always wanted his spiritual welfare. Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with the love of His devotees by giving mercy to those for whom they pray. While some may interpret such actions as partiality, they are in fact simply reciprocation: to those who give all to Kṛṣṇa, He gives all in return. Kṛṣṇa also showed His impartiality by giving salvation to all who died seeing Him, whether friends or enemies.

In many ways, Karṇa represents the rebellious, conditioned souls. We are Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual children, heirs to a life of eternal, always-increasing pleasure and knowledge in His kingdom. But we think ourselves permanent members of families in this world. We give our loyalty and service here, and we think ourselves good because of that. When Kṛṣṇa asks for our obedience and love, we refuse, citing our many responsibilities. Although our material plans and loyalties have no lasting value, we cling to them rather than rejoin our real home and family. But if, like Karṇa, we can get the blessings and mercy of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa such as Kuntī, we can come to our real life even before death, and see that the Lord is with us always.

***“Your considerations are selfish, Karṇa,”  
Kṛṣṇa said. “You think you deserve acclaim and honor,  
and whoever gives you those is your friend.”***



cause they were Duryodhana’s rivals—were his younger brothers? His mother was a queen? No. But Kṛṣṇa is God; He’s all-knowing . . .

“And my father?” Karṇa finally asked.

“Your father is the celestial being who rules the sun. You may know that the *devas* fathered Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers on Pāṇḍu’s behalf. Out of curiosity, when Kuntī was still quite young she called for the sun’s deity. Your luster and natural armor are signs of your celestial origin.”

“They abandoned me,” said Karṇa, “and now that they are threatened they want my allegiance? I will stick to Duryodhana, who gave me wealth and power.”

“Your considerations are selfish, Karṇa,” Kṛṣṇa said. “You think you deserve acclaim and honor, and whoever gives you those is your friend. Don’t you see that Yudhiṣṭhira has always been truthful, wise, and concerned for the people’s welfare, whereas Duryodhana has cared only for his own position? Disregard your own pleasure and go to the side of truth.”

“Duryodhana gave me a kingdom,” Karṇa replied. “Pāṇḍu’s sons have given me nothing but scorn. They consider me a servant’s son only. Why should I now embrace them as brothers?”

Kṛṣṇa wanted to give Karṇa spiritual life, the highest pleasure, but He doesn’t interfere with our will. He then offered Karṇa a lower reward.

“Karṇa, as the oldest of Pāṇḍu’s sons you will have the first right to world rule if Yudhiṣṭhira regains his empire. As soon as he knows your true identity, he will give you the world and serve you obediently.”

“I will honor my pledge of loyalty to my friend Duryodhana,” Karṇa said, “even if it means I die in battle and fight against the true emperor and against Your wishes.”

Kṛṣṇa lets us get the results of our

choices. He left Karṇa to his thoughts and returned to Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers.

### **A MOTHER’S REQUEST**

Meanwhile, Kuntī also thought, like Kṛṣṇa, to bring Karṇa to his blood family. Karṇa had vowed that anyone who came with a request during his worship would get their desire granted if it was within his power. Kuntī came at that time, without fanfare or royal dress.

“Beggar,” he asked her, “what do you want?”

“I am your mother,” she said, telling him her story and taking his head in her lap.

How Kuntī cried to hold her son for the first time since his birth!

“Come,” she said, making the same offer as had Kṛṣṇa. “Your brothers will recognize you as the elder and give you the empire of the earth.”

“Ask for something else, mother who abandoned me at birth,” said Karṇa. “You cannot ask me to join you now.”

“Then do not kill your younger brothers in the upcoming war,” she pleaded.

“I cannot agree to that, either,” Karṇa replied. “I have pledged to fight for Duryodhana. But I promise that I won’t kill more than one of my brothers. If I live and one of my brothers dies, you’ll still have five sons. It is as the mother of five sons that the world knows you.”

The war came, a great war that involved most of the world’s armies.

Karṇa came before Arjuna on the battlefield. Facing Arjuna meant also facing his chariot driver, the Supreme Lord. Kṛṣṇa had asked Karṇa to join the side of truth, and now Kṛṣṇa was opposing him directly. Even now, if Karṇa accepted Kṛṣṇa’s will the Lord would give him all protection. But Karṇa stuck to his vow of loyalty.

“Stand and fight!” Arjuna called.

The two opponents were so evenly matched that neither could gain the advantage. Karṇa, however, was burdened. Before the battle, the celestial king Indra, Arjuna’s father, had asked Karṇa for his armor during the time of Karṇa’s worship. Cutting it off his body, Karṇa deprived himself of protection. Earlier in life, to gain an education as a warrior, he had deceived his teacher about his parentage. When his teacher discovered the lie, he cursed Karṇa to forget his military knowledge at the most crucial moment.

When Karṇa’s chariot ran into a rut and he got down to free it, Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna to kill his foe.

“But when he’s not fighting, the code forbids it,” Arjuna countered.

“Didn’t Karṇa support Duryodhana when he burned your house, insulted your wife, and cheated you of your kingdom?” Kṛṣṇa replied. “Didn’t he break the code to kill your son? A cheater should be cheated. Kill him!”

Seeing Arjuna reach for his weapons, Karṇa left aside the wheel and tried to invoke divine missiles, but he couldn’t remember the method. A moment later, he lay dead.

Kṛṣṇa teaches that one who dies remembering Him attains his own original, divine nature. Karṇa, dying while seeing the face of God, got such a benediction. Still, he had caused much suffering to himself and society by blindly following a promise of faithfulness to an evil man for the sake of his own prestige. As Kuntī openly mourned him at the end of the day, her other sons lamented that their brother had unnecessarily become their enemy. ☸

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**“If you have got another actual name for God,  
then you can chant that. We are requesting this:  
‘Chant God’s holy name.’”**



**GOD HIMSELF IS TEACHING**

(continued from page 15)

**Interviewer:** Is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy compatible with the Hindu religion?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Any religion.

**Interviewer:** Any religion.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Because God is one. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the science of God. Two plus two equals four—it is understood by everyone. Not that it is to be understood by the Christians and not by the Hindus. Two plus two equals four is a fact for everyone. Similarly, God is a fact for everyone. Now, when it comes to the method for loving God, this is the only process.

**Interviewer:** Now, do you claim, then, that your way of loving God is the way to love God?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. At least for this age.

**Interviewer:** For this age?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** You mean for Kali-yuga?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** For the time we live in right now?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Because the method is authorized. Kṛṣṇa prescribes this—Kṛṣṇa Himself in His original form, and also in His manifestation as Lord Caitanya. He says that in this age this is the only method for self-realization, or for God realization, or to learn how to love God.

He says. Kṛṣṇa says. Therefore, it is authorized. And it is practically happening. Otherwise, these boys and girls—they’re foreigners. They never knew Kṛṣṇa. But now I have got sixty centers, and in each center there are, on average, a hundred devotees. And they have dedicated their life. So how is it happening, unless it is authorized?

**Interviewer:** Well, you know, they say they never knew Kṛṣṇa, and you are, of course, right. But different people

name their Gods in different ways. You name your God Kṛṣṇa. In the Western world many, many people name their God Jesus.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. That’s all right. We say in that connection that if you have got a name which is actually referring to God, that will also do—just as we are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare . . .

**Interviewer:** Right. Yes.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So according to the Vedic literature, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavan svayam*: “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” He has got many names, thousands and millions of names. This is the original name. So Lord Caitanya says that you have to chant Kṛṣṇa, but if you have got another actual name for God, then chant that. We are not asking that you chant Kṛṣṇa. If you have got another actual name for God, then you can chant that. We are requesting this: “Chant God’s holy name.”

**Interviewer:** But before, when you came here—now, you came here in the middle sixties, less than a decade ago—what . . . what was it . . . this is what I’m trying to find out from you . . . what was the motivating force behind your coming to the United States?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is already explained. Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted that this propaganda be made all over the world—and that people will accept. And my Guru Mahārāja said to me, “You go and try to do this.” So I came with this purpose, and it is becoming fulfilled.

**Interviewer:** There must have been an element, though, of dissatisfaction on your part with the way God was being professed in this part of the world before you came. Otherwise, there would have been no sense in your coming.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Dissatisfied not just with this part of the world. Every part.

In every part of the world, practically everyone—very little interest in God. There’s more interest in dog.

**Interviewer:** You are trying to increase the interest in God. Is that correct?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. That is the only interest we must have in human life.

**Interviewer:** And you were not particularly interested in what name this God has.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, no. Our purpose or mission is that people may become God conscious. And the process is, in this age, chanting the holy name of God. If you have got any name for God which is actually a name of God, then you’ll be successful by chanting that.

**Interviewer:** The chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s name, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, seems to play a very important role in the profession of your religious belief. Right? In fact, I think I will ask you—and some of your followers who are sitting here with us tonight—a little bit later to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa. That probably would be a proper ending to this particular program.

However, I’m still wondering, you know, about some of the aspects. In reading a little bit—and I have not read much, of course—but in reading a little bit of your writings in your magazine and your other publications, it seems to me, sir, that there is a very high emphasis placed on the relationship between the individual and God.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. That is for everyone.

**Interviewer:** In fact, there seems to be more emphasis on that relationship than on the relationship between one individual and another individual. Am I right in that?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. We have to re-establish first our lost relationship with God. You see? Then we can understand what is the relationship between one individual and another. ❁

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

# THE LORD OF SACRIFICE

*While listing the descendants of Svāyambhuva Manu, the sage Maitreya describes the incarnations known as Lord Yajña and His consort, Dakṣiṇā.*

## CANTO 4: CHAPTER 1

4 यस्तयोः पुरुषः साक्षाद्विष्णुर्यज्ञस्वरूपधृक्  
या स्त्री सा दक्षिणा भूतेरंशभूतानपायिनी

*yas tayoh puruṣaḥ sāksād  
viṣṇur yajña-svarūpa-dhṛk  
yā strī sā dakṣiṇā bhūter  
aṁśa-bhūtānapāyini*

*yah*—one who; *tayoh*—out of them; *puruṣaḥ*—male; *sāk-  
ṣāt*—directly; *viṣṇu*—the Supreme Lord; *yajña*—Yajña;  
*svarūpa-dhṛk*—accepting the form; *yā*—the other; *strī*—  
female; *sā*—she; *dakṣiṇā*—Dakṣiṇā; *bhūteḥ*—of the god-  
dess of fortune; *aṁśa-bhūtā*—being a plenary expansion;  
*anapāyini*—never to be separated.

Of the two children born of Ākūti, the male child was directly an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His name was Yajña, which is another name of Lord Viṣṇu. The female child was a partial incarnation of Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, the eternal consort of Lord Viṣṇu.

PURPORT: Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, is the eternal consort of Lord Viṣṇu. Here it is stated that both the Lord

and Lakṣmī, who are eternal consorts, appeared from Ākūti simultaneously. Both the Lord and His consort are beyond this material creation, as confirmed by many authorities (*nārāyaṇaḥ paro ’vyaktāt*); therefore their eternal relationship cannot be changed, ❶ and Yajña, the boy born of Ākūti, later married the goddess of fortune.

5 आनिन्ये स्वगृहं पुत्र्याः पुत्रं विततरोचिषम्  
स्वायम्भुवो मुदा युक्तो रुचिर्जग्राह दक्षिणाम्

*āninye sva-grham putryāḥ  
putram vitata-rociṣam  
svāyambhuvo mudā yukto  
rucir jagrāha dakṣiṇām*

*āninye*—brought to; *sva-grham*—home; *putryāḥ*—born of the daughter; *putram*—the son; *vitata-rociṣam*—very powerful; *svāyambhuvaḥ*—the Manu named Svāyambhuva; *mudā*—being very pleased; *yuktaḥ*—with; *rucir*—the great sage Ruci; *jagrāha*—kept; *dakṣiṇām*—the daughter named Dakṣiṇā.

**(1) What is the name of the incarnation of the Lord who appeared as the son of Ākūti?**

**Svāyambhuva Manu very gladly brought home the beautiful boy named Yajña, and Ruci, his son-in-law, kept with him the daughter, Dakṣiṇā.**

**PURPORT:** Svāyambhuva Manu was very glad to see that his daughter Ākūti had given birth to both a boy and girl. He was afraid that he would take one son and that because of this his son-in-law Ruci might be sorry. Thus when he heard that a daughter was born along with the boy, he was very glad. ❷ Ruci, according to his promise, returned his male child to Svāyambhuva Manu and decided to keep the daughter, whose name was Dakṣiṇā.

❸ One of Lord Viṣṇu's names is Yajña because He is the master of the *Vedas*. The name Yajña comes from *yajuṣām patih*, which means "Lord of all sacrifices." In the *Yajur Veda* there are different ritualistic prescriptions for performing *yajñas*, and the beneficiary of all such *yajñas* is the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu. Therefore it is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.9), *yajñārthāt karmaṇaḥ*: one should act, but one should perform one's prescribed duties only for the sake of Yajña, or Viṣṇu. If one does not act for the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or if one does not perform devotional service, then there will be reactions to all one's activities. It does not matter if the reaction is good or bad; if our activities are not dovetailed with the desire of the Supreme Lord, or if we do not act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then we shall be responsible for the results of all our activities. ❹ There is always a reaction to every kind of action, but if actions are performed for Yajña, there is no reaction. Thus if one acts for Yajña, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one is not entangled in the material condition, for it is mentioned in the *Vedas* and also in *Bhagavad-gītā* that the *Vedas* and the Vedic rituals are all meant for understanding the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. From the very beginning one should try to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; that will free one from the reactions of material activities.

6 तां कामयानां भगवानुवाह यजुषां पतिः  
तुष्ट्यां तोषमापन्नोऽजनयद् द्वादशात्मजान्

*tām kāmāyānām bhagavān  
uvāha yajuṣām patih*

**(2) What is the name of the incarnation of Lakṣmī who appeared as the daughter of Ākūti?**

**(3) Why is the Lord called Yajña?**

**(4) What kind of action is free from karmic reaction?**

**(5) Why is there is no peace and prosperity in the present-day world?**

*tuṣṭyām toṣam āpanno  
janayat dvādaśātmajān*

*tām*—her; *kāmāyānām*—desiring; *bhagavān*—the Lord; *uvāha*—married; *yajuṣām*—of all sacrifices; *patih*—master; *tuṣṭyām*—in His wife, who was very much pleased; *toṣam*—great pleasure; *āpannaḥ*—having obtained; *ajanayat*—gave birth; *dvādaśa*—twelve; *ātmajān*—sons.

**The Lord of the ritualistic performance of yajña later married Dakṣiṇā, who was anxious to have the Personality of Godhead as her husband, and in this wife the Lord was also very much pleased to beget twelve children.**

**PURPORT:** An ideal husband and wife are generally called Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa to compare them to the Lord and the goddess of fortune, for it is significant that Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa are forever happy as husband and wife. A wife should always remain satisfied with her husband, and a husband should always remain satisfied with his wife. In the *Cāṇakya-śloka*, the moral instructions of Cāṇakya Paṇḍita, it is said that if a husband and wife are always satisfied with one another, then the goddess of fortune automatically comes. In other words, where there is no disagreement between husband and wife, all material opulence is present, and good children are born. Generally, according to Vedic civilization, the wife is trained to be satisfied in all conditions, and the husband, according to Vedic instruction, is required to please the wife with sufficient food, ornaments and clothing. Then, if they are satisfied with their mutual dealings, good children are born. ❺ In this way the entire world can become peaceful, but unfortunately in this age of Kali there are no ideal husbands and wives; therefore unwanted children are produced, and there is no peace and prosperity in the present-day world.

7 तोषः प्रतोषः संतोषो भद्रः शान्तिरिडस्पतिः  
इध्मः कविर्विभुः स्वहः सुदेवो रोचनो द्विषट्

*toṣaḥ pratoṣaḥ santoṣo  
bhadraḥ śāntir iḍaspatih  
idhmaḥ kavir vibhuḥ svahnaḥ  
sudevo rocano dvi-ṣaṭ*

*toṣaḥ*—Toṣa; *pratoṣaḥ*—Pratoṣa; *santoṣaḥ*—Santoṣa; *bhadraḥ*—Bhadra; *śāntih*—Śānti; *iḍaspatih*—Iḍaspati; *idhmaḥ*—Idhma; *kaviḥ*—Kavi; *vibhuḥ*—Vibhu; *svahnaḥ*—Svahna; *sudevaḥ*—Sudeva; *rocanaḥ*—Rocana; *dviṣaṭ*—twelve.

**The twelve boys born of Yajña and Dakṣiṇā were named Toṣa, Pratoṣa, Santoṣa, Bhadra, Śānti, Iḍaspati, Idhma, Kavi, Vibhu, Svahna, Sudeva, and Rocana.**

8 तुषिता नाम ते देवा आसन् स्वायम्भुवान्तेरे  
मरीचिमिश्रा ऋषयो यज्ञः सुरगणेश्वरः



*tuṣitā nāma te devā  
āsan svāyambhuvāntare  
marīci-miśrā ṛṣayo  
yajñah sura-gaṇeśvarah*

*tuṣitāḥ*—the category of the Tuṣitas; *nāma*—of the name; *te*—all of them; *devāḥ*—demigods; *āsan*—became; *svāyambhuva*—the name of the Manu; *antare*—at that period; *marīci-miśrāḥ*—headed by Marīci; *ṛṣayah*—great sages; *yajñah*—the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu; *sura-gaṇa-īśvarah*—the king of the demigods.

**During the time of Svāyambhuva Manu, these sons all became the demigods collectively named the Tuṣitas. Marīci became the head of the seven ṛṣis, and Yajña became the king of the demigods, Indra.**

**PURPORT:** During the life of Svāyambhuva Manu, six kinds of living entities were generated from the demigods known as the Tuṣitas, from the sages headed by Marīci, and from descendants of Yajña, king of the demigods, and all of them expanded their progeny to observe the order of the Lord to fill the universe with living entities. These six kinds of living entities are known as *manus*, *devas*, *manu-putras*, *aṁśāvātāras*, *sureśvaras*, and *ṛṣis*. Yajña, being the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, became the leader of the demigods, Indra.

## 9 प्रियव्रतोत्तानपादौ मनुपुत्रौ महौजसौ तत्पुत्रपौत्रनप्तृणामनुवृत्तं तदन्तरम्

*priyavratottānapādau  
manu-putrau mahaujasau  
tat-putra-pautra-naptṛṇām  
anuvṛttam tad-antaram*

*priyavrata*—Priyavrata; *uttānapādau*—Uttānapāda; *manu-putrau*—sons of Manu; *mahā-ojasau*—very great, powerful; *tat*—their; *putra*—sons; *pautra*—grandsons; *naptṛṇām*—grandsons from the daughter; *anuvṛttam*—following; *tad-antaram*—in that Manu's period.

**Svāyambhuva Manu's two sons, Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, became very powerful kings, and their sons and grandsons spread all over the three worlds during that period.**

## 10 देवहूतिमदात्तात् कर्दमायात्मजां मनुः तत्सम्बन्धि श्रुतप्रायं भवता गदतो मम

*devahūtim adāt tāta  
kardamāyātmajāṁ manuḥ  
tat-sambandhi śruta-prāyaṁ  
bhavatā gadato mama*

*devahūtim*—Devahūti; *adāt*—handed over; *tāta*—my dear son; *kardamāya*—unto the great sage Kardama; *ātmajām*—daughter; *manuḥ*—Lord Svāyambhuva Manu; *tat-sambandhi*—in that connection; *śruta-prāyaṁ*—heard almost in full; *bhavatā*—by you; *gadataḥ*—spoken; *mama*—by me.

**My dear son, Svāyambhuva Manu handed over his very dear daughter Devahūti to Kardama Muni. I have already spoken to you about them, and you have heard about them almost in full.**

## 11 दक्षाय ब्रह्मपुत्राय प्रसूतिं भगवान्मनुः प्रायच्छद्यत्कृतः सर्गस्त्रिलोक्यां विततो महान्

*dakṣāya brahma-putrāya  
prasūtiṁ bhagavān manuḥ  
prāyacchad yat-kṛtaḥ sargas  
tri-lokyāṁ vitato mahān*

*dakṣāya*—unto Prajāpati Dakṣa; *brahma-putrāya*—the son of Lord Brahmā; *prasūtiṁ*—Prasūti; *bhagavān*—the great personality; *manuḥ*—Svāyambhuva Manu; *prāyacchat*—handed over; *yat-kṛtaḥ*—done by whom; *sargaḥ*—creation; *tri-lokyāṁ*—in the three worlds; *vitataḥ*—expanded; *mahān*—greatly.

**Svāyambhuva Manu handed over his daughter Prasūti to the son of Brahmā named Dakṣa, who was also one of the progenitors of the living entities. The descendants of Dakṣa are spread throughout the three worlds.**

## 12 याः कर्दमसुताः प्रोक्ता नव ब्रह्मर्षिपन्तयः तासां प्रसूतिप्रसवं प्रोच्यमानं निबोध मे

*yāḥ kardama-sutāḥ proktā  
nava brahmarṣi-patnyayāḥ  
tāsāṁ prasūti-prasavaṁ  
procyamānaṁ nibodha me*

*yāḥ*—those who; *kardama-sutāḥ*—the daughters of Kardama; *proktāṁ*—were mentioned; *nava*—nine; *brahmarṣi*—great sages of spiritual knowledge; *patnyayāḥ*—wives; *tāsāṁ*—their; *prasūti-prasavaṁ*—generations of sons and grandsons; *procyamānam*—describing; *nibodha*—try to understand; *me*—from me.

**You have already been informed about the nine daughters of Kardama Muni, who were handed over to nine different sages. I shall now describe the descendants of those nine daughters. Please hear from me.**

**PURPORT:** The Third Canto has already described how Kardama Muni begot nine daughters in Devahūti and how

all the daughters were later handed over to great sages like Marīci, Atri, and Vasiṣṭha.

13 पत्नी मरीचेस्तु कला सुषुवे कर्दमात्मजा  
कश्यपं पूर्णिमानं च ययोरापूरितं जगत्

*patnī marīceṣ tu kalā  
suṣuve kardamātmajā  
kaśyapaṁ pūrṇimānaṁ ca  
yayor āpūritaṁ jagat*

*patnī*—wife; *marīceḥ*—of the sage named Marīci; *tu*—also; *kalā*—named Kalā; *suṣuve*—gave birth; *kardama-ātmajā*—daughter of Kardama Muni; *kaśyapaṁ*—of the name Kaśyapa; *pūrṇimānaṁ ca*—and of the name Pūrṇimā; *yayor*—by whom; *āpūritaṁ*—spread all over; *jagat*—the world.

**Kardama Muni's daughter Kalā, who was married to Marīci, gave birth to two children, whose names were Kaśyapa and Pūrṇimā. Their descendants are spread all over the world.**

14 पूर्णिमासूत विरजं विश्वगं च परंतप  
देवकुल्यां हरेः पादशौचाघाभूत्सरिदिवः

*pūrṇimāsūta virajam  
viśvagam ca parantapa  
devakulyāṁ hareḥ pāda-  
śaucād yābhūt sarid divaḥ*

*pūrṇimā*—Pūrṇimā; *asūta*—begot; *virajam*—a son named Viraja; *viśvagam ca*—and named Viśvaga; *param-tapa*—O annihilator of enemies of; *devakulyā*—a daughter named Devakulyā; *hareḥ*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *pāda-śaucāt*—by the water which washed His lotus feet; *yā*—she; *abhūt*—became; *sarid divaḥ*—the transcendental water within the banks of the Ganges.

**My dear Vidura, of the two sons, Kaśyapa and Pūrṇimā, Pūrṇimā begot three children, namely Viraja, Viśvaga, and Devakulyā. Of these three, Devakulyā was the water which**

**(6) Which daughter of Kaśyapa and Pūrṇimā is the presiding deity of the River Ganges?**

**(7) Who are the three sons of Atri and Anasūyā?**

**washed the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead and which later on transformed into the Ganges of the heavenly planets.**

PURPORT: Of the two sons Kaśyapa and Pūrṇimā, herein Pūrṇimā's descendants are described. An elaborate description of these descendants will be given in the Sixth Canto.

⑥ It is also understood herein that Devakulyā is the presiding deity of the River Ganges, which comes down from the heavenly planets to this planet and is accepted to be sanctified because it touched the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari.

15 अत्रेः पत्न्यनसूया त्रीञ्जजे सुयशसः सुतान्  
दत्तं दुर्वाससं सोममात्मेशब्रह्मसम्भवान्

*atreḥ patny anasūyā trīṅ  
jajñe suyaśasaḥ sutān  
dattaṁ durvāsasaṁ somam  
ātmeśa-brahma-sambhavān*

*atreḥ*—of Atri Muni; *patnī*—wife; *anasūyā*—named Anasūyā; *trīṅ*—three; *jajñe*—bore; *su-yaśasaḥ*—very famous; *sutān*—sons; *dattaṁ*—Dattātreya; *durvāsasaṁ*—Durvāsā; *somam*—Soma (the moon-god); *ātma*—the Supersoul; *īśa*—Lord Śiva; *brahma*—Lord Brahmā; *sambhavān*—incarnations of.

**Anasūyā, the wife of Atri Muni, gave birth to three very famous sons—Soma, Dattātreya, and Durvāsā—who were partial representations of Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva, and Lord Brahmā. Soma was a partial representation of Lord Brahmā, Dattātreya was a partial representation of Lord Viṣṇu, and Durvāsā was a partial representation of Lord Śiva.**

PURPORT: In this verse we find the words *ātma-īśa-brahma-sambhavān*. *Ātma* means the Supersoul, or Viṣṇu, *īśa* means Lord Śiva, and *brahma* means the four-headed Lord Brahmā. ⑦ The three sons born of Anasūyā—Dattātreya, Durvāsā, and Soma—were born as partial representations of these three demigods. *Ātma* is not in the category of the demigods or living entities because He is Viṣṇu; therefore He is described as *vibhinnāṁśa-bhūtānām*. The Supersoul, Viṣṇu, is the seed-giving father of all living entities, including Brahmā and Lord Śiva. Another meaning of the word *ātma* may be accepted in this way: the principle who is the Supersoul in every *ātma*, or, one may say, the soul of everyone, became manifested as Dattātreya, because the word *aṁśa*, part and parcel, is used here.

[continued in the next issue]

# *I have come to Vṛndāvana to deepen my relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the form of His holy name.*

• • •

## COMING BACK

(continued from page 23)

On the right altar, exquisitely beautiful Rādhā-Śyāmasundara are lovingly served by Lalitā and Viśākhā, Their principal cowherd girlfriends. At home I often gaze at my photos of all these deities, but that doesn't compare to seeing them here in person.

The altar and the deities' clothing, jewelry, and other ornaments are a feast for my eyes. I breathe in the sweet aroma of the incense and listen to the melodious *kīrtana*. The sensually pleasing atmosphere in the temple startlingly contrasts with the sordid conditions of Vṛndāvana's commercial district. Prabhupāda understood his disciples' need for aesthetics and comfort, so he had this temple built to provide a favorable and pleasing atmosphere to help us take up the path of *bhakti-yoga*. In our pure state, to be fully absorbed in loving Kṛṣṇa we don't require any amenities, but before coming to that platform, we require so many things.

I have more appreciation this visit for the greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission. Inspired by the order of his spiritual master and deep compassion for suffering humanity, he left his quiet spiritual home here in Vṛndāvana to travel west to New York City, one of the most materialistic cities in the world. After successfully spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West, Prabhupāda returned to Vṛndāvana in 1970 to get land and start building a magnificent temple to attract devotees from all over the world. Now, twenty-four years after Prabhupāda's departure from this world, thousands of devotees from all over the world have come to Vṛndāvana and taken shelter of his Krishna-Balarama Temple, gaining spiritual strength to continue his mission. The temple is a tribute to Prabhupāda's greatness, his compassion, and his love for his spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa.

My eighteen-day visit to Vṛndāvana passes quickly. Days are filled with spiritual activities in the temple, visits to holy places where Kṛṣṇa performed pastimes five thousand years ago, shopping for devotional supplies to take back to the West, and associating with devotees from all over the world.

As I expected, the Lord's mercy comes in many forms. I get my share of intestinal problems, was well as a flu and a cold. But I get to speak with advanced devotees who inspire me with their realizations and their service to the Lord. I get to celebrate Govardhana Pūjā and Prabhupāda's Disappearance Day in the holiest of places in the world. I receive gifts and *prasādam* from devotees I meet. One devotee gives me a shawl that Rādhārāṇī wore on the altar. Another devotee brings my husband and me garlands from Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as we are leaving Vṛndāvana.

The greatest gift is the mornings I chanted attentive *japa* and felt a deeper connection with Kṛṣṇa's holy names than ever before. Although I would leave Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's holy names would be with me wherever I went. As Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana are identical, so are Kṛṣṇa and His holy names. I have come to Vṛndāvana to deepen my relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the form of His holy name, and I feel that the desire has been fulfilled.

## REFLECTIONS

While sitting in the New Delhi airport waiting for our 1:30 A.M. flight home, I reflect on things I will and won't miss about Vṛndāvana:

I won't miss the herds of monkeys that congregate almost everywhere.

I won't miss the hogs, the open sewers, and the garbage in the street.

I won't miss the firecrackers and other fireworks that exploded almost every night when I was trying to go to sleep.

I won't miss the polluted air and water.

I won't miss the bicycle-ricksha rides to Loi Bazaar or the taxi rides to Govardhana or New Delhi.

I will miss the beautiful Krishna-Balarama Temple, the decorative altars hung with canopies of fresh flower-garlands, and the exquisitely adorned forms of the Lord.

I will miss the melodious *kīrtanas* with hundreds of voices singing responsively together glorifying the Lord.

I will miss chanting in Prabhupāda's *samādhi* in the pre-dawn hours.

I will miss chanting in Prabhupāda's warm, cozy writing room.

I will miss going barefoot in the soft sands around Govardana Hill and seeing the white cows with lotus eyes that gather around us at Govinda Kund while we sing a soft *kīrtana*.

I will miss hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavam* class from so many mature devotees.

I will miss the little banana-leaf bowl full of warm *mahā-prasādam kitri* I buy at the end of class for five rupees.

I will miss the many sweet devotees who came to Vṛndāvana this holy month (Kārtika) and the stalwart residents I had the good fortune to meet.

I will miss having someone wash and iron my laundry each day for a few rupees.

I will miss the absence of mundane news.

I pray that Rādhārāṇī will allow me to return soon and some day go beyond the external Vṛndāvana. I hope that one day I will be able to see the eternal home of the Lord in all its beauty and splendor and engage in uninterrupted, unmotivated devotional service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. ☀

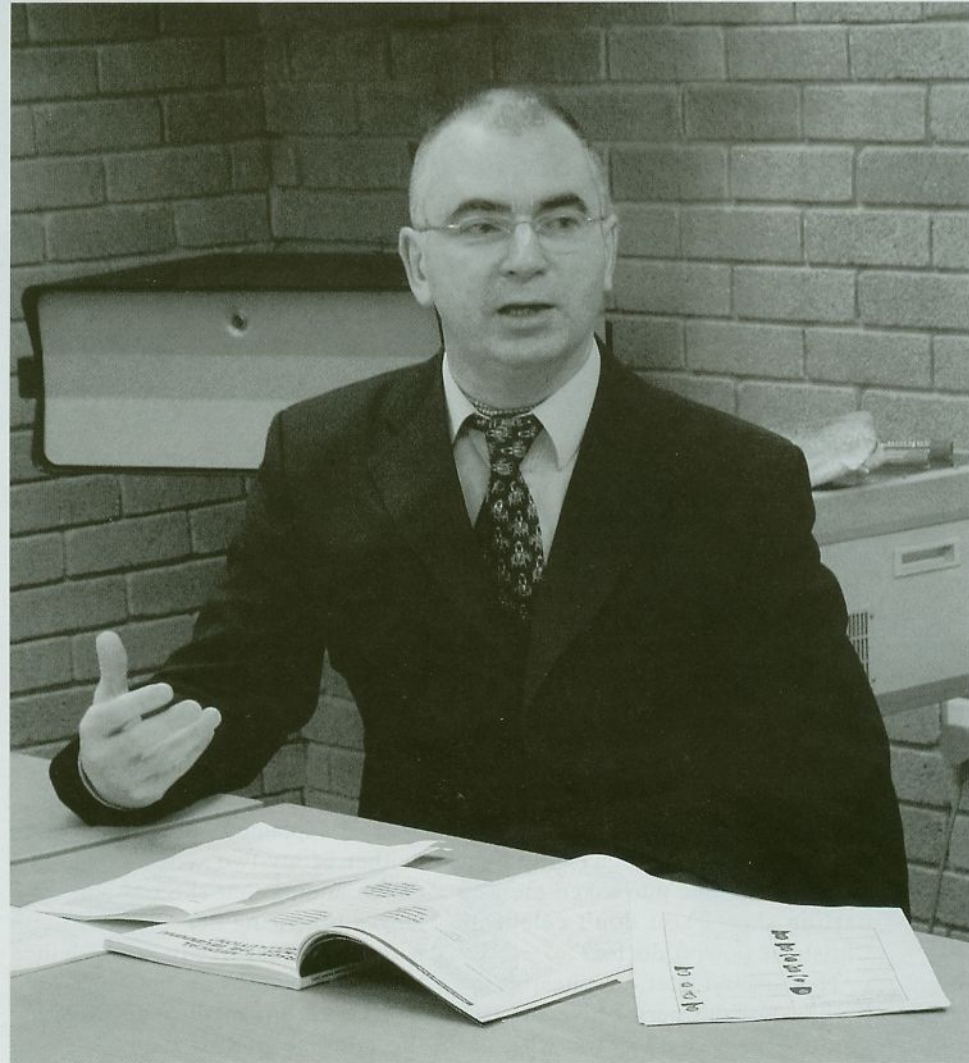
*Arcana-Siddhi Devī Dāsī was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1976. She lives with her husband and son in Baltimore, Maryland, where she works as a family therapist.*

# DOCTORS OF BODY AND SOUL

*Two doctors discover the benefits of doing their work while wearing tilaka, the symbol of the Lord, on their foreheads.*

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī  
(Dr. Heena Ghanshyambhai Patel)





*Dressed as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāśī (Dr. Patel) examines a patient (opposite page). At left, her husband, Puṇḍarīka Dāśa (Dr. Oliver), wears Vaiṣṇava tilaka while teaching medical students.*

Because of my father's strictness, my sisters and I were not allowed to cut our hair. I wore mine long, braided or tied in a bun. When my husband and I were newly qualified as doctors, a senior Indian colleague mentioned that the generation of Indian women with their traditional saris, ornaments, and embellishments was being threatened by a new generation that adopted Western dress styles. But we began to appreciate the abiding faithfulness in these practices shown by many middle-aged and, particularly, elderly Indian

women. There was something especially coherent, we sensed, in their maintaining their dress culture. It even seemed to help them cope with illness and family tragedies. Besides, they looked beautiful and dignified.

Our feelings were reinforced when we read Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions on Vedic dress codes. He said that his female disciples looked more beautiful when they dressed the Indian way. And he wrote that when devotees of Kṛṣṇa, men and women, were properly dressed—with *tilaka* on their bodies and beads in their hands and on their necks—they seemed to be coming from Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world.

The sari gradually became more and more my everyday attire, even in rain or snow. My grandmother, who came to England in 1966 and lived to 82, had never worn anything else. My mother,

**I**N ONE OF OUR FIRST meetings with His Holiness Śivarāma Swami Mahārāja, who is now our spiritual master, he instructed my husband and me, "Now you are doctors of the body. You should become doctors of the soul." Shortly after, he directed us to wear *tilaka* to work.

That was more than thirteen years ago, and his instruction to wear *tilaka* has given us many opportunities to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness in our daily lives. Our duties as general practitioners/family physicians are performed in our surgeries,\* in hospitals, and at a university medical school where we teach. We also visit patients in their homes and other residential institutions, such as homes for the elderly. We're parents too, so parental duties

take us into schools and shops, to children's activities, and into contact with other parents. We have come to appreciate all these situations as opportunities for spiritual exchanges.

### TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

When we first met Kṛṣṇa devotees, I was already accustomed to wearing the red *kumkum* dot on the forehead, as is done by married Indian women. From a young age I had learned that this would bring auspiciousness into our marriage. Daily, as I got used to applying it, whether I got dressed in a sari or in Western clothes, I prayed for my husband's continued welfare. I got used to people asking what it was for. Sometimes I would explain that it was like my wedding ring, solemnizing my marriage vows.

\*British for "doctors' offices"

# *We came to appreciate that anyone who happened to see this symbol of the Lord on our foreheads would get spiritual credit.*



who arrived seven years later, would take occasional exceptions to don Sulwar kameez, or trouser pants.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions on dress were not fanatical. His emphasis was always on dressing as a means for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He encouraged a disciple, about to address a group of scientists, to wear Western dress but keep his *tilaka* and *śikhā*—the tuft of hair on his otherwise shaven head.

Śrīla Prabhupāda compared the devotees' dress to that of a policeman: "Just like a policeman. As soon as he appears in his dress—'Oh! Here is a policeman!' So, similarly, these things—*tilaka*, neck beads, dress—are required to remind others. Our process is to raise persons to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So if by our symbolic representation one immediately remembers Kṛṣṇa, that is our success."

Recently I was inspired when listening to some girls who are part of the Bhaktivedanta Manor congregation. They want to embrace the practice of wearing a sari and *tilaka* in their daily lives. Most of them are students or professionals in mainstream British society. One girl, a Gujarati accountant, said that her biggest hurdle was her mother, who had felt pressured to adapt to the prevailing dress culture on her arrival to Britain.

## UNEASY WITH TILAKA

For me, the *tilaka* was more of a challenge than the sari. Early attempts by my husband and me to install the *tilaka* on the forehead did not always produce satisfying results: not straight enough, not always in the middle, the lines too thick or uneven. A lot would be peeling off by the time I reached my surgery. My spectacles would get in the way. My confidence would waver, and I'd rub most of it off. What were our staff members thinking? Colleagues?

Patients? What of those eye contacts that made a sudden diversion? My husband was asked, "Have you been decorating, doc? You have paint on your nose." The sweetest were the children and babies, who would just stare with frank eyes. Some parents would allow them to look on, or would enquire further. Others would rush off in embarrassment.

We began to realize that people's embarrassment was proportional to our level of unease with the *tilaka*, and our ignorance of its underlying spiritual worth. Once I was struck by the appearance of a couple of Punk patients with fluorescent lime and shocking pink hair. "Why is the oddity of my *tilaka* daunting me?" I asked myself.

One Christmas eve, an eighty-four-year-old Catholic nun asked me as a parting shot, "You don't celebrate Christmas, do you, doctor?"

Half an hour later, after hearing my Kṛṣṇa conscious perspective, she left, pointing accusingly at me with her wizened finger.

"The only problem with professional people like you," she said, "is that whilst you believe in God, you do not make it your practice to publicize it so!"

My forehead *tilaka*, and its carriage, would get bolder from that day.

We came to appreciate that anyone who happened to see this symbol of the Lord on our foreheads would get spiritual credit. We were no longer applying the *tilaka* for our own sake. The doctor of the body could become the doctor of the soul.

The *Padma Purāṇa* states, "Those who have Viṣṇu *tilaka* on their foreheads are to be understood as the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu in this world. Their presence makes the world purified, and anywhere they remain, they make that place as good as Vaikuṅṭha." The *Skanda Purāṇa* says that a person decorated with *tilaka* need not fear the

Yamadūtas, the agents of Yamarāja, who punishes the sinful after death. The *tilaka* wearer, when seen even once, can help the seer become relieved from all sinful activities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that although we need not disturb people who might think our appearance strange, we must show who we are by wearing *tilaka*. He said that Caitanya Mahāprabhu would not see a person's face if there was no *tilaka*. Lord Caitanya compared such a face to a crematorium ground.

*Tilaka* sparks conversations in unexpected of places. Recently, in the dentist's waiting room, the receptionist asked across her desk what the beautiful face decoration was in aid of. When I explained, she observed that neither of my two sons was wearing *tilaka*, adding that she too had challenges practicing her Christian faith with her teenager. My son Govinda responded by showing her his *śikhā*.

At a recent medical symposium, the courage of two sisters, devout Muslims, reinforced for me the need for the outer expression of one's faith. When the organizer asked for any special needs, they unhesitatingly stood up in Muslim attire and asked about arrangements for their obligatory prayers.

Back in our surgery, my husband is asked, "What's that war paint on your face, doc?"

The patient, an emergency walk-in, has lived with Native Americans and fondly recalls that they always painted their faces. After his medical problems are solved, my husband speaks to him about *tilaka*.

"Yes, ours is a kind of war paint, too," my husband says. "It symbolizes a spiritual war to end all our suffering in the material world." 🌸

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī and her husband, Puṇḍarīka Dāsa (Dr. Paul Oliver), live in Nottingham, England.*

# “My Devotee Is Always Saintly”

*Lord Kṛṣṇa overlooks the accidental sins of devotees wholeheartedly engaged in His service.*

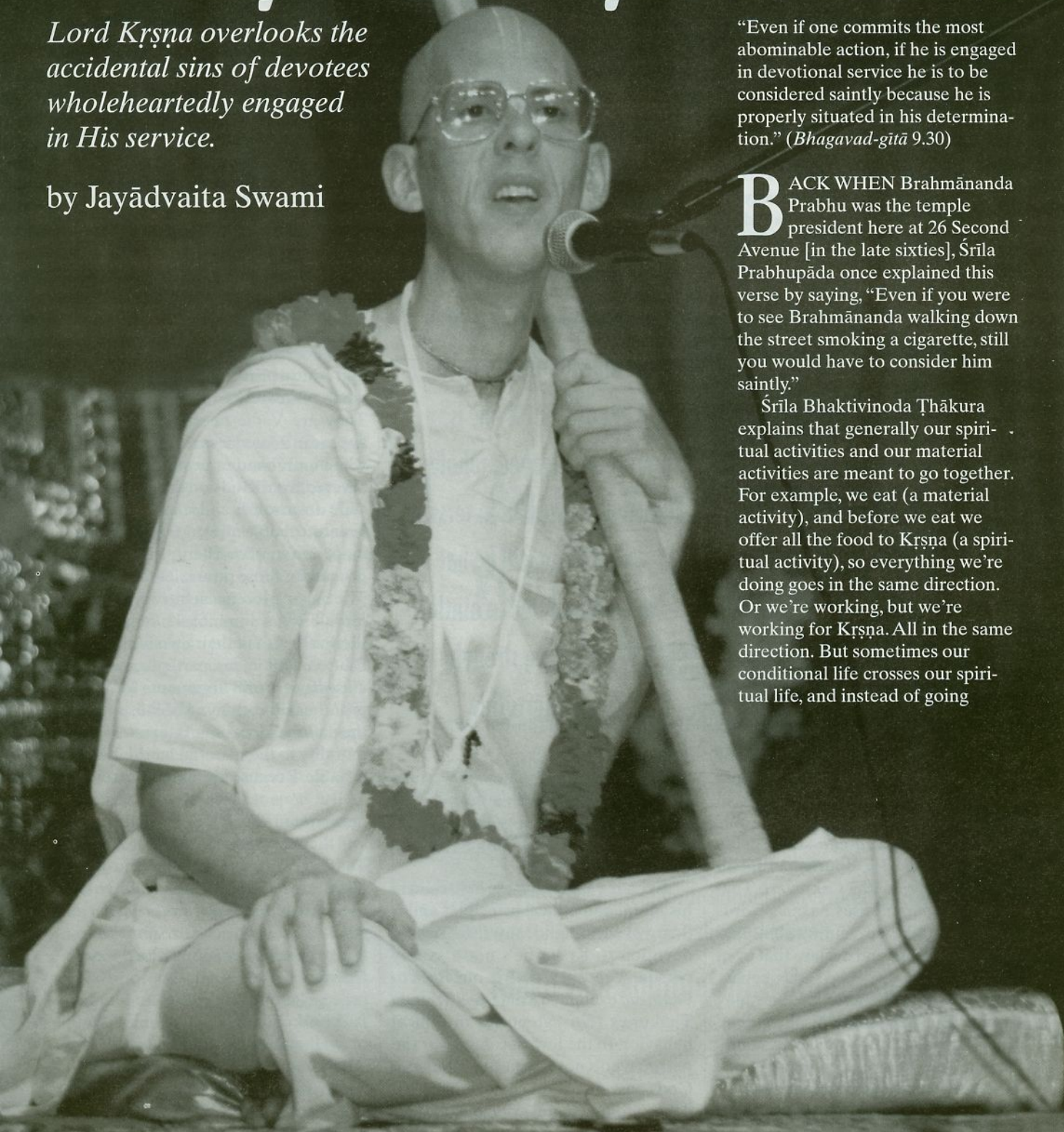
by Jayādvaita Swami

*A talk given on May 22, 2001, at ISKCON's first temple: 26 Second Avenue, New York City.*

“Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30)

**B**ACK WHEN Brahmānanda Prabhu was the temple president here at 26 Second Avenue [in the late sixties], Śrīla Prabhupāda once explained this verse by saying, “Even if you were to see Brahmānanda walking down the street smoking a cigarette, still you would have to consider him saintly.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains that generally our spiritual activities and our material activities are meant to go together. For example, we eat (a material activity), and before we eat we offer all the food to Kṛṣṇa (a spiritual activity), so everything we're doing goes in the same direction. Or we're working, but we're working for Kṛṣṇa. All in the same direction. But sometimes our conditional life crosses our spiritual life, and instead of going



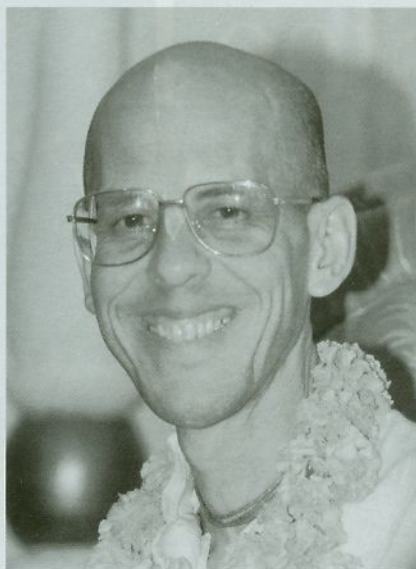
parallel our activities go at cross purposes. So then there is a material discrepancy, a falldown.

When this happens, a devotee violates social principles or ethical principles or even spiritual principles. He somehow gets caught by the material energy. So then we might say, "All right, now that he has done this, he's a hypocrite. He's good for nothing." But Kṛṣṇa takes a revolutionary stance. "Even if someone grossly misbehaves," Kṛṣṇa says, "if he's seriously engaged in My service that's a higher consideration."

In the material world, anyone may get caught in the whirlpool of material energy. But if one is seriously engaged, wholeheartedly engaged, in serving Kṛṣṇa, then still he has to be considered a saintly person. Very strongly Kṛṣṇa asserts this.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, "A person who is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is engaged with determination in the process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare should be considered to be in the transcendental position, even if by chance or accident he is found to have fallen. The words *sādhur eva*, 'he is saintly,' are very emphatic. They are a warning to the nondevotees that because of an accidental falldown a devotee should not be derided; he should still be considered saintly even if he has accidentally fallen down. And the word *mantavyaḥ* is still more emphatic. If one does not follow this rule, and derides a devotee for his accidental falldown, then one is disobeying the order of the Supreme Lord. The only qualification of a devotee is to be unflinchingly and exclusively engaged in devotional service."

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* study guide *Surrender Unto Me*, Bhūrījana Prabhu cites Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who paraphrases Kṛṣṇa's words and says, "Take up your cymbals and beat your drums and declare that even if My devotee is wicked in his behavior, he will never persish." One may argue, "But he's done this, he's done that." Kṛṣṇa says no—still he's a saintly person. The value of devotional service is so great that even a great discrepancy in one's material activities doesn't



**"In the material world, anyone may get caught in the whirlpool of material energy. But if one is seriously engaged, wholeheartedly engaged, in serving Kṛṣṇa, then still he has to be considered a saintly person. Very strongly Kṛṣṇa asserts this."**

rule him out of the picture. He's still a saintly person—maybe a misbehaved saintly person, but still a saintly person, because he's chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and he's devoted to Kṛṣṇa.

Even if a materialist is first-class in his moral and ethical principles and is doing everything ideally, if he has no devotion to Kṛṣṇa he's not a saintly person. A recent article in our *Back to Godhead* examined Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's four categories of ethical behavior. In the lowest category is the person who's not Kṛṣṇa conscious, not God conscious, and also not ethical. He doesn't follow moral principles. So he's

a rat. He's nowhere. Higher than him is the person who is moral but not God conscious. He has the idea but that one should be moral for the upkeep of social principles, or the welfare of others, or to keep up one's own place in society. He's more or less selfish, but he's in a higher category—a moral atheist. And still higher is the person who is moral and God conscious, though more prominently moral. And finally there's the person who is fully engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa, and for him God consciousness is more compelling than morality. He's moral, but his standard of morality is dictated by what pleases and displeases Kṛṣṇa. Such a person is on a higher platform than those who are just asking themselves, "Is this moral? Is this ethical?" He has an absolute standard of ethics: If Kṛṣṇa is satisfied, it's moral. If Kṛṣṇa is dissatisfied, it's immoral.

Of course, Kṛṣṇa Himself tells us that generally one should follow moral and ethical principles. Those principles come ultimately from Kṛṣṇa Himself. They are Vedic principles, and they appear in diluted form in civic laws. But when moral and ethical principles are severed from God consciousness, they slide downwards and start to crumble, because people no longer have an ultimate reason for them, an ultimate ground for those principles to stand on. The laws become arbitrary. What's moral? What's immoral? People shift their values to fit their own sense gratification. Politicians, particularly, make all sorts of moral arguments for doing reprehensible things "because it's in the national economic interest." That's morality in the material world. It's adjustable. Because ultimately it's selfish.

But it's not that a Kṛṣṇa conscious person can do any sort of mischief and then say, "Oh, that was for Kṛṣṇa." That's an offense. In chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, one of the offenses to be avoided is *nāmnād balād yasya hi pāpa-buddhiḥ*: to perform sinful acts on the strength of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is a purifying process, and if one wishes to be purified one should never think, "Well, okay, I'm doing something sinful, but Kṛṣṇa understands. I'm chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, so it's okay—Kṛṣṇa will forgive me." That's very bad. And that's not



what Kṛṣṇa is referring to here.

But somehow if accidentally, in the course of one's Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one does something apparently sinful, or actually sinful, still, because he's sticking to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, "All right. It's not considered." Why? Because he's so much engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

## SPOTS ON THE MOON

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, "In the *Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa* the following statement is given:

*bhagavati ca harāv ananya-cetā  
bhṛṣa-malino 'pi virājate manuṣyaḥ  
na hi śaśa-kaluṣa-cchabiḥ kadācit  
timira-parābhavatām upaiti candrah*

The meaning is that even if one fully engaged in the devotional service of the Lord is sometimes found engaged in abominable activities, these activities should be considered to be like the spots that resemble the mark of a rabbit on the moon."

Just as Americans and Europeans see a man in the moon, the Hindus see a rabbit in the moon. Therefore the moon is sometimes called *śaśi*. *Śaśi* means "moon," and *śaśi* also means "having a rabbit." So there are some marks on the moon which resemble, depending on what culture you're from, a man or a rabbit. And Śrīla Prabhupāda continues, "Such spots do not become an impediment to the diffusion of moonlight. Similarly, the accidental falldown of a devotee in the path of saintly character does not make him abominable."

There will always be someone who criticizes: "The moon has spots on it." But someone who knows how to appreciate will see that the moon is giving so much light, the moon is so beautiful, so glorious, cooling, soothing. So even if it has some spots, that's not a disqualification. It's not that the moon should be removed from the sky because of spots. Spots and all, it should be accepted. And so the devotee also.

Generally a devotee should be spotless. Elsewhere the *Bhagavad-gītā* says, *nirdoṣaṁ hi samam brahma*: Just as the Personality of Godhead, or the Absolute Truth, is faultless, so is the devo-

tee. But sometimes some faults appear. That's superficial.

"On the other hand," Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, "one should not misunderstand that a devotee in transcendental devotional service can act in all kinds of abominable ways; this verse only refers to an accident due to the strong power of material connections. Devotional service is more or less a declaration of war against the illusory energy. As long as one is not strong enough to fight the illusory energy, there may be accidental falldowns. But when one is strong enough, he is no longer subjected to such falldowns, as previously explained. No one should take advantage of this verse and commit nonsense and think that he is still a devotee. If he does not improve in his character by devotional service, then it is to be understood that he is not a high devotee."

Well, there's the other side of it.

Sometimes we see that a so-called religious person will do anything and everything, and his followers will say, "Well, but it's all transcendental. You have to understand, it's all his *lilā* [pastime], it's all—" It's all a wash. He's really a misanthrope, a debauchee, but everything gets painted "transcendental." No. It's not that one can go on and on in sinful life and just say, "Well, it's okay, I'm a devotee." That's just base.

## DEVOTION AND DEGRADATION

There's a class of men called *sahajiyās* who act as debauchees and say it is part of their devotional practice. They have some sentiment for Kṛṣṇa, but they don't follow the rules or principles of devotional service. We have our four rules: no gambling, no intoxicants, no meat-eating, no illicit sex. But

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the *sahajiyās* regularly decry all these rules, because “the main thing is to love Kṛṣṇa”—and because they can’t follow these rules anyway. Nor do they want to. Instead they produce a hodgepodge of “high devotion” and low behavior, an unsavory mixture of devotion and degradation. That’s not what Kṛṣṇa means here, not “still they’re considered saintly, however vile their way of life.” No.

But if a devotee who knows the rules and principles and is trying to follow them somehow stumbles and falls, it’s not that such a devotee is finished, that he’s all washed up, that for one mistake everything is wiped out. Devotional service is not like that. Kṛṣṇa has such high regard for devotional service that He thinks, “All right, even if something happened, still the main thing is that he’s a devotee.” Kṛṣṇa therefore helps him. And therefore in the next verse Kṛṣṇa says, *kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā*: Very quickly he comes back to the standard.

Sometimes a devotee commits a mistake, but then he sincerely regrets it: “Oh, I did something very wrong.”

For such a case, the scriptures mention that whatever impurities there may be, whatever reactions there may be, are burned off in the fire of sincere regret. So he becomes purified, and he very quickly comes back to the standard of pure devotion. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa says, *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhakta prapaśyati*: “My dear Arjuna, please declare that My devotee is never finished.” A materialist would be finished, but a devotee has such transcendental credit that even if there’s some accidental falldown, Kṛṣṇa is inclined to be generous: “All right. Everyone makes mistakes.” And the devotee quickly comes back up to pure behavior.

Therefore a devotee should never be derided. Rather, devotees should be appreciated. Kṛṣṇa is called *bhaktavatsala*, “the person who is very much inclined to His devotees.” So an intelligent person who is trying to make advancement in spiritual life should see, “Oh, here’s a devotee. He’s dear to Kṛṣṇa.”

Still, it’s not that we can maintain a deviant track. That won’t work. And it’s not that we blindly take any degrada-

tion to be okay. But if a devotee is sincerely engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa, even if he does something abominable, we have to consider him saintly. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I’m told, once gave the example of the precision required in space launches. If the trajectory is slightly off, the spacecraft goes zooming past its mark. One has to be on target in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, if a devotee deviates, he fires his retrorockets, gets back on course, and continues. And the mission is still successful. ☸

*His Holiness Jayādvaīta Swami joined ISKCON in New York City in 1968. He was the previous editor of Back to Godhead. He is now editing a three-volume English edition of Śrī Bṛhadbhāgavatāmṛta, a foundational Sanskrit text on bhakti by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. The first volume is scheduled for release by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust as this issue of BTG goes to press.*

An abridged version of this talk originally appeared in *Matchless Gifts*, the newsletter of the 26 Second Avenue temple.

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**“In this world there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge.”**

**—Bhagavad-gītā 4.38**



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”)



*Day breaks at New Vraja Dhama (above), where devotees of Kṛṣṇa have moved “off the grid” to a natural life where petroleum power gives way to ox power (right).*





*Here devotees  
are developing a  
community with  
Kṛṣṇa in the center  
and free from  
the bad influences  
of the age.*

by Ādikartā Dāsa

**V**RAJA DHĀMA is another name for Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal residence in the spiritual world and the transcendental arena for His all-attractive pastimes when He comes to earth. New Vraja Dhāma is a community founded on the idea of expanding the mood of Kṛṣṇa's sacred place in India to other parts of the world. As in Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa resides in New Vraja Dhāma as the cause and recipient of selfless devotion.

Located approximately two-hours' drive from Budapest, the capital of Hungary, New Vraja Dhāma is a manifestation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire for self-sufficient country communities. Inspired by His Holiness Śivarāma Swami, the devotees here have succeeded in capturing the mood of a genuine holy place in this remote part of the world. New Vraja Dhāma's 450 acres of prime agricultural land boast hundreds of fruit trees and acres of grape vines. Purchased in 1993, it is home to approximately 150 devotees.

While complete self-sufficiency is the goal of New Vraja Dhama, at this stage some money is still needed, and it is acquired partly through a special law in Hungary that allows people to donate one percent of their owed taxes to a religion of their choice. The donations can be given only during

# NEW VRAJA DHĀMA

Creating the Land of Kṛṣṇa  
In Hungary



Adikarta Dasa

the first two months of the year, so at that time many devotees leave the farm to collect contributions, which seem to come easily because of the popularity of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Hungary.

### PRABHUPĀDA'S VISION

Śrīla Prabhupāda had many plans for elevating society to a better way of life. He said that “books are the basis” for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, and he took much time to translate dozens of ancient India’s sacred texts. These books not only give the greatest

*A priest offers a mirror to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara (right), who preside from their gorgeous temple (above) at the heart of the community.*





Adikarta Dasa

philosophy and logic but also contain the blueprint for a way of life radically different from our present mechanized society and much more beneficial for humanity.

Three months before leaving this world, in 1977, Śrīla Prabhupāda became keen to teach his disciples (and the world at large) how one could live off the land simply and peacefully, without dependence on artificial amenities. Even though very ill, to show how it could be done he wanted to travel to America—to Gita Nagari, a Hare Kṛṣṇa community in rural Pennsylvania. Sadly, his health prevented the trip.

Although he promoted the simple life, Prabhupāda was not an enemy of machines, and they are currently being used effectively to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Citing the example of using a thorn to remove a thorn, Prabhupāda used high-tech equipment to promote simple living. Why? Because these things could speed up the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the goal of which is to teach dependence on God, not on machines.

Most people today object to the idea of returning to a simple life, saying that modern conveniences have made life so much easier, more enjoy-



*A devotee works happily to keep the temple spotless (above). At left, visitors to the temple hear about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.*

able, and interesting. They say that going back to the land would be a step back to a less civilized and enlightened age.

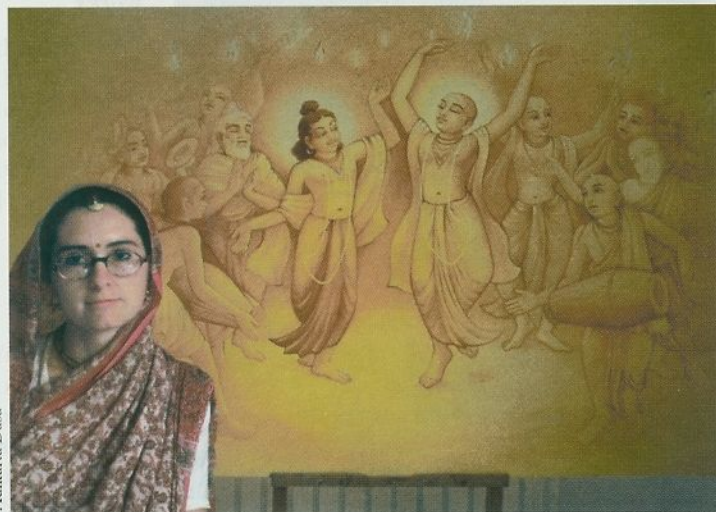
One could write volumes of books debating the superiority of one way of life over the other, but the main point is that the biggest problems of life, namely birth, death, old age, and disease, are just as present today as ever. If living simpler helps solve those problems by making our minds less distracted by artificial stimulation, surely that must be better. If we have more time and our life is molded for thinking and serving Lord Kṛṣṇa, we will be happier.

One major problem is that Westernized people think they are more intelligent because they have so many machines, and that only “simple” people live off the land. It’s a shame that modern man has no conception of the ideal traditional way of life in the Indian village. It hardly exists today, for reasons too numerous to present here, but the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself designed the world to be lived in that way. Tampering with His plan and trying to adjust things as we have, in the name of progress, may give the illusion of an easier life, but present-day reality hardly gives rise to optimism. In fact, the very worst problems—terrorism, atomic warfare, anthrax, airplane hijackings, and so on—can exist only in a mechanized society.

Although the New Vraja Dhāma community started fairly recently and has a long way to go to be a perfect model of self-sufficiency, there’s plenty



Ādikartā Dāsa



Ādikartā Dāsa

Artist  
Tāralākṣī  
Devī Dāsī  
(left) has  
used her  
talent to  
produce  
many  
of the  
temple’s  
beautiful  
paintings  
(above).

of evidence there that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s vision of “simple living and high thinking” can become a practical solution to modern man’s problems. From my visit I saw how devotees were happy living the simple life.

### TEMPLE AT THE CENTER OF LIFE

I was fortunate enough to visit New Vraja Dhāma on the special occasion of Rādhāṣṭamī, the sacred birthday of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s beloved consort. There was a special atmosphere in the temple, lit by oil lamps, as devotees gathered at 4:30 A.M. for



*māṅgala-ārati*, the first ceremony of the day. They decorated their eyes with the forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, the presiding deities of the community. Beholding the beautiful deities and hearing the pure chanting of the *mahā-mantra*, I felt transported to that eternal abode of the Lord, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma.

The temple is a fitting complement to the radiant beauty of the deities and acts like a powerful magnet to draw everyone into its own unique jewellike interior. Everything about it is highly devotional. From the vibrant colors to the artwork and the intricate trim work, everything intoxicates the senses, as if one had opened the door to the spiritual world. I could see why devotees seemed so enthusiastic about going to the temple.

I was amazed by the cleanliness of the temple. Every day I saw several devotees, both male and female, happily washing windows, polishing floors, and dusting ceilings and walls. They must have known well that they were

simultaneously cleaning their own hearts. On seeing such a spotless home for the Lord, my mind felt refreshed.

In the ideal self-sufficient way of life, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in His deity form is the center of the community. Even in modern India, deities like Rādhā-Govinda in Jaipur and Lord Jagannātha in Puri are still devotedly worshiped daily by thousands of devotees. Similarly, in New Vraja Dhāma the deities are obviously served with great love and devotion. Seriously following the principles of *sādhana-bhakti*, the scientific process of scheduled devotional activities, the devotees seem highly committed to their spiritual development, which is centered on the temple. Maybe this accounts for the enthusiastic, carefree mood. Knowing that so many devotees would be there chanting and dancing, I looked forward to the morning prayers with great eagerness.

The devotees at New Vraja Dhāma happily welcome many guests to the community, and receiving guests is

an important part of their lives. Last year, more than twenty thousand guests visited. Guests seem impressed by what they see—the guest lodge, the Vṛndāvana-style lakes and bathing places, the pottery, the art studio, the bakery, the restaurant, the gift shop, the gorgeous temple room. In exchange for their endeavor to visit New Vraja Dhāma, their senses are rewarded with a variety of devotional treats: bhajanas, philosophy, Oriya dance, books, and of course *prasādam*. Seeing the guests pleasantly intoxicated by Kṛṣṇa's special bliss, the devotees themselves naturally become happy as they explain the meaning of the paintings or the position of Srīla Prabhupāda.

### **COW PROTECTION AND OX POWER**

Just as in the original Vraja Dhāma, where Lord Kṛṣṇa, as the son of Nanda Mahārāja, the king of the cowherd men, takes care of many cows, the devotees here also care for and pro-



*A reflecting pool in the temple courtyard enhances the beauty of the deities' home.*

tect this most valuable of creatures. According to Ayurveda, the ancient medical system of the *Vedas*, given by the Lord in His form of Dhanvantari, cow's milk is the most beneficial food. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself especially loves food offerings prepared with milk products. From ghee (clarified butter), butter, yogurt, buttermilk, and of course milk itself, so many tasty and healthy preparations can be made. Even in our degraded Kali-yuga, the present Age of Quarrel, the cow's by products are still very popular. Whether it's milk on their cereals, cream in their coffee, ice-cream, yogurt, or luxury leather seats in their cars, most people still benefit from mother cow. Sadly, father bull, the symbol of religion, is cruelly slaughtered, because ox power is one of those so-called primitive practices that has been replaced by the tractor.

Here, though, both the cows and oxen are valued as essential to the community. The oxen look satisfied using their strong bodies to plow the land or pull cartloads of wood, and the cows produce milk products for the offerings to the deities. By their service these animals make spiritual progress and live out their natural lives, unlike their kin whose nondevotee owners slaughter them when they are no longer profitable.

## THE NATURAL LIFE

Life without electricity, at least here, doesn't seem to present a problem. Although there are a few solar panels to power computers and other machines for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, life seems a lot more peaceful without electricity. Most of the cooking and heating is done with wood from the devotees' own land. Dried cow dung, renowned as the best cooking fuel, is used in the deity kitchen. The temple, the deities' sanctum, and the houses all use attractive glazed-tile furnaces for heating. Even water for bathing is heated with wood in unusual but efficient water heaters. Some of the water comes from the local village, but many of the twenty or so houses have their own hand-operated wells beside them. Washing is done by hand using hot water from the wood stoves.



Adhikari Dasa



Setting up all the aspects of the ideal Vedic village may take many generations. Because pleasure is the motivating principle for all living beings, the way of life needs to be so satisfying that people won't want to give it up—and won't miss cinemas, TV, and so on. Practiced properly, the natural way of life is far superior to the unnatural urban alternative. Every day is something of a festival. With lots of chanting and dancing, a high standard of deity worship, captivating explanations of the scriptures, regular dramas with colorful costumes and touching portrayals of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, dances, musical events, marriages, fire sacrifices, and huge celebrations on special days like Janmāṣṭamī (Kṛṣṇa's birthday), life can be like the spiritual world. Of course, there is also plenty to do to survive, but everything is enhanced by the mood of devotion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to quote the British poet William Cowper as saying, "God made the country, and man made the town." Life in the city means economic development and artificial necessities. Working for money to buy these things requires the mode of passion. Country life means living in the mode of goodness, appreciating the beauty of nature, the running stream,

the peacefulness of God's creation.

While devotees find cities good for distributing books and interesting people in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for the majority of married devotees, the rural way of life is much cheaper, healthier, more peaceful, more conducive to raising children, and more in line with the ideal social structure presented by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Known as the *varṇāśrama* system, it depends on four classes of men to make a complete society whose interdependence is essential and mutually beneficial. The head of society is the *brāhmaṇas*, who guide; the arms are the *kṣatriyas*, who protect; the stomach is the *vaiśyas*, who trade, farm, and protect cows; and the legs are the *śūdras*, who provide labor and other services. Unlike the modern-day corrupt caste system of India, in *varṇāśrama* anyone, regardless of birth, can achieve the highest position if qualified. No class is better than the others, because each is essential. Without cow protection, this way of life does not work, because farming will need tractors, which require money, and the whole scheme collapses.

So far, New Vraja Dhāma has only a few children, because the residents are young. But they have built a large

*Cows graze peacefully (above) next to a pond accented with Vedic gazebos. At left, residents prepare a feast for the many devotees attending a festival. At right, children enjoy a playground built by devotees with local lumber.*



*Following the ancient practice of pilgrims in India, visitors head up the stairs to the temple and, for most, their first audience with Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara.*



## Toward Self-Sufficiency

Here are some of the things being done at New Vraja Dhāma in the quest for self-sufficiency:

- Temple constructed using rammed-earth walls and other traditional techniques
- Temple lit by traditional oil lamps or by lamps that burn oil pressed from locally grown rapeseeds
- Very little use of electricity
- Most electricity generated by solar panels
- Heating by super-efficient wood-burning stoves, using wood sustainably harvested from a fifty-acre forest plot
- Home-grown fruits and vegetables (600 fruit trees)
- Home-grown and -ground wheat
- Honey from bee-keeping
- Oxen used for farming and transport
- Cows giving milk for an endless variety of milk products





A family gathers (below) to worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa on their home altar. At bottom, devotees and guests get together in the community's restaurant.



Ādikartā Dāsa

building where youth will receive an education based more on service to God than on preparing to fit into a chaotic society. The plan is for future generations to be able to provide for themselves by staying and using their natural talents, whether in pottery, farming, painting, teaching, protecting others, or running a restaurant.

Because we live in such an artificial environment today and eat unnaturally, many children, at least in America, are prescribed tranquilizers to calm them down. Here the children have plenty of space to run around and lots of home-grown foods to nourish their growing bodies.

The main purpose of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is to teach people that we are all eternal servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa and that to love Him is real satisfaction for the soul. Cities are good for spreading that message. But to completely transform people's lives—saving them from a

world where they're forced to warm the globe, eat pesticides, drive to work at breakneck speed, or work in a factory or a nuclear-power plant—New Vraja Dhāma is the right kind of place. It can shelter people from the bad influences of this age and let them associate with like-minded people. They can live peacefully, in harmony with Kṛṣṇa, and at the end of this life go back to the eternal Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world. ☸

**Visit:** [www.krisna-volgy.hu/english](http://www.krisna-volgy.hu/english)

*Ādikartā Dāsa joined ISKCON in 1974. He lives with his wife and two of his five children in Prabhupada Village, an aspiring self-sufficient community in North Carolina. He lectures on Kṛṣṇa consciousness at colleges, distributes Prabhupāda's books, grows a few fruits and vegetables, and milks the cows now and again.*

LORD CAITANYA'S EIGHT TEACHINGS

INTRODUCTION

# A PROPHECY FULFILLED



*Caitanya Mahāprabhu's descent to this world  
fulfilled the prophecies of the Vedic scriptures about  
the incarnation of the Lord for this age.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

*This is the first of a five-part series on Lord Caitanya's Śikṣāṣṭaka, or "Eight Teachings." The series has been adapted from lectures presented at the New York City Public Library to a group of students from Columbia University.*

I WOULD FIRST OF ALL like to thank Dr. Lundquist and the other good scholars and librarians affiliated with the Oriental Division for allowing us to meet and discuss the philosophy of Śrī Caitanya, especially in regard to His eight verses, or *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. These important verses contain the sum and substance of Indian religious thought and indeed of all spiritual philosophy.

Some background information is in order. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was a preeminent religious figure of the sixteenth century, although today He is not well known. One reason for this is that He left no literary contribution to speak of. His eight original prayers, which we will be discussing at length, are considered original compositions, although they were not written down in the usual sense. They were profound devotional outpourings, which He spoke in an enhanced state of spiritual ecstasy. They were eventually written down by Caitanya Mahāprabhu's intimate follower Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara. And Mahāprabhu instructed His intimate disciples, chief among whom were the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, to delineate in a scholarly way His message of scientific devotion, His message of advanced spirituality, His message of love of God. This they did in great detail, and Mahāprabhu's teachings later came to be known as the philosophy of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. So although Mahāprabhu Himself left little in the way of written documents, His followers left a vast wealth of philosophical literature, codifying and systematizing Mahāprabhu's teachings for future generations.

Besides Caitanya Mahāprabhu's negligible literary career, a more important reason that He is not well known is that He is a particularly esoteric avatar and is known as the *channa-avatāra*, or the hidden incarnation of God.

You see, ancient India's Vedic literature, the world's most time-honored and comprehensive scriptural tradition, predicts God's many appearances in this world, referring to His parentage, the town in which He makes His

---

*The illustration at left shows that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (right) is a special form of Kṛṣṇa (left), because He is the combined form (center) of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort.*

# Separating the saints from the swindlers, the avatars from the avaricious, is sometimes difficult.



appearance, the mission He seeks to accomplish, and things of this nature. The arrangement is very scientific. So there can be no mistake about an incarnation's authenticity.

In recent years, especially since the '60s, it has become fashionable to sentimentally accept someone as a guru or, worse still, an incarnation of God, based on whimsy, speculation, or gut impressions. But this is risky. Cheaters abound. Separating the saints from the swindlers, the avatars from the avaricious, is sometimes difficult. For this reason Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, a direct disciple of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, asked Him, *kemane jāniba kalite kon avatāra?* This is the Bengali. It means, "How can I understand who is the incarnation of God for Kali-yuga, the current age?" Mahāprabhu answered, "One can understand that someone is an incarnation in this age in the same way one could have ascertained such a thing in previous ages—by consulting the scriptures." This is the secret.

The scriptures reveal exact information—specific things to look for in an alleged incarnation. First, there is *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*. This refers to personal characteristics, such as form, nature, and bodily features—external things that one can observe. Then there is *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*. This refers to marginal characteristics, such as specific information about His transcendental activities. In other words, there is a reason why an incarnation descends—and it's not just to collect money, grow a long beard, and look holy on special holidays! So one who learns this transcendental science from a teacher in discipleship succession—a teacher who represents one of the four genuine Vaiṣṇava lines and does not deviate from the scriptures—will not be cheated. There is thus a way

to objectively distinguish the genuine incarnation from a bogus person.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu was specifically described in the scriptures, and so according to these standards He is rightly accepted as an incarnation of the Supreme.

## A RARE APPEARANCE

But let's backtrack for a second. The scriptures describe many incarnations in great detail. For example, Buddha is predicted, and the names of His parents and village are specifically mentioned. So, too, are a host of other avatars mentioned, or predicted, in this same exacting way.

Some are explained in a general way, but not so general that it is left vague. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Laghubhāgavatāmṛta*, for example, says that the Lord appears in Satya-yuga, the first age, with a white complexion. In the next age, Tretā-yuga, He appears with a red complexion. In the following age, known as Dvāpara-yuga, He comes with a dark complexion. Finally, in Kali, the fourth age, He generally comes in a blackish form, but sometimes comes in a golden form. This is a secret, esoteric incarnation. The Eleventh Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, for instance, tells us that in a rare Kali-yuga, which occurs only in the twenty-eighth *divya-yuga* of the seventh Manvantara—that is to say, every 8.64 billion years—this special Golden Avatar appears. This is Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore, at this special point in our evolution of *yuga* cycles, the Lord is called Triyuga, or "He who appears in three of the four ages." Why? Because in the fourth age He is *channa-avatāra*, or the special hidden incarnation.

**Question:** You are referring to the

predictions in the Vedic texts?

**Satyarāja Dāsa:** Oh, yes. There is much concrete evidence for the divinity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. For example, there are direct statements in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and there is even a book known as *Caitanya Upaniṣad*, which is said to be an appendix to the *Atharva Veda*. The *Kṛṣṇa-yāmala* and the *Brahma-yāmala* both specifically mention by name Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mother, Śācī, as well as the town of Navadvīp, where He took birth. These two scriptures also mention His mission: the *saṅkīrtana* movement, or the movement that centers on the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* says, *kalau saṅkīrtanārambhe bhaviṣyāmi śācī sutaḥ*: "In the age of Kali, when the *saṅkīrtana* movement is inaugurated, Kṛṣṇa will descend as the divine son of Śācīdevī."

So Caitanya Mahāprabhu's divinity is fully acknowledged in the Vedic literature, and scholars of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition have brought this out in many academic works and lucid writings. Especially, if one carefully reads *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* with the translation and commentary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, one will be convinced of the preeminent position of Lord Caitanya.

## CONFIDENTIAL MISSION

**Question:** But in India, at least, Śrī Caitanya is not recognized by everyone. If He were such an important avatar, as you indicate, then you would imagine that He would be accepted across the board.

**Satyarāja Dāsa:** In this age, nothing is accepted across the board. [*Laugh-*



ier.] This is the age of disharmony and argument. [Laughter.]

Actually, what you are bringing out is the real glory, or the inner meaning, of *channa-avatāra*. Mahāprabhu's mission is confidential—the most secret of all secrets. Therefore, the *Bhāgavatam* [11.5.32] predicts that only the most intelligent will recognize His glory: “In the age of Kali the Lord incarnates as a devotee, yellowish in color, and is always chanting the holy name: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Although He is Kṛṣṇa, His complexion is not blackish like Kṛṣṇa's, but golden. He preaches love of God through His *saṅkīrtana* movement, and those living entities who are sufficiently intelligent will adopt His method of realization.”

So this is the great secret of the scriptures. It is no wonder that it is accepted by a fortunate few! But Kṛṣṇa had warned that it would be so. In the *Gītā* [7.3] He says, “Out of many millions of people, only a handful will look for perfection. And out of that handful, hardly one will know Me in truth.” So this can be said to relate directly to Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Only a rare breed will take up His method of realization. Those who are serious. Those who want love of God and nothing else.

Of course, this is not an ego game. The exalted stature of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's devotees should not be taken as a pompous sentiment. His method is open to everyone. Simply chant the holy name, whatever your religion, whatever your language. Chant God's name and devote your life to His glorification. If you do this much, then you are a practitioner of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's method, at least in a fundamental sense. So it is not exclusive. We don't say that one must become a Hindu, or a Jew, or a Christian, or anything. No. Just develop love for God. This is the actual substance of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's nonsectarian message, and it can be embraced by everyone.

What is the result? The highest realization. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is not only Kṛṣṇa, but Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined. Male and female absolute—the

most complete manifestation of Godhead. This is the verdict of the Gauḍīya line.

So, in answer to your question, yes, it is a rare thing, not widely accepted. But that is not very shocking. If you have a rare gem, you shouldn't expect that everyone will have what it takes to purchase it.

**Question:** I'm curious about documentation. How accurate are the stories relating to Śrī Caitanya's life? Were biographies written much later, or were they written during His own time period?

**Satyarāja Dāsa:** More than any other major religious figure, perhaps, Lord Caitanya was written about in His own lifetime and shortly thereafter. Early biographies include *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam* and *Caitanya-carita*, a lengthy work, both by Kavi Karṇapura, one of Lord Caitanya's contemporaries. And then there were the diaries kept by Murāri Gupta, Svārūpa Dāmodara, and Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, all close associates of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu's personal servant, Govinda, kept a diary. Several authoritative biographies

were written a generation or two after Caitanya Mahāprabhu—Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura's *Caitanya Bhāgavata*, for example, and Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura's *Caitanya-maṅgala*. Sometime later came Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, perhaps the most elaborate and esoteric of the Lord's biographies. These are great scholarly works. And then there is Cūḍamaṇi Dāsa's *Gaurāṅga-vijaya*, and the *Gaura-pāda-taraṅginim* and the *Gaurāṅga-campū*—oh, there is no limit!

You see, Caitanya Mahāprabhu was known as a divinity in His own time. So contemporaries and devotees of the next two generations took it upon themselves to write many books to capture His pastimes. His history is well documented. ☀

*Satyarāja Dāsa is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a regular contributor to BTG. He has written several books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the latest of which is Gita on the Green: The Mystical Tradition Behind Bagger Vance. He and his wife live near New York City.*

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# CALENDAR

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

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

## Month of Govinda

(February 28–March 28)

### MARCH

**3**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, then feasting. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Gour Govinda Swamī, an ISKCON guru.

**10**—Pakṣa-vardhinī Mahādvādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans for Vijayā Ekādaśī. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

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

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

**25**—Āmalakī-vrata Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

**28**—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.

## Month of Viṣṇu

(March 29–April 27)

### APRIL

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

**8**—Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

**23**—Kāmādā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

## Month of Madhusūdana

(April 28–May 26)

### MAY

**6**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

**8**—Varūthinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

**21**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sitā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnava Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

**23**—Mohinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhiṣa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

**24**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

**25**—Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsimha-deva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting.

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

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[mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock]), NSW 2325/ Tel. +61 (02)4998-800/ Fax: (Sydney temple)



## Getting to Know Kṛṣṇa

THE CHEERY DENTAL assistant asked me how I'd be spending the weekend.

"I'll be gathering with other members of the local Kṛṣṇa community for a big festival," I told her.

"Christian community?" she asked.

Apparently, my Hare Kṛṣṇa haircut didn't mean anything to her.

"No," I replied, "Kṛṣṇa community. I'm a Hare Kṛṣṇa."

"Hare Kṛṣṇa?"

"You've never heard of Hare Kṛṣṇa?" I asked.

"No. Is it something like Islam?"

"No. It's from India."

And that's as far as we got before the dentist's drill found my mouth and ended our conversation.

I was surprised that someone living in an area that's home to hundreds of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees had never heard of Kṛṣṇa. But I was happy to introduce her to Him.

On my first visit to a temple, in 1974, I heard the lecturer say that Kṛṣṇa is God because Kṛṣṇa possesses six opulences in full: beauty, wealth, strength, fame, knowledge, and renunciation. These are attractive qualities, he said, and since Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all of them, He's naturally the most attractive person. That's why He's called Kṛṣṇa—"the all-attractive person."

Pondering the qualities the lecturer had mentioned, I balked momentarily at the idea that Kṛṣṇa possesses unlimited fame. Two days earlier I'd never heard of Him. How could He be the most famous person?

I asked someone about that later.

"Well, He's God," he replied. "Everyone's heard of God! And because He's the most famous

(among other things), He's called Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīla Prabhupāda came to teach us that Kṛṣṇa is God. I sometimes wonder at how easily I accepted that proposition back then. The night before my first visit to the temple, I read a small book called *Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure*. I had bought it from a devotee that afternoon for twenty-five cents. I'd been haphazardly looking for "the truth" and keeping a diary of my search. When I finished reading that night, I wrote in my diary, "Maybe this Kṛṣṇa [sic] is it."

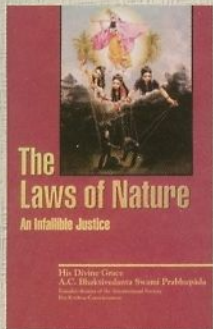
I'm sure the devotees' conviction had a lot to do with my attraction to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I arrived at the temple a few hours before the Sunday Feast, so I was escorted to the apartment of a devotee couple, where I spoke with several devotees and witnessed something of their lives. One impression stuck: "Boy! These people are really into what they're doing!"

Their dedication inspired me to dive into Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. And only a few weeks later I was blessed to see Śrīla Prabhupāda himself at the San Francisco Rathayātrā festival. That day I started wearing Vaiṣṇava neckbeads—an outward sign of my growing conviction that Kṛṣṇa is God.

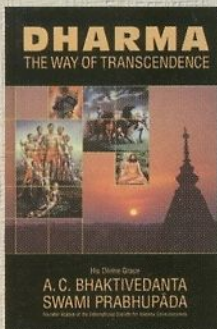
Seeing Prabhupāda and reading his books helped me understand the depth of faith shown by his disciples. Śrīla Prabhupāda's conviction, clearly derived from experiences higher than any I could imagine, was contagious. His day was spent in full absorption in Kṛṣṇa, in thought, word, and deed. And his books contained none of the hedging found in pretty much everything else I'd read.

Now I'm trying to do my small part to help Śrīla Prabhupāda spread the name and fame of Lord Kṛṣṇa. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

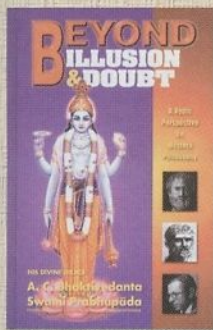
# Do You Have These Books by Prabhupāda?



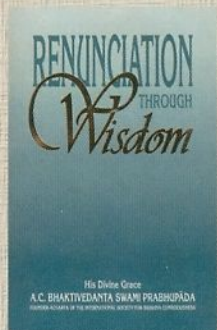
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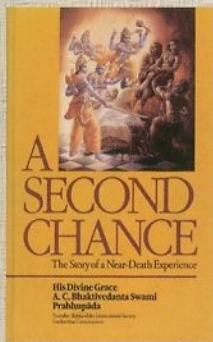
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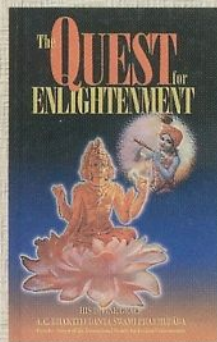
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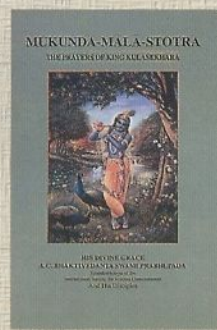
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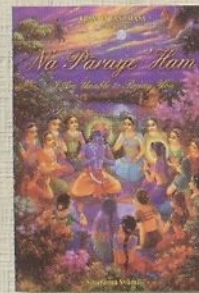
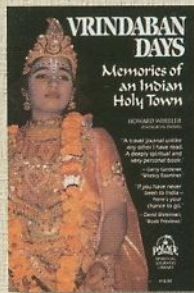
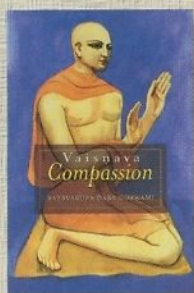
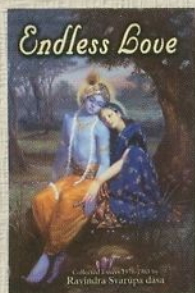


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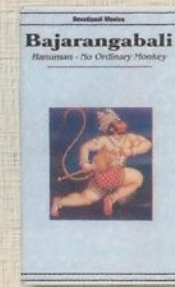
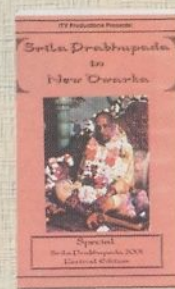
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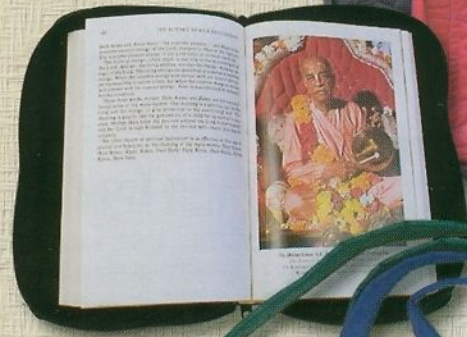


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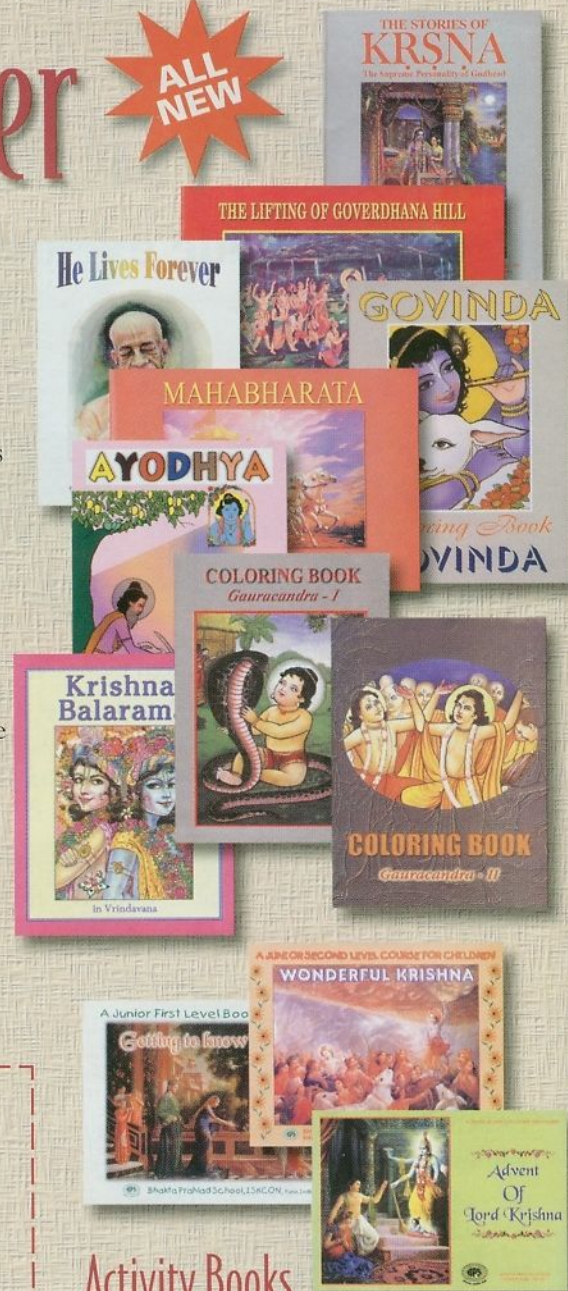
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# Vedic Thoughts

The most confidential part of knowledge is that one should become a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa and always think of Him and act for Him. . . . He should arrange his life in such a way that throughout the twenty-four hours he cannot but think of Kṛṣṇa. And the Lord's promise is that anyone who is in such pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness will certainly return to the abode of Kṛṣṇa, where he will engage in the association of Kṛṣṇa face to face.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta  
Swami Prabhupāda  
*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 18.65, Purport

The residents of both heaven and hell desire human birth on the earth planet because human life facilitates the achievement of transcendental knowledge and love of Godhead, whereas neither heavenly nor hellish bodies efficiently provide such opportunities.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.12

Those who are fortunate to receive the teachings of Lord Caitanya can progress very quickly. In a short life span, a person can easily progress from *varṇāśrama* to the highest level of *prema*, pure love of God.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura  
*Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta*, Chapter 3, Part 1

One has to have great strength of mind to know the truth. If one wants to learn to swim, he must not be afraid of water. At the same time, one should know that *śaraṇāgati*, or the path of exclusive surrender, is not a difficult thing. In fact, it is very easy and natural for the soul. Anything which is opposed to it—*that* is unnatural and painful.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura  
Reply to a disciple's question

The Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa [Govinda], is the exclusive shelter for all great living beings, and His transcendental attributes cannot even be measured by such masters of mystic powers as Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā. Can anyone who is expert in relishing nectar [*rasa*] ever be fully satiated by hearing topics about Him?

Sages of Naimṣāraṇya  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.18.14

Material enjoyments are full of poison, but you consider them pleasing. Do not think of them as a source of happiness, but understand them as distress. Be absorbed in full thought of Govinda, associate with His devotees, and conclude that devotional service is the goal of life.

Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura  
*Śrī Prema Bhakti Candrikā*

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