

FOUNDER

(under the direction of

His Divine Grace

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta

Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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### 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.

CONTINUE THIS WAY

The letter by Krishna Chaitanya Das, (August 2008) which said that BTG should follow in the footsteps of *Shri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu* and *Śrī Sampradaya Journals* are tenable with the proposition that more and more philosophies from the *ācāryas* will enrich us and enlighten our soul.

However, let us not go by fiction but by facts. One of the prime principles of our society is *ṣṛīthivite āche yata nagarādi grāma sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma Śrī Caitanya* came to deliver everybody irrespective of the fact that whether they are rich or poor, Hindu or Muslim, educated or savage. I am a life member and closely connected to the New Alipore temple in Kolkata. I have seen in Bengal itself, the very land of Lord Caitanya's appearance, how difficult it has become to preach because people are blind with *Māyāvāda* doctrine. Due to the ill effects of Kali-yuga, people no longer practice the philosophy and they wonder how Lord Caitanya is relevant in their day-to-day lives. How can we discuss unconditional love of God and similar elevated topics as given by our *ācāryas* with these people? Philosophy works among the devotee circle, not among the common masses—for them there is only one message: *harer nāma harer nama harer nama aiva kevalam*. So there will be repetitions, there has to be repetitions—it is inevitable.

As far as Chaitanya Das's regret on the fact that this magazine will in no time become a coffee-house journal—that is something we have to think about. ISKCON is a world religion based on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, and *Back to Godhead* therefore should not remain a minority journal. To discuss the philosophy of our *ācāryas* and other esoteric topics, there can be a separate magazine with restricted circulation. However *Back to Godhead* should go exactly the way it is going now. The presentation, the style, and elegance are *par excellence*, and if it continues this way then one day it will become the most popular magazine in India.

Dear friends, let us open our hearts and try to accumulate a single drop of love by which Lord Gaurāṅga is going to flood every town and village in the near future. Look at the situation of ISKCON in Kazakhstan? Can we afford to be disunited?

Let *Back to Godhead* reach every town, village, school, college, casino, bar, liquor shop, brothel, and each and every dark corner of society. Śrī Caitanya

Mahāprabhu has appeared to deliver the whole world, and before Him there is perfect egalitarianism, spiritual socialism, equality, justice, and universal humanitarianism.

MR.SOHAN MUKHOPADHYAY  
LL.B(HONS), Kolkotta

DISTINGUISHING *Bhakti*  
FROM GAUṆA-DHARMA

Your July issue was wonderful, with intelligent contributions from devotees. However, a comment by one devotee, "Raising my child is my favorite type of devotional service..." was technically incorrect. Śrīla *Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī* comments on *Śrī Brahma-samhitā* (5.61) that "duties of the world that are connected with the Supreme are "subsidiary spiritual functions (*gauṇa-dharma*)," being helpful for the growth of *bhakti*. Begetting and caring for children is such a function, not actually *bhakti*, or devotional service.

The distinction is important because untrained householders tend to substitute *gauṇa-dharma* for *bhakti*. The idea that any activity connected with Kṛṣṇa is devotional service is incorrect. It is important to know the difference between *gauṇa-dharma*, which prepares the field for *bhakti*, and actual *bhakti*. For example, when a devotee brushes his or her teeth it is *gauṇa-dharma*, because the devotee is taking care of the body, which is used in Kṛṣṇa's service. Some activities that are done with a child—for example, hearing, chanting, and so on—are *bhakti*. However, some activities are *gauṇa* (material preparation), not *bhakti*.

Dayānanda Dāsa,  
New York

EXCELLENT!

The August edition of *Back to Godhead* on Śrīmatī Tulasī Mahārāṇī was excellent. It answered lots of my queries.

Manali D Bijlani  
Delhi

ENLIGHTENING ISSUE

I was enchanted and enlightened by the Tulasī special issue. I liked all of the articles. In our bungalow in Bharuch we created a rostrum to grow Tulasī—an auspicious event in Gujarat.



After reading “Taking care of Tulasī Devī” my knowledge was expanded so that further requisite action could be taken particularly in watering. While there is sufficient water and light, there is so much growth of *mañjarīs* and more Śyāma Tulasī than Rāma Tulasī.

In May issue the article ‘Between Life and Death’ by Rādhā Rāja Murāri Dāsa was inspiring—fighting against death so gloriously and winning over through the tremendous faith of a couple in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

BTG July carried a very educative and informative article by Murāri Gupta Dāsa called “From Village to Village”. My heartiest congratulations to the writer and Rūpa Raghunātha Dāsa, who took the bus party *sañkīrtana* to the villages making them throb with Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I have had always thought that the movement needs to be taken to 67% of our population; who are deprived of so many facets of urban and metropolitan cities. I have seen village life so closely from Bhraucha taluka and district.

With the assistance of Jagannātha Prabhu and Murāri Gupta Dāsa, I had arranged *Bhagavad-gītā* book distribution in Bharuch. I was wondering whether with their help we can gradually spread to villages in and around in Bharuch.

Now we have the presence of ISKCON in the Bharuch—a small congregation meets every Tuesday evening. Many youngsters have come forward to welcome this step.

Narendra Dalal,  
Bharuch, Gujarat.

### ACTIONS THAT LIBERATE

Kṛṣṇa says in the 3rd chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Whatever actions you perform, surrender the fruits of those actions unto Me and you shall remain unaffected by its reactions.” Unfortunately, most of us perform our duties without worrying about their outcome and do not surrender the fruits of our action unto Kṛṣṇa. I want to know what is *naiṣkarmya*? What are the actions to be performed in *naiṣkarmya* which will not incur any sins or reactions and will attain us liberation after death by surrendering to Lord Kṛṣṇa? Does *naiṣkarmya* means *karma-yoga* performed in synchronization with *Bhakti-yoga* (devotional service)?

Veerendra Ekbote  
Via internet

OUR REPLY: *Naiṣkarmya* or *niṣkāma karma-yoga*

means activities that do not give any reaction because the results are offered to Kṛṣṇa. Activities in *karma-yoga* may not be exactly what Kṛṣṇa wants us to do, but since we offer the results to Him, they are free of sins.

*Bhakti-yoga*, on the other hand, constitutes activities that are done solely for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. *Karma-yoga* becomes *bhakti-yoga* if we perform all our activities as directed by Kṛṣṇa (through His pure representative, the bona fide spiritual master) for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, and not merely offer Him the results of actions that we chose to perform as per our likes. *Karma-yoga*, therefore, in its purest form is non-different from *bhakti-yoga*.

Reply to the letter was written by Mukunḍa Mālā Dāsa

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## VEDIC THOUGHTS

One cannot establish a friendship with the Supreme Lord Rāmacandra on the basis of material qualities such as one's birth in an aristocratic family, one's personal beauty, one's eloquence, one's sharp intelligence or one's superior race or nation. None of these qualifications is actually a prerequisite for friendship with Lord Śrī Rāmacandra. Otherwise how is it possible that although we uncivilized inhabitants of the forest have not taken noble births, although we have no physical beauty and although we cannot speak like gentlemen, Lord Rāmacandra has nevertheless accepted us as friends?

Therefore, whether one is a demigod or a demon, a man or a creature other than man, such as a beast or bird, everyone should worship Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who appears on this earth just like a human being. There is no need of great austerities or penances to worship the Lord, for He accepts even a small service offered by His devotee. Thus He is satisfied, and as soon as He is satisfied, the devotee is successful. Indeed, Lord Śrī Rāmacandra brought all the devotees of Ayodhyā back home, back to Godhead [Vaikuṅṭha].

- Hanumānji in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.19.7-8



# The Mellow of Loving Service

*Bhakti-rasa, the mellow relished in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, does not end with the end of life.*

by His Divine Grace

**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

**Pradyumna:** (reading) "...happiness immediately terminates with his body as soon as his life is over. Death is therefore taken as the representative of God for the atheistic class of men. The devotee realizes the presence of God by devotional service, whereas the atheist realizes the presence of God in the shape of death."

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. We have discussed this point last night that everyone can see God. To see God is not a very difficult job. There are so many points described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. For the devotees, those who are serious about seeing God, they can see God. God is present everywhere. And God Himself, Kṛṣṇa, is describing, *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śāśi-sūryayoḥ* [Bg. 7.8]. Everyone drinks water. Now Kṛṣṇa says, "I am the taste of the water." So as soon as you drink water, the taste of the water is Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says, "I am this." Kṛṣṇa has described Himself in so many ways. "Amongst the trees, I am this. Amongst the aquatics, I am this." You can see God everywhere.

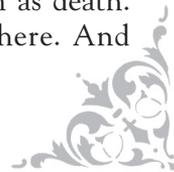
Those who are saintly devotees, they are seeing God, Kṛṣṇa, at every moment. *Premāñjana-cchurita-*

*bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti* [Bs. 5.38]. If you become a saintly person by your austerities, penances, then you can see God at every step.

Yes, nobody can become saintly immediately. It requires time. But as long as you are a material person, you can see God even in the water. You drink water. You can see God. You can see sunshine. God is there. *Prabhāsmi śāśi-sūryayoḥ*. So who has not seen the sunshine? Who has not seen the moonshine? Therefore, if you have seen moonshine, if you have seen sunshine, you have seen God.

But especially those who are impersonalists, they can see God in that way. *Śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu*. There are descriptions in the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, how

you can see God in your common dealings. Still, if you do not see God, then you can see, you must one day see God at the time of your death. *Mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś cāham* [Bg. 10.34]. Death is God. So the atheist class of men, just like Hiraṇyakaśipu, who always challenges God, in spite of so many things, they deny to see God; therefore God comes before them as death. Everyone has to meet death. So God is there. And





our promotion to devotional service. We cannot go on doing this and that at the same time. It is like igniting a fire while pouring water over it. It will be a useless attempt. If you want to burn the fire, don't put water on it. Keep it dry. Similarly, if you want to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you cannot indulge in sinful activities. *yeṣāṃ tv anta-gaṭāṃ pāpāṃ janānāṃ puṇya-karmaṇām.* (After many, many

because he is properly situated in his determination. (Bg 9.30) But not willfully. Willfully, if we commit some sinful activities, that can be excused once, twice, but not thrice. Then you'll be punished. Therefore a devotee should not willfully commit any sinful activities in order to keep himself always fit in devotional service. He should try to keep himself steady, without committing any sinful actions.

the regulative principles, if one wants to execute devotional service in a solitary place, it will be simply disturbing, and he must fall down. There are so many examples. So we should not imitate. We must follow the *vidhi-mārga*. The regulative principles must be followed. Then when you are mature, then we can sit down in a solitary place. Otherwise it is not possible. You read.

**Pradyumna:** "This is confirmed in all Vedic literatures. The *Bhagavad-gītā* says that a little advancement in *bhakti-rasa* can save the devotee from the greatest danger, that of missing the opportunity for human life."

**Prabhupāda:** *Svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.* "In devotional service there is no loss or diminution, and even a small service rendered in devotional life is sufficient to save one from the greatest danger." (Bg. 2.40). Just like Ajāmila. When he was young, he was executing devotional service just like a pure *brāhmaṇa* under the direction of his father, but when he was young, he was captivated by prostitute and fell down, became a thief, drunkard, and cheater. His life became sinful in so many ways. But at the end of his life, when he was just going to die, he simply chanted "Nārāyaṇa", calling out his youngest son's name. The Yamadūtas, the messengers of Yamarāja, came to carry him away. Ajāmila thought that his youngest son would save him. So he called his youngest son, Nārāyaṇa and immediately remembered Nārāyaṇa; because in the beginning he was a devotee of Nārāyaṇa. So because he remembered Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa immediately sent His messengers to take him back to Vaikuṅṭha. So *svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.* ❀

To be concluded in the next issue.

## Willfully, if you commit some sinful activities, that can be excused once, twice, but not thrice. Then you'll be punished.

births of executing pious activities, when one is completely freed from all contaminations, and from all illusory dualities, one becomes engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. (Bg 7.28)

Even if you engage yourself twenty-four hours in pious activities, in goodness, that is also tainted. But when you actually engage yourself in the devotional service of Vāsudeva, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world. *vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ, janayaty āśu vairāgyam.* [SB 1.2.7]. Even if we are accustomed to sinful activities on account of bad habits, still, we can engage ourselves in the devotional service of Vāsudeva. Devotees, sometimes due to their past habits, may unknowingly commit something sinful—that is excused by Kṛṣṇa. *Api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk:* Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly

Chant sixteen rounds and keep yourselves always aloof from the sinful activities.

### KEY TO SUCCESS

If you want to advance in devotional service, then you should be enthusiastic, *utsāhān*, *dhairyāt*, with patience, and *niścayāt*, you should be assured that "Because I'm following strictly the direction of my spiritual master and *śāstras*, certainly I shall meet Kṛṣṇa." *Tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt.* By following the rules and regulations, *sato vṛtteḥ*, always trying to be honest, and *sādhu-saṅgas*. *Sādhu-saṅga* is very important. Therefore we have created this International Society. People are coming to our society, in our centers, and after one week, automatically take a bag and beads and shave head.

Solitary *bhajana*, executing devotional service in a solitary place, is not possible for the neophyte devotees. It is meant for the advanced devotees. If, from the very beginning, without executing



# PRAYERS AND ENDEAVORS

*Realization on Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day*

by Yugāvtāra Dāsa

Janmāṣṭamī is the only day when devotees see the midnight; else they are always early to bed and early to rise. This Janmāṣṭamī I was early to bed as I was determined to go to the temple to chant my rounds on the auspicious appearance day of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I got up early and reached the temple. It was absolutely silent as most of the devotees were taking rest after the hectic *nirjalā* Janmāṣṭamī service. The temple hall was still dark. *Pūjārīs* were dressing the Deities in the altar behind closed doors. Because of the silence I could hear the Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture tape that was being played in the altar. There was dim light in the temple hall. I stood before Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I was so excited to reach there on his appearance day. This was probably the first time in the last 15 years that I had reached the temple in the morning on his appearance day. It was a thrilling experience to be alone in the temple hall in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda. I thought it was a golden chance to pray.

Standing before Śrīla Prabhupāda I started praying, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, so many years I am chanting but still I am 'as it is', the same lusty, greedy, angry per- (please turn to page 29)





# DEFINING THE DIVINE

*- East and West*

*Conceptions of God in the  
Bhagavad-gītā encompass  
those of other traditions  
and give a full picture of  
the Absolute Truth.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

**T**he *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches a pantheistic view of God," he said, his confidence and years of learning clear from his authoritative tone. "The massive *viśvarūpa*—Kṛṣṇa's universal form, which encompasses all material phenomena, including time—tells us much about God in the *Gītā*."

His friend, another scholar of some renown, seemed to disagree.

"The *Gītā* goes beyond pantheism.

---

*At left: The terms monotheism, panentheism, and pantheism in the West reflect the Bhagavad-gītā's presentation of the Absolute as Bhagavān (Lord Kṛṣṇa), Paramātmā (Supersoul), and Viśva-rūpa (Universal Form) and all-pervasive Brahman.*



It shows us how to perceive God in all things. The Tenth Chapter, especially, shows us how Kṛṣṇa is the superlative exemplar in seventy categories, how He exists in the perceivable world.”

A third colleague gave his considered opinion as well: “The *Gītā* ultimately teaches *bhakti*, devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the supreme personal Deity. In this sense, it is not unlike the great monotheistic traditions of the West. I think you’ve both missed the point.”

I was attending a panel discussion at a conference of the

three levels of Godhead expressed most succinctly in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11): “Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.”

### PANTHEISM AND BRAHMAN

Pantheism is understood in several related ways. First of all, pantheism equates God with nature, saying that He exists as everything and that everything is God. In Greek, *pan* = all, and *theos*

the created world, where He exists, without personality or form, as its essence. This is perhaps the earliest reference to pantheism—even if it doesn’t use that word—in any religious literature, Eastern or Western.

In the *Gītā*, one can find hints of pantheism (specifically God’s oneness with the universe) in the Seventh Chapter, where Kṛṣṇa identifies Himself with various material phenomena: He is the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the sound in ether, the ability in man, and so on. A closer look, however, shows that these are manifestations of His energy and He stands quite apart from them. Still, He does say that He is, in a sense, everything that exists (*vasudevaḥ sarvam iti*), and the *Gītā*’s Ninth Chapter tends to confirm this fact. (See texts 4, 5, 6, 16–18.)

The Lord elucidates His all-pervasive nature again in Chapter Ten, identifying Himself with the best of everything: He is Śiva, the ocean, the lion, Garuda, the *Himālayas*, the letter A, inexhaustible time, Brahmā, truth itself, victory, adventure, and so on. But clearly, again, this is not all there is to Kṛṣṇa, and He says so Himself by describing all of the above, and more, as a “mere indication” of His glory (*eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto* 10.40) and but a spark of His splendor (*mama tejo-’mśa-sambhavam*, 10.41).

A pantheistic view seems somewhat more apparent in the *Gītā*’s Eleventh Chapter, wherein the Lord reveals His Universal Form (*viśvarūpa*). Details of this form appear in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Second Canto, particularly in Chapters One and Six. Here we learn that “the gigantic manifestation of the

## In the *Gītā*, one can find hints of pantheism (specifically God’s oneness with the universe) in the Seventh Chapter, where Kṛṣṇa identifies Himself with various material phenomena.

American Academy of Religion, and as I sat back and listened, I noted that all three scholars were correct, each in his own way. I considered deeply their individual perspectives, and I realized something: The *Gītā* has it all!

In the West, theologians tend to speak of God in three ways, using the terms pantheism, panentheism, and monotheism, with a few variations in between. That is to say, Western theology speaks of God (1) as impersonal, diffused throughout all we see and beyond, or as nature itself, (2) as existing both within and outside everything, or (3) as the Supreme Being, omnipotent, omniscient, and all the rest.

Those familiar with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is will immediately recognize the correlation between these conceptions of God and Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān, the

= God. According to this view, the universe, including all matter and energy, is a metaphysical entity that is more than what we perceive. The pantheistic “God”—both impersonal and nontheistic (if we consider the usual sense of theism)—is entirely immanent, or close by, if only we had the eyes to see it.

The doctrine of pantheism often goes further, espousing “a belief that every existing entity is only one Being, and that all other forms of reality are either modes (or appearances) of it or identical with it.”<sup>1</sup> This is clearly a Western articulation of God as Brahman. The *Vedas* describe Brahman as a transcendent impersonal divinity. The *Ṛg Veda*, in particular, tells us in a prayer known as the *Puruṣa-sūkta* (10.90.4) that Brahman, here in a more personalized form, expanded a portion of Himself as



phenomenal material world as a whole is the personal body of the Absolute Truth . . ." (2.1.24), and that, "the sphere of outer space constitutes His eye pits, and the eyeball is the sun as the power of seeing. His eyelids are both the day and night, and in the movements of His eyebrows, Lord Brahmā and similar personalities reside." (2.1.31) In this way the *Bhāgavatam* goes on to deliver an elaborate meditation on the Absolute, allowing practitioners to virtually "see" Him in the material world.

However, the *Bhāgavatam* (1.3.30) is clear: "The conception of the *virāta* universal form of the Lord, as appearing in the material world, is imaginary. It is to enable the less intelligent [and neophytes] to adjust to the idea of the Lord's having form. But factually the Lord has no material form." Thus, the universal manifestation of the Supreme is meant to take practitioners from an impersonal understanding of the Absolute to a more developed, personal conception of Lord, and to help them realize that while He has no material form, He does have a spiritual form.

Because this universal vision of the Lord equates God with the phenomenal world—that is, as being wholly amalgamated with, or inseparable from, visible nature—it is a form of pantheism, and one needs to go further to understand God's spiritual nature. A pantheist who fails to look beyond the complex, majestic manifestations of matter may even be regarded as atheistic, having overlooked their all-attractive, transcendent, personal source.

That being said, a more liberal view of pantheism can also be found in the teachings of the *Gītā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

Pantheism in its higher status does not permit the student to form an impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth, but it extends the conception of the Absolute Truth into the field of the so-called material energy. Everything created by the material energy can be dovetailed with the Absolute by an attitude of service, which is the essential part of the living energy. The pure devotee of the Lord knows the art of converting everything into its spiritual existence by this service attitude, and only in that devotional way can the theory of pantheism be perfected. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.20, purport)

Here Prabhupāda suggests that the pantheistic perspective may be an imperfect preliminary stage that can lead to a more mature or complete realization of the Absolute Truth as something far greater than can be found in material nature. This correlates with the Vaiṣṇava view of Brahman realization as a low-rung, impersonal conception of God.

### PANENTHEISM AND PARAMĀTMĀ

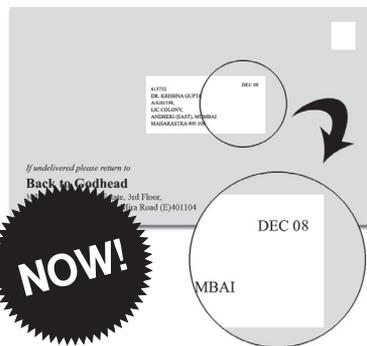
While the *Gītā* views pantheism as immature or incomplete, it more readily embraces a panentheistic view, seeing all things as imbued with God's presence and all things as being in God as well. As opposed to pantheism, which sees God as everything, panentheism sees God in everything (*pan* = all, *en* = in, and *theos* = God) or everything in God. The word is used in both ways.<sup>2</sup>

The term *panentheism* is attributed to German philosopher Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832), who wanted to reconcile monotheism and

pantheism. From a Vaiṣṇava point of view, panentheism has some redeeming features. For example, Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhāgavatam* (11.15.35–36), "I exist within everything as the Supersoul and outside of everything in My all-pervading feature." The *Gītā* (6.30) encourages us to see everything in Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa in everything: *yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati*. And the *Brahma-samhitā* (5.35) tells us, "All universes exist in Him [Kṛṣṇa], and He is present in His fullness in every atom." Clearly these are all panentheistic statements.

Now, for God to fit within everything He would have to be smaller than the smallest, and for everything to fit within Him, He

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would have to be larger than the largest. He would have to simultaneously be both, inconceivably. In fact, this is precisely how He is described in numerous scriptural passages. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.9), for example, tells us that God is smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest (*aṅor aṅīyān mahato*

especially, are quite specific about Viṣṇu as He appears in every atom: “He has four hands carrying a lotus, a wheel of a chariot, a conch shell, and a club, respectively. His mouth expresses His happiness. His eyes spread like the petals of a lotus, and His garments, yellowish like the saffron of a *kadamba* flower, are bedecked with valuable jewels, and

is impersonally within all things we see (panentheism). But this is still not monotheism proper.

## MONOTHEISM AND BHAGAVĀN

When scholars talk about “the three great monotheistic traditions,” they are usually not talking about Vaiṣṇavism or the tradition of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Rather, they are talking about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. But if they would look just a little beneath the surface, they would perhaps find the earliest monotheistic tradition.

True, one should be cautious when applying the terms of one set of religious traditions to another with its own history, insights, and ways of thinking about spirituality. People who identify with the Judeo-Christian tradition have very particular ideas in mind when they refer to monotheism, and that should be respected. The same might be said about the terms *pantheism* and *panentheism*. But given that caveat, the God of the *Gītā* is clearly a Supreme Being and the recipient of monotheistic worship: Kṛṣṇa is described as God of gods (10.14), the origin of all other gods (10.12), the primeval person (11.38), the Lord of the worlds (5.29), the creator and sustainer of everything (8.9), and on and on. As Kṛṣṇa says, no one is equal to or greater than Him (11.43).

Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy is so blatant, in fact, that one wonders why there would be any question at all. Perhaps it is because He is contrasted with other gods—demigods, or specially empowered beings—who serve as universal administrators. Indeed, this is why various forms of Indian religion are often described as polytheistic, or endorsing the worship of many

## Panentheism might be considered a Western equivalent for Paramātmā realization, wherein one views Kṛṣṇa(or His expansion Viṣṇu) as all-pervading.

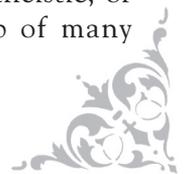
*mahīyān*). The *Gītā* tells us that God is both the smallest (*aṅor aṅīyāmsam*, 8.9) and the greatest (*vibhum*, 10.12), and it also reveals that all beings are in Kṛṣṇa (*matsthāni sarva-bhūtāni*, 9.4).

The alternate side of the same concept, that God is within everything, brings us to the subject of Paramātmā. Panentheism, in this case, might be considered a Western equivalent for Paramātmā realization, wherein one views Kṛṣṇa(or His expansion Viṣṇu) as all-pervading—existing within every human heart and, indeed, within every atom. This is a more localized, personal feature of the Lord, as compared with the pantheistic Brahman conception. But all is not so easy.

There are differences between panentheism, as commonly understood, and the Vaiṣṇava conception of Paramātmā. While the similarity of “God in all” exists in both, Paramātmā goes much further, putting a “face” on panentheism’s God. The critical factor here is *form*. Both the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavatam* (2.2.9–11),

He wears a glowing headdress and earrings.”

Moreover, while the panentheistic view holds that everything is in God and sometimes that God is in everything, it is never quite clear about the relationship between God perceived in nature and the transcendent being who is the source of all we see.<sup>3</sup> The *Bhāgavatam* and the *Gītā* give us a much more developed, or shall we say sophisticated, idea about this source. Those Vaiṣṇava texts tell us that Kṛṣṇa is the root of all divine manifestations and that Paramātmā is an emanation from that original source, partaking fully of His transcendent nature. The omnipotent Supreme Person can reproduce His essential being by appearing in “an extended personal form of Himself,” as Prabhupada describes Paramātmā. Thus, if we may offer new terminology to the Western theological tradition, let us call the theology of Paramātmā “Personal Extensionism.” This differs both from the view that God is in one sense identical with all that is (pantheism) and that He



gods. But, at least in terms of the *Gītā*, such charges cannot stand. Though other gods may exist, Kṛṣṇa is clearly supreme.

Biblical scholars might want to stop us here, claiming that, since other gods are even acknowledged, the *Gītā*'s religion is not really monotheism in the traditional sense of the word. It should be remembered, however, that early Israelite tribes practiced "monolatry" as opposed to strict monotheism: they worshiped one Supreme God among many. And besides, as already stated, we use the term *monotheism* with caution.

It should also be noted that the *Gītā*'s monotheism is distinct, deserving terminology of its own. Apropos of this, Graham M. Schweig, associate professor of religious studies at Christopher Newport University, Virginia, calls the *Gītā*'s Vaisnavism "polymorphic monotheism," that is, a theology that recognizes many forms (*ananta-rūpa*) of the one, single, unitary divinity.<sup>4</sup> Since it is here stated that God has many forms, one could superficially accuse the tradition of polytheism. But those who understand the tradition well know that it hereby merely acknowledges God's capacity to be in many places and forms at the same time. This is not to say that *all* forms are God's. The Vedic literature is quite clear about what constitutes a form of the Supreme Lord, and only those are to be worshiped.

The *Gītā* promotes the worship of one Supreme Personality of Godhead, also known as *Bhagavān*.<sup>5</sup> But the monotheistic worship of *Bhagavān*, lovingly adored as Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, is unique in the history of religions, for here we actually get to see, or visualize, the Lord of our prayers. If the scriptures place a face on Paramātmā, as He exists within

every atom, they do so much more for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Devotees become privy to His numerous ecstatic features and His day-to-day activities with eternal associates in the spiritual world.

### THREE ASPECTS OF THE SAME TRUTH

I would agree with the three scholars mentioned in the beginning of this article, accepting their diverse views. Like the first of these well-meaning men, I acknowledge that the *Gītā* promotes a type of pantheism, God's presence as a metaphysical dimension of nature. But I would hasten to add that the *Gītā*'s pantheism goes beyond the kind we usually hear about in the West. It shows us that there is a person behind the divinity perceivable in the natural world. I agree, too, that the *Gītā* shows us a form of panentheism, sharing with its

these aspects is correct then the others must be wrong. Rather, the *Gītā* revels in multi-faceted reality, taking its readers from fundamental conceptions of the Absolute Truth to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān are three aspects of that same Truth, manifesting variously according to the realization and wisdom of the practitioner. Those who approach God through knowledge tend to realize His eternality aspect, and in perfection this is Brahman realization. Yogīs and mystics meditate on the Lord in the heart, and the highest point of such meditation is called Paramātmā realization. This is where one realizes not only eternality but the ultimate end of all knowledge as well. Finally, the highest and most inclusive theistic pursuits culminate in devotion to God. Those who adopt this process

**The *Gītā* gives us several views of God, all legitimate and each revealing different aspects of the divine.**

readers God's immanence and how we might perceive that immanence in our day-to-day lives. And finally, of course, I agree with the third scholar most of all—that the *Gītā*'s ultimate teaching is *bhakti*, or devotion to a Supreme Personal Godhead. This is the *Gītā*'s crowning glory.

What I disagree with is how the three scholars address the *Gītā*'s diversity. The *Gītā* gives us several views of God, all legitimate and each revealing different aspects of the divine. It's not that if one of

focus on Bhagavān, the worship of whom leads to divine love. Here one reaps the benefit of all other processes, affording the practitioner the zenith of not only eternity and knowledge, but bliss as well. This is the best that pantheism, panentheism and monotheism have to offer. ☀  
*Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor. He has written over twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lives near New York City.*

(please turn to page 16)

# THE POSITIVE OBJECT OF LOVE

*Can positive thinking alone keep us happy?*

*by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa*

**F**or atheists, God is just a ‘feel-good’ concept. This notion is refuted by the scientific evi-

tively directed, that is, directed to God, can we attain the positivity of eternal life.

Different scriptures throughout the world address God variously as Jehovah, Allah, Buddha, Rāma and

dence of design throughout the universe and the concomitant necessity of the designer—God. But even many believers retain traces of the feel-good concept. To them, God Himself is not important; what is important is that God makes them feel good while they pursue their worldly goals. Positive thinking with such a utilitarian concept of God will not save us from death. Only when our love is posi-



*Kṛṣṇa’s attribute of wealth is shown by the splendor of Dvārakā (above). His attribute of strength is displayed in killing of various demons like Dhenukāsura (right)*



so on. These names refer to God's different qualities like being all-strong, all-powerful, all-enlightened, all-joyful and so on. God has these and many other extraordinary attributes, all of which together make Him universally attractive. The name Kṛṣṇa, meaning 'the all-attractive one' describes this all-attractiveness of the Lord and so is the most all-encompassing name of God. The name Kṛṣṇa describes the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in full. When a person is beautiful, wealthy, intelligent, strong, famous or renounced, that person attracts our love. Being Supreme by definition, Kṛṣṇa possesses all these cherished attributes in full, eternally. He is supremely beautiful, wealthy, intelligent, strong, famous, and renounced. Over and above these six attractive qualities, Kṛṣṇa also has an especially endearing seventh opulence: the most loving nature. In the spiritual world, He personally and individually reciprocates with the love of each one of us. Kṛṣṇa is thus the perfect object for our love. Our longing for love, when reposed in Kṛṣṇa, finds complete fulfilment. The saying 'God is love' means God, Kṛṣṇa is the most loving and lovable person.

How does knowledge of God's loving nature help in positive thinking.

### LOVE FOR GOD CONQUERS DEATH

Love for God is the ultimate positive truth for it conquers the greatest negative truth in this world—death. For the lover of God death is not a fearful termination of existence, but a joyful reunion with God in his everlasting abode.

The existence of an eternal realm known as the spiritual world



or the kingdom of God, is concurrent teaching in the great spiritual traditions of the world. The Bible (Mathew 6.33) exhorts us to make it the supreme goal of our lives: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The Vedic texts give further revelations of the spiritual world as the arena of endless, divine love, where we serve the Lord as His admirer, servant, friend, parent, or lover. That spiritual world is our original home

and ultimate positive destination of life.

In the spiritual world every one of us is endowed with free will to enable us to choose to love Kṛṣṇa and thus experience the ecstasy of endless love. By causeless misuse of our free will, when we refuse to serve Kṛṣṇa, we are sent from spiritual realm to the material world. Here we try to find a substitute object of love, but the temporary nature of all material objects and relationships frustrate us inevitably



and repeatedly. Kṛṣṇa being the most magnanimous lover does not neglect us, even though we neglect Him. Throughout all our journeys in various species of life in the material world, He accompanies us as Supersoul (Paramātmā) in our own hearts and strives to guide us to redirect our love back to Him and return back to Him; for that alone can bring about our ultimate well-being.

So positive thinking will be ultimately futile in the face of death unless we choose the positive object of love; only when we redirect our love towards Kṛṣṇa will we achieve everlasting happiness.

To summarize let us clearly understand the difference between pseudo positive thinking and real positive thinking: a pseudo positive thinker loves the things of this world and uses God to attain those things, where as a real positive thinker loves God and uses the things of this world to attain God and His eternal abode. ❀

*Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa holds a degree in electronics and telecommunications engineering and serves full-time at ISKCON Pune. To subscribe to his free cyber magazine, visit [thespiritualscientist.com](http://thespiritualscientist.com)*



### Defining the ....

(Continued from page13)

#### Notes

1. H. P. Owen. 1971. *Concepts of Deity* (London: Macmillan).
2. Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke, eds. 2004. *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).
3. One who sees "God as all" (pantheism) could easily make the

common mistake of identifying oneself with God, since every individual is clearly part of "all." Similarly, one who sees "God in all" (pantheism) might just as easily see the divine in oneself and mistakenly identify with God. But one who has these realizations along with *Bhagavān* realization, worshiping God in a spirit of monotheism, is less likely to fall prey to this misconception.

4. Graham M. Schweig, "Krishna, the Intimate Divinity," in Edwin F. Bryant and Maria L. Ekstrand, eds., 2004. *The Hare Krishna Movement: The Postcharismatic Fate of a Religious Transplant* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 18.
5. Ultimately, as Dr. Schweig points out, the tradition can be seen as polymorphic bi-monotheism, since it acknowledges a dual-gendered divinity whose ultimate manifestation is Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

## SANSKRIT PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

It is commonly seen that राम and कृष्ण in Sanskrit become 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 pronounce 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, hedgehog, and red-hot. Pronounce ṣ and ś like sh. So for Kṛṣṇa say KRISHNA, for Caitanya say CHAITANYA.

### Correction

On page 25 of the August issue the number of *pradakṣiṇa* of Tulasī is wrongly given as three.

The correct number of *pradakṣiṇa* is four times.



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# A Vision from the Heart

*The power of devotional service manifests brilliantly through an unusual person.*

Text by Murārī Gupta Dāsa  
Photos by Vrajajana Dāsa

I am sitting in the first floor room of the *brahmacāri āśrama* in the ISKCON temple in Belgaum, India, honoring the dinner *prasāda*. Outside, the evening twilight is slowly being enveloped by a veil of darkness—helped by the absence of the electric current which is so common in the towns of India. The room I am in is dimly lit by a single emergency bulb.

I finish my *prasāda*, get up to wash my plate, and step outside. It is dark. My eyes take a few seconds to adjust; still I can barely make out the steps in front of me. Suddenly, I am greeted by the loud singing of Hare Kṛṣṇa from the *verandah* below. I look there. It's jet black, no one can be seen.

"Who is chanting in such darkness?" I ask the devotee behind me.

"It is Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura Dāsa," the devotee replies. "Night or day does not make any difference to him. For him every thing is night—because he is blind."

"What!" my jaw drops.

"But he is happy chanting the holy names," the devotee adds, and excuses himself.

I stand there peering down, unable to see anyone. Oblivious to the night Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura continues to chant: *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*

## INDEPENDENT LIFE

I see Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura Dāsa the next day in the *maṅgala-ārati*. He is of medium height and age but well-built, wears white *dhotī* and *kurtā*, with his head shaven, *sikhā*, and a smudgy *tilaka* on his forehead. He sings joyfully and loudly shouts "Gaurāṅga," "Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda," in the chorus. When the *kīrtana* picks up he jumps and spins around with arms upraised, frequently marking his position by touching the wall on his left. Many devotees dance with their arms around him and he laughs and jumps with them. Later he sits down to chant his *japa* with us and after a short break even joins in *guru-pūjā* and the *Bhāgavatam* class.

After the breakfast, I go to the *verandah* to hang my washed clothes for drying. There I find him honoring breakfast. I sit down to observe him; it is my first experience of seeing a blind person so closely.

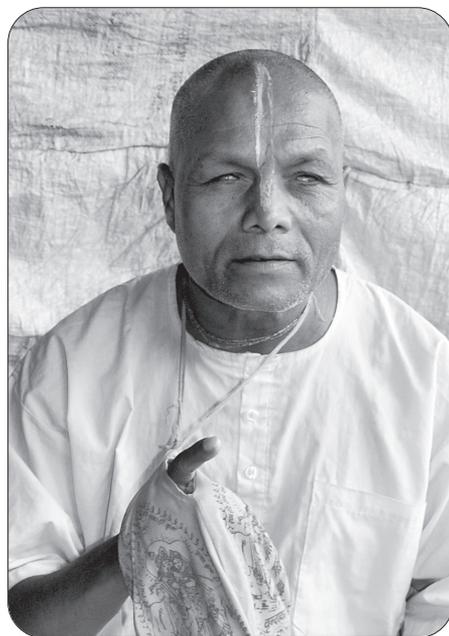


Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura eats with gusto. After eating he gets up and walks to a tap, washes his hands and mouth, cleans his plate, returns to his sitting place, and much to my surprise, wipes the floor with a rag. He then keeps his plate next to the wall, picks up his bead bag and begins chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. He appears adept at carrying out his basic needs without much help.

For the next few days I observe him and learn about his daily life from others.

His day begins much before 3 am. He chants all the prayers sung during *maṅgala-ārati*, even the *prema-dhvani* prayers during which he bows down. Then he begins *jaṇa*. At 4:30 am someone gets him to the temple for *maṅgala-ārati*. After the morning program he honors *prasāda*. Then throughout the day he chants his rounds, taking break to honor *prasāda* and attend to bodily needs. In the evening he again sings songs and prayers in glorification of Supreme Lord and His devotees. He does not need drums or cymbals; when he is standing he claps with both hands and dances, and when he is sitting he beats his hand on his thigh. Either he chants or he sings and most of the day and night is spent like this.

I am intrigued and want to find more about him. For this I meet Uttama Śloka Dāsa and Nāgendra



Dāsa and also interview Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura. Some excerpts from his life story follow:

#### PULL OF GOD

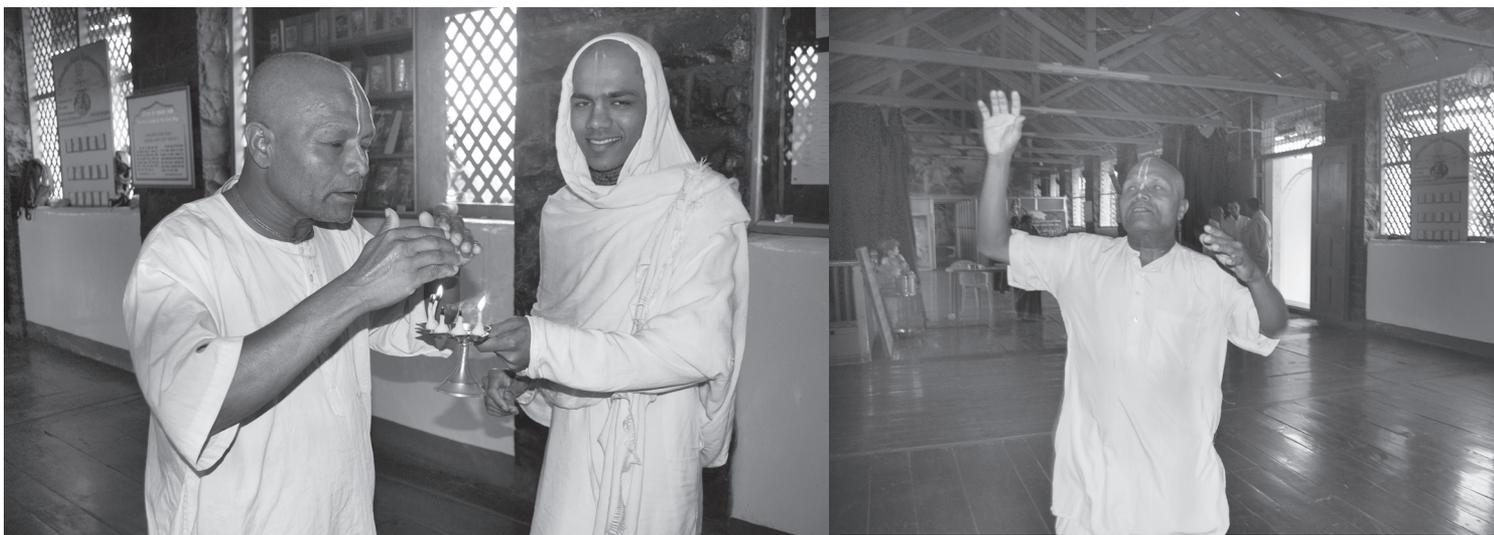
Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura was born the eldest of three siblings in the year 1949. After his birth, the family priest told the mother to name the child Nārāyaṇa. Young Nārāyaṇa was fond of listening to the *abhaṅgas* (devotional poems) of the great Vaiṣṇava saint of Maharashtra,

Tukārāma Mahārāja. He would memorize them and recite them along with stories of the Lord to his friends and family members. Most of his listeners, however, were not interested being caught in worldly duties; yet they marveled at the young child's devotional proclivities.

At the age of ten Nārāyaṇa contracted an eye ailment that pestered him for one year, finally ending only by claiming both his eyes. His family supported him, but he had to discontinue his education. His solace was a tape-recorder which played *bhajan*s and *kīrtan*s.

Over the years, his family took him to many holy men and places to cure his vision, but nothing could be changed. Nārāyaṇa began to lose faith in them. Meanwhile, his younger brother came in touch with the Hare Kṛṣṇas and began to chant and even induced the family members to accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Nārāyaṇa, however, was not willing to change.

"I prayed to all the gods and demigods," he said, "but there was no result. What will your chanting beads do?" Then one day, Nārāyaṇa put forward a demand unheard of: "Give me an egg to eat," he said to his mother. All his life he had not even touched onion and garlic, but



Glimpses from Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura Dāsa's day in ISKCON temple at Belgaum.



now, even as his mother repeatedly stopped him, he forced her to give him a boiled egg.

He ate the egg in the night and went to bed. But there was no sleep. A virulent rash appeared on his body and he spent the whole night painfully itching his body from his feet to his head. The next day, when his mother woke him up, he confessed his suffering to her.

“My dear son,” the mother said, “Chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa. It will surely help you.”

“Bring me the beads,” Nārāyaṇa told her. “Look mother,” he said, “if these beads are right, they should remove all my suffering. If not, I will cut them into a thousand pieces and throw them in the gutter. But in case they help me, I promise, I will never leave chanting.”

Nārāyaṇa began to chant. He had been suffering from a strange fever for fifteen days and no medicine seemed to work, but as he chanted his condition improved. Gradually he developed faith and taste in chanting and began to chant more rounds: 20, 32, and sometimes even 64. Soon he became a regular visitor to the temple, coming along with his brother Prahlādānanda Dāsa and the entire family.

After his mother’s death in 2001, he was inspired to move into the temple. The resident devotees were unimpressed. “How can we keep a blind man in the temple?” they questioned. “Who will take care of him?” These and many other doubts arose before the authorities.

The temple president, Devāmṛta Dāsa, intervened. “I knew of Nārāyaṇa’s profound taste for holy name,” he says. “If he could adjust in the temple, we had no problem.”

Nārāyaṇa got a small room which he shared with others. He quickly adapted to his new surroundings and was neat and clean in his appearance and surroundings. He only needed help from someone to get him *prasāda* and take him to the first floor temple hall. He bathed, shaved his face, washed his clothes and dried them, took care of his belongings—all by himself. When the roof of his room leaked in rains, he took rice gunny bags that were left over after the Sunday feast, tore them from the edge and sewed them to make a tent. He now sleeps in this tent that doubles up as a mosquito net and even serves him well during the grueling winters.

His spirits see no barrier. So with the help of devotees and the free

train passage allowed by the Government, he also went on pilgrimage to Māyāpura, Vṛndāvana, Jagannātha purī, and Tirupati.

In 2008 he received *harināma* initiation and got the name Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura Dāsa.

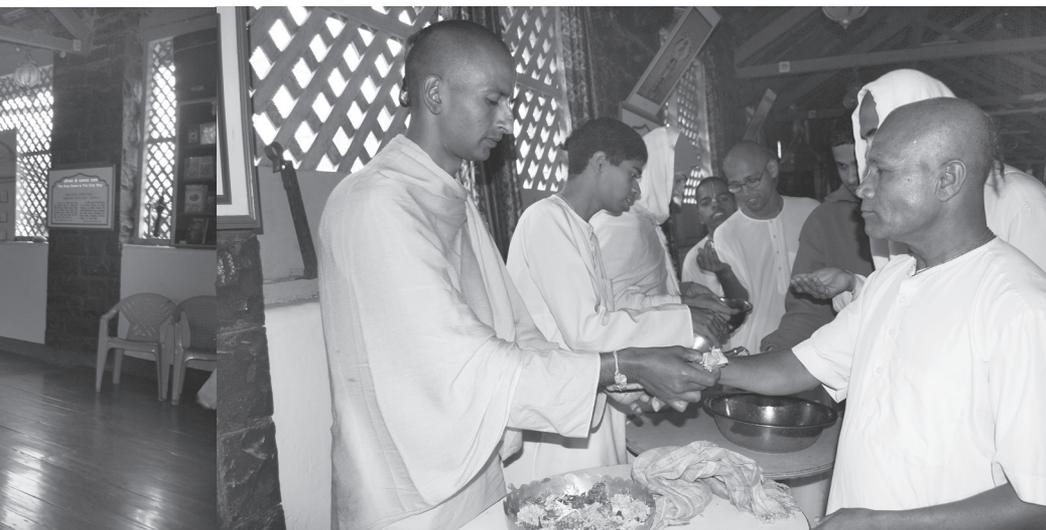
### STURDY FAITH IN THE HOLY NAME

With this information in hand I take along with me Uttama Śloka Dāsa, Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura’s friend, and conduct this interview. Following are some excerpts:

**BTG:** *You have lost your vision. Don’t you feel God did an injustice to you?*

**Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura Dāsa (BTD):** *Earlier I used to feel bad, but not now, after coming to bhakti. Now I feel that because I don’t have vision, the Lord has kept me here in His service.*

**BTG:** *Still, you cannot take darśana of the Lord. Don’t you feel bad about it?*



**BTD:** No. The Lord is present in His name. Lord Kṛṣṇa has said, “Chant My name and I will be with you.” I feel so. Few days back I fell down near the gate and was injured. The Lord told me, “Don’t fear; I am with you.” Although I went to the doctor, I had no faith in him; I had full faith in the Lord, and eventually the Lord cured me.

**BTG:** How can you chant so much?

**BTD:** I don’t get much sleep: three-four hours at the most. When I am awake I take shelter of the Lord, and He gives me mercy. I feel that if I surrender to Him, it will be good.

**BTG:** How do you feel when you chant?

**BTD:** I feel good.

**BTG:** Can you describe it in more detail?

**BTD:** Look, I am illiterate; I don’t know much philosophy. I told you it feels nice when I chant, that is all.

**BTG:** What gives you taste in chanting?

**BTD:** Tulasī Devī gives the taste. . . and Kṛṣṇa. I pray to my chanting beads before chanting. A few years ago, I had a dream in which Śrīla Prabhupāda came and told me to take shelter of Tulasī Devī. Here, (he points to his right to a garden) there is Tulasī. Every day I bow to her and sing her prayers. And I live here in this courtyard, and do my bhajana and kīrtana. Sometimes I chant 32

rounds, sometimes more. And on Ekādaśī I fast and chant 64 rounds or even more.

**BTG:** Have you read Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books?

**BTD:** No. I only studied till 4th standard. But I regularly hear temple classes.

**BTG:** Did you stitch this tent in which you live?

**BTD:** Yes.

**BTG:** How could you do it? You cannot see?

**BTD:** Rādhā-Gokulānanda gave me the intelligence. Earlier I lived in the room behind me. During the rains its roof leaked. Nobody fixed it. Then Rādhā-Gokulānanda told me to make this tent.

**BTG:** What is your message to our readers?

**BTD:** Perform devotional service. Take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa. You will be benefited. What I did, you also do. You will get mercy of the Lord and you will go ahead. If He does not have mercy on you, you cannot do anything. Here I am—a blind man, but He is taking care of me. Even if I keep servants, they will not take care of me as nicely as these devotees are doing. How much more He will take care of you. So, just take shelter of the Lord.

**BTG:** Thank you.

We leave.

Later Uttama Śloka recalls an anecdote: “Once when Devāmṛta Dāsa returned to the temple after a long gap, many devotees were complaining about their issues. But when he came to this place he found Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura blissfully chanting kīrtana and dancing. ‘It seems,’ Devāmṛta said, ‘that Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura is the only satisfied devotee in the temple.’ Really Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura is an inspiration to so many of us. The whole day he is immersed in harināma.”

### A CLEAR VISION

I return after the meeting to my room. Outside a train rushes past loudly whistling and shaking the earth by its massive wagons carrying petrol. I look out of the window at the speeding train, and think about the modern day world that is so rapidly turning atheistic. Brilliant scientists, scholars, philosophers, writers, common people—all appear to be so ignorant and going away from God. On one hand, we have people with eyes who fail to perceive the role of God in creation, and on other hand here we have Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, a person without vision, who can so clearly perceive the hand of God in his life. He “sees” God in His names, and



Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura affirming his vows before receiving harināma initiation(left).

Chanting before the mosquito net that he stitched for himself (right).



realizes His mercy in the love and support that appears internally in his heart and externally in the kindness of devotees. The divine songs that may appear to us as ordinary words reveal their transcendental potency to him—so much so that nearly all day and night he joyfully sings them. The process of devotional service that may appear tedious to us becomes a natural asylum for him. It is not that he pretends; he cannot fake anything for so long or fool so many. His faith and satisfaction in the process of devotional service is real.

One marvels at the power of the process of *bhakti*, which can cut

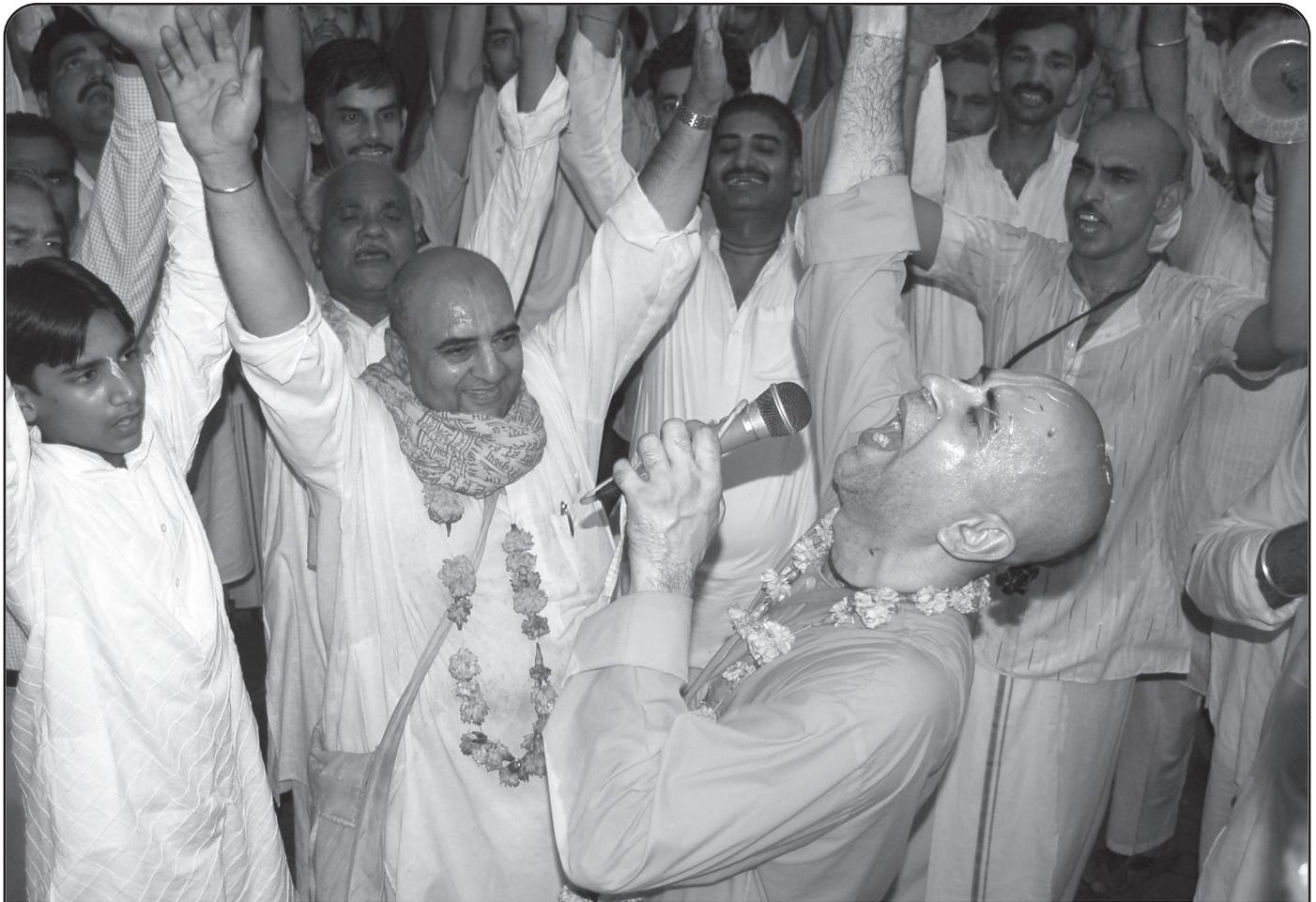
across any material impediments and reveal the ultimate truth even to a blind person. One also marvels at the devotees of the Lord, who can think beyond ordinary sensibilities and offer shelter and support to a seemingly non-productive aspiring devotee. And one completely marvels at the all-attractive Supreme Lord who, by His unlimited power, can provide a blind man with divine vision and faith.

With so many manifestations of the glories of the process of devotional service clear before my eyes, I can only offer my prayers repeating the words of the original blind Saint Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, who

writes in his celebrated book, *Kṛṣṇa-karnāmr̥ta*: “My dear Lord, You are the ocean of mercy. With my arms placed upon my head, I am bowing down before You with all humility and sincerity. I am praying unto You, my Lord. Would You be pleased just to sprinkle a little of the water of Your glance upon me? That will be a great satisfaction.”

(Quoted by Śrīla Prabhupāda in *Nectar of Devotion*.) ❁

The author acknowledges the help of Uttama Śloka Dāsa, Nāgendra Dāsa, Atul Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, and Devāmr̥ta Dāsa (Temple President) of ISKCON Belgaum in compiling this article.



**Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare**





# Good Qualities and Devotion

*All good qualities automatically appear in a devotee; there is no need to endeavor for them.*

by Śrīla Saccidānanda  
Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

In the book *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, auspiciousness (*śubhadā*) has been described as one of the six glories of *bhakti*. The question, “How many kinds of auspiciousness are there?” is answered as follows:

*śubhāni prīṇanam  
sarva-jagatām anuraktatā  
sad-guṇāḥ sukham ity  
ādīny ākhyātāni manīṣibhiḥ*

*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (Eastern Division, *Sādhana-lahari* 28)

Learned sages have described the meaning of auspiciousness as love for the entire creation, caring affection for all living entities, saintly character, happiness, and other such qualities. The person in whom

*bhakti* has arisen bestows affection to the whole world and becomes the object of attachment for everyone in the world. He effortlessly becomes the recipient of all saintly qualities and attains all types of pure happiness and auspiciousness. Learned scholars have described all these attributes as symptoms of auspiciousness. All good qualities, and the demigods themselves, reside in *bhagavad-bhaktas*.

The following words of the *Bhāgavata* (5.18.12) describe that devotee who possesses all good qualities:

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā  
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ  
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā  
mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

“One who has unflinching devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead has all the good qualities of the demigods. But one who is not a devotee of the Lord has only material qualifications that are of little value. This is because he is hovering on the mental plane and is certain to be attracted by the glaring material energy.”

All good qualities along with the *devatas* take shelter of that person who has *akincanā-bhakti* for Bhagavān. How can all good qualities appear in a nondevotee whose mind always runs towards temporary worldly affairs? The *Skanda Purāṇa* states:

*ete na hy adbhutā vyādha  
tava himsādayo guṇāḥ*



*hari-bhaktau pravṛttā ye na  
te syuḥ para-tāpinaḥ*

“O hunter! Good qualities, like non-violence, which you have developed, are not very astonishing, for those who are engaged in Hari-bhakti are by nature never inclined to give pain to others.”

*antaḥ-śuddhir bahiḥ-śuddhis  
tapaḥ-śānty-ādayas tathā  
amī guṇāḥ prapadyante  
hari-sevābhikāminām*

“Internal and external purity, austerity, peacefulness and so on, take shelter of a person desiring to serve Hari.”

### THE GOOD QUALITIES OF A VAIṢṆAVA

A list of good qualities has been compiled in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.78-80):

*kṛpālu, akṛta-droha, satya-sāra sama  
nirdoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu, śuci,  
akiñcana  
sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika  
śaraṇa  
akāma, nirīha, sthira, vijita-saḍ guṇa  
mita-bhuk, apramatta, mānada,  
amānī  
gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi,  
dakṣa, maunī*

Devotees are always merciful, humble, truthful, equal to all, faultless, magnanimous, mild and clean. They are without material possessions, and they perform welfare work for everyone. They are peaceful, exclusively surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, and desireless. They are indifferent to material acquisitions and fixed in devotional service. They completely control the six bad qualities: lust, anger, greed and so forth. They eat only as much as required, and they are not inebri-

ated. They are respectful, grave, compassionate and without false prestige. They are friendly, poetic, expert and silent.

All these good qualities accompany *bhakti*. Now the following question arises: Does *Bhakti Devī* manifest after the appearance of all these qualities, or do all these good qualities take shelter of the *bhakta* in whom *bhakti* appears?

### NO NEED FOR SEPERATE ENDEAVOR

The above question is answered as follows. According to the *bhakti-śāstras* a *jīva* develops faith in *bhakti* on the strength of *sukṛti* caused by a desire to perform *bhakti*. On attaining faith in *bhakti*, the *jīva* takes shelter at the feet of a *sādhu* and engages in *bhajana*. Immediately before engaging in *bhajana*, many *anarthas*, meaning those things that are opposed to good qualities, remain in him. By the strength of *bhakti* and *sadhusaṅga*, all *anarthas* effortlessly melt away while performing *bhajana*, and in their place all good qualities naturally arise. Until *anarthas* are annihilated and auspicious qualities manifest, one remains on the stage of *bhajanābhāsa* or *nāmābhāsa*. As one performs *śuddha-bhajanai*—that is, chants *śuddha-nāmai*—*anarthas* are destroyed and simultaneously saintly qualities manifest. At this time, the *sādhaka* has no taste for sinful activities or *anarthas*. For this reason Śrī Mahāprabhu said in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 15.107):

*eka kṛṣṇa-nāme kare  
sarva-pāpa kṣaya  
nava-vidhā bhakti pūrṇa  
nāma haite haya*

Simply by chanting the holy

name of Kṛṣṇa once, a person is relieved from all the reactions of a sinful life. One can complete the nine processes of devotional service simply by chanting the holy name. All the good qualities, such as *jīve-dayā* (mercy to all living entities), *niṣpāpatā* (a non-sinful nature), *satyasāratā* (truthfulness), *samadarśitva* (equal vision), *dainya* (humility), *śānti* (peacefulness), *gāmbīrya* (gravity), *saralā* (simplicity), *maitrī* (amiability), *daksatā* (expertise), *asat-kathāy audasīnya* (indifference to mundane talk), *pavitrā* (purity), *tucchakāma tyāga* (the renunciation of useless work) and many others, naturally arise along with the appearance of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. It is not for the *bhakta* to attempt to attain other qualities separately from performing *bhajana*. The cultivation of *śuddha-bhakti* is indeed sufficient to achieve this. By cultivating *śuddha-bhakti*, *anarthas* are quickly destroyed and auspicious qualities are quickly awakened.

### NO YOGA NO MORALITY

To cultivate the traditional practices of yoga such as *yama*, *niyama*, *pratyāhāra* and so on, is troublesome; and success, which only comes after a long period of practice, is checked by unwanted obstructions. As long as the *jīva* does not develop faith leading to *bhakti*, known as *bhakti-unmukhī śraddhā*, the determination to develop these qualities of the yoga path remains in him. Therefore only by performing *bhajana* in the association of a *sādhu* will all good qualities appear in that person in whom *śraddhā* has arisen. Auspicious qualities are cultivated on the paths of yoga and morality but a *bhakta* does not need to separately cultivate them. Persons on other  
(please turn to page 25)



# The End Of Kali-Yuga: No More Hare Kṛṣṇa

*This conversation between Śrīla Prabhupāda and the poet Allen Ginsberg took place on May 13, 1969, in Columbus, Ohio.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Lord Buddha is accepted as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. This is stated in the *Bhāgavatam*. He is accepted as the ninth incarnation. Baladeva is the eighth. And the tenth is awaiting.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Kalki.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Kalki.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Now, what is Kalki's nature?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is described in the *Bhāgavatam*. He will come just like a prince, with royal dress and sword, on horseback—simply killing, no preaching. There will be no brain to understand God.

**Allen Ginsberg:** There will be no brain to understand God?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** People will be so dull. It requires a brain to understand...

**Allen Ginsberg:** So Kalki comes at the end of the *Kali-yuga*?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Then *Satya-yuga* will begin.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Which is?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** *Satya-yuga* is the pious age. People will be pious, truthful, long-living.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Are those the people that will remain, or are they from whatever new creation comes out of the destruction?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** All the miscreants will be killed. And there must be some pious. They remain.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Do you think of this in terms of a historical event that will occur in the lifetime of your disciples?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. This will happen at least 400,000 years from now. So at that time my disciples will be with Kṛṣṇa. [Laughter.]

**Devotees:** Haribol!

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** And those who will not follow them,



they will see the fun—how they are being killed. [Laughter.]

**Allen Ginsberg:** Will people still be chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in 400,000 years?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. Hare Kṛṣṇa will be finished within ten thousand years. There will be no more Hare Kṛṣṇa.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Ah. So what will be left?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Nothing. I'll kill you and eat you, and you shall kill me. You shall eat me. That will be left.

**Allen Ginsberg:** After ten thousand years?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, there will be no grain, no milk, no sugar, no fruit. So I will have to eat you, and you will have to eat me. Full facility for meat-eating. [Laughter.] Full facility. Kṛṣṇa is very kind. He'll give you facility: "All right. Why cows and calves? You take your own son. Yes. Eat nicely." Just like serpents, snakes—they eat their own offspring. Also tigers. So this will happen. And there will be no brain to understand [God], no preachers, nothing. And then Kṛṣṇa will come: "All right, let Me kill you so that you will be saved."

**Allen Ginsberg:** But you see it as actually a historical thing of ten thousand years for the chanting?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Now it will increase.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Until?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Up to ten thousand years.

**Allen Ginsberg:** And then?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Then diminish.

**Allen Ginsberg:** So what is the purpose right now?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** People will take advantage of this up to ten thousand years. Then they will...

**Allen Ginsberg:** So this is like the last rope, the last gasp.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** [Laughs.] Yes. So

the sooner we take shelter—shelter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—the better.

**Allen Ginsberg:** When did this *yuga* begin?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** *Kali-yuga* began five thousand years ago.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Where is all this information?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** In the Vedic literature, the *Bhāgavatam*.

**Allen Ginsberg:** It has the detailed analysis of what goes on in the *Kali-yuga*?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. I will read it to you sometime. In the Twelfth Canto, the *Kali-yuga* descriptions are there. And you will find that all the descriptions are coming true. Just like there is one statement, *svīkāra eva udvāhe*: "Marriage will be performed simply by agreement." Now that is being done. And *lāvanyaṁ keśa-dhāraṇam*: "People will think that they have become very beautiful by keeping long hair." That is coming true.

**Allen Ginsberg:** In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is there also provision for the Caitanya cult?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. We have given that in our book *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Within this period of ten thousand years, only those who hear Kṛṣṇa's name and worship Kṛṣṇa by chanting...

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** They become liberated and go back home, back to Godhead.

**Allen Ginsberg:** And everybody else gets involved deeper and deeper in the *yuga*.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, yes. So if anyone believes in the *sāstras* [scriptures], he should take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is intelligence—to take advantage of the authorized scriptures. ❀

**Good qualities ....**

(Continued from page 23)

paths may attain all good qualities, but in the absence of *bhakti*, these qualities are like many ornaments on an ugly lady, and can never actually be beautiful. On the other hand if, by the mercy of a *sādhu*, they fortunately gain *bhakti* *unmukhī śraddhā*, they will undoubtedly perform *sādhana* immediately to achieve *uttamā-bhakti*.

### ACCEPT THE SHELTER OF KṚṢṆA BHAKTI

O brothers who are filled with good qualities! Do not waste your time uselessly. Please make your life and *dharma* successful by taking shelter of the lotus feet of a devotee. This is the highest fruit of whatever auspicious qualities you have attained. It is incorrect to think that just by accumulating auspicious qualities one will get *bhakti*. Auspicious qualities will automatically appear in a person who has *bhakti*. One may have all auspicious qualities other than having taken one pointed shelter of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇaikaśaraṇa*), but until he develops faith in *bhakti*, he will not attain *bhakti*. Without possessing Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*, even auspicious qualities are not glorious. You should know that the life of a *jīva* who is endowed with all auspicious qualities but bereft of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*, is useless. ❀

*Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is a great spiritual teacher and the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.*

[Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā* 1/8] (Courtesy: Krishna.com)



# In your own

*What do you do to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness in your work place?*

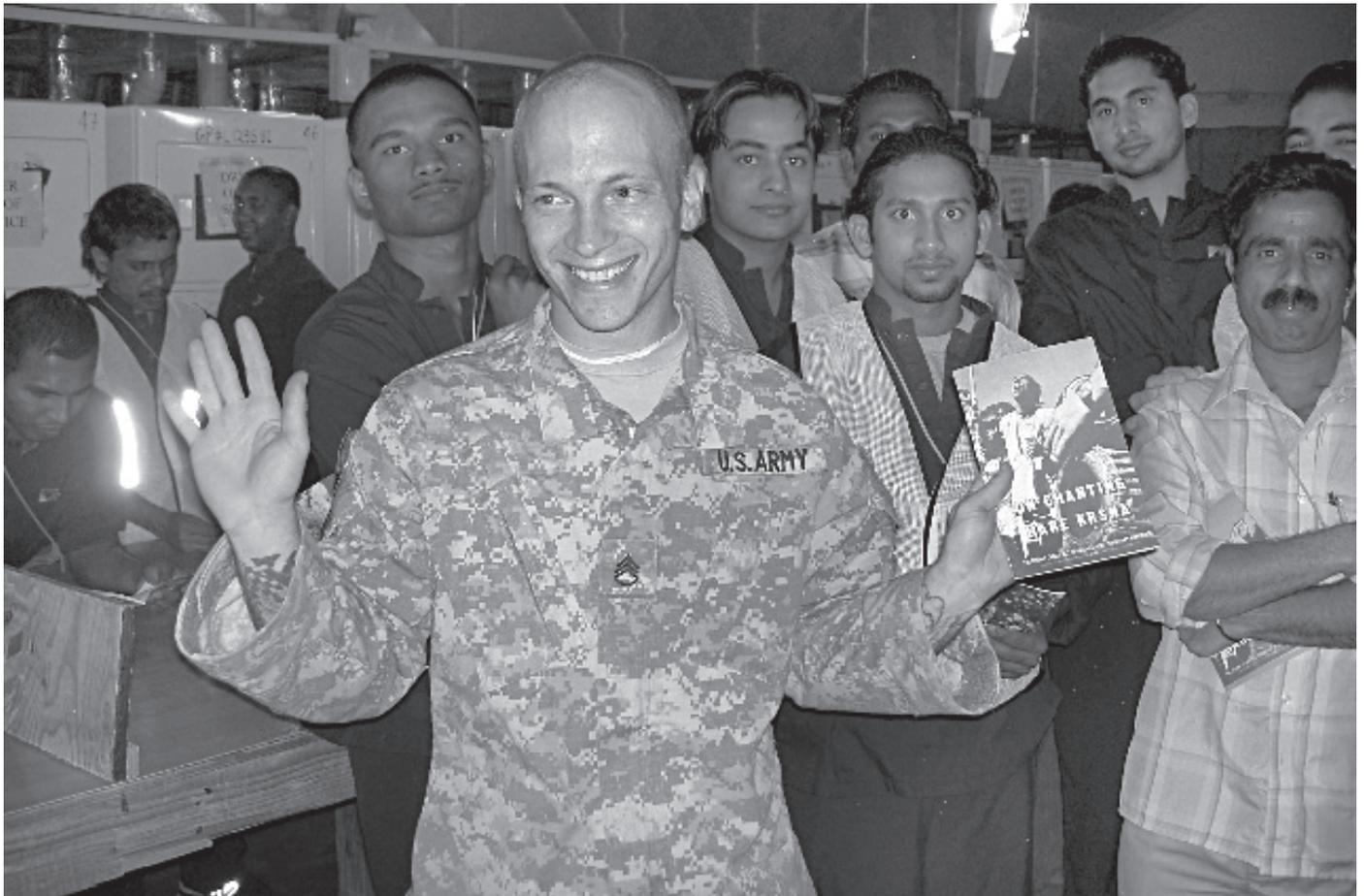
MY WORKPLACE IS PRETTY intense. Some days it's an IED (Improved Explosive Device); some days it's incoming mortars. I'm in the U.S. Army. During my day-to-day life, I try to give as many soldiers as possible the joy of reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Prabhupāda said that by simply holding his books, one makes advancement. If sometimes I must put myself in harm's way to do this ser-

vice, oh well—I can handle it. I can see the change in the soldiers' hearts from receiving Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and *prasāda* offered to the Lord.

Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa  
Talfar, Iraq

I AM A PSYCHIATRIST IN UK. It is difficult to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness openly as this could lead to allegations of brain-washing or

indoctrination. For those who are interested I begin with emphasis on lifestyle changes (the four regulative principles) and how they could benefit in terms of health, economics, environment, and consciousness. During ward rounds it is customary to offer tea/coffee. I refuse and when my colleagues ask me 'Why?' I say that I am a Hare Kṛṣṇa monk and my spiritual master has refrained me from taking intoxica-



*Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa in Iraq*



# words ...



tions. Often this leads to a discussion about “What is Hare Kṛṣṇa?” I then invite the interested ones to my home or temple. The other strategy is that I try to be efficient and honest at work. When others complement on this, I say that I am efficient because I am trying to work for God and therefore want to do my best. This surprises everyone and leads to a discussion about ethics and spirituality.

Dīnabandhu Dāsa  
UK

I WORK IN A HIGH-STRESS real-estate business, where I attract a lot of attention by singing the *mahā-mantra* to relieve my stress. When someone asks, “What’s that song?” I reply that it’s a *mantra* that takes away all the bad and brings only good, inspiring some of my co-workers to write down the words and sing them quietly.

Those who accompany me for exercise during lunchtime also inevitably see me chanting on my beads. I tell them about my sixteen rounds, and that usually starts a spiritual discussion.

Finally, both my office voice mail and my cell phone have the greeting “Hare Kṛṣṇa, you have reached Krishnapria Kashyap.” Having known me for so long, my co-workers sometimes leave a message starting with, “Hey, Hare Kṛṣṇa to you too!”

Krishnapria Kashyap  
San Diego, California

I AM VERY FOND OF celebrating everyone’s birthday at my office. In order to remember I display the names of colleague with their birth dates for each month on the notice board. Until a few months back we used to celebrate the birthdays by cake cutting, distributing sweets and other *namkeen* items. However one day I thought of celebrating the birthdays by distributing Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* (*Atta Ladoo, kesar perā, and kacaurī* which are available at Govinda’s restaurant at the ISKCON temple). There was a magic in Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*... everyone liked it very much. Finally they decided to distribute *prasāda* from Govinda’s on each birthday. Slowly my colleagues began taking *prasāda* to their homes on special occasions, for which they would request me to visit the temple and bring it. I am happy with this service as I get to see the Deities. Eventually my organization sponsored the 6-day Life Changing Seminar for 15 employees.

Manali D. Bijlani, Delhi.

PRASĀDAM DISTRIBUTION— that’s one thing nobody will say ‘no’ to. I heard in a lecture that even if one unknowingly glorifies *prasāda*, he advances in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He gets *ajñāta sukṛti*. So that’s the best way I try to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness among my colleagues, my ex-class mates, and others. One more way is to put up photos of Deities in the office. As

people see Them, they get attracted and glorify the Deities. That’s another trick to tell people about tricky Kṛṣṇa! And finally, by keeping BTGs on my desk. People generally pick them up and go through the pages. “Wow! Wonderful pictures!” That’s the only one-liner I’ve heard so far from them whenever they’ve turned the pages of BTG.

Nandagopāl Jīvana Dāsa  
Author & Editor, *The Higher Taste*. E-Magazine from ISKCON-Delhi

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# EVERY TOWN AND VILLAGE



A LOOK AT THE WORLDWIDE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS (ISKCON)

## JANMĀṢṬAMĪ

**Māyāpur:** Around 63,000 people attended Janmāṣṭamī festival in Māyāpur.

**Vṛndāvana:** For the first time Śrīla Prabhupāda Vyāsa-pūjā was celebrated in the evening, with many leading citizens of Vṛndāvana offering their homage to Śrīla Prabhupāda on his appearance day.

**Delhi:** Janmāṣṭamī festival was covered live from ISKCON New Delhi temple on many leading TV channels. On 20 August DD1 National Channel aired a program related to Lord Kṛṣṇa, highlighting the Vedic Expo, Robotic Show (Dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in Hindi), *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathī, and the paintings on the *parikramā* path.

**Designer outfits for Śrī Śrī Rādhā Rāsabihārī:** Śrī Śrī Rādhā Rāsabihārī, the presiding Deities of ISKCON temple in Juhu, Mumbai were offered outfits designed by the well-known fashion designer Manish Malhotra. In 2007, Manish had designed outfits for the

Lordships on the occasion of Rādhāṣṭamī. For Janmāṣṭamī, Manish used red silk and velvet with heavy gold sequin work and hand embroidery. He mentioned that this was his present to the Lord on His appearance day.

**Agra:** Janmāṣṭamī was celebrated in the Agra Central Jail with almost three thousand inmates participating in *kīrtana* and honoring *prasāda*.

**Ludhiana:** 1008 bhoga were offered to Their Lordships on Janmāṣṭamī. Every visitor got an opportunity to do *abhiṣeka*. About 15,000 people participated in japa meditation on beads. A painting

competition was organized for children in which 80 students from seven schools participated.

**Batala, Punjab:** A *harināma* procession was held on eve of Janmāṣṭamī. 500 devotees from Amritsar, Delhi, Rajpura, and Jharkhand participated.

**UK:** Over 50,000 people attended the first day of the two-day Janmāṣṭamī festival at Bhaktivedānta Manor. 14,000 cars were parked inside the temple campus. Kitchen staff worked 24 hours with 400 volunteers and distributed 50,000 plates of *prasāda*.

**Alachua, USA:** The New Raman Reti Temple celebrated Janmāṣṭamī by building a miniature replica of Vṛndāvana with the seven major temples and holy places.

The **Houston Chronicle**, the only daily newspaper in Houston, published pictures from Janmāṣṭamī on the front page of their online religion section.



Students drawing in a competition organised by ISKCON Ludhiana.





In Belgaum the devotees converted Śrīla Prabhupāda's vyāsa-āsana into a model of the ship Jaladuta.

**Belgaum, Karnataka:** Over 20,000 visitors came to the temple during the three day Janmāṣṭamī festival. For Śrīla Prabhupāda's vyāsa-pūja celebration the devotees converted Śrīla Prabhupāda's vyāsa-āsana into a model of the ship Jaladuta on which Śrīla Prabhupāda sailed to the USA.

Over 700 students from 25 schools participated in competitions on bhakti songs, recitation of Gītā verses, rangoli art, and fancy dress.

### RATHA-YĀTRĀ

**Leicester:** For the first time, the 14-year old Ratha-yātrā festival in Leicester was celebrated with three chariots in the parade. The Lord Mayor, Manjula Sood, and other Councilors attended the festival, along with over 7000 revelers.

**Dublin:** 800 people witnessed the Ratha-yātrā where the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr Eibhlín Byrne, started the festival procession by sweeping the ground in front of the chariot.

### SEATTLE

A new temple and Vedic Cultural Center opened in Seattle, USA.

### GURUKULĪ REUNION

Around 400 gurukulīs from several countries attended this year's European Kulī Melā in Rādhādes, Belgium.

### MTV FILMS DALLAS TEMPLE

MTV filmed the Sunday temple program in Dallas. The story line (for real) was about MTV following a 17 year old film student's visit to three religious places she had never gone to before. The film student went to the Dallas Buddhist temple, the Bahai temple, and the Dallas Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. The segment will air on MTV in September-January.

Reports by Dīnabandhu Dāsa, Vrajendra Nandana Dāsa, Pārijāta Devī Dāsī, Kaplish, Bhaktisiddhānta Dāsa, and Rādhā Mohan Dāsa.

### Prayers and ....

(Continued from page 7)

son as I was. Please be merciful to me and bless me with devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Make me pure so that I can distribute this devotion to others."

I was still alone in the temple hall. I sat down in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mūrti and started chanting intensely. I just thought, "Today is a very auspicious day and Śrīla Prabhupāda may bless me with devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Then I will preach the message of Godhead everywhere." As I was thinking so, suddenly there was a bright light in front of my eyes ... actually some one had put on the lights.

But that light brought me out of my dreams. I was making big prayers before Śrīla Prabhupāda but what about my endeavors? I desired pure devotion but I was day dreaming while chanting. And then I had the audacity to stand before Śrīla Prabhupāda and say that the holy name had failed to change me in so many years. How seriously was I attempting to hear attentively each word of the mahāmantra?

I felt depressed; but again decided to make a new start in my spiritual life.

This is what I learned: Unless one concentrates on each and every syllable of the mahāmantra during the chanting of sixteen rounds he has no right to complain that the holy name has failed to change him. Be attentive... give the holy name a chance to change you. Vision without action is a daydream and action without vision is a nightmare. Don't dream while you pray, rather pray attentively that dreams come true. ❀

Yugāvatāra Dāsa is a lecturer in Anatomy in a medical college in Mumbai. He is a regular contributor to BTG.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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as of  
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## Vaiṣṇava Calendar 1 Oct -15 Nov 2008

9 Oct : Rāmacandra Vijayotsava, Śrī Madhvācārya – Appearance  
11 Oct : Fasting for Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī  
12 Oct : Break fast (Mumbai) 06:32 am - 06:57 am, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī – Disappearance, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī – Disappearance, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī – Disappearance  
14 Oct : Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaradiya Rāsayātrā, Śrī Murārī Gupta – Disappearance, Lakṣmī Pūjā, Fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins. (Fast from *urad dāl* for one month.)  
19 Oct : Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura – Disappearance  
21 Oct : Appearance of Rādhā Kuṇḍa, Snāna dāna, Bahulāṣṭamī  
22 Oct : Virabhadra – Appearance  
24 Oct : Fasting for Ramā Ekādaśī  
25 Oct : Break fast (Mumbai) 08:20 am - 10:27 am  
28 Oct : Dīpa dāna, Dīpāvalī  
29 Oct : Govardhana Pūjā (Worship of Govardhana Hill), Go Pūjā, Go Kṛḍā, Bali Daityarāja Pūjā, Śrī Rasikānanda – Appearance  
30 Oct : Śrī Vāsudeva Ghosh – Disappearance  
2 Nov : Śrīla Prabhupāda – Disappearance (Fasting till noon)  
6 Nov : Gopāṣṭamī, Goṣṭhāṣṭamī, Śrī Gadādhara Dāsa Gosvāmī – Disappearance, Śrī Dhananjaya Paṇḍita – Disappearance, Śrī Śrīnivāsa Ācārya – Disappearance  
7 Nov : Jagaddhātrī Pūjā  
9 Nov : Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī – Disappearance (Fasting till noon), Bhiṣma-pañcaka, Fasting for Utthāna Ekādaśī  
10 Nov : Break fast (Mumbai) 06:43 am - 10:29 am  
12 Nov : Śrī Bhugarbha Gosvāmī – Disappearance, Śrī Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita – Disappearance  
13 Nov : Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsayātrā, Tulasī-Śaligrāma Vivāha (marriage), Śrī Nimbārkācārya – Appearance, Cāturmāsya ends.  
14 Nov : Kātyāyanī vrata begins

## Lord Kṛṣṇa—the Master of All Mystics

**M**ystic power is very attractive. In fact, many feel that in order for someone to be a spiritual leader, that person should possess mystic power. No wonder that fake spiritualists use a little bit of mystic power to fool gullible masses. Śrīla Prabhupāda was once asked whether he possessed mystic power which could ‘shock’ someone. He humorously replied to the man, “Why don’t you put your finger in an electric socket and start the electricity flow. That should serve the purpose.”

Mystic power ‘does’ exist. It is of eight varieties—Lord Kṛṣṇa describes them to Uddhava (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.15.4-5):

1. *aṇīmā* - Becoming smaller than the smallest
2. *mahimā* - becoming greater than the greatest
3. *laghimā* - becoming lighter than the lightest
4. *prāpti* - one acquires whatever one desires
5. *prākāmya* - one experiences any enjoyable object, either in this world or the next
6. *īśitva* - one can manipulate the subpotencies of *māyā*
7. *vaśitva* - one is unimpeded by the three modes of nature
8. *kāmāvasāyitā* – one can obtain anything from anywhere, to the highest possible limit.

Through *aṇīmā-siddhi* one can become so small that one can enter a stone or pass through any obstacle. Through *mahimā-siddhi* one becomes so great that one covers everything, and through *laghimā* one becomes so light that one can ride on the sun’s rays into the sun planet. Through *prāpti-siddhi* one can acquire anything from anywhere and can even touch the moon with one’s finger. By this mystic perfection one can also enter into the senses of any other living entity through the predominating deities of the particular senses; and by thus utilizing the senses of others, one can acquire anything. Through *prākāmya* one can experience any enjoyable object, either in this world or the next, and through *īśitva*, or the controlling potency, one can manipulate the subpotencies of *māyā*, which are material. In other words, even by acquiring mystic powers one cannot pass beyond the control of illusion; however, one may manipulate the subpotencies of illusion. Through *vaśitva*, or the power to control, one can bring others under one’s dominion or keep oneself beyond the control of the three modes

of nature. Ultimately, one acquires through *kāmāvasāyitā* the maximum powers of control, acquisition and enjoyment.

Therefore it is clear that what so-called miracle men, *bābās*, *māntriks*, and *tāntriks* peddle before us is a very poor excuse for miracles. Contemporary miracle men are like the dullards belonging to a miracle academy classroom of the previous ages.

After the advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa, when He was just a tiny baby, a demon named *Tṛṇāvarta* was sent by Kāmsa. Kāmsa wanted his servants to kill Kṛṣṇa so that he could rule without opposition. Of course, Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that this demon had entered Gokula, therefore He became so heavy that His mother was forced to put Him down. She felt Him to be heavy like the planet earth! Why did Kṛṣṇa do that? He did not want the demon to kidnap Him from His mother’s arms, therefore He became heavy.

As soon as the demon saw that the baby was alone, he assumed the form of a dusty whirlwind. All Gokula was reduced to darkness, which was so acute that people could not see even each other. The demon lifted baby Kṛṣṇa and soared up high in the skies. He was about to throw Him down to His death, when Kṛṣṇa grabbed his neck.

Here was the competition between a demon who had mastered the *laghimā siddhi* (being lighter) and the original master of ‘all’ *siddhis*—Lord Yogeśvara. Previously when mother Yaśodā had lifted her baby boy His weight was normal, then suddenly He became heavy, and again when the demon had lifted the boy he too felt Him to be normal, and yet again now the baby was heavier than a mountain.

As Lord Kṛṣṇa increased His weight, the demon found it impossible to go any further. His flight was arrested. With Kṛṣṇa grasping him by the throat, *Tṛṇāvarta* choked, unable to make even a sound or even to move his hands and legs. His eyes popping out, the demon lost his life and fell, along with the little boy, down to the ground of Vraja. He fell on a slab of stone and his limbs were dislocated.

Thus ends the story of a miracle-performer who tried to use his *siddhis* in competition with Lord Kṛṣṇa. ☀

- Śyamānanda Dāsa

