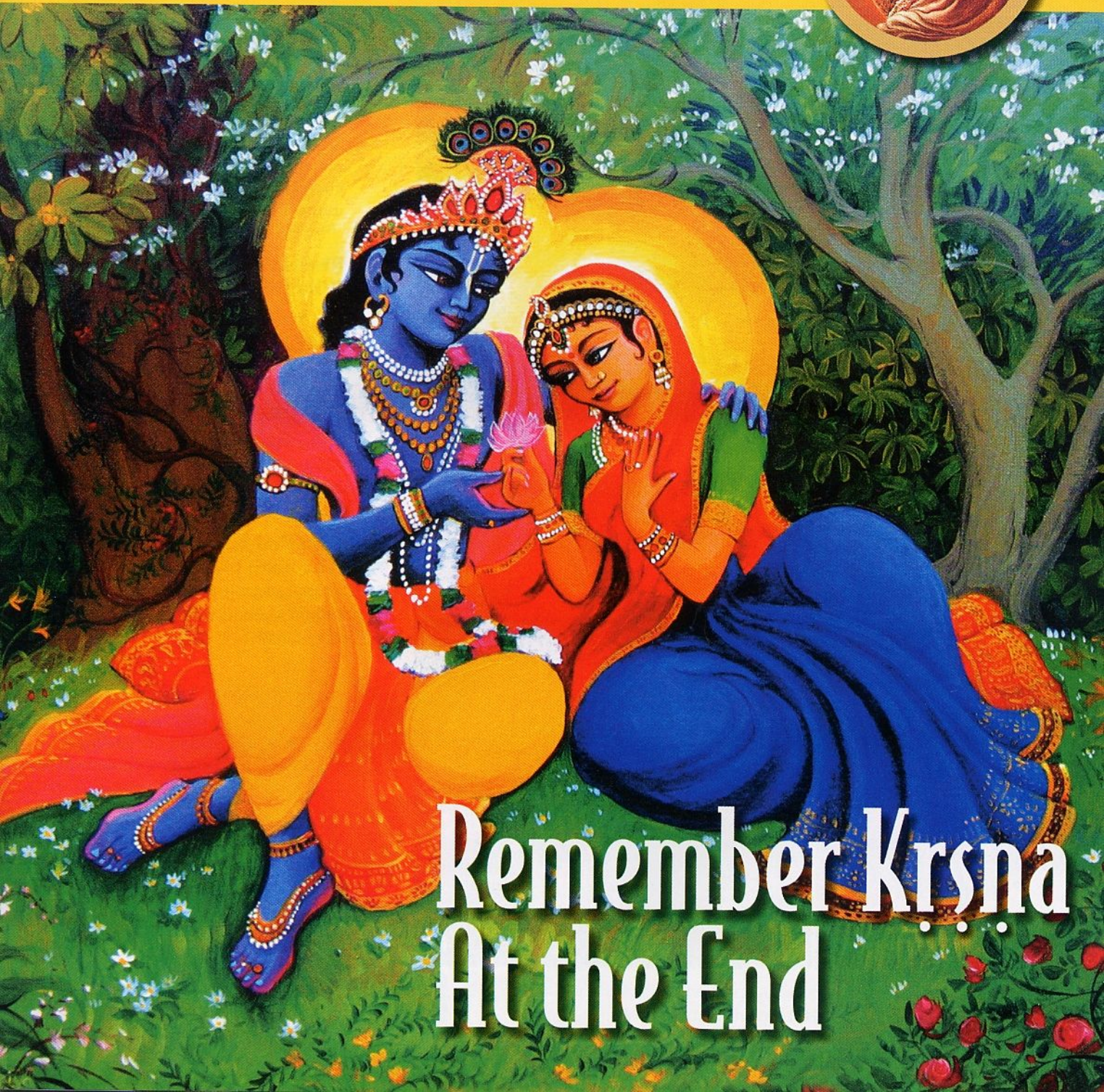


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



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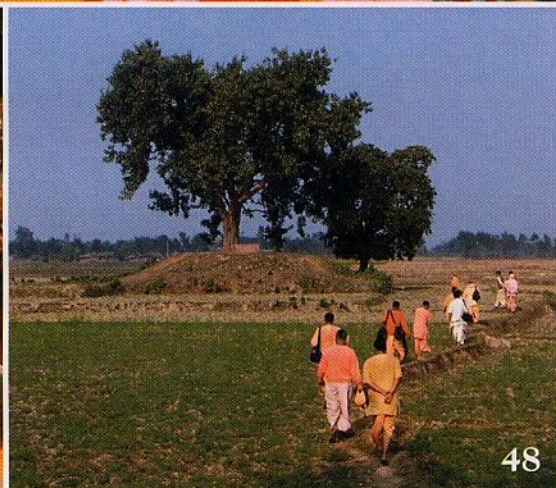
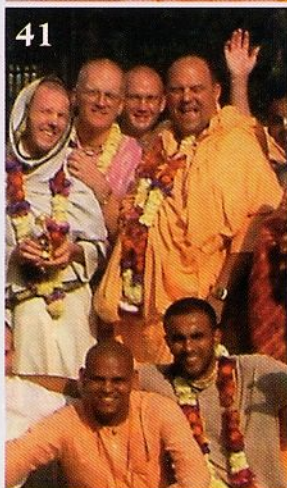
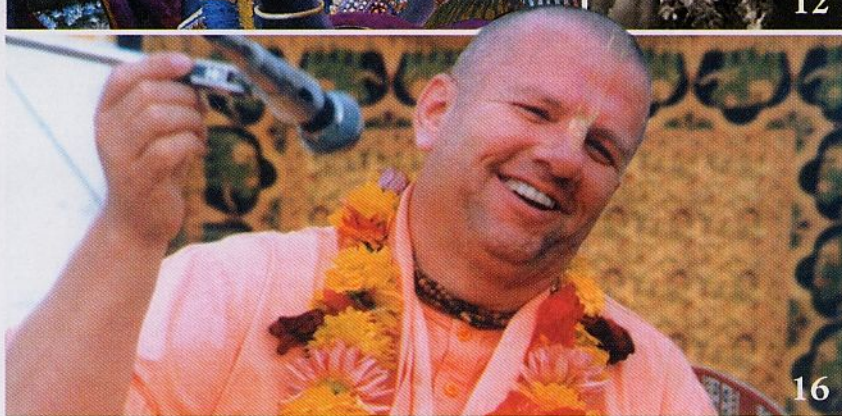


Remember Kṛṣṇa
At the End

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 38, No. 5 • September / October 2004



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7 Remember Kṛṣṇa at the End

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ead

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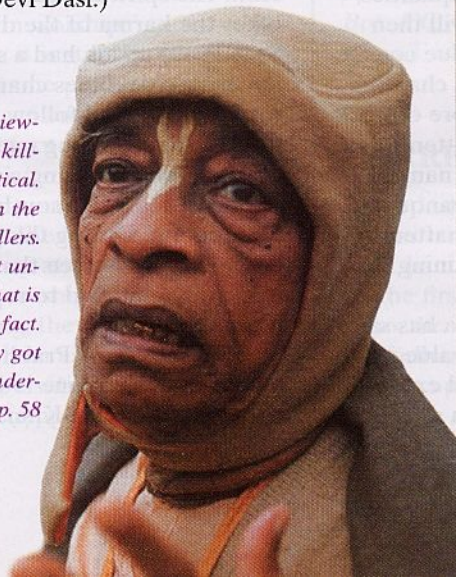
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COVER Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, His eternal consort and the personification of love for Him, enjoy eternally in the spiritual world. By remembering Them at the time of death, we can enter Their endless pastimes. (Painting by Māyāpriyā Devī Dāsī.)

*“From any view-
point, animal kill-
ing is not practical.*

*I have seen the
animal killers.*

*They do not un-
derstand what is
God. That is a fact.
Nor have they got
the brain to under-
stand it.”—p. 58*



WELCOME



IN THIS ISSUE we hear about the life and glorious passing of one of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement’s pioneers, His Holiness Śrīdhara Swami. Known as “the jolly swami,” he joined Śrīla

Prabhupāda’s fledgling movement in 1969 and spent the next thirty-five years in service to his guru, in dedicated spiritual practice, and in teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world.

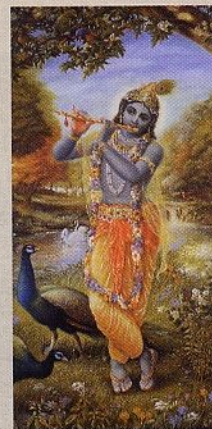
Śrīdhara Swami spent his last days at ISKCON’s center in Māyāpur, West Bengal, in the heart of Lord Caitanya’s holy land. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted the center to become a showcase for all aspects of the Kṛṣṇa conscious life, including education. A group of devotees there have wholeheartedly taken up the task of creating an educational institution in Māyāpur where members of ISKCON can grow in their spiritual knowledge and practice. “Seed of a Sage Vision” introduces us to the fruit of their efforts: Māyāpur Institute for Higher Education.

Māyāpur lies only about thirty miles from the border of Bangladesh, formerly part of India and its rich spiritual heritage, especially as connected to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his followers. Indradyumna Swami’s “Pilgrimage to Bangladesh” tells of a rare visit by Western devotees to some of Bangladesh’s holiest sites.

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 incar-
nation, taught Kṛṣṇa
consciousness through
the chanting of
Hare Kṛṣṇa*



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

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement



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Letters

A Seed Bears Fruit

Many years ago, and it seems like lifetimes now, I had two high school friends who were a couple of years older than I and were Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. We used to go on the weekends to the Potomac, Maryland, temple together. From the beginning my faith was confident in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīlā Prabhupāda. I was even fortunate to have *darśana* [audience] with His Divine Grace when my friends received initiation. I can't remember, after almost three decades, what my friends' initiated names were. But, Jerry and Sandy, may you know that the seeds of devotion planted so long ago established something which flourished over time. May Govinda bless you both for the most excellent of matchless gifts.

L. C. Hagerty
Corcoran, California

Attentive Chanting

While chanting, is it wrong to listen to Kṛṣṇa's *bhajanās* or read about Kṛṣṇa?

Rajes
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: The process is to hear and chant the holy sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Revelation of the form, qualities, and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa will then take place gradually in due course. To do other things while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa makes it more difficult to pay attention, and inattention is an offense to the holy name. Attentive chanting can vanquish our other offenses, but inattention can prevent us from attaining love of Godhead.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said that there is nothing of value in the whole material world except the holy name. Why then do we

feel the need to do other things while we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa? It may be that our realization of this point is lacking. So we should humbly return our attention to the mantra and continue, again and yet again, always trying to hear with attention.

Looking for a Guru

BTG seems to arrive just when my "Kṛṣṇa battery" seems to be running out of power!

Where can I find out more detailed, practical information about initiation? I have contacted a couple of *śikṣa* [instructing] gurus who have Internet Web sites. They (I guess) in turn had a couple of their disciples contact me. Alas, they offered no tangible information that I could use. This "initiation thing" is like a "private club" that I can't get into. I'm forty-eight with family responsibilities, so it's hard to visit the closest temple (which is two hours away). I follow the four regulative principles and chant ten rounds a day. Any thoughts?

Van Gignilliat
Mobile, Alabama

OUR REPLY: In different places in Śrīlā Prabhupāda's books the importance of initiation is described. It is an essential part of spiritual life. At initiation one receives transcendental knowledge about God and how to approach Him. The spiritual master also takes the karma of the disciple. Śrīlā Prabhupāda had a standard of having the devotees chant sixteen rounds a day and follow the four principles forbidding meat-eating, intoxication, gambling, and illicit sex for at least six months prior to initiation. During this time, the disciple may also see that the guru is steadily qualified to represent Kṛṣṇa.

Generally Śrīlā Prabhupāda taught that when one is serious about spiritual life, Kṛṣṇa will send

the guru. Therefore, you should not be overly anxious about it. You can pray to Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda and keep your eyes open to see who they may be sending.

As a disciple you will have to dedicate your life to the service of your guru, so you should keep that in mind, and be sure you have that much faith in the person you accept as guru. The guru must be a faithful follower of his own guru in a line of succession going back to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gives some guidance about choosing a guru in *The Nectar of Instruction* (pages 25–30).

In reality, initiation is not a private club you cannot get into. It is beyond superficial appearances. It is Kṛṣṇa revealing Himself to you through one of His confidential associates.

Why No Shoes?

I'm a student of anthropology, and I have a question regarding the removal of shoes before entering the temple. What is the significance of that?

Sumaira
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: The reason is that cleanliness is an important religious principle. Here are two statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda about cleanliness in worship:

“In India it is still the prevalent custom that one put his shoes in a specified place and then enter the temple barefoot after washing his feet.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.59, Purport*)

“To keep the temple very cleansed, very attractive, that is also Deity worship. Those who are here working, they should keep this temple as clean as possible. Then Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied. Kṛṣṇa's body—this temple. Do not think

it otherwise. Temple should be worshiped in that way. Therefore I ask you not to come with shoes.” (Lecture, August 17, 1976)

Our shoes can become contaminated with so many unclean things, and thus we should not enter the temple wearing them. This is out of respect for the deity, who is considered an especially merciful form of the Lord, for He appears before the material senses of the neophyte worshiper.

Inevitable Cleansing

I think that man has forgotten God. With all of his fancy inventions and technology, man has lost touch with God. Therefore a *cleansing of some sort must inevitably come*. Would you agree?

Jerad Mack
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Yes, we will have to turn away from this absorption in materialism. There is no doubt about it. There is a counterculture of people turning away from it, and it will increase. We are confident that if the congregational chanting of the glories of God is promoted in human society, then all the sinful reactions will be dispelled. That is the great need at the present moment. ☸

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CORRECTIONS

In the last issue, the text on page 15 was laid out incorrectly. The right-hand column of text should be the first column on the page. Also, the deity on page 14 is Gadādhara, not Lord Nityānanda as the caption states. We apologize for these mistakes.



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REMEMBER KṚṢṆA AT THE END

The success of whatever we do in life will be tested by our ability to remember the Supreme Lord at the time of death.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyām
sva-dharma-pariniṣṭhayā
janma-lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām
ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*

“The highest perfection of human life, achieved either by complete knowledge of matter and spirit, by practice of mystic powers, or by perfect discharge of occupational duty, is to remember the Personality of Godhead at the end of life.”

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.6



ultimately we go to the same goal.” That is very nice, provided you actually go to the same goal. Otherwise, it is misleading. You say, “Whatever path one may take, it leads to the same goal.” We accept that. That is described here. *Ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*. Whatever you have done may be very good, but at the time of death, if you forget Nārāyaṇa, then it’s all useless, all useless.

Because that is the point—your mentality at the time of death. At that time, if your mentality is about Nārāyaṇa,

then your life is successful. You will be transferred to the spiritual world and associate with Nārāyaṇa. You get complete perfection. But if you think of your dog at the time of death, then you go to become a dog. Finished. All your *sāṅkhya-yoga* and philosophy and yoga practice—all go to hell. You become a dog.

One has to remember Nārāyaṇa at the time of

Ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ. At the time of death, if you can remember Nārāyaṇa—Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa, the same thing—then your life is successful, whatever you do. Very big stalwart spiritualist or yogis say, “Everything is leading to the Supreme.” That has been described here: *sāṅkhya-yoga*, *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, or *dhyāna-yoga*. These yogis say, “Whatever path we may follow,

If you always engage in Lord Kṛṣṇa's service, you always have the impression of Kṛṣṇa within your heart.

• • •

death. Then why not directly practice remembering Nārāyaṇa? What we are doing is the correct practice for that. The deity is there; the form of Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa, is there. If you always engage in Lord Kṛṣṇa's service, you always have the impression of Kṛṣṇa within your heart. And if you continue it some way or other, then your life is successful.

Otherwise big, big talks, nose pressing, and keeping the head down—you can do that, waste your time in that way. But will that guarantee that at the time of your death you shall remember Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa? That remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is wanted—*ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*—as Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the authority, says here.

There is a Bengali proverb. *Bhajana kara sādhana kara murte janle haya*: “You are very good transcendentalist. You are practicing so many nice things. That's all right. But do you know how to die? That is the point. If you die with God consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then your life is successful.”

WE ARE NOT GOD

[Reads from his Purport:] “Nārāyaṇa is the transcendental Personality of Godhead beyond the material creation.”

Nārāyaṇa is not a person like us. The Māyāvādīs say, “Nārāyaṇa is a person like us. So I can remember anyone. I can remember my wife; I can remember my husband or my child. Still, I am going to the same goal.”

No, no, no. That is not possible. Therefore it is particularly said, *ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*. Not your other friend or other demigod or . . . No. *Nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*: “Remember Nārāyaṇa.”

[Reading:] “Everything that is created, sustained, and at the end anni-

hilated is within the compass of the *mahat-tattva* (material principle).”

In another place it is said,

*dharmah svanuṣṭhitah puṁsām
viśvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratim
śrama eva hi kevalam*

“The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.8)

That is also referred here: *etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyām*. Big, big *sannyāsīs* are discussing *sāṅkhya-yoga*, metaphysics, or analyzing what is spirit, what is matter. *Neti neti*: “Not this.” This is called *sāṅkhya-yoga*. And the original *sāṅkhya-yoga* is *bhakti-yoga*. The philosophy of the *sāṅkhya-yoga* system was spoken by Kapiladeva, the son of Devahūti. That is purely *bhakti-yoga*. Later on, an atheist assumed the name Kapila and discussed *sāṅkhya-yoga*. His is a materialistic analysis.

The *sāṅkhya-yoga* system of philosophy is very much liked in Europe and Western countries because it is a system of metaphysics analyzing the whole cosmic manifestation. There are twenty-four *tattvas*. The first five *tattvas* are the material elements: earth, water, air, fire, and ether. Then ten senses: five senses for acquiring knowledge and five senses for enjoying. Then five principles of enjoyment: sound, form, touch, taste, and smell. Then mind, intelligence, ego, and finally the soul. In this way there are twenty-four elements.

The *sāṅkhya* yogis very much analyze this study. They are of the opinion that besides these twenty-four elements, there is nothing more. No. There is: the one who is combining

and annihilating the twenty-four—the Supreme Lord, *pradhāna*, Viṣṇu.

Whether you take the atheist Kapila's philosophical principle or that of the original Kapiladeva, that's all right. But after analyzing, if you do not find Nārāyaṇa, the creator of this material atmosphere and the material elements, then it is only so much useless labor. The chemists and physicists are analyzing the material elements within the laboratory. But that does not mean they are going to all be liberated at the end of life. No. You are spirit soul. You are entangled with these twenty-four elements. So your real business is how to get out of it. That is wanted.

Suppose you are a diseased fellow and you analyze the disease. That is called pathology. The doctor examines your blood and he finds out, “This is an infection, that is an infection, this is this, this is this.” That's all right. But simply understanding the blood analysis, pathology, does not mean one is cured. The cure is different.

Similarly, these *sāṅkhya-yogī* philosophers may analyze very critically. They may even count the atoms composing the whole material atmosphere. But that does not mean they have understood the original force that has created all these things. That is discussed here. *Etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyām*. You can become a very big scientist, a very big physicist or chemist. That is all right. But you must know how to remember Nārāyaṇa at the time of your death.

THE SCHOLAR AND THE BOATMAN

An interesting story has been described in *Back to Godhead*: The learned scholar and the boatman. In Bengal there are many rivers, and so people generally travel by boat service.

So a learned scholar from Calcutta, say, was going home to his village on a boat, and he was very happy.

He asked the boatman, "My dear boatman, do you know astronomy? Do you know how these stars are working?"

"No, sir, I do not know."

"Oh, your life is twenty-five percent lost. You do not know anything."

Then after some time: "Do you know geology? Do you know how earth and water are working?"

"No, sir, I am poor man. What can I know?"

"Oh, fifty percent of your life is lost."

Then all of a sudden there was a black cloud in the sky, and there was a storm.

The boatman asked, "Sir, do you know how to swim?"

"No, I do not know."

"Then one hundred percent you have lost." [Laughter.] "You are going to be drowned."

He jumped and he drowned.

This is the point. You are trying to understand the whole analytical study of the material world. That is very good. But if you do not know how to remember Nārāyaṇa at the time of death, then you are going to be cats and dogs. That's all. Because you are very fond of dogs. Especially in the Western countries, every gentleman, every lady has a dog. So what will you think of at the time of death? Dog.

That is nature's law. *Yam yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram.* You will find this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [8.6]. At the time of death, the mental condition you have created will carry you to the next body. Therefore don't create a doggy mind. Make it Kṛṣṇa conscious. And that is very nice. Then at the time of death you will remember Kṛṣṇa and you will be transferred to Kṛṣṇaloka. Therefore it is advised, "Whatever you may be, it doesn't matter. Practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That will save you."

Otherwise, *janma-lābhaḥ*: getting different types of births. So-called scientists and physicists do not know why there are so many varieties of life. Why not only human beings? Why are there cats, dogs, rats, flies, serpents, trees, creepers, fish—8,400,000 species

of life? They also take birth from a father and mother. Whether for the insect, the cat, the dog, or the human being, the process of birth is the same. Therefore a Vaiṣṇava poet has sung, *janame janame sabe pitā mātā pāya, kṛṣṇa guru nahi mile bhaja hari ei*: Whether you take birth as a man or a cat or a dog or an insect, there is the father and mother. You will get a father and mother in any type of birth, but not guru and Kṛṣṇa. Therefore this birth is meant for achieving guru and Kṛṣṇa.

SECOND BIRTH

Janmanā jāyate sūdraḥ. Even in human society, every man is born a *sūdra*. *Samskārād bhaved dvijaḥ.* He requires a second birth, by *samskāra*, reformation. The spiritual master gives the second birth, which is spiritual initiation. For the second birth, the father is the spiritual master and the mother is the *Vedas*. As the first birth is possible because of the material father and mother, the second birth, *dvija*, is possible because of the spiritual master (the father) and Vedic knowledge (the mother). That is possible in the human form of life.

If you do not take the privilege of accepting the second father and mother, then what is the difference between your birth and the dog's birth? You have got this human form of body, the best body. That is the instruction of all Vedic literature. But what is this material civilization? Simply working like cats and dogs. The same eating, sleeping, sex intercourse, and defending as animals. There are so many buildings in your city, Paris. Where is the culture to make the human life perfect? You have got very nice buildings. There is intelligence. So many nice buildings. People come to see the buildings. But that is not all. If you use your intelligence simply for the material activities, then you are not intelligent. You are a fool.

You must make a cultural institution where people may take education on how to remember Nārāyaṇa at the time of death. That is required. Otherwise your activities are useless. What is their value? You waste so much time to construct a very nice house, but at the time of death you cannot remember

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 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**, **hedge-hog**, 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."

Nārāyaṇa. You remember your very nice friend—your dog. What is the value of that?

People do not understand that there is life after death. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.13):

*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.” It is very simple philosophy. But the rascals will not understand it. I am changing my body. You may say it is growth, but in any case it has changed. I had a childhood body; that body is different from my present body.

It has changed. Therefore I have already changed my body so many times. And I will change my body after this body is no longer useful.

An example is given: I put on this sweater, but when it is torn, no longer useful, I give it up. I get another one, a new one. This body is a dress. Therefore we do not give so much importance to the bodily dress. We stress the soul. We do not make the distinction that “This is Hindu dress, Muslim dress, Christian dress, white dress, black dress.” No, no, we have nothing to do with the dress. We have to do with the soul within the dress. He is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. He has forgotten Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he is suffering.

Therefore our movement is meant to revive Kṛṣṇa consciousness and go back home, back to Godhead. This is the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. *Ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*. It

is a very important movement. Those who are very intelligent can take to it. Or you become intelligent or not intelligent, but know at least that unless one is pious, he cannot take to this movement. But somehow or other, if you take to this movement, then your valuable life is successful. *Janma-lābhaḥ paraḥ purisām*.

It is not cats' and dogs' life. It is the human form of life. Utilize it properly. “Properly” means to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, not dog conscious, cat conscious. No. These will not help you. Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then you will be able to remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death and your valuable life will be properly utilized. *Janma-lābhaḥ paraḥ purisām*. You have a very nice, valuable body, but it will be properly utilized if you learn how to remember Nārāyaṇa at the time of death.

Thank you very much. ❀

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“A person who in the month of Kārttika passes the time in studying the holy scriptures burns away all his sins and attains the pious result of performing ten thousand *yajñas*. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not as pleased with many *yajñas*, and with charities of many cows, elephants, or other expensive gifts, as He is with discussion of scripture during the month of Kārttika.”

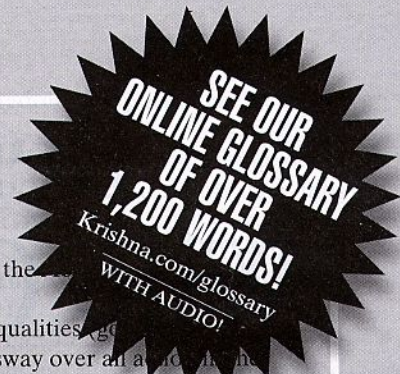
—Sanātana Gosvāmī, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 16.78–79

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Glossary



Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.
Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa’s first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother.
Battle of 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.

Māyāvādi—one who regards the Supreme as ultimately impersonal.
Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion and ignorance) that hold sway over all activities 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, Śrīman, Śrīmatī).
Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.
Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.
Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas*.
Varnāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *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.

Respect for Those Who Give the Holy Name

Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself through His holy names to chanters who honor and obey His agents.

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

This is the fifth in a series of articles on offenses to be avoided when trying to progress spiritually by chanting God's names. This article discusses the offense of disregarding or disobeying the guru.

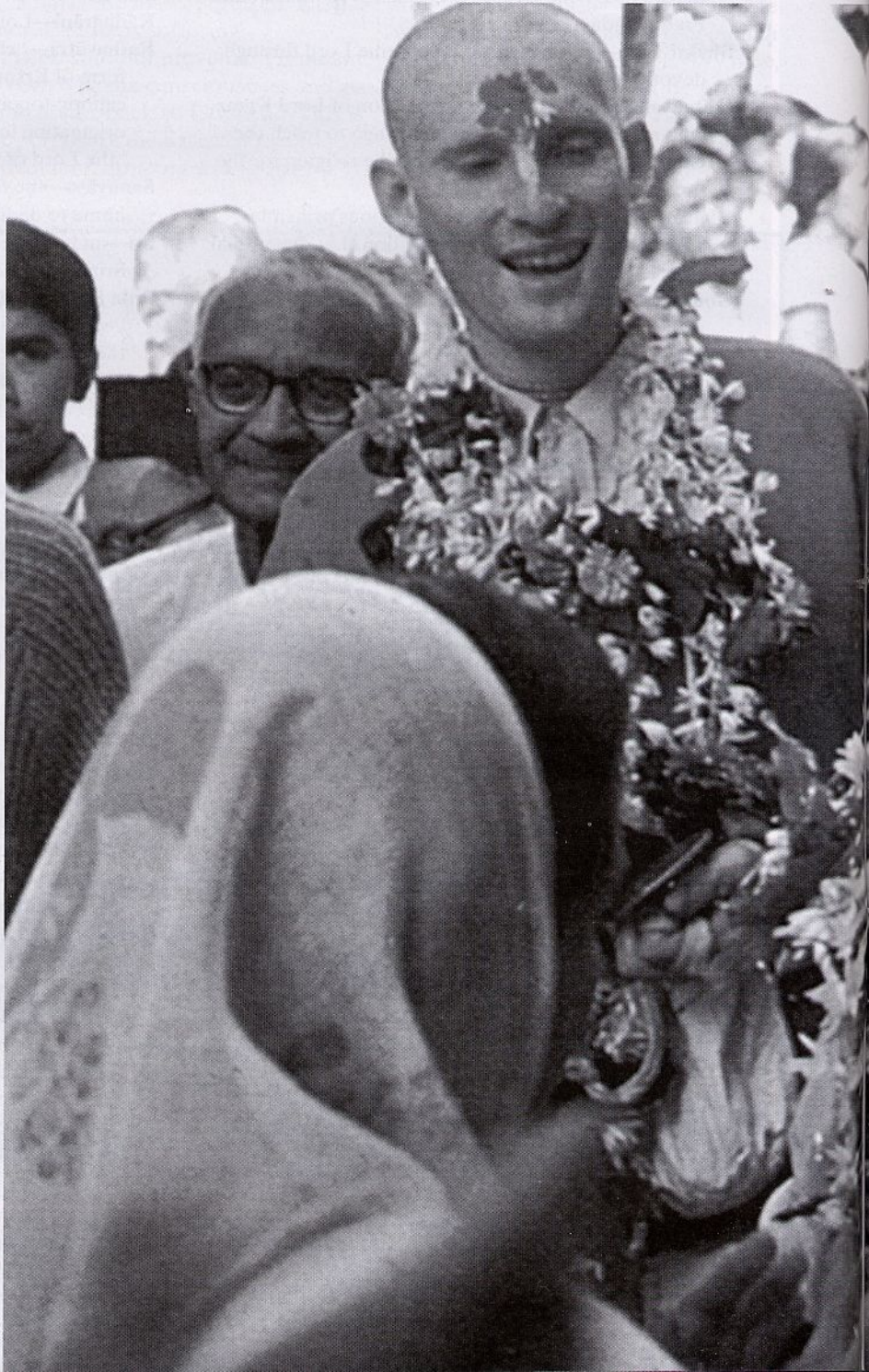
The celestial city Indrapurī is the residence of Indra, one of the *devas* who manage universal affairs in service to the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. In Indrapurī the scent of smoke from *aguru* incense mixes with the fragrance of flowers that decorate the parks and the bodies of the residents. Strings of natural pearls adorn the buildings, and benches carved from diamond and coral line the spotless roadways. Indrapurī is off limits to the sinful, cunning, lusty, greedy, envious, violent, or falsely proud.

Indra's wife, Śacī, sits beside him on his throne, as the dancers and singers of this material heaven entertain them with music glorifying Kṛṣṇa. A white umbrella that glows like the moon is Indra's royal canopy.

Although Indra is a powerful *deva*, his enemies, the *asuras* (demons), were once able to attack his heavenly kingdom and injure him and his associates. Because of disrespecting his spiritual master, Indra had become vulnerable.

Once, while enjoying his wealth and power on his jeweled throne, Indra saw Bṛhaspati, his guru, enter the pal-

In December 1970, thousands of residents of Surat, India, honor Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples as they take the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa to the streets of the city.



Yadvivra Dāsa

ace hall. According to etiquette, Indra should have stood to greet him with a seat, sweet words, and some refreshment. But because Indra was used to seeing Bṛhaspati every day, he ignored him. Offended, Bṛhaspati left.

Indra quickly understood his omission and took to the standard method of rectification—he went to find his guru to fall in repentance at his feet. But Bṛhaspati, wanting to teach Indra a lesson, became invisible. Because Indra lost the blessings of Bṛhaspati, demonic forces were able to attack Indrapurī, wounding Indra and others.

THE NEED FOR A SPIRITUAL MASTER

Like Indra, every human being needs the grace of a spiritual master. We may not face enemies like Indra's, but we still need protection as we pursue the business of human life: spiritual advancement. "Demons," such as our desires for material things, constantly seek our destruction.

Those of us who have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness want to attain a kingdom far superior to Indrapurī. We're aiming for the spiritual world,

the kingdom of God, Kṛṣṇa. We know that the pleasure of serving Kṛṣṇa there is higher than anything Indra enjoys. Our plea for entrance into that service is the mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

We can know about chanting the holy names only when we've learned the purpose of life from a bona fide guru. Human beings are mostly at a loss to see the purpose in the gigantic creation around them. Using only observation and experience, people



The principle of accepting personal guidance in the mission of life is so important that when Kṛṣṇa incarnates He also accepts a guru to set an example.

• • •

sometimes reason that an intelligent being created everything for some purpose. But the nature of the creator, the purpose of His creation, and the means to align with that purpose escapes them. These things must be revealed from beyond the creation, by the creator or His representatives. Therefore, to understand these things, everyone needs a guru. All gurus also have gurus, the ultimate guru being the Lord Himself. The principle of accepting personal guidance in the mission of life is so important that when Kṛṣṇa incarnates He also accepts a guru to set an example.

When we find a genuine guru who comes in a chain of teachers and disciples that starts with the Lord Himself, we learn that creation is meant to help fallen souls pursue material desires and ultimately return to their original spiritual position. A bona fide guru also teaches that the principal means of achieving the ultimate purpose of existence—loving union with Kṛṣṇa—is the chanting of His holy names, especially the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

INITIATION AND SPIRITUAL TRAINING

Even to know about the Lord's name requires some touch with a guru. So unquestionably someone who decides to dedicate his or her life to Kṛṣṇa will need systematic training by a guru. Just as a young couple formalize their relationship with marriage, or a student officially enrolls in a school, a person serious about loving and surrendering to Kṛṣṇa makes a vow of formal commitment. When we become officially initiated into a lineage of gurus and disciples, we receive a firm commitment to our deliverance from the guru who initiates us, the many previous teachers, and the

Lord Himself. In ordinary life, when the admissions officer of a school accepts a student, all the teachers and staff, up to the chief administrator, give their implied assurance that they will do their utmost to ensure the student's education and graduation. Similarly, a faithful disciple in a transcendent school is sure to achieve spiritual success. At the time of initiation, the guru "plants the seed of devotion" and delivers the holy name by requesting Kṛṣṇa to manifest Himself through the chanting.

Kṛṣṇa will not manifest through the chanting if the chanter disrespects the guru—either the guru from whom one learned the chanting or the guru from whom one received formal initiation into the school of devotional life. Even in an ordinary school students who lack courtesy toward their teachers may be neglected or even dismissed. How much is the Lord displeased when someone disregards a spiritual master!

The offense to the holy name of disregarding or disobeying the guru stems from considering the guru an ordinary person. Of course, the guru almost always seems to be like us, appearing in a physical body made of the same ingredients as all other human beings. But the guru is the representative of God, is realized in the science of devotion, and is therefore extraordinary. Although police officers are human beings like you and I, we treat them with the respect due to the government as a whole because they represent the government and know the law. We respect a teacher as a representative of the school and a repository of knowledge and experience that exceeds our own. With such examples, we can easily understand that one should treat the guru, as we are taught, like God; the guru represents God and is our link to Him.

The scriptures list specific ways by which disciples must show respect for

the guru. For example, they should sprinkle on their head water that has washed the guru's feet, and upon seeing the guru, they should offer prostrated obeisances. They shouldn't use the guru's bed, seat, shoes, or conveyances, worship anyone else as guru in the guru's presence, or act or speak in a way that displeases the guru.

One should worship the guru first and then take permission to worship Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, along with the picture or deity form of Kṛṣṇa, a disciple keeps a picture of his or her guru. The incense, flowers, and so forth, are offered first to the guru and then to Kṛṣṇa. Even when chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, one keeps the guru in mind, with gratitude for the gift of chanting.

The disciple is expected to be not only respectful but also obedient. The guru's instructions—in both letter and spirit—should be the life and soul of the disciple. The guru often gives general and individual instructions. Some may apply to all times, places, and circumstances, such as the instruction to always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. Some are to be applied in various ways and degrees, depending on the situation. And not everything the guru says is an order; he may also give guidelines.

The disciple must avoid both neglect of the rules and blind, fanatical following. The key is to distinguish between eternal principles and external details. Kṛṣṇa therefore says that the disciple should inquire from the guru and follow the practical example of saints, or sadhus.

BEWARE OF CHEATERS

Some people today may feel that the scriptural rules for respecting one's guru are excessive. Yet respect for a person who represents and speaks for a greater power is a sign of civilization. *(please turn to page 57)*

“Grains, Fruits, Vegetables, Milk— Why Should You Kill the Animals?”

Here we continue a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and the mother of one of his students, along with a Jesuit priest. It took place in the garden at Bhaktivedanta Manor, near London, England, on July 25, 1973.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I have to live. We agree that we have to live by eating another living entity. *Jivo jīvasya jīvanam*. But if I eat this grass, and if I eat some animal, do you think they are equal?

Jesuit Priest: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They are equal? Then why don't you kill your child—your own child?

Jesuit Priest: Because there's a . . . I mean . . . that's logical. I just tried to show you the difference between vegetative life, sensitive life, and rational life.

Disciple: Animals have got rationality.

Jesuit Priest: No, they haven't.

Disciple: Modern psychologists will display to you rational life in the monkeys . . .

Jesuit Priest: No, no.

Disciple: . . . and so many other animals. Rats.

Jesuit Priest: No.

Disciple: They make rational decisions.

Jesuit Priest: No, they don't. All I can say is, this idea that animals have rationality has not been accepted by many Western philosophers.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So because some animal is not very intelligent, you are right to kill?

Jesuit Priest: No, no, no. We're not talking about killing. Your disciple's theme now is that there's no difference between us and the unintelligent dog.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. But even if the animal is not intelligent, you cannot kill him. The fact that your child is also not intelligent does not mean you can kill your child.

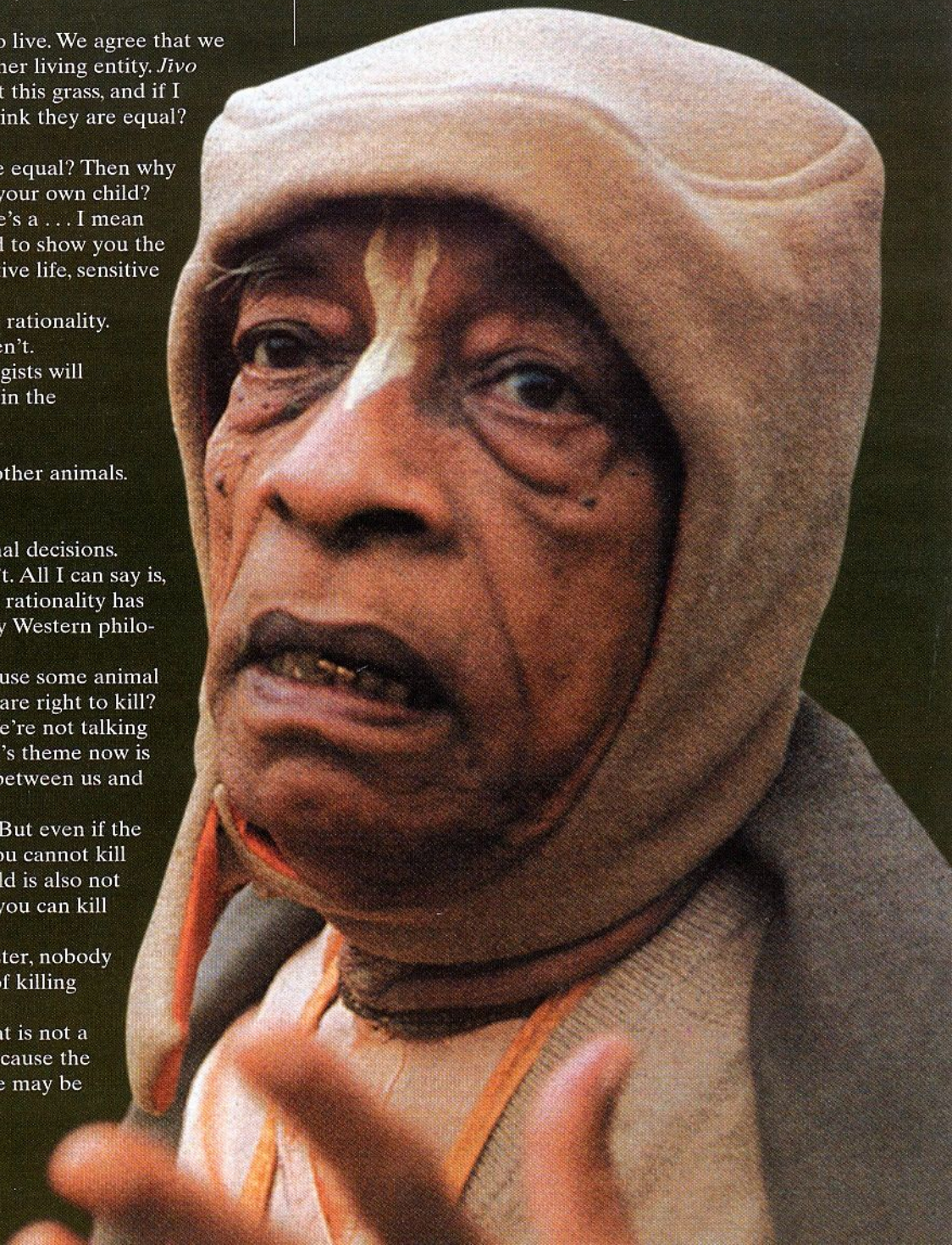
Jesuit Priest: Oh. But, Master, nobody would for a second think of killing an innocent child.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Still, that is not a very good reason—that because the animal is not intelligent, he may be

killed. That is not a very good reason.

Jesuit Priest: Oh, no. That isn't the reason. That isn't the reason why we kill it. We kill the animal because we need it for a means of living.

[please turn to page 57]



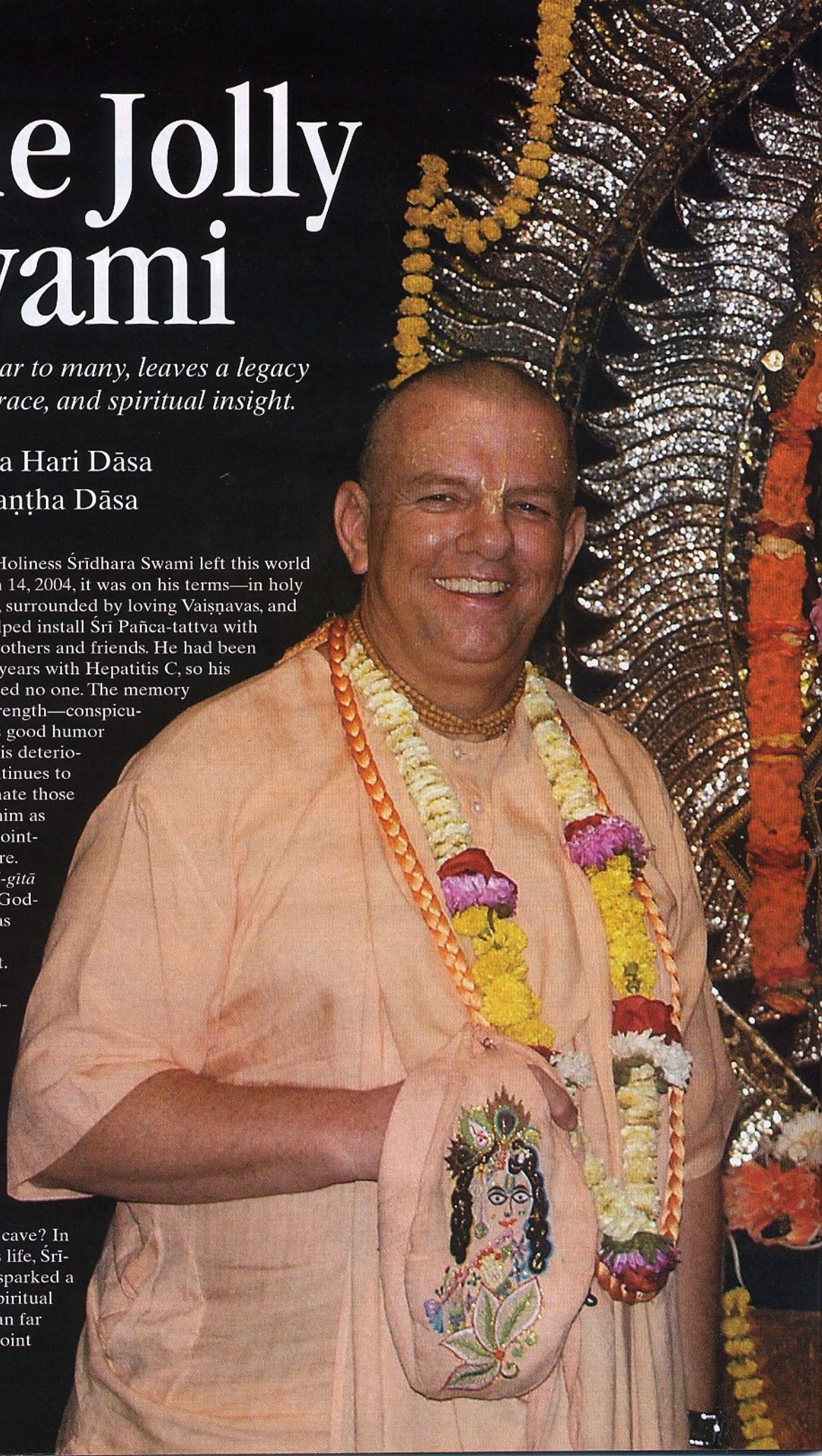
The Jolly Swami

A friend, dear to many, leaves a legacy of humor, grace, and spiritual insight.

by Adbhuta Hari Dāsa
and Kālakaṅṭha Dāsa

When His Holiness Śrīdhara Swami left this world on March 14, 2004, it was on his terms—in holy Mayapur, surrounded by loving Vaiṣṇavas, and just after he'd helped install Śrī Pañca-tattva with his dearest godbrothers and friends. He had been terminally ill for years with Hepatitis C, so his departure surprised no one. The memory of his spiritual strength—conspicuous in his endless good humor and unfazed by his deteriorating body—continues to inspire and fascinate those of us who knew him as we await our appointment with the pyre.

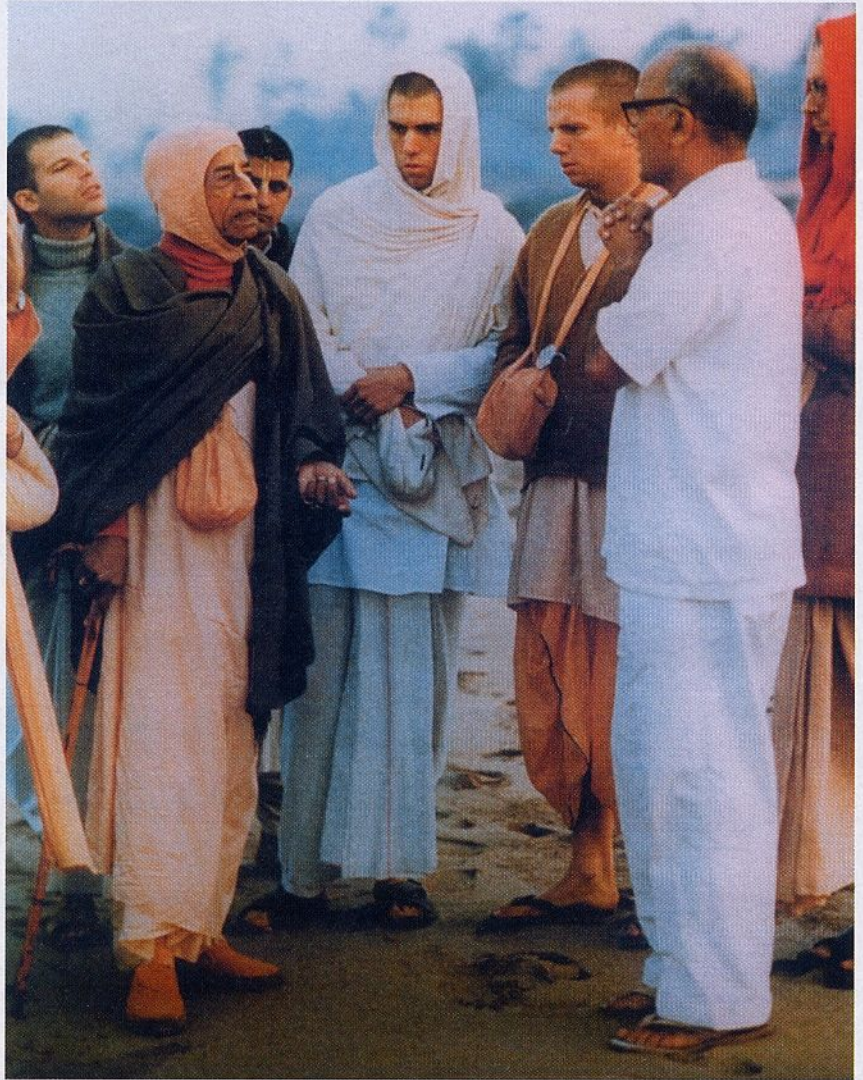
The *Bhagavad-gītā* describes a fully God-conscious death as the highest human achievement. How did this robust, ebullient, sociable Western born world traveler achieve a state of enlightenment more commonly associated with thin, reclusive yogis meditating in a remote Himalayan cave? In Śrīdhara Swami's life, Śrīla Prabhupāda's sparked a thirty-five-year spiritual journey that began far from its ending point in holy India.



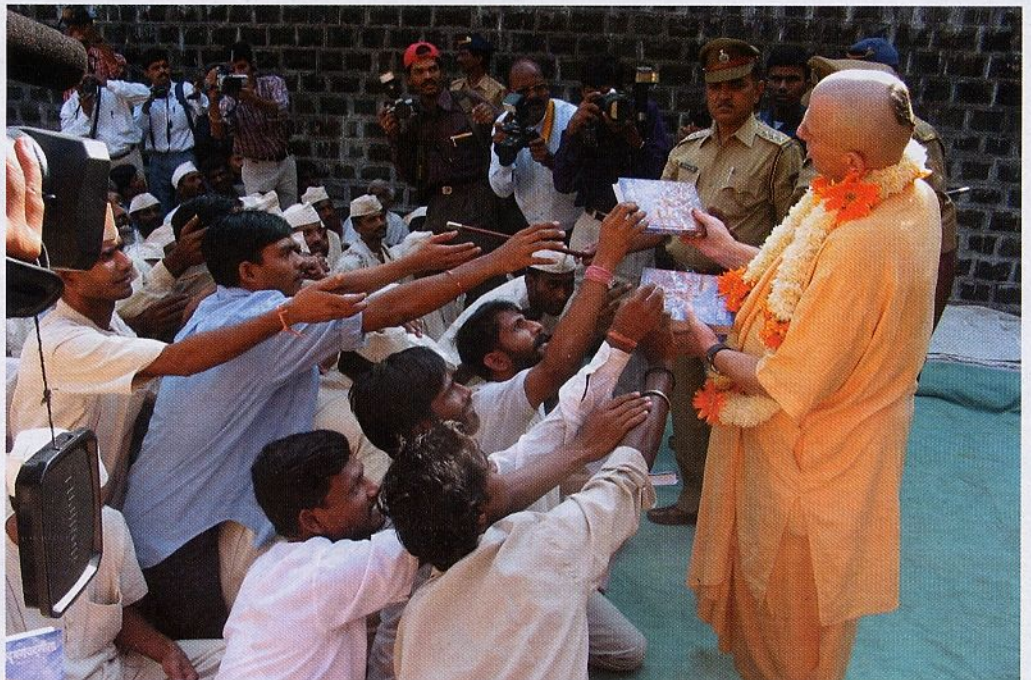


Śrīdhara Swami described himself as a shy person before coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Born John Colcleugh in 1948 in Vancouver, Canada, his quest for spiritual understanding led him, in 1969, from engineering school to a Sunday feast at the Frederick Street San Francisco Kṛṣṇa temple. The first person he met at the door was a kind and energetic devotee named Jayānanda Dāsa. Since it was early in the day, Jayānanda invited his young guest to vacuum the rug and help in the kitchen. By the end of the evening, John was ready for more. He moved in to the San Francisco ashram to begin his study of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Later, he transferred to the fledgling Kṛṣṇa center in his native Vancouver.

In 1970 he returned to San Francisco for the Rathayātrā festival and met Śrīla Prabhupāda for the first time. John was deeply impressed and, having completed the required training, was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda as Śrīdhara Dāsa Brahmācārī. He received more training in cooking, deity worship, and book sales. At one point he led a large group of devotees distributing *Back to Godhead* magazines to people leaving the popular musical *Hair*. It was hard for the early-rising devotees to be out so late, but they were happy to find that people were receptive to their message,



Previous spread:
 With Lord Nṛsiṃha
 at ISKCON
 Māyāpur. On a
 morning walk with
 Śrīla Prabhupāda
 (top) on Juhu
 Beach, Mumbai.
 Top right: receiving
 a śālāgrāma-śilā
 (a form of Kṛṣṇa)
 during a visit to a
 South Indian temple.
 At right: passing out
 copies of *Bhagavad-*
gītā As It Is in a
 prison.





having just seen Hare Kṛṣṇa chanted onstage.

Śrīdhara Swami remembered, “We devotees were very close to each other in certain ways, maybe not maturely, but in the sincerity of desperation. We were trying to rush out of the material world. We had no idea of lifelong devotional service.”

Śrīdhara found he had a strong taste for distributing books, so he joined one of ISKCON’s first traveling parties. In Reno, Nevada, he set a record by selling four hundred BTGs in a day. Later he helped open ISKCON’s first center in the conservative town of Salt Lake City.

“It was very enlivening and inspiring yet difficult” he said of the experience. “It was an austerity. You’re approaching people who think you’re weird. You don’t know the philosophy that well. Every day you go out in any kind of inclement weather, any environment. It was a hard struggle, but I did well.”

FEELING AT HOME IN INDIA

Śrīdhara and Buddhimanta, another successful young distributor, were sent to London to train others. After some time Śrīdhara, reasoning he was already halfway there, took an opportunity to visit India. On arriving in Delhi, he found the atmosphere strikingly familiar.

“It was *dejā vu*,” he said. “I felt at home.” He served in ISKCON’s emerging centers in holy Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana before again joining a traveling party. He and his comrades, headed by Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, conducted Vaiṣṇava revival programs throughout the country, performing devotional *bhajan*s (hymns) and speaking to thousands in colorful *pandal* tents.

By this time, Śrīdhara Dāsa Brahmācārī knew what he wanted to do with his life: serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and, specifically, teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. However,

in those early days before ISKCON grew widely popular in India, the two goals were not always compatible.

When his traveling party reached Bombay, the young temple was in a critical situation. Śrīla Prabhupāda had bought a large tract of land near Juhu Beach, but now the seller, having taken ISKCON’s deposit, was trying to renege on the contract. The devotees had built a temporary temple on the mostly undeveloped land, but the seller, well-connected politically, had influenced municipal authorities to demolish the structure. Conservative Hindus were outraged.

Śrīla Prabhupāda needed capable devotees to stay on the land, rebuild the temporary temple, and battle the deceptive seller in the media and courts. He asked Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, ISKCON’s governing body representative for India, to ask the traveling party to redirect their efforts to Bombay. They agreed, leaving the excitement of the road to share a hut on the raw



Juhu land with a tribe of rats, each “big enough to scare any cat.” Poverty, mosquitoes, and snakes were constant obstacles.

In the emergency, Śrīla Prabhupāda put the preacher Śrīdhara in charge of construction material. Śrīdhara, taking inspiration from young Girirāja Dāsa, the temple president, faithfully and obediently carried out Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions. Through the austerity of his daily life, he worked hard to please Śrīla Prabhupāda, for that was his only ambition. Later, Śrīdhara

Swami said that Bombay taught him discipline and service as the means to attain happiness and to progress in devotional service.

“Disciple,” he would often say, “means discipline.”

BECOMING A SWAMI

When Śrīdhara Dāsa Brahmācārī would enter Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room, Prabhupāda would sometimes jokingly say, “Here is our Śrīdhara Swami.” (Śrīdhara Swami is the name of a great

ācārya in our line.) When Śrīdhara asked Śrīla Prabhupāda if he could take *sannyāsa*, Prabhupāda agreed and asked him when he would like to have the ceremony.

Śrīdhara replied, “*Śubhasya śighram*,” which means that auspicious things should be done at once.

By this time, Śrīdhara had no interest in family life. Externally he was a jolly, friendly person, but internally he was unemotional about the material world, seeing in it nothing of value for him. India had helped solidify his



Serving prasādam (left) as part of ISKCON's free-food distribution program. Below: chanting before a discourse at a festival. Bottom: working at his computer somewhere during his worldwide travels.

Adbhuta Hari Dasa

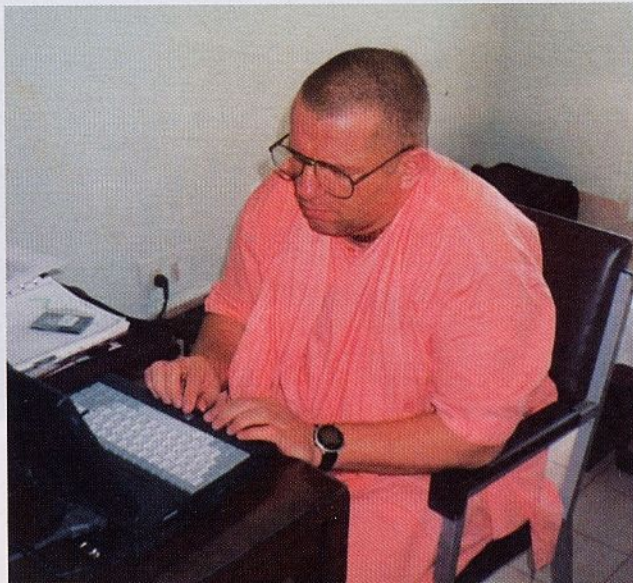
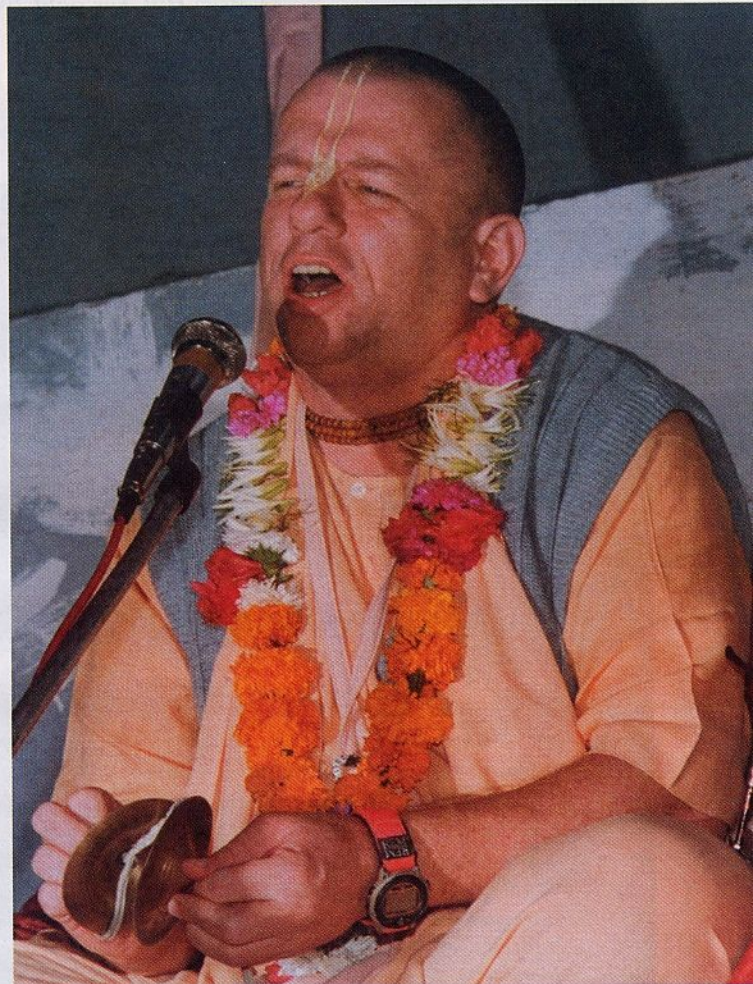
development and maturity in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

“It was very sobering,” he later said, “seeing the miserable condition of the material world and the last vestiges of an ancient spiritual culture. India gave me a broad understanding of the tradition and potential of what I was receiving from Śrīla Prabhupāda.”

Thus, in Vṛndāvana, 1975, Śrīdhara Dāsa Brahmaçārī became Śrīdhara Swami, accepting vows of celibacy and renunciation that he honored the rest of his life.

After taking *sannyāsa*, Śrīdhara Swami felt uncomfortable receiving the traditional honor afforded to *sannyāsīs* in India. He returned to Bombay and joked with his colleagues, “Where is my *mahā-prasādam*? Where is my *mahā-prasādam*?”—referring to special meals traditionally offered to honored guests.

Śrīdhara Swami thought himself duty bound to return to the West and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but Śrīla



Prabhupāda asked him to stay and help set up ISKCON in India. At that time manpower was scarce; ISKCON had few Indian-born members, and sickness and immigration made staying in India difficult for Westerners. Śrīla Prabhupāda deputed Śrīdhara Swami to organize temples in Calcutta and, later, Hyderabad, a service he continued until Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world in 1977.

BACK TO JUHU

Śrīdhara Swami was in Germany buying a van for the Hyderabad temple when he heard of Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure. He felt, he said, "like a bird flying in the sky who is stunned by the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute and just falls to the ground." He was crushed at the thought of living without the company of his beloved spiritual master, whom he had seen regularly through his years of service in India.

Meanwhile, in Bombay, Girirāja Dāsa [now Girirāja Swami], under Śrīla Prabhupāda's direction, had led a successful fight to secure ISKCON's Juhu land and build a breathtaking temple. Śrīla Prabhupāda departed just two months before the grand opening.

Again, help was needed, so Śrīdhara Swami was asked to return to help lead and develop the new Rādhā-Rāsabihārī Temple in Juhu. He worked diligently there over the next twenty-six years, serving twice as temple president, and helping ISKCON Juhu become one of India's most famous and successful temples.

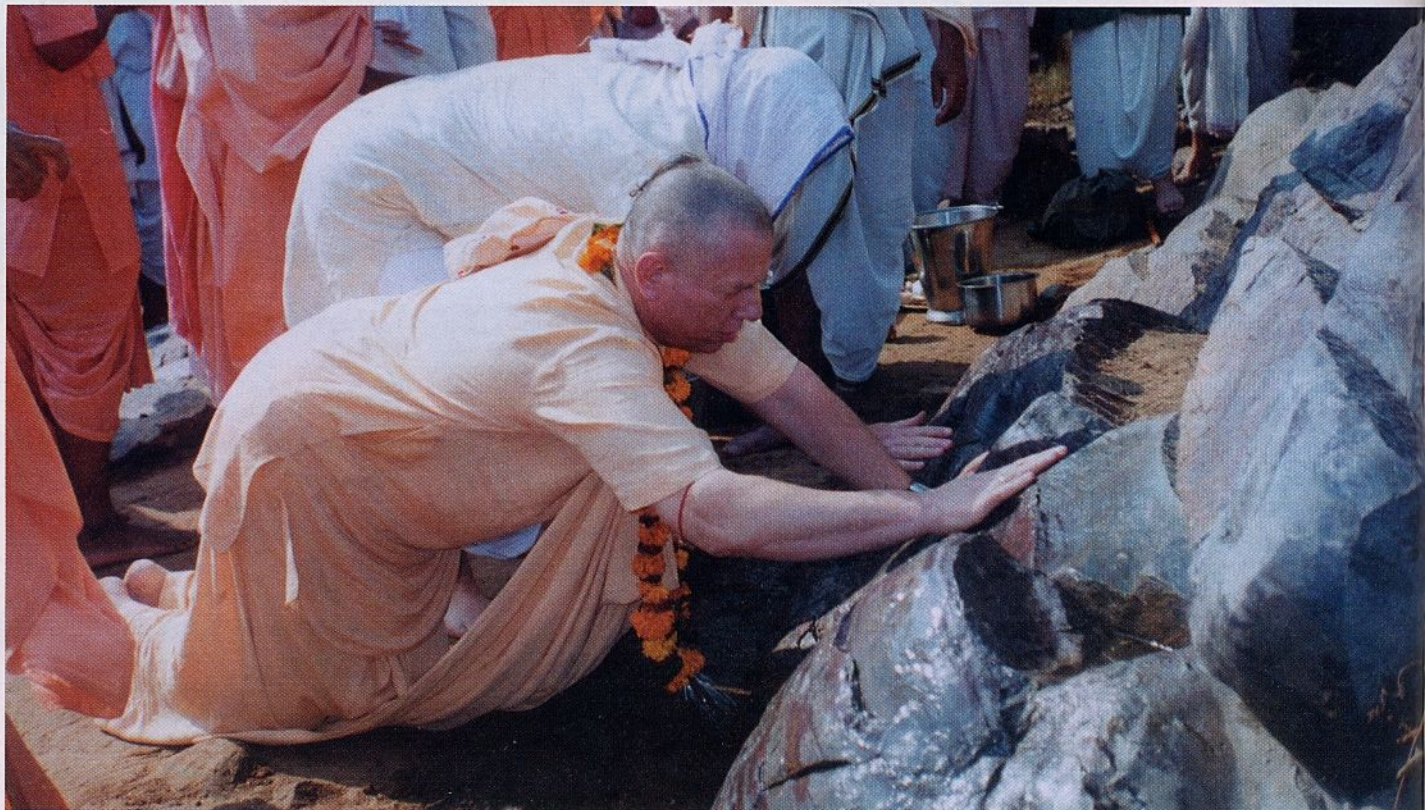
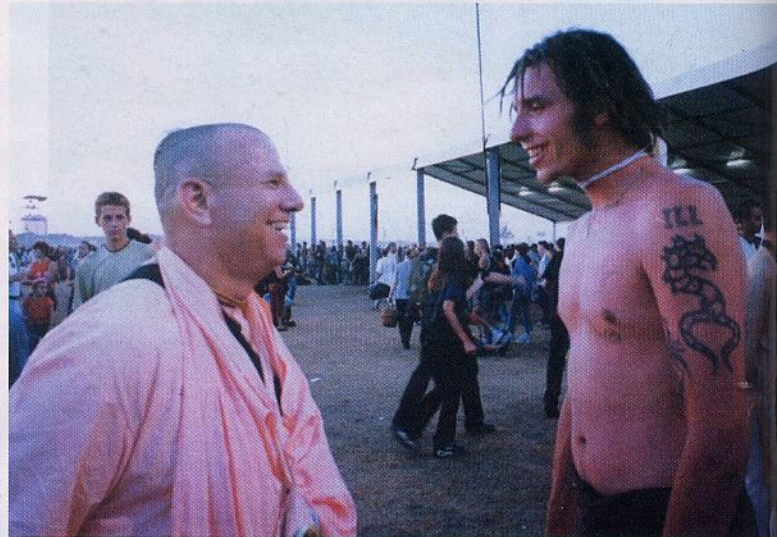
During his years in Juhu, Śrīdhara Swami enrolled and cultivated long-term relationships with ISKCON life members. The members loved him and

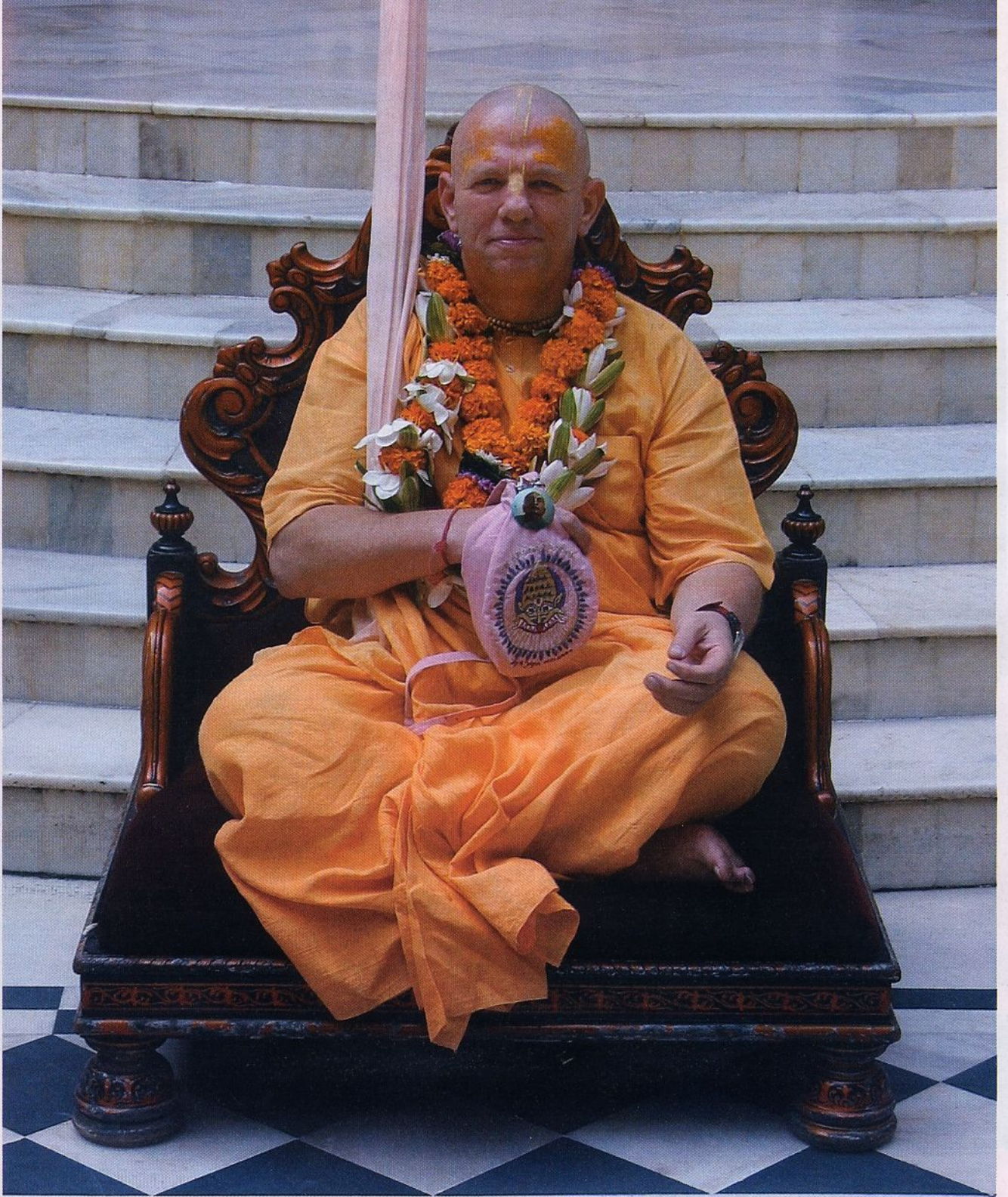
were impressed with his knowledge of Vaiṣṇavism, especially when he spoke in Hindi. Out of deep affection for him and appreciating his friendly, outgoing nature, two members, M. P. Maheswari and Brijratan Mohatta, nicknamed him "the jolly swami."

While enrolling members, Śrīdhara Swami met many aristocratic industrialists who had little interest in spiritual life. As a renunciant his needs were few, but he was enthusiastic to engage others in giving money

A reveler at the Polish Woodstock festival (right) gets a smile from the jolly swami.

Below: offering respects to sacred Govardhana Hill. Far right: at home in Hare Krishna Land, Mumbai.



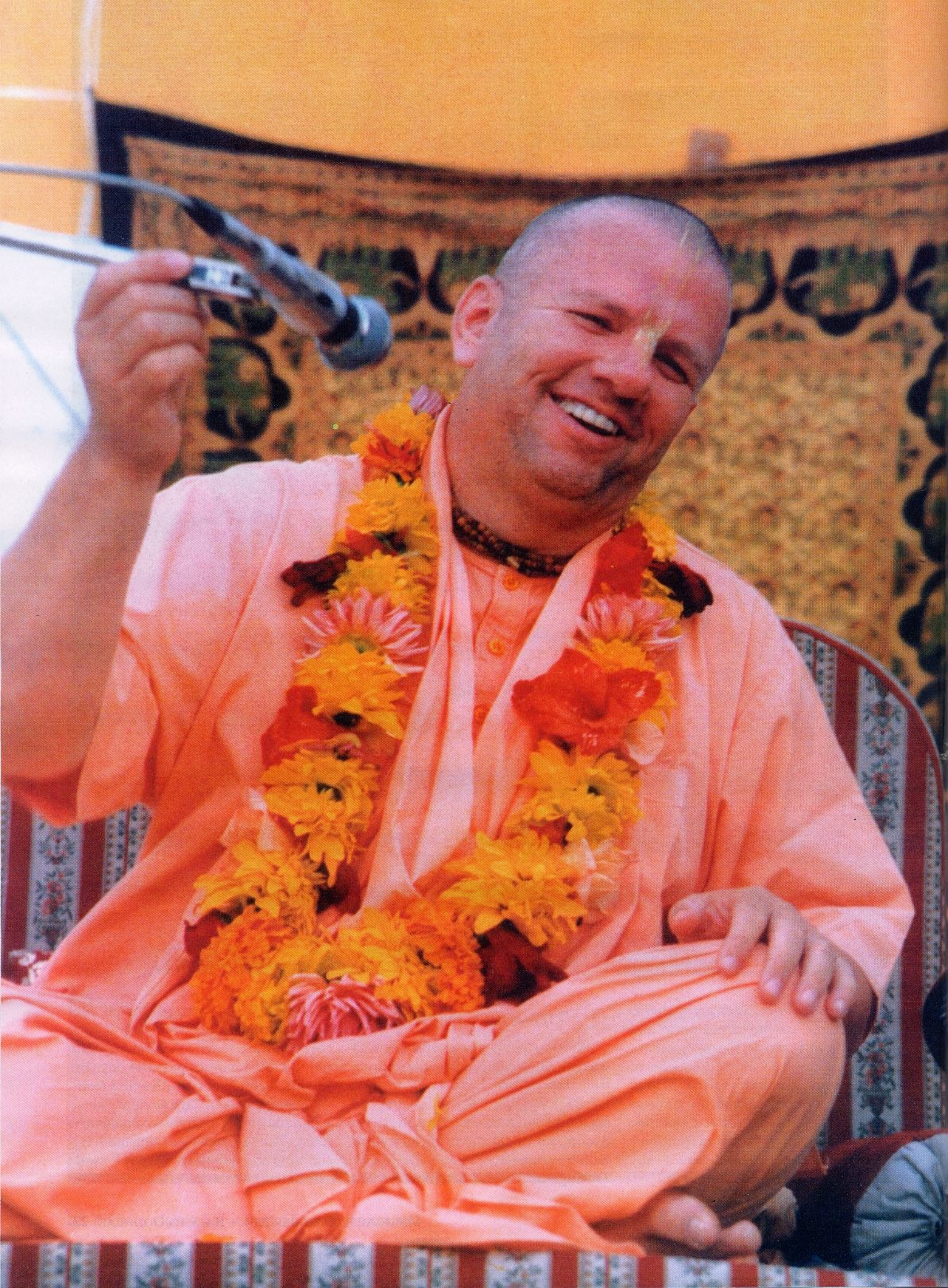


for Kṛṣṇa's service. Such giving helps implant spiritual life in the donors and bring them towards Kṛṣṇa. Śrīdhara Swami compared himself to one of Lord Rāma's monkeys who helped bring Sitā (who is Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth) back from the demoniac Rāvaṇa. He liked Cāṇakya Paṇḍita's assertion that "one should not be shy about money or *prasādam*."

THE JOLLY INMATE

At Juhu in the late seventies a thief was caught stealing and, in the altercation that followed, struck dead by a hired temple guard. The police arrested six temple leaders, including Śrīdhara Swami, and held them in the hellish Bombay municipal jail for two weeks. During the ordeal Śrīdhara Swami

was a source of strength for all. He spoke enthusiastically about Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the other inmates and helped the devotees pass the days by holding an imaginary Rathayātrā festival, passing around an imaginary ghee lamp, and preparing massive imaginary feasts. The inmates were charmed. By the time the devotees were released, one inmate, a taxi driver, enrolled with





Śrīdhara Swami's personality shines (left) as he speaks about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Above: near the Kremlin, Moscow.

Śrīdhara Swami as an ISKCON life member.

During his decades of service in Juhu, Śrīdhara Swami developed a deep love for the deities Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. Recalling that Śrīla Prabhupāda carried Their photo wherever he went, he did the same.

Paraphrasing a statement of Prabhupāda's, in his jovial way he would reflect, "Bombay was Śrīla Prabhupāda's office, Māyāpur his place of worship, and Vṛndāvana his home. For me, Bombay is everything."

INNOVATIVE FUNDRAISER

Although he performed many services in Bombay, Śrīdhara Swami's most innovative contribution was the establishment of BHISMA (Bhaktivedanta Information Service and Management). In the early '90's, when the technology was just becoming available and was still unheard of in ISKCON and in India, Śrīdhara Swami set up a direct-mail fundraising program in Juhu. His investment in the program was met with much skepticism but proved to be highly successful. He went on to

extensively study professional fundraising and non-profit management. He spent years traveling throughout the ISKCON world introducing principles and practices he'd learned.

Last year, he founded VAST (Vedic Academy for Spiritual Technology), whose members are academically trained devotees. The aim of VAST is to bring the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* to business people in language and formats that appeal to them.

In recognition of his devotion and expertise, ISKCON's Governing Body Commission (GBC) appointed Śrīdhara Swami the GBC minister of membership and minister of fundraising. He served in those posts for nearly a decade until ill health forced his retirement. During his time as a GBC member, he expanded his portfolio to include shared responsibility for overseeing ISKCON's temples in Mumbai and the New York City area. Devotees in New York remember him for tackling the demanding and thankless task of cleaning up the large festival area each year after the New York Rathayātrā. At the end of the long festival day he would jump to the stage and, with buoyant

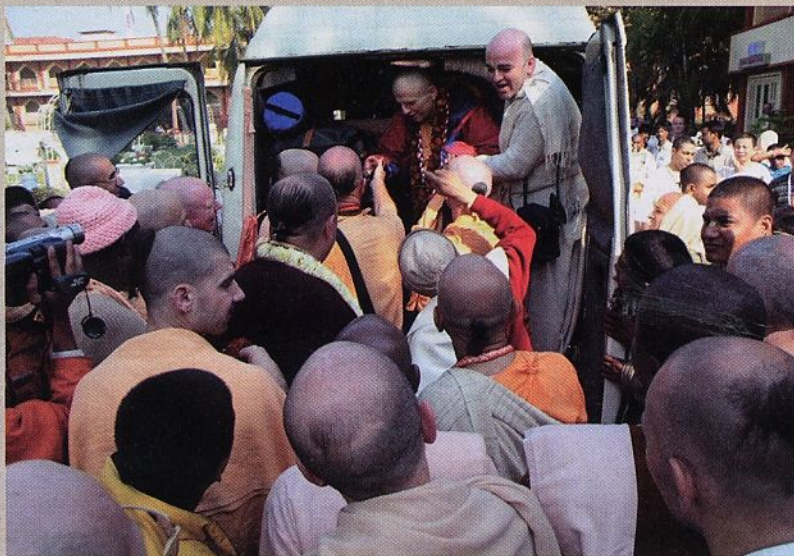
enthusiasm and good humor, attract and exhort all sorts of volunteers to complete the difficult job. He would perform this duty each year despite struggling with his steadily worsening liver disease.

THE SILVER JUBILEE

Nothing symbolizes Śrīdhara Swami's courage, devotion, and kindness more clearly than his role in the Silver Jubilee celebration at the Juhu temple in January of 2003. He hatched a plan to gather the Juhu pioneers from all over the world for the event. For several days the magnificent temple was filled with astonishing, emotional, and humorous accounts of the struggles surrounding its birth. Śrīdhara Swami, who was quite ill, rose from his hospital bed to lead the event. For days he enthralled the large audience by serving generous portions of long overdue appreciation and recognition for the sacrifices of the assembled ISKCON Bombay pioneers.

Such was Śrīdhara Swami's mature realization—a hope that ISKCON could continue to evolve from its early struggles into a friendlier,

A Hero's Welcome



This excerpt from Diary of a Traveling Preacher, by Indradyumna Swami, begins outside the Calcutta airport. Indradyumna Swami is helping Śrīdhara Swami (referred to here as “Mahārāja”) make his final journey to Māyāpur.

MAHĀRĀJA'S DISCIPLE
Māyāpur Dāsa was waiting outside for us and helped Mahārāja to the van that was waiting. We put Mahārāja inside and laid him down on a mattress that had been provided for the four-hour journey to Māyāpur.

On the way, Mahārāja spoke with affection about his disciples. In particular, he reminisced about the service of Māyāpur Dāsa, his first disciple. It was nectar to hear his reminiscences, but painful as well, for there would not be many more in this lifetime.

We were so absorbed in the discussion that at first we didn't hear the big *kīrtana* on the road leading up to our property in Māyāpur. I was the first to hear it, and when I looked out the window, I was stunned. The entire GBC body had come to greet Mahārāja, as well as many *sannyāsīs* and other senior devotees. Hundreds of other devotees had assembled as well. Everyone was

chanting and dancing to a blissful *kīrtana* led by Dānavīr Goswami.

“Mahārāja,” I said, “the devotees have come to receive you. Look.”

We lifted Mahārāja a bit so he could see outside the front window, and when he saw the *kīrtana* party, tears started rolling down his cheeks and he couldn't speak. Then slowly, he recovered his voice. “How I love my Godbrothers!” he said.

Because of the mass of devotees converging on our van, we had to slow down. As we inched our way along, many senior devotees came to the side window of the van to greet Mahārāja and pay their respects. It was a touching sight to see the love expressed between Mahārāja and these men. He had served alongside many of them through the years, and it was obvious that the camaraderie they had developed in service to guru and Gaurāṅga [Lord Caitanya] ran deep.

We finally drove through the big gates and then up close to the temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. By that time, news of Mahārāja's arrival had spread and an even bigger crowd—over a thousand devotees—had assembled.

“A hero's welcome,” I thought,

“and well deserved.”

I helped Mahārāja out of the van and began helping him towards the temple to take *darśana* of the deities. But at one point he pushed me away, as if disturbed that he even needed help. I didn't take offense but rather thought of him as an old soldier, distraught by the fact he needed help. Mahārāja had been an active preacher throughout most of his life. He once told me that he would prefer to go down fighting than to die lying in bed with a prolonged illness. A noble sentiment for any preacher, but after a few steps Mahārāja began to falter, and I had to catch him to help him along again.

We entered the temple. Mahārāja stood before Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and the eight *gopīs*, his eyes focused on their divine forms. He then surprised everyone by raising his arms and dancing a little. Ever intent on learning the art of dying, I watched him intently.

Afterwards several of us helped Mahārāja to his room. Many devotees accompanied us, and the room soon filled with devotees wanting to see him. Despite his condition, he was the perfect host, receiving their blessings, words of appreciation, and encouragement.

But soon it became obvious that the long journey from Vancouver and the *darśana* were taking their toll on Mahārāja. His abdomen appeared alarmingly swollen with liquid. A doctor was called, and those who were allowed to remain in the room were very sober as Mahārāja lay there with his eyes closed and the doctor checked his stomach with a stethoscope.

Suddenly Mahārāja opened his eyes.

“It's a boy, Doc,” he said.

The room exploded in laughter. He was still the jolly swami.

From Diary of a Traveling Preacher, Volume 5, Chapter 16. (To read the full chapter, go to www.krishna.com/385.)

kinder, and gentler institution. Beyond the book distribution, fundraising, and management of his earlier years, he said he considered his primary duty to help ISKCON make and keep Kṛṣṇa conscious people.

“Losing devotees,” he said, “is our real failure.”

He was particularly sensitive to the needs of ISKCON youth and helped inspire the founding of Children of Krishna in 1996.

The international ISKCON community felt Śrīdhara Swami’s love and loved him in return. He felt that the devotees’ prayers had allowed him an “extension of visa”—several years of active service even after his doctors, in 2000, predicted he would be dead in six months. Strengthened by his many well-wishers, he envisioned a Web site through which devotees in difficulty could ask for the blessings of Vaiṣṇavas around the world.

Surely something helped Śrīdhara Swami survive, as he was less than an ideal patient. Despite the efforts of his loving disciples to get him to follow his doctor’s prescribed diet, he would sometimes break it.

Quoting Śrīla Prabhupāda, he would say, “To hell with the starvation committee.” He reasoned, “If I eat I’ll die, or if I fast I’ll die, so I might as well die eating *prasādam*.”

As a further risk, rather than retiring to Vṛndāvana to die he continued traveling and teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Wherever he went, his presence was poignant and uplifting.

He liked the positive spirit and would say, “There is no utility in negativity. Pain is inevitable; suffering is an option.”

“Pain will be there,” he once declared, “but for me it’s an education.”

DEDICATED TO MĀYĀPUR

Through his final years Śrīdhara Swami’s great passion remained to see the development of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s grand Māyāpur project. He constantly sought to inspire devotees to work cooperatively to build the historic temple, which he knew he would not live to see. In 2003 he organized meetings between project chairman

Ambarīṣa Dāsa and leading ISKCON life members in Bombay. He gave his disciples names related to Māyāpur. And he constantly prayed to his private deities (Ugra Narasimha *śālagrāmas*) to tear apart his obstacles so he could dedicate himself uninterruptedly to building Māyāpur.

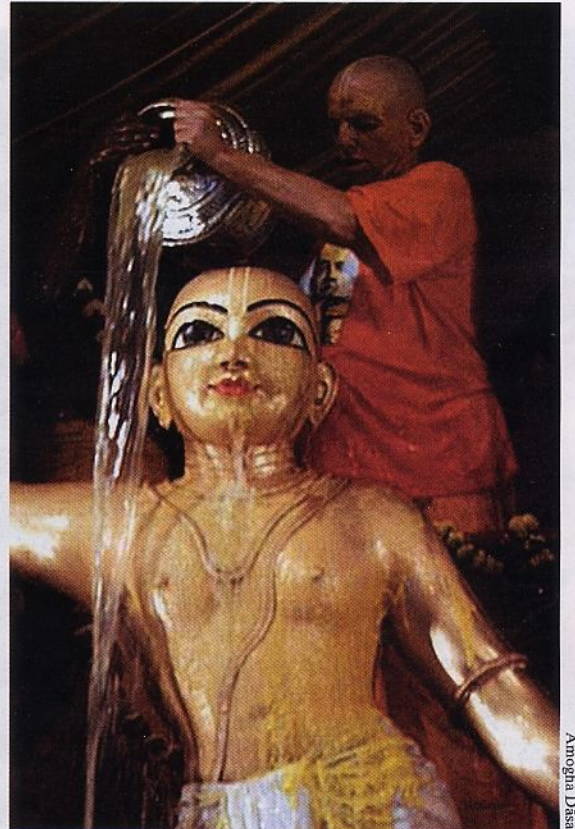
Naturally it was to Māyāpur that Śrīdhara Swami turned as his death became imminent. In January of 2004 he was diagnosed with inoperable liver cancer. After the failure of a last-ditch effort to obtain a liver transplant, he flew, in great pain, from Canada to Māyāpur. His elderly mother admonished him that he seemed “too cheerful for someone who is about to die.” His two brothers accompanied him and some close disciples and Godbrothers on his final journey.

Śrīdhara Swami prayed intently to live long enough to attend the historic installation of the Pañca-tattva deities in Māyāpur in February. The trip to Māyāpur was arduous and his pain intense, but he survived with help from his friend Indradyumna Swami (See the sidebar “A Hero’s Welcome”). As Śrīdhara Swami finally approached Māyāpur, lying in the back of a van, he heard a thunderous *kīrtana*. Hundreds of devotees had gathered to welcome him.

As it turned out, the jolly swami survived those last few days. On the day of the Pañca-tattva installation, he again pulled himself from his sickbed and climbed the scaffolding behind the huge deities. With five thousand devotees chanting and cheering uproariously, Śrīdhara Swami poured the ceremonial liquids over the sacred form of Lord Nityānanda.

Days later, on the auspicious day of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita’s appearance, Śrīdhara Swami peacefully passed away. He left this world as he had lived in it, fixed in devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who says in the *Bhagavad-gīta*, “One who

is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.” ❁



Shortly before his passing, Śrīdhara Swami bathes Lord Nityānanda during the Pañca-tattva installation in Māyāpur.

Abhuta Hari Dāsa, from Croatia, is a disciple of His Holiness Śrīdhara Swami and served as his personal assistant.

Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa, BTG associate editor and author of The Song Divine, writes and raises a family in Alachua, Florida.

Much of the information in this article came from an interview with Śrīdhara Swami conducted by Ārya Devī Dāśī for the ISKCON Oral History Project at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

ONLINE EXTRA

For more stories and photos, please visit www.krishna.com/385.

Śrīla Prabhupāda and th

When meeting with followers of the Bible, Prabhupāda would invariably urge them to

by Satyarāja Dāsa

At a recent interreligious conference, I happened to mention that we devotees of Kṛṣṇa are vegetarian, and in the midst of the discussion, I referred to the Sixth Commandment: “Thou shalt not kill.” A prominent Christian scholar, who was part of the discussion, asked what the commandment had to do with vegetarianism.

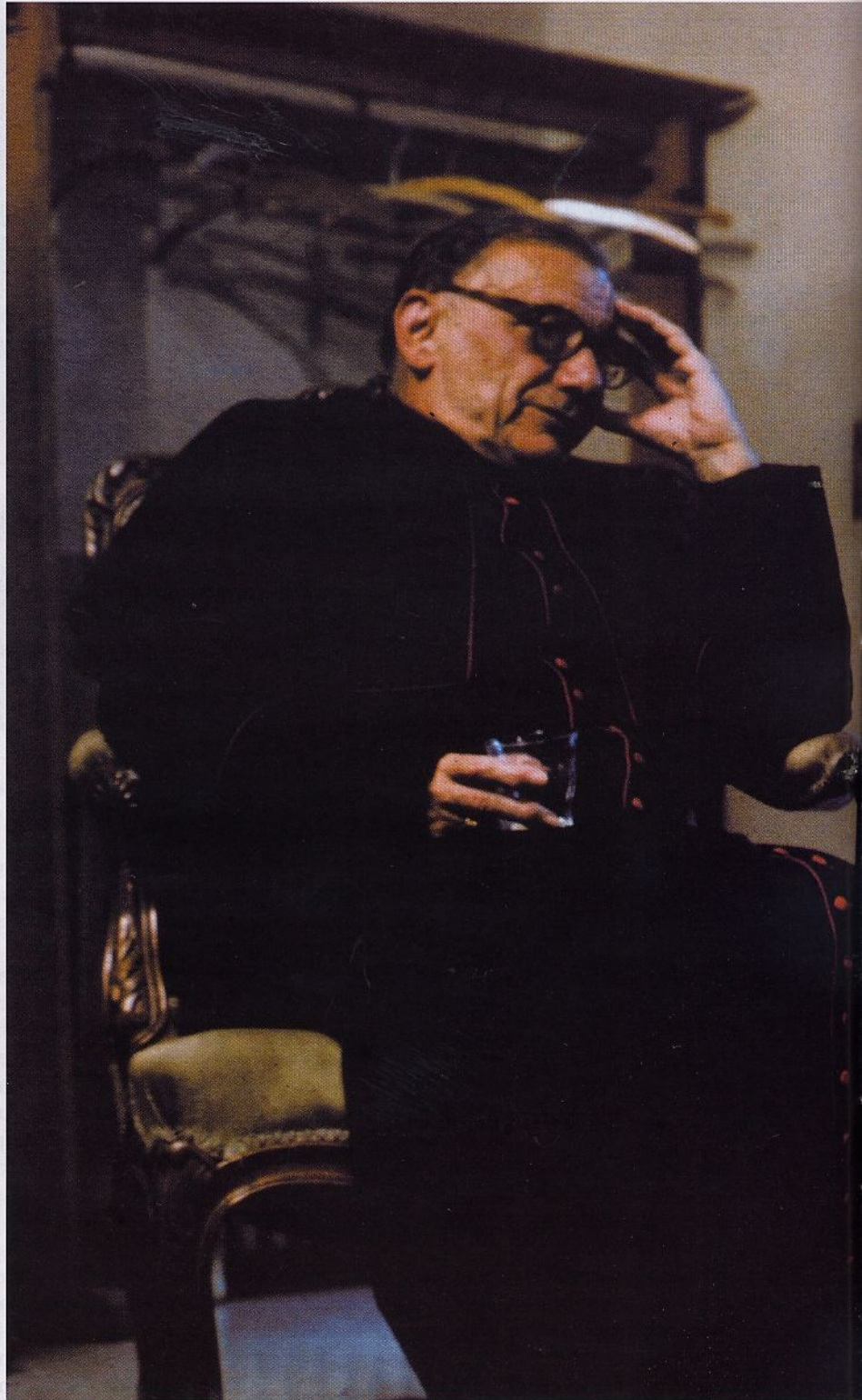
“It has everything to do with it!” I responded. “If you eat meat, you either directly or indirectly kill animals, and killing is what the commandment expressly forbids, isn’t it?”

Well, my Christian friend sharply disagreed. He said that the commandment applied only to human beings. Though he insisted that this was so, he was at a loss for words when I asked him to explain his rationale in this regard. And that got me thinking . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

But when you’re actually on the platform of love of God, you understand your relationship with God: “I am part and parcel of God—and this dog is also part and parcel of God. And so is every other living entity.” Then you’ll extend your love to the animals also. If you actually love God, then your love for insects is also there, because you understand, “This insect has got a different kind of body, but he is also part and parcel of God—he is my brother.” *Samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu*: you look upon all living beings equally. Then you cannot maintain slaughterhouses. If you maintain slaughterhouses and disobey the order of Christ in the Bible—“Thou shall not kill”—and you proclaim your-

Śrīla Prabhupāda discusses Christianity and meat-eating with Cardinal Jean Danielou at the Paris ISKCON center.



The Sixth Commandment

stop the killing of animals.



self a Christian, your so-called religion is simply a waste of time . . . because you have no love for God.

Prabhupāda frequently uses the “Thou shalt not kill” motif in his presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is one of the most persistently recurring themes in his books, and the attentive reader can find reference to it in nearly every one of them.* His insistence on its importance is clear not only from the number of times he refers to it, but from the force and intensity with which he does so. Some examples:

It is not that national leaders should be concerned only with human beings. The definition of native is “one who takes birth in a particular nation.” So, the cow is also a native. Then why should the cow be slaughtered? The cow is giving milk and the bull is working for you, and then you slaughter them? What is this philosophy? In the Christian religion it is clearly stated, “Thou shalt not kill.” Yet most of the slaughterhouses are in the Christian countries. (From *The Quest for Enlightenment*, “The Mercy of Lord Caitanya”)

They should have been ashamed: “Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us, but we are continuing the sinful activities.” He told everyone, “Thou shalt not kill,” but they are indulging in killing, thinking, “Lord Jesus Christ will excuse us and take all the sinful reactions.” This is going on. (From *Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers*, Chapter 6)

As far as the Christian religion is concerned, ample opportunity is given to understand God, but no one is taking it. For example, the Bible contains the commandment

*I found references and explanations for “Thou shalt not kill” in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; *Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers*; *The Science of Self-Realization*; *Life Comes From Life*; *Matchless Gifts*; *The Journey of Self-Discovery*; *The Quest for Enlightenment*; *Dialectical Spiritualism*; and in countless lectures and *Back to Godhead* magazine articles. His other works, while not addressing the biblical command directly, certainly deal with related issues, and the commandment’s essence is not far in the background.

The Commandment and Diet

SEVERAL STUDIES discuss the significance of “Thou shalt not kill” from a vegetarian point of view. The most noted work from this perspective would be Aaron Frankel’s “*Thou Shalt Not Kill*”—*The Torah of Vegetarianism*, published in the year of Prabhupāda’s birth (1896). Since then, only a handful of outspoken vegetarian advocates have explained the commandment in terms of their dietary preference. In 1903, J. Todd Ferrier, a found-

ing father of the Order of the Cross, released a little book called *Concerning Human Carnivorism*, later reprinted in 1968 as *On Behalf of the Creatures*. Some years later, The Reverend V. A. Holmes-Gore wrote a similar volume entitled *These We Have Not Loved*, which was followed by Geoffrey L. Rudd’s *Why Kill for Food?* Such books are few and far between, but they do allow us to see the Sixth Commandment from a broader perspective.

“Thou shall not kill,” but Christians have built the world’s best slaughterhouses. How can they become God conscious if they disobey the commandments of Lord Jesus Christ? And this is going on not just in the Christian religion, but in every religion. The title “Hindu,” “Muslim,” or “Christian” is simply a rubber stamp. None of them knows who God is and how to love Him. (From *The Science of Self-Realization*, “What Is Kṛṣṇa Consciousness?”)

Jesus Christ taught, “Thou shalt not kill.” But his followers have now decided, “Let us kill anyway,” and they open big, modern, scientific slaughterhouses. “If there is any sin, Christ will suffer for us.” This is a most abominable conclusion. (From *The Science of Self-Realization*, “Jesus Christ Was a Guru”)

If we look at all of Prabhupāda’s proclamations on the subject, the ones that stand out are found in his conversations with two Christian clerics of some renown: Cardinal Jean Danielou, from Paris, and Father Emmanuel Jungclaussen, a Benedictine monk from West Germany. While there is hardly enough space to reproduce these classic talks here, the reader is advised to look through Prabhupāda’s book *The Science of Self-Realization*, where both interviews are reproduced. Briefly, Prabhupāda’s main argument is that the commandment should be

taken at face value—it is wrong to kill, plain and simple.

BIBLICAL ALLOWANCES FOR KILLING

But, those familiar with the Bible might ask, what about self-defense and capital punishment? Or when killing occurs by accident? The Bible makes allowances for these things and thus excludes them from the demands of this commandment. According to the Bible, enemies of Israel can also be killed. So where do we draw the line? If the command does not even include all humans, what hope is there to include animals in its scope?

Given the culture and context in which the commandment was revealed, in all probability it originally meant, “You shall not kill unnecessarily,” for, as noted, the Bible clearly permits certain forms of killing. And it probably focused on human concerns rather than those of animals. However, given the ideals of peace and compassion espoused by the Judeo-Christian tradition, it would be natural to extend this command to include the lesser creatures, for modern science—especially the nutritional sciences—indeed teaches that *we don’t have to kill animals, even for food*. Such foods are no longer deemed necessary for humans to maintain proper health.

If the commandment doesn't specify whether it is referring to both humans and animals or merely to humans, then why should we interpret it?

• • •

Mark Mathew Braunstein, a scholar of some renown, is among those who see in the command a clear ordinance against harming any living beings. He writes, "Moses the messenger brought down the decree 'Thou shalt not kill.' Period. While coveting refers specifically to a neighbor's spouse, or honoring to one's parents, prohibition against killing is not specific: it says simply and purely not to kill."

This is an important point—the other commandments tell us exactly who falls within their jurisdiction, or who might be deemed their beneficiaries. But here we are simply told not to kill, without any such qualifying considerations.

This, too, is Prabhupāda's argument: If the commandment doesn't specify whether it is referring to both humans and animals or merely to humans, then why should we interpret it? Why not just understand it in its most simple and direct way? But people do insist on interpreting, and for this reason we will look at the words in question to see if we can find some reasonable resolution to the dilemma.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE COMMANDMENT

If we are to understand Prabhupāda's insistence on "Thou shalt not kill" as a basis for universal compassion and vegetarianism, it is imperative to look at the Sixth Commandment (Exodus 20.13) more closely.

According to Reuben Alcalay, one of the twentieth century's great linguistic scholars and author of *The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary*, the commandment refers to "any kind of killing whatsoever." The original Hebrew, he says, is *Lo tirtzakh*, which asks us to refrain from killing in toto. If what he says is true, we can analyze the commandment as follows: "Thou shalt not"

needs no interpretation. The controversial word is "kill," commonly defined as (1) to deprive of life; (2) to put an end to; (3) to destroy the vital or essential quality of. If anything that has life can be killed, an animal can be killed as well; according to this commandment, then, the killing of animals is forbidden.

The problem is that not all manuscripts of the Bible are the same. Of the numerous references to this same command in the Old and New Testaments, some of them are nuanced in slightly different ways. Modern scholarship now leans toward "Thou shalt not murder" as opposed to "Thou shalt not kill." How do scholars come to this conclusion, and what really is the distinction between the two?

First, let us examine what the Bible actually says. The Hebrew word for "murder" is *ratzakh*, whereas the word for "kill" is *harog*. The commandment, in the original Hebrew, indeed states: "*Lo tirtzakh*" (a form of *ratzakh*), not "*Lo taharog*." In other words, it is "Thou shalt not murder," as opposed to "Thou shalt not kill." Why, then, does Reuben Alcalay say that *tirtzakh* refers to "any kind of killing whatsoever"?

THE WORDS "KILL" AND "MURDER" IN BIBLICAL TRADITION

The difference between these two words—"kill" and "murder"—has more to do with modern usage than original texts: the demarcation between these words may have been different in biblical times. Indeed, the Bible appears conflicted in this regard, as do Bible translators. *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, which is the New Revised Standard Version and the rendition used by the Society of Biblical Literature, interprets the commandment as "Thou shalt not murder,"

but it then includes a footnote saying "or kill." *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* does the same.

The King James Version of the Bible, and others too numerous to mention here, translate the verse as "Thou shalt not kill," while others keep going back and forth, changing from "kill" to "murder" and, every few years, back again.

Perhaps the most important version to use the word "kill" instead of "murder" is *The Holy Bible: From Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*. This work is based on the earliest editions of the text, making use of rare Aramaic fragments. Here we find that the Exodus verse is unequivocally rendered as "Thou shalt not kill," though a lengthy Introduction explains why well-meaning translators might choose otherwise.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin writes about one of the many dangers of interpreting the word as "kill":

If the commandment had read "You shall not kill," it would have suggested that all killing is illegal, including that in self-defense. Indeed, certain religious groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses take this position, and insist that their members refuse army service (during World War II in Germany Jehovah's Witnesses refused to fight for the Nazis while their American co-religionists refused to fight against them).

These are very real concerns for biblical translators and commentators, and while they may have diverse opinions on whether to use "kill" or "murder" while addressing any number of complex issues, one thing is certain: In current usage, the two words carry different meanings. According to *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, "killing" is straightforward, and its definition is given above. But "murder" is more complicated. Webster
(please turn to page 56)

SRILA
PRABHUPADA



ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀ

A Special Year Begins

by Lokanāth Swami

The year beginning on Prabhupāda's Vyāsa Pūjā this September and ending with his Vyāsa Pūjā in 2005 marks the 108th anniversary of his birth. While everyone honors 100th anniversaries, Vaiṣṇavas place great significance on the 108th anniversary, because 108 is a special number. Kṛṣṇa enjoys with 108 principal *gopis* (cowherd girls), there are 108 *Upaniṣads*, and a round of *japa* on beads is 108 Hare Kṛṣṇa mantras. ISKCON has created a special opportunity to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda on his 108th birthday and throughout the year afterwards. ISKCON's governing body commissioners in their annual meeting this year passed the following resolution.

WHEREAS:

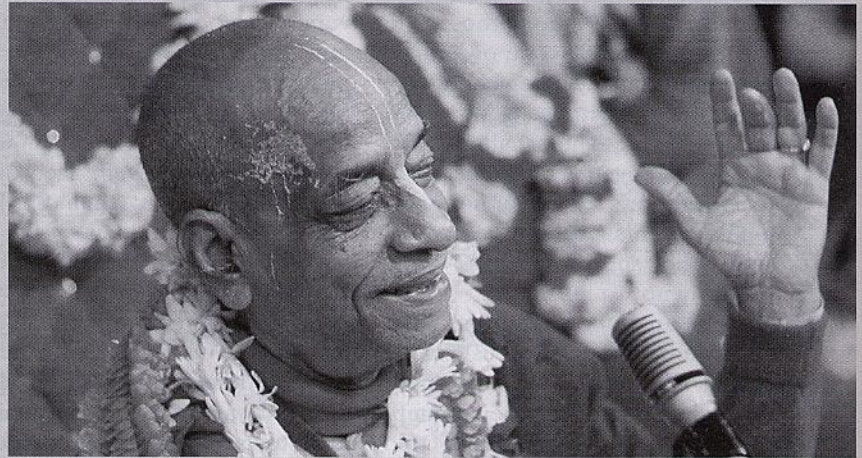
The 108th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance can bring special inspiration to the devotee community by glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda,

WHEREAS:

H.H. Lokanāth Swami was successful in performing the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial Global Minister,

RESOLVED:

ISKCON will make the celebration of Śrīla Prabhupāda's 108th appearance anniversary year a



highlight of its activities until Vyāsa Pūjā 2005. H.H. Lokanāth Swami will take up the service of global coordinator for this project.

In 1996 ISKCON celebrated Śrīla Prabhupāda's Centennial. Participation in events far exceeded expectations. Throughout the Centennial year, followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda made extraordinary efforts to spread his glories worldwide by inundating their countries, states, and cities with the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa *prasādam*, and Prabhupāda's books. Temples worldwide joined in celebrating many spectacular special events. Streets were named in Prabhupāda's honor, and several biographies about him were published. There were also many wonderful special achievements and offerings by individuals and groups. But why was the Centennial so successful? We could only conclude that it was because Kṛṣṇa wanted to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda. Kṛṣṇa wanted to show the world

that He is known as *bhaktānāma māna vardhanaḥ*, "He who enhances the reputation of His devotees."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings, which continue to be felt throughout all parts of ISKCON, are the universal inspiration for the 108 celebration. All initiated devotees and all followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda have a high level of awareness, appreciation, and remembrance of him. They feel connected with him as their *sikṣā* guru, accepting as essential the teachings he gave in his books. Inspired by his powerful presence, they follow his instructions in their own lives and are able to bring others to follow them too.

The celebration of Śrīla Prabhupāda's 108th anniversary will focus on a series of public events. Most of the international events that were so successful in 1996 will be held again. The events will bring about a heightened appreciation for Śrīla Prabhupāda and his movement in the public

MAY HIS FAME SPR

DA 108 CELEBRATION

and increase ISKCON's members' awareness of being part of a united worldwide movement.

The 108 Celebration is not limited to events. The spirit of the Celebration is to encourage each ISKCON devotee, member, and follower to make at least one personal offering to Śrīla Prabhupāda during the year, in one or more of the following areas:

1. Help spread Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission by expanding the congregation, distributing books, and chanting the holy name, especially at 108 events.

2. Dedicate oneself to glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda by a personally meaningful special achievement during the 108 year.

3. Build personal internal strength by a commitment to improve both personal spiritual standards and practices and those of your community.

The 108 Celebration is a great time to introduce the whole world to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission. Let us all take seriously this very special opportunity and wholeheartedly glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda.

By the time this issue of BTG reaches your hands, you should be preparing to take part in the kickoff of the 108 Celebration with Prabhupāda's 108th Vyāsa Pūjā. Don't hesitate. Get involved. In September, the planning and preparation for Feed the World Week can begin. Help make this occasion for *prasādam* distribution something wonderful and astounding. It will do good for you and the world. Distribute *prasādam* widely to as many people as possible, and join in the celebration of 108 for Śrīla Prabhupāda. Go on glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda more and more.

INFORMATION

FEATURED 108 EVENTS

108th Vyāsa Pūjā, September 8:

This is the kickoff event for 108 year-long celebration.

Take part in the *kalaśa abhiṣeka* (bathing with commemorative waterpots) of Śrīla Prabhupāda and your local temple deities. Sponsor a *kalaśa* in your local temple and join with devotees worldwide to usher in a full year of celebration.

Feed World Week,

October 15–21:

Honor Śrīla Prabhupāda for his 108th anniversary by massive distribution of *prasādam* in your hometown. Every temple, family, and congregation group can take part in giving out Kṛṣṇa's mercy in the form of *prasādam*, and in turn get the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

At www.prabhupada108.net you'll find:

- *Kalash Abhisheka*, a five-minute video clip
- 108 Abhiṣeka Poster
- Abhiṣeka Sponsorship Form
- 108 Ways You Can Get Involved

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

2004

September 28: Śrīla Prabhupāda's *sannyāsa* day

October 5: Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in Boston

October 15–21: Feed the World Week (See www.ffl.org/html/feed_the_world.html for details.)

October 28–November 26:

Vṛndāvana Kārttika Festival

November 14–16: Vṛndāvana Prabhupāda's Disappearance Day Festival

December 18–19: World Enlightenment Weekend

December 22: Gita Jayanti Day (Contact your local temple for celebration dates.)

November 26–December 31:

Prabhupāda Book Distribution Marathon

2005

January: Mumbai Original Pandal Program Returns

March 9–25: Māyāpur Festival

March 9–13: Grand Śrīla Prabhupāda Family Reunion (See <http://www.mayapur.info/> for details.)

March 14–20: Navadvīpa Maṇḍala Parikrama

March 21–24: Māyāpur Seminars

June 6–11: Padayātrā Week

June 12: World Holy Name Day

August 28: Kolkata Mahā-Abhiṣeka Vyāsa Pūjā (See www.mayapur.info for details.)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Website:
www.prabhupada108.net

READ EVERYWHERE!

PLAN THE BEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE

Mayapur Institute for Higher Education (MIHE)—Mayapur, West Bengal, India

Here's how you can take five giant steps in Kṛṣṇa consciousness: **(1)** Go to Vṛndāvana for the 2004 Prabhupāda Festival during Kārttika. **(2)** Take the VTE (Vaiṣṇava Training and Education) Bhakti-śāstrī Course starting November 22 in Māyāpur. **(3)** Take as many MIHE courses as you like during the MIHE Semester. **(4)** Take part in the 2005 Māyāpur Gaura Pūrṇimā Festival, including celebrations for the 108th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance. **(5)** Take the VTE Bhaktivaibhava Course in Māyāpur. For details about any of these, visit www.mihe.info/.

2004–2005 MIHE SCHEDULE

- November 8:** VTE Bhakti-śāstrī Online Registration Deadline
November 16: Śrīla Prabhupāda's Disappearance Day
November 22–February 27: VTE Bhakti-śāstrī Course
February 1: MIHE Semester Online Registration Deadline
February 7–11: First Module of MIHE Semester
February 13–18: Second Module of MIHE Semester
February 15: Śrī Advaita Ācārya's Appearance Day (No Classes)
February 21: Lord Nityānanda's Appearance Day
February 22–26: Third Module of MIHE Semester
February 27–March 8: GBC Meetings
March 2–6: Fourth Module of MIHE Semester
March 9–12: Fifth Module of MIHE Semester / Festival Seminars
March 13: Pañca-tattva Abhiṣeka (No Classes)
March 14–20: Navadvīpa Dhāma Parikramā / Sixth Module of MIHE Semester
March 21–24: Seventh Module of MIHE Semester
March 25: Gaura Purnima
April 22–July 29: VTE Bhaktivaibhava Course (1st and 2nd Cantos)

2005 MIHE SEMESTER COURSES

(Students may register for one course or several courses, and may enroll for 1–6 weeks of classes.)
Vastu: An Aid to Spiritual and Material Development (March 23), Ajāmila Dāsa; *VTE Communications Course One* (March 2–7), Anuttama Dāsa; *VTE Leadership and Management Course One* (March 9–15), Anuttama Dāsa; *Final Chapters of Bhagavad-gītā*, Vidvān Gaurāṅga Dāsa; *Searching For and Destroying the False Ego*, Bhakti Tīrtha Swami; *ISKCON Mediation Training* (March 16–20), Braja Bihārī Dāsa; *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, BVV Narasimha Swami; *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam*, BVV Narasimha Swami; *Glorious Departures: How Some Personalities in the Bhāgavatam Went Back to Godhead*, Devāmṛta Dāsa; *Science and Kṛṣṇa Consciousness*, Drutakarmā Dāsa; *Pañcarātrika Process of Deity Worship (Nitya-sevā One & Two)*, Jananivāsa Dāsa, Pañkajāṅghri Dāsa, Nṛsimha Kavaca Dāsa; *Vaiṣṇava Life Skills and Counseling* (March 9–13), Kaunteya Dāsa; *Personal Transformation* (March 14–19), Kaunteya Dāsa; *Classical Hatha Yoga Taught in the Iyengar Tradition (Levels One & Two)*, Krodhasamanī Dāsi, Kiśora Dāsa (Separate sections for men and women); *Ayurvedic Self-healing (Course One)*, Dr. Liladhar Gupta; *To be announced*, Pūrnacandra Dāsa; *VTE Teacher Training (Course One, March 2–7), (Course Two, March 9–15)*, Rāsamaṅḍala Dāsa; *VTE Bhakti-śāstrī Teacher Training*, Rāsamaṅḍala Dāsa, Atul Kṛṣṇa Dāsa; *The Blissful Result of Following the Regulative Principles of Freedom* (March 10–13), Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa, Saṅkīrtana Dāsa; *Śrī Brahmasamhitā*, Vedavyāsa Priyā Swami

2004–2005 VTE Bhakti-śāstrī Course Facilitators

The Nectar of Instruction, Jayādvaita Swami; *The Nectar of Devotion*, Kadamba Kānana Swami; *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, BVV Narasimha Swami; *Bhagavad-gītā*, Atul Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and Vidvān Gaurāṅga Dāsa

2005 VTE Bhaktivaibhava Course Facilitators (1st & 2nd Cantos)

BVV Narasimha Swami, Hari Śaurī Dāsa, Atul Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

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 ELEVATED POSITION OF LORD ŚIVA

*Goddess Satī, the wife of Lord Śiva, continues to explain
her husband’s greatness to her unyielding father.*

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 4

16 किं वा शिवाख्यमशिवं न विदुस्त्वदन्ये
ब्रह्मादयस्तमवकीर्य जटाः श्मशाने
तन्माल्यभस्मनृकपाल्यवसत्पिशाचै-
र्ये मूर्धभिर्दधति तच्चरणावसृष्टम्

*kiṁ vā śivākhyam aśivaṁ na viduḥ tvad anye
brahmādayas tam avakīrya jaṭāḥ śmaśāne
tan-mālya-bhasma-nṛkapāly avasat piśācāir
ye mūrdhabhir dadhati tac-caraṇāvasṛṣṭam*

kiṁ vā—whether; *śiva-ākhyam*—named Śiva; *aśivaṁ*—inauspicious; *na viduḥ*—do not know; *tvad anye*—other than you; *brahma-ādayaḥ*—Brahmā and others; *tam*—him (Lord Śiva); *avakīrya*—scattered; *jaṭāḥ*—having twisted hair; *śmaśāne*—in the crematorium; *tan-mālya-bhasma-nṛkapāli*—who is garlanded with human skulls and smeared

with ashes; *avasat*—associated; *piśācāiḥ*—with demons; *ye*—who; *mūrdhabhiḥ*—with the head; *dadhati*—place; *tat-caraṇa-avasṛṣṭam*—fallen from his lotus feet.

Do you think that greater, more respectable personalities than you, such as Lord Brahmā, do not know this inauspicious person who goes under the name Lord Śiva? He associates with the demons in the crematorium, his locks of hair are scattered all over his body, he is garlanded with human skulls and smeared with ashes from the crematorium, but in spite of all these inauspicious qualities, great personalities like Brahmā honor him by accepting the flowers offered to his lotus feet and placing them with great respect on their heads.

(1) Despite Lord Śiva’s apparently inauspicious activities, how do great personalities like Lord Brahmā and others show him honor?

PURPORT: It is useless to condemn a great personality like Lord Śiva, and this is being stated by his wife, Satī, to establish the supremacy of her husband. First she said, “You call Lord Śiva inauspicious because he associates with demons in crematoriums, covers his body with the ashes of the dead, and garlands himself with the skulls of human beings. You have shown so many defects, but you do not know that his position is always transcendental. Although he appears inauspicious, why do personalities like Brahmā respect the dust of his lotus feet and place on their heads with great respect those very garlands which are condemned by you?”

Since Satī was a chaste woman and the wife of Lord Śiva, it was her duty to establish the elevated position of Lord Śiva, not only by sentiment but by facts. Lord Śiva is not an ordinary living entity. This is the conclusion of Vedic scripture. He is neither on the level of the Supreme Personality of Godhead nor on the level of the ordinary living entities. Brahmā is in almost all cases an ordinary living entity. Sometimes, when there is no ordinary living entity available, the post of Brahmā is occupied by an expansion of Lord Viṣṇu, but generally this post is occupied by a greatly pious living entity within this universe. Thus Lord Śiva’s position is constitutionally higher than that of Lord Brahmā, although Lord Śiva appeared as the son of Brahmā.

Here it is mentioned that even personalities like Brahmā accept the so-called inauspicious flowers and the dust of the lotus feet of Lord Śiva. Great sages like Marīci, Atri, Bhṛgu, and the others among the nine great sages who are descendants of Brahmā also respect Lord Śiva in such a way because they all know that Lord Śiva is not an ordinary living entity.

In many *Purāṇas* it is sometimes asserted that a demigod is elevated to such a high position that he is almost on an equal level with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but the conclusion that Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead is confirmed in every scripture. ❷ Lord Śiva is described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* to be like curd or yogurt. Curd is not different from milk. Since milk is transformed into curd, in one sense curd is also milk. Similarly, Lord Śiva is in one sense the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but in another sense he is not, just as curd is milk although we have to distinguish between the two. These descriptions are in the Vedic literature. Whenever

- (2) In what way is Lord Śiva compared to yogurt or curd?**
(3) What are the respective destinations of those who worship the demigods and those who worship the Supreme Lord?
(4) What was Satī’s main purpose in going to her father’s house?

we find that a demigod occupies a position apparently more elevated than that of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it is just to draw the devotee’s attention to that particular demigod.

It is also stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.25) that if one wants to worship a particular demigod, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is sitting in everyone’s heart, gives one greater and greater attachment for that demigod so that one may be elevated to the demigod’s abode. *Yānti deva-vratā devān.* ❸ By worshiping demigods one can elevate himself to the abodes of the demigods; similarly, by worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead one can be elevated to the spiritual kingdom. This is stated in different places in Vedic literature.

Here Lord Śiva is praised by Satī, partially due to her personal respect for Lord Śiva, since he is her husband, and partially due to his exalted position, which exceeds that of ordinary living entities, even Lord Brahmā.

The position of Lord Śiva is accepted by Lord Brahmā, so Dakṣa, Satī’s father, should also recognize him. That was the point of Satī’s statement. She did not actually come to her father’s house to participate in the function, although before coming she pleaded with her husband that she wanted to see her sisters and her mother. ❹ That was a plea only, for actually at heart she maintained the idea that she would convince her father, Dakṣa, that it was useless to continue being envious of Lord Śiva. That was her main purpose. When she was unable to convince her father, she gave up the body he had given her, as will be seen in the following verses.

17 कर्णौ पिधाय निरयाद्यदकल्प ईशे
 धर्मावितर्यसृणिभिर्नुभिरस्यमाने
 छिन्द्यात्प्रसह्य रुशतीमसती प्रभुश्चे-
 ङ्गिह्वामसूनपि ततो विसृजेत्स धर्मः

*karṇau pidhāya nirayād yad akalpa īše
 dharmāvitary asṛṇibhir nṛbhir asyamāne
 chindyāt prasahya ruśatīm asatīm prabhuḥ cej
 jihvām asūn api tato viśṛjet sa dharmah*

karṇau—both ears; *pidhāya*—blocking; *nirayāt*—one should go away; *yat*—if; *akalpah*—unable; *īše*—the master; *dharmāvitari*—the controller of religion; *asṛṇibhiḥ*—by irresponsible; *nṛbhiḥ*—persons; *asyamāne*—being blasphemed; *chindyāt*—he should cut; *prasahya*—by force; *ruśatīm*—vilifying; *asatīm*—of the blasphemer; *prabhuḥ*—one is able; *cej*—if; *jihvām*—tongue; *asūn*—(his own) life; *api*—certainly; *tataḥ*—then; *viśṛjet*—should give up; *sah*—that; *dharmah*—is the process.

Satī continued: If one hears an irresponsible person blaspheme the master and controller of religion, one should block his ears and go away if unable to punish him. But

if one is able to kill, then one should by force cut out the blasphemer's tongue and kill the offender, and after that one should give up his own life.

PURPORT: The argument offered by Satī is that a person who vilifies a great personality is the lowest of all creatures. But, by the same argument, Dakṣa could also defend himself by saying that since he was a Prajāpati, the master of many living creatures and one of the great officers of the great universal affairs, his position was so exalted that Satī should accept his good qualities instead of vilifying him. The answer to that argument is that Satī was not vilifying but defending. If possible she should have cut out Dakṣa's tongue because he blasphemed Lord Śiva. In other words, since Lord Śiva is the protector of religion, a person who vilifies him should be killed at once, and after killing such a person, one should give up one's life.

⑤ That is the process, but because Dakṣa happened to be the father of Satī, she decided not to kill him but to give up her own life in order to compensate for the great sin she had committed by hearing blasphemy of Lord Śiva. The instruction set forth here in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is that one should not tolerate at any cost the activities of a person who vilifies or blasphemes an authority. ⑥ If one is a *brāhmaṇa* he should not give up his body because by doing so he would be responsible for killing a *brāhmaṇa*; therefore a *brāhmaṇa* should leave the place or block his ears so that he will not hear the blasphemy. If one happens to be a *kṣatriya* he has the power to punish any man; therefore a *kṣatriya* should at once cut out the tongue of the vilifier and kill him. But as far as the *vaiśyas* and *sūdras* are concerned, they should immediately give up their bodies.

Satī decided to give up her body because she thought herself to be among the *sūdras* and *vaiśyas*. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.32), *striyo vaiśyās tathā sūdrāḥ*. Women, laborers and the mercantile class are on the same level. Thus since it is recommended that *vaiśyas* and *sūdras* should immediately give up their bodies upon hearing blasphemy of an exalted person like Lord Śiva, she decided to give up her life.

18 अतस्तवोत्पन्नमिदं कलेवरं
न धारयिष्ये शितिकण्ठगर्हिणः
जग्धस्य मोहाद्धि विशुद्धिमन्धसो
जुगुप्सितस्योद्धरणं प्रचक्षते

atas tavotpannam idam kalevaram
na dhārayiṣye śiti-kaṅṭha-garhiṇaḥ
jagdhasya mohād dhi viśuddhim andhaso
jugupsitasyoddharaṇam pracakṣate

ataḥ—therefore; tava—from you; utpannam—received; idam—this; kalevaram—body; na dhārayiṣye—I shall not

bear; *siti-kaṅṭha-garhiṇaḥ*—who have blasphemed Lord Śiva; *jagdhasya*—which has been eaten; *mohāt*—by mistake; *hi*—because; *viśuddhim*—the purification; *andhasaḥ*—of food; *jugupsitasya*—poisonous; *uddharaṇam*—vomiting; *pracakṣate*—declare.

Therefore I shall no longer bear this unworthy body, which has been received from you, who have blasphemed Lord Śiva. If someone has taken food which is poisonous, the best treatment is to vomit.

PURPORT: ⑦ Since Satī was the representation of the external potency of the Lord, it was in her power to vanquish many universes, including many Dakṣas, but in order to save her husband from the charge that he employed his wife, Satī, to kill Dakṣa because he could not do so due to his inferior position, she decided to give up her body.

19 न वेदवादाननुवर्तते मतिः
स्व एव लोके रमतो महामुनेः
यथा गतिर्देवमनुष्ययोः पृथक्
स्व एव धर्मे न परं क्षिपेत्स्थितः

na veda-vādān anuvartate matiḥ
sva eva loke ramato mahā-muneḥ
yathā gatiḥ deva-manuṣyayoḥ pṛthak
sva eva dharme na param kṣipet sthitaḥ

na—not; *veda-vādān*—rules and regulations of the Vedas; *anuvartate*—follow; *matiḥ*—the mind; *sve*—in his own; *eva*—certainly; *loke*—in the self; *ramataḥ*—enjoying; *mahā-muneḥ*—of elevated transcendentalists; *yathā*—as; *gatiḥ*—the way; *deva-manuṣyayoḥ*—of the men and the demigods; *pṛthak*—separately; *sve*—in your own; *eva*—alone; *dharme*—occupational duty; *na*—not; *param*—another; *kṣipet*—should criticize; *sthitaḥ*—being situated.

It is better to execute one's own occupational duty than to criticize others'. Elevated transcendentalists may sometimes forgo the rules and regulations of the Vedas, since they do not need to follow them, just as the demigods travel in space whereas ordinary men travel on the surface of the earth.

- (5) Why did Satī decide not to kill her father but to give up her own life?
(6) How should a *brāhmaṇa* respond to blasphemy of an authority?
(7) Why didn't Satī use her power to destroy Dakṣa?

PURPORT: The behavior of the most elevated transcendentalist and that of the most fallen conditioned soul appears to be the same. The elevated transcendentalist can surpass all the regulations of the *Vedas*, just as the demigods traveling in space surpass all the jungles and rocks on the surface of the globe, although a common man, who has no such ability to travel in space, has to face all those impediments.

Although the most dear Lord Śiva appears not to observe all the rules and regulations of the *Vedas*, he is not affected by such disobedience, but a common man who wants to imitate Lord Śiva is mistaken. A common man must observe all the rules and regulations of the *Vedas* which a person who is in the transcendental position does not need to observe.

⑧ Dakṣa found fault with Lord Śiva for not observing all the strict rules and regulations of the *Vedas*, but Satī asserted that he had no need to observe such rules. It is said that for one who is powerful like the sun or the fire, there is no consideration of purity or impurity. The sunshine can sterilize an impure place, whereas if someone else were to pass such a place he would be affected. One should not try to imitate Lord Śiva; rather, one should strictly follow one's prescribed occupational duties. One should never vilify a great personality like Lord Śiva.

20 कर्म प्रवृत्तं च निवृत्तमप्यृतं
वेदे विविच्योभयलिङ्गमाश्रितम्
विरोधि तद्यौगपदैककर्तारि
द्वयं तथा ब्रह्मणि कर्म न चर्च्छति

*karma pravṛttam ca nivṛttam apy ṛtam
vede vivicyobhaya-liṅgam āśritam
virodhi tad yaugapadaika-kartari
dvayam tathā brahmaṇi karma narcchati*

karma—activities; *pravṛttam*—attached to material enjoyment; *ca*—and; *nivṛttam*—materially detached; *api*—certainly; *ṛtam*—true; *vede*—in the *Vedas*; *vivicya*—distinguished; *ubhaya-liṅgam*—symptoms of both; *āśritam*—

directed; *virodhi*—contradictory; *tat*—that; *yaugapada-eka-kartari*—both activities in one person; *dvayam*—two; *tathā*—so; *brahmaṇi*—in one who is transcendently situated; *karma*—activities; *na rcchati*—are neglected.

In the Vedas there are directions for two kinds of activities—activities for those who are attached to material enjoyment and activities for those who are materially detached. In consideration of these two kinds of activities, there are two kinds of people, who have different symptoms. If one wants to see two kinds of activities in one person, that is contradictory. But both kinds of activities may be neglected by a person who is transcendently situated.

PURPORT: The Vedic activities are so designed that the conditioned soul who has come to enjoy the material world may do so under direction so that at the end he becomes detached from such material enjoyment and is eligible to enter into the transcendental position. The four different social orders—*brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, and *sannyāsa*—gradually train a person to come to the platform of transcendental life. The activities and dress of a *gṛhastha*, or householder, are different from those of a *sannyāsi*, one in the renounced order of life. It is impossible for one person to adopt both orders. A *sannyāsi* cannot act like a householder, nor can a householder act like a *sannyāsi*, but above these two kinds of persons, one who engages in material activities and one who has renounced material activities, there is the person who is transcendental to both. Lord Śiva is in the transcendental position because, as stated before, he is always absorbed in the thought of Lord Vāsudeva within himself. Therefore neither the activities of the *gṛhastha* nor those of the *sannyāsi* in the renounced order can be applicable for him. He is in the *paramahansa* stage, the highest perfectional stage of life.

The transcendental position of Lord Śiva is also explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.52–53). It is stated there that when one fully engages in the transcendental service of the Lord by performing activities without fruitive results, one is elevated to the transcendental position. At that time he has no obligation to follow the Vedic injunctions or the different rules and regulations of the *Vedas*. ⑨ When one is above the directions of the Vedic ritualistic injunctions for attaining different allurements and is fully absorbed in transcendental thought, which means thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in devotional service, one is in the position called *buddhi-yoga*, or *samādhi*, ecstasy. For a person who has attained this stage, neither the Vedic activities for realizing material enjoyment nor those for renunciation are applicable.

[continued in the next issue]

(8) Why was Dakṣa wrong in faulting Lord Śiva for not strictly following Vedic rules?

(9) At what stage is one above both renunciation and activities for realizing material enjoyment?

CALENDAR

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

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 Hṛṣīkeśa

(August 31–September 28)

SEPTEMBER

7—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for a schedule of events.

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

10—Annadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

24—Parśvā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today for Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī tomorrow.)

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

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

27—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

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

Month of Padmanābha

(September 29–October 28)

OCTOBER

5—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States.

10—Indirā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

23—Rāmacandra Vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

24—Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

25—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

28—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaradīyā Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya. Beginning of Dāmodara-vrata.* Offering lamps for one month. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *ūrad dāl*).

Month of Dāmodara

(October 29–November 26)

NOVEMBER

2—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

5—Appearance of Radha Kunda.

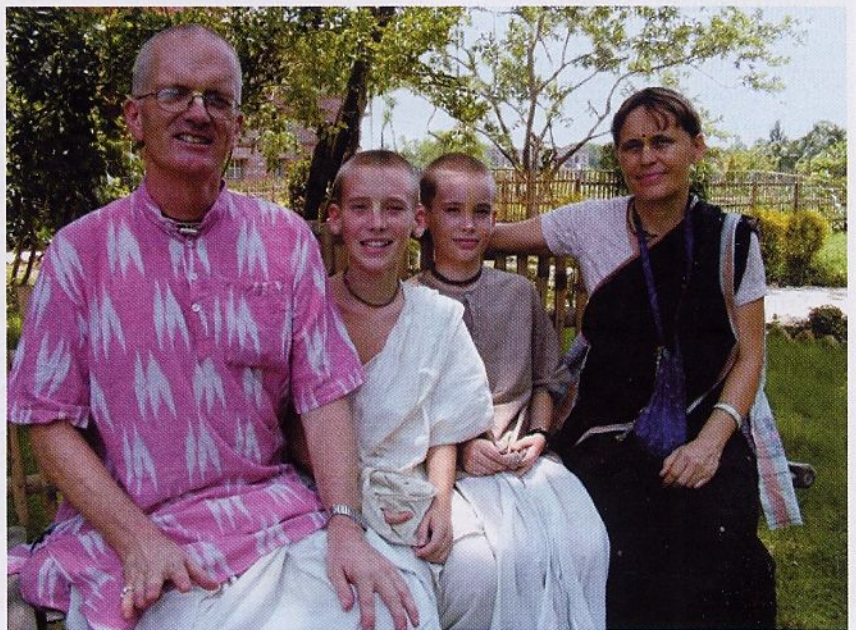
8—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

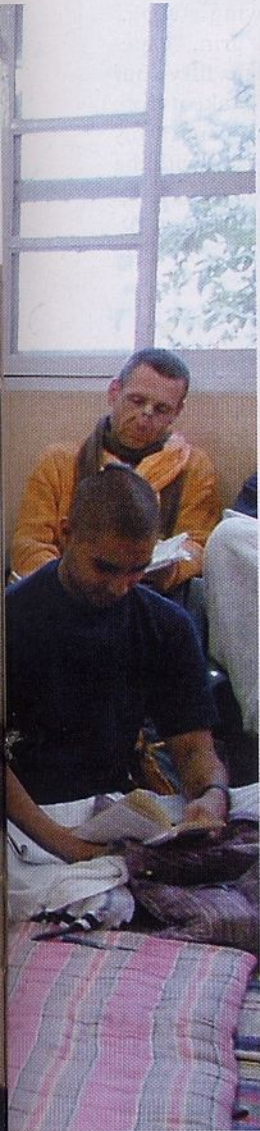
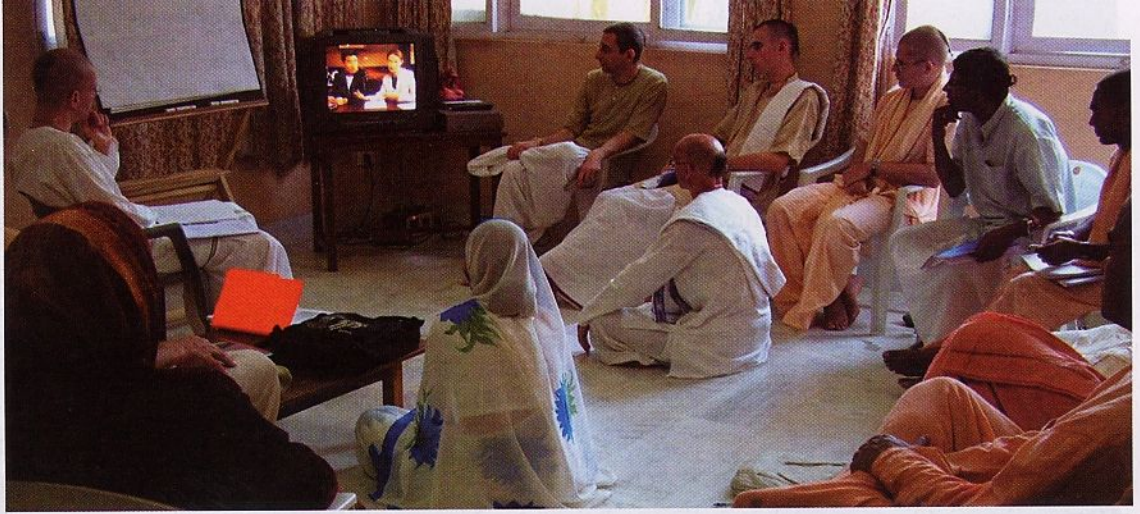
12—Diwali, the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

*Even though the month of Dāmodara begins on the 29th, we start the observance of the Dāmodara-vrata on the Pūrṇimā (full-moon day), the 28th.



Students study Śrī Īsopaniṣad (above) as part of the Bhakti-sāstrī course. At right: MIHE's director, Janmāṣṭamī Dāsa, with his wife, Saṅkalpa Devī Dāsi, and their sons, Prahlāda Dāsa (left) and Nimāi Paṇḍita Dāsa. Opposite page: Students watch a film on mediation during a course on that subject taught by Braja Bihārī Dāsa (center).





SEED OF A SAGE VISION

*By the shores of the Ganges in Māyāpur,
West Bengal, an educational institution is arising
to fulfill a global prophesy of ISKCON's
founder/ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda.*

by Sureśvara Dāsa

Although his friends in Melbourne, Australia, went to Kṛṣṇa schools, Mahāmantra Dāsa always attended public schools and visited the local temple only on the weekends. But when he reached puberty, Mahāmantra started to see what Śrīla Prabhupāda meant when he referred to materialistic schools as “slaughterhouses.”

“Sexual promiscuity was the norm,” he says, “both inside and outside the classroom.”

After he finished the ninth grade, his devotee parents gave him permission to leave school and move into the temple as a full-time *brahmacārī*. Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he knew from reading the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is the “king of education.”

Now twenty, Mahāmantra has fond memories of his teenage years in the

temple—lots of cooking and cleaning, public chanting, sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others, even a stint on the 24-hour chanting party at ISKCON's temple in Vṛndāvana, India—but he still felt incomplete in his education. So when an opportunity came along to attend the Bhakti-śāstrī* course at the Mayapur Institute for Higher Education (MIHE) in India, he seized it with a passion—and was challenged by its goodness. His four-month immersion in the basic books

*The first spiritual degree Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his students to earn. A Bhakti-śāstrī can speak and live the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as found in the four basic Sanskrit scriptures Prabhupāda translated for us: *Bhagavad-gītā*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, *The Nectar of Instruction*, and *Śrī Isopaniṣad*.

of Kṛṣṇa consciousness awakened him to a calling in Prabhupāda's mission.

“The course really sobered me,” Mahāmantra says with a handsome smile, “the way I see and deal with people. It was the teachers. They empowered and challenged me to apply what I was learning. To complete the course, I had to discipline my mind and senses more than ever. But I also tasted more love and trust with the devotees than I ever have. I want to learn more, and teach others.”

An appreciation like this encourages the MIHE's director, Janmāṣṭamī Dāsa, who launched the institute's first semester in the year 2000, a small miracle of hard work and prayer. His inspiration? The Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education (VIHE). Organized by ISKCON educator Bhūrijana Dāsa

in 1987, the VIHE was the first school to start fulfilling Prabhupāda's desire to systematically educate his international disciples in a sacred setting, where the philosophy and culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness could be lived, breathed, and tasted.

"The first month I attended the VIHE," says Janmāṣṭamī Dāsa, "I felt I learned more than in my previous eleven years in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

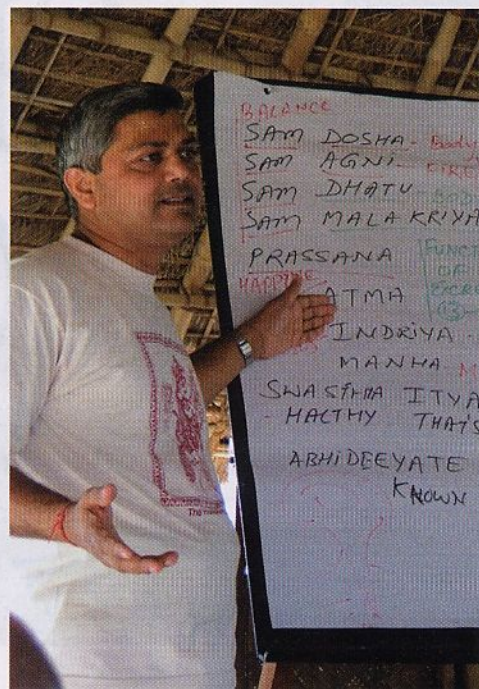
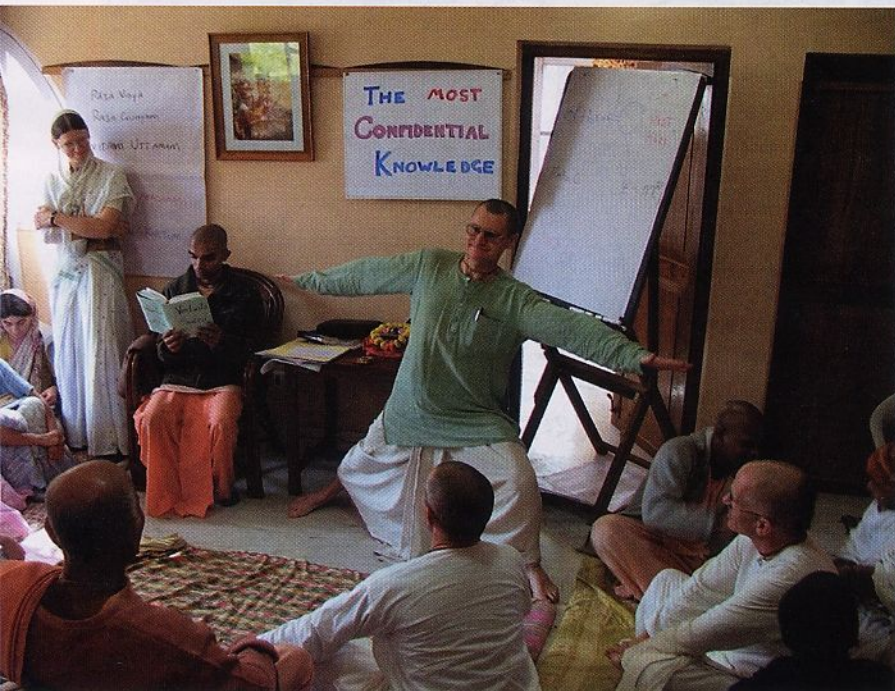
That experience brought him back to the VIHE six more times, each semester increasing his taste and conviction to serve Prabhupāda's mission.

A highly successful seller of Prabhupāda's books back then, he later moved with his wife and two sons to ISKCON Māyāpur and committed himself to improving the education offered there. In 1999, when he arranged some teacher-training and leadership/management seminars, the response was so good that he had to turn devotees away. Inspired with the idea to do an "MIHE," he took the concept to Māyāpur's management, who accepted it on the condition that he would commit to its development for at least five years.

"Five years and growing strong," Janmāṣṭamī says with a grin, "especially in Bhakti-śāstrī. The fifty-four students who lived here to take it from November '03 to March '04 came away completely transformed. And with the top-notch teachers we have lined up this year, we're expecting seventy students or more."

SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

Completely transformed. Hmmm. Is this an educator talking or a pub-



A student dramatizes a point from the Bhagavad-gītā (above). Dr. Liladhar Gupta (above, right) teaches a course on Ayurvedic self-healing. At right, a group prepares visual material for a presentation to the full class. Opposite page: Students from a smaller work-group hold the attention of the class.





lic relations man? The answer comes clearly as I speak with another MIHE student, nineteen-year-old Vijayā Devī Dāsī, from Bolivia.

A medical student, Vijayā looks beautiful and bright-faced as she sits with me and her father, Hari Saṅkīrtana Dāsa from La Paz. Her father had encouraged her to take Bhakti-śāstrī the year before, but Vijayā rejected the idea. Medical training is long and rigorous, she reasoned. Better to get on with med school and do Bhakti-śāstrī later.

But her first year in college left her tired and a little shocked. In place of altruism and the quest for knowledge, she found a good-grades-at-any-price game.

“The way some students would flatter the teachers for high marks was outrageous,” says Vijayā. “To continue medical school, I needed spiritual strength and focus. My father was right. I needed the foundation that Bhakti-śāstrī would provide.”

To finish her first-year exams in Bolivia, she had to start Bhakti-śāstrī in Māyāpur a full month late, a formidable handicap for anyone. But with the

love and support of the MIHE’s teachers and students—especially from her fiancée, Ekanātha Dāsa—she caught up and even excelled.

“It was the way the teachers taught,” says Vijayā, her eyes brightening. “Lots of group work and interactive learning, using music, art, and drama. At nineteen, I was the youngest student, and I was afraid to speak in front of so many senior devotees. But they encouraged me and gave me confidence that I could realize the truth of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. I read it all the way through for the first time.”

Vijayā is staying in India for the rest of this year to study Ayurveda. When she returns to med school, she wants to lead a spiritual study group and apply what she learned at the MIHE to help her friends entering college.

“Bhakti-śāstrī pacified my heart and gave my studies and career goals a transcendent purpose—to please Kṛṣṇa. I owe a lot to my facilitators.”

“The teacher as facilitator is an approach our students love,” says Janmāṣṭamī. “It’s the standard set by the VTE—the Vaiṣṇava Training and Education team headed by Rāsamaṇḍala

Dāsa in Oxford, England. The aims and objectives of VTE courses are student-centered. The content must be consistent with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions, of course, but trained facilitators know how to present the material to address students’ real needs, interests, and concerns.”

THE BEST USE OF A HARD BARGAIN

I begin to wonder what I did to deserve the years of irrelevant info I had to cram and forget the next day in materialistic schools. Yet we all pay our dues before receiving real knowledge at a place like the MIHE, and our next student is a classic example.

Twenty-four years ago, Śāntavīgraha Dāsa came into this world on the West Indies island of Trinidad, where he grew up in the village of Hardbargain. He has no recollection of his mother, who died in a car accident when he was seventeen months old. The bargain improved when his father gave him to his maternal grandparents for raising.

“That eased the pain of separation



they felt after the departure of my mother,” he explains. “The love and care I received from my grandparents was unimaginable. I am very grateful to them for their kindness.”

Trinidad has a large Hindu population, Śānta-vigraha’s relatives among them, so from an early age, he was exposed to Hindi and the local Hindu temple. As a teenager, questions like What is the soul? and Who is God? started to surface in his mind.

“I began to ask these questions to a lot of the temple leaders and other learned Hindu pundits, but somehow I felt they did not have a clear idea of what they were speaking. Their answers weren’t precise, and I was never satisfied.”

His skepticism seemed to increase when he met Dāmodara Dāsa, a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee. Though his friends were attracted to Dāmodara, Śānta-vigraha found his scriptural preaching fanatical.

“I would raise challenges and even personal attacks, but every time he would shoot me down and lay my arguments to waste. I was impressed, but due to pride I would not relent. Then one day he challenged me: ‘What is your problem? Do you have something personal against me?’ I was tak-

en aback, and from that day on my mood changed. We became very good friends, and I began to associate with him very closely.”

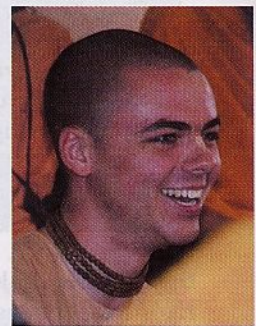
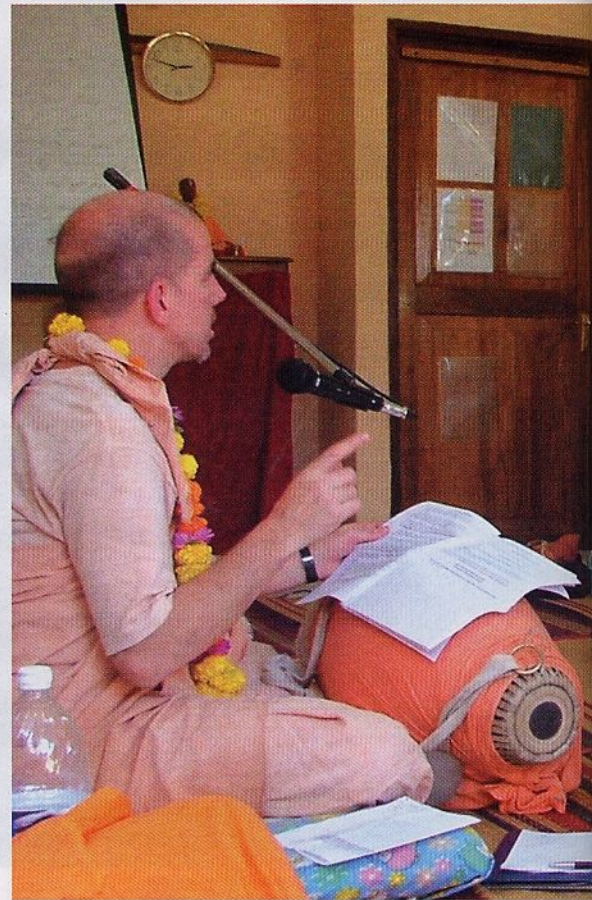
Once Śānta-vigraha started reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, he couldn’t stop.

“I was so impressed with his style of presentation and how exact it was. Practically every question I could ever have was being answered so crisply and clearly. I was convinced that this was it.”

He credits his schoolmate and devotee friend Rūpa Gosvāmī Dāsa for prodding him to chant sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra on beads, give up bad habits, and finally receive spiritual initiation from ISKCON’s Guru Prasāda Swami.

“After initiation, I moved to my father’s place to pursue a college degree. His house was close to the college and the temple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha Mandir.”

In 1999 a friend returned from Vṛndāvana and told him how wonderful it was to study Bhakti-śāstrī at the VIHE in the holy land. Already in love with Kṛṣṇa’s philosophy as presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śānta-

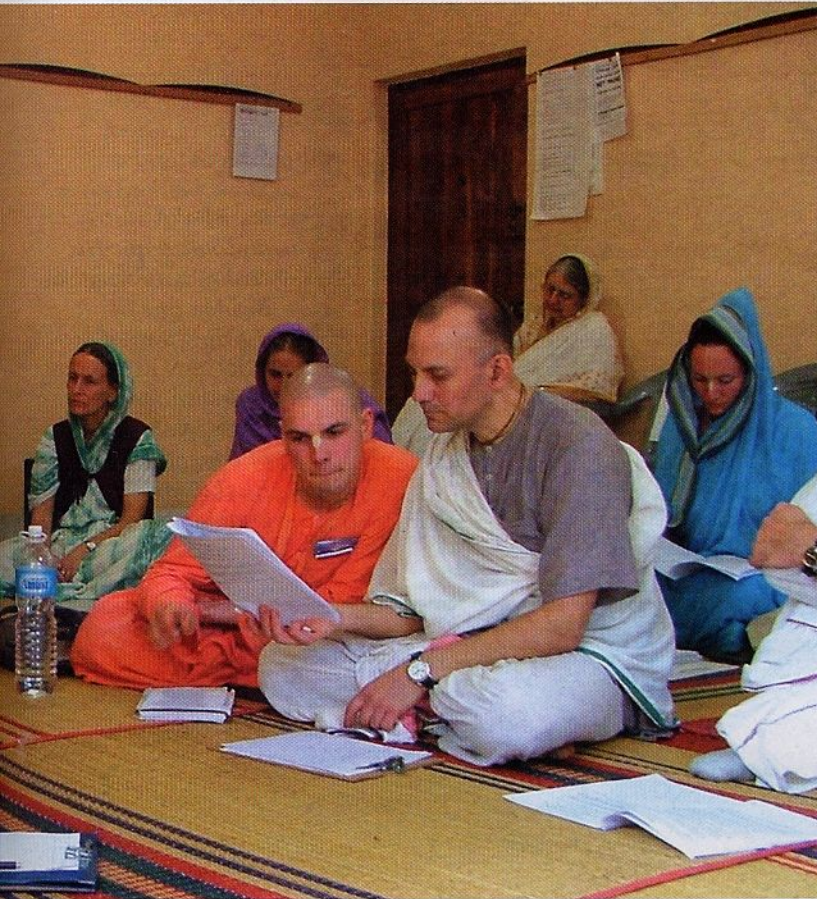


vigraha started to meditate and pray on how he could go to India to study deeply.

“I had no money, but I was always asking friends and India pilgrims to pray for me that I might be able to go someday.”

By 2003 he still had no money, but when he heard about the upcoming installation of Pañca-tattva in Māyāpur, he determined that he would take Bhakti-śāstrī at the MIHE.

“I had no money, not one red cent. I was praying like anything, and a breakthrough came. The temple president said that the temple would be willing to fund me the equivalent of eight hun-



MIHE Mission Statement

PROVIDE AN IDEAL facility and atmosphere in Māyāpur that will help devotees:

- (1) increase their abilities to associate lovingly with Vaiṣṇavas,
- (2) develop a higher taste for studying Śrīla Prabhupāda's books,
- (3) systematically strengthen their *sādhana* [spiritual practices] and *śāstric* [scriptural] knowledge,
- (4) develop practical skills in preaching, worshiping, and living,
- (5) enhance their appreciation of Śrī Māyāpur Dhāma,
- (6) become spiritually enlivened and empowered to preach,
- (7) deepen their faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement,
- (8) become properly situated in Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement,
- (9) deepen their Kṛṣṇa conscious realizations, and
- (10) develop a deeper appreciation for Śrīla Prabhupāda's gifts.



Outside the school building (top, left) a group puts on a skit to drive home a philosophical point. Pūrṇacandra Dāsa (above), an American based in Russia, teaches a course called "Overhaul Your Spiritual Life." Vijayā Dāsī (far left) and Mahāmantra Dāsa are two of the younger students attending the Bhakti-śāstrī course. At left, Anuttama Dāsa, director of ISKCON Communications, teaches courses in leadership, communication, and management.

dred U.S. dollars. With this, I went to my father and asked him to fund me the rest of the cash. After a grave and sober silence, he assented."

Though penniless, Śānta-vigraha had paid the price—intense eagerness.

And how the Lord loves to test and temper our eagerness! En route to Māyāpur, Śānta-vigraha stopped in Vṛndāvana and promptly caught one of its hardest bargains: malaria.

"I developed a nagging cough from the dust. The malaria was the worst.

A friend said he could feel my temperature a foot away. By the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, I survived and left for Māyāpur at the end of October in time to start the Bhakti-śāstrī."

Great expectations. Poets and sages have warned us about them, and with good reason. Yet in the Lord's abodes, His mercy flows as fast and far as the Ganges, sweeping us all to a divine dimension, satisfied beyond our dreams. Listen carefully to Śānta-vigraha:

"I must say that the Bhakti-śāstrī course exceeded my expectations. I thought it would be lectures with questions and answers, but it was so interactive; practically the students were involved in the teaching process from the beginning. The course materials and recordings were professionally done, the facilitators well trained and chosen, and the classes well organized. And the MIHE staff was always ready to help us with whatever inquiries or problems we had. I was astonished at how hard they worked, practically day and night, to make sure everything ran smoothly."



Śānta-vigraha Dāsa (left) receives his Bhakti-śāstrī diploma from His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami, one of the directors of ISKCON Māyāpur, and Śeṣa Dāsa, ISKCON's minister of education. Below: Bhakti-śāstrī course graduates and teachers.

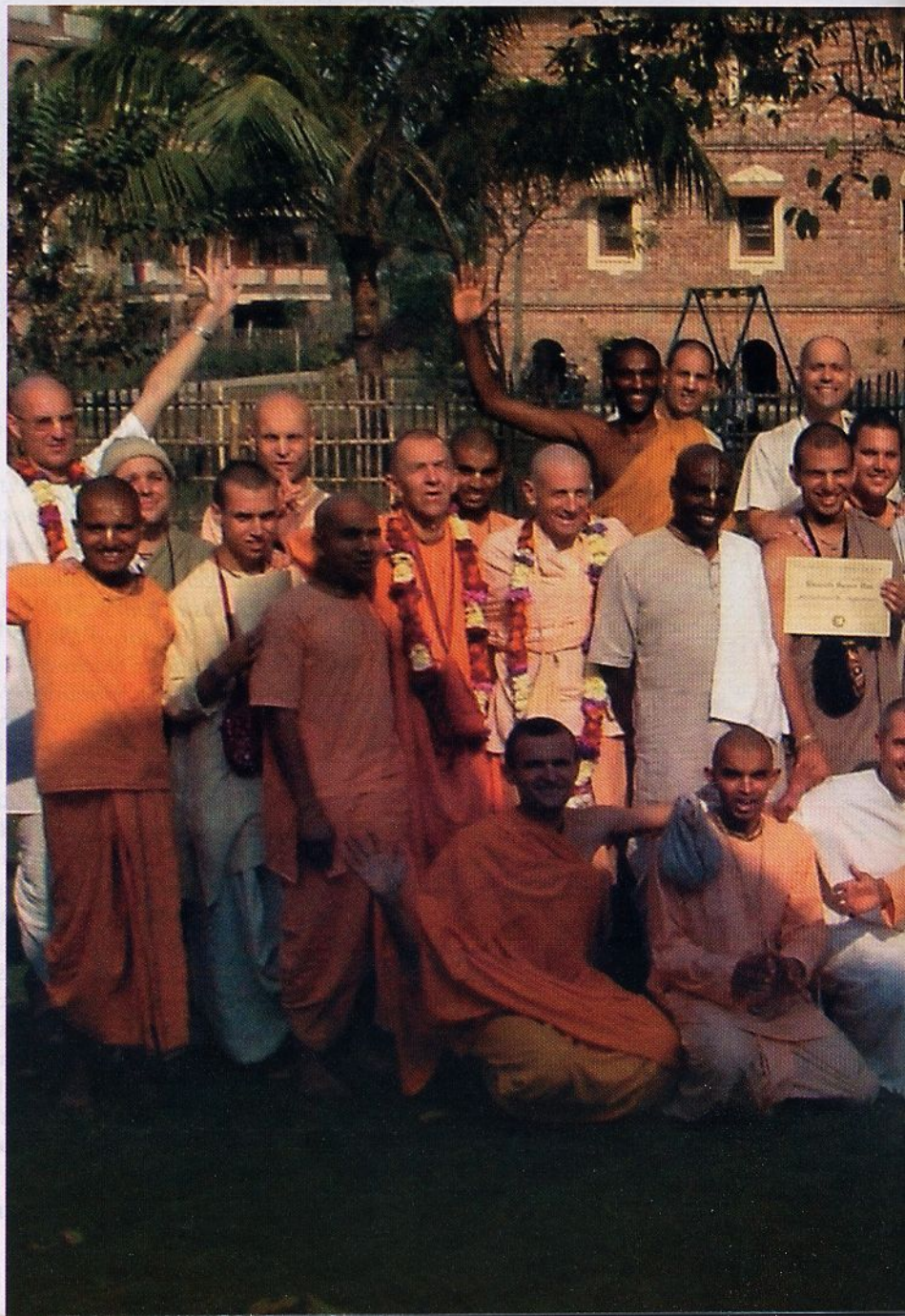
AN EDUCATOR'S INSPIRATION

It's midnight. Another MIHE Māyāpur Festival semester has just ended, and Janmāṣṭamī is pacing his office, catching up on his chanting. Before he and his family leave for Jagannath Puri for a much-needed respite from the pressures of the past five months, I want to thank him for making possible my studying and teaching. The headaches and heartaches of management sometimes break even seasoned administrators, and their families with them. When I ask what keeps him inspired, he presses play on his recorder, and once more I listen to Śānta-vigraha:

“While taking Bhakti-śāstrī, I personally felt that I made some friends for life. I had the feeling that we in ISKCON are really part of a big family, and I got a deeper appreciation for the devotees from all over the world who are serving in their various capacities. I have gotten valuable gems of experience I cannot wait to take home to Trinidad and share with my friends, family, and well-wishers. I am convinced that by the mercy of my spiritual master and the devotees, I am able to remain as a servant in this unique and wonderful society of devotees founded by Prabhupāda to fulfill the mission of Lord Caitanya.”

Janmāṣṭamī Dāsa smiles and puts down his beads.

“When I hear responses like that, I know that we are receiving Śrīla



Prabhupāda's blessings."

He opens his laptop, searches the Vedabase,* and stops at Prabhupāda's first purpose for founding his International Society for Krishna Consciousness: "To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life, in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world."

As the words sink in, I start feeling like a revolutionary again. Restoring education as ISKCON's top priority

* A searchable database containing all of Prabhupāda's recorded words, both spoken and written.

is the life and soul of educators like Janmāṣṭamī, who clicks on the MIHE website to read the lead quotation, a letter excerpt from Prabhupāda:

"Throughout the whole world there is no institution to impart education in the matter of spiritual understanding. So we are going to open a big center in Mayapur where this education will be internationally imparted. Students from all parts of the world will go there to take education in this important subject."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was empowered to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness worldwide, and his vision for Māyāpur education soared to the summit of Lord Caitanya's Golden Age.** The MIHE is the seed of that sage vision.

Sureśvara Dāsa has studied and taught at the MIHE. He distributes Śrīla Prabhupāda's books from his base at ISKCON Hawaii and is currently pursuing a degree in Teaching English As a Second Language.

**The global spiritual renaissance predicted in India's scriptures and embodied by the life and teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa's "Golden Avatar," Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

ONLINE EXTRA

For up-to-date information about the MIHE and its Bhakti-śāstrī, Bhaktivaibhava, and Māyāpur festival semester courses, please visit www.mihe.info.





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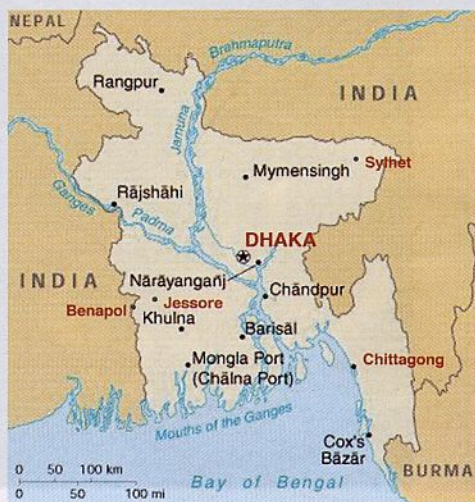
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Pilgrimage To Bangladesh

Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees from the West make a rare visit to sites in Bangladesh connected with Lord Caitanya's movement.

by Indradyumna Swami



Deities of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā (above) reside in a temple in Benapal, near the site where Haridāsa converted the prostitute Lakshahira. A shrine (left) honors Lakshahira at the spot where she sat daily to chant 300,000 names of the Lord.

January 30–February 10, 2004

The Bangladesh ambassador had just approved my visa to enter his country. As I got up to leave, he took a photo guidebook from his desk, quickly signed it, and gave it to me with a handshake.

It read: "To Mr. Tibbitts with love. May you find the happiness you're looking for in our beautiful Bangladesh. Mohammed Ilah."

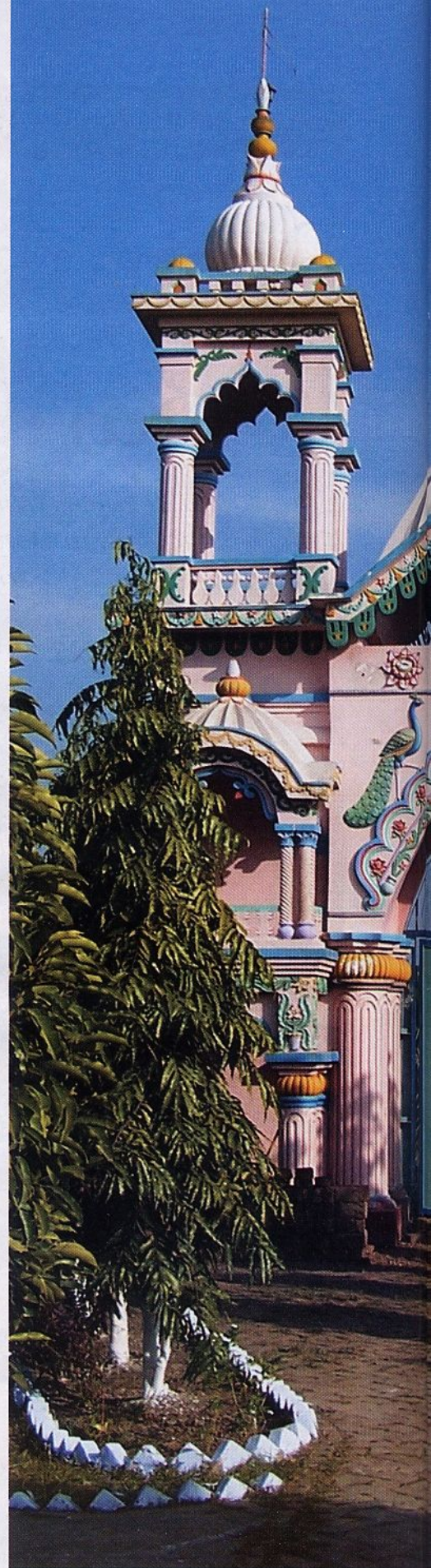
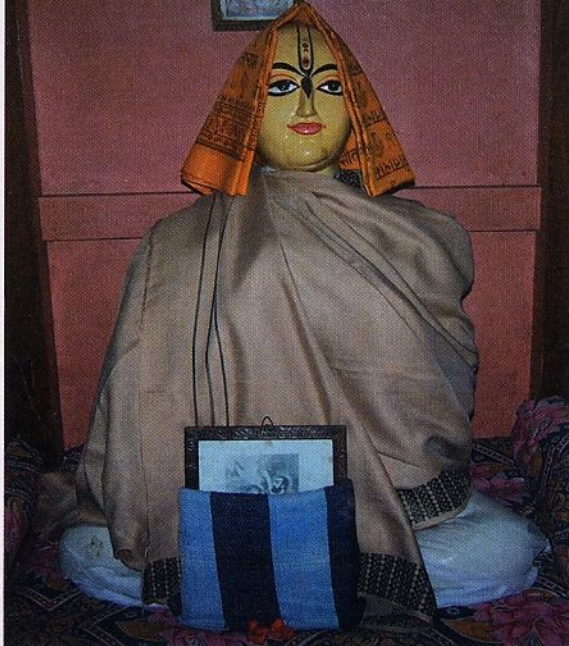
I had no doubt I would find happiness in Bangladesh, but it would be of a specific nature. The former Indian State of East Bengal (known as East Pakistan after the partition of India by the British in 1947) became the sovereign state of Bangladesh in 1972 after a war for independence. Being part of India's rich spiritual past, it contains many holy places especially dear to the followers of Lord Caitanya. Numerous devotees of Lord Caitanya were born there, and the Lord Himself performed many divine pastimes throughout Bangladesh's towns and villages. The capital, Dhaka, was a favorite place of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in the 1930s. He once called Dhaka a second Vṛndāvana because it contains more than seven hundred Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples.

I would be traveling to these holy places with a dear Godbrother, Rādhānātha Swami. Months ago, we had met in our travels and discovered that we shared an attraction to the pastimes and songs of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, one of the principal ācāryas in our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line. He appeared after Lord Caitanya's departure from this world. For years we had longed to visit his birthplace, Kheturi, in Bangladesh. I would be meeting Rādhānātha Swami and several of his disciples in Dhaka the next day.

HELP AT IMMIGRATION

At the Dhaka airport I handed the immigration officer my passport and a form all passengers had to complete with their personal details. I was in Western clothes, as Hindus make up only ten percent of the population and

In Benapol, pilgrims can offer respects to the deity of Haridāsa Ṭhākura (right) and, at a nearby temple, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda (below). At right: the entrance gate at ISKCON Jessore. Far right: the ISKCON Jessore temple.



there is sometimes tension between them and the majority Muslims.

After studying the form for a moment, the officer looked up and said, “You wrote that you’ll be staying in a hotel, but you didn’t mention which hotel. You have to tell me which hotel or I can’t let you in.”

I had no idea of the name of any hotel in Dhaka. I stood there for a moment, and then the officer motioned me to a nearby room. Suddenly, an Indian man stepped forward and rebuked the officer.

“For goodness sake, man, he’s a tourist. How is he supposed to know which hotels we have here? Foreigners don’t come here often, and when

they do we can’t treat them like this. Let him through!”

Somehow his words worked, and the officer stamped my passport.

As I collected my baggage, the Indian man walked by and whispered softly, “Hare Kṛṣṇa. Have a good trip.”

Outside the terminal I met Rādhānātha Swami and twelve *brahmacārīs* from his temple in Mumbai, also all in Western dress. We ate and then sat in a nearby field to discuss our itinerary. We had only ten days and had to select which holy sites to visit. We decided to begin our journey at the birthplace of Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī in Jessore, in the southwest of the country. Our guide, Cāru Candra



Dāsa, ISKCON's regional secretary for Bangladesh, quickly bought our tickets, and two hours later we were on our way.

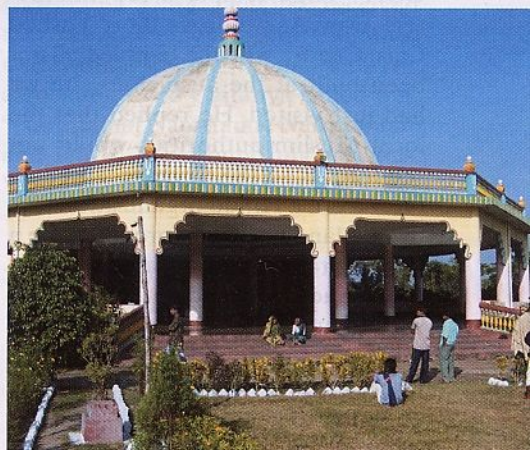
THE PLACE OF HARIDĀSA

On Rādhānātha Swami's suggestion, from the Jessore airport we took a taxi to Benapol, a small village in the jungle where Haridāsa Ṭhākura had awakened a prostitute to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It was dark when we arrived, but Haridāsa Ṭhākura's room was still open. I almost ran to it. Falling down before his image, I prayed for his mercy. As I studied the altar, I was curious to see the deity of a shaven-headed woman in a white sari.

"That's Lakshahira," Rādhānātha Swami said, "the prostitute sent by a government official to seduce Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Soldiers hiding in the foliage were supposed to catch them in union and arrest and defame Haridāsa. But after listening to Haridāsa's chanting of the holy names for three days, Lakshahira became purified and took shelter of him. He initiated her, and she became a great devotee."

I prayed for the mercy of Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Lakshahira.

The next day we went to the birthplace of Rūpa and Sanātana outside Jessore. Like most of the other holy places we would visit, there wasn't much to see. After partition, the minority Hindus were persecuted and many of their temples destroyed. The policy continued after the founding of Bangladesh. So, wherever we would go, all that would be left of most holy places was one or two reminders of the divine pastimes that took place





there. This was particularly true at the home of Rūpa and Sanātana. There was nothing but a single tree. But when we learned it was the very tree under which the Gosvāmīs performed daily worship, we nestled under it and chanted for several hours.

Often a holy place is built up with many shrines and temples to attract pilgrims and impress upon them its importance, but here we had only a single tree on which to focus. As we chanted in the simple jungle environment, I thought that one day it too might become a renowned holy place. For the moment it remains hidden from the world, retaining a charm rich in Gauḍīya history and saturated with mercy. As the hours passed, I closed my eyes and absorbed myself in the holy names at the spot where Rūpa and Sanātana chanted the very same names.

Our next destination was ISKCON's large temple a few kilometers away. As we drove there I asked Cāru Candra why the temple had not been built at the auspicious site we had just visited. He replied that the local Muslim authorities would not sell it to us, so ISKCON accepted an offer from a Hindu organization that owned land nearby. It proved to be a better arrangement, because the ISKCON land is situated in the center of 96 Hindu villages. When the beautiful temple was opened in 1999 after years of construction, more than one million people from all over the country attended.

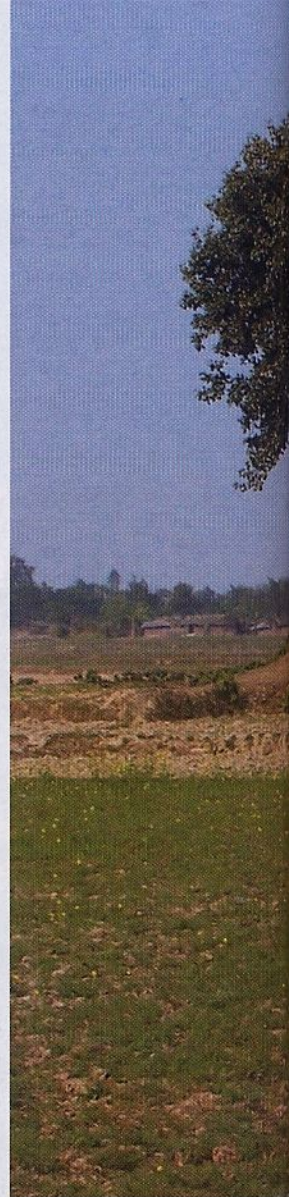
NAROTTAMA, RESERVOIR OF LOVE

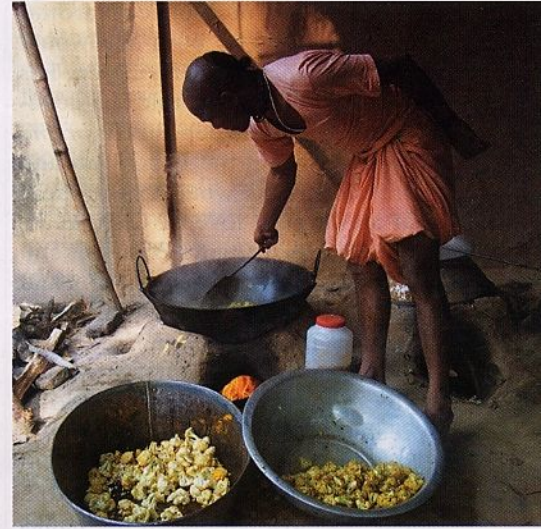
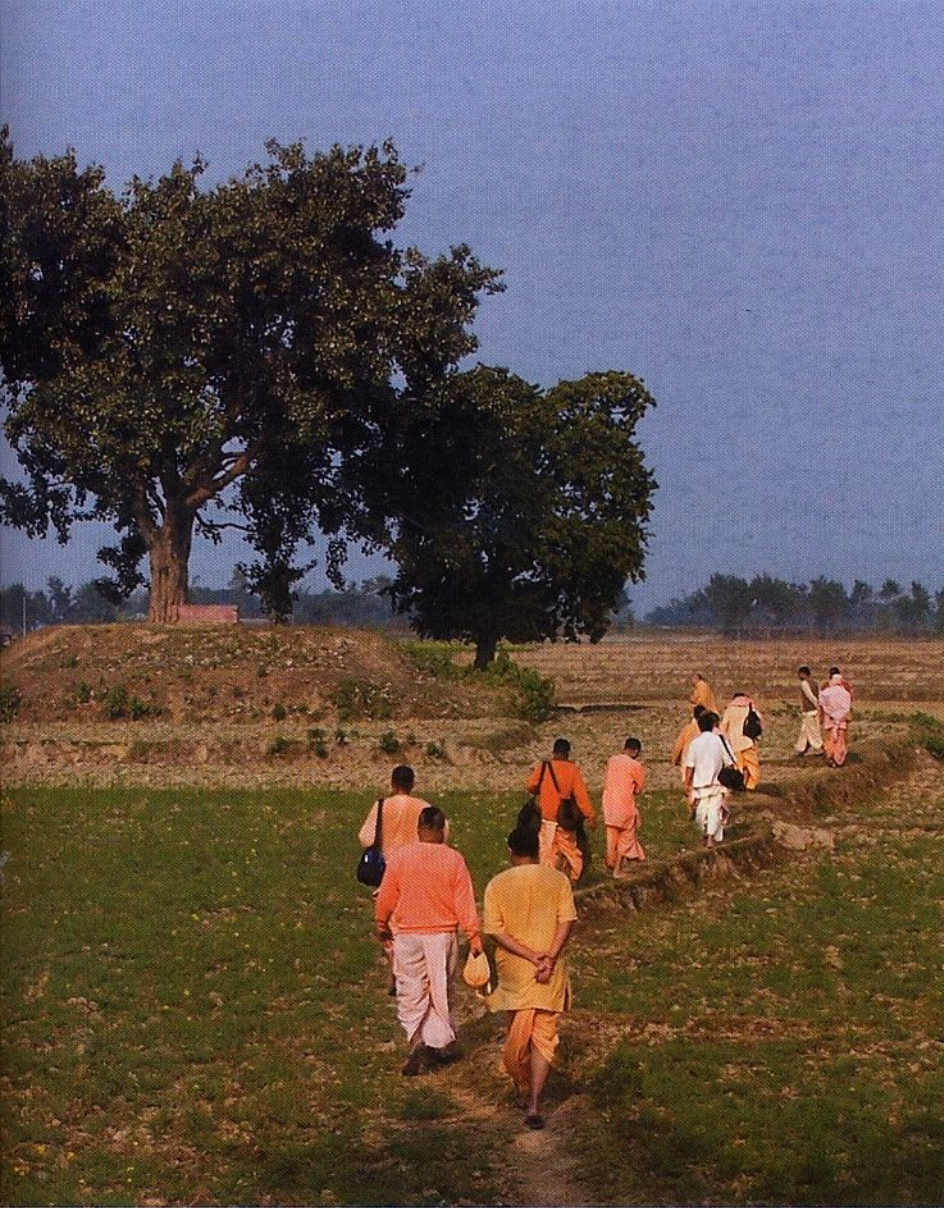
Two days later, we flew to Rajshahi in the northwest, a short distance from Kheturi on the banks of the Padmavati River. As our car rumbled along the dirt roads leading to the isolated village, my heart beat in anticipation. I prayed we'd find more than a single tree. I wasn't disappointed. Though Kheturi consists of only forty families (thirty-eight Muslim and two Hindu), we were happy to discover a small, walled temple compound just outside the village.

One of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's major contributions was organizing at Kheturi the inaugural Gaura Pūrṇimā festival, the yearly observance of Lord Caitanya's appearance. Many important Vaiṣṇavas of the time attended, including Lord Nityānanda's wife, Jāhnvā Mātā. At that historic event, Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura installed six deities: five Kṛṣṇa deities and one pure gold Lord Caitanya deity. The six Vaiṣṇava devotees currently living at the lakeside temple, built by a pious Hindu businessman more than a hundred years ago, told us that Jāhnvā Mātā collected water from the lake for cooking for the Kheturi festival, and to this day the water is used only for cooking. I was unable to discover what happened to most of the deities. I do know that Vraja-mohana was sent to Vṛndāvana soon after the installation and the Caitanya deity was moved to India during Bangladesh's war for

At the birthplace of Rūpa and Sanātana (above), devotees chant in front of a five-hundred-year-old tree.

At right, the pilgrims approach Narottama's place of spiritual practice near Kheturi.





independence. I noticed on the altar, however, six beautiful *śālagrāma-sīlās* (deities of Kṛṣṇa in the form of special stones from the Gandhaki River). When I later inquired about Them, the *pūjāri* (priest) told me They were from the Kheturi festival era.

We spent most of the next day hearing and chanting. The following day, we walked to a small hill where Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura had performed his daily service to Kṛṣṇa—reading, chanting, praying, writing songs, and so on. It was a four-kilometer walk through the fields, and I was again struck by the fact that such a holy site was so isolated. Marking the spot was only a small stone seat with no inscription. Of course, the fact that there was no significant shrine didn't diminish its spiritual potency, so we again immersed ourselves in chanting, trying to open our spiritual eyes and see the sanctity of the place.

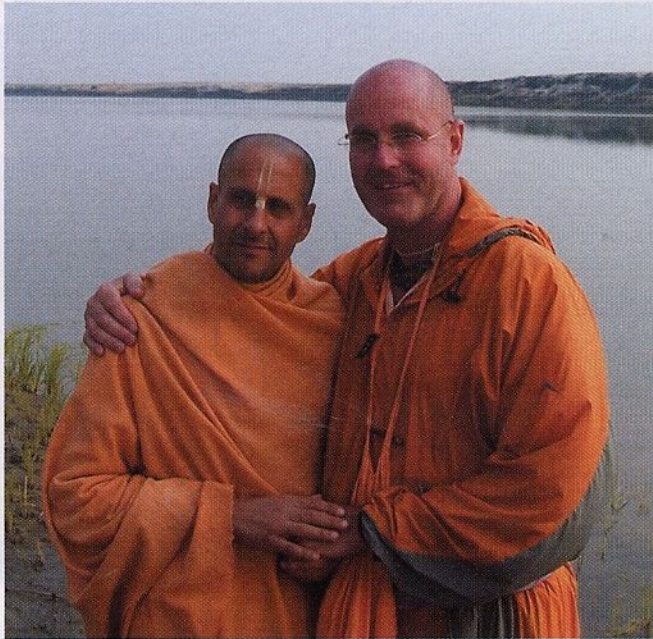
In the afternoon, we visited the place on the Padmavati River where Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura received the special mercy of Lord Caitanya. Once, while having *kīrtana* with His associates, Lord Caitanya called out, "Narottama! Narottama! Narottama!" and fell to the ground unconscious. When He awoke He revealed that

A cook (top) prepares a feast in Kheturi. At left: service at ISKCON Dhaka. Far left: deities at Kheturi.

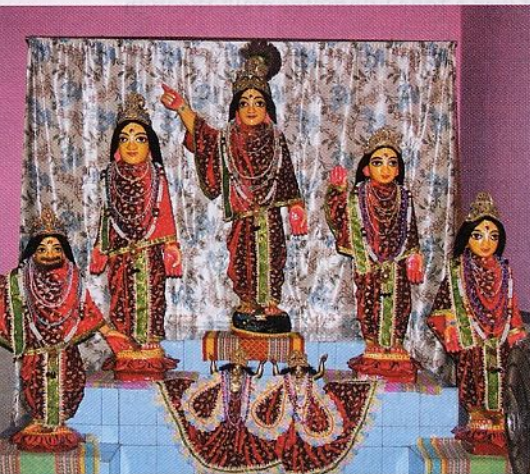


soon a great devotee named Narottama Dāsa would be born and would be instrumental in carrying on His mission. Mahāprabhu told the devotees that He would deposit His *prema* (love of God) in the Padmavati and Narottama Dāsa would bathe there and attain pure love of God. Years later, when Narottama Dāsa was still a boy, he bathed in that exact spot and was overwhelmed with ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. Imbued with that mercy, he was constantly floating in the ocean of love of God and was empowered to spread that love everywhere.

As we searched for the precise location of this pastime, we came to a small Vaiṣṇava temple on the banks of the river. Inquiring further, we discovered it was indeed the place. The devotee couple and their two children who manage the temple were overjoyed by our unsolicited visit. Because Bangladesh is a Muslim country, it is rare that devotees visit such holy places. The man excitedly showed us the tree under which Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura had bathed and which the couple worship daily. We paid our obeisances to the tree, had *kīrtana* there, and then bathed in the sanctified waters near-



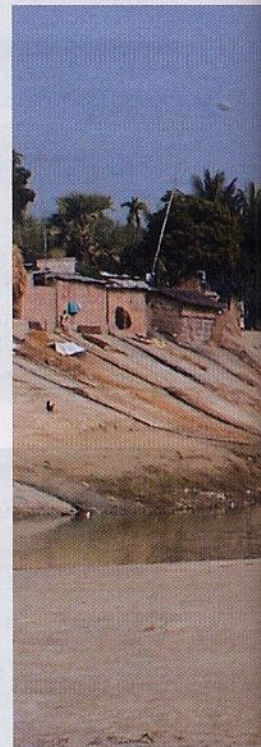
Indradyumna Swami (at right in the photo at left) and Rādhānātha Swami savor their friendship on the bank of the sacred Padmavati River (below, right).



by. I had brought a two-liter plastic water bottle for the occasion, and after emptying it, carefully filled it with water from the holy river.

A PRICELESS GIFT

The next morning as we prepared to leave, I went to the main temple at Kheturi for one last viewing of the deities. The *pūjārī* was worship-



The Pañca-tattva deities (far left) at ISKCON Dhaka are 250 years old. At left: the deity of Lord Caitanya installed by Narottama during the Kheturi festival.

ing the *śālagrāma-śilās*, and I was surprised to see him simply throw some water over Them, dry Them quickly, and place Them back on the altar. It was a simple worship at best. He didn't massage Them in oil, which is customary, or even offer sandalwood paste or Tulasī leaves. When I saw the small fruit plate he offered Them, I became disappointed. When the superintendent of the temple appeared, I mentioned the seemingly poor standard of worship.

He hung his head and said, "It's true what you say. I've tried to impress this on the priests for years, but they don't seem to care."

I thought, "These are such important deities, a part of the pastimes of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. They deserve more than this."

I decided to take a chance.

Him, offering Him opulent worship. And He'll be part of Lord Caitanya's movement in the West, inspiring many devotees."

I was stunned by his reply.

"I've been observing your group closely," he said. "I can see that you are sincere Vaiṣṇavas and that you all have deep affection for Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. So take any *śālagrāma* you want. Just indicate to the *pūjārī* which one you desire."

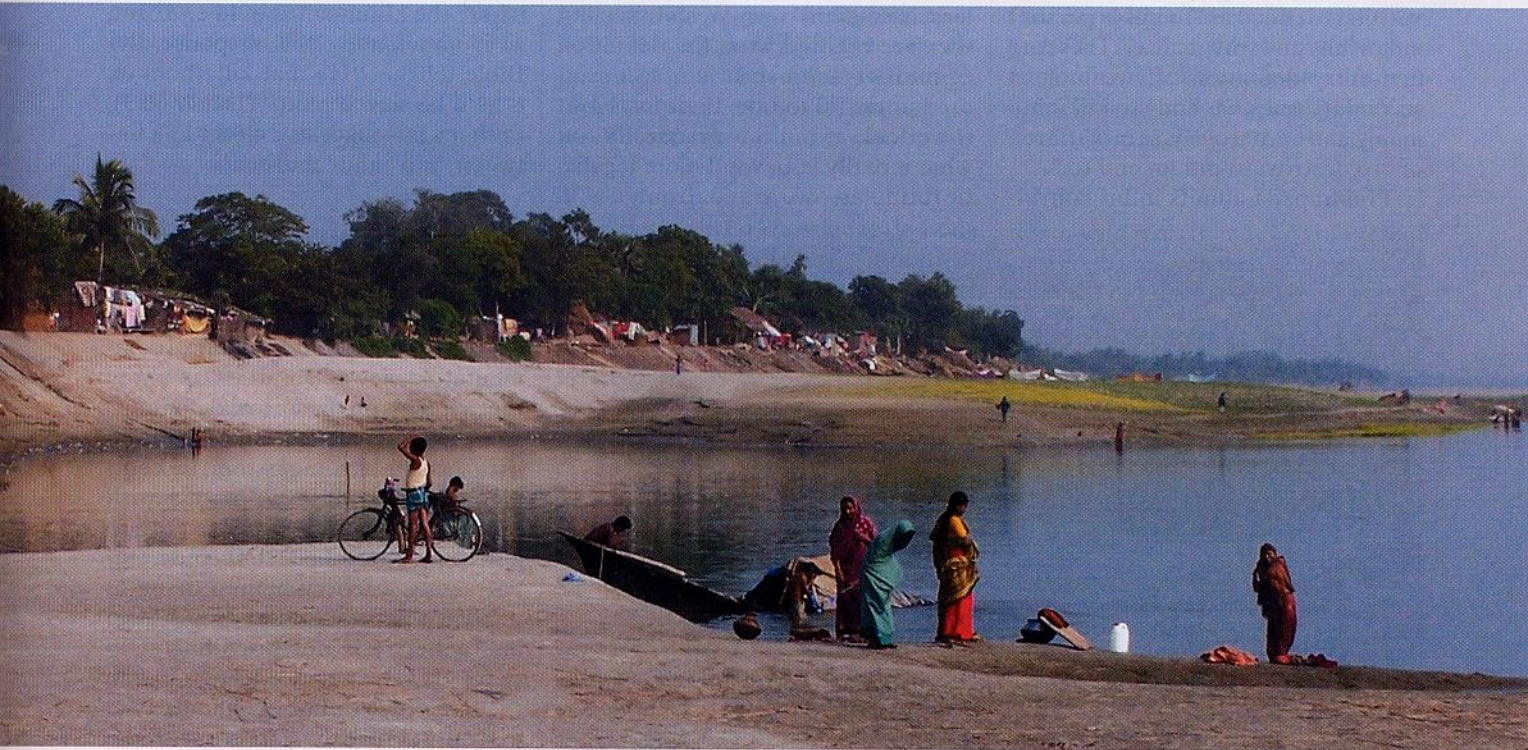
I had already chosen the principal *śālagrāma* on the altar. He was the biggest one, exquisitely beautiful and as smooth as glass.

"I'll take Him," I said, motioning with my head (not my finger, which is considered impolite in Vedic etiquette).

The superintendent instructed the *pūjārī*, who took the *śālagrāma* off the

abode of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's pastimes. While clutching the precious gift to my heart, I considered that the good fortune of Kheturi received by our small group of pilgrims would now go out to many Vaiṣṇavas around the world.

We visited several other holy sites in the following days, such as those of stalwart associates of Lord Caitanya like Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Vāsudeva Datta, Mukunda Datta, and Murāri Gupta. We even visited the ancestral home of Lord Caitanya's father, Jagannātha Mīśra, an ancient array of stone buildings in the jungle in northern Bangladesh. But our experiences in Kheturi left the greatest impression upon me. After Kheturi I hankered to get back to my services in the West. In more ways than one, I had received special mercy, and I



"Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura is a great source of inspiration for me," I said. "He's a great preacher and a deeply realized devotee. He's one of my heroes. I often think of him while spreading his message in Western countries."

Pausing for a moment and praying for mercy, I then said, "Would you consider giving me one of those *śālagrāmas*? I'll take good care of

altar without any apparent emotion. He quickly put Him in my hand. I stood there, my hand trembling, trying to fathom the mercy I had received.

When I went back to my room to collect my belongings for our departure, I showed the deity to Rādhānātha Swami, who was struck with wonder.

"He's so majestic!" he said.

Sadly, we then left Kheturi, the holy

wanted to share it with others.

I didn't have long to wait. At the Dhaka airport, while in a lounge preparing to board my flight out of the country, a Muslim holy man approached me. As a security measure, I was dressed in Western clothes and sported a two-week beard. Many Muslims assumed I was one of them, and had been respectfully addressing me with the greeting "*Salaam alaikum*."

This particular man pointed to my bottle of special water and said in broken English, “Allah hu akbar! I’m very dry. Very thirsty. Please, water.”

I froze. He wanted to drink from my bottle of water from the Padmavati River where Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura had received *prema*. Every drop in that bottle was sacred. It was capable of giving more than liberation; it could give love of God. But he thought it was just an ordinary bottle of water. I hesitated for a moment, and several Muslim men looked at me. Obviously, you don’t refuse a Muslim

holy man’s request for a simple drink of water. So I handed him the bottle, and he proceeded to drink with gusto. I watched in shock as he guzzled more than half the bottle.

He then turned to me and said, “Allah has been very kind to me today!”

“Yes, indeed He has,” I replied with a smile.

I thought, “Even before leaving Bangladesh I’m sharing the good fortune of my pilgrimage with others. Indeed, this must be the perfection of visiting a holy place.” ❁

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.

Adapted from *Diary of a Traveling Preacher, Volume 5*, Chapter 14. To receive chapters by e-mail as they come out regularly, write to indradyumna.swami@pamho.net. (Volumes 3 & 4 are available from the Krishna.com Store.)

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

(continued from page 31)

defines it in legal terms. Its first definition as a noun is “the unlawful and malicious or premeditated killing of one human being by another”; as a verb, it is defined as “to kill (a person) unlawfully and with malice.” These are first-entry definitions. If we look at secondary ones, we find “to kill inhumanly and barbarously, as in warfare,” or “to destroy; to put an end to.”

Prabhupāda admits in his conver-

sation with Father Emmanuel that “murder” refers to humans, and this is borne out by the primary definitions given above. But who defines these words? Because animals do not have the same rights as humans, at least in contemporary Western society, they are omitted from the definition of murder—and so it is not considered unlawful to take their lives. But if we look at murder practically—at what it really is, beyond mere legalistic formulas—we are confronted with

the secondary definitions of “murder” given above, both of which can certainly be applied to animals.

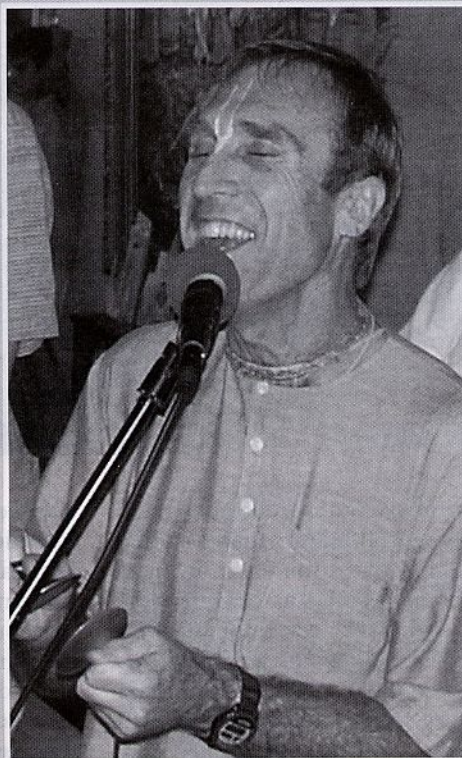
Literalists might tightly cling to the primary definitions, saying that murder refers only to humans, and that this is where the argument should end. But, as if anticipating this response, the Bible tells us, “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man.” (Isaiah 66.3). Perhaps this suggests a closer link between “kill” and “murder.”

A BROADER DEFINITION OF “MURDER”

Moreover, traditional biblical commentators viewed “murder” in a way that expands on the formal definitions of today, with subtle nuances infused with heartfelt compassion. In commenting on Exodus 20.13, early Jewish scholars write as follows: “Sages understood ‘bloodshed’ to include embarrassing a fellow human being in public so that the blood drains from his or her face, not providing safety for travelers, and causing anyone the loss of his or her livelihood. One may murder by the hand or with the tongue, by talebearing or by character assassination. One may murder by carelessness, by indifference . . .” Thus, rabbinical interpretation of the commandment includes more than just the literal taking of life. Or, to put it another way, accepted Jewish definitions of murder go beyond the word’s standard boundaries. It would not be unreasonable, then, to include the killing of animals—which necessitates the taking of life—under the general ru-

**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”)



Yamareja Dasa

bric of murder, for this would in some ways be less of a stretch than other interpretations traditionally found in conventional Jewish definitions of the word.

But there is more. When Prabhupāda refers to the “Thou shalt not kill” commandment, he generally refers to it as “the commandment of Jesus Christ,” or he will preface it by saying, “Jesus says.” This is quite telling. In fact, the New Testament reading of this commandment seeks to expand on its original definition: Luke (18.20), Mark (10.19), and Matthew (5.21) all exhort followers to go beyond conventional understandings of this command. To give but one example, let us look at Matthew: “You have heard that it was said to those in ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister . . .”

In other words, we are no longer talking about “murder” but of inap-

propriate treatment. True, these statements address human interaction, first and foremost. But given biblical ideals about the original diet of man, which was vegetarian (see Genesis 1.29), and the ultimate vision of Isaiah (11.6–9)—that all creatures will one day live together in peace—it is clearly desirable that man begins to treat his co-inhabitants of the planet with dignity and respect. He can begin by not killing them.

COMMON-SENSE COMPASSION

This is Prabhupāda’s main point: In whatever way the original Jewish prophets and their modern representatives interpret the word “kill,” a religious person should be able to invoke common sense and inborn human compassion—it is wrong to unnecessarily kill any living being. Prabhupāda believes that a practicing religionist, especially, should have the good sense, character, and purity of purpose to know that taking life is not in our

charge: We cannot create the life of an animal, and so we have no right to take it away. Prabhupāda’s understanding of “Thou shalt not kill” is thus clearly legitimate—especially in light of the commandment’s restructuring as found in the New Testament. This is so because modern slaughterhouses go against the very spirit of the entire Judeo-Christian tradition—of religion in general—which seeks to abolish wrongful killing and to establish universal harmony and love throughout the creation. ☸

This article was adapted from the author’s book Holy Cow: The Hare Krishna Contribution to Vegetarianism and Animal Rights, just published by Lantern Books and available from the Krishna.com Store.

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HOLY NAME

(continued from page 14)

tion and culture. For example, modern social norms demand respect for one’s employer, professor, or a district court judge.

Unfortunately, there will always be people seeking respect and prestige by claiming spiritual authority, just as there are criminals who dress as policemen and phony schools and businesses that cheat innocent people of their money. A prospective disciple should therefore determine if the guru is a disciple in a bona fide line of teachers and disciples, just as one examines the educational credentials of university professors. A guru’s main qualification is knowledge of Kṛṣṇa—not simply theoretical knowl-

edge, but realized knowledge demonstrated by a practical life of dedication to the Lord.

Generally, when one finds a bona fide guru, the relationship is established for eternity. Still, a guru is obliged to renounce a disciple who seriously or repeatedly falls from the path, and a disciple should reject a fallen guru.

FROM THE GURU, ONE GETS KṚṢṆA

If we please our spiritual master, then Kṛṣṇa in the form of His holy name will easily reveal Himself to us, even if we are not very qualified otherwise. This principle operates even in ordinary material dealings. For example, a highly placed university pro-

fessor who feels that a certain student shows promise can recommend that student for an advanced program for which the student would not ordinarily be eligible. The institution will back up the professor’s recommendation. Kṛṣṇa reciprocates in a similar way with His dear devotees. If Kṛṣṇa’s representative is happy with our service, Kṛṣṇa accepts us despite our shortcomings. The obstacles to our chanting are then easily removed, and our progress is swift and sure. ☸

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“WHY SHOULD YOU KILL?”

(continued from page 15)

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No.

Jesuit Priest: As food.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You “need” it. For instance, if you can get nice fruits, grains, milk, why do you need some animal? You have to eat. You have to

eat to live. You do not have to kill. In this way, if you can prepare nice foodstuffs from grains, from fruits, from flowers, from vegetables, from milk, why should you kill the animals? A reasonable man, a religious man—he should have discrimination, that “If I get my foodstuffs from here, why shall

I kill a big animal?”

Mother: Well, I always think it’s not for me to condemn people, whatever they do. All I ask for in life is . . . I’m not condemning you, but, uh . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, we are thinking in that way. It is all right that we have to eat some living entity, but there is

***“The animal eaters—
they cannot have any conception of God.
Their brain is so dull.”***

. . .

a difference. If we can get our food-stuffs without killing an animal . . . Besides that, when you get the grains, it is not actually killing. When you get the fruits—I am getting these fruits from the tree—it is not killing. The fruits are there; I take them. They fall down; I take them. The grains, also. It is not killing.

Mother: Well, I think . . . No, well, I don't think we're really worried about whether we kill or you—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So, similarly, if I take milk from the cows, that is also the cows' blood, but I don't kill them. So if I can live in such a nice way, without killing, if I get the fruits and flowers and the milk and the grains, why should I kill the animals?

Mother: There are a great number of people being vegetarians today.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mother: You're not the only people. I mean, a lot of people just have decided . . . Yes, they do this.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is nice. That is nice, very nice. They should be vegetarian.

Mother: But we don't condemn people who eat meat.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Being vegetarian will make them less sinful. And that will qualify them to go back to home, back to Godhead. If they remain sinful, they cannot go.

Jesuit Priest: Would you say that because we—and I talk about myself—because I have meat and bacon and so on, I am a . . . does that make me sinful? If I didn't eat those, I would be less sinful?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes. That is our philosophy.

Jesuit Priest: So if I give up eating meat and bacon and sausages and things, I'll suddenly become a different person.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then you become pure. You become pure.

Jesuit Priest: That's very interesting.

Disciple: Recently, a gentleman told me exactly that. He's a businessman here in London, about forty years old, and a member of the Mensa Society, you know, for geniuses. And three months ago, he decided—because he had learned, had heard this from Prabhupāda's followers—he decided to become a vegetarian. And a few weeks later, he said, “It's amazing—the difference in my consciousness.” He said, “I've become a completely different man.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Well, yes. In the Vedic literature it is said the animal killers cannot understand God.

Mother: Well, this is very good, sir, that you find this. Of course, this is not my viewpoint.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. From any viewpoint, animal killing is not practical. I have seen the animal killers. They do not understand what is God. That is a fact. Nor have they got the brain to understand it.

Mother: But for yourselves, you don't need a brain if you're not going to study the sciences or to do anything further.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, we are studying. And because we are preaching, we are studying the science of God. But the animal eaters—they cannot have any conception of God. Their brain is so dull.

Mother: What about your followers' children? Do they go to school?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why not?

Mother: And do they go to college?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They are now little children. But we don't wish to send them to college. We have got sufficient books.

Mother: So you'll cut off their education like that?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What is this nonsense education?

Mother: Now, do you think that's not

cruel to them?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We don't care for this.

Disciple: We cut off this nonsensical education, this evolution propaganda, that dead matter gives rise to life and consciousness, so no need for a creator. We get our education from the *Vedas* and our spiritual master. We learn how to read and write and handle numbers, and whatever we need practically for our work. And we learn the science of God from Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master. And we find that sufficient.

Jesuit Priest: But you're depending on other people, then, to do the other side of your life for you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We are not depending on anyone.

Jesuit Priest: What happens if somebody gets very ill tomorrow morning?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So we give them medicine.

Mother: You call the doctor.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So do you mean to say that because we may sometimes require a medical man, we have to take the education of a medical man?

Mother: But you don't train people to be medical men.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Our training is . . . First of all, try to understand. For instance, you have got four divisions in your body for maintaining the body. So you have the brain division, the arm division, the belly division, and the leg division. The leg is doing its own work, walking. The hand is doing its own work. And the belly is doing its own work. And the brain is doing its own work. When the brain is working, it may require the help of the leg. But the brain does not require to learn the business of the leg. This is the idea. The brain sometimes requires the help of the leg. But this does not mean that the brain has to learn how to walk, also. ☸

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The full list appears in the January/February and July/August issues.

A Near-Life Experience

NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES change people, often starting them on a sincere spiritual search. But they only happen to people extremely close to death who live to tell about it. So most of us won't get the benefit of such a traumatic event to jump-start our spiritual lives. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement offers an alternative: a near-life experience.

Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that real life exists on the platform of the soul. The body is always dead—it displays symptoms of life only while the soul is present. So, strictly speaking, a life absorbed in the body and everything related to it is not really life at all.

The Kṛṣṇa conscious life offers a chance to get near the real life of the soul free from the chains of matter. Unlike some religious traditions, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement doesn't claim that its members are saved merely by membership. Kṛṣṇa consciousness entails the practice of living like the souls who exist eternally in God's company. Life in the spiritual world is real life. We approach that life through acts that mirror what goes on there.

While one could say that the Kṛṣṇa conscious life here on earth is full life, our bodies will always limit how much we can replicate the life of the liberated souls in the spiritual world. In *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, Sanātana Gosvāmī gives a vivid description of Vaikuṅṭha, the part of the spiritual world where Kṛṣṇa as Lord Nārāyaṇa is worshiped like a king, with full respect and limitless opulence. A striking feature of Vaikuṅṭha is that the souls there can assume any form they desire for

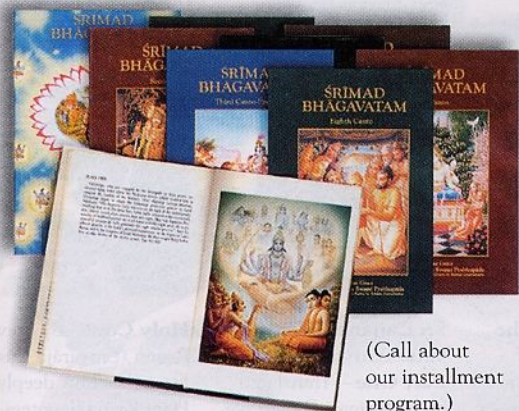
their service to the Lord. And no matter what the form, the residents of Vaikuṅṭha can move from place to place at will and do many other things impossible for us.

Whether we know it or not, our actions in this world reveal that we all naturally yearn for a life of complete freedom. But that's available only in the spiritual world, a place reached only by those who never misuse their freedom. They can do whatever they want because, having awakened their innate love for God, they want only to please Him. And they think of endless ways to do so.

In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we often refer to degrees of perfection. So while it may seem that nothing can surpass Vaikuṅṭha, spiritual realms above it, especially Goloka Vṛndāvana, the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, provide even greater freedom. Vṛndāvana's unequalled opulence is the freedom to enjoy with God in the familiarity of unrestricted love. Kṛṣṇa's parents have the freedom to punish Him, His girlfriends the freedom to refuse His advances, and His playmates the freedom to wrestle with Him and defeat Him in games.

The freedoms of the spiritual world spring from pure love and selfless service. The culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this world delivers a taste of that freedom. In presenting the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda always invited people to associate with devotees of Kṛṣṇa and take advantage of all the ways we can experience—as closely as is possible in our situation—the happiness of the real life that is the life of the soul.

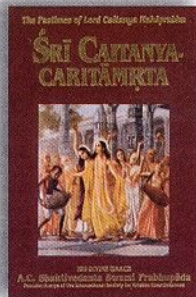
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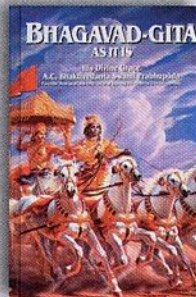
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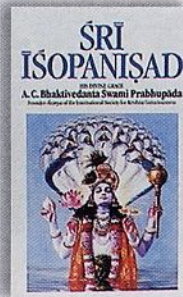
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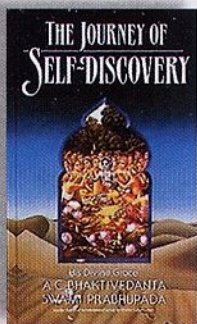
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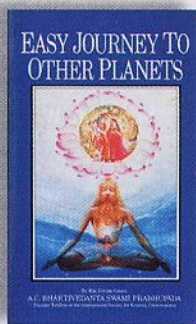
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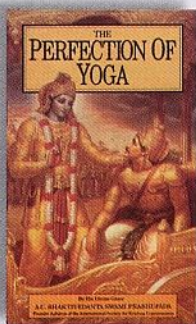
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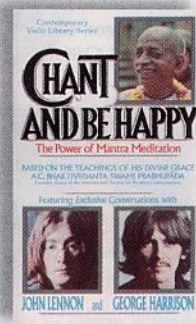
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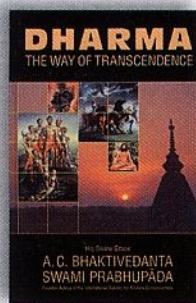
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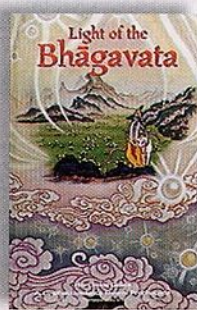
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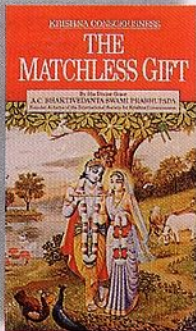
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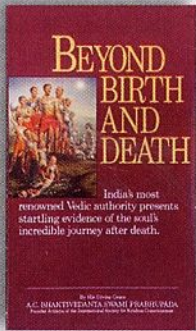
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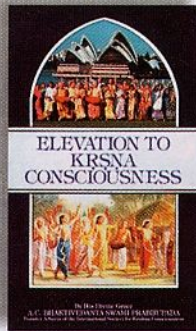
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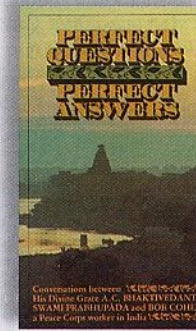
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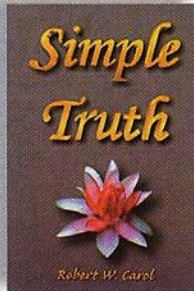
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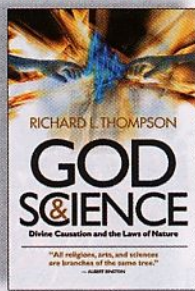
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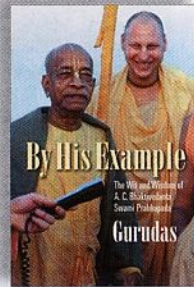
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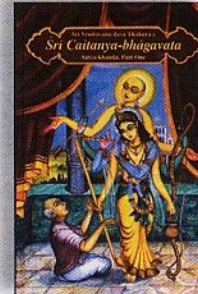
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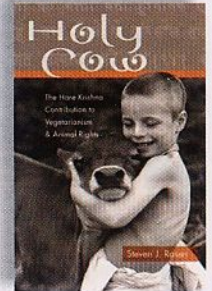
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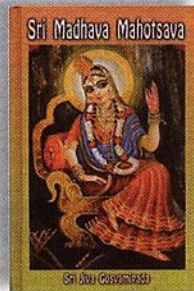
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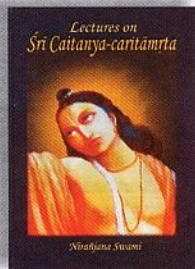
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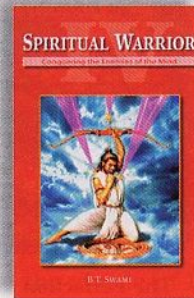
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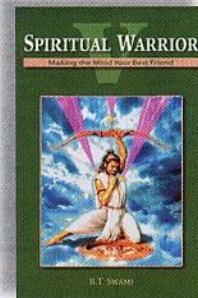
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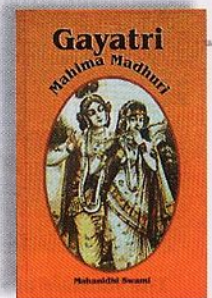
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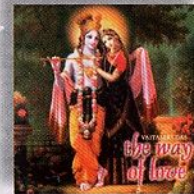
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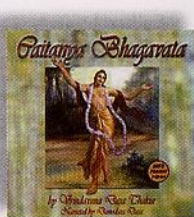
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One who takes shelter of the Supreme Lord has nothing to fear, even in the midst of the greatest calamity.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda
Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 1.19, Purport



Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the cause of all causes. He is the original creator, maintainer, and annihilator, of all universes. Whenever Lord Brahmā and Lord Rudra are described as the creator and annihilator it is to be understood that they are empowered secondary agents under the instructions of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore they are established as predominating deities of the modes of passion and ignorance.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,
Madhya 1.149, Commentary



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

Lord Brahmā
Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā 5.59



What good is lust when youth has fled?
What good is a lake that has no water?
Where are the relatives when wealth is gone?
Where is *samsāra* [repeated birth and death] when the Truth is known?

Ādi Śaṅkarācārya
Bhaja Govindam 10

Those who understand the principles of social interaction say that . . . friendship with a good man may be established simply by exchanging seven words with him or walking seven steps with him.

Friendship with a very good man may be established in merely three words or steps. But saintly persons establish friendships at every step.

Sanaka Kumāra
Nārada Purāna 1.36.32-33



By performing the sacrifice of congregational chanting of the holy name, learned scholars in the age of Kali worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is now non-blackish because of the great upsurge of the feelings of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. He is the only worshipable deity for the *paramahamsas*, who have attained the highest stage of the fourth order (*sannyāsa*). May that Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Caitanya, show us His great causeless mercy.

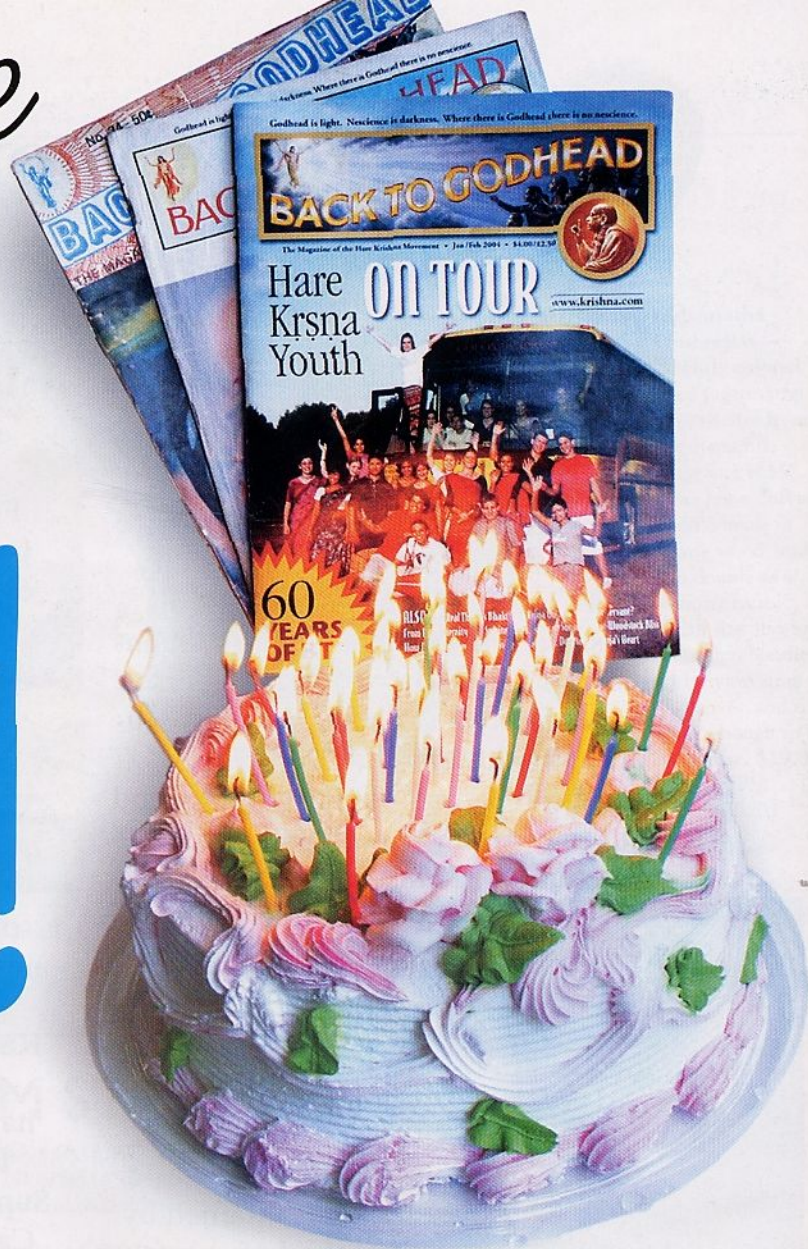
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī
Stava-mālā, *Dvītiya Caitanyāṣṭaka* 1—



Who, other than one who is not a human being, can exist in this world and not be interested in the ultimate goal of life? Who can refuse the nectar of narrations about the Personality of Godhead's activities, which by itself can deliver one from all material pangs?

Maitreya Ṛṣi
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.13.50

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