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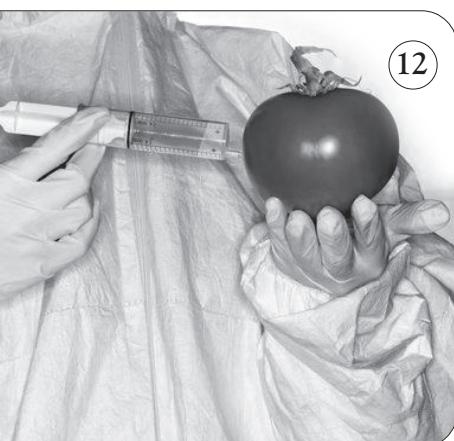
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- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary. • To expose the faults of materialism.
• To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life. • To preserve and spread the Vedic culture. • To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu • To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

OUR PURPOSES

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement



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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MOODY ABOUT THE MOON

BTG reader, Dāmodara, had a series of email exchanges with us on the proper representation of science in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We published his letter earlier, (See "Why Make Fun of Science?" Letters, March 2009).

Here we are publishing some excerpts from his subsequent letters along with our replies.

DĀMODARA: I am grateful to you for replying to my mail. Our society (ISKCON) is against atheistic science and you told me that you will raise voice against such non-religious people, but at the same time you are not raising your voice against India's moon-landing mission. According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is not possible for a man to go to the moon in his lifetime. You have the truth but are not telling society. You raise voice only in the temple; but do not make this point clear in the public.

OUR REPLY: Regarding the moon landing, our point is mentioned in the editorial of the March issue.

DĀMODARA: Publishing in BTG is not paramount. You should have written a column in one of the national newspapers. Publishing in BTG means you are restricting the truth to our ISKCON members only. You should bring the truth to the whole of society, not just the ISKCON society.

OUR REPLY: BTG magazine is not for ISKCON members only; it is for the general public. We don't have any tie up with any national newspaper. You have the article; you may go ahead and print it in the daily of your choice.

DĀMODARA: I requested you to write an article exposing the moon-landing issue in a national paper because you are senior whereas I am just a beginner in ISKCON. Secondly, you have knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and you can support your views with relevant scriptural points.

Recently, when I told my friends about the moon concept (the moon is very far from earth and it is not possible to land there etc.), they asked me why ISKCON wasn't coming forward to expose the truth and defeat the illusion. You should conduct seminars so that people will be aware of the truth.

OUR REPLY: The astrological views mentioned in the *Purāṇas* are difficult for most to comprehend. Efforts are underway to make them understandable according to modern astrological findings. Śrīla Prabhupāda also wanted to present the Vedic astronomy in a planetarium in Māyāpur, the world headquarters of ISKCON, where all the different planets and universes will be depicted according to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Then we can present the concepts properly to the entire world. Why stop just at a newspaper article? What you want us to do will be done, though it may take some time.

Secondly, moon landing is not an important issue. It doesn't make any difference to the suffering masses whether we went to the moon or not. More important is to help them come to Kṛṣṇa and land on Goloka from where they cannot come down.

You may choose to discuss the positive aspects of Kṛṣṇa conscious-

VAISNAVA CALENDAR

1 MAY - 15 JUNE

1 MAY: Jāhnu Saptamī

3 MAY: Śrīmatī Sītā Devī (consort of Lord Śrī Rāma) – Appearance, Śrī Madhu Paṇḍita – Disappearance, Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī – Appearance

5 MAY: Fasting for Mohinī Ekādaśī

6 MAY: Break fast (Mumbai)
06:08 am - 09:05 am, Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī

7 MAY: Śrī Jayānanda Prabhu – Disappearance

8 MAY: Nṛsiṁha Caturdaśī: Appearance of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva (Fasting till dusk)

9 MAY: Kṛṣṇa Phula Ḍola, Salila Vihāra, Śrī Parameśvarī Dāsa Ṭhākura – Disappearance, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Ramāṇa Devajī – Appearance, Śrī Mādhavendra Purī – Appearance, Śrī Śrīnivāsa Ācārya – Appearance

14 MAY: Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya – Disappearance, End of Jala Dāna

20 MAY: Fasting for Aparā Ekādaśī

21 MAY: Break fast (Mumbai)
08:30 am - 10:24 am, Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura – Appearance

2 JUN: Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa – Disappearance, Gaṅgā Pūjā, Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāminī – Appearance

3 JUN: Fasting for Pāñḍava Nirjalā Ekādaśī (Total fast, even from water)

4 JUN: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:00 am - 10:25 am

5 JUN: Pāniḥāṭi Cidā Dahi Utsava

7 JUN: Snāna Yātrā, Śrī Mukunda Datta – Disappearance, Śrī Śrīdhara Paṇḍita – Disappearance

8 JUN: Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu – Disappearance

13 JUN: Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita – Appearance

ness like devotion to God, the information about the soul, workings of the mind, sense control, meditation, proper character and behavior, ISKCON's efforts in propagating Vedic culture globally, etc. These will appeal more to your friends than needless controversies. For more details see Caitanya Carāṇa's article in this issue.

WASTING MONEY ON THE MOON

The editorial "Ten objections to India's lunar mission lunacy" (March 2009) should serve as an eye-opener to all. All space missions, including the lunar mission are utterly foolish acts and exercises in futility.

Śrīla Prabhupāda himself had refuted time and again, the claim of man landing on the moon and called the scientists cheaters trying

to fool the people. Billions of dollars being wasted on such ignominious and useless missions can best be utilized for arresting global warming or eliminating terrorism which are international threats, and also for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness through construction of ISKCON temples the world over, which is the greatest service to mankind.

R.M.Manoharan
Chennai

Replies to the letter were written by Murāri Gupta Dāsa.

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VEDIC THOUGHTS

The Supreme Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is always fully satisfied in Himself. Therefore when something is offered to Him, the offering, by the Lord's mercy, is for the benefit of the devotee, for the Lord does not need service from anyone. To give an example, if one's face is decorated, the reflection of one's face in a mirror is also seen to be decorated.

Prahlāda prays to Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva (Bhāg 7.9.11)

My dear Prahlāda, you are very fortunate. Please know from Me that those who are very wise and highly elevated try to please Me

in all different modes of mellows, for I am the only person who can fulfill all the desires of everyone.

Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva speaks to Prahlāda (Bhāg 7.9.54)

A person who accepts the path of devotional service is not bereft of the results derived from studying the Vedas, performing austere sacrifices, giving charity, or pursuing philosophical and fruitive activities. Simply by performing devotional service, he attains all these, and at the end he reaches the supreme eternal abode.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa,
(Bhagavad-gītā 8.28)

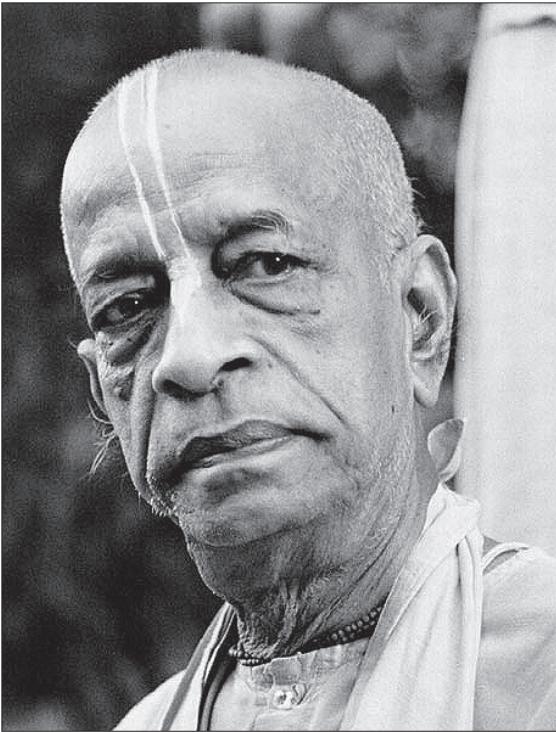
EYES TO SEE GOD

*When the eyes are smeared with the ointment
of love of Kṛṣṇa, by these eyes, you'll see Kṛṣṇa.*

by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Pradyumna: "Invoking auspiciousness: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, the reservoir of all *rasas*, or relationships, which are called neutrality, or passive adoration, servitorship, friendship, parenthood, conjugal love, comedy, compassion, fear, chivalry, ghastliness, wonder, and devastation. He is the supreme attractive form, and by His universal and transcendental attractive features, He has captivated all the *gopīs*, headed by Tārakā, Pālikā, Śyāmā, Lalitā, and ultimately, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Let His Lordship's grace be on us so that there may not be any hindrance in the

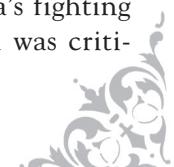


execution of this duty of writing *The Nectar of Devotion*, impelled by His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda."

Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa is described as *akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. So there are different *rasas*. *Rasa* means the mellow or the taste which we enjoy in every activity. Whatever you do, you must enjoy some taste out of it. There are twelve *rasas*, out of which five *rasas* are primary and seven *rasas* are secondary. They are described here.

KISSING WITH ARROWS

For example Kṛṣṇa's fighting with Bhīṣma. Bhīṣma was criti-



cized by Duryodhana: "My dear grandfather, you are not fighting in full strength with Pāñdavas, because they are your grandsons and you have affection for them. I think you are not fighting according to your strength. Otherwise, they would have been finished by this time."

Bhīṣma could understand his criticism. He promised, "Tomorrow I shall finish all these five brothers. Will that make you happy? I am keeping five arrows to be used tomorrow to kill these five brothers."

Duryodhana became doubtful. He requested, "My dear grandfather, may I keep these five arrows with me so that you can take them from me tomorrow and use them?" "All right," he said. "You keep them."

Kṛṣṇa understood that Bhīṣma had promised to kill the Pāñdavas the next day, and had selected five arrows for them. Kṛṣṇa had to protect His devotees. He told Arjuna, "Duryodhana had promised to give you some benediction. Now is your opportunity. Go to Duryodhana. He has kept five arrows very carefully; you take them."

After fighting in the day, one could go to the other camp in the evening as friends, brothers—without enmity. So Arjuna went to Duryodhana and Duryodhana received him according to Vedic etiquette. "Arjuna, why have you come?" he asked. "Ask something from me. I am ready to give. If you want the kingdom without fighting, I'll give it to you."

Arjuna said, "No, my dear brother, I've not come for that purpose. But I have come for that benediction you wanted to give me." "Yes, I am prepared," replied Duryodhana. Arjuna requested the five arrows, and they were immediately delivered.

The next morning, when Bhīṣmadeva asked for the five arrows, Duryodhana said, "Sir, they were taken away by Arjuna." Bhīṣmadeva could understand that it was Kṛṣṇa's trick, so immediately, out of devotion, he became angry.

today I shall fight in a way that either Kṛṣṇa has to break His own promise, or His friend Arjuna will be killed." Two alternatives!

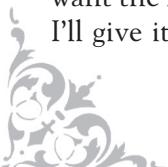
So with Bhīṣma fighting fiercely, Arjuna's chariot was broken and he fell down. At that time Kṛṣṇa took one of the wheels of the chariot and immediately rushed towards Bhīṣma. Bhīṣma was piercing Kṛṣṇa's body with arrows, but He accepted the arrows as if they were flowers. Therefore that is a *rasa*, ghastly *rasa*. Though it appears to be very severe—that Kṛṣṇa is being



Kṛṣṇa took one of the wheels of the chariot and immediately rushed towards Bhīṣma.

Devotional service can also be executed in anger, not simply by flowers. A devotee can serve Kṛṣṇa by becoming angry. Bhīṣma vowed, "Today Kṛṣṇa has to break His promise." Kṛṣṇa had promised that He would simply drive Arjuna's chariot and not fight even while on the battlefield. Bhīṣma said, "Kṛṣṇa has broken my promise, so

pierced by the arrows—but Kṛṣṇa was feeling pleasure. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained this portion, by the example of kissing. Sometimes there is hard pressure of the teeth, but still it is pleasurable. Although Kṛṣṇa was being pierced by the arrows of Bhīṣmadeva, He still found it very pleasing. And Bhīṣmadeva

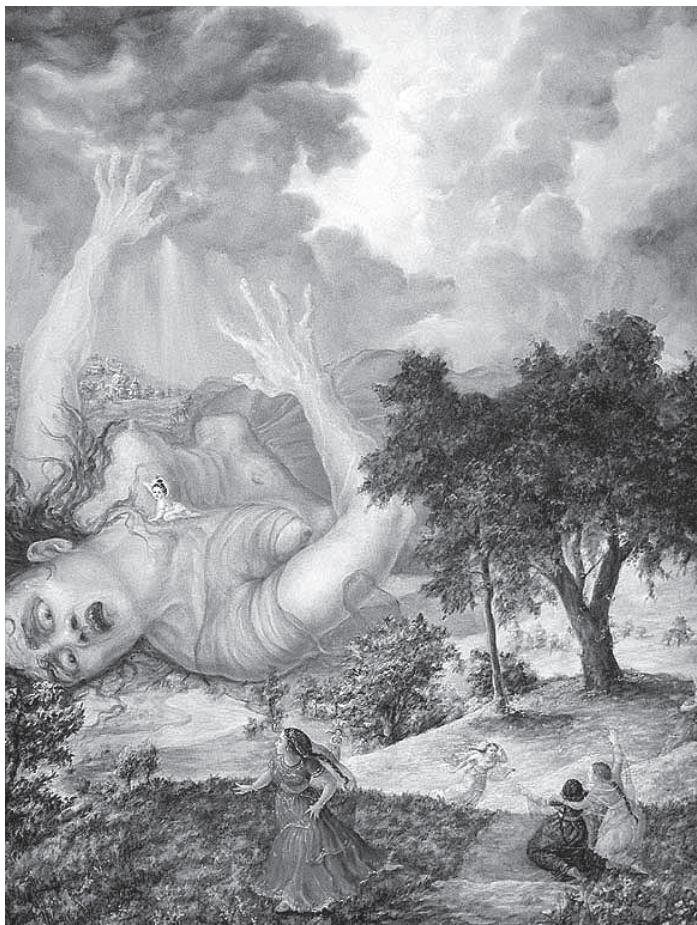


on his death bed, wanted to see that form of Kṛṣṇa, angry and approaching to kill him on the battlefield.

We can enjoy Kṛṣṇa's loving service in so many ways. Not only by the embrace of the gopīs, but in the fight of Bhīṣma with Kṛṣṇa—piercing His body with arrows. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*. He can associate with you in any *rasa*, humor, you like

LORD SEES THE BRIGHTER SIDE

There are twelve *rasas*, either primary *rasa* or secondary *rasa*.



Kṛṣṇa killed Pūtanā by sucking both her breast and life

Kṛṣṇa is ready to respond to any *rasa*. That is Kṛṣṇa's position. *Kāmāt krodhād bhayāt dveśāt*: Either by lusty desire or by anger or by fear, if one comes in contact

with Kṛṣṇa, then he becomes purified, what to speak of those who love Him. For example Pūtanā wanted to kill Kṛṣṇa, but when Pūtanā was killed by sucking both her breast and life, she was given the position of Kṛṣṇa's mother. Because Kṛṣṇa took the bright side. Kṛṣṇa thought "Whatever her intention may be, she came to Me just like a mother, and I sucked her breast. Therefore she is My mother." *Tejiyasāṁ na doṣāya*: one who is very powerful should be understood to be faultless [Bhāg. 10.33.29]. Similarly, the gopīs came to Kṛṣṇa out of lust, but out of lust,

they became purified. Just like the sun soaks the water from the urinal but does not become polluted, rather, the urinal becomes sterilized. This is the process. Try to approach Kṛṣṇa some way or other, then your life will be successful. It doesn't matter. *Kāmāt krodhād bhayād dveśāt*. What to speak of those who are constantly engaged in love with Kṛṣṇa? Everything is love. As soon as you

divert your attention to Kṛṣṇa, that is love. It may be perverted, just like Kaṁsa. Kaṁsa was always thinking of Kṛṣṇa. He was also Kṛṣṇa conscious, but he was thinking in terms

of killing Kṛṣṇa, as enemy. This is not *bhakti*. This is not *anukūla*, favorable; it is *pratikūla*, un-favorable. But still, Kṛṣṇa is so kind that Kaṁsa was also given liberation. This is the special kindness of Kṛṣṇa.

FIXING THE MIND

Yena tena prakāreṇa manah kṛṣṇe niveśayet. That is the direction given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. "Some way or other, fix up your mind on Kṛṣṇa." Then your life is successful. Some way or other, *Yena tena*. If your mind is fixed up always in Kṛṣṇa, then your senses will also be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service. Because the mind is the center of all activities of the senses.

Ambarīṣa Mahārāja first of all engaged his mind in Kṛṣṇa. *Sa vai manah kṛṣṇa-padāravindayoh* [Bhāg. 9.4.18]. By fixing up his mind in Kṛṣṇa, then he could use all other senses, including the tongue. Actually *bhakti* begins with the tongue. *Sevomukhe hi jihvādau*. Beginning from tongue, *kṛṣṇabhakti* begins. It may be very awkward to hear, "by tongue, how can *bhakti* begin?" But that is the statement in the *śāstras*. *Atah śrī-kṛṣṇā-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ* [Cc. Madhya 17.136]. Our present blunt, materially covered senses, cannot taste what is Kṛṣṇa's name, what is Kṛṣṇa's form, what is Kṛṣṇa's quality, what is Kṛṣṇa's pastime, what is Kṛṣṇa's paraphernalia. Senses, they taste. But just like when one is suffering from liver disease, or jaundice, he cannot taste the sugar candy. The sugar candy is sweet, but it will taste bitter to a jaundiced patient. Similarly, our senses, being covered with material consciousness, cannot at the present moment taste Kṛṣṇa's form, Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's quality, Kṛṣṇa's pastime, and Kṛṣṇa's para-

phernalia. It is not possible. Atah śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ [Cc. Madhya 17.136]. Our senses are materially contaminated. Therefore we cannot directly perceive Kṛṣṇa with our present senses. So they have to be purified.

Just like when the eyes suffer from cataracts, you cannot see properly. But if by surgical operation, the cataract is moved, the eyes become purified, you can see. That is also stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

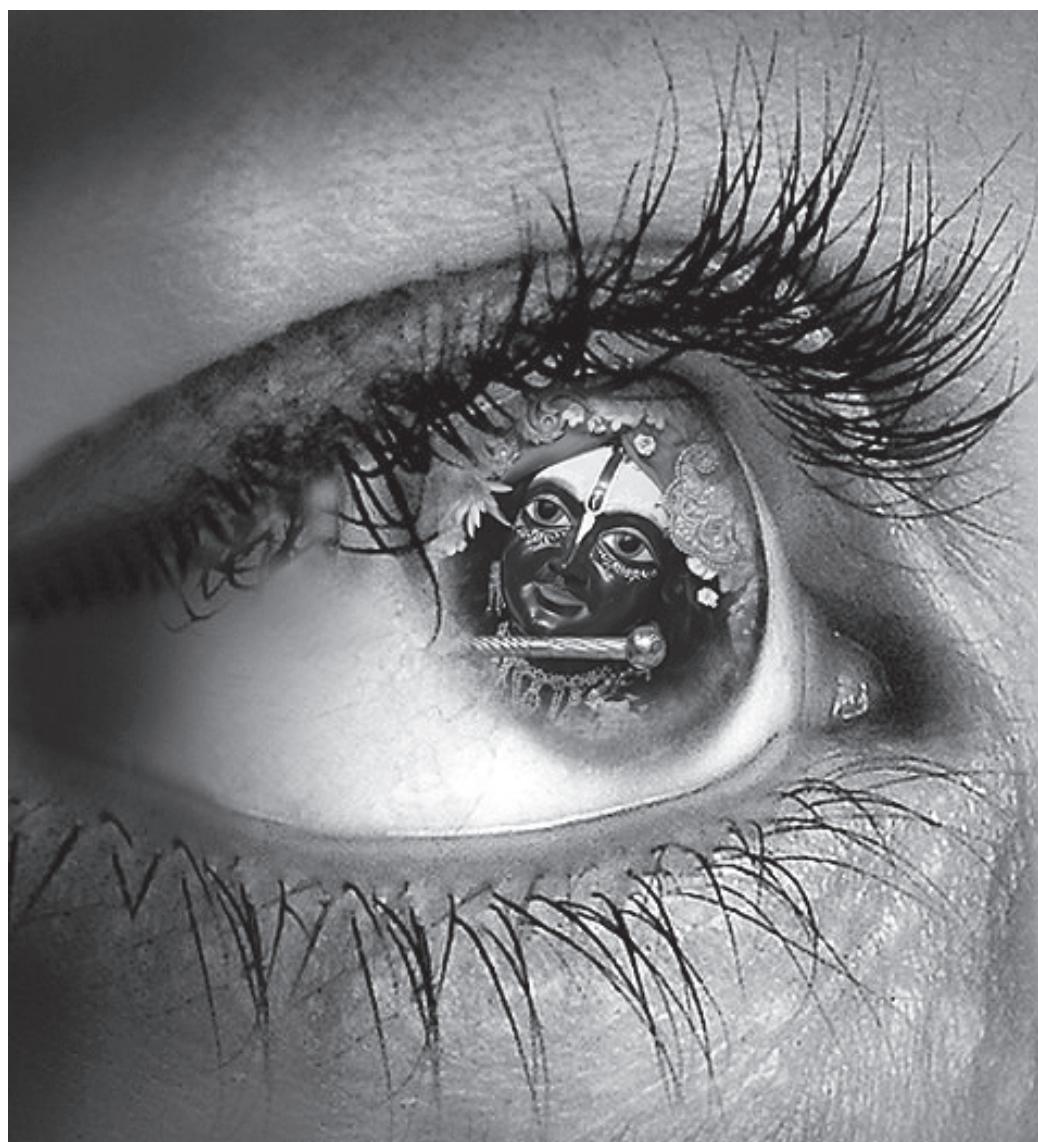
*premāñjana-cchurita
bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣु
vilokeyanti
yam śyāmasundaram
acintya-guṇa-svarūpam
govindam ādi-puruṣam
tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*
[Bs. 5.38]

Premāñjana-cchurita. You have to collect the ointment of love for Kṛṣṇa, just like we use *surma* for clear vision. And when the love of Kṛṣṇa-surma is applied on the eyes, you'll see Kṛṣṇa. This is the process.

*S a r v o p ā d h i -
vinirmuktam* [Cc. Madhya 19.170]. You have to get yourself freed from the *upādhis*, designations. The sum and substance of designation is this material body. "I am this body." "I am Hindu." "I am Mussalman." "I am American." "I am Indian,"—all are designations of this body. One has to become free from the contamination of this bodily concept of life. That is called *sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam* [Cc. Madhya 19.170]. Tat-paratvena

nirmalam: one is freed from all material designations, and one's senses are purified. When our spiritual body becomes revealed, the material body, contamination, is washed off, *nirmalam*, purified. At

I have got this arm, the shirt has got an arm. Otherwise where does this arm come from? Unless the spirit soul has arms and legs, how we have got these material arms and legs?



When the ointment of love of Kṛṣṇa is applied on the eyes, you'll see Kṛṣṇa

that time, the senses remain. They are simply covered by the material energies.

FEATURES OF THE SOUL

The living entity is not *nirākāra*. The living entity has got hands, legs, everything, spiritual. Just like I have got my body, and this body is covered by this shirt, and because

So the soul has got form. It is not formless. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa has also got form, but that form is different from this form. When in the *śāstras* it is said, *nirākāra*, *nirākāra* means *nirākṛta ākāra*: this *ākāra*, this form, is being nullified. *Nirākāra* does not mean there is no *ākāra*, no body. When it is said *nirākāra*, that means the Supersoul



or the soul has no ākāra as we see. Just like we see a dog, cat, hog, tree, plants—eight million four hundred thousands of forms—but this is not the actual form. *Nirākāreti*. Not this form. The soul has a different form. *Keśāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca*: the dimension of the soul is 1/10,000th part of the tip of the hair. [Cc. Madhya 19.140]. We cannot see the soul at the present moment. I am not seeing you, you are not seeing me. Just like a man's father dies. He cries, "Oh, my father is gone, my father is gone." Where has your father gone? Your father is lying on the floor. Why do you say the father has gone? "No, he's gone. He's no more." That means this thing, the soul that has gone he has never seen. He has simply seen this outward body, dress. This is called ignorance. I am not seeing you; still, I say that I see you. So if I cannot see you, the part and parcel of God, how can I see God with these eyes?

COMING IN TOUCH WITH GOD

Therefore, śāstra says,

ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevomukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adah
[Cc. Madhya 17.136]

You cannot see Kṛṣṇa by your blunt senses, but you can do so if you purify your senses: *sevomukhe hi jihvādau*. That purification begins from the tongue. By the tongue we can do two things. We can taste foodstuff and we can vibrate sound. So if you engage your tongue in vibrating this transcendental sound Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma

Rāma Rāma Hare Hare, and do not take anything except *prasāda* of Kṛṣṇa, then your spiritual life immediately begins. Then gradually, as you advance in spiritual life, Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to you, "Here I am." You cannot see Kṛṣṇa, but by being satisfied with your service, Kṛṣṇa sees you. Just like you cannot see the sun at night, but when the sun sees you, you can see the sun and yourself, both. Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa sees you, being satisfied with your service, then you can see Kṛṣṇa, you can see yourself and you can see the whole world.

Now, whatever you are seeing, this is all illusion. Because our senses are too blunt to see things as they are. Therefore in the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that

vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
suni caiva śva-pāke ca
pañcitaḥ sama-darśināḥ
[Bg. 5.18]

One who has got the eyes to see, he does not see that "Here is a learned *brāhmaṇa*, and here is a dog." He sees both the learned *brāhmaṇa* and the dog in equal vision. Because he does not see the

dress, he sees the spirit soul within the *brāhmaṇa* and within the dog. That is called *brahma-darśana*. *Samāḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktim labhate parām* [Bg. 18.54]. When one has got that vision, transcendental vision, *samāḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhakti*, then devotional service begins. Not that with blunt eyes and senses one can serve God and do devotional service.

This is the process. So when our senses are engaged in the service of the Lord, *hṛṣikeṇa hṛṣikeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*, at that time our senses become purified. Because Kṛṣṇa is spirit, the Supersoul, He cannot be served by matter. He has to be served with spirit.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *patram puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati*: "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." [Bg. 9.26]. This *bhakti* is spiritual activity. If you offer something to Kṛṣṇa, "Kṛṣṇa, I have brought a very palatable dish. You take it." Kṛṣṇa will not take it. *Nāham prakāśah sarvasya yogamāyā-samāvṛtaḥ* [Bg. 7.25]. He's not exposed to everyone. You cannot serve Kṛṣṇa if you are not a devo-

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tee. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, *yo me bhaktyā prayacchati* with devotion. That is the real thing, *bhaktyā*. Not that "I have brought a nice plate and Kṛṣṇa will accept." Kṛṣṇa can accept when you offer something with devotion. It doesn't matter what it is. It may be a simple flower, a fruit, a small piece of leaf or little water. For worshiping Kṛṣṇa, there is no impediment. If you want to worship other demigods, there are so many things required. But for worshiping Kṛṣṇa the poorest man in the world, in any part of the world, can offer his love, his offering to Kṛṣṇa. *Patram puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati* [Bg. 9.26].

This *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by Rūpa Gosvāmī which we have translated by the name *The Nectar of Devotion*, the complete science of *bhakti-yoga*, is a very important book for understanding how to become purified in devotional service, how to approach Kṛṣṇa, and how to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. These things are described very nicely. And Kṛṣṇa, being Supersoul cannot be approached with our material consciousness. Therefore the consciousness has to be changed. Then we can approach Kṛṣṇa. That is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Just like, without being fire, you cannot enter into fire. The śāstra says, without being Brahman, you cannot approach Brahman. Similarly, without being purified of all material contamination, you cannot approach Kṛṣṇa. *Hṛṣikeṇa hṛṣikeśa*. How, what kind of *hṛṣika*, senses? *Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam* [Cc. Madhya 19.170]. The senses are to be purified. *Tat-paratvena*. *Tat-paratvena* means always being attached to Kṛṣṇa. If you simply see Kṛṣṇa with your eyes, then your eyes will be purified and spiritualized. Just like if you keep yourself always in touch with fire, you become warm. If you put an iron rod in the fire, it becomes warmer and warmer, and at last, it becomes red hot. When it is red hot, it is fire. It is not an iron rod. You touch that red hot iron anywhere, it will burn. Similarly, if you always keep in touch with Kṛṣṇa, you become Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa-ized, and you can appreciate what is Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you very much. ☺

Chant

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

and be happy.

Hare Krishna



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The Rabbit Race

Text by Yugāvatāra Dāsa
Art by Janardan Salkar

I was listening to a lecture in an ISKCON temple. The speaker talked about enthusiasm and patience. He said we should be enthusiastic like the rabbit and patient like a tortoise. Perhaps you know the story of the race between a rabbit and a tortoise. In this race the rabbit ran a lot of distance leaving the tortoise miles behind. But then he thought of taking a break and laid down to rest. As he rested he fell deep asleep, and the patient tortoise crossed him to win the race.

Similarly, some devotees enter the devotional path with hyper enthusiasm like the rabbit. But after cruising some distance they take a break. But there is no ‘break’ in devotional service. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.6), devotional

service is described as *apratihatā* or uninterrupted. The patient tortoise ran the race in an uninterrupted way. Also Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes in his book *Bhaktirasāmyā-sindhu*, verse three, that some important principles of devotional service are: *utsāhān*, *niścayād*, and *dhairyāt*, or being enthusiastic, endeavoring with determination, and being patient. The rabbit showed that enthusiasm, but lacked the determination and patience which were present in the tortoise.

In our schooldays teachers told us we should not become like a rabbit, but should become like a tortoise. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness is all about picking up the best from everyone and learning from it. Look-

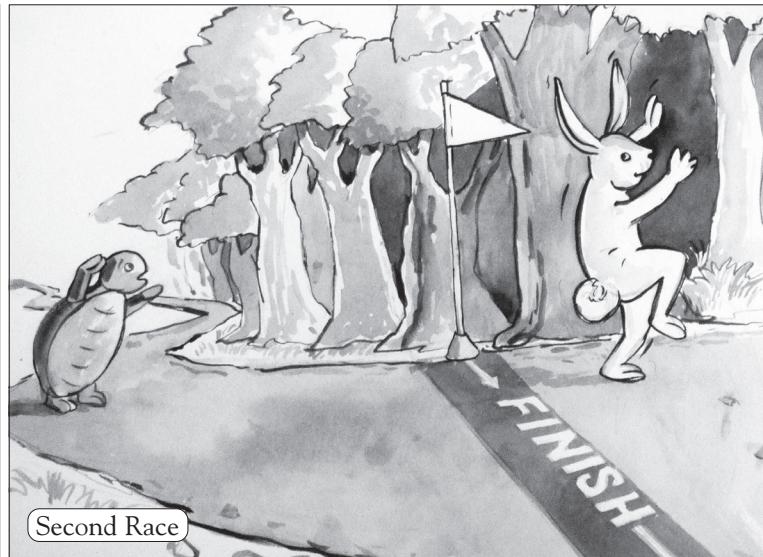
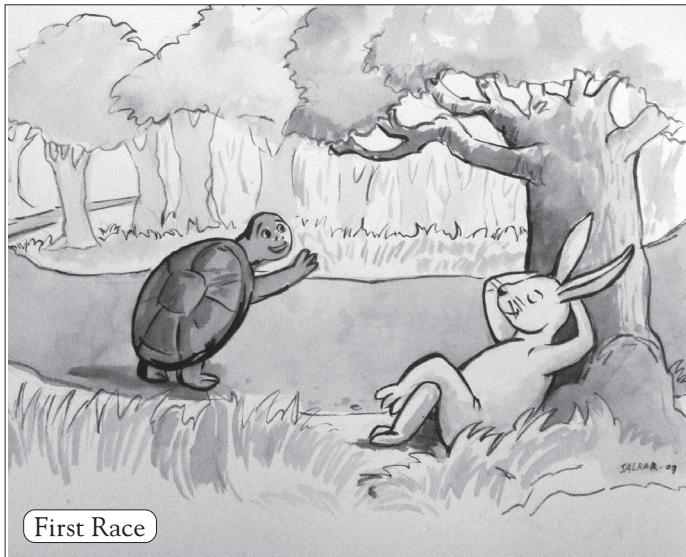
ing for the bright side provided me with newer insights into that story.

Enthusiasm, like that of the rabbit, is required to bring intensity in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness; and patience, like that of the tortoise, is required for us to continue in spite of pitfalls.

EXTENDED VERSIONS

A few days back, the Vice Chancellor of our medical university told us three extended versions of this story. I tried to connect them with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy.

Second Race: After losing the first race, the rabbit organized a second race. This time he decided not to stop until he reached the finishing line. He did so and successfully won the second race.



We are also running on the devotional path, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is standing at the finishing line. So we should start running and not stop till we reach Kṛṣṇa. But the problem is we cannot choose to run at a slow speed, like the tortoise, as death is fast behind us. We have to reach Kṛṣṇa before death reaches us.

If we keep on running fast on this path we are sure to reach the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. But it is not that easy. Like on the highways of this world, the devotional highway also has malls set up by the illusionary energy, *māyā*, which may distract us. A focused traveler never wastes his time in malls as he is determined to reach his destination in time. There are others who enjoy in these malls and never reach the destination.

Also on this devotional highway are many offshoots and crossroads. These are the distractive paths of yoga and *jñāna*. These are the long way around and they take years to join back the devotional path and finally reach the destination. To avoid these misleading paths we have to follow the map shown to us by scriptures like the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Third Race: This time the tor-

toise arranged the route. He chalked out the path of the race in such a way that there was a river in between. The rabbit reached the river and could not help but stop, while the tortoise swam across and won the race.

Something to learn from the tortoise: Although he lost the second race, he did not give up. He made the necessary changes to win. This introspection is the integral part of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We may get defeated by *māyā* or illusion many times. Then we have to introspect. Open our hearts before our seniors and peers for their feedback and understanding. They may suggest some changes in our devotional activities in form of intensifying our devotional service, improving our chanting, regularizing our reading of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. We have to scan our devotional activities and realign them with the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

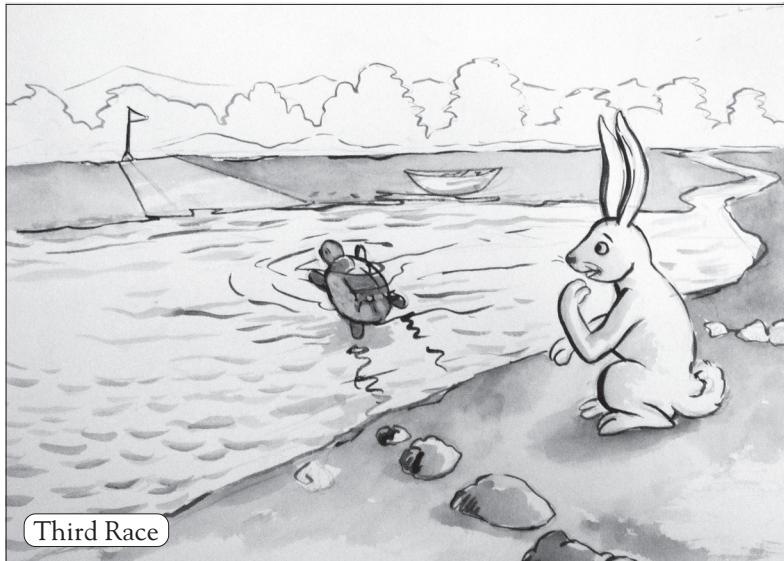
Then was the time for the fourth race.

Fourth Race: The route was same as the third race. Both reached the river. This time the tortoise carried the rabbit on its back, and both won the

race.

Some devotees will have enthusiasm, others patience. We have to learn from each other and inspire each other to win this obstacle race. In this material world, there is scarcity of jobs due to overpopulation. So if somebody else gets a job, we lose the opportunity. But that's not the case in the spiritual world. We don't lose job in Kṛṣṇa's palace just because many devotees pour in due to the Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion. Rather, more the number of souls we help to get recruited in Kṛṣṇa's service, more chance of our becoming a permanent employee of the spiritual world. So we should give up this worldly rat-race mentality, and like that tortoise, carry the enthusiastic souls across the Virajā River—which lies between the material and the spiritual world—back home, back to Godhead. ♣

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



Third Race



Fourth Race





ENGINEERED FOOD

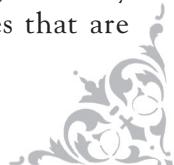
Find out the risks of genetically engineered crops.

by Chand Prasad

Biotechnology is a method of gaining and maintaining corporate control over food resources. It involves genetic engineering, i.e. taking genes from one species and inserting them into another. For instance, genetic material from an arctic flounder,

which is resistant to freezing temperatures, may be embedded into a tomato plant to prevent frost damage. Genetic engineering involves substantial overhead expenses and is capital-intensive. In order to recoup these costs and generate a profit, governments provide cor-

porations a temporary monopoly on the new technology in the form of patents, and maintain legal structures for the enforcement of intellectual property rights. In addition to these legal mechanisms, biotech firms develop genetically modified (GM) varieties that are



engineered with terminator technology, rendering harvested seeds sterile. Farmers cannot replant these seeds after harvest. Rather, they must continue purchasing from corporate suppliers.

Clearly, genetic modification (GM) differs greatly from traditional breeding practices. Specifically, genetic modification involves the altering of the genetic material in that organism in a way that does not occur naturally by mating or natural recombination or both. In contrast, traditional breeding techniques allow reproduction to take place only between closely related life forms, e.g., tomatoes can cross-pollinate with other tomatoes but not with soybeans, and certainly not with pigs.

Genetic engineering violates natural boundaries within which reproduction occurs by crossing genes between unrelated species that would never crossbreed in nature, and it does so in an imprecise, potentially hazardous way. The genetic modification process is imprecise because it is impossible to guide the insertion of the new gene, and even if it were possible, genes do not work in isolation but in highly complex relationships which are not understood. Consequently, genetic alterations can lead to unforeseen interactions and unpredictable effects.

The possibility exists that biotechnology will contribute to the already serious problem of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Genetic engineers use antibiotic marker genes (which themselves were designed for antibiotic resistance) to transfer genetic coding from one life form to another. Antibiotics are then used to kill the cells whose genes were not successfully modified, thereby creating the possibil-

HAZARDS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

- Substantial overhead expenses
- Violates natural boundaries
- May contribute to the already serious problem of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- Potential consequences include epidemics of new viruses and the development of cancer.

ity that bacteria living in the digestive tract of humans or animals could acquire antibiotic resistance from GMO foods eaten by the human or animal.

Virtually all genetically engineered crops contain genetic material from viruses, since the artificial insertion of virus genes is a very common practice in the production of transgenic crops. These virus genes may combine with genes from infecting viruses, and experimental evidence indicates the new viruses created in this way may be more infectious, cause more serious diseases, and have a tendency to cross species borders. For example, the most common virus DNA used in genetic engineering is the promoter of the Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CaMV), which is used in almost every case, including the Roundup Ready (RR) Soy of Monsanto, the Bt-Maize of Novartis, GE cotton and various varieties of GE Canola. CaMV has the potential to reactivate dormant viruses or create new viruses in all species to which it is transferred. Potential consequences include epidemics of new viruses and the development of cancer.

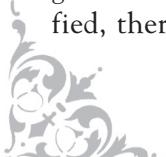
According to Dr. Stanley Ewen, one of Scotland's leading experts in tissue diseases, eating genetically

modified (GM) food may lead to stomach and colon cancer. The CaMV virus used in GM foods is infectious, and could act as a growth factor in the stomach or colon, encouraging the growth of polyps. This is particularly troubling since the faster and bigger the polyps grow, the more likely they are to be malignant. Ewen recommended that the health of people who live near farm-scale GM crop trials be monitored, as their food and water will be contaminated by GM material, which could hasten the growth of malignant tumors. GM products such as maize and soybeans are also fed to cattle. Cow's milk, cheese, or even a lightly cooked, thick fillet steak could contain active GM material and derivatives that can be directly ingested by humans. Based on these risks, which extend to a wide range of GM food crops, Ewen recommended a ban on GM crop trials while their safety is tested on animals.

GLOBAL SCENERIO

Commercial farming uses vast quantities of genetically modified organisms, thereby creating ample opportunity for generating new potentially hazardous organisms through recombination. Approximately 27 million acres of cropland in the United States is planted with RR soybeans, while in Canada canola accounts for about 7 million acres. Every cell in these genetically modified crops contains virus genes. There are about 50,000 plants in an average cornfield, with each corn plant containing about 1 billion cells, with each cell containing one CaMV promoter which is prone to recombination into more hazardous viruses. [5]

In addition to importing GM
(please turn to page 18)



TERRORISM

COMBATING OR TRANSCENDING?

Seeking security in a hostile world.

by Vraja Vihārī Dāsa

"No one can confidently say that he will still be living tomorrow."

-Edward W. Howe

In the wake of the 26/11 tragedy, preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the youth of Mumbai presented new challenges. The young are thirsting for revenge. As I search for answers and seek strength through spiritual practices, I am also faced with the challenge of counseling young, disturbed minds.

"What's the relevance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness now, if you can't usher in a political revolution?" challenged a student. I assured my restless audience that we certainly have to do the needful to protect innocent citizens, and we all stand united to combat terrorism. However, at another level we also need to individually transcend problems that seem overwhelming at the present, but are blinding us to the real problems facing all of us, all the time. A spiritual direction and purpose enables us to withstand repeated tragedies of various kinds,



General Dyer's troops firing on innocent citizens gathered at a peace



imposed on us time and again. Terrorism or no terrorism, the ugly reality of birth, death, old age and disease always stares at us, threatening to prolong our sojourn in this world (Bg. 13.9). A spiritual practice transforms our consciousness, and helps us remember the Supreme Lord at the time of death. This ensures that we do not take another birth in this miserable material world, but rather, join the Supreme Lord in His abode, for an eternal life of bliss (Bg. 8.16).

"But the tragedy has consumed my consciousness. I can't chant, I see no hope," confessed another devotee. My thoughts went back to the history of the Indian independence struggle of the 1920's . . .

BIGGER EMERGENCY THAN TERRORISM

The nation was up in arms against British terrorism. General Dyer had ordered firing on innocent citizens gathered at a peace rally at Jalianwala Bagh, Punjab. Thousands had died under England's persecution, and now the Indians wanted independence from British rule. The streets of Calcutta, the then Indian Capital, burned, and riots sprung up. Anger and violence pervaded the society, while Gandhi called upon educated youth to boycott everything British. Young Abhay Charan (Śrīla Prabhupāda's household name), in his first meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, his spiritual master, voiced his support to the Gandhian cause. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had urged Abhay to spread Lord Caitanya's spiritual message to the English-speaking world. Abhay protested, "As long as we are a dependent nation, Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to wait." The whole country would have agreed with Abhay, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī boldly declared, "Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the real emergency, and it can't wait for independence. Lack of spiritual awareness is the only problem, and God consciousness is the only solution."

Six decades have passed since Indian independence. The saga of



rally at Jalianwala Bagh, Punjab. (Courtesy: Jalianwala Bagh Museum)



untold human deprivation and abuse—now inflicted by the Indians themselves—is a chilling reminder of the terrible times we are living in. Recession, corruption, unemployment, inflation, starvation due to hoarding of essential food grains, and breaking of the family unit are a few of the rising ills affecting the hapless millions. Each issue grabs the media attention for some time, until another exciting story or scandal agitates the population. Soon, another “breaking news” hits the screen, and families sit glued to their TV sets. The former President of In-

dia, Abdul Kalam lamented, “In India we read and hear only about death, sickness, terrorism, crime.” One after another the mind is bombarded with disturbing news and terror images, and the masses are convinced—“Kṛṣṇa consciousness can wait.”

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* exposes the lives of such men and women:

*śrotavyādīnī rājendra
nr̥ṇām santi sahasraśah
apaśyatām ātma-tattvam
grheṣu grha-medhinām*

“Those persons, who are materially engrossed, being blind to the knowledge of ultimate truth, have many subject matters for hearing in human society, O Emperor.” (*Bhāg.* 2.1.2)

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA’S APPEAL TO TRANSCEND

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life changed

after that first meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and he dedicated himself to the cause of spreading God consciousness to the misdirected civilization. Years later, as Śrīla Prabhupāda started *Back to Godhead* magazine, India had been forced to enter the Second World War. As bombs dropped in Calcutta, Śrīla Prabhupāda was busy writing the timeless spiritual wisdom of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and begging humanity to solve the real problems of life by combating the enemies within—lust, envy, anger, and greed—the root cause of terror without.

“Will you not die if there is no war?” challenged Śrīla Prabhupāda.

During the 1971 Indo-Pak tension, a reporter interviewing Śrīla Prabhupāda suddenly panicked when a black out signaled a full-scale war. Fearing imminent death, he pleaded with Śrīla Prabhupāda to urge General Yahya Khan of Pakistan to stop this bloody war. Śrīla Prabhupāda again exposed the ugly reality of death staring at us always—war or no war. “Will you not die if there is no war?” challenged Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda explained we are always in danger, and he urged us to make an all round solution to problems of this world by taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Are we then to turn a blind eye to the day-to-day crisis of this world?

A DEVOTEE FIGHTS THE TERRORISTS

No! While dealing with them, a spiritual practitioner also addresses the deeper issues of harsh laws of this material world. The frequent disasters can’t be avoided *per se*. We may successfully ward off one problem only to find another confronting us. This law is as unavoidable and natural as the law of gravity. A devotee of Kṛṣṇa surely does the needful to address different fleeting problems of this world, while simultaneously working to free himself from the bondage of repeated birth and death.

Mr. Nilesh Ghosalkar, a trained fighter with the Mumbai Police is also a devotee, attending weekly programs and festivals held in the local ISKCON temple. (See BTG March 2009) He was on the frontline, fighting the terrorists in one of the hotels. He humbly sought the blessings of devotees to be able to remember Kṛṣṇa, while he bravely responded to his call of duty. In the heavy fighting that

lasted more than 24 hours, he narrowly survived. He later expressed his confidence that were he to die in the battle, it would have been glorious, because Kṛṣṇa would have heard the devotees' prayers, and taken him to the spiritual world. His heroic combat was combined with devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained the need for *ksatriyas*, the warrior class whose principal duty is to uphold law and order in the society. If an emergency arises, we are not against violence against the terrorists, just as a surgical operation to remove a tumor from the body is not deemed as violence by the suffering patient. In fact the *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa to encourage Arjuna to fight a war to stop the nefarious lawlessness, spread by the evil Kauravas—the tumor of the human society then.

KRṢNA CONSCIOUSNESS GIVES STRENGTH TO COMBAT TRAGEDIES

Kṛṣṇa consciousness may not stop aggression by the terrorists, betrayal by loved ones, or devastations by tsunamis. A strong spiritual practice, however, can help us survive internally the onslaught of these miseries. As exemplified by Nilesh, life becomes tolerable and hopeful for a devotee because he discovers a tangible purpose in life, to cultivate a relationship with God, and plan his journey to his real home—the spiritual world.

The rain of problems will certainly shower unabatedly, but a devotee carries the umbrella of Kṛṣṇa consciousness practice. This keeps him sane even as events in this world get bizarre by the day. A

spiritualist seeking to love God naturally loves all of God's children—fellow humans and even animals. This love helps the devotee rid his heart of all undesirable and negative forces. Through the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, a devotee works to be an instrument of positive change in society. Becoming a devotee of Kṛṣṇa is then

by pre-determined behavioral patterns, the human life offers the soul the power to choose and desire. A human being's choice to connect to his spiritual nature, his ardent desire to obtain the Lord's mercy, and his sincere devotional practice ensures that his suffering in this world is for the last time.



Chanting not only soothes the mind, but also awakens our relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

a practical solution to combat tragedies. Gung-ho fiery speeches and tall promises to change the world order will do little good when the human heart is steeped in crass greed, and ruthless drives to gratify one's own insatiable lust.

After evolving through 8.4 million species of life, the conditioned soul gets a human body. Human life is a rare opportunity to end this cycle of transmigration. Unlike the other species whose life is governed

HOLY NAME—THE REAL PANACEA

The internal purification begins with the vibration of the transcendental sound Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. This chanting not only soothes the mind during troubled times, but also gradually awakens our dormant relationship with Kṛṣṇa.



kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann
asti hy eko mahān guṇah
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya
mukta-saṅgah param vrajet

"...Although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom." (Bhāg. 12.3.51)

Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to chant this mantra in the mood of a helpless child calling out to the mother for shelter. Besides, devotees also chant for the welfare of others, and offer heart-felt prayers for the grief-stricken families directly affected by the terrorist attacks.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is a sound descending from the spiritual plane. As we connect to this spiritual sound, we learn to transcend immediate emergency issues of this world. Chanting helps us see the myriad events of our daily life in a broader perspective and deal with them maturely.

MORE BLASTS COMING UP...

Even as I complete this article, the neighborhood is resounding with deafening blasts and shrieks of a different kind. The Indian cricket team has pulled off a cliffhanger, and a pompous wedding ceremony has Bollywood numbers blaring off the sky. Seems a good reason to rejoice, and forget the terrorism issue. Never mind the thousands dying daily to disease, natural calamities, starvation, and accidents. It also seems Kṛṣṇa consciousness can wait for the Indians—or can it? ☺

Vraja Vihāri Dāsa, MBA, serves full-time at ISKCON Mumbai, and teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness to students in various colleges.

Engineered...

(Continued from page 13)

commodities from countries such as the United States and Brazil, India is also expanding its domestic production of genetically engineered crops. Biotechnology companies, backed by substantial financial resources to mobilize scientific opinion as well as political support, have exerted tremendous pressure on the government of India to support the development and adoption of GM crops. Consequently, India has the unfortunate distinction of achieving the fastest growth in genetically modified (GM) crop adoption globally. India, which is the world's second-biggest cotton producer, is likely to grow genetically modified varieties on 80 percent of the total land area cultivated to cotton by 2010-2011. India's biotechnology sector hopes to replicate its "success" in promoting BT cotton by spreading out into food commodities, wherein genetic engineering experiments are being conducted on maize, mustard, sugarcane, sorghum, pigeon pea, chickpea, rice, tomato, brinjal, potato, banana, papaya, cauliflower, oilseeds, and several species of fish.

Commercial agriculture incurs risks that are completely unnecessary. Organic yields are at least as high as those of the genetically modified crops used in conventional farming. Organic farming is better able to withstand droughts, and is also relatively immune to the upcoming and inevitable shortages of petroleum supplies. In contrast, commercial agriculture depends heavily on petroleum-based chemical inputs, in the absence of which conventional crop yields would fall sharply. Finally, as taught by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupāda, the world produces more food than needed, and starvation is actually

caused by unequal distribution, not by food scarcity. ☺

Chand Prasad is a Ph.D. Agricultural economist. His areas of specialization are international trade, finance, and industrial organization.



Be my...

(Continued from page 32)

are illusory indirectly give encouragement to indulge in material sensory activities, which end in horrible misery. Vaiṣṇava philosophy states the prime effect of understanding Kṛṣṇa's loving affairs is that our material lusty desires will vanish. Here we are all afflicted by lust, but in the spiritual world there is not a tinge of lust. Indeed the great saint Yāmunācārya said, "So long I have been engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa and I am rendering more and more service and getting spiritual pleasure, since then, as soon as I think of sex life, I immediately spit upon it and I hate to think of it."

Lord Kṛṣṇa is described as the source of *brahmānanda* or that pleasure sought by completely renounced ṛṣis and *munis*. These personalities sacrifice everything, not just sex life, but even the most mundane pleasures for the sake of *brahmānanda*. How absurd to think that the person who is the source of that *brahmānanda* will stoop down to the gutters of the material world and engage in so-called sex enjoyment.

To conclude, instead of buying that valentine's card and allowing yourself to be manipulated by corporate barons or see them laughing all the way to the bank, why not chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and send an "I want to love You" card to Lord Kṛṣṇa? ☺

-Śyamānanda Dāsa



Moods of Rādhārāṇī

I would like to share some of my most pleasant experiences in Kṛṣṇa consciousness with the readers.

I began my journey on this beautiful path some three years ago. Being a first timer, I was curious and keen to quickly learn the Vaiṣṇava process of devotion. In particular, I wanted to learn the āratis performed at ISKCON centers worldwide. I started with śringāra-ārati. Until that time, I had no book whatso-ever, so I thought of downloading it from the internet along with the tune sung by Yamunā Devi Dāsi and also one mahā-mantra tune sung by Śrīla Prabhupāda. At that time, I had a slow dial-up connection

which was accompanied by a lot of distortion. Aware of these limitations, I gathered my patience, and prepared to download it. When I got connected to the site, I was thrilled to hear Yamunā's singing and wanted to follow her effortlessly. But this did not remain for long as there was electricity failure. I was disappointed. It was all so sudden and swift that I could not even save the ārati. It would take so long to connect again and then visit the site and open the page. And surely, it took 45 minutes for the power to return.

Then there was an additional problem with the server and hence connection could not be established. Though disappointed, I was not hopeless and kept persisting. The omnipresent Kṛṣṇa was not oblivious of my predicament and

selection of ornament. I have a small box for Their earrings, and have to almost dig my fingers deep into the box to take out a matching pair. I scatter them on a flat tray to make it convenient. At times when in a hurry, I select one pair randomly and try to put it on, but on finding the other piece of the pair missing from the tray, I know for sure this is not what Rādhārāṇī wants to wear today. I remove that piece from Her ear, select another pair, decorate Her beautiful ears, and when the śringāra is complete, I see the previously missing earring lying there right in front of my eyes.

Great are the ways of Rādhārāṇī, and how She fulfills the desires of devotees is the greatest bliss and grace on the faithful. ♪

by Bhavana
Kurukṣetra, Haryana



Sri Sri Rādhā Śyāmsundara at author's home

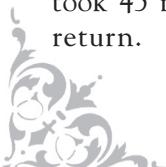
His grace in the form of help came with unprecedented swiftness. The impossible happened as the ārati was "made" available offline only for that very moment. I had never before or later seen that happen. Although I was naive to suspect God's mercy, I could not comprehend what had happened then.

DIVINE HINTS

During Deity worship, when I decorate Rādhārāṇī and Śyāmsundara with beautiful jewellery, They at times, seem to be giving me hints regarding Their

BTG welcomes articles for this column based on readers' experiences with the Deities, holy name, sacred books, dhāma, spiritual master, or even experiences from every day life.

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Kṛṣṇa

*Is Kṛṣṇa an incarnation of Viṣṇu
or the source of all incarnations?*

by Mukunda Mālā Dāsa

In India, there is a common understanding that Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, etc., are His various incarnations. Even among the Vaiṣṇava circles, who unanimously accept the supremacy of *viṣṇu-tattva* (Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu and all incarnations) above all demigods including Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, there is difference of opinion regarding the position of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa. Śrila Prabhupāda gave various explanations clearing the position of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, based on both logic and scripture.

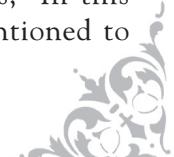
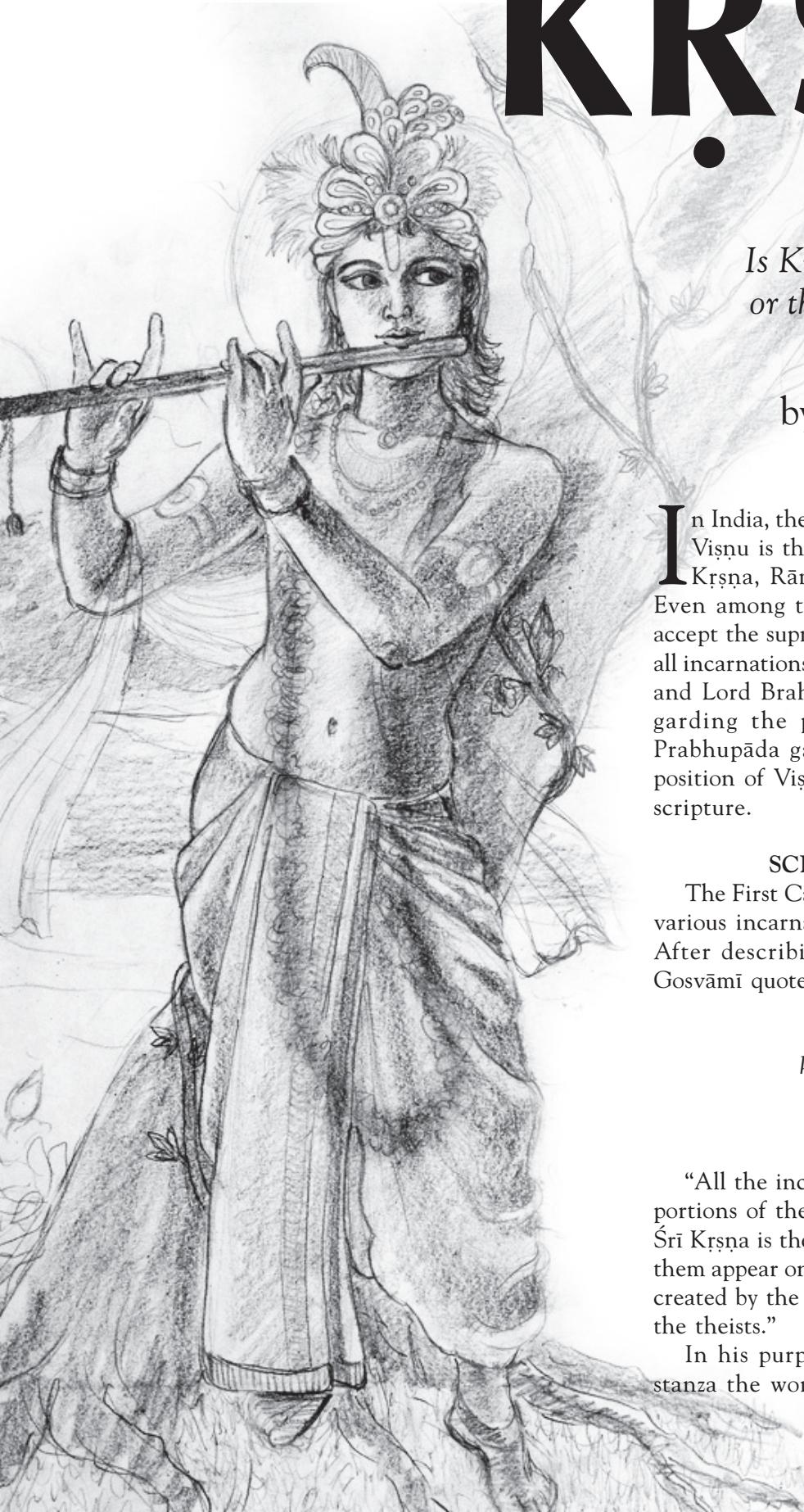
SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

The First Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes various incarnations of the Lord and Their activities. After describing the prominent incarnations, Sūta Gosvāmī quotes the following verse (*Bhāg.* 1.3.28):

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ pūṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokam
mṛdayanti yuge yuge

“All the incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead. All of them appear on planets whenever there is a disturbance created by the atheists. The Lord incarnates to protect the theists.”

In his purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “In this stanza the word *svayam* is particularly mentioned to



ANĀ VİŞNU

confirm that Lord Kṛṣṇa has no other source than Himself. Although in other places the incarnations are described as *bhagavān* because of their specific functions, nowhere are they declared to be the Supreme Personality. In this stanza the word *svayam* signifies the supremacy as the *summum bonum*." Thus we understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa is not just another *avatāra*, or incarnation, but the *avatārī*, one from whom all incarnations emanate.

The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.46) compares Kṛṣṇa to a candle from which several other candles are lit. These candles are compared to Lord Viṣṇu and the various incarnations.

dīpārcir eva hi daśāntaram
abhyupetya
dīpāyate vivṛta-hetu-samāna-
dharmā
yas tādṛg eva hi ca viṣṇutayā
vibhāti
govindam ādi-puruṣam
tam aham bhajāmi

"The light of one

candle being communicated to other candles, although it burns separately in them, is the same in its quality. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda who exhibits Himself equally in the same mobile manner in His various manifestations." Although all candles have the same potency, the original candle still retains its uniqueness. Kṛṣṇa is like that original candle, the source of all incarnations.

The *Brahma-saṁhitā* also says: *Viṣṇur mahān sa iha yasya kalā-višeṣo govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*: "I adore the primeval Lord Govinda of whose subjective personality Mahā-Viṣṇu is the portion of portion." (Bs. 5.48)

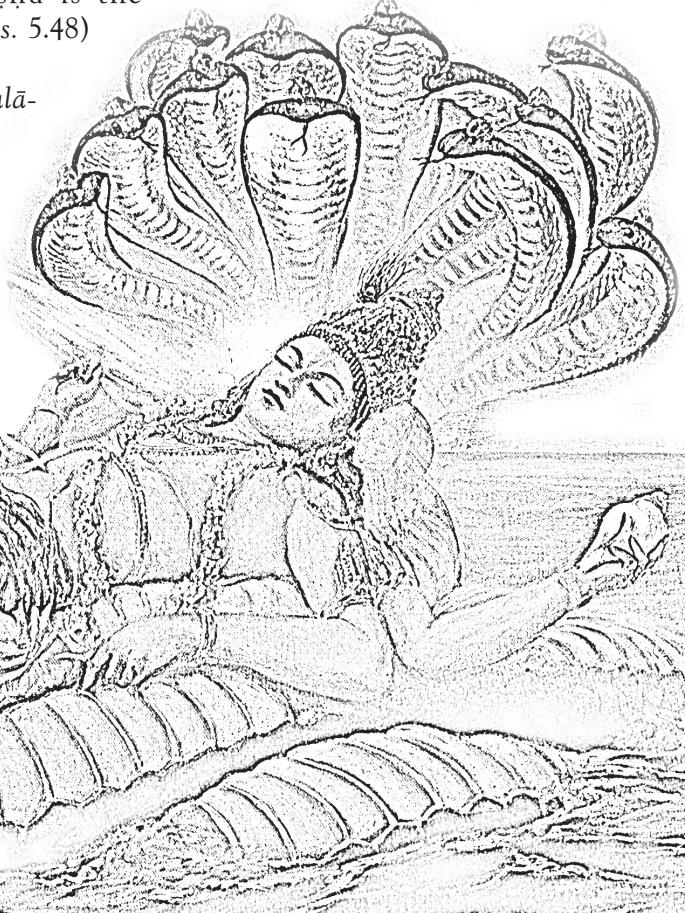
Rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-
niyamena tiṣṭhan
nānāvatāram akarod
bhuvaneṣu kintu

kṛṣṇah svayam samabhavat
paramah pumān yo
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam
aham bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who manifested Himself personally as Kṛṣṇa and the different *avatāras* in the world in the forms of Rāma, Nṛsiṁha, Vāmana, etc., as His subjective portions." (Bs. 5.39)

MAHA-VIṢNU EAGER TO SEE KRŚNA

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, tenth canto, we read the story of a brāhmaṇa who was living in the city



of Dvārakā during Lord Kṛṣṇa's time. This *brāhmaṇa* was in great distress because every time his wife gave birth to a child, the child dropped dead immediately after touching the ground. He had nine children, and all of them died in a similar way. After the death of each child, the *brāhmaṇa* approached

to be born, Arjuna, with his holy mantras and celestial arrows, made all arrangements to protect the child. But as soon as the child was born, both the child and Arjuna's arrows mysteriously disappeared into the sky. The *brāhmaṇa* condemned Arjuna and accused him of making false promises even though other great personalities in Dvārakā had failed to protect his children. Arjuna then went all over the universe—to higher, middle, and lower planetary systems—searching for the dead child, but all his attempts proved futile. When he finally decided to throw himself in fire in disgrace, Lord Kṛṣṇa assured him saying He would personally help Arjuna get the child.

After mounting on His transcen-

Arjuna that this transcendental light was non-different from Him. Then they both entered the Kāraṇa Ocean, the vast spiritual water that is the origin of material creation. Within the water, Arjuna saw a huge palace with thousands of pillars and columns made of valuable jewels. Inside the palace Arjuna saw the gigantic beautiful form of Anantadeva, on whose soft body Mahā-Viṣṇu was laying comfortably. On seeing Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, Mahā-Viṣṇu said, "My dear Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I was very eager to see you both, and therefore I arranged to take away the babies of the *brāhmaṇa* and keep them here. I have been expecting to see you both at this palace."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains to us that Śukadeva Gosvāmī narrated this story in order to prove that among all *viṣṇu-tattva* forms, Lord Kṛṣṇa is one hundred percent the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

THE THREE VIṢNUS

The Sātvata-tantra explains the various *puruṣa* incarnations (expansions) that appear in different Viṣṇu forms.

viṣṇos tu trīṇi rūpāṇi
puruṣākhyāny atho viduh
ekāṁ tu mahataḥ sraṣṭṛ¹
dvitīyaṁ tv aṅḍa-samsthitaṁ
trītyaṁ sarva-bhūta-stham
tāni jñātvā vimucyate

For material creation, Lord Kṛṣṇa's plenary expansion assumes three Viṣṇus. The first one, Mahā-Viṣṇu, creates the total material energy, known as the *mahat-tattva*. The second, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, enters into all the universes to create diversities in each of them. The third, Kṣirodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is diffused as the all-pervading Supersoul in all the universes

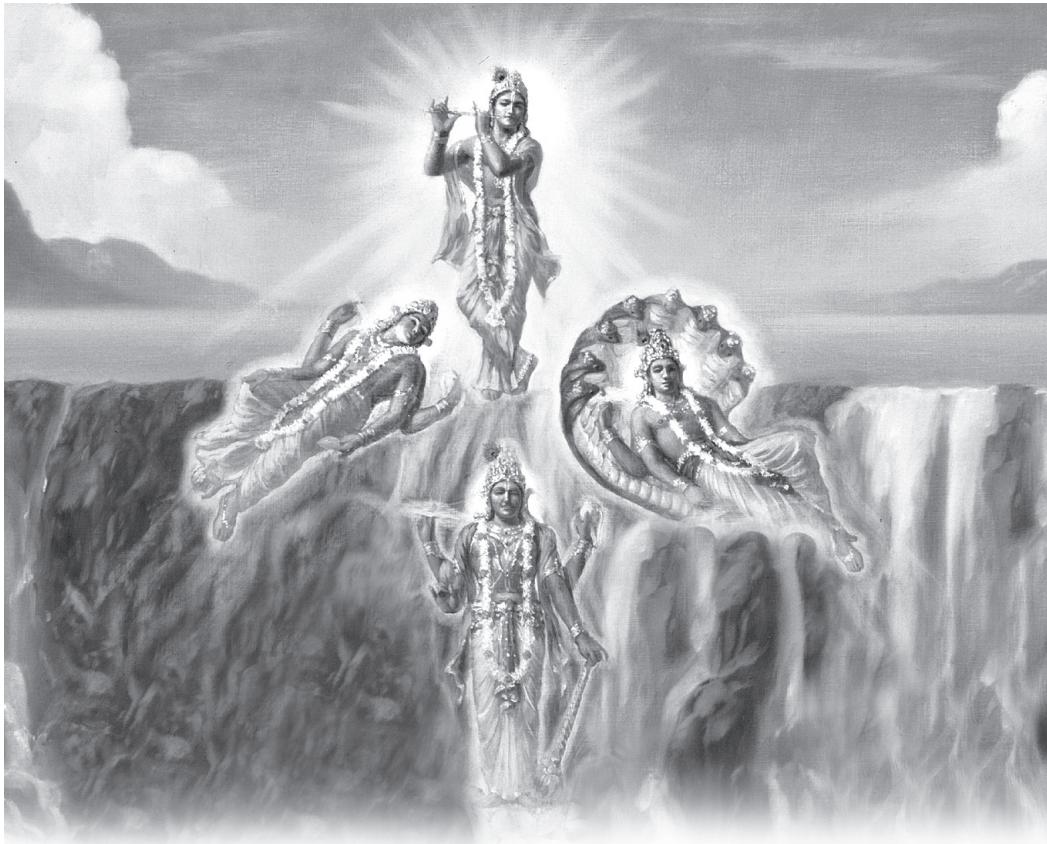


On seeing Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, Mahā-Viṣṇu explained the cause of death of the *brāhmaṇa*'s children

the king and accused him of being unable to protect the citizens. When he came to the king after the death of his ninth child, Arjuna happened to be present in Dvārakā. When he heard the accusations against the king, Arjuna assured the *brāhmaṇa* that he would take complete responsibility of protecting his next child.

When the tenth child was about

dental chariot, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna proceeded north crossing over many planetary systems. They reached the covering of the universe which is described as great darkness. Using His Sudarśana cakra, Kṛṣṇa illuminated the sky, and thus they were able to cross over this dark region. On reaching the effulgent region of brahmajyoti, Kṛṣṇa informed



For creation, Kṛṣṇa expands into three Viṣṇus: Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśayī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakaśayī Viṣṇu,

and is known as *Paramātmā*. He is present even within the atoms. All the incarnations within the universe are emanations from this Kṣīrodakaśayī Viṣṇu.

So when Kṛṣṇa descends into this universe, He follows the regular course—coming through Kṣīrodakaśayī Viṣṇu. Therefore people mistakenly think that Kṛṣṇa is one among Viṣṇu's incarnations, whereas actually He is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, the fountainhead of everything and the source of all incarnations.

In one lecture Śrīla Prabhupāda explained, "Kṛṣṇa has a direct expansion, and then expansions of the expansion. His immediate expansion is Lord Baladeva, or Balarāma. Then from Balarāma come the *catur-vyūha*, the quadruple expansions of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and

Aniruddha. And from Saṅkarṣaṇa, the Nārāyaṇas expand. Then from the Nārāyaṇas come second sets of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha." (BTG May 1984) Thus we see that there are unlimited expansions of Kṛṣṇa.

THE HOLY NAMES OF KṛṣṇA AND VIṢNU

The revealed scriptures also give us specific information regarding the power of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu and Rāma. A conversation between Lord Śiva and his wife Durgā appears in the *Bṛhadviṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra* in the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* (72.335):

*rāma rāmeti rāmeti
rame rāme manorame
sahasra-nāmabhis tulyam*

"O Varānanā [Durgā], 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."

Chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa once is equivalent to chanting three thousand names of Lord Viṣṇu.

*sahasra-nāmnām
puṇyānām
trir-āvṛtyā tu yat
phalam
ekāvṛtyā tu kṛṣṇasya
nāmaikam tat
prayacchatī*

"The pious results from chanting the thousand holy names of Viṣṇu three times can be attained by only one utterance of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa." [This verse from the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* appears in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Laghu-bhāgavatāmrta* (1.5.354).]

Kṛṣṇa's SPECIAL QUALITIES

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī lists out sixty-four qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Out of these sixty-four qualities, fifty qualities can be found among the individual living entities in minute quantities, fifty-five qualities are sometimes manifested partially in Lord Brahmā or Lord Śiva, and sixty qualities are manifest in the body of Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu). The remaining four qualities, however,

are found only in Kṛṣṇa and no one else, not even Viṣṇu. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains them in *The Nectar of Devotion*:

1. **Līlā-mādhurya**—He is the performer of wonderful varieties of pastimes (especially His childhood pastimes).

2. **Bhakta-mādhurya**—He is surrounded by devotees endowed with wonderful love of Godhead.

3. **Venu-mādhurya**—He can attract all living entities all over the universes by playing on His flute.

4. **Rūpa-mādhurya**—He has a wonderful excellence of beauty which cannot be rivaled anywhere in the creation.

GOD AT OFFICE AND GOD AT HOME

Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana is like God at home, while Kṛṣṇa, as Viṣṇu in various Vaikuṇṭha planets, is like God at office. A person at home is most comfortable and relaxed and has intimate loving dealings with his family members—joking, playing, etc., with his wife or children. At office, however, he has very formal dealings with his associates; there is no frivolity involved in the interactions with his colleagues. Similarly in Vṛndāvana, all the Vrajavāsīs have very intimate dealings with Kṛṣṇa in sākhya (friendship), vātsalya (parental) and mādhurya (conjugal) rasas. His cowherd boyfriends wrestle with Him while playing various games, mother Yaśodā sometimes chastises Him for doing childish mischief, while His cowherd girlfriends many times admonish Him in various loving ways. No one in Vṛndāvana is

aware of Kṛṣṇa's supreme position as God; that awareness usually results in very formal and reverential dealings. In the Vaikuṇṭha planets, however, everyone is aware of Viṣṇu's supreme position as the controller and maintainer of the whole creation. Therefore, all their

tracts the Nārāyaṇa form which presides in each and every Vaikuṇṭha planet. Since He is the origin of all incarnations, including the form of Nārāyaṇa, the goddess of fortune, who is a constant companion of Nārāyaṇa, gives up Nārāyaṇa's association and engages herself in pen-



Kṛṣṇa has a wonderful excellence of beauty which cannot be rivaled anywhere in the creation.

dealings with Him, including mādhurya, are tinged with the feelings of awe and reverence.

THE SUPEREXCELLENT BEAUTY OF KRŚNA

In His teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya described the inconceivable beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda summarizes them in his book *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*: "Kṛṣṇa is known as Madana-mohana because He conquers the mind of Cupid. When He stands in a three-curved way, He attracts all living entities, including the demigods. Indeed, He even at-

tracts the Nārāyaṇa form which presides in each and every Vaikuṇṭha planet. Since He is the origin of all incarnations, including the form of Nārāyaṇa, the goddess of fortune, who is a constant companion of Nārāyaṇa, gives up Nārāyaṇa's association and engages herself in pen-

ance in order to gain the association of Kṛṣṇa. Such is the greatness of the superexcellent beauty of Kṛṣṇa, the everlasting mine of all beauty. It is from that beauty that all beautiful things emanate."

So, from an impartial study of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa we can see that Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are more sweet and enchanting than those of Viṣṇu. In that sense, Kṛṣṇa is superior to Viṣṇu. Otherwise there is no difference between the two. ♣

Mukunda Mālā Dāsa has a bachelor's degree in ET&C Engineering. He is part of BTG editorial team.

The Moon Mission

Exploring India's moon landing mission in light of Vedic Cosmology

by Caitanya Carana Dasa

Do you really believe man never went to the moon?" Amit blurted out as soon as we sat down on a mat at the ISKCON Pune temple. Amit is an IIT student, introduced to Kṛṣṇa consciousness a few months ago. When he came to know that, according to the Vedic scriptures man could not have gone to the moon, he had become immediately, immensely disturbed. As soon as he had reached Pune for a youth retreat, he had asked to talk with me as soon as possible.

Incredulity and indignation were writ large on Amit's face. Seeing his troubled face, my mind flew back to the year 1997 when I had faced the same challenge to my faith. As a student, I had loved science as an excellent means to understand the world around us. It was my fascination with science that had initially attracted me to spirituality; when devotees had presented scientific evidence and reasoning establishing the existence of God and the existence of the soul, I had embarked on experimenting with—experiencing—spirituality. The moon controversy had jolted the honeymoon between science and spirituality that my heart was celebrating. Landing man on the moon was globally considered the crowning jewel of all the accomplishments of modern science. To

have that conquest declared as a falsity was not easy to take. I hated the unpleasant choice that confronted me: choose either science or scripture. "Can't there be a reconciliation of both?" I had wondered.

A dozen years later, I am a spiritual teacher, focusing on scientific presentation of spirituality. Amit is a budding devotee, proud of India's scientific accomplishment in the lunar mission Chandrayaan, facing the same predicament that had once confounded me. I prayed for help as I started sharing the understanding that had led me out of my dilemma.

DIFFERENT SCALES OF OBSERVATION

"Amit, I understand your situation. I have been through it myself. Please tell me what exactly you have heard till now."

"Devotees told me that Srila Prabhupada said we could not have gone to the moon because it is a higher planet. Without doing good karma, one cannot go there, just as without proper immigration clearance, one cannot go to America," Amit answered, sounding skeptical about the logic of what he was repeating.

"Doesn't this logic itself reveal a fundamental difference in the Vedic and modern worldviews?

That difference holds the key to a reconciliation of the two." I said.

"What is that?" asked Amit, warming up to the possibility of a satisfactory reconciliation.

"Modern science sees the moon as a lifeless satellite, whereas Vedic science sees it as Candraloka, a higher-dimensional planet inhabited by higher beings. Imagine two transparent glass beakers, one containing white chalk powder and the other, black charcoal powder. If we mix the two powders, we will get a grey mixture. But if we see the same mixture under a microscope, the grey particles will disappear; we will see only white and black particles. Which is the reality?"

"I am not sure; maybe both," replied Amit, intrigued.

"Exactly," I said. "What we see varies with our scale of observation. What is a grey powder to the naked eye is a mixture of black and white particles to the microscopic eye. Similarly, what is a lifeless planet at the human scale of observation is a higher-dimensional planet filled with higher beings at a divine scale of observation. Hence the seeming contradiction."

I continued, "The Vedic texts themselves contain descriptions of cosmology based on both scales of observation. There are two main sources of cosmological information in the Vedic literatures—the



Purāṇas and the *Jyotiṣa śāstras*. The *Purāṇas* describe cosmology from a divine perspective and they mention many features of the cosmos that are inaccessible to human observation. On the other hand, the *Jyotiṣa śāstras* describe cosmology largely from a human perspective. Among the *Jyotiṣa śāstras* are works on mathematical astronomy known as astronomical *siddhāntas*. The *siddhāntic* cosmology contains information similar to the information obtained from modern cosmology. For example, the *Surya Siddhānta*, one of the most important *siddhānta śāstras*, states:

- * The distance between the earth and the moon as 253,000 miles, compared to modern measurements of 252,710 miles.
- * The Earth's diameter is 7,840 miles, compared to the modern measurements of 7,926.7 miles.

The very fact that cosmic distances were measured with such precision in Vedic culture long before the dawn of modern cosmology is itself remarkable. It suggests

that Vedic cosmology deserves to be studied with due respect, not dismissed summarily as unscientific due to some of its features being currently incomprehensible to us."

WHERE MODERN COSMOLOGY FALLS SHORT

"This sounds interesting. But if everything depends on the scale of observation, then doesn't that make everything relative and subjective?" Amit said slowly, pondering how to best put his thoughts into words. "I mean: isn't there a reality? Aren't scientific theories real? After all, scientific technology works—look at the cellphones, the internet, the airplanes."

"Doesn't spiritual technology also work?" I asked, gently. "You have yourself told me earlier that since you started practicing mantra meditation, your anger decreased, your stress levels came down, your inner stability while facing problems increased. So, if what works is the standard to decide what's real, then even spiritual

principles should be considered real."

"That's true," admitted Amit.

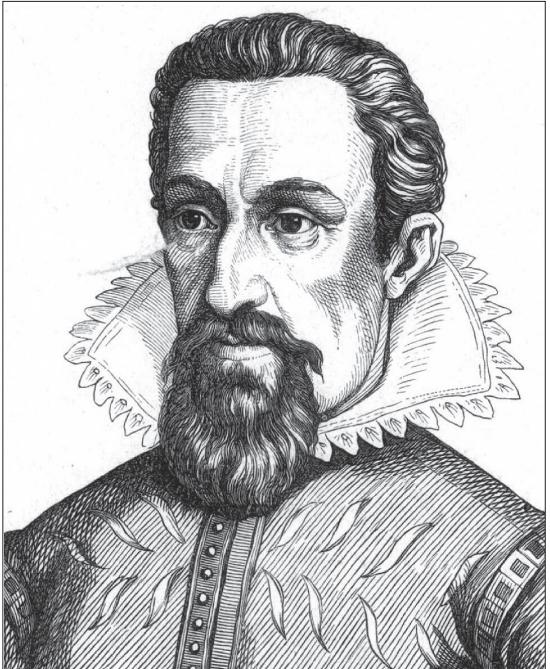
"Different things work at different levels. If our goal is to improve our external comforts and control, to increase our ability to manipulate the world around us, scientific technology works. If our goal is to improve our internal life, to increase our self-mastery, spiritual technology works. Modern science is fabulously successful in controlling a tiny slice of reality, but does it give a satisfactory explanation of the totality of reality?"

I repeated a quote from Nobel Laureate physicist Erwin Schrodinger, a quote that unequivocally admits the incompleteness of the scientific worldview:

'I am very astonished that the scientific picture of the real world around me is very deficient. It gives a lot of factual information, puts all our experience in a magnificently consistent order, but it is ghastly silent about all and sundry that



Erwin Schrödinger



Johannes Kepler



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam



is really near to our heart that really matters to us. It cannot tell us a word about red and blue, bitter and sweet, physical pain and physical delight; it knows nothing of beautiful and ugly, good or bad, God and eternity. Science sometimes pretends to answer questions in these domains, but the answers are very often so silly that we are not inclined to take them seriously.'

"What to speak of explaining the existence of life on other planets, modern science cannot explain the existence of life on our own planet," I asserted. Seeing Amit's surprise, I elaborated, "We obviously know that life exists here because we exist here. But modern, reductionistic science claims that life is a result of chemical combination, but it cannot demonstrate or explain how life arises from chemicals.

"Not only can reductionistic science not explain *how* life arises, it also cannot explain *why* life arises.

It offers no explanation about what the purpose of our existence is or what the values guiding our existence should be. That's why eminent Indian scientist Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, in his book *Ignited Minds*, quotes Albert Einstein recalling Werner Heisenberg's words to him: 'You know in the West we have built a large, beautiful ship. It has all the comforts in it, but one thing is missing: it has no compass and does not know where to go.'

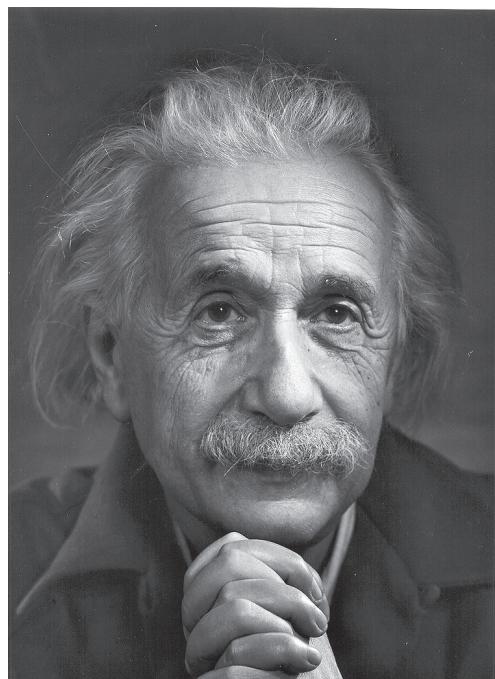
TOWARD A MORE COMPLETE COSMOLOGY

"To gain a more holistic understanding of the cosmos, we have to free ourselves from the rigid constructs of Euclidean and Cartesian three-dimensional geometry, which forms the basis of the modern scientific worldview. Let me read from the remarkable book *Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy* by the late Dr. Richard L. Thompson, a scientist-disciple of Srila Prabhupada, who pioneered the postulation of a new cosmology that

integrated scientific and Vedic insights:

'Radical extensions of our theoretical perspective have taken place repeatedly in the history of science. A striking example of this is provided by the revolution in the science of physics that occurred in the twenties and thirties of this century. At the end of the nineteenth century, physicists were almost universally convinced that classical physics provided a final and complete theory of nature. However, a few years later, classical physics was replaced by a new theory called quantum mechanics, which is based on fundamentally different principles. The most interesting feature of this development is that classical physics turns out to be compatible with quantum mechanics in the domain of observation in which it was originally applied. The differences between the two theories become significant only in the new atomic domain opened up by the quantum theory. Likewise, our proposed new cosmology would agree with existing theories in its predictions of gross sensory observations, but it would open an entirely new world of higher-dimensional travel.'

I explained, "At one level, Vedic cosmology is compatible with modern cosmology, as seen from the above agreement in astronomical measurements. At another level,



Albert Einstein



Werner Heisenberg

Scientist with a theistic outlook of life.



Vedic cosmology is more complete than modern cosmology, because of its ability to account for higher-dimensional cosmic realms, higher living beings and ultimately the higher purpose of life."

"What exactly does Vedic cosmology teach?" asked Amit.

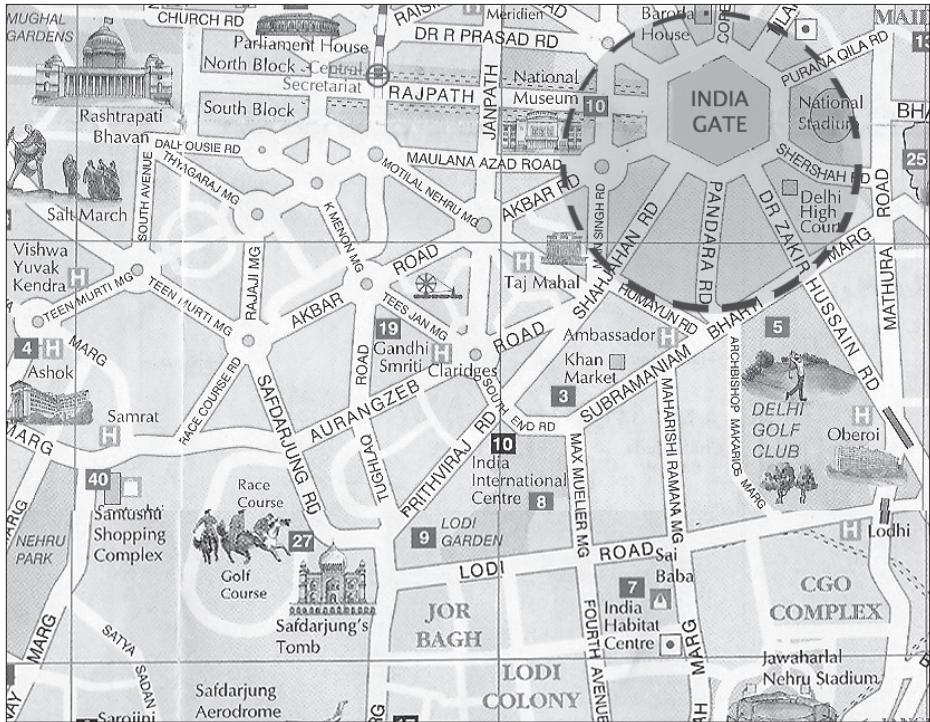
"Vedic cosmology is innately theistic and spiritual. It is based on the understanding that we are souls, spiritual beings, temporarily residing in our material bodies. We are all astronauts on a long multi-life cosmic journey through many, many bodies in many different parts of the cosmos. We are the beloved children of the Supreme Being, originally residing in loving harmony with Him in His abode. When we desired to enjoy separate from Him, we were sent to this material cosmos for experimenting with reality and rectification.

"The cosmos, the Vedas explain, is created and controlled by God, with the help of numerous assistants called demigods. The demigods are beings much more powerful than us, who reside in the higher regions of the cosmos. Soma, the presiding deity of the moon, is one of the demigods."

As Amit reflected over what I was saying, I paused.

"I will need time to comprehend what you are saying," he remarked after a pause.

"Obviously," I laughed and replied. "I poured over dozens of books, shed intellectual sweat for many long hours, and prayed intensely to understand. The principle of humility is vital in approaching the magnificent works of God like the cosmos. We cannot expect to conquer the cosmos with our intellect and dominate it for our ends. Such an attitude implies that we are trying to become all-know-



ing and usurp God. This vain attitude will lead only to bafflement, as has happened to many scholars who had a non-devotional approach in their study of Vedic cosmology. A good example of a devotional attitude to cosmic research is the following quote of Johannes Kepler: 'I have endeavored to gain for human reason, aided by geometrical calculation, an insight into His way of creation; may the Creator of the heavens themselves, the father of all reason, to whom our mortal senses owe their existence, may He who is Himself immortal, keep me in His grace and guard me from reporting anything about His work which cannot be justified before His magnificence or which may misguide our powers of reason, and may He cause us to aspire to the perfection of His works of creation by the dedication of our lives.'

THREE POSSIBILITIES

This explanation of the right approach to the subject seemed to relax Amit. "What actually hap-

pened with the moon flights then?" he asked.

"That we can't say for sure. Authoritative mathematics textbooks state that three plus three is six. If somebody says, according to his calculations, it's not six, we know for sure he's wrong. But we can't know for sure what answer he got. Similarly, the Vedic scriptures authoritatively state that Candraloka is a higher-dimensional planet with higher living beings. So if astronauts claiming to have gone there did not encounter any life there, we can know for sure that they have not accessed Candraloka. But we can't know for sure where they went."

"Still, based on Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements, we can envision three possibilities," I continued. "Firstly, let's understand the concept of a higher dimensional object being projected to a lower dimension. A three-dimensional office address in Delhi (given by street name, apartment, and floor) can have a two-dimensional projec-

tion (given by name of street and apartment). Similarly, the higher-dimensional Candraloka can have a three-dimensional projection, the moon visible to us with the naked eye. No matter how hi-tech our spacecrafts, they cannot take us beyond the three-dimensional reality that our sensory apparatus limits us to. On a map of India, which is a two-dimensional projection of the multi-dimensional reality India, if I move my finger from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate, I cannot experience Rashtrapati Bhavan or India Gate, the people there, the tall buildings etc. Similarly, the astronauts may travel in three-dimensional space to the three-dimensional projection of Candraloka, but not experience its higher-dimensional reality: Somadeva and the other residents,

the heavenly opulences."

Amit nodded thoughtfully. "What are the other two possibilities?" he asked.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the astronauts may have been subjected to a hi-tech diversion by the demigods. Consequently, they imagined they had landed on the moon, but had been grounded on some other relatively (relative to Candraloka) lower planet like Rāhu, which is ordinarily invisible to us due to its existing in a dimension higher than ours.

"Or the third possibility is that the moon flights may have been hoaxed; the astronauts may never have gone out of the atmosphere of the earth. For example, regarding the first American Apollo flights, there are dozens of books and scores of websites devoted to

'the moon conspiracy theory' with its proponents and opponents both vigorously presenting arguments and counter-arguments. Given the money, prestige, security, and technology involved, ascertaining the truth in such projects will be difficult and possibly dangerous."

THE ULTIMATE COSMIC FLIGHT

"Vedic culture is not against cosmic travel," I concluded. "In fact, the perfection of life, according to the Vedic scriptures, is the ultimate cosmic flight; Vedic culture trains us to become transcendental cosmonauts and fly beyond the moon, beyond the sun, beyond the entire material universe, to the spiritual world, which is our eternal home."

"This discussion has opened my eyes to the depth of Vedic cosmology and given me a lot to think about," Amit remarked.

"Perhaps only when our most cherished assumptions are challenged do we strive for a higher understanding."

I couldn't have put it better. ☩

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India Gate as seen in two dimensional map (top left) and in three dimensions (left).



In your own words . . .



Which Kṛṣṇa pastime is your favorite, and why?

KRŚNA'S PASTIMES ARE as unlimited as Kṛṣṇa Himself. To select one and call it my favorite seems like quite a task. But, whenever I think of His stories and glories, there is something that strikes my mind first. When Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He appeared as the most merciful of all incarnations. And during His time, something very special happened: the *mahāprakāśa līlā*. The Lord passed into an unusual ecstasy and revealed Himself as the Lord of the heart of all the devotees present there. It seemed like He was, out of love, serving His devotees by letting them serve Him. He let them know how at every step, just because of their sincerity, He was always with them in inconceivable forms. This pastime shows how Kṛṣṇa is a true lover and goes to any extent to please and comfort His devotees.

Rashi Parikh, Mumbai.

GOPI'S PASTIMES WITH KRŚNA are the most inspiring for me. The *gopīs* dress themselves very nicely just to make Kṛṣṇa happy. When Kṛṣṇa sees them, He becomes delighted, and on seeing Kṛṣṇa delighted, the *gopīs* become millions of times more delighted, and their beauty increases. On seeing this, Kṛṣṇa, whose happiness is full, becomes happier and the reciprocation goes on and on.

It is very difficult to understand the position of the *gopīs*. They have totally surrendered themselves unto Kṛṣṇa. They don't know anything other than Him. They don't even care for their relatives or household

duties. They are always absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa. For them, a moment's separation from Kṛṣṇa is like a lifetime of separation.

Laveen Arora, New Delhi

"I AM WITH A FRIEND, Mom." "My friends are coming for lunch." "Don't say anything about him; he is my best friend." Friends! Friends! Friends! This is what parents hear from their kids as soon as they grow older. Friends occupy most of the mental and physical space of our lives.

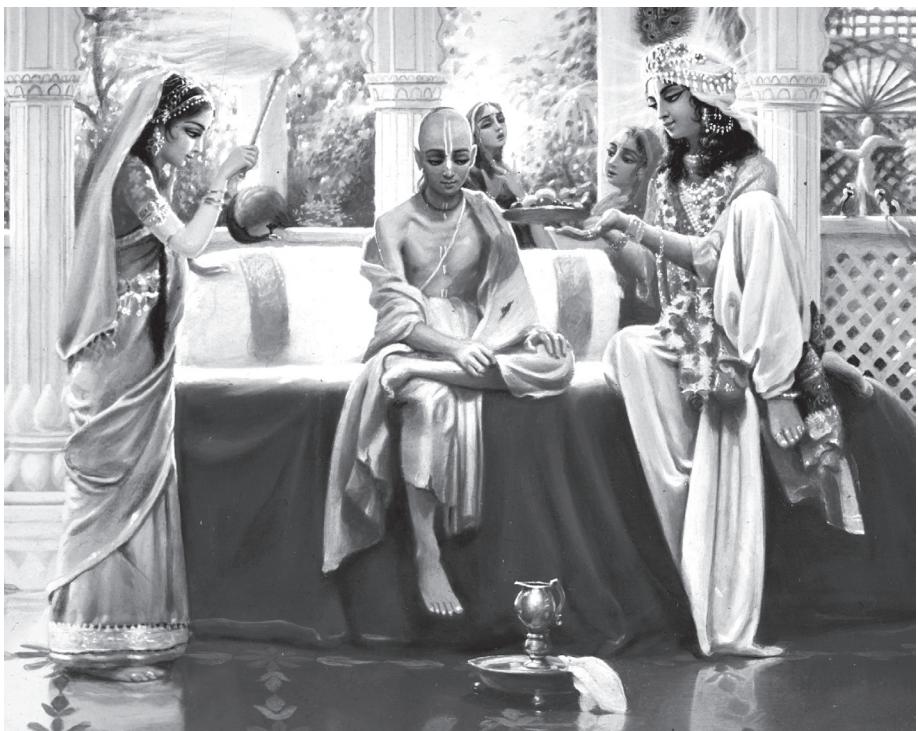
Imagine two friends in the material world, one who is as opulent as Kṛṣṇa, and the other poor like Sudāmā. Without doubt, I can say envy will creep into the poor guy's mind. And the rich guy will feel

pity on the poor.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in *Bhagavad-gītā* chapter nine the importance of non-enviousness. He explains that in today's world even erudite scholars become envious of Kṛṣṇa. Thus, the pastime of Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā is very inspiring. We see how the non-envious Sudāmā yearns only for the Lord's love and doesn't desire any materialistic gain. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa also treats him as an equal and eventually transfers him to His spiritual kingdom.

Manish Goel, Delhi

ONCE BRAHMĀ STEALS all the cowherd boys and calves who were with Kṛṣṇa in the forest. After searching for them and not finding them anywhere, Kṛṣṇa knows



Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā

that Brahmā has stolen them. He then expands Himself into all of His friends and calves.

A lesson I draw from this pastime is that when we leave the body, nothing is lost. Kṛṣṇa is the only one who understands us completely. With Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the heart, mind, and soul, it is much easier for us to forgive those who hurt or betray us. We always want so much, but we can let go of all these material things. If all people worldwide were devotees of the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, then this entire earth would be a beautiful place to live.

Susanne Sticher
Hanau, Germany

EXPANSION OF SAṄKIRTANA MOVEMENT is my favorite pastime of Kṛṣṇa. Without being specially empowered by Kṛṣṇa Himself, no body can preach the glories of the holy name. (Cc. Antya 7.11-12) ISKCON's success in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the proof that this movement is being personally handled by Kṛṣṇa. We could not see the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa when He appeared on this planet, but when He appeared again in the form of His holy names (*kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra*), we're witnessing His wonderful pastimes in the form of ever-expanding ISKCON society.

Nandagopāla Jīvan Dāsa
Author & Editor,
The Higher Taste e-magazine

GOVARDHANA HILL IS THE FORM OF LORD KRŚNA, which bestows His mercy in this material world where the conditioned soul has little hope. Lord Kṛṣṇa gave a glimpse of Himself to Nārada Muni in Nārada's past birth. But the Lord gives us unlimited darśana in the form of Govardhana Hill. While

even Lord Śiva had to come disguised as a snake charmer to see baby Kṛṣṇa, we, even with our mundane vision are able to see to our heart's content, the Lord in His Govardhana form. Where even the gopīs had to wait eagerly to serve Kāñṭhā, we are given the opportunity to cook for and serve Govardhana directly.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.65), Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me." What better way to do so than by serving Govardhan!

Vrajavijaya Devī Dāsī,
Mumbai

I LOVE WHEN KRŚNA AS RATHĀNGAPĀNI is lifting a weapon to kill Bhīṣmadeva, thereby breaking His promise of not using any weapon. All this to save Arjuna! There are a few lessons here:

Kṛṣṇa proves that His devotee never perishes as He had spoken in the Gītā. He knows exactly how to reciprocate with His devotees; for example He pleases Bhīṣmadeva by fighting with him in a chivalrous mood.

Arjuna's surrender to Kṛṣṇa is outstanding. Irrespective of Arjuna's tremendous love for Bhīṣmadeva, he has to kill his grandfather to please Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa does one activity to please many devotees simultaneously. The hidden lesson conveyed here is not to fear anything while performing devotional service unto Kṛṣṇa.

Hari Chaitanya T,
Raichur, Karnataka

DĀMODARA LĪLĀ IS MY FAVORITE PASTIME of Kṛṣṇa. In this pastime Kṛṣṇa plays different roles: a naughty child helplessly dependant on Mother Yaśodā, the Supreme Lord who was bound by

pure love and devotion, a grateful personality reciprocating with the monkeys, and a merciful deliverer keeping the word of His pure devotee, Nārada.

The feelings of Mother Yaśodā—while churning butter, feeding Kṛṣṇa her breast milk, keeping Kṛṣṇa on the ground to take care of milk, and chasing Him to bind Him—are all to satisfy Kṛṣṇa.

The way ācāryas explain the consciousness of milk and the flower garlands adorning Mother Yaśodā, increase sweetness of the pastime. Kṛṣṇa's pressing His red lips with His white teeth, the rope getting two fingers too short, and other details reveal subtle messages and increase the affection and attraction of the listener.

It's beyond words to express the delight of seeing Lord Dāmodara glowing in the midst of thousands of lamps that are offered gracefully by His loving devotees, while the great composition, *Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, is being sung sweetly during the month of Kārtika.

Laxminarayan, Bangalore

IN YOUR OWN WORDS QUESTIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING ISSUES

What will be the world like if everyone is a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee?

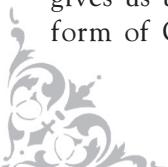
Answers will be published in June

Describe an incident in your life where you clearly felt Kṛṣṇa's direct involvement

Answers will be published in July and August

Word limit: 150 words

E-mail: ed.btgindia@pamho.net



BE MY VALENTINE...

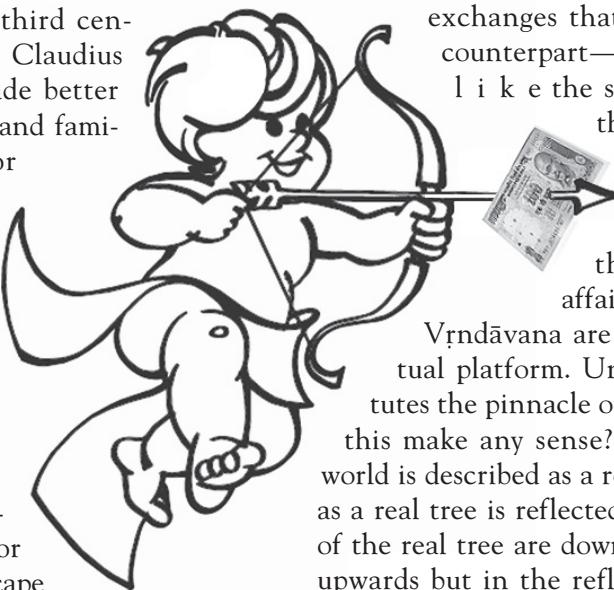
Indians rejoice! In these days of shouting slogans like: "Jai Ho!" and "India—A global superpower in the making", we have to learn one more important lesson. And that is to learn how to express love. Yes, you guessed it right—we did not have Valentine's Day celebrations until now. But the situation has changed for the better.

What did you say? You have never heard of this day before! How much India is lagging behind the developed countries can be safely judged by this one criterion alone. Let me tell you the story (or the myth, if you prefer) behind this day.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men—his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured. Some say that there were two Saint Valentines, and both achieved martyrdom.

Whatever may be the story (or myth), this day is certainly a favorite of today's merchants of consumerist culture. It just makes good business sense. Just read this—according to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion Valentine cards are sent each year in the USA, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. According to the National Retail Federation, total spending this year is estimated to top \$16.90 billion, with the average consumer spending nearly \$120 on the holiday. And with the growing clout of the fast-growing Indian middle-class it is high time that Indians needed to be taught a



lesson or two in the fine art of expressing love.

Of course, not everybody is fooled by this hype. Some have started an anti-commercially oriented Valentine's Day celebration which does not have any purchasing involved.

How was love originally expressed? As the boy-friend-girlfriend culture tries to make inroads in the Indian psyche, one wonders if there is any allowance for it in Vedic culture. The *Bhagavad-gītā* states that Kṛṣṇa is the origin of everything—everything emanates from Him alone. Thus original love is also to be found in Him. How does He express that love? Kṛṣṇa does not need to seek out a female partner. He exchanges that love with His own spiritual counterpart—Rādhā. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are like the sunshine and the sun—one is the potency while the other potent (possessor of the potency). Great devotees and learned scholars have given their decision that the loving affairs of Kṛṣṇa and the damsels of

Vṛndāvana are situated on the highest spiritual platform. Understanding this love constitutes the pinnacle of spiritual evolution. How does this make any sense? To begin with, this material world is described as a reflection of the spiritual world as a real tree is reflected in a lake of water. The roots of the real tree are downwards and the branches grow upwards but in the reflection the roots are up while the branches are down.

In the spiritual world the topmost part is this conjugal love, and here, the same thing, when pervertedly reflected, is the lowest abominable thing. In the spiritual world, to remain as girlfriend and boyfriend, that is the topmost pleasure, but in the material world, the same thing is the most abominable thing. We cannot imitate the loving affairs of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī unless we understand the real fact.

We have to understand that unless the loving propensity is there in the Supreme, how it can be reflected? Because this is perverted reflection only, so there must be an origin. Therefore those who say that God is impersonal or He has no form or His activities

(please turn to page 18)