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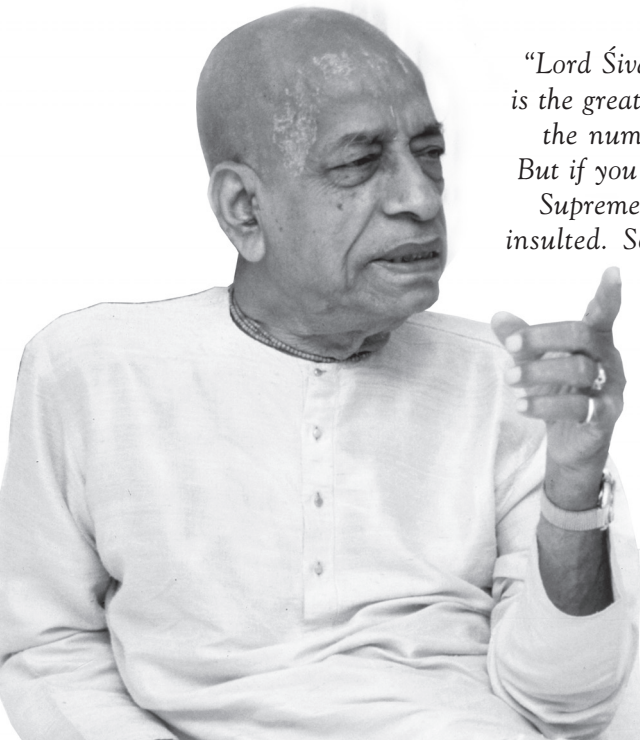
A selection highlighting different qualities of Lord Śiva

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 Mahārabhu
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



14



"Lord Śiva is Vaiṣṇava. He is the greatest devotee. He is the number-one demigod. But if you say that he is the Supreme, then he will feel insulted. So don't insult him in that way."
—p13

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BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement



LETTERS

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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Dāsa, Nanda Dulāla Dāsa, Mukunda Mālā
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IS BACK TO GODHEAD AN OFFENDER?

In 1995, *Back to Godhead* pub-
lished a series of articles called “The
Glories of the Demigods.” Not ev-
eryone was pleased with it. We pub-
lish here excerpts from an objec-
tion and our reply.

Federation of Hindu Associations (FHA), Inc., Hawaiian Gardens, California

Resolution

The Federation of Hindu Asso-
ciations, Inc. (FHA) takes strong
exception to the article in the *Back
to Godhead* magazine, which in ef-
fect state that Śiva, Gaṇeśa,
Brahmā, Rāma and other deities
can at best be considered as “demi-
gods” and “a little higher” than
human beings.

Statements of this type are ex-
tremely offensive and confusing to
the devout Hindus and are destruc-
tive to the Hindu interests. Brand-
ing the worshipers of such deities
as “offenders” is not fair to the com-
passionate and diversified philoso-
phy of Hinduism.

With interpretations suiting to
themselves, from obscure *Purāṇas*,
since thousands of years, schools of
Vaiṣṇavism (Kṛṣṇa), Śaivism and
Śaktism (Durgā) are unfortunately
conflicting on this question. The
attitudes reek of fundamentalism,
violate the very spirit of Hinduism,
and create the possibility of another
offshoot from the mother religion.
By following such interpretations,
they are creating exclusive territo-
ries of influence and business
around one deity, by eliminating or
reducing the significance of others.

FHA considers that in Hindu-
ism all deities represent the differ-
ent forms, attributes, qualities, pow-

ers or śaktis of the same Almighty.
A partial attachment to any of
them, and not surrendering to all
of the others remaining, does not
complete surrender to all the quali-
ties and components of the defini-
tion of God. Surrender to any de-
ity is surrender to one of His at-
tributes. Hence, all of them are
worshiped, at one time or another,
to complete the “Pūjā” [worship] of
the Supreme. So, nobody should
knock down, degrade or insult any
of the Gods or Goddesses by creat-
ing classes or grades around these
multi-faces of the same God. FHA
proposes that, for the benefit of
Hinduism, we should stop this dis-
cussion and treatment of superior-
ity and inferiority.

FHA appeals to ISKCON to
continue the good work initiated
by Swami Prabhupāda.

FHA appeals to ISKCON to
make a clear statement that “there
is no superior or inferior among
Kṛṣṇa, Śiva or Durgā” and retract
the objectionable statements and
declare themselves belonging to the
Hindu family and way of life, re-
specting everyone.

Please Remember: Confinement
is not Hinduism. HINDUS,
PLEASE SAVE HINDUISM.

Sincerely,

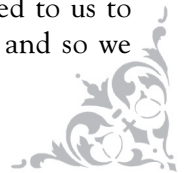
Prithvi Raj Singh, President

OUR REPLY: Dear Mr. Singh,

Thank you for sending us a copy
of your resolution. I am grateful to
you for expressing to us your con-
cern.

You have appealed to us to con-
tinue the good work initiated by
Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thank you for
that request. We consider it your
blessing.

You have also appealed to us to
make a clear statement, and so we



shall. Here it is: We reaffirm that Kṛṣṇa alone is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. He appears in unlimited Viṣṇu forms such as Nārāyaṇa and Rāma. All other gods and living beings are His servants.

Now, let me respond in some detail to the points you have raised in your resolution.

Yes, we have referred to Lord Śiva, Śrī Gaṇeśa, and Lord Brahmā as demigods—but not Lord Śrī Rāma. We consistently distinguish between the forms of Viṣṇu (the Supreme Lord) and the *devas* (the exalted servants of the Supreme Lord). According to authoritative scriptures, Lord Rāma is another form of Viṣṇu—He is identical with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord Himself—and deities such as Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, and Śrī Gaṇeśa are His servants.

Yes, we refer to these exalted servants as “demigods.” This is an English rendering of the Sanskrit word *deva*, and it means that they are partial manifestations of God. Yes, we say they are subordinate to God and are His servants.

Far from being insults, these are terms of high praise. According to the *R̥g Veda* (1.22.20), to be subordinate to the Supreme Lord is the glorious qualification of the gods (*om tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ*). As conditioned souls, we are insubordinate—rebellious against the Lord—whereas the *devas* always humbly consider themselves subordinate and always look toward His lotus feet.

We therefore honor the *devas* for being exalted devotees. We do not call them ugly or bogus, dismiss them as “seducers,” or consider them merely “a little higher” than human beings.

Are the *devas* “a little higher” than human beings? No, we never said that. They are vastly higher.

But they are still subordinate to Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord.

You are unhappy that we published a statement describing the worshipers of the *devas* as “offenders.” But that word wasn’t ours. It appeared in a direct quotation from the *Padma Purāṇa* (one of the eighteen principal *Purāṇas*, and hardly obscure). The specific Sanskrit word used is *pāṣaṇḍi*. We have given the translation “offender.” According to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English dictionary, alternatives are “heretic,” “hypocrite,” “imposter,” or “anyone who falsely assumes the characteristics of an orthodox Hindu.”

That’s not our fault. That’s what the scriptural quotation says. We have simply repeated it.

Anyway, for the moment let us leave the *Purāṇas* aside. In the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, our main source of teaching is *Bhagavad-gītā*. That is our primary source of authority, the main scripture we follow. How about you? Do the members of your Association accept the words of *Bhagavad-gītā*? I assume they must.

Then what do you make of this statement (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.23):

ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya
yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam

Here Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa clearly says that those who are devotees of other gods (*anya-devatā*) and who worship them with faith (*śraddhayānvitāḥ*) are actually worshiping only Him (*mām eva*)—but they are doing it in the wrong way (*avidhi-pūrvakam*).

The *Bhagavad-gītā* says it is wrong. Why should we say it is right?

Elsewhere in the *Gītā* (7.20), Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that because of materialistic desires (*kāmaih*), those

who surrender to other gods (*anya-devatāḥ*) are bereft of intelligence (*hṛta-jñānāḥ*). The intelligent, Lord Kṛṣṇa says (7.19), surrender to Him (*mām prapadyante*), knowing that He, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who appeared as the son of Vāsudeva, is everything. He is the complete whole, the Absolute Truth, of whom all other living beings are a part.

Therefore, by worshiping Kṛṣṇa one automatically worships all other deities, just as by watering the root of a tree one waters all the leaves and branches or by putting food in the stomach one feeds the entire body.

We can’t water every leaf of a tree or offer food to every cell in the body. But when we pour water on the root or put food in the stomach, the entire tree or the entire body is satisfied.

As you say in your resolution, “Surrender to any deity is surrender to one of His [God’s] attributes.” True. But surrender to the Supreme Lord Himself is surrender to the source of all deities and all attributes.

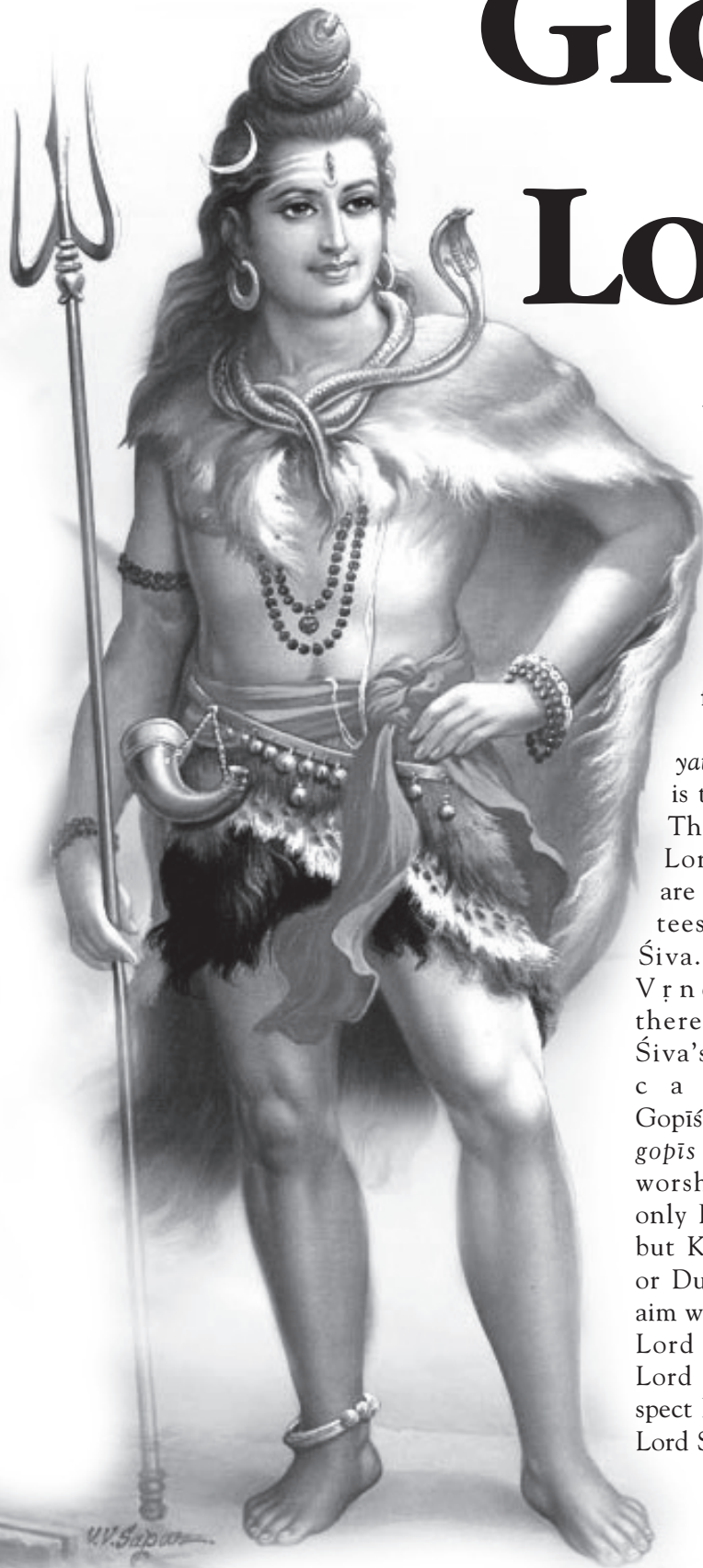
You speak of the need to surrender to all the gods. But the Vedic scriptures tell us there are 330 million gods. So how will it be possible? We can’t even think of all those gods, what to speak of surrender to them.*

Therefore, we have to follow the method given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, God Himself: surrender to Kṛṣṇa. In that way our surrender will be complete.

God is the complete reservoir of all qualities, powers, and attributes, and yes these are represented by various gods. Therefore some people are attracted to one god, some to another. But as you say, “A partial attachment to any of them, and not surrendering to all of the others remaining, does not complete surrender” (please turn to page 29)

*A friend has pointed out to me that to separately worship each of the 330 million gods within the course of a year, we’d need to worship more than 900 thousand of them every day.

Glories of Lord Śiva

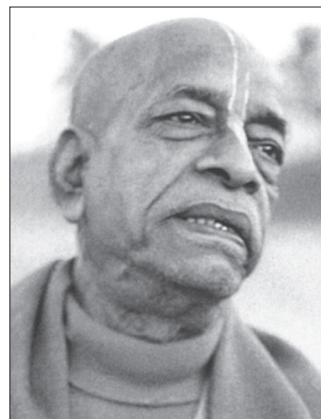


In this article we pose certain commonly asked question about Lord Śiva, with answers from the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda

In what way do devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa offer respect to Lord Śiva?

It is said, *vaiṣṇavānām yathā sambhuḥ*: Lord Śiva is the best of all devotees. Therefore all devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa are also devotees of Lord Śiva. In Vṛndāvana there is Lord Śiva's temple called Gopīśvara. The *gopīs* used to worship not only Lord Śiva but Kātyāyanī, or Durgā, as well, but their aim was to attain the favor of Lord Kṛṣṇa. A devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa does not disrespect Lord Śiva, but worships Lord Śiva as the most exalted

devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Consequently whenever a devotee worships Lord Śiva, he prays to Lord Śiva to achieve the favor of Kṛṣṇa, and he does not request material profit. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.20) it is said that generally people worship demigods for some material profit. *Kāmais tais tair hr̥ta jñānāḥ*. Driven by material lust, they worship demigods, but



a devotee never does so, for he is never driven by material lust. That is the difference between a devotee's respect for Lord Śiva and an *asura's* respect for him. The

asura worships Lord Śiva, takes some benediction from him, misuses the benediction and ultimately is killed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who awards him liberation. (*Purport to Bhāg. 4.24.30*)

What is the relationship between Lord Śiva and the ghosts?

Lord Śiva, or Rudra, is the king of the ghosts. Ghostly characters worship Lord Śiva to be gradually guided toward a path of self-realization. *Māyāvādī* philosophers are mostly worshipers of Lord Śiva, and Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya is considered to be the incarnation of Lord Śiva for preaching godlessness to the *Māyāvādī* philosophers. Ghosts are bereft of a physical body because of their grievously sinful acts, such as suicide. The last resort of the ghostly characters in human society is to take shelter of suicide, either material or spiritual. Material suicide causes loss of the physical body, and spiritual suicide causes loss of the individual identity. *Māyāvādī* philosophers desire to lose their individuality and merge into the impersonal spiritual *brahmajyoti* existence. Lord Śiva, being very kind to the ghosts, sees that although they are condemned, they get physical bodies. He places them into the wombs of women who indulge in sexual intercourse regardless of the restrictions on time and circumstance. (*Purport to Bhāg. 3.14.24*)

Why do so many ladies worship Lord Śiva?

Today in Hindu society, unmarried girls are still taught to worship Lord Śiva with the idea that they may get husbands like him. Lord Śiva is the ideal husband, not in the sense of riches or sense gratification, but because he is the greatest of all devotees. *Vaiṣṇavānām yathā sambhuḥ*: Śambhu, or Lord Śiva, is

the ideal Vaiṣṇava. He constantly meditates upon Lord Rāma and chants Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Śiva has a Vaiṣṇava-*sampradāya*, which is called the Viṣṇusvāmī-*sampradāya*. Unmarried girls worship Lord Śiva so that they can expect a husband who is as good a Vaiṣṇava as he. The girls are not taught to select a husband who is very rich or very opulent for material sense gratification; rather, if a girl is fortunate enough to get a husband as good as Lord Śiva in devotional service, then her life becomes perfect. The wife is dependent on the husband, and if the husband is a Vaiṣṇava, then naturally she shares the devotional service of the husband because she renders him service. (*Purport to Bhāg. 3.23.1*)

Why does Lord Śiva have snakes all over his body?

In order to get release from the false ego, one has to worship Śaṅkarṣaṇa. Śaṅkarṣaṇa is also worshiped through Lord Śiva; the snakes which cover the body of Lord Śiva are representations of Śaṅkarṣaṇa, and Lord Śiva is always absorbed in meditation upon Śaṅkarṣaṇa. (*Purport to Bhāg. 3.26.21*)

What is the position of Lord Śiva ?

In the *Vāmana Purāṇa* it is said that the same Viṣṇu expands Himself as Brahmā and Śiva to direct the different qualities.

Maheśvara, or Lord Śiva, is not an ordinary living being, nor is he equal to Lord Viṣṇu. Effectively comparing Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva, the *Brahma-saṁhitā* says that Viṣṇu is like milk, whereas Śiva is like yogurt. Yogurt is nothing like milk, but nevertheless it is milk also. (*Purport to Cc. Adī 5.104*)

It is said that Lord Śiva is non-different from Lord Kṛṣṇa? What does it mean?

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, in his *Bhakti-sandarbha* (213), has clearly defined that a pure devotee's observation of the spiritual master and Lord Śiva as one with the Personality of Godhead exists in terms of their being very dear to the Lord, not identical with Him in all respects. (*Purport to Cc. Adī 1.46*)

Is Lord Śiva worshipped thought taking of intoxicants?

Lord Śiva drank poison to the extent of swallowing an ocean, but if any common man tries to drink even a fragment of such poison, he will be killed. There are many pseudo devotees of Lord Śiva who want to indulge in smoking *gañjā* (marijuana) and similar intoxicating drugs, forgetting that by so imitating the acts of Lord Śiva they are calling death very near. Similarly, there are some pseudo devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa who prefer to imitate the Lord in His *rāsa-līlā*, or dance of love, forgetting their inability to lift Govardhana Hill. It is best, therefore, that one not try to imitate the powerful, but simply follow their instructions; nor should one try to occupy their posts without qualification. There are so many "incarnations" of God without the power of the Supreme Godhead. (*Purport to Bg. 3.24*)

Q. How is Lord Śiva auspicious?

A. Lord Śiva is always great and auspicious, but since he has accepted on his head the Ganges water, which emanated from the lotus feet of the Lord, he has become even more auspicious and important. (*Purport to Bhāg. 3.28.22*)

Q. Is it acceptable to worship Śiva

before Kṛṣṇa?

A. There is no harm. But you should understand what is Śiva and what is Viṣṇu. If you offer first prayer to Lord Śiva, there is no harm. It is good. He is... *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*. He is our spiritual master. He is Vaiṣṇava. Why not offer first respect to him? But if you take Lord Śiva as the Supreme, that is insult. You are giving me respect as spiritual master, but if you give me overestimation, that "You are the king of the whole world," that is insult. That is not prayer. If you offer me prayer as I am befitting, then it is all right. But if you give me prayer for which I am not befitting, that is insult. So you must know what is the position of Lord Śiva. He is a Vaiṣṇava. He is the greatest devotee. He is the number-one demigod, and everything is all right. But if you say that he is the Supreme, then he will feel insulted, that "What is this nonsense saying?" So don't insult him in that way. That

will go against your credit. He doesn't like that. (*Conversation, 5 Oct 1975, Mauritius*)

Q. Who are the real followers of Lord Śiva?

A. It is especially significant that Lord Śiva is a pure devotee of Lord Vāsudeva. *Vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*: "Amongst all Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Śiva is the topmost." Consequently Lord Śiva has a *sampradāya*, a Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession, called the Rudra-sampradāya. At the present moment those who belong to the Viṣṇusvāmī-sampradāya of Vaiṣṇavas come from Rudra, Lord Śiva. (*Purport to Bhag. 4.24.76*)

Q. What is the relationship between Lord Śiva and devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa?

A. Because Lord Śiva is a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he loves all the devotees of the Supreme Lord. Lord Śiva told the Pracetās that

because they were devotees of the Lord, he loved them very much. Lord Śiva was not kind and merciful only to the Pracetās; anyone who is a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very dear to Lord Śiva. Not only are the devotees dear to Lord Śiva, but he respects them as much as he respects the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (*Purport to Bhag. 4.24.30*) ❀

*rāma rāmeti rāmeti
rame rāme manorame
sahasra-nāmaḥ tulyam
rāma-nāma varānane*

"[Lord Śiva addressed his wife, Durgā:] 'O Varānā, I chant the holy name of Rāma, Rāma, Rāma and thus enjoy this beautiful sound. This holy name of Rāmacandra is equal to one thousand holy names of Lord Viṣṇu.'

—Uttara-khaṇḍa,
Padma Purāṇa (72.335).



Q. What are the activities of Lord Śiva?

A. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses such as *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ* glorify Śambhu as a Vaiṣṇava. The purport of such statements is that Śambhu unites with Durgā-Devī according to his own time potency and the will of Govinda. Thus, he accomplishes his task. In many scriptures headed by the *tantras*, he teaches religious duties that are a ladder for the *jivas* of various qualifications to come to *bhakti*, devotion. By Govinda's sweet will, Śambhu (indirectly) protects and sustains *śuddha-bhakti*, pure devotion, by preaching the

doctrine of *Māyāvāda* (illusionism) and intellectual or imaginary fabrications of the scriptures.

The fifty qualities of the *jīva* are present within Śambhu in copious proportions, and five more great qualities unattainable by the ordinary *jīva* are also found in him in partial proportion. So Śambhu cannot be categorized as a *jīva*. He is the lord (*īśvara*) of the *jīvas* although he partakes of the nature of a separated part (*vibhinnāśa*) of the Supreme Lord (Bs. 5.45).

—From *Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava*, Chapter 22

ŚIVA

“The Auspicious One”

by Satyarāja Dāsa



ŚIVA IS AMONG the most widely worshiped deities in India. With names such as Mahādeva (“the great god”) and Naṭarāja (“the king of dancers”), he is venerated in ancient holy cities like Benares, where Śaivites (as his worshipers are called) devote their lives to him, viewing him as the Supreme Lord.

The fact is, he is supreme. As the scriptures say, “Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is supreme among *Purāṇas* just as the Gaṅgā is the greatest of all rivers, Lord Acyuta [Viṣṇu] the best among deities, and Lord Śambhu [Śiva] the greatest among devotees of Lord Viṣṇu [*vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhu*].” (Bhāg. 12.13.16) According to this and similar statements, Śiva may correctly be considered the greatest—at least among devotees—but among gods the supreme is Viṣṇu. This is made clear as far back as the *Ṛg Veda* (1.22.20): “The lotus feet of Viṣṇu are the supreme objective of all the demigods. Those lotus feet of the Lord are as enlightening as the sun in the sky.”

Śaivites, however, tend to see Śiva not just as the greatest devotee but as God Himself. There is some basis for this in scripture. In the *Bhāgavatam* (4.7.50) Lord Viṣṇu

The Birth of Lord Śiva

The pastime of Lord Śiva's birth is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.12.7–13):

“Although Brahmā tried to curb his anger, it came out from between his eyebrows, and a child of mixed blue and red was immediately generated. (7)

“After his [Śiva's] birth, he began to cry: O destiny maker [Brahmā], teacher of the universe, kindly designate my name and place. (8)

“The all-powerful Brahmā, born from the lotus flower, pacified the boy with gentle words, accepting his request, and said: Do not cry. I shall certainly do as you desire. (9)

“Thereafter, Brahmā said: O chief of the demigods, you shall be called by the name Rudra by all



people because you have anxiously cried. (10)

“My dear boy, I have already selected the following places for your

residence: the heart, the senses, the air of life, the sky, the air, the fire, the water, the earth, the sun, the moon, and austerity. (11)

“My dear Rudra, you have eleven other names: Manyu, Manu, Mahinasa, Mahān, Śiva, Ṛtadhvaja, Ugraretā, Bhava, Kāla, Vāmadeva, and Dhṛtavrata. (12)

“O Rudra, you also have eleven wives, called the Rudrāṅīs, and they are as follows: Dhī, Dhṛti, Rasalā, Umā, Niyut, Sarpi, Ilā, Ambikā, Irāvati, Svadhā, and Dīkṣā.” (13)

Śiva and Pārvatī, as his wife is also known, have their abode in Siva-loka, between the material and spiritual worlds (see *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.43). This description is of how Śiva appeared in the material world. ❁

Himself says, “Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and I are the supreme cause of the material manifestation. I am the Supersoul, the self-sufficient witness. But impersonally there is no difference between Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Me.”

In other words, all three divinities are one because they are all *avatāras*, or descents of the Supreme, for the creation, maintenance, and annihilation of the material world. In this context, they are known as *guṇa-avatāras*, and they preside over the modes of passion (embodied by Brahmā, the creator), goodness (embodied by Viṣṇu, the maintainer), and ignorance (embodied by Śiva, the destroyer). All three of these *avatāras* are considered aspects of the same principle of Godhead.

The *Mahābhārata* too (*Anuśāsana-parva* 135) says that Viṣṇu and Śiva are nondifferent

and even counts the names Śiva, Śārva, Sthānu, Isāna, and Rudra—names traditionally identified with Śiva—among the thousand names of Viṣṇu. Such identification between Śiva and the Supreme Lord seemingly gives weight to the idea of contemporary Hinduism that all the gods mentioned in the Vedic literature are one.

But a close study of scripture shows that while there is reason to see Śiva as nondifferent from Viṣṇu, there is also reason to distinguish strongly between them. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is accepted by nearly all classes of transcendentalists in India—including Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivites—Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) is the ultimate Godhead, to whom even Śiva must bow down. This is not a matter of opinion or sectarian prejudice. Kṛṣṇa identifies Himself as the source of all material and spiritual

worlds (Bg. 10.8), and Arjuna confirms that Kṛṣṇa is indeed supreme (Bg. 10.12). Kṛṣṇa is *deveśa*, “the God of all the gods.” (Bg. 11.37)

In countless incidents from the *Purāṇas*, Śiva is clearly seen to be Viṣṇu's devotee. For example, there is the story of Vṛkāsura, a demon who practiced severe austerities and then asked Śiva for a boon—the power to kill at once any living being whose head Vṛkāsura would merely touch. Śiva granted the boon, but was soon to regret his decision, for Vṛka came after him to try out the newfound power. Lord Śiva ran to all parts of the universe to escape this power-mad devotee and finally ended up at the door of the kingdom of Viṣṇu.

Hearing the words of a frightened Śiva, Viṣṇu devised a plan to help him. Viṣṇu appeared directly before Vṛkāsura and told him Śiva was not to be trusted. “Śiva is fond

of joking and even lying,” said Viṣṇu. “I am sure he is not telling you the truth. He was just teasing you. Touch your own head, and you will see that nothing will happen.”

Vṛka, of course, touched his own head and died. But the point of this story, in the present context, is Viṣṇu’s superiority over Śiva, who could not resolve the problem on his own. After racing through the entire material cosmos to escape Vṛkāsura, Śiva sought refuge in Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

To counter this, Śiva devotees cite traditions in which Rāma, for example, is seen as a devotee of Śiva. This would make an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu subservient to Śiva, and thus support the tenets of Śaivism. But upon closer study Rāma’s worship of Śiva turns out to be a later tradition, not supported in Vālmiki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*. Moreover, even these later traditions explain that Rāma became a devotee of Śiva only out of etiquette: Rāma wanted to become a greater devotee of Śiva than the evil Rāvaṇa was, and then ask Śiva for permission to defeat Rāvaṇa.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* offers many stories about the glories of Śiva—his destruction of Dakṣa’s sacrifice, his marriage with Umā (Pārvatī), his drinking of the ocean of poison, his killing of the demon Andhaka, his cursing of Kaṇḍarpa—but ultimately the *Rāmāyaṇa* makes the supremacy of Rāma quite clear. Rāma (as an incarnation of Viṣṇu) is supreme.

The differences between Śiva and Viṣṇu should be further underlined. As Śrīla Prabhupāda says in *Srimad-Bhāgavatam* (3.9.16), purport,

“Of the three principal agents controlling the three modes of material nature, Viṣṇu is the Almighty;

even though He is within material nature for the purpose of maintenance, He is not controlled by the laws of material nature. The other two, Brahmā and Śiva, although almost as greatly powerful as Viṣṇu, are within the control of the material energy of the Supreme Lord.

Śiva is superior to Brahmā, who is an empowered soul (*jīva*), but Śiva is not quite on the same level as Viṣṇu. It is therefore said that Śiva is a unique living being who merits his own category, known as *śiva-tattva*.”

To clarify Lord Śiva’s position, the *Brahma-saṃhitā* (5.45) offers an analogy: “When milk is transformed by acids into yogurt, the yogurt is neither the same as nor different from the milk. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda [Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu], of whom Lord Śiva is a transformation for performing the work of destruction.”

Though milk and yogurt are essentially nondifferent, yogurt is a product of milk. One can use milk to make ghee, cheese, ice cream, or yogurt, but one cannot turn yogurt into milk. Clearly, then, Śiva’s divinity is intimately connected with, even dependent upon, his relationship to Viṣṇu.

This is made clearer still in the *Bhāgavatam* (3.28.22): “The blessed Lord Śiva becomes all the more blessed by bearing on his head the holy waters of the Ganges, which has its source in the water that washed the Lord’s lotus feet.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, “Lord Śiva is important because he is holding on his head the holy Ganges water, which has its origin in the footwash of Lord Viṣṇu.

“In the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* by Sanātana Gosvāmī, it is said that anyone who puts the Supreme Lord and the demigods, including Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, on the same level at once becomes a

pāṣaṇḍī, or atheist. We should never consider the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu and the demigods to be on an equal footing.”

So, theologically, Śiva is both God and yet different from God as well. Because of Śiva’s intimate contact with the quality of ignorance and with matter (which is innately ignorant), the living beings in this world cannot receive the same spiritual restoration by worshiping him as by worshiping Viṣṇu.

And yet they try. As mentioned earlier, the worshipers of Śiva are second in number only to the worshipers of Viṣṇu. Śaiva Siddhānta, a form of Śiva worship found mainly in South India, is a force to be reckoned with, and Vīra Śaivism (or Lingāyatism), another form of the religion, is popular in the South Indian state of Karnataka.

There are other forms of Śiva worship as well, but the only authorized form comes down in the Rudra-Sampradāya, also known as the Viṣṇusvāmī-Sampradāya, an authorized Vaiṣṇava lineage in which Śiva is worshiped as the greatest devotee of Viṣṇu. Its adherents say that ultimate liberation comes from devotion to Viṣṇu. And Śiva, they say, showed how to be the perfect devotee. Even Śiva himself confirms that one can achieve the supreme destination only by the mercy of Viṣṇu. Lord Śiva says, *mukti-pradātā sarveṣāṃ viṣṇur eva na saṃśayaḥ*: “There is no doubt that Viṣṇu is the deliverer of liberation for everyone.” (purport to Bg. 7.14) ❀

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

Śrī Śivāṣṭakam

Eight prayers glorifying Lord Śiva, spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
Recorded in Murāri Gupta's Śrī Caitanya Carita Mahākāvya

*namo namaste tri-daśeśvarāya
bhūtādi nāthāya ṛṣḍāya nityam
gaṅgā-taraṅgotthita-bāla-candra-
cūdāya gaurī-nayanotsavāya*

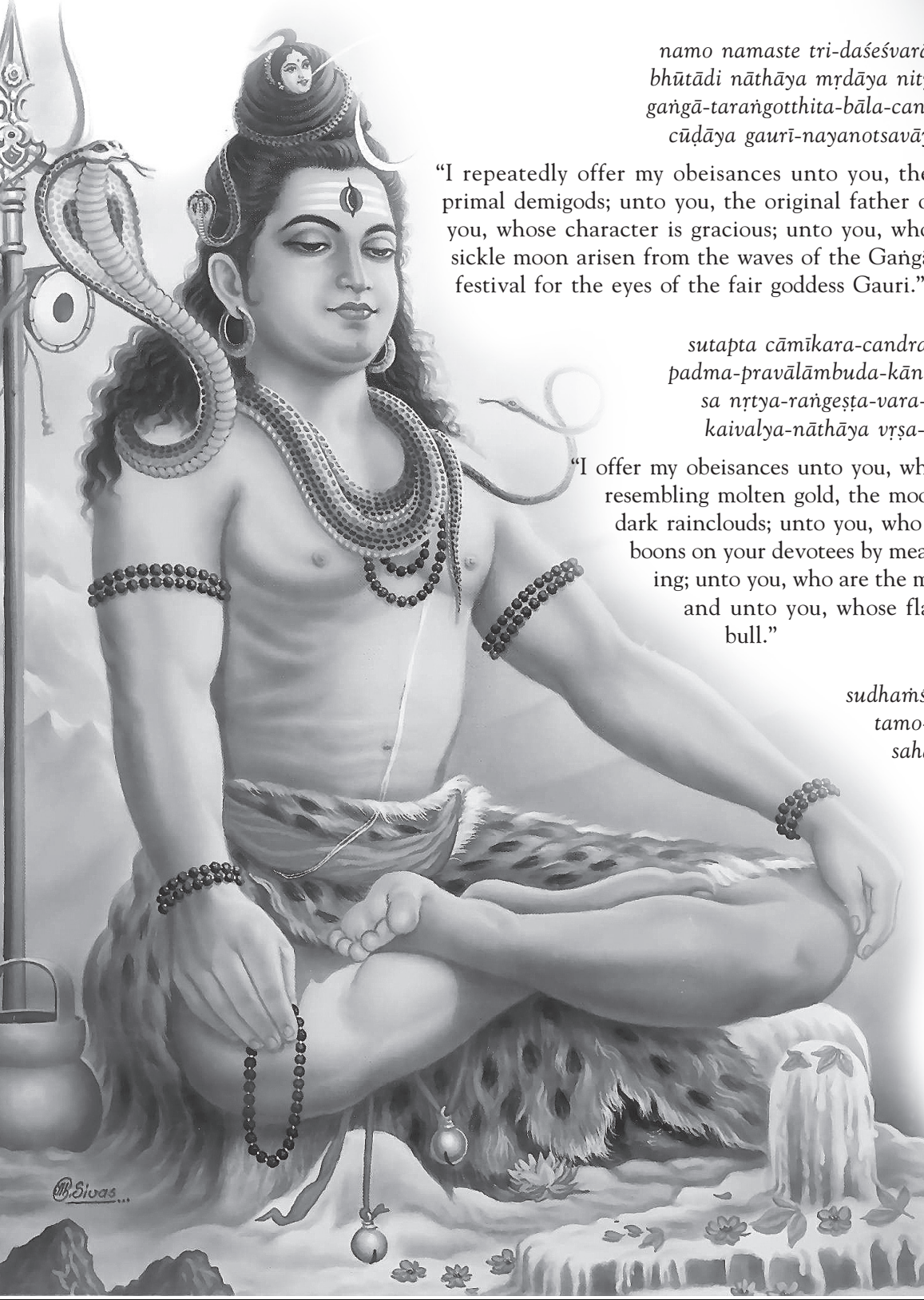
“I repeatedly offer my obeisances unto you, the controller of the thirty primal demigods; unto you, the original father of all created beings; unto you, whose character is gracious; unto you, whose head is crested by the sickle moon arisen from the waves of the Gaṅgā and unto you, who are a festival for the eyes of the fair goddess Gauri.”

*sutaṭṭa cāmikara-candra-ñila-
padma-pravālāmbuda-kānti-vastraiḥ
sa ṇṛtya-raṅgeṣṭa-vara-ṭradāya
kaivalya-nāthāya vṛṣa-dhvajāya*

“I offer my obeisances unto you, who are dressed in garments resembling molten gold, the moon, blue lotuses, coral, and dark rainclouds; unto you, who bestow the most desirable boons on your devotees by means of your delightful dancing; unto you, who are the master of the impersonalists and unto you, whose flag bears the image of the bull.”

*sudhamśu-sūryāgni-vilocanena
tamo-bhīde te jagataḥ śivāya
sahasra-śubhrāmśu-sahasra-
raśmi-
sahasra-sañjit-tvara-
tejase'stu*

“ I offer my obeisances unto you, who dispels darkness with your three eyes—the moon, the sun and fire; unto you, who causes auspiciousness for all the living entities of the universe and unto you, whose potency easily defeats that of thousands of moons



and suns.”

*nāgeśa-ratnojvala-vigrahāya
śārdūla-carmāśuka-divya-tejase
sahasra-patroṇari samsthitāya
varāṅgadā-mukta-bhuja-dvayāya*

“I offer my obeisances unto you, whose form is brilliantly illuminated by the jewels of Ananta, the king of snakes; unto you, who are clothed by a tiger-skin and thus radiate divine effulgence; unto you, who sits upon a thousand-petalled lotus and unto you, whose two arms are adorned by lustrous bangles.”

*su-nūṇpurā-rāñjita-pāda-padma
kṣarat-sudha-bhṛtya-sukha-pradāya
vicitra-ratnaugha-vibhūṣitāya
premānam evādyā harau videhi*

“I offer my obeisances unto you, who brings happiness to your servitors, as you pour on them the liquid nectar from your two reddish lotus feet, which ring with charming anklebells. Obeisances unto you, who is adorned with an abundance of gems—please endow me with pure love for Lord Hari.”

*śrī rāma govinda mukunda śaure
śrī kṛṣṇa nārāyaṇa vāsudeva
ity-ādi nāmāmṛta-pāna-matta-
bhṛṅgādhi-pāyākhila-dukha-hantre*

“ O Śrī Rāma, O Govinda, O Mukunda, O Śāuri, O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, O Nārāyaṇa, O Vāsudeva! I offer my obeisances unto you, Lord Śiva, the monarch of intoxicated bee-like devotees, maddened by drinking the nectar of these and other holy names of the Lord.

ŚIVA-TATTVA

Śiva-tattva is extremely complex. The principle of Brahmā is not as complicated, because Lord Brahmā is always a *jīva*, a finite spirit soul. Sometimes, when there is no qualified *jīva*, Lord Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa’s expansion) personally takes the post of Brahmā, but that is very rare. Lord Śiva is not like that; he is not a finite soul.

After passing through the eight material coverings, and after crossing the Virajā (the river that divides the material world and the spiritual world) and the planet of Lord Brahmā (the highest material planet), one comes to the planet of Śiva. There he is known as Sadāśiva, a manifestation of Lord Viṣṇu.

One meaning of Śiva is “auspicious.” Worship of

Obeisances unto you, the destroyer of all grief.”

*śrī nāradādyaiḥ satataṁ sugopya-
jijñāsītā-yāśu vara-pradāya
tebhyo harer bhakti-sukha-pradāya
śivāya sarva-gurave namo namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances again and again unto you, who is forever enquired of confidentially by Śrī Nārada and other sages; unto you, who also grants favors to them very quickly; unto you, who bestows the happiness of *hari-bhakti*; unto you, who creates auspiciousness and unto you, who is the guru of everyone.”

*śrī gaurī-netrosava-maṅgalāya
tat-prāṇa-nāthāya rasa-pradāya
sadā samutkaṅṭha-govinda-līlā-
gāna-praviṇāya namo’stu tubhyam*

“I offer my obeisances unto you, who are a festival of auspiciousness for the eyes of Goddess Gauri; unto you, who is the monarch of her life-breath; unto you, who is capable of bestowing transcendental *rasa* and unto you, who is expert in forever singing songs of the pastimes of Lord Govinda with great longing.”

*etat śivasyāṣṭakam adbhutam mahat
śṛṇvan hari-prema labheta śighram
jñānam ca vijñānam apūrva-vaibhavam
yo bhāva-pūrṇaḥ paramaṁ samādaram*

“ A person, filled with loving feelings, who hears with rapt attention this wonderful eight-fold prayer to Lord Śiva, can quickly gain *Śrī Hari-prema* as well as transcendental knowledge, the realisation of that knowledge, and unprecedented powers.” ❀

Lord Śiva is recommended for the inauspicious persons who are in ignorance so so that they gradually come to the modes of passion and goodness, and then they are liberated.

Śiva has got connection with this material energy. Therefore He is called father and the material energy is called mother. And because He has connection with this illusory energy, therefore He is not exactly God. God has nothing to do with this material energy, illusory energy. He is never illusioned. But Lord Śiva has connection with Durgā, the material energy. Therefore His position is between the living entity and Kṛṣṇa. ❀

- Nanda Gopāl Jivana Dāsa

Worshiping Lord Śiva in the Right Mood

Following is an extract from a morning walk conversation with His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda that took place in Mauritius, on October 5, 1975.

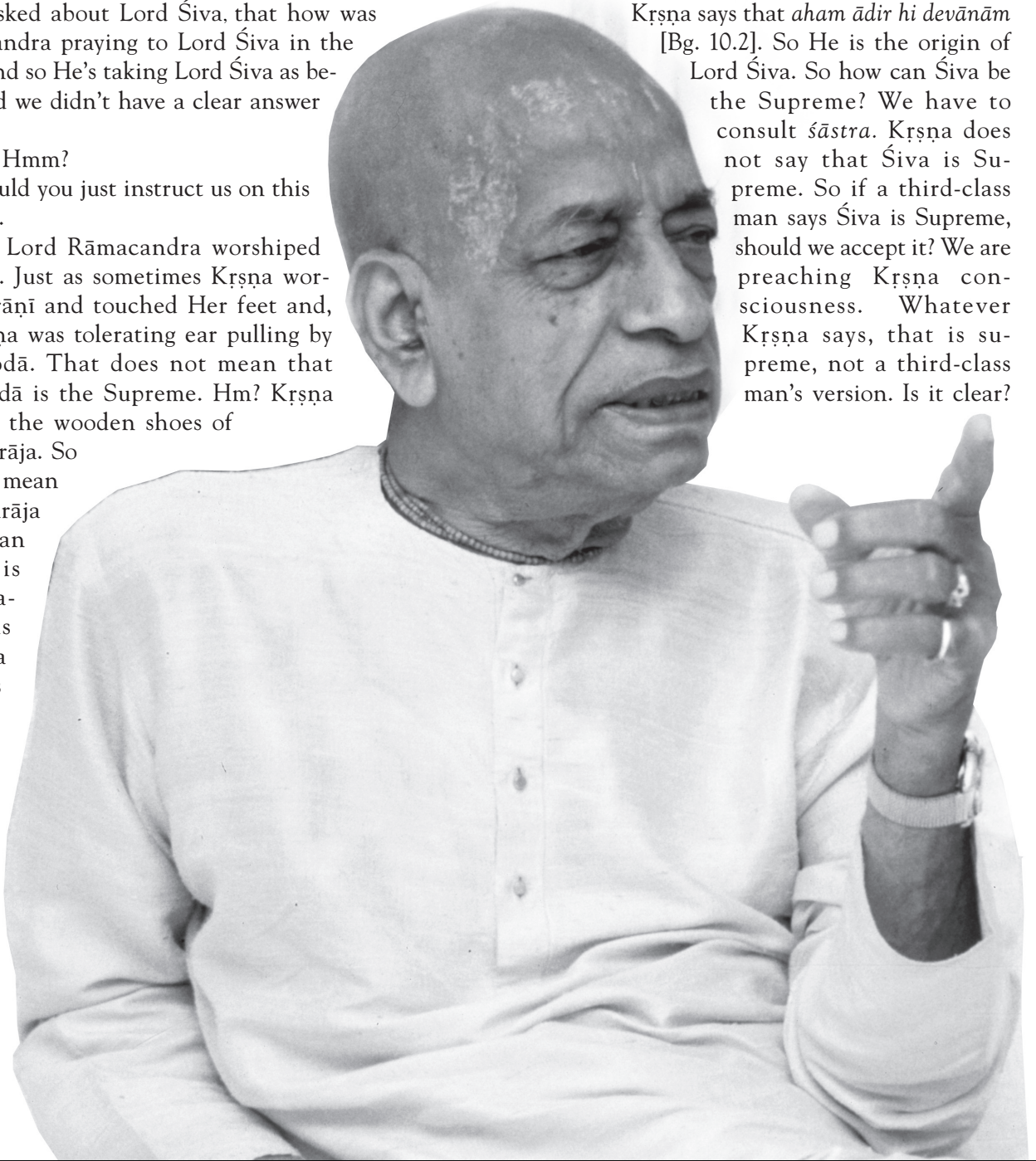
Devotee : Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was asked a question by a man. He asked about Lord Śiva, that how was Lord Rāmacandra praying to Lord Śiva in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and so He's taking Lord Śiva as being God. And we didn't have a clear answer for him.

Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Devotee : Could you just instruct us on this matter, why...

Prabhupāda: Lord Rāmacandra worshiped His devotees. Just as sometimes Kṛṣṇa worships Rādhārāṇī and touched Her feet and, just like Kṛṣṇa was tolerating ear pulling by mother Yaśodā. That does not mean that mother Yaśodā is the Supreme. Hm? Kṛṣṇa was carrying the wooden shoes of Nanda Mahārāja. So that does not mean Nanda Mahārāja is greater than Kṛṣṇa. It is Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Just as sometimes a father carries his son on his shoulders. Does it mean the father is inferior to the son? This is third-class man's conclusion.

They do not know what is Kṛṣṇa, what is Rāma. Kṛṣṇa says that *aham ādir hi devānām* [Bg. 10.2]. So He is the origin of Lord Śiva. So how can Śiva be the Supreme? We have to consult *śāstra*. Kṛṣṇa does not say that Śiva is Supreme. So if a third-class man says Śiva is Supreme, should we accept it? We are preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever Kṛṣṇa says, that is supreme, not a third-class man's version. Is it clear?



Yes. We should not take a third-class, fourth-class man's version. We should take from the *śāstra*.

Indian man : Swamijī, is Śiva not another name of God?

Prabhupāda: Yes. Śiva is next to God. Just like yogurt, *dahi*. You know *dahi*? What is this *dahi*? Milk. But it is not milk. *Dahi* is nothing but milk, but it is not milk. Similarly, Lord Śiva is nothing but Viṣṇu, but it is not Viṣṇu. Is it clear now? You can say, "Well, *dahi* is nothing but milk." Yes. But it is not milk. If instead of milk you take *dahi*, the result will be different. And if you take milk instead of *dahi*, that is..., that will be different, even though the milk and *dahi* is the same thing, same ingredients. So you have to understand in that way. Lord Śiva is nondifferent from the Supreme Lord. Everyone is nondifferent from Supreme Lord, but he's still different. This is the perfect philosophy, *acintya-bhedābheda*, simultaneously one and different.

Indian man : Swamijī, in all the temples in Mauritius, the supreme deity...

Prabhupāda: Supreme Deity is Viṣṇu.

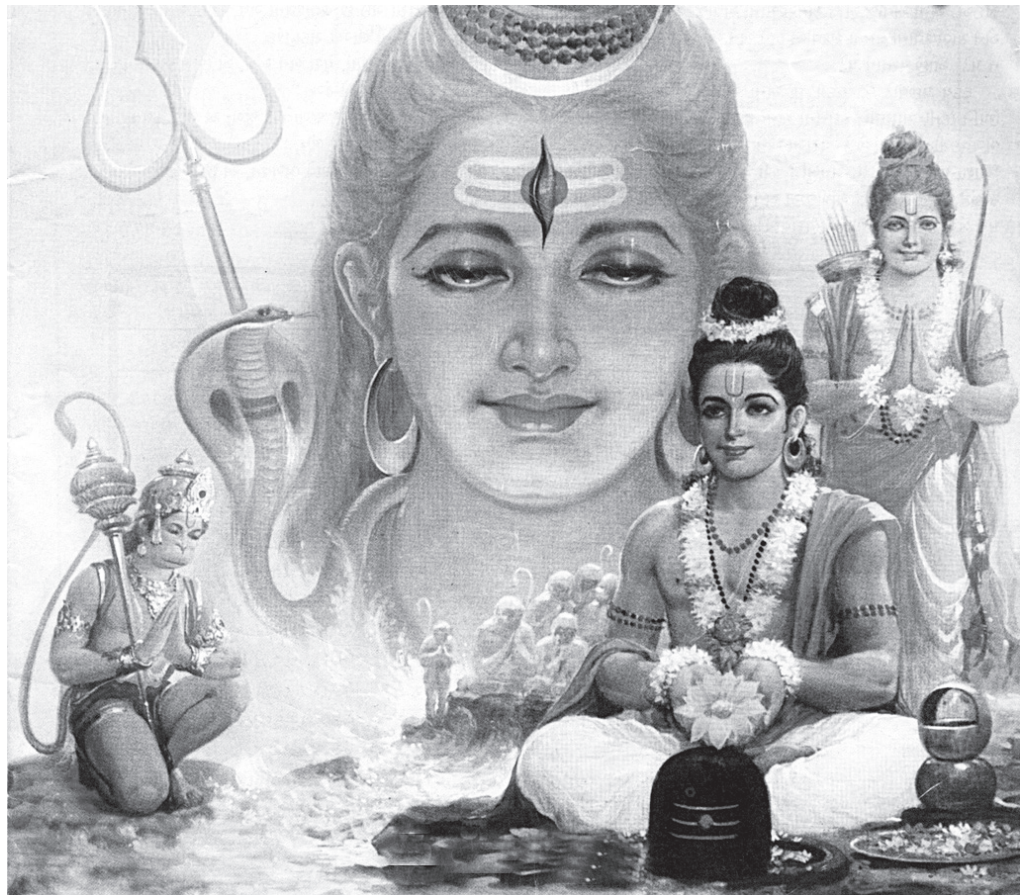
Indian man: But we consider Lord Śiva to be the supreme deity because we...

Prabhupāda: But that is your lack of knowledge. I have already explained that, that yogurt is not different from milk. It is milk but still, it is not milk. You have to understand like that. Lord Śiva is not different from Viṣṇu, but he's still not Viṣṇu.

Indian man: No, but do we offer the prayer first to Śiva...?

Prabhupāda: That you do. There is no harm. Lord Śiva is also called Mahādeva. Amongst the demigods, he is the chief. So if you worship Lord Śiva... We also worship Śiva. It is not that we disrespect Śiva. We offer our utmost respect to Lord Śiva. But that does not mean that he is the Supreme Lord.

Indian man: The difference that is there, Swamijī...



Lord Rāmacandra praying to Lord Śiva

Prabhupāda: Difference I have already explained. You cannot understand?

Indian man: No, no, we pray to Śiva first and then we pray to Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda: So that you do. There is no harm. There is no harm. But you should understand who is Śiva and who is Viṣṇu. If you offer first prayer to Lord Śiva, there is no harm. It is good. He is... *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*. He is our spiritual master. He is Vaiṣṇava. Why not offer first respect to him? But if you take Lord Śiva as the Supreme, that is insult. You are giving me respect as spiritual master, but if you give me overestimation, that "You are the king of the whole world," that is insult. That is not prayer. If you offer me prayer as I am befitting, then it is all right. But if you give me prayer for which I am not befitting, that is insult. So you must know what is the position of... Lord Śiva is a Vaiṣṇava. He is the greatest devotee. He is the number-one demigod, and everything is all right. But if you say that he is the Supreme, then he will feel insulted, that "what is this nonsense saying?" So don't insult him in that way. That will go against your credit. He doesn't like that. ❀

Protector of the Holy Dhām

Understanding Lord Śiva's service in Vraja

BHUTEŚVARA MAHĀDEVA AT MATHURĀ

Four ancient deities of Lord Śiva residing at Mathurā are known as *dik-pālas*, “protectors of the directions.” They stay in Mathurā to protect the *dhāma*. Bhuteśvara Mahādeva protects from the western side.

The tradition amongst the vaiṣṇavas is that when coming to Vraja one must first go to Mathurā to take permission from him to enter the *dhāma*. The reasons for this are described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Mathurā-Mahātmya* (texts 234-238), wherein he has quoted the following verses from the *Ādi-varāha Purāṇa* recounting Kṛṣṇa's words about Bhuteśvara Mahādeva:

*mathurāyām ca deva tvam kṣetra-pālo bhaviṣyasi
tvayi dṛṣṭe mahā-deva mama kṣetra-phalam labhet*

“O deva! You will be the protector of Mathurā. O greatest of the gods! Whoever sees you will attain My abode.”



Bhuteśvara Mahādeva

*dṛṣṭva bhūta-patiṃ devaṃ varadaṃ pāpa-nāśanam
tena dṛṣṭena vasudhe māthuraṃ phalam āpnuyāt*

“By seeing Bhuteśvara Mahādeva, all sins are destroyed. O Vasudhā, one who sees him, achieves the land of Mathurā.”

*yatra bhūteśvaro devo mokṣadaḥ pāpinām api
mama priyatamo nityaṃ deva bhūteśvaraḥ paraḥ*

“In Mathurā is the deity Lord Bhūteśvara, who grants liberation even to the sinful. This Bhuteśvara deity is very dear to Me.”

*kathaṃ vā mayi bhaktiṃ sa labhate pāpa-pūruṣaḥ
yo madīyaṃ paraṃ bhaktaṃ śivaṃ sampūjayen na hi*

“How is it possible for a sinful person who tries to worship Me but will not worship Bhūteśvara Śiva, to attain devotion to Me?”

*man-māyā-mohita-dhiyḥ prāyas te mānavādhamāḥ
bhūteśvaraṃ na smaranti na namanti stuvanti vā*

“Those who are bewildered by My māyā, who are the lowest of men, will not meditate on, bow down before, or offer prayers to Lord Bhūteśvara.”

Also, Śrī Caitanya *Caritāmṛta* (Madhya 17.191) by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes how Lord Caitanya visited Bhuteśvara Mahādeva in the following way:

*svayambhu, viśrāma, dīrgha-viṣṇu, bhūteśvara
mahāvidyā, gokarṇādi dekhilā vistara*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited all the holy places on the banks of the Yamunā, including Svayambhu,

Viśrāma-ghāṭa, Dīrgha Viṣṇu, Bhūteśvara, Mahāvidyā and Gokarṇa.

GOPIŚVARA MAHĀDEVA AT VṚNDĀVANA

Gopīśvara Mahādeva is one of the most prominent deities in the Gauḍīya-sampradāya and is mentioned in many Gauḍīya literatures, being a very ancient protector of Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma. It is said that one



Gopīśvara Mahādeva

cannot enter Vṛndāvana without his permission. His glories are sung throughout the Gosvāmī literatures:

*śrīmad –gopīśvaraṁ vande śaṅkaraṁ karuṇā-mayam
sarva-kleśa-haraṁ devaṁ vṛndāraṇya-rati-pradam
- Śrī Bhakti Ratnākara 5.3741*

I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrī Gopīśvara, who is merciful Lord Śiva himself. He removes troubles and grants spiritual love in Vṛndāvana.

In the song *Vraja-dhāma-mahimāmṛta*, the following line is sung

jaya jaya gopīśvara vṛndāvana-mājh

“All glories, all glories to Gopīśvara Śiva, who resides in the holy dhāma of Vṛndāvana.”

For more information, please refer to the article “The Merciful Lord Śiva” by His Holiness Girirāja Swami on page 18.

KĀMEŚVARA MAHĀDEVA AT KĀMYAVANA

Kāma means “desire”. It is said that Kāmeśvara Mahādeva is the fulfiller of one’s desires.

Śrīla Narahari Cakravartī has described Kāmeśvara Mahādeva in his *Bhakti-ratnākara* (5.841): See here the

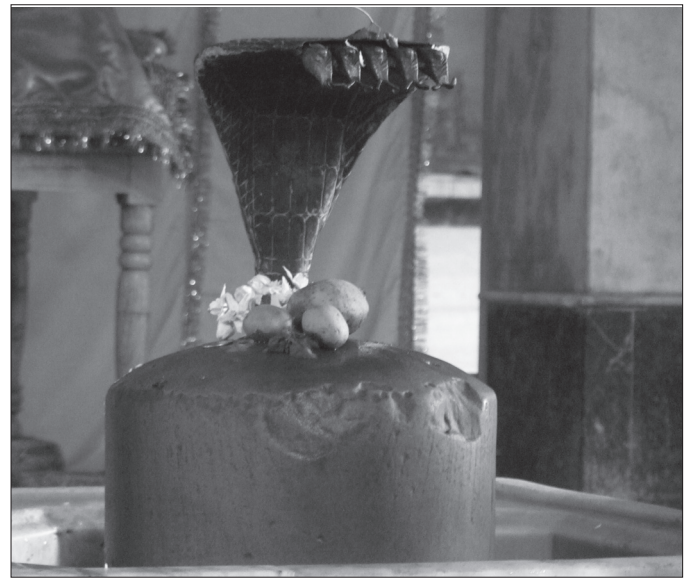
most powerful Śiva as Kāmeśvara.

Kāmeśvara Mahādeva resides in Kāmyavan in the western part of Vraja-maṇḍala. According to the tradition in Vraja, Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja worshipped Kāmeśvara to get a daughter. He already had a son, Śrīdāma but no, he wanted a daughter. Kāmeśvara granted his desire and he obtained Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as his daughter.

CAKALEŚVARA MAHĀDEVA AT GOVARDHANA HILL

On the northern bank of Mānasi Gaṅgā, by Govardhana hill is a group of five *śiva-liṅgas* that are famous by the name Cakaleśvara Mahādeva. These five *śiva-liṅgas* are considered to be Lord Śiva’s five faces. They protect the area of Govardhan. This part of Mānasi Gaṅgā is known as Cakra-tīrtha and because he stays at this place, this *śiva-liṅga* was originally known as Cakareśvara, but now he is known as Cakaleśvara. It is said that this place is called Cakra-tīrtha because when Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana Hill, He requested the Sudarśana Cakra to appear above the mountain to dry up all the rain coming down on Govardhana so that the Vrajavāsīs standing underneath would not drown. After Indra withdrew the Sāmvartaka clouds that he had sent to destroy Vraja and the danger was over, Sudarśana requested Kṛṣṇa to give him a place to rest. Kṛṣṇa gave him this place on the northern bank of Mānasi Gaṅgā.

The present temple of Cakaleśvara Mahādeva is recent; the original one was destroyed by the Mus-
(please turn to page 28)



Kāmeśvara Mahādeva



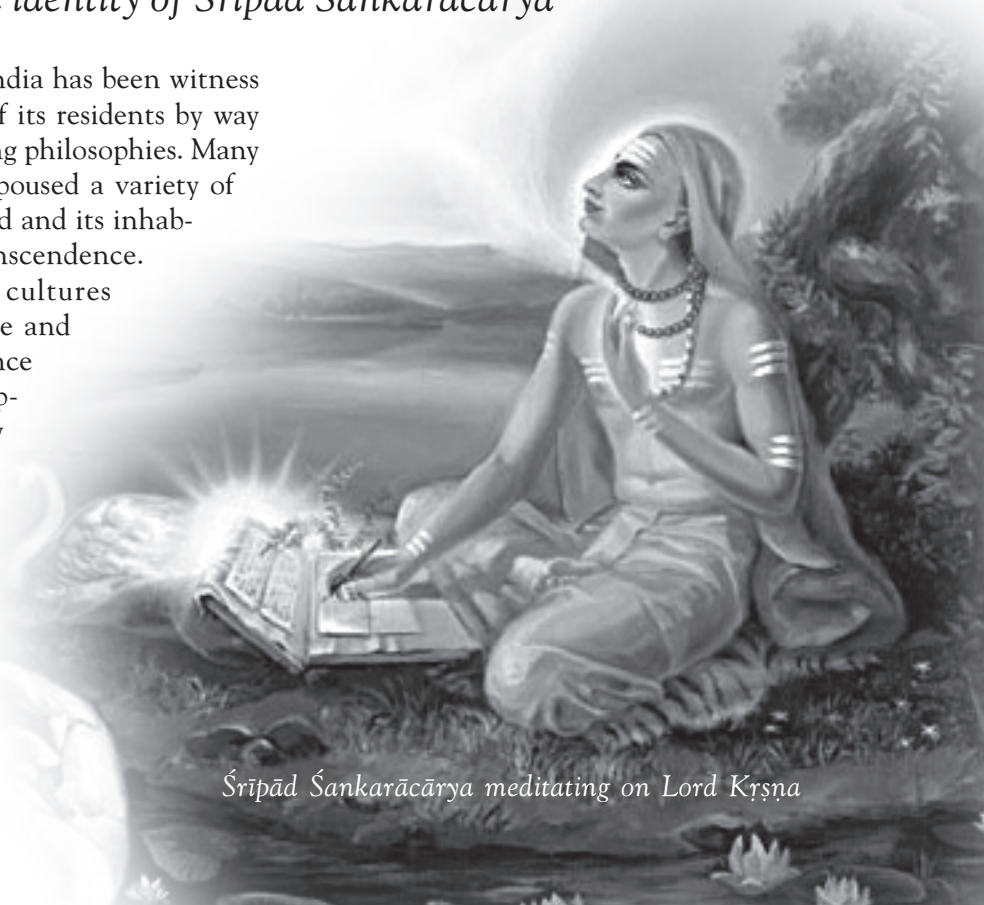
counteract the rampant animal-killing in the name of Vedic sacrifices, it proverbially “threw the baby out with the bath water.” Along with the rejection of the Vedic injunctions for sacrifices (which were exploited by a few to kill animals), it led to a wholesale rejection of the entire *Vedas*. Losing respect for their traditions, people became atheists. In such adverse times, one spiritual teacher re-established the supremacy of the Vedic tradition. He was Śrīpād Śankarācārya. In a life of a mere 32 years, Śankara drove out the Buddhists from India and unfurled the flag of the *Vedas* on the monument of the subcontinent’s culture.

PREACHING IMPERSONALISM as a service

The secret identity of Śrīpād Śankarācārya

Over time, the ancient land of India has been witness to many changes in the lives of its residents by way of shifting cultures and changing philosophies. Many have, over the past several centuries espoused a variety of views about the very nature of this world and its inhabitants. Few have even searched for transcendence.

Amongst this myriad variety, few cultures could measure up in terms of both-time and space-to the Vedic culture. Practiced since time immemorial, this culture is deep-seated in the hearts of people here. Try as they might, it is difficult for them to escape the impressions within. But, around 200 BC, Emperor Aśoka’s acceptance of Buddhism led to a major shift in the religious landscape of the land. Buddhism is veiled atheism. Propagated by Lord Buddha as an emergency measure to



Śrīpād Śankarācārya meditating on Lord Kṛṣṇa

THE ĀCĀRYA'S ADVENT

Appearing in the year 788 AD, in a religious brāhmaṇa family in South India, Śrī Śankarācārya was quick to attract the attention of people around him. With a prodigious intelligence and memory, he quickly mastered the Sanskrit language. Accepting *sannyāsa* at the tender age of eight, Śankara marched throughout India and used all his might to turn the tide of Buddhism, widespread in India at the time.

To achieve this, he had to make the transition easy. He devised a philosophy of *advaita-vedānta* or absolute non-dualism. Denying the Buddhist understanding of the ultimate truth being void, Śankara argued that the truth is Brahman, spirit. He also replaced the Buddhist idea of no soul with the Vedic truth of *ātmā* or individual soul. Further, he described the *ātmā* and Brahman as undifferentiated spiritual reality without any qualities, varieties or relations. Obviously, there is no cognitive difference between “void” and “Brahman” presented without qualities or distinctions. Śankara's Brahman was thus a clever, scriptural replacement of the Buddhist “void.”

HIDDEN IDENTITY

Even as it may seem that Śankarācārya's preaching of impersonalism tends to be a disservice to the Supreme Lord, it is very important to understand a passage from the *Padma Purāṇa* which details a conversation of Lord Śiva and Pārvatī Devī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments in his purport to *Bhāgavatam* 4.24.17:

Since Lord Śiva does not incarnate himself unless there is some special reason, it is very difficult for an ordinary person to contact him. However, Lord Śiva does descend

on a special occasion when he is ordered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this regard, it is stated in the *Padma Purāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa* (25.7) that Lord Śiva appeared as a *brāhmaṇa* in the age of Kali to preach the Māyāvāda philosophy, which is nothing but a type of Buddhist philosophy.

*māyāvādam asac-chāstram
pracchannam bauddham ucyate
mayaiva vihitam devi
kalau brāhmaṇa-mūrtinā*

Lord Śiva, speaking to Parvatī-Devi, foretold that he would spread the Māyāvāda philosophy in the guise of a *sannyasi brahmana* just to eradicate Buddhist philosophy. This *sannyasi* was Śrīpada Śankarācārya. In order to overcome the effects of Buddhist philosophy and spread *Vedānta* philosophy, Śrīpada Śankarācārya had to make some compromise with the Buddhist philosophy, and as such he preached the philosophy of monism, for it was required at that time.

To prove his scholarly might, Śankarācārya commented vigorously on *Upanisads* like the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, etc., the *Bhagavad-gīta* and even the *Vedānta-sūtra* giving his impersonal conclusions. However, he intentionally never touched the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* knowing that the author's own commentary would be too difficult for him to surpass.

GLORIES REVEALED

Even though it was required to present somewhat of a compromise of the essence of the Vedic teachings, Śrīpada Śankarācārya has unabashedly displayed his devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa frequently. He has compiled prayers to Lord Jagannātha called *Jagannāthāṣṭakam*, to Lord Pāṇḍu-raṅga called

Pāṇḍuraṅgāṣṭakam, where he explicitly glorifies the Supreme form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. While at Benares, he compiled a beautiful text called *Bhaja Govindam*, which says

*bhaja govindam bhaja govindam
bhaja govindam mūḍha mate
samprāpte sannihite kale
na hi na hi rakṣati ḍukṛṅ-karaṇe*

“You fools and rascals, all your grammatical word jugglery of suffixes, prefixes and philosophical speculation will not save you at the time of death. Just worship Govinda! Worship Govinda! Worship Govinda!”

Modern impersonalists unfortunately don't follow their great predecessor Śankarācārya and think Kṛṣṇa to be just an ordinary living entity. Śankarācārya himself in his commentary to the *Bhagavad-gīta*, admits *nārāyaṇaḥ paro'vyaktād*—“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Nārāyaṇa is beyond the material creation.”

Māyāvāda philosophy, as spread by Śrīpada Śankarācārya was less of a permanent doctrine and more of a temporary facilitation for the people of Bhārata-varṣa to change over from atheistic Buddhist philosophy to his presentation of scripturally respectable impersonalism. Present-day Māyāvādīs, however, neglecting Śankarācārya's personal advice, continue to walk on the treacherous path of Māyāvāda, guiding their followers to commit grievous offense at the lotus feet of the Lord by considering the infinitesimal living entity to be equal to the infinite Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Serving to re-establish the Vedic authority, Śankarācārya's efforts provided the foundation for further work by stalwart ācāryas like Śrīpada (please turn to page 22)

Merciful Lord Śiva

Understanding Lord Śiva from different perspectives

by His Holiness Girirāja Swami

(Adapted from a talk given on Śivarātri 2003)

The Vedic literatures inform us that there are two categories of controllers: God, the Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*, full in all opulences), and the demigods (*devas*, appointed servants of the Supreme Lord placed in charge of the various departments of the management of the universe). The Supreme Lord is compared to the king, the absolute sovereign, whereas the various demigods are likened to the king's ministers. They are placed in powerful positions by the king in consideration of their faithful service to him. They are always dependent on the king—always his faithful servants. The Supreme Lord can grant any boon to His worshipers, even up to liberation from material bondage. The various demigods, however, can grant only material facilities within the material world, and then too only with the sanction of the Supreme Lord. That Supreme Lord is Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, as confirmed throughout the Vedic literatures.

The *Bhagavad-gīta*, the essence of the Vedic literatures, spoken by Kṛṣṇa Himself, recommends complete and exclusive surrender unto the Supreme Lord:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

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

Lord Kṛṣṇa further advises us to become devoted to Him:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi yuktvaivam
ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.” (Bg 9.34)

Demigod worship, on the other hand, is discouraged in the *Bhagavad-gīta*. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains:

*antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ
tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti
mad-bhaktā yānti mām api*

“Men of small intelligence worship the demigods, and their fruits are limited and temporary. Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, but My devotees ultimately reach My supreme planet.” (Bg 7.23)

Later in the *Gītā* the Lord

elaborates:

*ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya
yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam*

“Those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them with faith actually worship only Me, O son of Kuntī, but they do so in a wrong way.” (Bg 9.23)

LORD ŚIVA, THE BEST OF THE DEMIGODS

Lord Śiva, also called Rudra, is the demigod in charge of the material mode of ignorance (*tamo-guṇa*), and he is in charge of destruction. He is worshiped by persons who are influenced by ignorance, and he supervises their activities.

*ananta brahmāṇḍe rudra—
sadāśivera aṁśa
guṇāvatāra teṅho, sarva-deva-
avatamaṁsa*

“Rudra, who is an expansion of Sadāśiva and who appears in unlimited universes, is also a *guṇāvatāra* [qualitative incarnation] and is the ornament of all the demigods in the endless universes.” (Cc. *Adi* 6.79)

Thus, Lord Śiva is a demigod, albeit the best of them. Yet he also



has another feature: he is a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord. And the service and worship of pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa is most highly recommended for everyone:

*yat-sevayā bhagavataḥ
kūṭa-sthasya madhu-dviṣaḥ
rati-rāso bhavet tīvraḥ
pādayor vyaśanārdanaḥ*

“The service of the feet of pure devotees vanquishes one’s material distresses and enables one to develop transcendental ecstasy in the service of the Personality of Godhead, the unchangeable enemy of the Madhu demon.” (SB 3.7.19)

Lord Śiva himself instructs Parvati:

*ārādhanaṅm sarveṣāṁ
viṣṇor ārādhanaṁ param
tasmāt parataraṁ devī
tadīyānāṁ samarcanam*

“Of all kinds of worship, the worship of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, is the topmost. But above even the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the rendering of service to Vaiṣṇavas, who are related to Lord Viṣṇu.” (Padma Purāṇa) Thus, the worship of Vaiṣṇavas, devotees of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, is considered the highest.

WORSHIP OF LORD ŚIVA

Sometimes the Lord Himself worships His devotee. For example, Lord Rāmacandra worshiped Lord Śiva. Thus, if the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself worships His devotees, such as Lord Śiva, then certainly His other devotees may too. They should not, of course, think Lord Śiva is equal to or independent of Lord Viṣṇu. Rather, they respect and worship him as a pure devotee of Viṣṇu. And they may accord him the same respect as they give the Lord Himself.

Vaiṣṇavas generally do not go to demigods’ temples. Still, Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of Kṛṣṇa’s devotee, regularly visited the temple of Lord Śiva in Benares. Why? Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that a Vaiṣṇava gives due respect to all—so what to speak of to demigods, who are faithful servants of the Supreme Lord. Lord Caitanya offered obeisances and prayers to deities of Lord Śiva in temples throughout South India during His travels there, though, as the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* also states, the devotees of Lord Śiva in those places became Vaiṣṇavas by the Lord’s influence.

Lord Śiva’s position in particular is special because, as Śrīla Prabhupāda has stated, “Śiva is almost Viṣṇu.” The *Brahma-saṁhitā* compares Lord Viṣṇu to milk and Lord Śiva to yogurt. Yogurt is almost milk, but it is not milk. Milk can become yogurt, but yogurt cannot become milk. In the same way, although Lord Viṣṇu transforms Himself into the form of Śiva, Lord Śiva can never become Viṣṇu.

*kṣīraṁ yathā dadhi vikāra-
viśeṣa-yogāt
sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti
hetoḥ
yaḥ śambhutām api tathā*



samupaiti kāryād
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam
aham bhajāmi

“Milk is transformed into curd by the actions of acids, yet the effect, curd, is neither the same as nor different from its cause, viz., milk. I adore the primeval Lord, Govinda, of whom the state of Śambhu [Śiva] is a similar transformation for the

śambhuh, Sambhu, or Lord Śiva, is the ideal Vaiṣṇava, yet in other places the *Bhāgavatam* and other *sāstras* proclaim that the residents of Vṛndāvana, and especially the *gopīs*, are the highest devotees. So how do we reconcile these different statements? One answer is that Lord Śiva is the greatest Vaiṣṇava in the material world, whereas in the spiritual world the residents of Vraja, especially the young *gopīs*,

personalities in Vraja. The deity of Gopīśvara Mahādeva and the other principal deities of Lord Śiva in Vraja were established by Lord Kṛṣṇa's great-grandson, Vajranābha. This particular deity is worshiped as a regular *śiva-līnga* during the day, as in other temples of Mahādeva, but in the evening the *pujārīs* dress the deity in a *sari*, with jewelry and ornaments just like a *vraja-gopī*. The history of Gopīśvara Mahādeva, as received through disciplic succession, is as follows:

are the highest. And Lord Śiva, desiring to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* in the spiritual realm, took up residence in Vraja.

Of all the forms of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa is considered the highest. He has four qualities that even Lord Nārāyaṇa does not possess. Among them are His very sweet pastimes (*līlā-mādhurya*) and His circle of very special, loving devotees (*prema-mādhurya*). Of all such devotees, the *gopīs* are considered the highest. And of all such pastimes, His *rāsa-līlā* is considered supermost. Therefore, Lord Śiva wanted to participate in the *mahā-rāsa*, where Kṛṣṇa dances and plays with the *gopīs*.

Lord Śiva is known as Kṣetrapāla, the protector of sacred areas. In particular, he wanted to protect Kṛṣṇa in His childhood pastimes. Therefore, he took up residence in

Understanding that entering the *rāsa* dance requires special qualification and mercy, Lord Śiva performed austerities in Vraja and thus was able to please Paurṇamāsī, who is the personification the spiritual energy (*yogamāya*). In Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes, she is an elderly brāhmaṇi and *śikṣā-guru* for the Vrajavāsīs. Under her instruction, Lord Śiva bathed in Brahma-kuṇḍa (some sources say Mānasarovara, and still others the Yamunā River). When he emerged from the sacred waters, Lord Śiva had the beautiful form of a *gopī*. No one can enter the *rāsa* dance with Kṛṣṇa unless one is a *gopī*. So Lord Śiva in the form of a *gopī* went to the area of the *rāsa* dance near the Yamunā in Vṛndāvana, and when



performance of the work of destruction.” (Bs. 5.45)

Lord Śiva is discussed in many places in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the “spotless Purāṇa” (*amala purāṇa*) glorified by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. (For more details, see article on page 24)

GOPĪŚVARA MAHĀDEVA*

For Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Śiva has special significance. Although *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* concludes, *vaiṣṇavānām yathā*

Vraja near Nandagrāma, where he is known as Nandīśvara Mahādeva. Similarly, he took up residence at Govardhana near Mānasi Gaṅgā, and there he is known as Cakaleśvara Mahādeva. He took up residence in Kāmyavana, where he is known as Kāmeśvara Mahādeva. And he took up residence in Vṛndāvana itself, and there he is known as Gopīśvara Mahādeva.

Gopīśvara Mahādeva is considered one of the most merciful

* Gopīśvara, in Sanskrit, means “he whose controllers are the *gopīs*” (*yasyeśvara gopyaḥ santi saḥ*) as well as “the controller of the *gopīs*” (*gopinām īśvaraḥ*). The former meaning applies to both Kṛṣṇa and Śiva, the latter only to Kṛṣṇa.

the other *gopīs* noticed her, they approached her and began to ask her questions: “What is your name? Who is your husband? What does he do? Where is your house?” They asked so many questions she could not answer. So the other *gopīs* concluded that this so-called new *gopī* was not actually one of them. They became angry at the imposter and began to slap her cheeks.

Śiva, in the form of the *gopī*, then began to desperately call out the name of Paurṇamāsī. Immediately Paurṇamāsī appeared and stopped the *gopīs*. She told them, “Don’t beat her. She is actually Lord Śiva, a great devotee.” Because of Paurṇamāsī’s position as their spiritual guide, the *gopīs* listened to her. Then Paurṇamāsī told Lord Śiva, “Actually, you cannot participate directly in the *rāsa* dance. The *rāsa* dance with Kṛṣṇa is only for *gopīs*. But you can stay near the arena of the *rāsa* dance and witness it and protect the area from others who are not qualified to enter.” She also gave Lord Śiva the benediction that he could bestow upon devotees the qualification to enter the *rāsa* dance.

The deity of Gopīśvara Mahādevaa established by Vajranabha resides near Vamśivata, the famous tree near the Yamuna where Kṛṣṇa played on His transcendental flute to call the *gopīs* for the *maha-rāsa* dance. Every evening around the time of sunset, the *pujaris* of the Gopīśvara Mahādevaa temple dress the *śiva-liṅga* there as a *gopī*.

Lord Śiva has instructed Parvati that the worship of Vaiṣṇavas is the highest. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that Kṛṣṇa has many devotees in different mellows, or *rasas*: *dāsyā-rasa*, *sakhya-rasa*, *vātsalya-rasa*, and *mādhurya-rasa*. Of all of the *rasas*, *mādhurya-rasa*, or the conjugal mellow, is the highest. Therefore,

servicing and worshipping devotees in *mādhurya-rasa* is the most exalted of all types of worship.

Appreciating all these transcendental truths, devotees pray to Gopīśvara to grant them the pure love that enables one to enter the sweet pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Offering homage to this dedicated devotee of the *gopīs*,* Śrīla Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura prays:

*vṛndāvanāvani-ṭate
jaya soma-soma-
maule sanandana-
sanātana-nāradeḍya
gopīśvara vraja-vilāsi-
yugānghri-ṭadme
prema prayaccha
nirupadhi namo namas te*

“O gatekeeper of Vṛndāvana! O Soma, all glories to you! O you whose forehead is decorated with the moon (*soma*), and who is worshiped by the sages headed by Sanandana, Sanātana, and Nārada!

Vṛndāvana, Sanātana Gosvami stayed at the Madana-mohana temple, near the Yamunā. And at Govardhana, he resided at Cakra-tīrtha near Mānasi-gaṅgā, just opposite Cakaleśvara Mahādeva. There he once was so disturbed by mosquitoes that he decided to leave. He couldn’t perform his *sadhana* or write his books. When Cakaleśvara Mahādeva, Lord Śiva, saw Sanātana Gosvami preparing to leave, he became concerned, because he wanted Sanātana to be near him there. So he came to the Gosvami, disguised as a *brāhmaṇa*, and asked him why he was leaving. Sanātana replied that he was being disturbed by the mosquitoes so much that he couldn’t do his work. Lord Śiva was relieved to hear that the trouble was something he could so easily resolve. He requested Sanātana Gosvami, “Just stay one more night, and by tomorrow your problem will be solved.” Then Lord Śiva summoned the demigod in charge of insect life and ordered

Devotees pray to Gopīśvara to grant them the pure love that enables one to enter the sweet pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana

O Gopīśvara! Desiring that you bestow upon me limitless love for the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madhava, who perform joyous pastimes in Vraja-dhāma, I offer my obeisances unto you again and again.” (Śrī *Saṅkalpa-kalpadruma*, 103)

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ AND THE MOSQUITOES

It has been said that Sanātana Gosvami was an especially close friend of Lord Śiva in Vraja. In

him, “Keep your mosquitoes away from my friend!” Thereafter, no mosquitoes came there, and Sanātana Gosvami continued to stay at Cakra-tīrtha up until the end. Although he would also visit Vṛndāvana, he resided at Chakra-tīrtha and entered into *samādhi* there.

Ordinary people do approach Lord Śiva for material boons, but pure devotees approach him only for pure devotional service. For

example, the young *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana prayed to Lord Śiva to be able to serve Kṛṣṇa as their husband. Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī has written:

*muda gopendrasyātma-
bhujaparivanga-nidhaye
sphurad-gopī-vṛndair yam iha
bhagavantam praṇayibhih
bhajadbhis tair bhaktyā svam
abhilāṣitam prāptum acirad
yami-tire gopīśvaram
anudinam tam kila bhaje*

“Desiring to quickly attain the treasure of the embraces of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the splendid and affectionate *gopīs* devotedly and happily worshiped Lord Śiva on the bank of the Yamuna. I daily worship Gopīsvara-tīrtha, where the *gopīs* performed their worship.” (Śrī Vraja-vilāsa-stava, 87)

Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms: “The *gopīs* worshiped Lord Śiva in Vṛndāvana, and the lord is still staying there as Gopīsvara. The *gopīs* prayed that Lord Śiva bless them by giving them Lord Kṛṣṇa as their husband. There is no harm in worshiping the demigods, provided that one’s aim is to return back to Godhead.” (Bhag. 4.30.38, purport) ❀

Girirāja Swami joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1969 and accepted sannyāsa, the renounced order of life, in 1978. During the mid-seventies, under Śrīla Prabhupāda’s supervision, he helped guide the construction of ISKCON’s temple complex in Mumbai.

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The Eternal Dilemma

by Yugāvtāra Dāsa

To worship Lord Śiva or not is an eternal dilemma for budding vaiṣṇavas. To enter a Śiva temple or not? To observe the mahā-Śivarātri or not? To pray to Lord Śiva or not?... The list continues when it comes to Lord Śiva. Some people even get into a brawl with the Śaivaites.

Thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s ISKCON which clarifies the picture of hierarchy and devotional relationship between Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Śiva is the greatest Vaiṣṇava and is always looking for a chance to serve, like he served in the form of Hanumān, the eleventh Rudra, when Kṛṣṇa appeared as Lord Rāma. There is no competition between Lord Śiva and Viṣṇu for the throne of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But immature Śaivaites and Vaiṣṇavas keep on competing to prove the supremacy of their worshippable lords. They keep on fighting while Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Śiva enjoy a loving devotional relationship. A knowledgeable Vaiṣṇava never ignores Lord Śiva. Rather he has some special prayers to offer to Lord Śiva.

A devotee remembers the pas-

time in which Lord Śiva was troubled by the Cupid. Lord Śiva opened his third eye and destroyed the body of Cupid. The devotee prays to him, “Oh Lord Śiva, this Cupid is troubling me too. Please do something to arrest this trouble.”

Whenever a devotee sees Lord Śiva he remembers how Śiva, who grants benedictions and opulence to his followers, himself lives a simple homeless life. So a devotee prays for this quality of detachment. The best quality of Lord Śiva that fascinates a Vaiṣṇava is his deep and continuous meditation on the holy name of Lord Rāma. So a devotee prays to Lord Śiva to grant him this love for chanting the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śiva happily becomes an instrument in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa in many pastimes. Sometimes he faces some embarrassment but He does not mind as Kṛṣṇa is glorified through that pastime. We should also pray to Lord Śiva for that courage to become a humble instrument in the Lord’s pastime. There are so many things to pray to Lord Śiva for our devotional enhancement. So where is the dilemma? ❀

Preaching

(Continued from page 17)

Ramanujācārya (1017–1137), Śrīpad Madhvācārya (1239–1319), who would in the future systematically highlight the personalistic conclusions of the Vedas and progressively refute the impersonalistic conclusions of Śrīpad Śankarācārya with their philosophies of *viśiṣṭā-advaita*

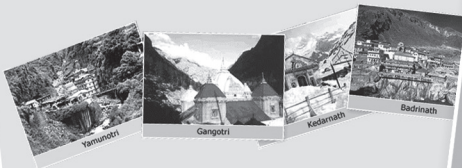
and *śuddha-dvaita* respectively, throwing more light on the conception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The grand finale of this plan would be the appearance of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who would freely distribute love of Godhead, the essence of all Vedic teachings to one and all without any discrimination. ❀

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Chitrakoot, "the hills of many wonders" is indeed a gift of Lord. Located in the Banda district of modern Uttar Pradesh (U.P), on the banks of river Paisuni (Mandakini), Chitrakoot is a tranquil retreat on the northern spur of the Vindhya. Chitrakoot Dham is one of the most ancient holy pilgrim places of India. It was the abode of Lord Rama, his wife Sita and brother Lakshman for eleven years of their fourteen years of exile. This is also the place, where they came in contact with sage Atri and sati Anusuya. Chitrakoot, sacred with the touch of Lord's feet, was where Goswami Tulsidas, the creator of the epic "Shri Ramcharitmanas" spent many years of his life. Dotted with innumerable temples and shrines, nature's splendor here is wrapped in peace and tranquility, permeated only by singing birds and gushing streams.

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Stories from ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

A selection highlighting different qualities of Lord Śiva

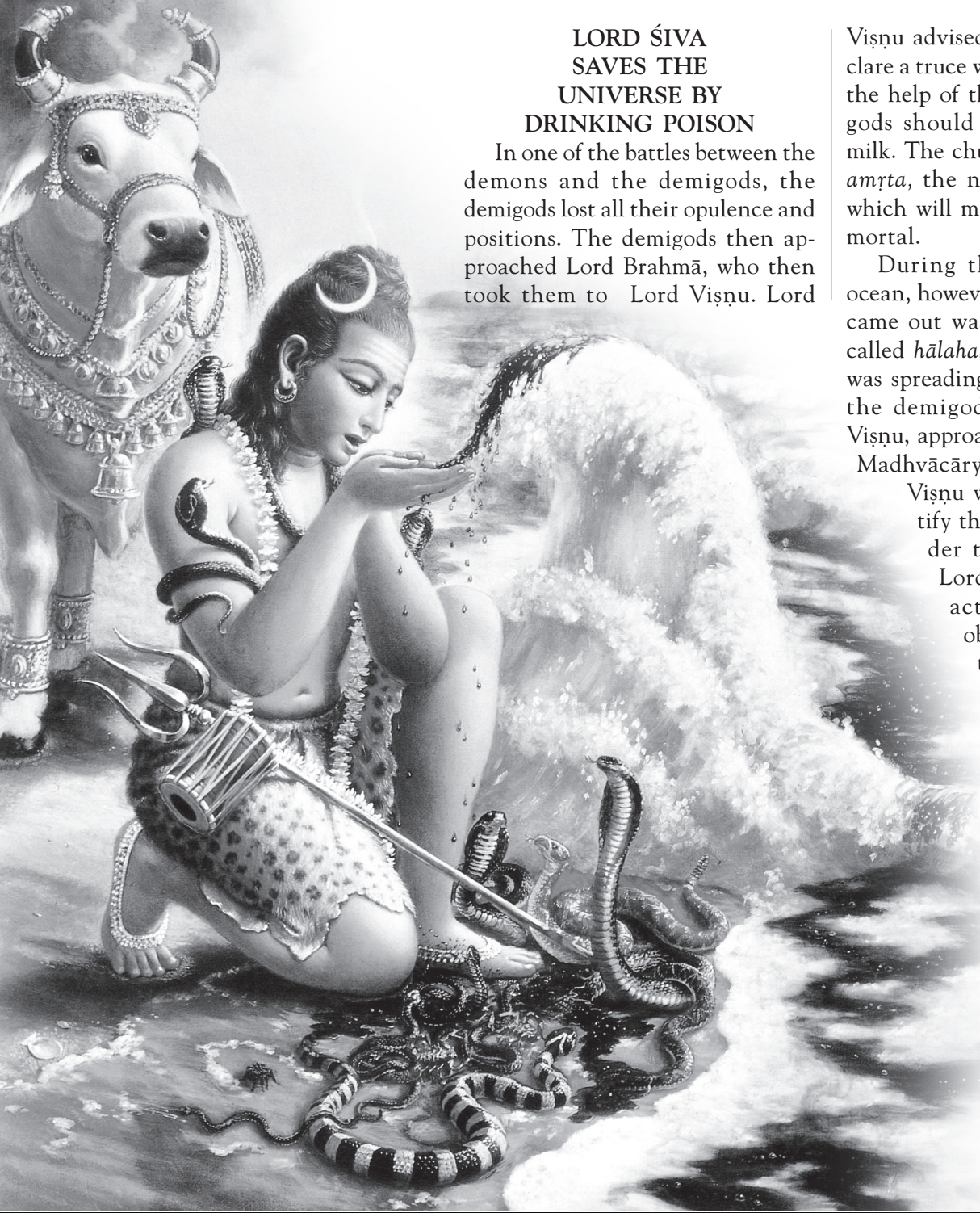
by Mukunda Mālā Dāsa

LORD ŚIVA SAVES THE UNIVERSE BY DRINKING POISON

In one of the battles between the demons and the demigods, the demigods lost all their opulence and positions. The demigods then approached Lord Brahmā, who then took them to Lord Viṣṇu. Lord

Viṣṇu advised the demigods to declare a truce with the demons. With the help of the demons, the demigods should churn the ocean of milk. The churning would produce *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality which will make the demigods immortal.

During the churning of the ocean, however, the first thing that came out was a dangerous poison called *hālahala*. When that poison was spreading in all directions, all the demigods, along with Lord Viṣṇu, approached Lord Śiva. Śrīla Madhvācārya explains that Lord Viṣṇu was competent to rectify the situation, but in order to glorify Lord Śiva, Lord Viṣṇu did not take action. The demigods observed Lord Śiva sitting on the summit of Kailāsa Hill with his wife, Bhavānī, for the auspicious development of the three worlds. Great saintly persons desiring liberation were worshipping him. Offering prayers and obeisances with great respect, the demigods requested



Lord Śiva to save them from the great calamity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in his purport how Lord Viṣṇu acts through Lord Śiva in the creation of the material world. Lord Śiva acts on behalf of Lord Viṣṇu. When the Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.4) that He is the father of all living entities (*aham bīja-pradaḥ pitā*), this refers to actions performed by Lord Viṣṇu through Lord Śiva. Lord Viṣṇu is always unattached to material activities, and when material activities are to be performed, Lord Viṣṇu performs them through Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva is therefore worshiped on the level of Lord Viṣṇu. When Lord Viṣṇu is untouched by the external energy He is Lord Viṣṇu, but when He is in touch with the external energy, He appears in His feature as Lord Śiva.

Seeing the distress of the demigods, Lord Śiva felt very compassionate, and he considered it as his duty to save all living entities from this dangerous poison. With his great power, he then reduced that great quantity of poison to a small quantity, held it in his palm and drank it. The poison marked Lord Śiva's neck with a bluish line, which is now accepted as an ornament of the Lord. Since then he became known as *nīlakaṅṭha*, or blue-throated.

Śrīla Prabhupāda warns in this connection that one should never try to imitate Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva can do whatever he likes, but those who try to imitate Lord Śiva by smoking *gañjā* (intoxicating drugs) and other poisonous things will be destroyed because of such activities.

KING CITRAKETU'S PASTIME

The sixth canto of the *Śrīmad-*

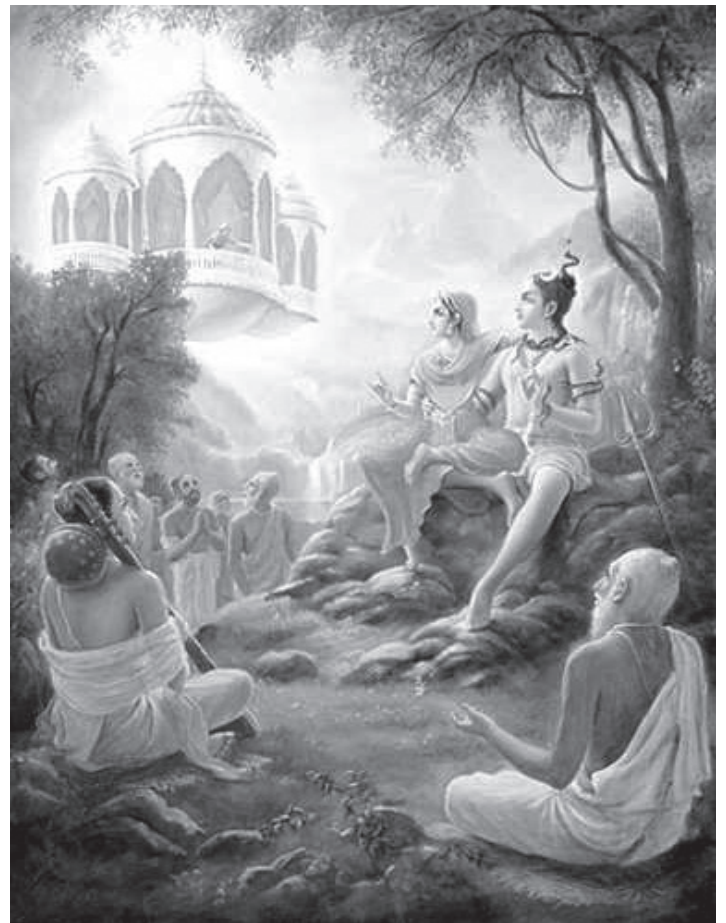
Bhāgavatam describes the pastime of King Citraketu who had the great fortune of meeting with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Once, while King Citraketu was traveling in outer space on an airplane given to him by Lord Viṣṇu, he saw Lord Śiva sitting in an assembly of great saintly persons and embracing Pārvatī who was sitting on his lap. Citraketu laughed loudly and expressed his wonder at Lord Śiva's action. When Pārvatī heard this, she became extremely angry and cursed Citraketu to become the demon Vṛtrāsura.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains how Citraketu did not offend Lord Śiva but was actually appreciating Lord Śiva's exalted position of remaining unaffected even while Pārvatī was on his lap. Citraketu addressed Lord Śiva as *mahāvratadharaḥ* which indicates a *brahmacārī* who has never fallen from his position.

Lord Śiva's response to Citraketu's remark also brings out his greatness. Citraketu feared that common people might become offenders at the feet of Lord Śiva by criticizing Śiva's external be-

havior without understanding his purity. That's why he laughed and criticized Lord Śiva in the open assembly. Lord Śiva, who is always deep in knowledge, could understand Citraketu's purpose, and therefore he was not at all angry; rather, he simply smiled and remained silent. But Pārvatī could not tolerate Citraketu's remark, and therefore she cursed him to become a demon. Citraketu, however, accepted the curse with folded palms as the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and went away. Lord Śiva, seeing this extraordinary behavior of Citraketu, glorified *viṣṇu-bhaktas* and the process of devotional service. He said,

*nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve
na kutaścana bibhyati*



King Citraketu observing Lord Śiva and Pārvatī Devi

*svargāpavarga-narakeṣv
apī tulyārtha-darśinaḥ*

“Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, never fear any condition of life. For them the heavenly planets, liberation and the hellish planets are all the same, for such devotees are interested only in the service of the Lord”(Bhāg. 6.17.28). He explained to Pārvatī how this material world is a place of duality, and how devotees have learned to tolerate these dualities and have become transcendental to them. Persons engaged in devotional service to Lord

Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, have naturally perfect knowledge and detachment from this material world. Therefore such devotees are least affected by the so-called happiness and distress of this world.

LORD ŚIVA’S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRACETĀS

Lord Śiva’s instructions to the Pracetās are one of the most valuable discussions appearing in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Pracetās were the sons of King Prācīnabarhi. When they were ordered by their father to marry and beget children, they all entered

the ocean and practiced austerities and penances for ten thousand years. Thus they worshiped the master of all austerity, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When all the sons of Prācīnabarhi left home to execute austerities, they met Lord Śiva, who, out of great mercy, instructed them about the Absolute Truth. All the sons of Prācīnabarhi meditated upon the instructions, chanting and worshipping them with great care and attention.

Lord Śiva said to the Pracetās, “Any person who is surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the controller of everything—material nature as well as the living entity—is actually very dear to me. You are all devotees of the Lord, and as such I appreciate that you are as respectable as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. I know in this way that the devotees also respect me and that I am dear to them. Thus no one can be as dear to the devotees as I am.”

Then Lord Śiva gave the Pracetās a mantra consisting of a series of verses glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu. The Pracetās chanted that mantra and attained the perfection of life.

DAKṢA-YAJÑĀ

The leaders of the universal creation, namely Marīci, Dakṣa and Vasiṣṭha, once performed a great sacrifice, and great demigods assembled for this sacrifice along with their followers. When Dakṣa, the leader of the Prajāpatis (progenitors) entered the assembly, everyone stood up in great respect, except Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. Lord Brahmā was the father of Dakṣa, so Dakṣa didn’t take offense to it. Lord Śiva, however, was



Lord Lord Śiva instructs the Pracetās

Dakṣa's son-in-law, and therefore he considered Lord Śiva's remaining seated as a great insult against him. Infuriated, he blasphemed and cursed Lord Śiva and denied his share of sacrificial oblations. A series of curses and counter-curses followed from the members of each party, and the whole event was completely spoiled.

During Dakṣa's outburst against Lord Śiva, he called him *yaśo-ghna* and *nirapatrapaḥ*, which meant "one who spoils name and fame" and "one who is stunted" respectively. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains how these words can be interpreted in a different way that brings out Lord Śiva's greatness. *Yaśo-ghna* can also mean that he was so famous that his fame killed all other fame. And *nirapatrapa* can mean "one who is the maintainer of persons who have no other shelter." Lord Śiva generally gives shelter to *bhūtas* (lower grade of living creatures) who cannot approach Lord Viṣṇu. Therefore the use of the word *nirapatrapa* is quite appropriate.

Dakṣa criticized Lord Śiva by saying that he lives in filthy places like crematoriums, and his companions are the ghosts and demons. He roams naked like a madman with ashes smeared all over him. He remains unclean and decorates himself with skulls and bones. All these are highly inauspicious, and therefore he is very dear to crazy beings, who are in the mode of ignorance.

Actually Lord Śiva is very kind to persons who are in the mode of darkness, such as unclean drunkards who do not regularly bathe. By giving shelter to such people, Lord Śiva gradually elevates them to spiritual consciousness. Lord Viṣṇu takes charge of persons who are advanced Kṛṣṇa conscious

Vaiṣṇavas, and Lord Brahmā takes charge of persons who are attached to material activities, but Lord Śiva is so kind that he takes charge of persons who are in gross ignorance and whose behavior is lower than that of the animals. Therefore he is all-auspicious. Śiva means "all-auspicious."

During the whole episode of cursing and counter-cursing, Lord Śiva did not curse Dakṣa, despite having the ability to do so. He remained silent and tolerated everything. This portrays Lord Śiva's excellent character. Because he is the greatest Vaiṣṇava he was completely sober and tolerant. He became morose because he knew that these people, both his men and Dakṣa's, were uninterested in spiritual life. From his point of view, he saw everyone equally, because he is a Vaiṣṇava. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.18), *paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*: one who is perfectly learned does not see anyone as lesser or greater, because he sees everyone from the spiritual plat-

*kṣīraṁ yathā dadhi
vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt
sañjāyate na hi tataḥ
pṛthag asti hetoḥ
yaḥ śambhutām api
tathā samuṣṭi kāryād
govindam ādi-puruṣam
tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

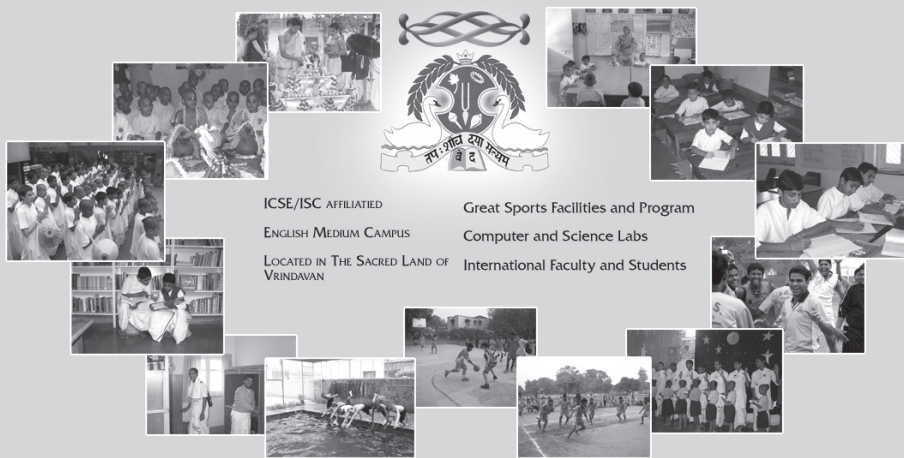
Just as milk is transformed into curd by the action of acids, but yet the effect curd is neither same as, nor different from, its cause, viz., milk, so I adore the primeval Lord Govinda of whom the state of Śambhu is a transformation for the performance of the work of destruction.

- Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā 5.45

form. Thus the only alternative left to Lord Śiva was to leave in order to stop his follower, Nandiśvara, as well as Bhṛgu Muni, who sided with Dakṣa, from cursing each other. ☸

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(Continued from page 15)

lims. However, the deities here are very old and are said to have been installed by Kṛṣṇa's great-grandson Vajranābha.

NANDEŚVARA MAHĀDEVA
AT NANDAGAON

The palace of Nanda Maharāja is situated atop Nandeśvara hill in Nandagaon. This hill is a form of Lord Śiva, who performed *tapasyā* for several thousands of years to enter into the Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja. When the Lord was pleased with him Śiva asked for a boon of getting a chance to witness the Vraja pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa by becoming a hill or a stone. Reciprocating with this desire, Lord Kṛṣṇa granted him this form in Nandagaon.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in *Vraja-rīti-cintāmaṇi* (1.15):

*tat-tac-chirobhūtam apāra-
śobham
nandiśvaram sādhu-gaṇā vadanti
nandiśvaram tam ca yadiya-
rūpaṁ
śrī-nanda-rājālaya-rājamānam*

The devotees declare that Nandiśvara hill, the form of Lord Śiva now shining as Nanda Mahārāja's capital, is an endlessly beautiful crown decorating Vṛndāvana.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in Nandagaon, Lord Śiva decided to take his *darśana*. When he reached Nanda Mahārāja's home, Yaśodā Māi was fearful of his strange appearance. There was a small drum tied to Lord Śiva's waist, he had ashes from the crematorium smeared all over his body, and snakes around his neck. Yaśodā Māi shut the doors of her home. Her

fear was that baby Kṛṣṇa would become terrified to see such a ghastly appearance. Finally, Lord Śiva left in disappointment.

During this time, Kṛṣṇa began to cry loudly. Alongwith Yaśodā, all the other elderly *gopīs* tried to pacify Him, but in vain. One elderly *gopī* said, "Maybe someone has put an evil eye on Kṛṣṇa. Who has come to meet Kṛṣṇa since the morning?" Yaśodā remembered the strange-looking person and sent some *gopīs* searching out for him. They found him at Āśeśvara-vana and got him to remove the evil eye put on the baby. As soon as baby Kṛṣṇa saw Śiva, He began to smile. Yaśodā then shut the door again. Again, Kṛṣṇa began to cry. So, they gave *darśana* of Lord Śiva to Kṛṣṇa again. He smiled. Lord Śiva then requested Yaśodā Māi to keep Kṛṣṇa's foot on his head. Scared of the snakes and scorpions, mother Yaśodā denied. However, the elderly *gopīs* persisted and finally Lord Śiva received the divine lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa on his head. His happiness knew no bounds. He began his ecstatic dance as Naṭarāja, playing his drum. Kṛṣṇa became very joyous to see Lord Śiva's wonderful dance. Yaśodā quickly requested Lord Śiva to stay in Nandagaon permanently so that Kṛṣṇa would always be happy.

Seizing the opportunity, Lord Śiva asked, "Whenever you bathe Kṛṣṇa, if you sprinkle that *carṇāmṛta* on me and whenever you feed Kṛṣṇa, if you bring me His remnants, then I will stay here." Yaśodā gladly accepted the offer. Since then, Lord Śiva has stayed at Nandagaon in the form of Nandeśvara Mahādeva and even today, the *carṇāmṛta* and *mahā-prasāda* of Lord Kṛṣṇa is first offered to him. ❀

Letters

(Continued from page 3)

der to all the qualities and components." But because Kṛṣṇa is the origin and refuge of all these gods, one attains the perfection of surrender to all—in one stroke—simply by surrendering to Him alone.

Whatever one might get by worshipping any other god is in fact bestowed by Kṛṣṇa Himself (*mayaiva vihitān hi tān*, *Gītā* 7.22). Why then should one refuse to surrender exclusively to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa?

The benefits one gets from other gods are temporary (*anta-vat*), and therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* (7.23) that those who worship such gods are *alpa-medhasa*, "meager in intelligence." The devotees of such gods attain the abodes of those gods, which are all temporary and subject to distress (*duḥkhālayam aśāsvatam*, *Gītā* 8.15). The devotees of Kṛṣṇa, on the other hand, attain the abode of Kṛṣṇa Himself (*yānti mām api*), where they enjoy immortal bliss and knowledge.

Again, these are not our statements. They are the statements of *Bhagavad-gītā*. We simply accept them. What else are we supposed to do?

You castigate us for violating "the spirit of Hinduism." But without the *Bhagavad-gītā*, what is the meaning of Hinduism? The ideas to which you are objecting come directly from the *Gītā*. So why are you objecting?

You accuse us of deviating from "the mother religion." But the mother religion is not "Hinduism." The mother religion—for all living beings—is *sanātana-dharma*, or *bhāgavata-dharma*, devotion to Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.4) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that He is the father of all living beings (*aham bija-pradhān* *pitā*). He is even the father of the

devas (*aham ādir hi devānām*, Bg. 10.2). The mother religion, therefore, is the worship of the Supreme Father (Bhagavān), the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The Vedic scriptures, in fact, may be compared to our mother, and the Supreme Lord to our father. If we are in doubt about who our father is, we should best consult our mother. And according to the conclusion of all the Vedic literature, the father of all living beings is Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*).

Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, in books such as *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, has presented the Vedic literature with scrupulous integrity. And he has distributed its message intact through the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Anyone born in India, the land of Vedic knowledge, is extremely fortunate. And we appeal to all such fortunate people to make their lives perfect by joining the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and spreading it everywhere for the eternal benefit of all living beings.

If Hinduism is to be saved, the way to save it is to accept *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. We may have been taught that all gods are equal and we should therefore surrender to them all. But Lord Kṛṣṇa says to give up all such notions, accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and surrender to Him alone (*sarva dharmān partiyajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*).

As long as we refuse to surrender to Kṛṣṇa we shall be confined to this material world (*Gītā* 9.3). So if confinement is not Hinduism, we should at once surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa will then at once grant us liberation from all material confinement and take us back home, back to Godhead. In this way—by following the divine instructions

given in *Bhagavad-gītā* by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself—one attains the perfection of Hinduism, and the perfection of human life. ❀

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Sincerely,
Jayādvaīta Swamī
(Former Editor)



The Greatest ...

(Continued from page 32)

to employ the energy of goddess Kālī (or Durgā). In another popular picture the goddess Kālī is sometimes seen standing on the prostrate body of Lord Śiva, which indicates that sometimes Lord Śiva has to fall down flat in order to stop goddess Kālī from killing the *asuras*. Since Lord Śiva controls the great material energy (goddess Durgā), worshipers of Lord Śiva attain very opulent positions within this material world. Under Lord Śiva's direction, a worshiper of Lord Śiva gets all kinds of material facilities. In contrast, a Vaiṣṇava, or worshiper of Lord Viṣṇu, gradually becomes poorer in material possessions because Lord Viṣṇu does not trick His devotees into becoming materially entangled by possessions. Lord Viṣṇu gives His devotees intelligence from within, as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10):

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām bhajatām
pṛīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena
mām upayānti te*

"To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me."

Thus Lord Viṣṇu gives intelligence to His devotee so that the devotee can make progress on the path back home, back to Godhead.

Since a devotee has nothing to do with any kind of material possession, he does not come under the control of goddess Kālī, or the goddess Durgā.

Lord Śiva is also in charge of the *tamo-guṇa*, or the mode of ignorance in this material world. His potency, the goddess Durgā, is described as keeping all living entities in the darkness of ignorance (*yā devī sarva-bhūteṣu nidra-rūpaṁ samsthītā*). Both Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, but Lord Brahmā is in charge of the creation whereas Lord Śiva is in charge of the destruction, which he carries out with the help of his material energy, goddess Kālī, or goddess Durgā. Thus Lord Śiva is described as being accompanied by dangerous potencies (*śaktyā ghorayā*), and that is the actual position of Lord Śiva.

HOW DO VAIṢṆAVAS WORSHIP LORD ŚIVA ?

It is stated in the list of *nāma-āparādhas* that it is an offense to think that the chanting of the name of Hari and the chanting of Hara, or Śiva, are the same. The devotees must always know that Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that Lord Śiva is His devotee. A devotee should be offered respect on the level of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and sometimes even more respect. Indeed, Lord Rāma, the Personality of Godhead Himself, sometimes worshiped Lord Śiva. If a devotee is worshiped by the Lord, why should a devotee not be worshiped by other devotees on the same level with the Lord? This is the conclusion. It appears that Lord Śiva blesses the *asuras* simply for the sake of formality.

Actually Śiva loves one who is devoted to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ❀

- Śyamānanda Dāsa



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Jaipur, Rajasthan — ISKCON Rd., Opp. Vijay Path, Mansarovar, Jaipur 302 020 (Mail: 84/230, Sant Namdev Marg, Opp. K.V. No. 5, Mansarovar, Jaipur 302 020)/ Tel. (0414) 2782765 or 2781860/ jaipur@pamho.net

Jammu, J&K — C/o Shankar Charitable Trust, Shakti Nagar, Near A.G. Office/ Tel. (0191) 2582306

Jhansi, U.P. — Inside Saiyar Gate, Near Kali Badi/ Tel. (0510) 2443602.

Katra, J&K — Sri Kalika Mata Mandir, Katra (Vaishnodevi), 182 101/ Tel. (01991) 233047

Kolkata — 3C Albert Rd., 700 017/ Tel. (033) 2287 3757/ 6075/8242/ Fax: (033) 247-8515 iskcon.calcutta@pamho.net

Kurukshetra, Haryana — 369, Gudri Muhalla, Main Bazaar, 132 118. Tel. (01744) 234806.

Lucknow, UP — 1 Ashok Nagar, Guru Govind Singh Marg, 226 018/ Tel. (0522) 223556 or 271551

Ludhiana, Punjab — Sterling Tower, Vrindavan Rd., Civil Lines, 141 001/ Tel. (161) 2770600 or (161) 3118897 or 98159-40005/ iskcon.ludhiana@pamho.net

Madurai, TN — 37 Maninagaram Main Road, 625 001/ Tel. (0452) 274-6472.

Mangalore, Karnataka — Shivagiri, Above Professional Courier, Nandi Gudda Road, Attavar, Mangalore 575 001/ Tel. (0824) 2423326 or 2442756, 9844325616

Mayapur, WB — Shree Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, Shree Mayapur Dham, Dist Nadia, 741 313/ Tel. (03472) 245239, 245240 or 245233/ Fax: (03472) 245238/ mayapur.chandrodaya@pamho.net

Moirang, Manipur — Nongban Inghkon, Tidim Rd./ Tel. 795133

Mumbai, Maharashtra — Juhu 400 049/ Tel. (022) 2620-6860/ Fax: (022) 2620-5214/ iskcon.juhu@pamho.net or

Mumbai, Maharashtra — 7 K. M. Munshi Marg, Near Babulnath Temple, Chowpatty, 400 007. Tel. (022) 2366-5500/ Fax: (022) 2366-5555/ radha-krishna.rns@pamho.net

Nadia, West Bengal — Habibpur, Ranaghat, 741 403/ Tel. (03473) 281150 or 281226/ shyamrup.jps@pamho.net

Nagpur, Maharashtra — Bharathwada Road, Near Gulmohar Nagar, Ramanuja Nagar, Kalmama Market, Nagpur- 8/ Tel. (0712) 6994730, 937015638/9371064102/

9423635311/ iskcon.nagpur@pamho.net
Nasik, Maharashtra — Behind Poornima Bus stop, Vrindavan colony, General vidya nagar, Dwarka, Nasik 422 011/ Tel. (0253) 6450005/ 9850071227/ siksastakam.rns@pamho.net
New Delhi — Sant Nagar Main Rd., East of Kailash, 110 065/ Tel. (011)26235133,34,35,36,37/ Fax: (011) 2621-5421 or 2628-0067/ neel.sunder@pamho.net
Nellore, AP — Hare Krishna Road, 524 004/ Tel. 0861-2314577/ Mobile: 9215536589/ sukadevaswami@gmail.com
New Delhi — 41/77 Punjabi Bagh West, 110 026/ Tel. 25222851, 25227478, 55136200.
Noida, UP — B-4, Sector 31, 201 301/ Tel. (095120) 245-4912 or 245-5015/ vraja.bhakti.vilas.lok@pamho.net
Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Hare Krishna Dham (East bank of Chandrabhaga river), 413 304/ Tel. (02186) 267242 or 267266/ Mobile: 9423335991/ iskcon.pandharpur@pamho.net
Patna, Bihar — Arya Kumar Rd., Rajendra Nagar, 800 016/ Tel. (0612) 687637 or 685081/ Fax: (0612) 687635/ krishna.kripa.jps@pamho.net
Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapur Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (020) 41033222, 41033223/ iyfpune@vsnl.com
Puri, Orissa — Bhakti Kutī, Swargadwar, 752 001/ Tel. (06752) 231440
Raipur, Chhatisgarh — Alopi Nagar, Opp. Maharshi Vidyalaya, Tatibandh, 492 001/ Tel. (0771) 5037555, 9893276985/ iskconraipur@yahoo.com
Salem, TN — Rajaram Nagar, 636 007/ Tel. (0427) 2418245/ iskcon.salem@pamho.net
Secunderabad, AP — 27, St. John's Rd., 500 026/ Tel. (040) 780-5232/ Fax: (040) 814021
Siliguri, WB — ISKCON Road, Gitalpara, 734 406/ Tel. (0353) 426619, 539046 or 539082/ Fax: (0353) 526130
Solapur, Maharashtra — Bhaktivedanta Marg, Old Akalkot Naka, District Solapur, 413005 . Tel. 09371178393
Sri Rangam, TN — 93 Anna Mandapam Rd., A-1 Caitanya Apartments, 620 006/ Tel. (0431) 433945
Surat, Gujarat — Jahangirpura-3, 395 005/ Tel. (0261) 2765891 or 2765516/ surat@pamho.net
Thane, Maharashtra — Srusti Complex, Opp. Royal College, Mira Road (E), 401 107/ Tel. (022) 2811-7795 or -7796/ Fax: (022) 2811-8875/ jagjivan.gkd@pamho.net
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala — T.C. 224/1485, WC Hospital Rd., Thycaud, 695 014. Tel. (0471) 2328197. jsdasa@yahoo.co.in
Tirupati, AP — Sri Sri Radha Govinda Asta Sakhi Girirajji Mandir, Hare Krishna Land, Hare Krishna Road, Tirupati - 517 507 Andhra Pradesh. Phone: (0877) 2231760, 2230009
Guest House Booking: guesthouse.tirupati@pamho.net
Udhampur, J&K — SrilaPrabhupada Marg, Srila Prabhupada Nagar/ Tel. (01992) 270298 or 276146
Ujjain, MP — Bharatpuri, 456010/ Tel. 0734-235000/ Fax: 0734-2536000/ iskcon.ujjain@pamho.net

Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat — Opposite Polytechnic, 388 121/ Tel. (02692) 230796 or 233012
Varanasi, UP — B 27/80 Durgakund Rd., Near Durgakund Police Station, 221 010/ Tel. (0542) 276422 or 222617
Vellore, TN — Chennai Ext. Centre, 10-12, 10th East Cross Road, Gandhi Nagar, 632006
Vijayawada, AP — Venkatapalem Karakatta Rd., Undavalli Village, Tadepalli Mandal, 522 501/ Tel. (08645) 272513/ mmdasiskconvijayawada@gmail.com
Vishakapatnam, AP — Sagaranaagar, 530045/ Tel. (0891) 5537625/ samba.jps@pamho.net
Vrindavan, UP — Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, 281 124/ Tel. (0565) 254-0021 (Guesthouse:) 254-0022/ Fax: (0565) 254-0053/ vrindavan@pamho.net; (Guesthouse:)
Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (08712) 426182

Vaiṣṇava Calendar 1 Feb 2009 -15 Mar 2009

- 2 Feb: Śrīla Advaita Ācārya – Appearance (Fasting till noon)
3 Feb: Bhīṣmāṣṭamī
4 Feb: Śrīpāda Madhvācārya – Disappearance
5 Feb: Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya – Disappearance
6 Feb: Fasting for Bhaimī Ekādaśī, Varāha Dvādaśī: Appearance of Lord Varāhadeva (Fasting till noon.) (Feasting is done tomorrow.)
7 Feb: Break fast (Mumbai) 07:11 am - 10:59 am, Nityānanda Trayodaśī: Appearance of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. (The fast is observed till noon on the Mahādvādaśī.) (Feasting is done today.)
9 Feb: Śrī Kṛṣṇa Madhura utsava, Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura — Appearance
14 Feb: Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa Ṭhākura – Disappearance, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura – Appearance (Fasting till noon), Śrīla Gaur Govinda Swami – Disappearance
21 Feb: Fasting for Vijayā Ekādaśī, Śrī Išvara Purī – Disappearance
22 Feb: Break fast (Mumbai) 07:03 am - 10:56 am
23 Feb: Śiva Rātrī
26 Feb: Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī – Disappearance, Śrī Rasikānanda – Disappearance
28 Feb: Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa Ṭhākura – Appearance
7 Mar: Fasting for Āmalakī vrata Ekādaśī
8 Mar: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:53 am - 10:50 am, Śrī Mādhavendra Purī – Disappearance
11 Mar: Gaura Pūrṇimā – Appearance of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu
12 Mar: Festival of Jagannātha Miśra

THE GREATEST VAIṢṆAVA

Many people in India harbor the opinion that Mahādeva Śankara is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And if they are presented with Vedic evidence which states that not only Lord Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu is established as the Supreme Godhead, but even Lord Śiva has no problems accepting that, then they feel even more confused. In Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, he narrates how various devotees are asked whether they are the greatest devotees and uniquely none of them reply in the affirmative. Everyone who was asked, Lord Indra, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Prahlāda, Hanumān, the Pāṇḍava brothers etc keep on pointing to someone else. And what about the cowherd damsels (*gopīs*) of Vṛndāvana—their love for Kṛṣṇa is unparalleled. But they too feel that they have no love for Kṛṣṇa. So, this business of determining who is the greatest devotee of Kṛṣṇa is not like determining who is the richest man in the country or who has scored maximum runs in cricket or maximum goals in football. In the mundane sphere, achievements can be counted, hence who has them in the largest number wins the game.

The path of *bhakti* is based on the foundation of humility. Therefore it should be obvious that the one with the greatest humility will be the last person to acknowledge that he is the most humble - because that will infect him with pride and consequently destroy his humility. As the best of the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa let us have a glimpse of Lord Śiva's sterling qualities.

LORD ŚIVA AS ŚRĪPĀDA ŚANKARĀCĀRYA

There are twelve great authorities in preaching God consciousness. The name Śambhu means Lord Śiva. His disciplic succession is also known as the Viṣṇu Svāmi-sampradāya, and the current Viṣṇusvāmi-sampradāya is also known as the Vallabha-sampradāya. The current Brahma-sampradāya is known as the Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya. Even though Lord Śiva appeared to preach Māyāvāda philosophy, at the end of his pastime in the form of Śankarācārya, he preached the Vaiṣṇava philosophy: *bhaja govindam*

bhaja govindam bhaja govindam muḍha-mate. He stressed worshipping Lord Kṛṣṇa, or Govinda, three times in this verse and especially warned his followers that they could not possibly achieve deliverance, or *mukti*, simply by word jugglery and grammatical puzzles. If one is actually serious to attain *mukti*, he must worship Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is Śrīpāda Śankarācārya's last instruction.

WHY DO PEOPLE WORSHIP LORD ŚIVA TOGETHER WITH GODDESS KĀLĪ ?

It is mentioned in the *Vedas* that Lord Śiva is always accompanied by his material energy (*śaktyā ghorayā*). Material energy—goddess Durgā, or goddess Kālī—is always under his control. Goddess Kālī and Durgā serve him by killing all the *asuras*, or demons. Sometimes Kālī becomes so infuriated that she indiscriminately kills all kinds of *asuras*. There is a popular picture of goddess Kālī in which she wears a garland composed of the heads of the *asuras* and holds in her left hand a captured head and in her right hand a great *khaḍga*, or chopper, for killing *asuras*. Great wars are symbolic representations of Kālī's devastation of the *asuras* and are actually conducted by the goddess Kālī. *śṛṣṭi-sthiti-pralaya-sādhana-śaktir ekā* (Śrī Brahma Samhitā. 5.44) *Asuras* try to pacify the goddess Kālī, or Durgā, by worshipping her in material opulence, but when the *asuras* become too intolerable, goddess Kālī does not discriminate in killing them wholesale. *Asuras* do not know the secret of the energy of Lord Śiva, and they prefer to worship goddess Kālī or Durgā or Lord Śiva for material benefit. Due to their demoniac character, they are reluctant to surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa, as indicated by *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.15):

*na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ
prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā
āsuraṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ*

Lord Śiva's duty is very dangerous because he has
(please turn to page 29)