

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

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna
Movement

July 2006



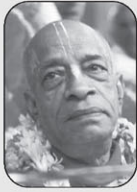
**KICK OUT
SECULARISM**

The Kingdom
of the Blind

Land of Kumbha-mela
Welcomes ISKCON

BACK TO GODHEAD

Founded 1944. Vol. 3 No. 28. July 2006



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Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
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Swami Prabhupāda**

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The Presiding Deities of ISKCON Ujjain-
Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan-mohanji

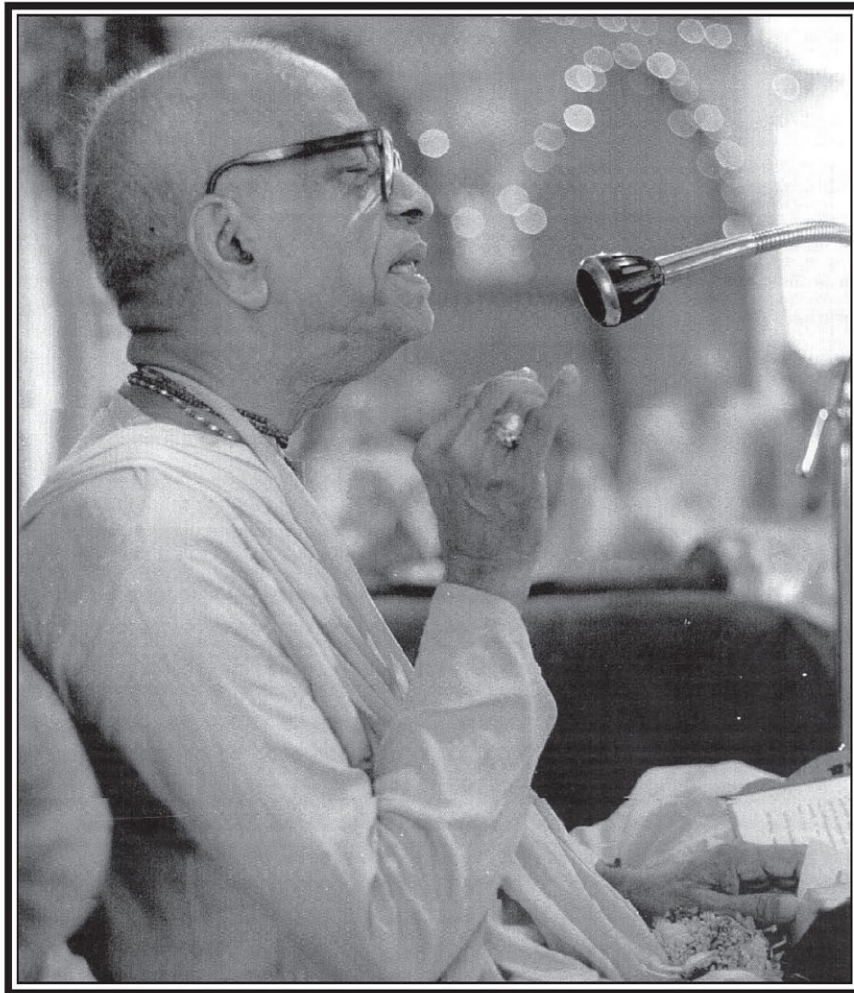
OUR PURPOSES

- 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 Supreme Personality of Godhead.

YOGA

Making Friends with the Mind

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



*bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitah
anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat*

“For him who has conquered his mind, it is the best of friends. But for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.6)



The whole purpose of the yoga system is to make the mind our friend. The mind in material contact is our enemy, just like the mind of a person in a drunken condition. In Caitanya caritāmṛta [Madhya 20.117], it is said, *kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha*. “Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, the living entity has been attracted by the Lord’s external feature from time immemorial. Therefore, the illusory energy [māyā] gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence.” I am a spiritual soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, but as soon as my mind is contaminated I rebel, because I have a little independence. “Why shall I serve Kṛṣṇa, or God? I am God.” When this idea is dictated from the mind, my whole situation turns. I come under a false impression, an illusion, and my whole life is spoiled. So, we are trying to conquer so many things-empire, and so on—but if we fail to conquer our minds, then even if we conquer an empire we are failures. Our very mind will be our greatest enemy.

PURPOSE OF YOGA

The purpose of practicing eightfold yoga is to control the mind in order to make it a friend in discharging the human mission. Unless the mind is controlled, the practice of yoga is simply a waste of time; it is simply for show. One who cannot control his mind lives always with the greatest enemy, and thus his life and its mission are spoiled. The constitutional position of the living entity is to carry out the order of the superior. As long as one’s mind remains an unconquered enemy, one has to serve the dictations of lust, anger, avarice, illusion, and so on. But when the mind is conquered, one voluntarily agrees to abide by the dictation of the Personality of Godhead, who is situated within the heart of everyone as the Supersoul (Paramātmā). Real yoga practice entails meeting the Paramātmā within the heart and then following His dictation. For one who takes to Kṛṣṇa

consciousness directly, perfect surrender to the dictation of the Lord follows automatically.

*jitātmanah praśāntasya
paramātmā samāhitah
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu
tathā mānāpamānayoḥ*

“For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquility. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.” [Bg. 6.7]

Actually, every living entity is intended to abide by the dictation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated in everyone’s heart as Paramātmā. When the mind is misled by the external energy, one becomes entangled in material activities. Therefore, as soon as one’s mind is controlled through one of the yoga systems, one is to be considered as having already reached the destination. One has to abide by superior dictation. When one’s mind is fixed on the superior nature, he has no other alternative but to follow the dictation of the Supreme. The mind must admit some superior dictation and follow it. The effect of controlling the mind is that one automatically follows the dictation of the Paramātmā, or Supersoul. Because this transcendental position is at once achieved by one who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the devotee of the Lord is unaffected by the dualities of material existence like distress and happiness, cold and heat, and so on. This state is practical samādhi, or absorption in the Supreme.

*jñāna-vijñāna-ṭṛptātmā
kūṭa-stho vijitendriyah
yukta ity ucyate yogī
sama-loṣṭrāśma-kāñcanaḥ*

“A person is said to be established in self-realization and is called a yogī, or mystic, when he is fully satisfied by virtue of acquired knowledge and realization. Such a person is situated in transcendence and is self-controlled. He sees everything—whether it be pebbles, stones, or gold—as the same.” [Bg. 6.8]

Unless the mind is controlled, the practice of yoga is simply a waste of time; it is simply for show. One who cannot control his mind lives always with the greatest enemy, and thus his life and its mission are spoiled.

UNDERSTANDING GOD

Bookish knowledge without realization of the Supreme Truth is useless. In the Padma Purāṇa this is stated as follows:

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

“No one can understand the transcendental nature of the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, quality, and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him.”

This is very important. Now, we accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. And why do we accept that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord? Because it is stated in the Vedic literature. The Brahma-saṁhitā for example, says, *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*: “The supreme controller is

**When we offer
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according to
the ritualistic
process, we
see that the
taste of the
food changes
immediately.
This is
practical. So
God eats, but
because He is
full in Himself,
He does not eat
like us**

Kṛṣṇa, who has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body.” Those who are in the modes of passion and ignorance simply imagine the form of God. And when they are confused, they say, “Oh, there is no personal God. The Absolute is impersonal or void.” This is frustration.

Actually, God has a form. Why not? The Vedānta-sūtra says, *janmādy asya yataḥ*: “The Supreme Absolute Truth is that from whom or from which everything emanates.” Now, we have forms. And not only we but all the different kinds of living entities have forms. Wherefrom have they come? Wherefrom have these forms originated? These are very common-sense questions. If God is not a person, then how have His sons become persons? If my father is not a person, how have I become a person? If my father has no form, wherefrom did I get my form? Nonetheless, when people are frustrated, when they see that their bodily form is troublesome, they develop an opposite conception of form and imagine that God must

be formless. But the Brahma-saṁhitā says no. God has a form, but His form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss (*iśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*). Sat means “eternity,” cit means “knowledge,” and ānanda means “pleasure.” So God has a form, but His form is full of pleasure, full of knowledge, and eternal.

Now, let’s compare our body to God’s. Our body is neither eternal nor full of pleasure nor full of knowledge. So our form is clearly different from God’s. But as soon as we think of form, we think the form must be like ours. Therefore, we think that since God must be the opposite of us, He must have no form. This is speculation, however, not knowledge. As it is said in the Padma Purāṇa, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*: “One cannot understand the form, name, quality, or paraphernalia of God with one’s material senses.” Our senses are imperfect, so how can we speculate on the Supreme Perfect? It is not possible.

SEEING GOD

Then how is it possible to see Him? *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*: if we train our senses, if we purify our senses, those purified senses will help us see God. It is just as if we had cataracts on our eyes. Because our eyes are suffering from cataracts, we cannot see. But this does not mean that there is nothing to be seen—only that we cannot see. Similarly, now we cannot conceive of the form of God, but if our cataracts are removed, we can see Him. The Brahma-saṁhitā says, *premāñjana-churita-bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*: “The devotees whose eyes are anointed with the love-of-God ointment see God, Kṛṣṇa within their hearts twenty-four hours a day.” So, we require to purify our senses. Then we’ll be able to understand what the form of God is, what the name of God is, what the qualities of God are, and what the paraphernalia of God is, and we’ll be able to see God in everything.

The Vedic literatures are full of references to God’s form. For example, it is said that God has no hands or legs, but that He can accept anything you offer: *apāṇi-pādo javano gṛhītā*. Also, it is said that God has no eyes or ears, but that He can see everything and hear everything. So, these are apparent contradictions, because whenever we think of someone seeing, we think he must have eyes like ours. This is our material conception. Factually, however, God does have eyes, but His eyes are different from ours. He can see even in the darkness, but we cannot. God can hear, also. God is in His kingdom, which is millions and millions of miles away, but if we are whispering something—conspiracy—He can hear it, because He is sitting within us.

So, we cannot avoid God’s seeing or God’s hearing or God’s touching. In the Bhagavad-gītā [9.26] Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

“If somebody offers Me flowers, fruits, vegetables, or water with devotional love, I accept and eat it.” Now, how is He eating? We cannot see Him eat, but He is eating. We experience this daily: when we offer Kṛṣṇa food according to the ritualistic process, we see that the taste of the food changes immediately. This is practical. So God eats, but because He is full in Himself, He does not eat like us. If someone offers me a plate of food, I may finish it, but God is not hungry, so when He eats He leaves the things as they are. *Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evavāśiṣyate*: God is so full that He can eat all the food that we offer and still it remains as it is. He can eat with His eyes. This is stated in the Brahma-saṁhitā. *Āṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛttimanti*: “Every limb of the body of God has all the potencies of the other limbs.” For example, we can see with our eyes, but we cannot eat with our eyes. But if God, simply sees the food

we have offered, that is His eating.

Of course, these things cannot be understood by us at the present moment. Therefore, the Padma Purāṇa says that only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him. We cannot understand God by our own endeavor, but God can reveal Himself to us. Trying to see God by our own efforts is just like trying to see the sun when it is dark outside. If we say, "Oh, I have a very strong flashlight, and I shall search out the sun," we will not be able to see it. But in the morning, when the sun rises out of its own will, we can see it. Similarly, we cannot see God by our own endeavor, because our senses are all imperfect. We have to purify our senses and wait for the time when God will be pleased to reveal Himself before us. This is the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We cannot challenge, "Oh, my dear God, my dear Kṛṣṇa, You must come before me. I shall see You." No, God is not our order supplier, our servant. When He is pleased with us, we'll see Him.

ACQUIRING THE GRACE OF KṚṢṆA

So, our yoga process tries to please God, so that He will be revealed to us. That is the real yoga process. Without this process, people are accepting so many nonsensical "Gods." Because people cannot see God, anybody who says "I am God" is accepted. No one knows who God is. Somebody may say, "I am searching after truth," but he must know what truth is. Otherwise, how will he search out truth? Suppose I want to purchase gold? I must know what gold is, or at least have some experience of it. Otherwise, people will cheat me. So, people are being cheated—accepting so many rascals as God—because they do not know what God is. Anyone can come and say, "I am God," and some rascal will accept him as God. The man who says "I am God" is a rascal, and the man who

accepts him as God is also a rascal. God cannot be known like this. One has to qualify himself to see God, to understand God. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*: if we engage ourselves in the service of the Lord, then we'll become qualified to see God. Otherwise, it is not possible.

Now, this Bhagavad-gītā is the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. No one can become Kṛṣṇa conscious simply by mundane scholarship. Simply because one has some titles—M.A., B.A., Ph.D.—that does not mean he'll understand the Bhagavad-gītā. This is a transcendental science, and one requires different senses to understand it. So one has to purify his senses by rendering service to the Lord. Otherwise, even if one is a great scholar-a doctor or a Ph.D.—he will make mistakes in trying to find out what Kṛṣṇa is. He will not understand—it is not possible. This is why Kṛṣṇa appears in the material world as He is. Although He is unborn (*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā*), He comes to make us know who God is. But since He is not personally present now, to know Him one must be fortunate enough to associate with a person who is in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has realized knowledge, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, because He is satisfied with pure devotional service. So we have to acquire the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Then we can understand Kṛṣṇa, then we can see Kṛṣṇa, then we can talk with Kṛṣṇa—then we can do everything.

Kṛṣṇa is a person. He is the supreme person. That is the Vedic injunction: *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*—"We are all eternal persons, and God is the supreme eternal person." Now, being engaged within this body, we are meeting birth and death. But actually, we have no birth and death at all, because we are eternal spiritual souls. According to our work, according to our desire, we are transmigrating from one kind of body to another, another, and another. Yet actually, we have no birth and death. As explained in the

SANSKRIT PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Indians grudgingly blame English language for spoiling the pronunciation of Sanskrit syllables. E.g. राम and कृष्ण in Sanskrit becomes Rama and Krishna in English with an extra trailing accent on 'a'. To eliminate such confusion we use a system of transliteration that lets us 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 c 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.

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Bhagavad-gītā [2.20], *na jāyate mriyate vā*: "The living entity never takes birth, nor does he ever die." Similarly, God is also eternal. *Nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*: "God is the supreme living entity among all living entities, and He is the supreme eternal person



The Bhāgavatam says that real religion must be *ahaitukī* and *apratihatā*: without selfish motivation and without any impediment. If we can practice such a system of religious principles, then we'll find that we are happy in all respects. Otherwise there is no possibility of happiness.

among eternal persons.” So, by practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, by purifying our senses, we can reestablish our eternal relationship with the supreme eternal person, the complete eternal person. Then we will see God.

Through realized knowledge, one becomes perfect. Through transcendental knowledge one can remain steady in his convictions, but with mere academic knowledge one can be easily deluded and confused by apparent contradictions. It is the realized soul who is actually self-controlled, because he is surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. And he is transcendental, because he has nothing to do with mundane scholarship. For him, mundane scholarship and mental speculation (which may be as good as gold to others) are of no greater value than pebbles or stones.

Even if one is illiterate, even if he

does not know the ABC's, he can realize God—provided he engages himself in submissive, transcendental loving service to God. On the other hand, although one is a very learned scholar, he may not be able to realize God. God is not subject to any material condition, because He is the Supreme Spirit. Similarly, the process of realizing God is also not subject to any material condition. It is not true that because one is a poor man, he cannot realize God, or because one is a very rich man, he shall realize God. No. God is beyond our material conditions (*apratihatā*). In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [1.2.6] it is said, *sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*: “That religion is first-class which helps one advance his devotional service and love of God.”

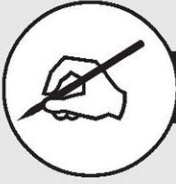
FIRST CLASS RELIGION

The Bhāgavatam does not mention that the Hindu religion is first-class or the Christian religion is first-class or the Muhammadan religion is first-class or some other religion is first-class. The Bhāgavatam says that that religion is first-class which helps one advance his devotional service and love of God. That's all. This is the definition of a first-class religion. We do not analyze that one religion is first-class or that another religion is last-class. Of course, there are three qualities in the material world (goodness, passion, and ignorance), and religious conceptions are created according to these qualities. But the purpose of religion is to understand God, and to learn how to love God. Any religious system, if it teaches one how to love God, is first-class. Otherwise, it is useless. One may prosecute his religious principles very rigidly and very nicely, but if his love of God is nil, if his love of matter is simply enhanced, then his religion is no religion.

In the same verse, the Bhāgavatam says that real religion must be *ahaitukī* and *apratihatā*: without selfish motivation and without any impediment.

If we can practice such a system of religious principles, then we'll find that we are happy in all respects. Otherwise there is no possibility of happiness. *Sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*. One of God's names is *Adhokṣaja*. *Adhokṣaja* means “one who conquers all materialistic attempts to be seen.” *Akṣaja* means “direct perception by experimental knowledge,” and *adhaḥ* means “unreachable.” So, we cannot understand God by experimental knowledge. No. We have to learn of Him in a different way—by submissive aural reception of transcendental sound and by the rendering of transcendental loving service. Then we can understand God.

So, a religious principle is perfect if it teaches us how to develop our love for the Godhead. But our love must be without selfish motive. If I say, “I love God because He supplies me very nice things for my sense gratification,” that is not love. Real love is without any selfish motive (*ahaitukī*). We must simply think, “God is great; God is my father. It is my duty to love Him.” That's all. No exchange—“Oh, God gives me my daily bread; therefore I love God.” No. God gives daily bread even to the animal—the cats and dogs. God is the father of everyone, and He supplies food to everyone. So, appreciating God because He gives me bread—that is not love. Love is without motive. I must think, “Even if God does not supply me daily bread, I'll love Him.” This is real love. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *āśliṣya vā pādaratām pinaṣṭu mām adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā*: “O Lord, You may embrace me, or You may trample me down with Your feet. Or You may never come before me, so that I become brokenhearted without seeing You. Still, I love You.” This is pure love of God. When we come to this stage of loving God, then we'll find ourselves full of pleasure. Just as God is full of pleasure, we'll also be full of pleasure. This is perfection. ❀



Letters

ETERNAL LIFE OR ETERNAL LIE

Now scientists are proclaiming that in the coming few decades average human age will increase to 300 years and after that man will become immortal. Scientists will replace dead human tissues by living, and ultimately by genetic engineering the mechanism for old age will be eradicated. Thus, man will defeat death. Is it possible?

*Ms Chitra Gautam
New Delhi*

OUR REPLY: Generally, speaking we have seen that within the last century the average age of human beings has gone down. The scriptures confirm this decline. "Then, O King, duration of life, religion, truthfulness, cleanliness, tolerance, mercy, physical strength and memory will all diminish day by day because of the powerful influence of the age of Kali." (S.B. 12.2.1) An example of diminishing power is the armors of warriors of previous centuries. They are so heavy for the present generation that one can hardly raise himself after wearing them, what to speak of fighting in battlefield.

There have been many claims by the scientists, in past, which made sensation at one point of time, but now have been brushed aside. No one talks about them anymore. For example- artificial intelligence, the idea that one-day machine will excel humans in intelligence. Today some scientists admit that it is even difficult to understand the brain and behavior of a tiny ant, what to speak of understanding the much more complex human brain.

Therefore, there may be tall claims, but one who is broadminded will put equal weight on other avenues of knowledge- for example the scriptures. Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly describes in

Bhagavad-gītā that one who has taken birth is sure to die (Bg. 2.27). Eternity is admitted in scriptures, but not of a material body but of the spirit soul. What to speak of this body made up of material elements, all the scientists know it well that even the sun, which is source of our very life, is going to die one day!

FLAT EARTH

In Atharva Veda it is explained that the earth is flat. However, according to modern science the earth is a sphere. Kindly clarify.

*Tridev V. Shirodkar
Belgaum.*

OUR REPLY: We, the Vaiṣṇavas, specialize in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is a natural commentary by Vyāsadeva, the author of the Vedas. Herein also, you will find the earth as being mentioned as a part of a disc like Bhūmaṇḍala system.

However, careful studies reveal that this disc is a projection of different planetary systems on to a plane. It is like mapping points on the surface of a sphere to points on a plane. We can use this method to map a modern Earth globe onto a plane, and the resulting flat projection is called a planisphere. Such projections help in clearer perceptions to human brains. It is easier to read a planer model than a multi-dimensional one.

Although the Bhāgavatam doesn't explicitly describe the earth as a globe, it does so indirectly. For example, it points out that night prevails diametrically opposite to a point where it is day. Likewise, the sun sets at a point opposite where it rises. If earth were a plane there would be day everywhere at one point of time, and similarly, there would be night everywhere at another point of time. There cannot be day and night simultaneously at one point of time. Therefore, the Bhāgavatam, which is a re-

Vaiṣṇava Calendar for the Month of July 2006

- 1 Jul 2006 Saturday :** Sri Vakreśvara Paṇḍita — Disappearance
7 Jul 2006 Friday : Fasting for Śayana Ekadāśī
8 Jul 2006 Saturday : Break fast(Mumbai) 06:07 - 10:31
11 Jul 2006 Tuesday : Guru (Vyāsa) Pūrṇimā, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Disappearance. First month of Cāturmāsyā begins. (Fast from śāk, green leafy vegetables, for one month.) (Cāturmāsyā is not observed during Puruṣottama Adhika Māsa.)
15 Jul 2006 Saturday : Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī — Disappearance
17 Jul 2006 Monday : Karka Sankrānti (Sun enters Cancer)
18 Jul 2006 Tuesday : Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī — Disappearance
19 Jul 2006 Wednesday : The incorporation of ISKCON in New York
21 Jul 2006 Friday : Fasting for Kamikā Ekadāśī
22 Jul 2006 Saturday : Break fast (Mumbai) 06:12 - 08:22
29 Jul 2006 Saturday : Śrī Raghunandana Ṭhākura — Disappearance
 Śrī Vamśīdāsa Bābājī — Disappearance

finer version of the Vedas, does not present the naive view that the earth is flat. ☸

(For more details, visit www.sacreduniverse.com)

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Answers to the letters were written by Rādhāvallabha Dāsa, M.Tech., IIT.

KICK OUT

SECULARISM



Illustration by Janardan B. Salkar

*Modern day secularism is nothing but veiled atheism
and it can never bring about peace in the world.*

By Candraśekhara Ācārya Dāsa

“...Kick out secularism. Kick out secularism.” [Śrīla Prabhupāda, Aligarh, October 1976]

The French diplomatic magazine ‘Label France’ recently published an article entitled “One hundred years of secularism ‘A la Francaise.’ ” Since February 2005, France is supposedly celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the law of 1905, which officially separates the Catholic Church from the State. In the article, the author claims that secularism is not a weapon used against religion. On the contrary, he says, “Secularism facilitates the peaceful co-existence of all spiritual convictions.” Alongside, he

mentions the law of March 2004, which states, “In schools, high-schools and colleges, the wearing of symbols or clothes by which the students may express any religious belonging is forbidden.” Finally, he proclaims that the law of 1905 is ‘simply the affirmation of the principle of the French Republic, which guarantees to one and all the freedom to practice the religion of his or her choice.’

However, this question may be raised: What is the most important duty of a government towards its citizens? Is it not to uphold religious principles?

According to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the government must imperatively make sure that the

citizens are properly engaged in their prescribed duties, both material and spiritual.

The Bhāgavatam states :
*yasya rāṣṭre pure caiva
bhagavān yajña-pūruṣaḥ
ijyate svena dharmeṇa
janair varṇāśramānvitaiḥ*

“The king is supposed to be pious in whose state and cities the general populace strictly observes the system of eight social orders of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, and where all citizens engage in worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead by their particular occupations.” [SB 4.14.18]

In Māyāpur in March 1976, the Back to Godhead staff asked Śrīla Prabhupāda the same question:



BTG: What is the actual duty of the government?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: To understand what God wants and to see that society works toward that aim. Then people will be happy. But if the people work in the wrong direction, how can they be happy? The government's duty is to see that they are working in the right direction. The right direction is to know God and to act according to His instructions. But if the leaders themselves do not believe in the supremacy of God, and if they do not know what God wants to do, or what He wants us to do, then how can there be good government? The leaders are misled, and they are misleading others. That is the chaotic condition in the world today. ... They're manufacturing their own way of governing. And that is their defect. They will never be successful. They are imperfect, and if they go on manufacturing their own ways and means, they will remain imperfect. There will always be revolutions—one after another. There will be no peace."

In a conversation in Atlanta in March 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda said,

"... The duty of the state, duty of the father, duty of the teacher, everyone, those who are guardians—they should teach their subordinates how to become faithful to God. This one qualification will make them perfect. That is not being done. Everyone is godless mostly. And therefore there are problems, chaotic condition. Nobody is abiding by the supreme law. Everyone is creating his own law."

STATE'S DEFINITION OF SECULARISM

Government officials affirm that secularism is not meant to deny religion, or to establish atheism. The first article of the law of 1905 even declares, "The Republic assures freedom of thought. The Republic assures the unimpeded practice of all cults."

However, we observe that the so-called "unimpeded practice of all cults" is fully prohibited in schools. Indeed, not only does the government forbid students to wear any religious insignia, but also, more dangerously, it categorically rejects from the official curriculum any notion of the existence of God, of a divine creation, or of the existence of the soul. In some places, a few courses on world religions are taught, out of diplomatic convenience. But the overwhelming authority of the atheistic paradigm nevertheless rules the classrooms. Undeniably, the government teaches students that the 'Big Bang', chemical evolution, Darwinism etc., are actual facts.

In brief, the government teaches atheism.

In 1883, the famous philosopher Jules Ferry wrote to all the French school teachers: "The law must first and foremost distinguish between two domains which have been confused with one another for too long, namely beliefs, which are personal, subjective, variable, and, on the other hand, knowledge, which is common and indispensable to one and all."

Here, Ferry reveals the prejudice, which lies at the foundation of secularism, namely the conviction that atheism is knowledge, and not belief. If the government maintains that it ensures the equality between all beliefs, it forgets that atheism is itself also a belief!

The fact is that the government leaders are themselves atheistic and want to keep everyone else the same way. Under the garb of secularism, they forbid any religious exhibition in the schools, both in the dress code and in the curriculum.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "All the education, its propaganda is how to make the world godless." [Morning Conversation, April 11, 1977, Mumbai.] Elsewhere, Śrīla Prabhupāda reminds us, "[In Kali Yuga] systematically there is propaganda by a section of people to stop glorification of the name and

Indeed, not only does the government forbid students to wear any religious insignia, but also, more dangerously, it categorically rejects from the official curriculum any notion of the existence of God, of a divine creation, or of the existence of the soul

fame of the Supreme Lord." [SB 1.5.11]

FLAWS OF SECULARISM

From an outsider's angle of vision, one may put forth the argument that since there exist so many religions, each one possessing very different beliefs and practices, isn't it wiser to teach an atheistic curriculum, thus remaining neutral, in order to avoid any type of favoritism towards any one religion? The answer is "No." To repress religious sentiments, to ignore sacred scriptures, and to affirm the so-called authenticity of the atheistic scientific theories does not represent a neutral stance at all. It is not simply by forbidding students to outwardly express their faith that the government can maintain peace and equality. The dress code is, after all, an external consideration. Certainly, what is the use of dressing the same way at school if we kill each other in the street? The

issue lies deeper than silk scarves and metal crosses. Similarly, excluding all notions of God in the curriculum does not guarantee that students of various religions will adopt the atheistic world, nor does it assure that they will not harbor fanatic sentiments in private.

The riots that took place in recent past all over France blatantly show us that a government, which supports atheism, can never bring about peace. Indeed, citizens can never be happy under a government, which defies religious principles. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, "Prahāda Mahārāja....His father was very careful that nobody comes and instructs his son about Vedic way of life or God consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ...He appointed teachers for his son, strictly prohibiting about... Just like nowadays it has become secular state. This is the present situation of the world, atheist class. Don't talk of God. But they do not know that they have not much improved by "don't talk of God". The situation is becoming grimmer and grimmer. But they have

no eyes to see. ...This Godless civilization will not make them happy. That's a fact." [Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.6.1, April 18, 1972, Hong Kong,]

Who are the victims of this atheistic propaganda? The victims are the young innocent students. Instead of giving them a chance for spiritual development, modern-day leaders make sure to extinguish any spark of spiritual inclination that students may possess.

THE SOLUTION

The popular idea that the followers of different religions have radically different worldviews and therefore they hate each other is false propaganda. The fact is that the same essence is present in all religions, and truly religious people are respectful towards everyone. Śrī Iṣopaniṣad and Bhagavad-Gītā clearly states:

*yas tu sarvāṇi bhūtāny
ātmany evānupaśyati
sarva-bhūteṣu cātmānam
tato na vijugupsate*

"He who sees systematically everything in relation to the Supreme Lord, who sees all living entities as His parts and parcels, and who sees the Supreme Lord within everything never hates anything or any being." [Iṣopaniṣad Mantra 6]

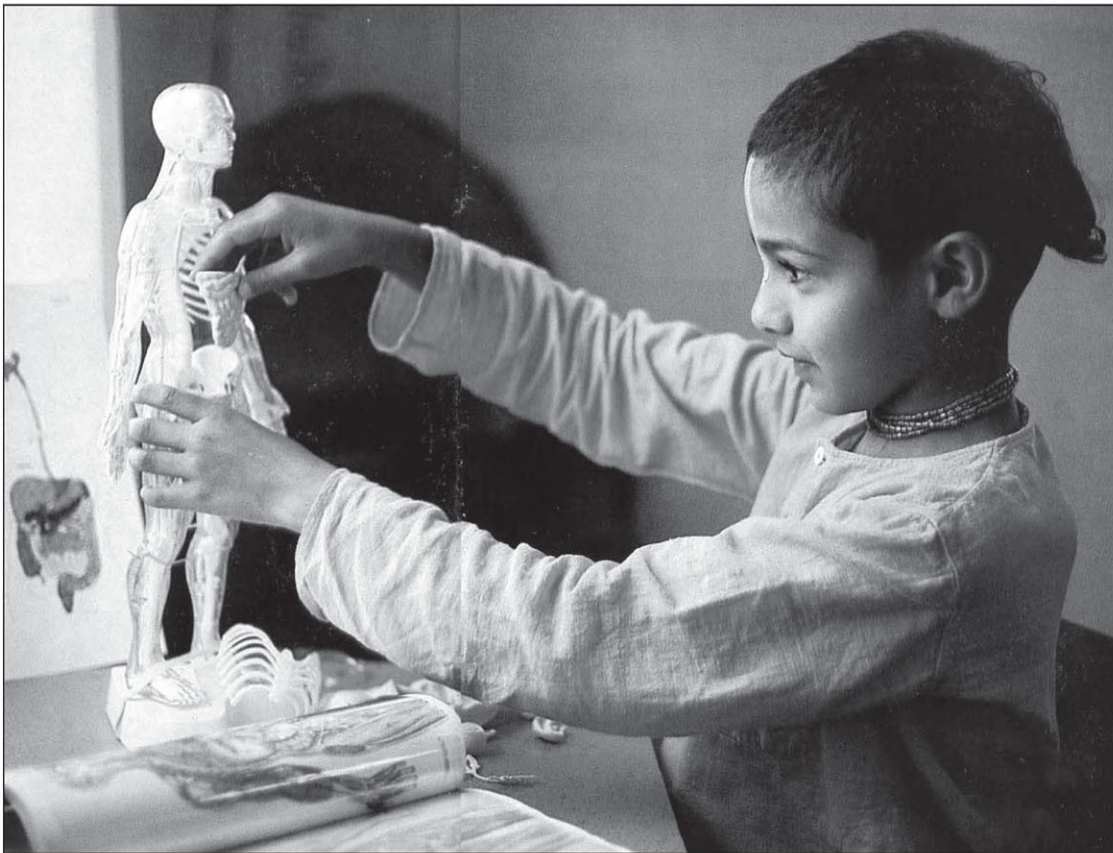
And,

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca
paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

"The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]." [Bg 5.18]

If schoolteachers are aware of the principle of seeing all living beings as parts-and-parcels of God, where is the fear if students wear the Christian cross or the Muslim scarf? If schoolteachers make sure that the principles of austerity, cleanliness, truthfulness, and mercy are upheld by all students regardless of their religion, where is the fear of favoritism? If





teachers teach students that the cosmos was created by God, who is one without a second, where is the room for conflict? Avoiding favoritism is therefore dependent on spiritual understanding and not on artificial restrictions. Discerning show-bottle fanaticism from true spirituality is easy when one is equipped with proper knowledge. So-called secularism is but a flowery camouflage to establish and reinforce atheism.

The solution, rather, is rooted in spiritual knowledge. The solution is to equip the teachers with actual understanding of the essence of all religions. There are universal principles common to all faiths. It is these principles, which the secular government should ascertain and uphold in the schools and colleges.

REAL SECULARISM

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam states that the government's prime duty is to make sure that the citizens follow religion and worship God. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that the government should

make sure that anyone who claims to be an adherent of a particular religion should follow its teachings completely. A Hindu should act like a Hindu; a Muslim should act like a Muslim. Eg. One of the ten commandments of Christianity is "Thou shalt not kill." Therefore, it is the government's duty to see that anyone who is professing Christianity should not eat meat. If he does so, he should be punished. Similarly, a Buddhist should follow the teachings of ahiṃsā (non-violence)

As members of ISKCON, we firmly believe that the Vedic scriptures such as the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam are the topmost sacred texts, containing all the knowledge found in every other scripture. We urge all governments to formulate their school curriculum based on these Vedic texts. Indeed, it was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who boldly declared that if all the books in the entire world were burnt, and that only Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam remained, nothing at all would be lost. Echoing his words, Śrīla Prabhupāda

replied to a follower:

Bob: What is the proper duty of the teacher in society? Let us say a science teacher. What should he be doing in the classroom?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: .. You should simply teach about Kṛṣṇa.

Bob: He should not teach about...

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. That will include everything. His aim should be to know Kṛṣṇa.

If the world governments are not yet ready to take such a measure of solely teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness at school, they should at least follow the advice of Śrīla Prabhupāda

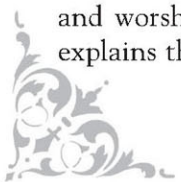
regarding secular governments and should make sure that practitioners of various religions are indeed practicing their own religions. This would indeed be a real positive step forward in the right direction and will bring about peace in the world. ☸

Candraśekhara Ācārya Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja

Vedic Thoughts

There is no friend equal to knowledge. There is no enemy equal to disease. There is no affection equal to that received from one's own child. And there is no strength superior to the will of God.

—Cāṇakya Paṇḍita



FINDING THE SILVER LINING

Nurturing our faith helps ease the inevitable suffering of life in the material world.

by Rashi Singh

I'M GROGGY. It's early. I'm way too tired to go to work today. After nearly shattering my alarm clock, I slowly drag myself out of bed. I shower, worship my deities, chant my rounds, and head downstairs for breakfast. I glance at the newspaper that sits untouched on the kitchen table.

"Father Convicted of Killing Two Children"

"Young Couple Victim of Hit and Run"

"Infant Dies of Malnutrition After Abandonment"

And I thought my problems were bad.

True to my morning ritual, I glance at Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who guard the kitchen through the antique picture frame that hangs above the table. I flash Them my best "good-morning-have-a-great-day" smile and touch Their feet. Usually, I'd now head out to face the cut-throat corporate world. But today I pause, turn around, and pull up a chair in front of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

"I don't get it," I say aloud.

I scan the vicinity to ensure that no one is within earshot.



When I'm sure the coast is clear, I say, "This world is filled with suffering. Even the people who try to serve You go through so much misery. Why?"

The only thing I know for sure is that I'm not the only one who doesn't quite understand the apparent inequality and unfairness of the material world, characterized by birth, death, old age, and disease. The current age of Kali is further characterized by greed, drought, famine, envy, irreligion, and, well, the kind of stories you read about in the newspaper every morning. In fact, the entire history of the material world is filled with sadness and tragedy, even during Lord Kṛṣṇa's time here. Lord

Kṛṣṇa Himself went through seemingly troubled times, such as His separation from His beloved gopīs, the cowherd girls. His paternal aunt and dedicated servant Kuntī lost five grandsons to murder in one night. His sister, Subhadra, lost her son Abhimanyu in the battle of Kurukṣetra. His friend Arjuna was faced with a dilemma most of us never even dreamed of: whether or not to kill some of his own family. The Lord's great devotee



There are times when it appears that Kṛṣṇa is neglecting us or not listening to our prayers. But as the Supersoul, He's always listening. He's not our order-carrier. His will is what ensues. The better and more sincerely we serve Him, the more He reciprocates and answers our prayers.

Prahlāda Mahārāja was tormented by his own father and survived several of his father's plots to kill him. Why must the Lord's own servants suffer so much in this world?

People can tell us until they're blue in the face to have unflinching faith in the Lord and devotion to Him, amidst all of our pain and suffering. People can tell us to trust that the Lord has a specific plan for us and it's fruitless for us to try to comprehend this plan. But that doesn't stop us from getting hurt, or from dwelling on our misfortunes. But here's the thing: Those people are right. If Lord Kṛṣṇa can put His own family and intimate associates in such severe "misery," what makes us so special?

KṚṢṆA AND THE GOPĪS

Probably the most touching of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes involve His association with His most dedicated and sincere servants, the gopīs. They were absorbed in thoughts of Him twenty-four hours a day. They cringed at the thought of grass hurting the soles of His lotus feet as He traversed the forests of Vṛndāvana. His happiness was their happiness.

One day, the gopīs were enjoying spending time with their beloved when they began to feel proud of being with Him. Sensing their pride, the Lord disappeared from their sight. The pure, simple-hearted gopīs could not endure even one moment without Kṛṣṇa's company. Their pain was immeasurable; the only thing they could think about was where He was, why He'd left them, and if He was all right. Their tears were plentiful, their grief

unbearable. They sought advice from animate and inanimate objects alike: Had anyone seen their beloved? Where had He gone? In their desperate attempts to find Him, they became even more immersed in thoughts of Him. When He finally reunited with them, they couldn't have been happier or more relieved. But they were still confused; they could not understand why He'd left them to begin with. When they asked Him, He responded as follows (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.32.20–22):

The reason I do not immediately reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship Me, O gopīs, is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it that he can think of nothing else. My dear girls, understanding that simply for My sake you had rejected the authority of worldly opinion, of the Vedas, and of your relatives, I acted as I did only to increase your attachment to Me. Even when I removed Myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never stopped loving you. Therefore, My beloved gopīs, please do not harbor any bad feelings toward Me, your beloved. I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahma. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your

own glorious deeds be your compensation.

KṚṢṆA IS LISTENING

It is clear: More than anything else, we should understand that so-called misfortune and disaster truly are a form of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. They are a sign that Kṛṣṇa is trying to deepen our love for Him, intensify our devotion.

It is true what people say: Unflinching faith is really the answer to all our problems and uncertainties. There are times when it appears that Kṛṣṇa is neglecting us or not listening to our prayers. But as the Supersoul, He's always listening. He's not our order-carrier. His will is what ensues. The better and more sincerely we serve Him, the more He reciprocates and answers our prayers.

Pure devotees want nothing from Kṛṣṇa but more opportunities to serve Him and His devotees. Our goal should be to aim to attain even the smallest fraction of the mood of the gopīs. Kṛṣṇa was so overwhelmed and appreciative of the gopīs' loving service that He told them, "I have nothing left to give you. Please be content with your own actions." He becomes indebted to them. The creator, the proprietor of everything, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had nothing left to give those dear sweet gopīs. In fact, He was so overwhelmed by their pure love for Him that He became their servant. He did all He could to satisfy them. If they asked Him to dance, He danced. If they asked Him to play the flute, He played. That is the beauty of the relationship between the Lord and His
(please turn to page 28)

The Land of Kumbha-

Lord Kṛṣṇa gets a new home in holy city of Ujjain

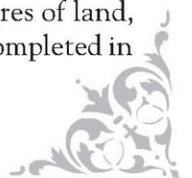


The city of Ujjain stands gloriously among the sacred and holy cities of India. Situated on the banks of the river Shipra, it is one of the four sites for the kumbhamelā; Haridwar, Prayag, and Nasika are the other three. Millions of pilgrims take bath in the sacred waters of Shipra during the kumbha melā celebrations. Ancient Ujjain also enjoyed the reputation of a being a great seat of learning even as early as the Mahābhārata period. It was here that young Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, accepted Sāndīpani

Muni as Their spiritual master and studied in his āśrama. The āśrama is now a reverential pilgrim site for devotees of the Lord. Apart from Vaiṣṇavism, various cults and sects of Śaivism, Jainism, and Buddhism have found a niche in this city. Lord Śiva, eternally resides here as Mahākāleśvara, one of the twelve *Jyotirlingas* in India. Ujjain abounds in temples, which form an integral part of the city and contribute to the continuity of its tradition and greatness. It enjoys a position of consider-

able importance in the field of Vedic astronomy according to which, the Tropic of Cancer passes through this city. Historically, Ujjain was ruled by the likes of the Vikramāditya and Ashoka. Kālidāsa wrote his soul stirring poetry here.

A new landmark now adds to the spiritual culture of Ujjain—the temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan-mohanji. Consisting of a guesthouse, Govinda's restaurant, āśrama, and gurukula the temple stands on seven acres of land, and its construction was completed in



melā welcomes ISKCON

By Śrīvatsa Dāsa



*The magnificent ISKCON temple (left) and His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja (inset).
The Deities of Kṛṣṇa Balrāma and Gaura-Nitāi (above)*

a record-breaking time of ten months.

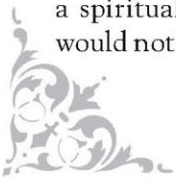
THE BEGINNING

Some time back, in pursuance of the Māyāpura Project (the world head quarters of ISKCON) Ambarīṣa Dāsa (Alfred Ford, the great grand son of Henry Ford of Ford Motors) met the West Bengal government. The aim was to solicit state support for developing a spiritual city in Māyāpura, which would not only be a pilgrimage site for

the innumerable followers of Lord Caitanya, but also a beautiful tourist attraction, and source of employment for the local people. After the West Bengal government showed an acute lack of interest, various other states like Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, U.P., Rajasthan etc., came forward and offered land to ISKCON. "But when the Madhya Pradesh government volunteered," His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja ex-

plains, "I felt their gesture as genuine." The then M.P. chief minister Uma Bharti offered 300 acres of land for developing the spiritual city.

When Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja decided to build a temple, before taking on the massive project on the banks of the Shipra, the administration of Ujjain invited him to the holy city. "The District magistrate of Ujjain and Chief secretary, Shri Vivek Agarwal, offered us 4 acres of land in





the most esteemed part of the city,” explains Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja. “Ujjain is a very holy city and Kṛṣṇa and Balrāma studied here, so we felt it to be the most suitable place for our temple.”

7th Nov 2004: A temporary ISKCON temple was established in a community centre located in a prestigious part of city. Thousands of people including many dignitaries attended the first program. The first Sunday program had five hundred people attending and since then the number has steadily increased. Now the average Sunday feast crowd numbers from twelve to fifteen hundred devotees.

A small gośālā has been established with a few cows and calves that provide twenty litres of milk for the temple everyday. The temple has regu-





Beautiful paintings adorn the ceiling (left above); the floor is no less (left) an artisan setting colorful marble patterns on the floor; *abhiṣeka* of the Deities (above); Ambariṣa Dāsa, film actress Rani Mukharjee and other guests take darśan of Their Lordships (right)



INAUGURATION FEST

SRI SRI RADHA MADAN MOHAN



lar college and congregation preaching programs along with book distribution, street harināma procession and prasādam distribution.

On 6th Feb 2005, the groundbreaking ceremony took place and the foundation of the temple were laid. A nine-hooded Deity of Ananta Śeṣa made of gold and precious gems was brought for the ceremony. Early in the morning, the Deity was taken to the main local temples where the local devotees showered flowers and enthusiastically welcomed the Lord. Later *abhiṣeka* and fire sacrifice were performed to sanctify the ground after which Ananta Śeṣa was placed in the foundation. Ananta Śeṣa, makes all arrangements for Rādhā Madana-mohana, and on His lotus head, the

temple resides.

MAKING OF A MASTERPIECE

“When I started the temple,” Mahārāja says, “I had no money at all. But I had faith that Kṛṣṇa would provide.” Soon support for the temple started pouring from around the world. Work began in first week of April 2005.

At first foundations of building were established. Then using complex scaffolding the overall concrete structure of the temple was erected. Domes were the most challenging part of construction. First, they were shaped with a steel mesh and then concrete was poured over. After six months, the initial concrete work was complete. Then Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja flew to Makarana to choose the high quality

marble. Mr C. V. Singh provided same marble that was used to build the Taj Mahal. The most skilled artisans in Makarana then carved the marble, which would later form the temple exterior. The marble was then sent to Ujjain and the marble cladding work began.

24-carat gold leafing from London, Germany, and Jaipur were done on the altar, above the magnificent chandeliers, doors, and on top of domes. Often devotees would work together until early hours of morning to complete this task. Glass for the four massive chandeliers was imported from Egypt. From original moulds, talented artists sculpted moulds of the Pancatattva and Jaya and Vijaya. The ceiling boasts of intricate designs and exquisitely

TIVAL TEMPLE



Scenes from the inauguration ceremony (above and below)

of Śrīla Prabhupāda and many other devotees from India, UK, South Africa, Mauritius, and rest of the world poured into Ujjain to witness the opening.

Entire temple was bedecked with flowers. Students of Māyāpura Gurukul Academy performed Vastu homa to create auspicious atmosphere. The Deities arrived and in Their first darśana auspicious items were brought before Their Lordships. It was followed by elaborate *abhiṣeka* with milk, honey, fruit juices, clarified butter, and scented water proceeded by a fire sacrifice. Ecstatic kīrtan of Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra went on throughout the day. The atmosphere was so spiritually vibrant that many senior leaders commented that they felt at home just like as in Māyāpura or Vṛndāvana .

Probably the whole of Ujjain was present for the grand opening. Shri Ambarīṣa Dāsa did the first *ārati* of Their Lordships.

The next day many VIPs arrived for temple inauguration. Those present included the former Chief Minister of M.P., Shri Bababulal Gaur, Ambarīṣa

Dāsa, film actress Rani Mukherjee, and other dignitaries including the Inspector General of Police, Minister of Education, Mayor of Indore, Secretary of Industry and Commerce etc. In the presentation ceremony, Ambarīṣa Dāsa dedicated the temple to the people of Ujjain.

His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja honored those devotees who had made substantial contributions to the project. In his address, he said to the citizens of Ujjain, "This temple has been build not for us but for you." He also spoke briefly on Śrīla Prabhupāda and added, "I have not come to Ujjain to ask for anything. Rather, I have come here to give the most precious thing in the world. I have come here to remind you of our relationship with our supreme father Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

Mahārāja showered heaps of praise on the chief architects Shri Hitendra and Shri Jitendra Mehta and Puṇḍarikākṣa Govinda Dāsa, management counselee of ISKCON Juhu, who coordinated proceedings with the architects. Mahārāja called up Shri
(please turn to page 29)

beautiful paintings. Temple doors are made of teak wood-the best in India, and specialist craftsmen from Gujrat, who worked on ISKCON temples around the world, carved them.

INSTALLATION CEREMONY

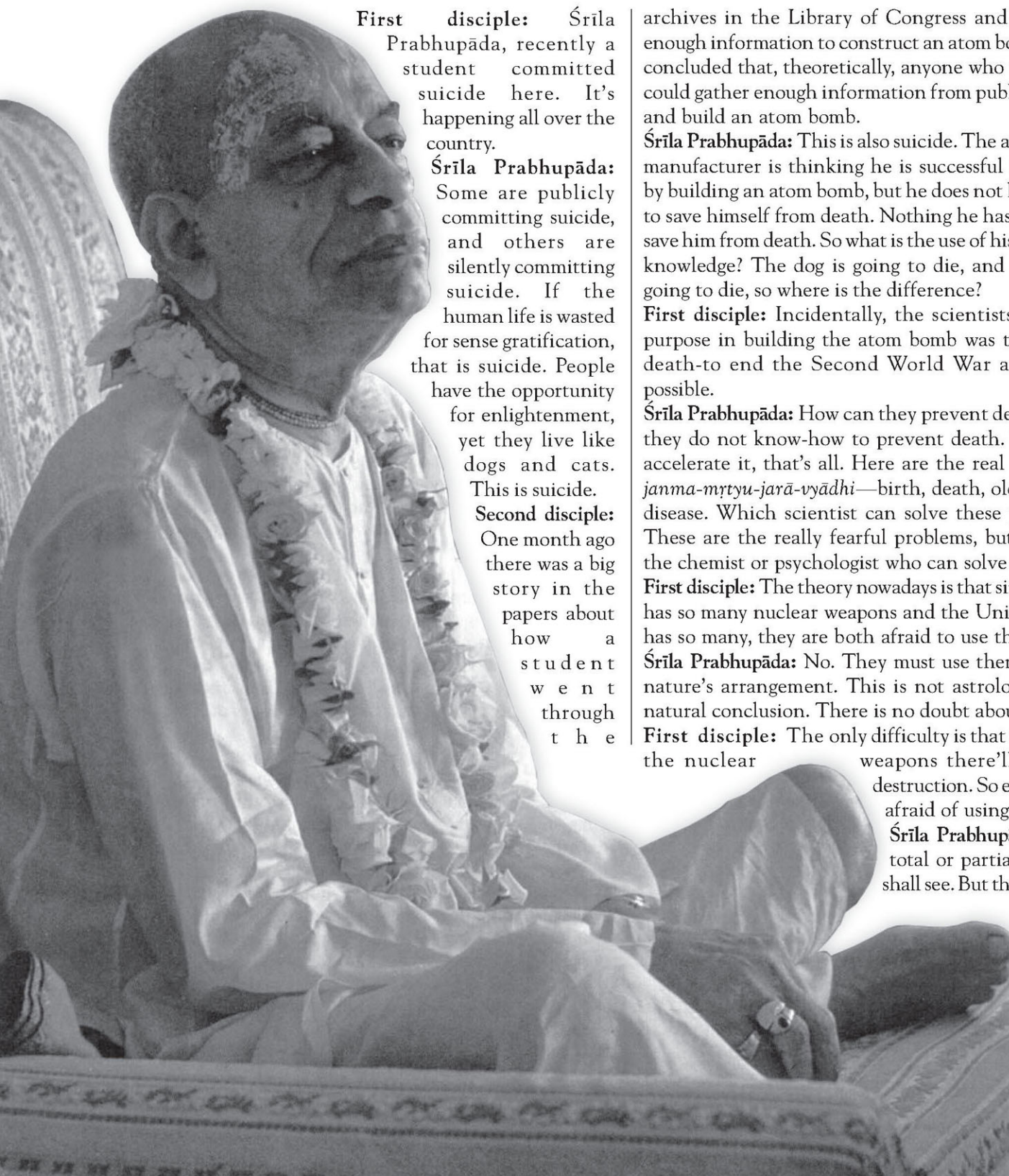
Within a short span of ten months the temple was erected and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madana-mohana were ready to move in to Their new home. A three-day installation festival was organised to welcome eight Deities: Gaura-Nitāi, Kṛṣṇa Balrāma, Rādhā Madana-mohana with Lalitā and Viśākhā sakhīs.

10th Feb 2006 Nityānanda Trayodaśī: As many as twenty two sannyāsīs leaders, and senior disciples



On War and Death

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in 1973 on an early morning walk in San Francisco.



First disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, recently a student committed suicide here. It's happening all over the country.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Some are publicly committing suicide, and others are silently committing suicide. If the human life is wasted for sense gratification, that is suicide. People have the opportunity for enlightenment, yet they live like dogs and cats. This is suicide.

Second disciple: One month ago there was a big story in the papers about how a student went through the

archives in the Library of Congress and compiled enough information to construct an atom bomb. They concluded that, theoretically, anyone who wanted to could gather enough information from public sources and build an atom bomb.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is also suicide. The atom bomb manufacturer is thinking he is successful in his life by building an atom bomb, but he does not know how to save himself from death. Nothing he has done can save him from death. So what is the use of his scientific knowledge? The dog is going to die, and he is also going to die, so where is the difference?

First disciple: Incidentally, the scientists' original purpose in building the atom bomb was to prevent death—to end the Second World War as soon as possible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How can they prevent death? That they do not know-how to prevent death. They can accelerate it, that's all. Here are the real problems: *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi*—birth, death, old age, and disease. Which scientist can solve these problems? These are the really fearful problems, but where is the chemist or psychologist who can solve them?

First disciple: The theory nowadays is that since Russia has so many nuclear weapons and the United States has so many, they are both afraid to use them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. They must use them. That is nature's arrangement. This is not astrology; it is a natural conclusion. There is no doubt about it.

First disciple: The only difficulty is that if they use the nuclear weapons there'll be total destruction. So everyone is afraid of using them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Well, total or partial, that we shall see. But the weapons must



Those who are thinking the so-called scientists and philosophers will solve their problems are exactly like those who are trying to cross the Pacific Ocean by holding on to the tail of a dog.

be used. If the leaders want to avoid war, they must understand three items: God is the proprietor of everything, He is the enjoyer of all work, and He is the friend of everyone. But the leaders act in just the opposite way, thinking, "I am the proprietor, I am the enjoyer, and I am the friend of everyone, because I am God." This is demonic. Nixon was elected President by pretending to be a friend of everyone, but later on he proved to be an enemy. Nobody can be the friend of everyone except Kṛṣṇa.

Third disciple: But isn't a pure devotee of God a friend to all?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, because he carries the message of Kṛṣṇa. If there is a universal friend, and if somebody gives information of that universal friend, then he is also a universal friend. Kṛṣṇa is the friend of all (*suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām*), and the pure devotee tells everyone that Kṛṣṇa is his friend. Therefore, nobody can be your friend except Kṛṣṇa's representative. In the material world, "I am your enemy, and you are my enemy." This is the whole basis of the material world. But the spiritual world is just the opposite: "I am your friend, and you are my friend, because Kṛṣṇa is the dearest friend of us both."

Third disciple: When we distribute your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are we trying to show people we are their friends, also?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. That is being a real friend. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *kota nidrā jāo māyā-piśācira kole . . . enechi auśadhi māyā nāśibāro laḡi' / Hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao tumi māḡi'*:

"O people, you are sleeping under the spell of māyā [illusion]. How long will you sleep and suffer in this material world? I have the medicine—the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—so take it and sleep no more."

First disciple: Wouldn't the threat of nuclear warfare make Kṛṣṇa consciousness easier to spread?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The threat is already here, but people are so foolish that they are not afraid of the threat. Certainly the threat of death is already here: everyone will die. That is the real problem, but who cares for it? People are avoiding this problem because they cannot make any countermeasure.

Fourth disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, we constantly hear from you and your books that we will die and that we must learn how to face this. But still, even as your disciples, we're not so convinced. We've been brought up in a culture that hides death. Particularly here in America, we rarely see death.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You think you'll not die?

Fourth disciple: I know I will, but how can we come to the platform of realizing that?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Everyone is dying. Your mother is dying, your father is dying, your friends are dying—and still you cannot understand? Then how will it be possible to make you understand? Every day, every moment, so many men and animals die. Death is inevitable, but still you are thinking, "I'll not die." And this is our real problem. Nobody wants to die, but everyone is dying. This problem the rascal scientists cannot solve.

Sometimes we see a dog swimming in the Pacific Ocean and think, "Oh, let me grab hold of the dog's tail, and I shall cross the ocean." Similarly, those who are thinking the so-called scientists and philosophers will solve the problems of birth, death, old age, and disease are exactly like those who are trying to cross the Pacific Ocean by holding on to the tail of a dog. The scientists are like dogs, and to catch hold of their tails is hopeless.

First disciple: So one must become convinced of the reality of death through philosophy?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: At the present moment philosophy means "mental concoction." But real philosophy means to find out reality. That is philosophy. Not "I think like this, he thinks like this, he thinks like that." This is mental concoction. Real philosophy is what Kṛṣṇa says in Bhagavad-gītā: *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*—"Always remember that there is death, that there is birth, that there is old age and disease, and try to save yourself from these by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious." This is philosophy. ❁

Watch

Aatma

Serial

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His Holiness Navyogendra Swami Maharaja

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TEMPLE OF MY DREAMS

A young girl hankers and prays for association of devotees until a temple opens next door.

By Parul Upadhyaya

On 31st December 1999 was my first visit to an ISKCON temple. That day, in Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gopīnātha Temple, Chowpatty, Mumbai my cousin Shyamasunder Dāsa was getting married. There, for the first time, I saw His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami Mahārāja. I thought that now-a-days when Indians are rejecting their culture, here was Mahārāja, who although a foreigner, was so nicely teaching our countrymen their own tradition and culture. It was my first experience to see a marriage in a temple before the Deities and I liked the simple but beautiful ceremony and the devotional atmosphere. Later Shyamasunder spoke to us about Lord Kṛṣṇa. I could understand only one thing from his talk that if we surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa then He will free us from all our sins. Then we returned to Ujjain.

SEARCH FOR THE SUPREME

I realized that I could find the answers to my questions only in ISKCON. At that time, I was 13 years old and I used to ask spiritual questions to anyone who appeared knowledgeable. But I was never satisfied. I would ask, "Who is the greatest God?" Those who worshipped Lord Śiva would say that Lord Śiva is the supreme, those who worshipped Lord Viṣṇu, called Lord Viṣṇu as god, and devotees of Devī said that she was the supreme. Somebody else



told that Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Lord Śiva, are the greatest gods. But I would think, "How can all three be the Supreme God? There has to be one, who is the Supreme." I would also ask, "Where was I before I was born? Where I will be after death?"

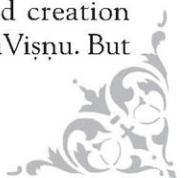
A few days after returning from Mumbai, my aunt, (mother of Shyamasunder Dāsa) Devakīmayī Devī Dāsī, visited us in Ujjain. I asked her, "Who is God?" She answered that Lord Kṛṣṇa is God. People so far had always been answering my questions in a round about way, so when I heard so clearly that Lord Kṛṣṇa is God I became very satisfied. Still I asked her, "How is it possible? Lord Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu." She replied, "No, it's not like this. Lord Viṣṇu is an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa and

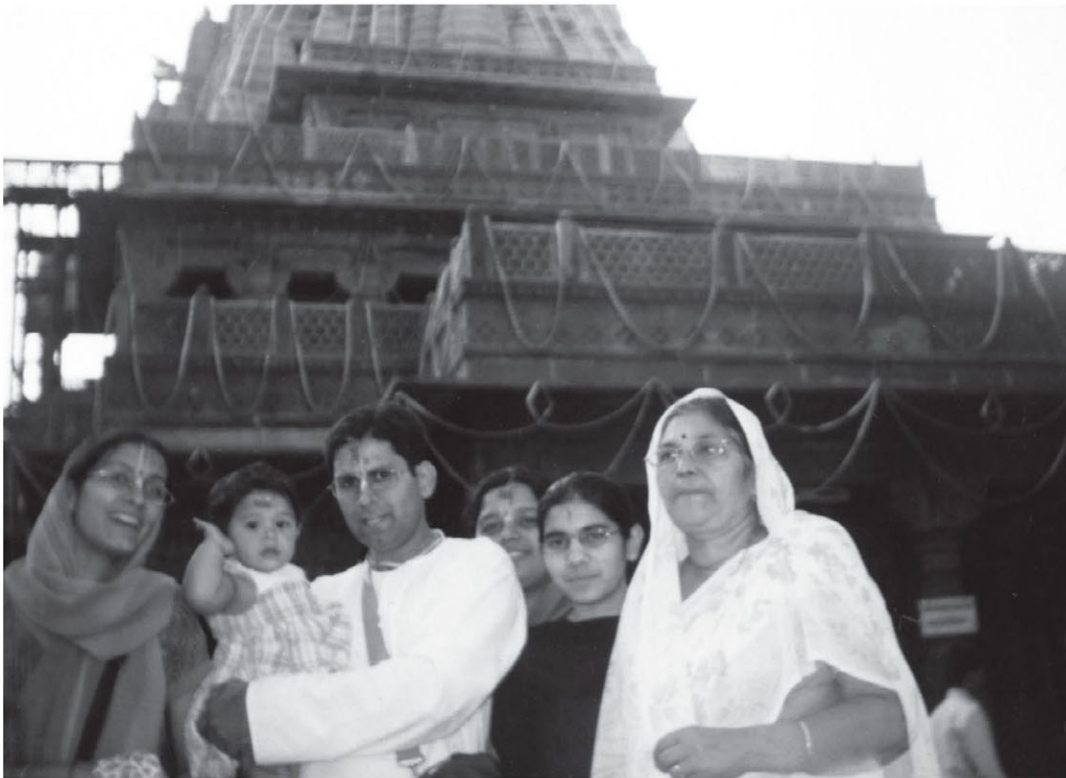
there are three not one Viṣṇus. This is the description given in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam."

From that day onwards, I began to chant one round of Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra. Even then, sometimes, I would think, "Is Lord Kṛṣṇa really the Supreme God?"

Then one day one of my relatives challenged me, "We have Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam at home. But nowhere has it mentioned that Lord Kṛṣṇa is God?" I said, "Perhaps you have not read it completely. It must have description of Lord Kṛṣṇa as God?" Then I went to his home to check Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam for myself. As soon as I glanced at the first page, I found in the first line, "Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the caitanya of this world...." I did not read ahead. The answer was staring at me. I begged forgiveness from the Lord that I doubted His position, but inside I was very happy that Lord Himself guided me to the proof of His supreme status.

Similarly, once a friend of my father came to our house. He is very well read in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Vedas. I asked him, "Which god do you worship?" he replied, "I am a devotee of Lord Śiva." "Who is God according to the Vedas and scriptures?" I asked. He told me that there are three expansions of Viṣṇu coming from Lord Kṛṣṇa and creation takes place through MahaViṣṇu. But





In above picture (left to right) Campaklatā Devī Dāsī, Shyamasunder Dāsa holding a baby, and the author wearing a dark dress and spectacles

the supreme Lord is only Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

When I turned 16, my father got me to Mumbai for summer vacation. We went to the temple and father took a subscription of *Bhagvad Darshan* (Hindi edition of Back To Godhead). Papa left me for 15 days at the home of my aunt and said, “Try to find out how much truth is there in this organization.” My father had lived in a temple since childhood and seen many frauds in the name of god; therefore, he did not want me to fall prey to some cheating organization.

During the vacations, I would go with my aunt and cousin Shraddhaiy to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gopīnātha Temple. I liked the temple very much. My sister Carulata’s (Campaklatā Devī Dāsī) friends would also be very nice to me. One day, Campaklatā didi told me that a devotee should be humble like a blade of grass. I tried to follow this principle. Shraddhaiy gave me a video CD of installation festival of Śrī Pancatattva in Māyāpur and another CD about Lord Caitanya. Campaklatā didi told me about the four regulative principles

and said that we should not eat onion, garlic, tea, coffee, chocolate, coke etc. From that day, I left eating these items and began to chant 4 rounds.

A LONELY DEVOTEE

When I returned to Ujjain I told my mother, “I am not going to eat onion and garlic.” “This is a temporary phase,” mother said, “Soon you will give up these fanciful ideas.” I stuck to my vow and began to eat roti with pickle. When mom saw that I was determined not to eat onion and garlic, she started cooking separately for me. I would first offer that food to Lord and then eat. This double cooking, however, would make mother late for her office. So soon, she began to cook everything without onion and garlic. Thus, gradually everyone at home stopped eating them.

I would read *Bhagvad Darshan* magazine daily both at home and school, and when I would come home, I would beg everyone, “Please hear me. Let me tell you what nice things I read today.” However, nobody wanted to lis-

ten.

In frustration and loneliness, I would daily cry in front of Lord, “Nobody understands me here. There is no devotee here. Why don’t you call me to Your abode? You declared that whoever comes to Your shelter, You forgive all his sins. How many sins have I committed that You are keeping me so far away from You? There is not even an ISKCON temple here, where I can get the association of devotees. Please Lord, help me, please.”

I would worship Lord before going to the school, and do Nṛsiṃha āratī in the evening. I was feeling very lonely. People said, “You don’t eat onion and garlic. Who will marry a girl like you?” I would think, “These

people think only about marriage, money, and job. There is hardly any place in their hearts for God.” Only my father, nana ji, and mama ji supported me saying that I was doing the right thing. But I had no devotee to help me.

A TEACHER ARRIVES

One day a new biology teacher came to my school. Her name was Mrs. Wagle. I saw her wearing a tulasī neck bead and the ISKCON tilak on her forehead. “Are you in ISKCON?” I asked. “Yes,” she replied. “But how do you know about ISKCON?” I told her everything. From that day onwards, we grew closer and she became more of a mother than a teacher to me.

I would read Science of Self-Realization and *Bhagvad Darshan* and ask her questions. Every Sunday, I would accompany her to Indore where the disciples of His Holiness Romapāda Swami ran a center. On Rāmanavami I went with Wagle madam (Mālinīpriyā Devī Dāsī) to Mumbai. There her son and daughter-in-law



were receiving initiation. Wagle madam son's name is Dr. Ranjit Wagle. He serves in Bhaktivedanta hospital as an ophthalmologist. After initiation, he received the name Gaurāṅga Sunder Dāsa and my cousin Shraddhaiy received the name Vrajarasa Dāsa. When the *abhiṣeka* of the Deities was going on then my elder sister Mañjarī Priyā said to me, "During the *abhiṣeka* whatever you ask from the Lord for your devotional service is very quickly granted." I prayed, "Oh Lord! I do not want edu-

few days.

When my father saw her genuine devotion he asked, "Ujjain is the place where Lord Kṛṣṇa had studied under Sāṅdīpani Muni, still there is no ISKCON temple here. Why?" "Very soon ISKCON will arrive here," she prophesized.

By that time, I had begun chanting 16 rounds and soon appeared for my 12th exams. From the very beginning, I had excelled in studies, but I hardly studied that year. I had lost all interest in my books. All the time I

used to study a lot, and this year you have failed because you neglected your studies."

This setback helped me; my pride got shattered and I became more tolerant. However, I did not lose a year. Because of a new rule, the same year I got regular admission in M.P. board school.

ANSWERS TO PRAYERS

In July, I read in a newspaper that there is going to be a big ISKCON temple in Ujjain. I was jubilant. Every-

day I would scan the newspaper for even a tiny bit of information about the new temple. In the newspaper itself, I had my first darśana of His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja.

One day, during the Maths class in school, suddenly our teacher exclaimed with surprise, "Hey! Look there! There are the Hare Kṛṣṇas." I was so overcome with joy on seeing the devotees, that I completely forgetting that I was in a class, I ran out to meet them. After speaking to them for a while, suddenly it dawned to me that my class was going on. Shyly I stepped in to the class. Everyone was staring at me. "Why did you go out?" sir asked me.

I replied that I wanted to see the ISKCON devotees. Everyone started laughing at me

Later I came to know that a temporary ISKCON temple had been built just behind my school. Nothing could stop me now. Everyday I would visit the temple with my friends and ask about the opening.

On 7th November 2004, Deities were brought in the temporary temple
(please turn to page 29)



With family in Ujjain

cation or wealth. I only desire that you keep me in that place where I can find Your holy name and Your devotees."

During the return train journey with Wagle madam, we met a devotee who had come from Los Angeles California and was going to the Ujjain Kumbha-melā. Her name was Vedavyāsa Devī Dāsī and she was a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. She came with me and stayed in our house for a

would only read books of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Within my thick Physics textbook, I would hide 'Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of all pleasure' and read it secretly. Moreover, I fell sick during the exams. When the result was declared, I had failed. I was shattered and cried bitterly. My cousin Ritu, who is also an ISKCON devotee, was with me at that time. She consoled me, "Lord Kṛṣṇa never does anything wrong to anyone. You were topper since childhood because you





Every Town and Village

A look at the worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

DELHITES LOVE LORD RĀMA

7th April 2006: The divine appearance of Lord Śrī Rāma and the eighth anniversary of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Pārthasārathī Temple and the Glory of the India Vedic Expo were celebrated with great pomp and gaiety in New

Delhi. The Minister for Tourism and Cultural Affairs, was one of the many distinguished guests present for the occasion. After the ceremony, she received the blessings of His Holiness Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami Mahārāja and then enjoyed honoring the lunch prasād at



Shri B.L. Joshi, the Lt. Governor of Delhi, presenting a garland to His Holiness Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami Mahārāja. Holding the microphone is Vrajendra Nandan Dāsa

Delhi. Brilliant lightings, beautiful flower decoration, and melodious harinām kīrtana completely captivated the hearts of the large number of visiting devotees. The festival started on 30 March with Śrī Rāma kathā by Vrajendra Nandan Dāsa. The kathā was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister of Uttaranchal State, Shri T.P.S. Ravat.

On 7th April, mahāabhiṣeka ceremony was performed by His Holiness Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami Mahārāja. Smt. Ambika Soni, the Hon'ble Min-

ister for Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Govinda's restaurant, which she highly appreciated.

In the evening, a dance drama entitled 'Śrī Rāma Līlā' was performed in the huge pandal at the open space behind the temple. The guest of honor, His Excellency Shri B.L. Joshi, the Lt. Governor of Delhi, had a nice darśana of the Deities and performed āratī and did *kalash abhiṣeka*. Smt. Kṛṣṇa Tirath, Member of Parliament, and Shri Ujjwal Rāman Singh, the Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Uttar Pradesh Government, were also

present. Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami Mahārāja, addressing the huge audience said, "If you people want Rāma rājya, you will have to follow the principles of Lord Śrī Rāma and imbibe them in your day to day life. In order to remain attached to such principles, you should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra and do kīrtan." Shri Joshi in his short speech praised ISKCON, "I am coming to ISKCON for the first time. I not only feel everything so nice here, but also experience great pleasure to see the enthusiasm of large number of devotees gathered here. Great preaching is being done by ISKCON through the distribution of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā and all the glories for this are attributed to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON and the unstinted efforts of the present devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa." Other distinguished guests also expressed their highly appreciative views.

HUNGARIAN HARE KṚṢṆA DEVOTEES FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN KAZAKHSTAN

In April, after a court ruled that the land belonging to the Hare Kṛṣṇa commune be confiscated and returned to the Kazakhstan Government, police attempted to demolish devotees' cottages located in the commune.

On hearing the news, two hundred Hungarian devotees demonstrated in front of the Budapest Embassy of Kazakhstan. They accentuated their presence by placing a real bulldozer in front of the embassy and carrying placards with the inscriptions: "WHERE IS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?" "BULLDOZERS AGAINST THE RELIGIOUS?" "RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN KAZAKHSTAN!"

The demonstration in Hungary is a part of an international wave of protest aimed at putting pressure on the Kazakhstan government to honor the principles of freedom of religion it professes to practice. The coming days will see similar actions in several European countries, United States, and India. 🌸

The Kingdom of the Blind

Descriptions from the scriptures are not mythologies, but tangible realities; with faith and knowledge, we can experience their truth.

By Gopīnāthacandara Dāsa

Once upon a time, there flourished a civilization, cut-off from the rest of the world by mountains. However, as providence would have it, an epidemic plunged the entire population into hereditary blindness. Generations passed, and a new way of life evolved to cope with this challenge posed by material nature. Life went on without an event until a traveler lost his way in to this 'Kingdom of the blind'.

The traveler was taken aback at the sight of a completely blind civilization, then amazed at the evolved lifestyle before, being submerged in sympathy- these people were missing so much of the variety of life! The residents were equally amused at the arrival of an alien who seemed exactly like them. They were amazed when he spoke of the world beyond the valley. But when he spoke of things like 'seeing', they were sympathetic and considered the man crazy. Vision had become a concept of the fairy tales, a mythological phenomenon!

Just as the valley was disconnected from the outside world, our world is

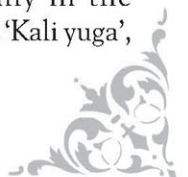


Illustration by Janardan B. Salkar

Just as 'vision' was a mythology in the valley,

disconnected from the spiritual world. All the scriptures of the world speak of the Kingdom of God. And the world, where we presently reside in, is described only as a temporary place, characterized by forgetfulness of our

connection with that divine realm. The scriptures provide us with the information to visualize the spiritual domain and also give us the lifestyle to attain that. But especially in the present age, which is called 'Kali yuga',



the epidemic of irreligion is predominant and people have lost faith in the scriptures. Thus, they are spiritually blind. A new lifestyle has now evolved which bases itself on modern scientific theories like the 'Big Bang' and the 'Theory of evolution'.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, when he first reached the shores of the United States, wrote a poem "Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma". A stanza from that poem reflects the thoughts of the 'visitor from the spiritual world' when he sees a 'blind' civilization:

"Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of ignorance and passion. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they

the valley, many scriptural concepts appear mythological to the people of this world: beings with supernatural features and powers; ages wherein people had extraordinarily long durations of life; lands of talking animals etc. People find these subject matters difficult to believe. The Mahābhārata therefore says, acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet. (Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva 5.22) 'How can that which is beyond the imagination or sensory speculation of mundane creatures be approached simply by logic?'

FAITH AND PHYSICS

Our logic often fails when we apply it to areas of which we have no

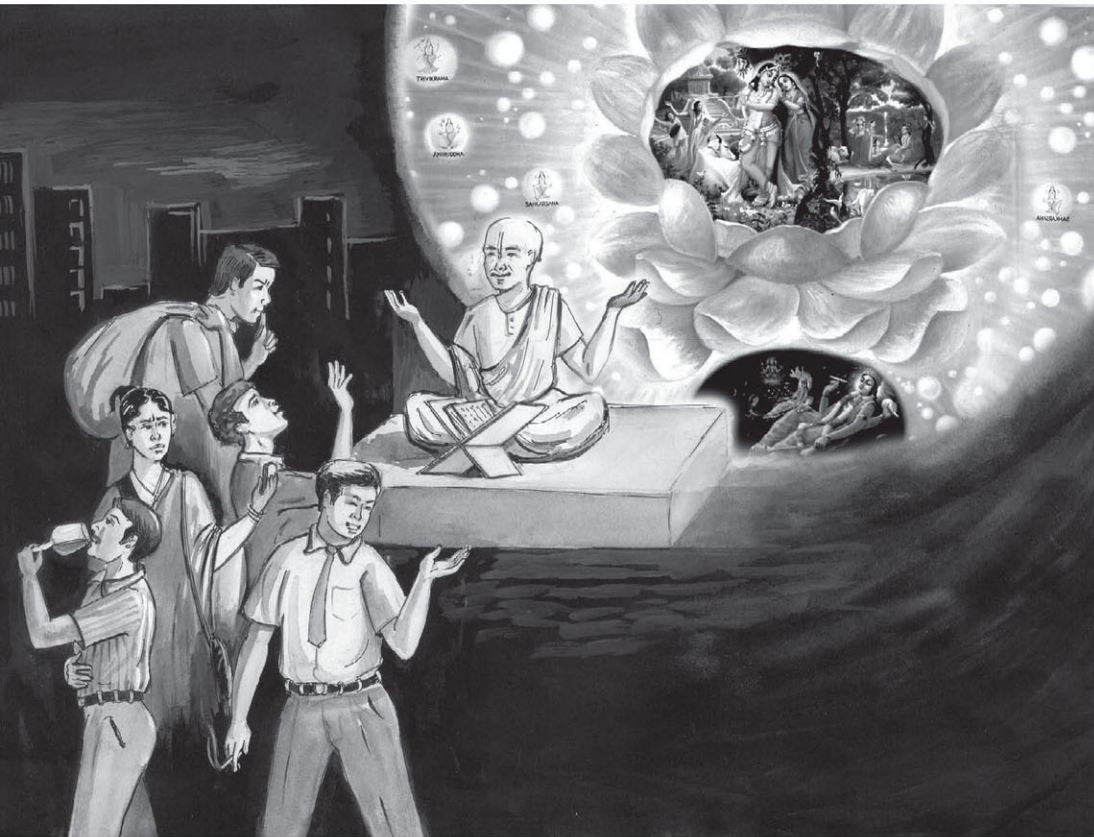
deal only with big objects, whereas one needs Quantum mechanics to deal with subatomic particles. But the student gains faith in the validity of the latter when formulae of quantum mechanics are applied to big objects; the results match with those obtained using Newtonian mechanics.

Similarly, we can gain faith in the scriptures when they clearly explain subject matters within our experience and then based on that faith, we can 'see the invisible'.

The Vedas, which were compiled five thousand years ago, provide us with information that matches with conclusions of recent scientific discoveries: description of growth of human embryo within the womb, round shape of earth, seven continents of earth, fire bacteria etc.

Moreover, the Bhagavad-gītā even deals with the dynamics of human life within this world: human psychology, motivation, negative emotions, rational thinking, harmonious lifestyles etc. One can experience a more peaceful and happier life when these principles are learnt and followed. The Vedas recommend a practical meditation for this age: chanting of the mahāmantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. By practicing this chant anyone can 'see' the truth of transcendence which the scriptures proclaim within a short period of regular practice. Unless one takes steps to understand the subject matter of the scriptures by practical application, one misses so much of the 'variety of life' due to spiritual blindness. ☸

Gopinātha Candra Dāsa has done M.Tech. from IIT Mumbai. He serves full-time at ISKCON Mumbai and teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness to students in various colleges.



many scriptural concepts appear mythological to the people of this world

have no taste for the transcendental message of Vāsudeva. I do not know how they will be able to understand it."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's heart was burning with compassion.

Just as 'vision' was a mythology in

experience. For example, when a student of Newtonian mechanics tries to solve a problem in the sub-atomic domain, which consists of very small particles, he will find his logic failing repeatedly. Newtonian mechanics can



Finding the....

(Continued from page 13)

devotees. So simple, so pure, so honest, so real—unlike anything we can find amongst ourselves in the material world.

Another example of unfaltering faith is Kuntī, who after the death of her grandsons approached Lord Kṛṣṇa and asked Him to please continue to put her through distress and hardship, because it was in those times that she thought of Him the most. That is the sign of a pure devotee.

A pure devotee looks at misfortune as bad karma being exhausted. A devotee thinks that Kṛṣṇa is lessening his sinful reactions. A devotee realizes that during the most difficult times, Kṛṣṇa within is guiding and protecting him. He realizes that his hardships are simply the Lord trying to keep His child close to Him, trying to encourage him to remember Him.

I understand that suffering comes because of karma, or things we've done in the past. And I understand that karma exists because we have free will, which Kṛṣṇa has given us so we can freely choose to love Him. Still, I can't explain exactly why a particular thing happens. I don't know why that man killed his children. I don't know why that driver fled the scene after striking that couple. I don't know why that

poor baby's mother left him to die.

But I do know that Kṛṣṇa has a plan for all of us. I do know that He loves all of us equally; He is impartial, like a father who doesn't favor any one child. Still, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates loving transactions with us proportionately to what we offer. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa will burn all of our good and bad karma, the causes of bondage to the material world.

MAXIMUM PROTECTION

A devotee once suggested to me that because the world is filled with exploitation and deceit, for maximum protection one should try to chant sixteen rounds every morning before leaving home. He said that if I did that, I'd develop an aura, almost a shield, that would bar people from hurting me. Minimum sixteen rounds each day for maximum protection.

The mahā-mantra is so powerful. It is Kṛṣṇa Himself incarnating as His name, and we directly associate with the Lord while chanting. We are awakening our dormant love for Him beneath the dust of the mirror of our hearts. It's simple: Unfortunate circumstances will ensue, we won't always understand what Kṛṣṇa's plan is, but chanting, reading, and associating with devotees will virtually, if not completely, remove our pain.

These practices will cause us to view our suffering in a different light, just as the gopīs did, just as Kuntī did, as Prahlāda Mahārāja did, and as Śrīmatī Subhadrā did.

Raise your hands and rejoice in the power and beauty of the Lord's sweet names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare!

And that's what I do as I look at the photo of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa this morning.

"Ahem!"

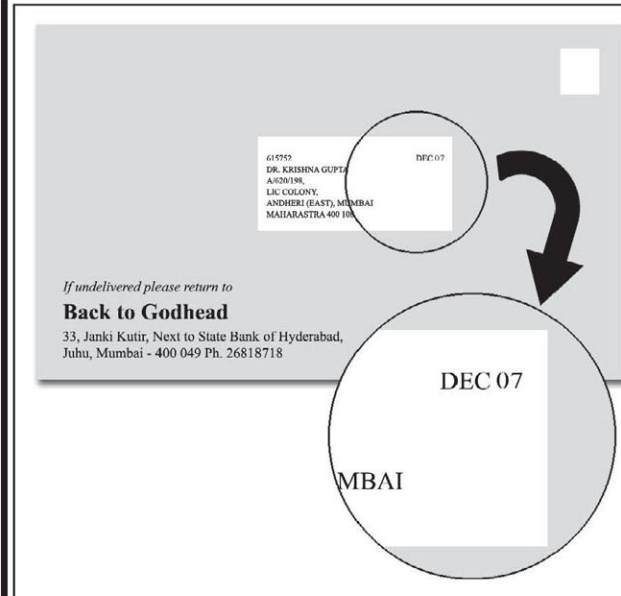
That's my mum. She has just rounded the corner and is peering at me, clearly wondering what exactly I'm doing, and if I'll be in need of medication.

"Were you just talking to yourself?"

"Oh. Hi mum. I.....uh.....well, emmm.....Stop talking to me—I'm late! Bye!"

And with that, I once again venture into the cut-throat corporate world. But I feel safer. I feel protected. I feel the warmth of Kṛṣṇa in my heart. I can deal with anything today. ☸

Rashi Singh graduated with an honors degree in marketing from the Schulich School of Business at York University. She lives in Toronto, Canada.



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The Land of....

(Continued from page 19)

Omprakash Khatri, the contractor. Mahārāja disclosed that Omprakash ji would never ask for any money. Only when Mahārāja would ask him for the bill would he comply. He even told Mahārāja, "Even if you have no money, still I will build this temple." The entire audience applauded on hearing about him, while he burst in to tears onstage. Mahārāja also glorified and offered gifts to many other devotees.

This huge festival was a major attraction and was telecasted on all major television channels and all the prominent newspapers gave it front-page coverage.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu predicted that His name would spread in every town and village on earth. Fulfilling His desire and the desire of His pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda, ISKCON is trying to give people the knowledge of the soul. This knowledge frees us from the miseries of life and engages us in Lord's loving devotional service. Thus, we can perfect our present life and finally go back home, back to Godhead to our eternal father Lord Kṛṣṇa, from where we all have come. ❀

Śrīvatsa Dāsa, (Srinath Rao) is a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja and serves at BHISMA department in ISKCON Juhu.

The Temple of....

(Continued from page 24)

structure and construction began. On that occasion, I had my first darśana, in person, of His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja. Mahārāja was holding something covered with white cloth. When he went inside the altar and the darśana opened, I found that They were small Deities of Rādhā Madana-mohana. The Lord had finally appeared in Ujjain! I could not believe it. Not only the Lord appeared, but I also found as my spiritual master His Holiness Bhakti-cāru Swami Mahārāja, who had brought the Lord

to Ujjain. What more mercy could I have asked for?

12th November was Dipawali. I told my father that I wanted to go for the Maṅgala ārati. Papa took me for the ārati and let me stay there after it ended. On that day, Mahārāja gave the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam class. Since the class was in Bengali, he asked me, "Do you know Bengali?" "No." I replied. Then he asked a woman to translate the class for me. I was very happy that day- it was the first time Guru Mahārāja had spoken to me!

That day papa also heard the class and asked Mahārāja, "How can we experience the spiritual world while staying in this world?" Mahārāja was very happy with the question and very nicely gave the answer. Papa found so much bliss in the Maṅgala ārati that he felt as though he was in heaven. He also developed a desire to join ISKCON. He met Mahārāja and then left his job in Reliance and became a full-time devotee in temple. This was the happiest occasion for me.

Life has come full circle for me. Where initially I was alone in Ujjain, now I have wonderful association of devotees, Guru Mahārāja, and Lord – everything. Truly if we take one-step towards Lord Kṛṣṇa, He rushes to us with thousands of strides. ❀

Parul Upadhyaya lives with her family in Ujjain.

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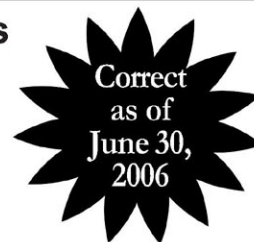
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Karma exchange....

(Continued from page 32)

failure, and is never entangled although performing actions. For such a person the cycle of karma ceases. In verse 18.66 Śrī Kṛṣṇa emphatically states, "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." It is important to note that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is recommending that one abandon all varieties of religion, including pious activities, since such activities will also bind one to the material world.

While activities performed in the mood of detachment do not have any reactions, devotional service, performed only for the pleasure of the Lord, goes one-step further. It not only stops the cycle of karma; it relieves one from one's due distress and eradicates the unmanifest desires in various stages of maturity. In Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.17), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes devotional service, or bhakti, as *kleśaghni* - one which eradicates distress: and *śubhada*- one which bestows auspiciousness, which means that if one takes to devotional service, all kinds of unnecessary labor and material distress cease entirely and one achieves all good fortune.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.19) Kṛṣṇa explains: "Just as a blazing fire turns firewood into ashes, devotion unto Me completely burns to ashes sins committed by My devotees." The conclusion is that one should not strive too hard for mundane things that may come of their own accord and bind one to material existence, but rather use one's valuable time in the service of the Lord. ❀

-Śyāmānanda Dāsa



KARMA EXCHANGE OFFER!!

With the advent of mega-retail marketing in India, one ubiquitous feature is the rash of exchange offers - from jeans to blenders and from TV sets to luxury cars - almost everything that you do not like in your life can be exchanged. Only if you can pay the proper difference in price. How nice would it be if someone could take our bad karmas and for some fee replace them with good ones? Previously those who believed in the Vedic way of life also believed in the principle of - *prāyaścitta* or atonement. The following tale from the *Nitiśāstra* highlights the importance of proper atonement.

There were two sages by the name of Śaṅkha and Likhitā. One day, Likhitā, the younger brother, happened to visit the āśrama of his elder brother. As Śaṅkha was away Likhitā decided to wait for him. After considerable time had passed Likhitā became hungry and thinking that this was his brother's āśrama, he decided to help himself to some ripened fruits that were lying on the ground. As he was in the midst of his small meal Śaṅkha returned and noticed that his brother was enjoying fruits without taking his permission.

Even before they exchanged pleasantries, Śaṅkha admonished Likhitā for his wrongdoing and ordered him to go to the king and confess his crime. As an obedient younger brother, Likhitā stood in front of the king and enquired from him the proper punishment for a thief. The king replied that in his kingdom the only punishment for theft is cutting off the thief's hands.

Likhitā then ordered the king to punish him accordingly. The bewildered king denied outright that he would do such a thing unless he has heard the whole story. Therefore, Likhitā narrated the entire episode. The king begged the sage not to request the punishment as he had eaten fruits from the household of his own brother and not from a stranger's. Still Likhitā stood firm and finally got his hands lopped off.

Profoundly sad for losing his limbs and at the same time satisfied that he had followed the proper conduct he returned to his brother's āśrama. Without saying a word, Śaṅkha took him to the nearby holy river and both began to take their baths. No sooner than Likhitā entered the waters, his hands miraculously re-emerged. Likhitā happily fell at the feet of his brother confident that this was a result of his prayers.

Upon asked as to why did he impose the ordeal of punishment when he could perform such miracles, Śaṅkha replied that the whole purpose of this episode was to delineate the ways of proper behavior.

Of course, in today's times people would scoff at the whole thing as 'impractical'. And it is so. As a 'sin' becomes a 'sin' taking into consideration the situation under which the particular activity was conducted, similarly atonement is also dependent on various factors.

In a famous conversation between the learned sage Śukadeva Goswami and his equally illustrious disciple, Parīkṣit Mahārāja, the topic of 'sinful activity and its nullification by *prāyaścitta*' was discussed. Upon hearing that a ritualistic atonement can adjust the situation, the intelligent king criticized the process. If the atonement does not cleanse the heart of the sinner then what is the value of such a process. The main problem is that the heart of the conditioned soul is filled up with dirty things - technically called *anarthas* - that which has negative value. These *anarthas* fall in six prominent categories of lust, anger, pride, madness, envy and illusion. Mahārāja Parīkṣit cites the example of an elephant taking his ritualistic bath. An elephant is a very big animal, and it takes bath in a lake, very nicely washing his body. Then, as soon as he comes on the bank, he immediately takes some dust and throws it over the body.

Something similar happens to the person performing ritualistic atonement. One reaction to sinful activities is a desire to commit more such sinful activities. While atonement may soften the suffering from past sins, it does not lessen the stockpile of desires that motivate one to commit more such activities. That is why Śukadeva Goswāmī says (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.11), "Persons who subject themselves to the rules and regulations of atonement are not at all intelligent." Furthermore, pious activities condition one to the resultant enjoyment and thus provide the motivation to perform more such pious activities. Since a soul is forced to accept a material body to live out these reactions, the self-perpetuating reactions of any endeavor bind one to the cycle of birth and death.

Sinful acts give me painful reactions and pious acts condition me to enjoy the results and while doing so, I inadvertently commit some more sinful activities and thus again suffer in the future. Is there any end to this never-ending story? Mercifully yes.

In Bhagavad-gītā Śrī Kṛṣṇa offers a way out. While Kṛṣṇa concedes, "One cannot even maintain one's physical body without work," He goes on to explain that by abandoning attachment to the results of one's activities, one becomes free of karmic reactions. Such a person is satisfied by gain that comes of its own accord, is undisturbed by success and

(please turn to page 31)

