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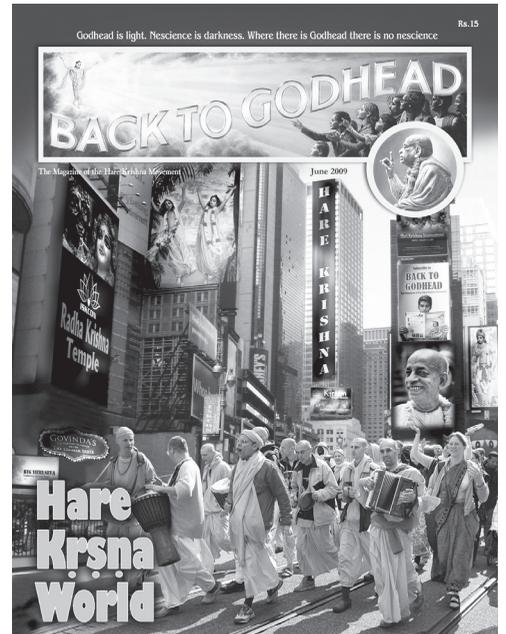
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SNĀNA-YĀTRĀ

An explanation of different pastimes of Lord Jagannātha.



Cover: If everyone becomes a Hare Kṛṣṇa, this is what you will see globally: Kṛṣṇa temples, Govinda's restaurants distributing *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, Kṛṣṇa billboards, theatres showing Kṛṣṇa conscious movies, and devotees performing *sankīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa's holy names. —p28



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OUR PURPOSES

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

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. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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SPIRITUAL BOOM

The three articles written each
by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, Ānanda
Vṛndāvana Dāsa, and
S.K.Subramanian (April 2009) on
“Recession” offer an interesting
reading. As these excellent articles
suggest, the spiritual concept iden-
tified, guided, and practiced by the
divine premise ISKCON has the
solution for everything and every-
one. Whether it is a single person
entangled in *māyā*, or a society of
people dwelling uncared for in
atheism, or a country undergoing
economic recession, ISKCON has
the real answer for relief.

Material bondage breeds sense
gratification which compels per-
sons to earn more and more money
so as to spend lavishly and quench
their insatiable appetite for mate-
rial enjoyment, which leads them
ultimately to distress, pain, and
agony. We should, therefore, re-
lieve our minds from the clutches
and control of the powerful senses
and abandon their attachment to
materialism.

Minimum food, ordinary cloth-
ing and a four-walled shelter are the
only basic needs of all human be-
ings. We eat to live and to be
healthy. We wear clothes lest our
bodies be bare, and we need shel-
ter to sleep. Then why should one
covet a palatial bungalow to live in?
Why should one yearn for luxuri-
ous clothes and costly jewellery to
wear? Why should one eat glutton-
ously? It is because people in the
mode of passion are unflinchingly
attached and attracted towards
kāma and *lobha*. Their minds need
to be diverted from the perversities
of *māyā* and directed towards
the mode of goodness.

A Kṛṣṇa devotee lives in the
mode of goodness and so he is not

enamored by material desires.
Chanting the *mahā-mantra* is the
simplest way to gain liberation from
the cycle of birth and death and
reach Lord Kṛṣṇa’s abode, Goloka
Vṛndāvana.

What has the international
community contributed to over-
come the crisis of recession? What
has it achieved over the past five
decades since a man, reportedly,
landed on the moon? Have the sci-
entists of the world really suc-
ceeded in conquering nature? Have
they found devices to eradicate
earthquakes, eliminate tsunamis,
storms, and twisters? Have they de-
vised methods to quell poverty,
hunger, and diseases? The answer
being a big NO, the billions of dol-
lars being wasted negatively spell
the dual dangers of driving the
world into economic recession and
the humanity into spiritual reces-
sion.

If countries the world over
learn to spend money positively and
frugally channeling the people to
live a simple life of devotion and
serve the Supreme Personality of
Godhead, a spiritual boom will
sprout out that would entail and
promise economic boom as well.

R. M. Manoharan,
Chennai

SELF-DISCOVERY ON MOON

I agree that visiting to moon is a
costly affair, eroding millions of
dollars of public taxes, but can’t this
exercise be take as an advancement
of man’s step towards an enquiry
about one own self?

Technological advancements
are the need of the day with which
we communicate more efficiently,
and they are also adopted by ev-
ery human being now.

The recent developments re-



garding the space journey of the path-finder and the voyager to different planets like mars are an outstanding achievement of man. Can't these things be added as accolades for human for self discovery?

Kunal Surana

Via email

OUR REPLY: For answer see the article "Redefining Progress" by Caitanya Caraṇa Dasa.

MINDLESS KILLING

When Kṛṣṇa was spending joyous days in Vṛndāvana, king Kaṁsa of Mathurā had sent many demons like Pūtanā, Tṛṇāvarta, Aghāsura etc., to kill Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. But putting these demons to death proved to be child's play for the teenage boy Kṛṣṇa. Such feats were godly indeed.

But Kṛṣṇa mindlessly killed an ordinary washerman of Kaṁsa, the washerman's only fault being that he refused to part with the king's garments for Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa to wear. The washerman was duty bound and he shouldn't have been killed. It seems even gods commit sinful errors sometimes, don't they?

P. K. V. Menon,
Kerala

OUR REPLY: Being situated in everyone's heart, the Lord is cognizant of all of our intentions and He may decide to reciprocate accordingly.

In the case of the washerman, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma approached the washerman politely, requesting him for some suitable garments for dressing Themselves. Kṛṣṇa even assured the washerman of the greatest benefit if he would do so. The advantages for the washerman were clearly spelled out before the washerman had to take a decision.

The washerman could have given some of the clothes even as an act of charity. But the washerman shot back in anger, insulting Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as forest dwellers daring to ask for the king's clothes. He even threatened Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with punishment at the hands of the king's servants. Witnessing his audacious behavior, Kṛṣṇa acted in a fitting manner and killed him.

Now was the washerman right in doing his duty to the king? *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.13) states, "... the highest perfection one can achieve by discharging the duties prescribed for one's own occupation ... is to please the Personality of Godhead." Therefore, although one is dutybound to serve his master in the material world, still the highest duty is to serve God. In case of a conflict, it is always the service to God that gains an upper hand. The washerman could have perfected his duty by serving Kṛṣṇa, but instead he chose to insult Him.

A entirely opposite approach was shown a little later by Trivakrā (Kubjā), who too worked for Kaṁsa. When requested by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, she immediately parted with generous amounts of cosmetic ointments originally meant for Kaṁsa, and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma decorated Themselves with it.

One can approach Kṛṣṇa after performing many austerities, giving charity, by rigorous study of scriptures etc. But, sometimes, He presents Himself directly and the person gets an opportunity to bypass all the systematic but time-consuming processes and directly surrender at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Both the washerman and Kubjā got this opportunity and while Kubjā understood very well the perfection of life

and acted in loving devotion, the washerman blew up his chance.

Coming to the question of sin. Religious principles are enacted by God Himself—*dharmam tu sāksād bhagavat-praṇītam* (*Bhāg.* 6.3.19). Any activity contrary to these principles is defined as sin. There is no sin for the Lord, because He, being the creator of the world, is not subjected to the laws operating here (*Bg.* 4.14). Therefore, everything that God does is all-good. So, when God the supreme-father slaps His impudent child, the apparently harsh act is actually a benediction for the living entity.

Thus, far from being a "mindless killing" of an "ordinary washerman" in an act of "sinful error," it was an expression of the Supreme Lord's ability to reciprocate accordingly with a living entity's particular mood. The washerman willfully tried to denigrate the position of Kṛṣṇa by siding with the demon Kaṁsa, and as a result was killed. Of course, it is a well-known fact that God being Absolute, His blessing and His killing are non-different.

Reply to the letter was written by Nanda Dulāla Dāsa.

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

Ocean of Nectar

Pure devotees reside in in the ocean of transcendental loving service to the Lord, and have no business with other processes that are like the rivers that gradually reach the ocean.

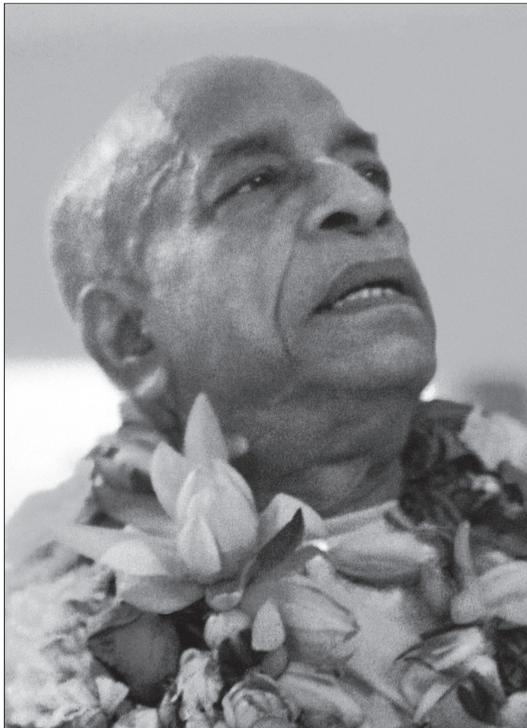
by His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Pradyumna: (reading) “Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī begins his great book by offering his respectful obeisances unto Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī who is his elder brother and spiritual master, and he prays that *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* may be very pleasing to him.”

Prabhupāda: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī wanted to please Sanātana Gosvāmī. Our duty is to please the superior, not the public. We are giving service to the public according to the direction of the superior authority. We do not manufacture any program of service. Just like Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, still, He was following the authorities. He referred to the *Brahmā-*



sūtra. Brahmā-sūtra-padaīś caiva hetumadbbhir viniścitaiḥ: “The knowledge is especially presented in *Vedānta-sūtra* with all reasoning as to cause and effect.” So this is the way that any bona fide spiritual propaganda must be: following the footsteps of previous authority.

PROCESS OF PURIFICATION

At the present moment, it has become fashionable to manufacture some idea, but that is not the Vedic way. The Vedic way is to receive the message through the *paramparā* system. *Evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ:* “This supreme science was thus received



through the chain of disciplic succession.” [Bg. 4.2]. Sanātana Gosvāmī was personally taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu for two months continually in Benares, Vārāṇasī; therefore, he’s our authority. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* follows the principles of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* written by Sanātana Gosvāmī. In the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, Sanātana Gosvāmī recommends, *tathā dikṣā-vidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām. Dikṣā-vidhāna*, by the process of *dikṣā*, any human being can be elevated to the position of a bona fide *brāhmaṇa*. The very word *vidhāna* is used, meaning bona fide process.

There is another good suggestion: *yathā kañcanatām yāti kaṁsa-rasa-vidhānena. Rasa* means mercury. The branch of chemistry coming from mercury is called *rasāyana-śāstra*. Actually, *rasāyana-śāstra*, chemical composition, begins from mercury and sulphur. So *rasa-vidhānena*, by chemical interaction of sulphur and mercury, if you add tin and copper, then it becomes gold. You can manufacture gold, provided you know the process of mixing copper, tin, and mercury via medium of sulphuric acid. Sulphuric acid is the mother of chemicals. Without sulphur, you cannot make any chemical composition. Therefore all chemical compositions are called sulphate, sulphite, like that. So, Sanātana Gosvāmī gives this idea of chemical composition. It appears that he knew how to work with chemicals.

*yathā kañcanatām yāti
kaṁsa-rasa-vidhānataḥ
tathā dikṣā-vidhānena
dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām*

We are trying to follow Sanātana Gosvāmī. In this age, Kali-yuga, the *dikṣā-vidhāna* is performed accord-

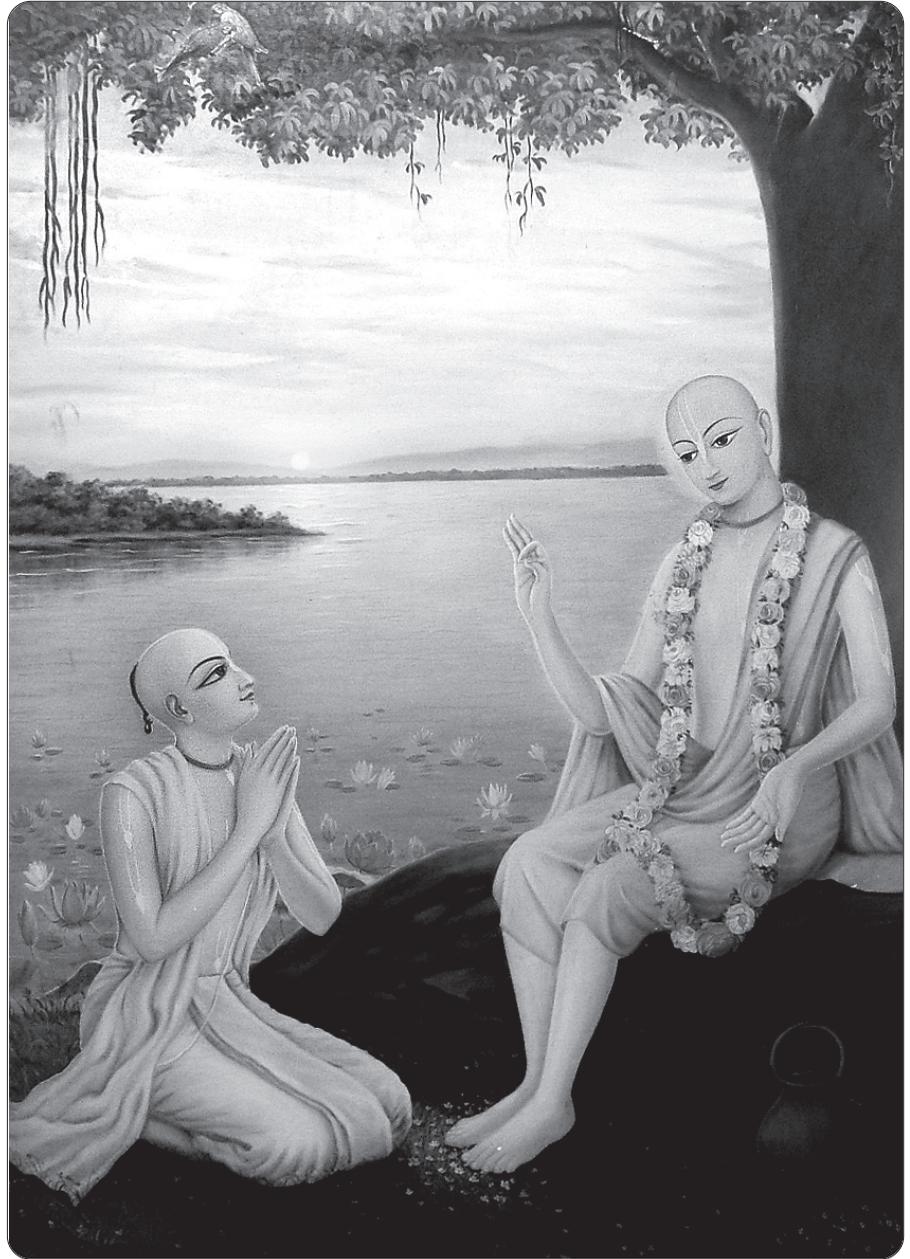
ing to *pāñcarātrikī-vidhi*, not *vaidika-vidhi*. *Vaidika-vidhi* is very strict. Unless one was a bona fide son of a *dvija*, initiation was not given. There was no initiation to the *śūdras*; only to *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriyas*, and *vaiśyas*. This was the Vedic process. In Kali-yuga it is understood that everyone is a *śūdra*, so *vaidika-vidhāna* cannot be applied. Therefore *pāñcarātrikī-vidhi* is accepted: *Nārada-Pañcarātra*. Rūpa Gosvāmī says in his *Bhakti-*

rasāmṛta-sindhu,

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-
pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate*

[Brs. 1.2.101]

Hari-bhakti, devotional service to the Lord, must be approved by *śruti* (the *Vedas*), *smṛti* (the *Purāṇas*), and other corollary literatures, *Bhagavad-gītā*,



Lord Caitanya instructing Sanātana Gosvāmī

Mahābhārata, *Manu-smṛiti*, the laws given by Manu, Parāśara, etc. Otherwise, any show of devotional service is simply a disturbance. So *pāñcarātriki-vidhi*. Otherwise anyone can manufacture his own path as supported by some very big missionary activities: *yata mata tata patha*. You can manufacture your way of religious principles, but that is not the Vedic way. The Vedic way is *evam paramparā-prāptam* [Bg. 4.2]. Although

we are initiating people from low-grade society, still, we are following the principles of *pāñcarātriki-vidhi*, injunction of the *Gosvāmīs*. Therefore it is bona fide.

So, Rūpa Gosvāmī first offers his respectful obeisances to his elder brother, *Sānātāna Gosvāmī*, because Rūpa Gosvāmī accepted him as spiritual master.

Pradyumna: “He further prays that by residing in that ocean of nectar he may always feel transcendental pleasure in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.”

MERGING INTO BRAHMAN

Prabhupāda: Yes. “Ocean of nectar.” The *māyāvādī* philosophers generally give the example that all rivers flow to the ocean. It doesn’t matter which course they follows; they all merge into the ocean. So

that is ultimate liberation.

But if you give some analogy, you must consider other similar points. The more the supporting points, the more perfect the analogy. So rivers merge into the ocean but the surface water mixing with the ocean is again evaporated by the scorching heat of the sun and will again fall down and glide into the ocean. So this is called *avagamana*—coming and going.

home, back to Godhead. Not in the spiritual sky, *paravyoma*, because there is chance of falling down. Why chance? It is sure. Those who are merging into the *Brahmān* effulgence, the *śāstra* says, they again fall down. *Āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ patanty adhaḥ* [Bhāg. 10.2.32]. The *jñānīs* undergo severe austerities, penances to merge into the existence of impersonal Brahman but they fall down



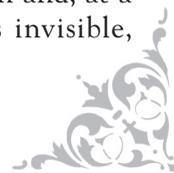
The māyāvādī concept of liberation is jīva merging into Brahman like rivers merge into the ocean.

But Vaiṣṇava philosophy is not to merge into the water, but keep our identity and go deep into the water, so you may not be evaporated. The fish and the aquatic animals within the water are not evaporated. They are not going to become cloud and again fall down. Therefore Rūpa Gosvāmī says, “He further prays that by residing in the ocean of nectar he may always feel transcendental pleasure.”

Our philosophy is to go back to

again. *Anādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*. Because they did not care for the shelter under the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, they have to come back to this material world. You can go with high speed to the moon planet or Venus planet, but if you have no shelter to stay there, you come back to this earthly planet.

You may merge into the Brahman effulgence, just like the airplane that goes very high and, at a certain point, becomes invisible,



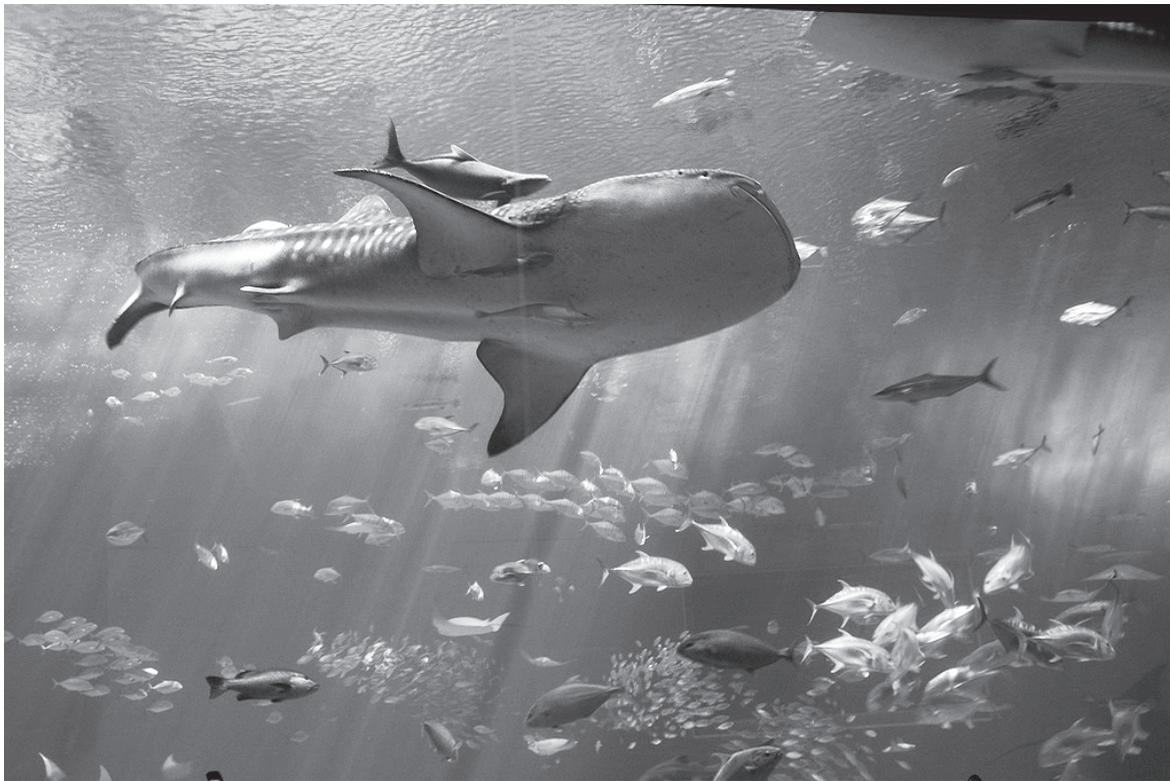
merged. But actually, it is not merged. Our eyes just cannot see it any more. Therefore, Jīva Gosvāmī has explained this merging principle: just like a green bird enters into a green tree, it appears to the imperfect eye that the bird is gone. But the bird is there; just because both the tree and the bird are green, it appears merged. The spiritual living being does not merge into the spiritual sky. The individu-

LIBERATION THE VAIṢṆAVA VIEW

Kṛṣṇa also says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “My dear Arjuna, do not think that I, you, or all these soldiers and kings who have assembled in this battlefield, they were not existing in the past. They are existing at present and similarly they will exist in the future.” That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. So where is the question of merging and loss of in-

merge into the ocean, evaporate into the sky, and falls. Again, goes through the river, and merges. *Bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate*: Again and again, all living entities come into being, and again they are annihilated. [Bg. 8.19]. So our philosophy is going once into the ocean, and no more coming back. *Tyaktvā dehaṃ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*: after the annihilation the devotees will go back home, back

to Godhead [Bg. 4.9]. If we once go in the spiritual world, we do not like to come back. We stay with Kṛṣṇa and dance with Him, or play with Him, or serve with, as tree, as plant, as water, as cows, as land, as cowherd boys, as father, mother, or as gopīs. Once we go to Kṛṣṇa, we live forever with Him in either of these capacities. Let



Devotees are like sharks who do not care for rivers of liberation.

ality is there. This individuality, fragment of the Supreme Brahman, is eternal, *sanātana*. Spirit cannot be cut into pieces. We are fragmental parts. That means eternally we are individual. *Nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13). We are one of the *nityas*. There are innumerable *nityas* and *cetanaś*, the living entities, part and parcel of the supreme living entity, Kṛṣṇa, are all individual.

dividuality? The individuality remains. It remained in the past, it is continuing at the present moment, and will remain in the future also. This is clearly explained in the second chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. So merging does not always mean losing one’s individuality. Therefore the theory of merging into the existence of impersonal Brahman is to stay there for some time and again fall down. Just like the example that the water of the rivers

me live in Vṛndāvana in any capacity. “He further prays that by residing in that ocean of nectar he may always feel eternally continually, without any cessation” *Ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt* (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.12). To remain *ānandamaya*. That is the principle of Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Go on.

Pradyumna: “Let us offer our respectful obeisances to all the great devotees and *ācāryas* or holy teachers, who are compared with sharks

in the great ocean of nectar and who do not care for the various rivers of liberation. Impersonalists are very fond of merging into the supreme, like rivers that come down and merge into the ocean. The ocean can be compared with liberation and the rivers with all the different paths of liberation. The impersonalists are dwelling in the river water, which eventually comes to mix with the ocean. They have no information, however, that within the ocean, as within the rivers, there are innumerable aquatic living entities. The sharks who dwell in the ocean do not care for the rivers which are gliding down into it.”

Prabhupāda: Yes. The big-bodied sharks and crocodiles have no place in the river. They constantly remain in the ocean. Go on.

Pradyumna: “The devotees

eternally live in the ocean of devotional service, and they do not care for the rivers. In other words, those who are pure devotees always remain in the ocean of transcendental loving service to the Lord and have no business with the other processes which are compared to the rivers that only gradually come to the ocean. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī prays to his spiritual master Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī for the protec-

tion of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the ocean of the pure nectar of devotional service, from the argumentative logicians who unnecessarily meddle in the science of service to the Lord. He compares their arguments and logic to volcanic eruptions in the midst of the ocean.”

WHERE LOGIC FAILS

Prabhupāda: Yes. *Acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāmś tarkeṇa yojayet* (*Mahābhārata*, *Bhīṣma-ṣarva* 5.22).

tion, but something that appears to the neophyte as a contradiction. Just like we cite the example that animal stool is impure, but cow dung is pure. By logic you can say, “Cow dung is also the stool of an animal. How is it pure?” But in the *Vedas* you’ll find such things. Therefore by simply studying without surrendering yourself to the spiritual master, you’ll find contradictions and you’ll be bewildered. *Śrutayo vibhinnā*. They are not

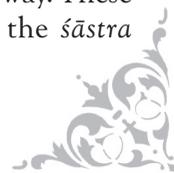


Logical arguments are compared to a whirlpool.

Simply by arguments, logic, you cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. That is the Vedic injunction. You cannot establish the truth by simple logic and arguments because somebody who is a greater logician may come and defeat you. *Tarko 'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā*. And due to different countries and different circumstances, one scripture is different from another. If you read the *Vedas*, you’ll find not a contradic-

vibhinnā, but to our limited knowledge, sometimes they appear as *vibhinnam*, different. *Nāsau munir yasya mataṁ na bhinnam*: And you won’t find a philosopher who does not agree with other philosophers.

Therefore, *dharmasya tattvam nihitaṁ guhāyām mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ* [*Cc. Madhya* 17.186]. We have to follow the footsteps of great *ācāryas*. That is the way. These *mahājanas* described in the *śāstra*



WRITING

Steps to make writing an enjoyable experience for kids.

By Aruddhā Devī Dāsī

Most writing is a private activity but a public service. Writing is, above all, for communication—to convey ideas and feelings from your mind to another mind. Writing, said Śrīla Prabhupāda, was also chanting (*kīrtanam*) because it is repeating what one has learned from sacred books. Writing naturally follows reading because generally we want to express what we read with our own realizations. Writing also helps in all facets of the language, namely, vocabulary, comprehension, spelling, and logical thinking.

When the children are about nine or ten years old we can teach them writing through Śrīla Prabhupāda's books such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We can ask them to compose essays on what they have read, comment upon current events through the eyes of *śāstra*, and give answers to thought-provoking questions that we assign to them. Through this, they learn the different stages of writing, such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing. A few years later they are

able to do research, understand the meaning of allegories, figurative language, and contradictions. They should be able to think critically, form their own understanding, and express it coherently.

We can try different ways to encourage our children to write on Kṛṣṇa conscious subjects. Here are some of the things I did with my children.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

During my homeschooling, I heard that a devotee, Sureśvara Dāsa, was teaching a Bhakti-śāstrī correspondence course for adults and so I wrote to him asking if he would kindly teach my eldest son, Rādhikā Ramaṇa Dāsa. He agreed and we signed up for the class. He would send questions written for an eleven-year-old and after my son answered them, Sureśvara would correct them and send them back with comments, grades, and lots of encouragement. Besides the usual questions, he would also send some challenging ones that required application of Kṛṣṇa's teachings to real-life situations. I remember one in particular that was based on





chapter 2, verses 62-63: “Complete this scenario: A teetotaler enters a bar with his friends . . .” Rādhikā Ramaṇa wrote a two-page story about a man who was trying to practice spiritual life, but succumbed to temptation with his old friends. The man went through the stages of fall down that Kṛṣṇa describes, but then picked himself up through good association.

WRITE FOR BACK TO GODHEAD

My son was very inspired and gained a lot of confidence in writing through the *Gītā* course. Eventually Sureśvara Prabhu suggested that he write for *Back to Godhead* magazine. Of course, this was a challenge in the beginning—the editors would send back the articles asking for substantial revision. Writing for BTG was a big step and brought out a new dimension to our home schooling. I also began looking for additional opportunities for him to write. The local newspaper in Boise had a weekly religion column where different faiths could present their philosophy and views on current topics. They accepted Rādhikā Ramaṇa for representing the Hare Kṛṣṇa faith. He wrote that column regularly for four years until he went to graduate school. This was a wonderful opportunity to reach people who would otherwise not be interested. The articles were well liked; he would get appreciative letters from readers and encouragement from his professors at the university.

WRITING PLAYS

While my older son was busy with assignments for BTG and the local newspaper, my younger son, Gopal, was writing in other areas. His style of writing is direct, upbeat and engaging. He would often write scripts for plays that we hosted in the temple. Children’s plays were our focus because we discovered that they provided an easy way to preach to their parents on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. After seeing their children so joyful in play practice, it rekindled their desire to do service in the temple and participate fully in the temple programs.

Writing scripts is really hard work for



children but an effective way of learning the language arts. For Gopāl, it involved reading the story from the scriptures, summarizing and writing in a dialogue format, and editing for grammar and good flow. He did not mind the hard work because he loved acting and directing the play among his friends. It was a lot of fun.

My children also wrote essays about the upcoming festivals, appearance or disappearance days of our ācāryas, visits to the holy dhāma, or national parks for vacation. In the early years I encouraged them to write a few sentences in birthday or invitation cards to friends. The children of a homeschooled family in Boise write letters daily to Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva, and Subhadrā Devī after Snāna-yātrā when They are sick, asking Them to get well soon and bestow Their mercy.

An important point to remember is that writing is not something most children will do spontaneously or even willingly so we have to make it fun for them. The trick is to ask them to write about things they want to write about! Writing plays was fun for my children because they would actually see it happen.

PUBLISHING NEWSLETTER

Another task that primarily belonged to Gopāl was publishing a temple newsletter. Every month he had to write a couple of articles for the newsletter, give the temple news and upcoming events. He also had a children's corner where he created crossword puzzles and other fun Kṛṣṇa conscious games. He learned responsibility, how to meet deadlines, and received hands-on experience with editing, publishing, copying, and mailing.

Writing for Kṛṣṇa can be a very wonderful and satisfying service, and we should help our children see it in that way. ❀

Aruddhā Devī Dāsi is a disciple of His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. She homeschooled her two children in USA, where she resides with her family. Her older son, Rādhikā Ramaṇa Dāsa (Dr. Ravi Gupta), holds a Ph.D in Hinduism from Oxford. He entered Boise State University at the age of 13, where he completed dual B.A. degrees in Philosophy and Mathematics with highest honors. Her second son Gopāla Hari Dāsa (Gopāl Gupta) is currently working towards his Ph.D in Science and Religion at Oxford University. He entered Boise State University at the age of 12 where he completed a bachelor's degree and M.Tech. in Electrical Engineering with highest

honors.

Readers interested in learning more can join her internet group www.krishnahomeschool.com

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

QUESTIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Describe an incident in your life where you clearly felt Kṛṣṇa's direct involvement.
Deadline for submission is June 30.

Which devotee in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam inspires you the most and why?
Deadline for submission is July 30.

Word limit: 150 words
E-mail:
ed.btgindia@pamho.net

BLUNDERS

Wrong Push

A program was being held at the residence of a very senior devotee. It was for established devotees, but I insisted on inviting my sister and her husband so to give them first time exposure to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The host called me up and in sweet words told me it would be better to call them for a public program. But I was adamant and insisted on calling them to his home, and he reluctantly agreed.

All through the program, my

sister and her husband felt like aliens, and it was even worse when we started to dance in kīrtana. Luckily nobody pulled them into the dance.

It was the last time they came for a program, and till date they remain neutral about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ❀

- Yudhiṣṭhira Dāsa

Share your mistakes and blunders in this coloumn. Write to us at:
ed.btgindia@pamho.net



How Kṛṣṇa Came to My Home?

My mother is a post graduate in Fine Arts and taught arts and craft in a reputed public school. Following in her footsteps, I also have a deep interest in painting and occasionally paint as a hobby.

One day, when we were renovating our office, I remarked that there should have been a big painting on the vacant wall of the conference room. Immediately the Chief Executive Officer inquired if I knew how to paint. I mentioned that I paint as a hobby, and could do so for the office. My first piece for the office was of Gaṇeśa wearing a peacock feather on his crown and playing a flute. Everyone was amazed whether he was Gaṇeśa or Śrī Kṛṣṇa; still everyone appreciated it. After I became a devotee, I realized that I should paint according to the description given by the bonafide scriptures, and not speculate. Over a period of time I painted more than thirty paintings for the office as well as for the plant.

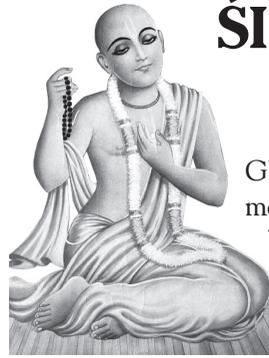
In 2007, I painted a *madhubani* painting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and two *gopīs*. As it was a traditional painting, I initially wanted to hang it at my residence, but later thought of letting it go to the office; I could always paint another one for my home. The CEO, however, did not like it as it was a traditional painting. But it was very close to my heart as I had worked on it very deeply, using vibrant colors to highlight Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I decided to take it home and pay the framing cost to the office. I was jubilant.

After joining ISKCON, I realized that out of the 30 paintings I had done, none of them had come back to me except for this painting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It was the mercy of the Lord that He came to my home so that we could see Him day and night. Before, there was no picture of Lord Kṛṣṇa in my home. ❀

Manali D. Bijlani,
Delhi

Share your experiences with the Deities, holy name, sacred books, dhāma, spiritual master, or even those from every day life.

Write to us at: ed.btgindia@pamho.net



ŚIKṢĀṢṬAKAM

by Sītā Devī Dāsī

Glory to the Śrī Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana* movement

Which purifies the mirror of the heart
And extinguishes the blazing fire in a moment

With its cooling moon like rays pure knowledge it imparts.

By Your causeless mercy Your innumerable names
Are endowed with all the energy in full
But unfortunately my heart with desires aflame
Cannot appreciate their sweetness, so beautiful.

To be humbler than a blade of grass,
And tolerant like a tree,
Ready to offer respect to all and never ask
That is the qualification to always chant and be free.

I have no desire for wealth or women
Or followers who serve one pointedly
Birth after birth in every lifetime I yearn
Only your devotional service wholeheartedly.

O my Lord, O son of Maharaja Nanda
Your lowly servant is falling
In this material ocean with no beginning nor end
Please lift me and place me at Your lotus feet I am crying.

Torrents of tears fall like rain,
And my voice falters with emotion,
Body decorated with ecstatic symptoms gain,
As soon as I chant Your names in devotion.

Every moment stretches a lifetime long
And tears come falling without cessation
Null void becomes this world which I belong,
O Govinda! In Your separation.

Embrace me or crush me under Your lotus feet,
Or break my heart by hiding Yourself, heartlessly
You are naughty and capable of any feat,
Yet you remain the Lord of my life unconditionally.

I was admitted in the surgical ward of our hospital. The nursing station was very close to my bed and in close proximity to the nursing station was a small radio. It was probably there to entertain the minds of the stressed-out doctors and nursing staff. Today the radio jockey had selected the theme *Jindagi ek safar*: “The journey of life.” For me the word *safar* was resounding as “suffer.” The songs were sending out the message that life is an enjoyable journey (*suhana safar*)—so just enjoy it. But I had been suffering from a terrible disease for the past few days. I had an abscess and was unable to sit or walk. Every step was like a marathon and simply sitting on the office chair seemed more difficult than yogic postures.

Although the doctors and nurses were working in synchrony with the tune, I was becoming annoyed. I distinctly remembered that song and the movie. In the film, the hero sang the song while riding his bike. Even I used to sing the same song while riding my bike during my college days. But today, the same song had no effect on my burning heart, because today I was exposed to a different version of this world.

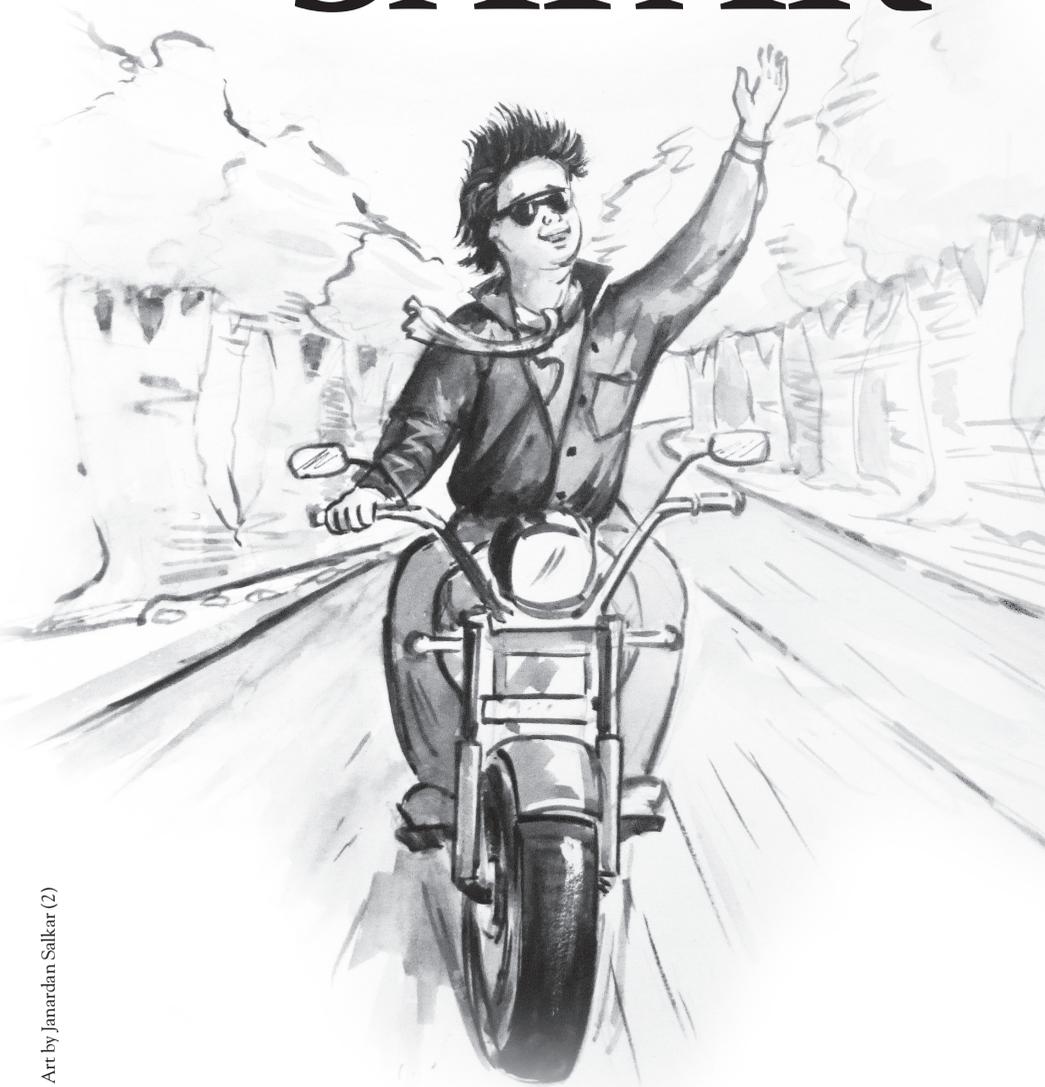
The patient on my right had an amputated limb and was screaming in pain. “O Lord! Please forgive me! Please relieve me of this pain.” On my other side was a patient of my age who was gasping. Whole day his young wife sobbed by his side. He was probably HIV positive and counting his final days. I tried to see the world through his eyes. Will any movie or song relieve his pain today? Will any food-stuff cause his

Art by Janardan Salkar (2)

mouth to water? Will any worldly pleasure please him today? Did he ever contemplate that AIDS will melt his body to a skeleton covered just by skin? I, too, had never imagined that I would be lying in midst of suffering souls.

This world of suffering is completely different from the way it is

“SAFAR”



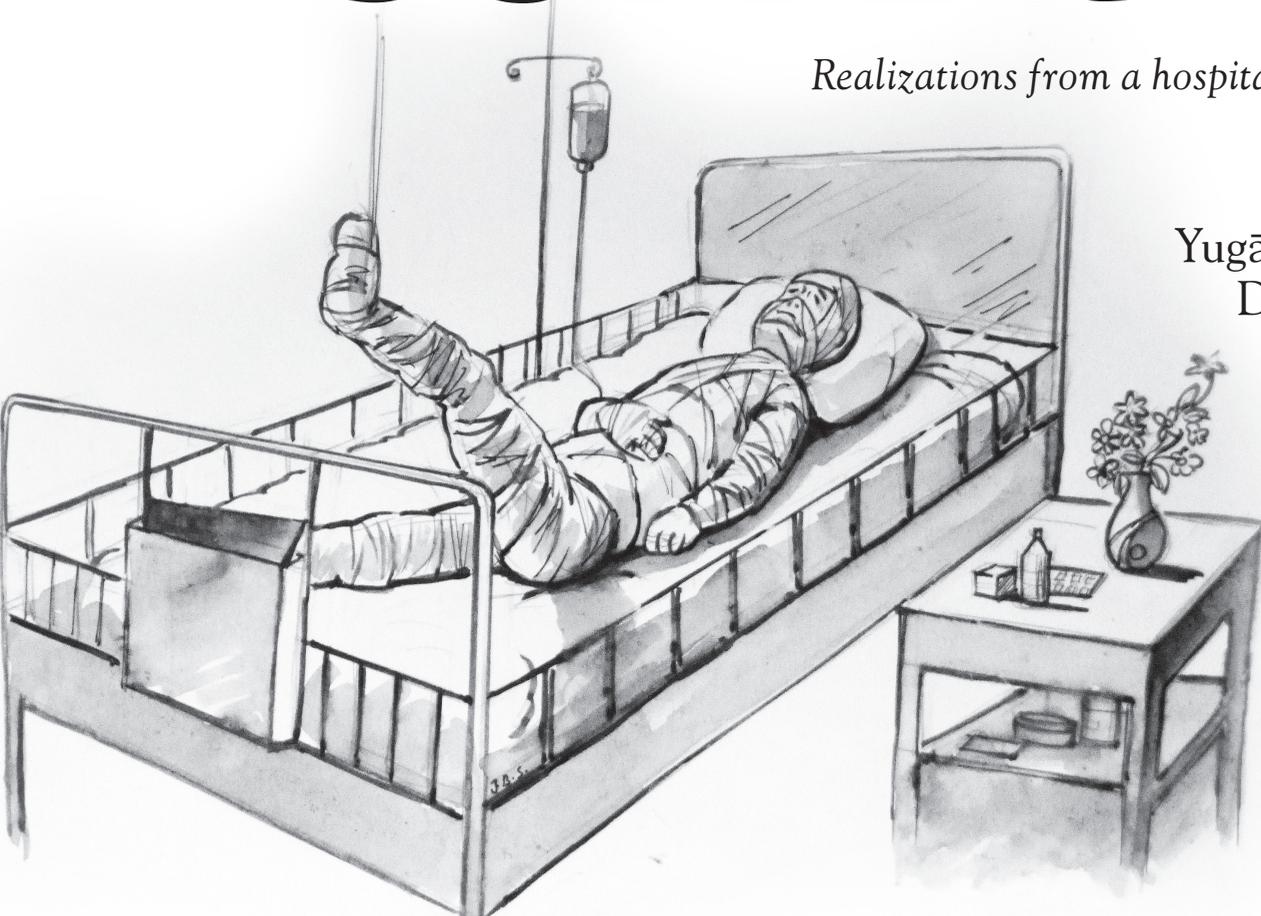
advertised, just as a product is different from its advertisement. In our regular advertisements we see a nice, healthy couple with a son and daughter staying in a well-painted home with healthy grandparents. If these hoardings reflect the healthy world, then why do we need the hospitals? We also see youngsters drink-



OR SUFFER

Realizations from a hospital bed

by
Yugāvatāra
Dāsa



ing cola, driving bikes and flirting around in the advertisements. But are they not aware that they are going to end up in hospital bed one day?

Nobody has time to introspect because there are no hoardings that show the suffering of a cancer or an AIDS patient. Death is not a topic to be discussed until it is seen on the horizon of our life. If we don't discuss this, is there any chance we will find a solution to this?

People ask, "Can you escape death on the power of your devotion?" True, devotees cannot escape

death, but they can tolerate the pain that comes with it. The pain at the time of death is due to two reasons: one is the disease, and second is the terrible feeling of getting separated from the body to which we are so attached. The pain of the disease is alleviated by those who rise above the bodily concept to realize that they are eternal souls. The pain of the attachment to the body and the relatives can be conquered by getting attached to God, Kṛṣṇa.

If God comes before us in the form of death and proposes that we

leave this place and join Him in the spiritual sky, most likely we will refuse. But when a boy proposes to his beloved to leave her place and elope with him, she quits everything in a second. This is because of love. Similarly when same love for Kṛṣṇa arises in our heart, we will be ready to go with Him anytime He comes. Then instead of being always scared in anticipation, we will eagerly await this reunion. ❁

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



Snāna-yātrā

An explanation of different pastimes of Lord Jagannātha

by Girirāja Swami

(Based on a talk given by the author on 13 July 2008, in Berkeley, California, USA)

It is a great honor, privilege, and pleasure to be here, in New Jagannātha Purī-dhāma, on the auspicious occasion of Snāna-yātrā.

According to the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the history of the installation of the Jagannātha Deities in Purī goes back about a hundred and fifty-three million years. Although there is a history of how the Deities came to be carved in the shapes

in which They now appear, actually Lord Jagannātha and His associates are eternal. His being carved is just a pastime to facilitate His manifestation on earth. As Prabhupāda explains, “Fire is already present in wood, but by a



certain process, fire is kindled. Similarly, God is all-pervading. He is everywhere, and since He may come out from everything, He appeared . . . Lord Nṛsiṃha appeared from the pillar of Hiraṇyakaśipu's palace, Lord Varāha appeared from the nostril of Brahmā, and Lord Kapila appeared from the semen of Kardama, but this does not mean that the nostril of Brahmā or the pillar of Hiraṇyakaśipu's palace or the semen of Kardama Muni is the source of the appearance of the Lord. The Lord is always the Lord." (Bhāg. 3.24.6 purport)

Lord Jagannātha is eternal, just as Kṛṣṇa is eternal. Although Kṛṣṇa had His appearance pastime in the prison house of Kāmsa, He is eternal. He resides eternally on His spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana, and He eternally manifests His pastimes within the material world. Lord Jagannātha also has an eternal planet in the spiritual sky. He is the source of all incarnations, and He appears in whatever form His devotee wants to see Him. Sometimes in Purī the *pūjārīs* dress Him as a demigod, such as Ganeśa, with an elephant's trunk. That is also to confirm the philosophical principle that by worshiping Lord Jagannātha—Kṛṣṇa—one worships all the demigods automatically. All the demigods are included in Jagannātha, and all the expansions of Godhead are included. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, see Lord Jagannātha as Kṛṣṇa. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu would see Jagannātha in Purī, He saw Kṛṣṇa, Śyāmasundara.

The appearance of Lord Jagannātha is mentioned in the *Skanda Purāṇa*. There, Lord Jagannātha tells King Indradyumna, who had the first

Jagannātha Deities carved and who built the first, great temple for Lord Jagannātha in Purī, that He appeared on the full moon day of the month of Jyeṣṭha, being pleased with the king's devotion and sacrifices. It is on this very date every year that Snāna-yātrā, the public bathing of Lord Jagannātha, is held. (See picture on opposite page)

A SPECIAL FORM OF THE LORD

For the Snāna-yātrā in Purī, Lord Jagannātha is brought into public view and bathed on a rooftop, or terrace, of the great temple. Then, as it is said, the Lord catches a cold and is removed to His private quarters—the quarters of

rial hands or feet. He has spiritual hands and feet. Still, in ecstasy, He sometimes withdraws His limbs and widens His eyes.

Kṛṣṇa had so much love for the residents of Vṛndāvana that even in Dvārakā, in the middle of the night; He would sometimes call the names of the cowherd boys and cows, or Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs*, or His mother and father, Nanda and Yaśodā. Sometimes He would be so overwhelmed with ecstatic love for the residents of Vṛndāvana that He would not eat or sleep. It was a mystery to the residents of Dvārakā: "What is this special place, Vṛndāvana? And who are these special people? What happened when Kṛṣṇa was there in His

What is this special place, Vṛndāvana? And who are these special people who live there?

Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, who for two weeks serves Him hand and foot. Of course, that is another question, about His hands and feet. A disciple asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "We are told to meditate on the Deity beginning with the lotus feet, but how do we begin our meditation on Lord Jagannātha? He doesn't have feet." And Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "You can meditate on whatever you can see." (Advanced devotees can see Lord Jagannātha's lotus feet.) There are philosophical principles and specific pastimes that account for why He has no feet or hands—or why they are not visible. The *Upaniṣads* say that the Lord has no legs but that He can overcome all others running. "He has no hands or feet" really means that He has no mate-

childhood that makes Him so attached to Vṛndāvana?"

One person in Dvārakā had been present in Vṛndāvana for Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes: Mother Rohiṇī, the mother of Balarāma. The residents of Dvārakā, wanting to hear about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, asked, "Who are these special people? What is this special place?" She said, "I will tell you, but no one should disturb me while I am speaking."

So, they all assembled in a large hall in Dvārakā, and Subhadra was posted at the door to make sure that no one entered. But she also wanted to hear about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, so she put her ear to the door. Hearing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, she became ecstatic, and in her ec-

stasy her eyes opened wide, her mouth smiled broadly, and her limbs withdrew. She assumed the features that we see today in the deity of Subhadrā.

Then Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came and saw Subhadrā with her ear to the door in that ecstatic feature. And They thought, “Let Us also hear what is being said inside.” So They put Their ears to the door, and They too became ecstatic and assumed Their own particular features, with Their limbs withdrawn and Their eyes open wide and Their mouths in broad smiles. So that is how Their Lordships came to assume these special forms.

CLEANING THE TEMPLE OF THE HEART

The Ratha-yātrā begins at the Jagannātha temple in Nīlācala and

the temple. First, with thousands of brooms, they swept it—twice—and then they washed it with thousands of pots of water. They didn’t have hoses then—only pots. They filled thousands of pots with water and washed the temple, inside and out, just to make the temple fit for the Lord.

Metaphorically, the cleansing of the Guṇḍicā temple is the cleansing of the heart to make it a fit place for the Lord. Such cleansing is effected by hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa.

*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
punya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadraṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

When a sincere devotee (*satām*) hears the messages of Kṛṣṇa, all the

of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in separation from Kṛṣṇa—the highest level of ecstatic love in separation—was unable to see Lord Jagannātha for two weeks, He almost went mad. When He had first arrived in Purī and entered the temple and seen the Deity of Jagannātha, He had thought, “Here is My Lord, for whom I’ve been searching.” He had run to embrace the Deity of Jagannātha—Kṛṣṇa—and fainted, in the ecstasy of pure love. So for Him to have achieved the Lord of His life and then lost Him—when Jagannātha went into seclusion—was intolerable. He could not remain in Purī. And so He walked fourteen miles west to Ālālanātha (Alarnath), in an area called Brahmagiri, which is named after Lord Brahmā because Brahmā is said to have come to earth and installed the Deity of Lord Nārāyaṇa worshiped there.

This is also very mysterious. Lord Alarnath is Nārāyaṇa, with four arms. Rādhārāṇī knew no one other than Kṛṣṇa, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu was in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. So how could He get solace by going to Alarnath to see a four-handed Deity of Lord Nārāyaṇa? Further, when Caitanya Mahāprabhu first saw the Deity and offered prostrated obeisances, the stone slab on the temple floor beneath Him melted. In the Jagannātha temple there is a pillar called the *Garuḍa-stambha*, where Caitanya Mahāprabhu used to stand to have *darśana* of Jagannātha. There are imprints of His fingers on the pillar and of His lotus feet on the floor where in great ecstasy He would behold Lord Jagannātha. But in Alarnath we find the impression of His entire body, which melted the stone when He prostrated Himself only once, in extreme ecstasy—which is un-

How could Caitanya Mahāprabhu get solace by going to Alarnath to see a four-handed Deity of Lord Nārāyaṇa?

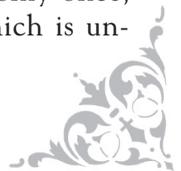
proceeds to the Guṇḍicā temple in Sundarācala. Nīlācala represents Dvārakā, where Kṛṣṇa lives as a king and is worshiped in opulence, and Sundarācala represents Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa is loved simply as a cowherd boy, the son of Nanda and Yaśodā. During the year, the Guṇḍicā temple (named after the wife of King Indradyumna) is empty, and naturally dust and dirt accumulate. The day before Ratha-yātrā is *Guṇḍicā-mārjana*, and on that day Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates thoroughly cleaned the Guṇḍicā temple. As described in Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛita*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gathered thousands of men, and together, they cleaned

dirty, inauspicious things (*abhadraṇi*) in the heart (*hṛdy antaḥ*) are cleansed (*vidhunoti*). Similarly, by attentive chanting and hearing of the holy names of the Lord—*saṅkīrtana*—one’s consciousness is also purified (*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*). Thus Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers cleaned the Guṇḍicā temple to make it a fit place for the Lord to reside.

And, as Śrīla Prabhupāda often said, “When you clean the temple, you clean your heart.”

ALARNATH—THE ABODE OF SEPARATION

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was in the mood





The four-handed form of Lord Nārāyaṇa worshiped in Alarnath.

where Lord Nārāyaṇa is worshiped in His four-handed form? And why should Caitanya Mahāprabhu go there, feeling intense separation from Kṛṣṇa, to see a four-handed Deity of Nārāyaṇa? There is a confidential answer, which relates to *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

Once, during His *rāsa-līlā* at Govardhana Hill in the springtime, Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the scene, suggesting that He wanted to be alone with Śrī Rādhā. He hid in a secluded bush, waiting for Her to pass by, but in the meantime the other *gopīs*, cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana, came looking for Him. They all were in the mood of separation, mad in separation from Kṛṣṇa, mad in love for Kṛṣṇa, having been attracted by His transcendental beauty, His charming gestures, and His loving words. They were searching all over Govardhana for Him, and finally they sighted

precedented.

In 1918, Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, went to Alarnath. What I am about to say is very confidential, but because today is a special occasion and we are in a special place, I will tell you. One morning Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta went into the forest. His followers assumed that he had gone to answer the call of nature, but

when some time passed and he did not return, they began to look everywhere for him. (In those days that area was thick jungle.) Eventually they found him. He had had a vision of Kṛṣṇa, and had been searching for Him. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta was a strict follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a pure devotee of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Why should he experience that extreme ecstasy in Brahmāgiri,

Him in the bush. Kṛṣṇa, when He saw them, became struck with emotion. He could not hide Himself, and so He assumed His four-armed Nārāyaṇa form. When the *gopīs* saw Lord Nārāyaṇa they said, "Oh, He is not Kṛṣṇa. He is Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead." They had no interest in Lord Nārāyaṇa; they were interested in Kṛṣṇa. So they offered Him respects and prayed, "Please bless

us with Kṛṣṇa's association." Otherwise, they had no use for Him. They went on searching for Kṛṣṇa. Then, when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī came, Kṛṣṇa wanted to maintain His four-armed form to joke with Her, but although He tried His best, He was unable to do so. The influence of Her ecstatic love forced Him to return to His original two-handed form. He couldn't maintain His feature as Lord Nārāyaṇa. He was conquered by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love and so revealed His original form as Kṛṣṇa.

*rāsārambha-vidhau nilīya vasatā
kuñje mṛgākṣī-gaṇair
dṛṣṭam gopayitum svam uddhura-
dhiyā yā suṣṭhu sandarśitā
rādhāyāḥ praṇayasya hanta
mahimā yasya śrīyā rakṣitum
sā śakyā prabhaviṣṇunāpi hariṇā
nāsīc catur-bāhutā*

"Prior to the rāsa dance, Lord Kṛṣṇa hid Himself in a grove just to have fun. When the gopīs came, their eyes resembling those of deer, by His sharp intelligence He exhibited His beautiful four-armed form to hide Himself. But when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī came there, Kṛṣṇa could not maintain His four arms in Her presence. This is the wonderful glory of Her love." (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī, Nāyikā-bheda 7*)

Transcendentally, Alarnath in Caitanya's līlā in Purī is compared to Paitha at Govardhana. It is a place of intense separation. The gopīs, in separation from Kṛṣṇa, roamed the forest there looking for Him. And it is the place where Lord Nārāyaṇa wasn't really Lord Nārāyaṇa. He was actually Kṛṣṇa assuming the form of Nārāyaṇa to play a joke on the gopīs—and to bring out their exclusive love for Him. Thus, although the external form of the Deity of Lord Alarnath

is that of four-armed Nārāyaṇa, internally He is Kṛṣṇa. And the pūjārīs of Alarnath admit that in their worship they recite very confidential mantras to Kṛṣṇa, the lover of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

During those fourteen days, called *anavasara*, when Lord Jagannātha retires to His private quarters and receives service from Lakṣmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in separation, went to Alarnath. So, there are many deep feelings connected to Ratha-yātrā. This whole pastime—like all the pastimes of Jagannātha in Purī—is very deep and full of separation. Jagannātha Purī is *Vipralambha-dhāma*. *Vipralambha* means "separation." Lord Jagannātha, in His opulent temple, feels separation from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and His other pure devotees in Vṛndāvana. And Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī after Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana for Mathurā and Dvārakā, also feels

separation. So Jagannātha Purī is a place of crying. But that crying is ecstasy. That separation is ecstasy. It is not what we experience in the material world.

After this period of separation, when Lord Jagannātha finally leaves His private quarters, He emerges from the temple and mounts His chariot—and for the first time in two weeks Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the other devotees are able to see Him. So they become ecstatic. And in the Ratha-yātrā, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is in the mood of Rādhārāṇī bringing Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana. ❀

(This year Snāna-yātrā falls on 7 June).

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

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Dear Readers,

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My Dear Friend

Care and affection of a friend during difficulty brings the author to the shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

by Abhinandana Dāsa

Dr. Hiranandani's words poured into my ears like molten lead. "You cannot work in a noisy place." My mind turned blank. My recent job at the engineering die-maker tools factory was my only source of livelihood—and it was a very noisy place! That was in 1978. I was 37, too old to learn a new trade.

A few years back I had dreamt of earning a lot of money and had purchased a big plot of land. Destiny was with me, and I was brimming with confidence. Slowly, however, strange changes in my body rocked my stable world.

Spells of dizziness, nausea, vomiting began, often ending in complete black-outs causing me to fall on the road. I fell two or three times on the railway platform, many times even passing stool. Some good samaritans would pick me and bring me to my house. I stopped venturing out alone. My left ear could not hear, and when I shut my eyes I lost

balance. Nobody could diagnose my ailment. All that the doctors would give me were sedatives with clear instructions to my wife to wake me up in the morning for breakfast

tigo in my left ear. One of the blood vessels of the ear had been blocked and the tissue it supplied was almost dead. A swelling appeared in my left ear and then began a ringing noise that went on non-stop for 24 hours.

My business was completed disrupted. At the same time, I was almost going crazy with all the complications. I just could not figure out what to do. Gradually, I sold my belongings and was reduced to almost a beggar; odd jobs sustained my family. At this stage in my life, my friend, Mohan Shetty, offered me invaluable assistance, which I cannot repay in this lifetime. Some debts cannot be paid off, but only remembered with gratitude for the remainder of life.

1992: I had my swelling removed by operation. At the

same time, Mohan Shetty came in contact with ISKCON and became convinced by Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. He asked me to attend



Abhinandana Dāsa with his wife Ānanda Bhakti Devī Dāsī

and in the afternoon for lunch. I would sleep for 40 hours at a stretch; it felt nice.

Then came the diagnosis: ver-

an introductory course for beginners. But I was in a terrible situation and felt that changing my life at this age was impractical. I told him that I would visit sometime later. During that time he organized his son Nikhil's birthday party at the ISKCON temple. He invited me very lovingly insisting that I attend. I just could not refuse my dear friend Mohan. Here I was, my life being sustained by consuming pills and I was attending a birthday party. That was my first visit to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gopīnātha Mandir.

Unfortunately I did not get a glimpse of Their Lordships, but I thought little of it. That day for the first time I tasted *prasāda* and was

love, devotion, compassion, support, and confidence all together.

CAMP OF LOVE

During that time a few devotees were leaving for Pandharpur to organize a medical camp to serve the pilgrims on the occasion of *Āṣāḍha Ekādaśī*. It is a huge gathering of hundreds of thousands. Mohan suggested that I volunteer for the camp. That made very good sense to me and the next day I confirmed my participation also deciding to take my wife with me. We were supposed to dispense medicines to the pilgrims who walk barefoot for days covering many miles. I had heard about *wari* before, but I never had

stretch of time.

The bus was moving at a good pace as there was hardly any traffic. After about an hour the bus halted at a place where water was available and everyone was served *prasāda*. After honoring *prasāda*, the bus again started and at about 5 pm we were nearing Shetat. There was a huge assembly of *vārkarīs* at Shetat and our pace was reduced to an ant's crawl. The palanquins of saints from different corners of Maharashtra had gathered there. Every one was loudly chanting "Rāma Kṛṣṇa Hari" and proceeding systematically in groups called *diṇḍi*. I had never seen such a procession. All devotees offered their obeisances with utmost respect. The *brahmacārīs* recited stories about Saint Tukārāma and other saints.

In Pandharpur, we were put up at Kale Hospital. That night, we had our first meeting to discuss the various aspects of the medical camp. Everyone was allotted services and were encouraged to do their services enthusiastically and promptly even if it was a menial service like cleaning toilets. I was appointed to serve in the *darśana-maṇḍapa*.

The services in the *darśana-maṇḍapa* started ordinarily. The *maṇḍapa* was a four-storey building and we had a temporary clinic on every floor which was manned by one doctor along with two devotees. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dāsa had printed 10,000 pamphlets of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy. He kept a huge lot of these copies with me and I would offer one copy to each *vārkarī* and then offer them my respectful humble obeisances. Services were continuing round the clock and everyone would be relieved after every six hours of service. However, I was so absorbed

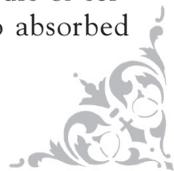
Every one was loudly chanting "Rāma Kṛṣṇa Hari" and proceeding systematically in groups called *diṇḍi*.

completely satiated. With it the seed of *harināma* was planted in my heart. After that, Mohan began requesting me to chant. He told me the importance of chanting. But what could I do? I was in a hurry and kept putting off chanting the holy names of the Lord. I whimsically visited the temple once in a while and attended His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami's class on Sunday. It watered the seed of *harināma* that was planted in my heart. I began to chant on my fingers.

One Sunday, Rādhānātha Swami was walking in the temple courtyard when I was talking with Mohan. Rādhānātha Swami came near and Mohan told him that I enjoyed chanting *japa*. Rādhānātha Swami clasped my hands and that was the moment when my life changed. That touch was full of

experienced it. I thought it would be a nice way to take a peek into this world.

Our bus left Mumbai for Pandharpur. Dr. Dvārakadhīśa Dāsa was our bus leader. Mohan accompanied us to the bus stand as we did not know anyone on the trip. He introduced me to three or four devotees. They graciously welcomed us with a broad smile, and I could only say "Hare Kṛṣṇa" to them. When the bus started, we were asked to chant. Everyone had their beads and they all started chanting. Both of us were left looking at each other. At that time one of the devotees told us that we could chant on our fingers and he demonstrated the technique to us. So we also joined the devotees in chanting. This was our first experience of chanting for a long



with my service that I remained busy throughout the day. Some *vārkarīs* asked me about the cost of the pamphlet. I jokingly told them to inquire about it from Lord Pāṇḍuranga. One elderly *vārkarī* just kept staring at me and offered me his obeisances. I told him to offer his obeisances to Lord Pāṇḍuranga. All the elderly Vaiṣṇavas had immense faith in Lord Pāṇḍuranga and they considered Him as their parent. Seeing their devotion, I was deeply moved.

NEW STEPS IN LIFE

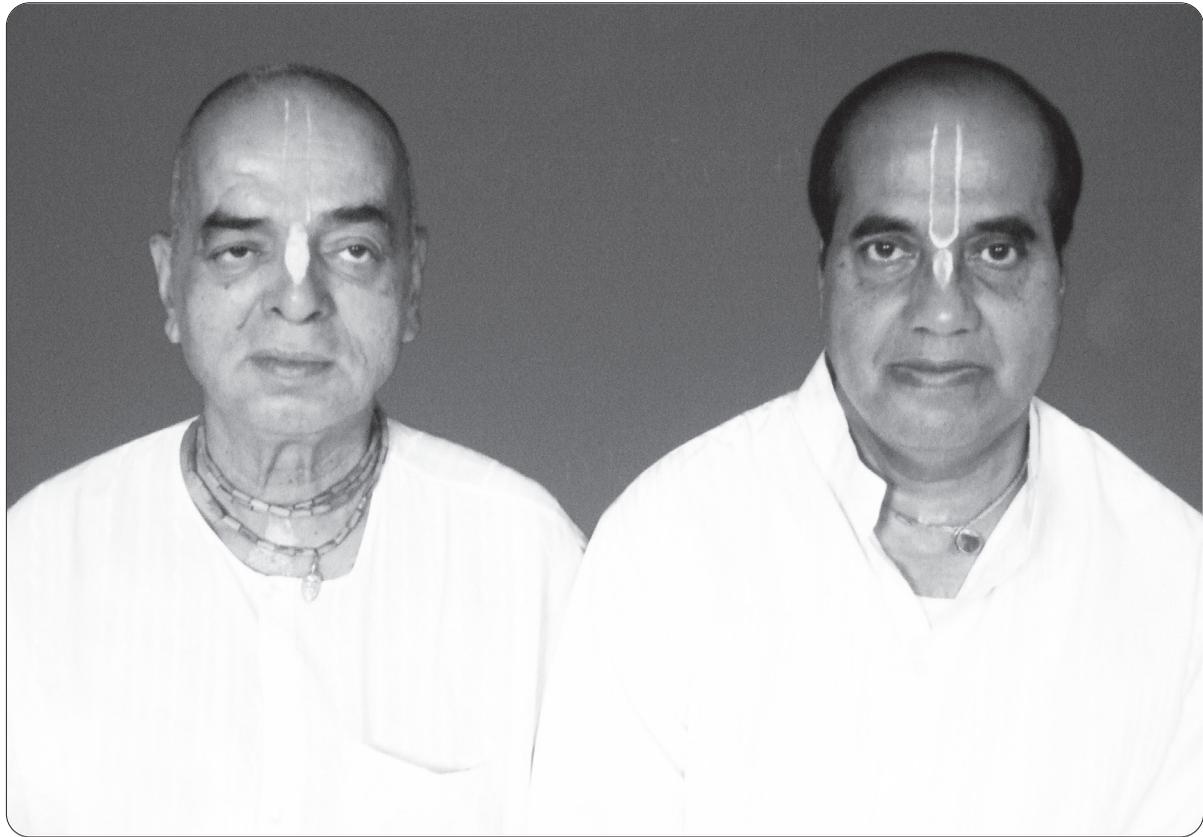
On my return I met the famous ENT surgeon, Dr. Bhatt. He said the kind of surgery I required was a very delicate procedure. "I am ready for anything so long as it can cure me," I said. Difficult as this option was, I had no other recourse, and I had already spent many years tolerating this disease. Finally the date for the surgery was set. It was a very difficult surgery. On day three after operation, my nose started bleeding and the doctors put me on oxygen. I was scared. Along with my relatives and other friends, came Mohan. He told me that if I was feeling better then I should chant Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. He constantly kept advising me to chant. He was my true friend. He did everything possible for me so that I would not feel troubled.

After the operation the giddiness stopped, but I still could not work in the engineering workshop. With passing age came other complications. Till date I have had 14 operations including four majors for hernia and prostate. Devotees helped me in all ways.

When I was operated on for prostate, I was admitted for 21 days in Bhaktivedanta hospital. With my

Barsānā, where I also distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. I also went with the *saṅkīrtana* bus party for many years.

Whatever Mohan did for me is incomparable. If he hadn't been a part of my life then my life would have been spoilt. Today Dr. Dvārakādhīśa Dāsa is my counselor and doctor. He and his good wife are just like my mother and father.



Author (left) with his friend Mohan Shetty (now Madan Mohana Dāsa)

urinary bag in one hand and *Bhagavad Gītā* in another, I went from patient to patient in every ward, convinced well-wishers who came to see me, and distributed more than 350 books to them.

Nowadays I distribute books, make *tilaka* boxes for devotees, run a preaching center in my house, and conduct a weekly program there. I volunteer and assist in medical camps in Paṇḍharpur and

My wife Ānanda Bhakti Devī Dāśī has been a pillar of support during my troubled times. All the loving *brahmacārīs* are like my children and I have willed my house to ISKCON. ❁

Abhinandana Dāsa is a leading book distributor in ISKCON Mumbai for many years.

The original article was written in Marathi and translated into English by Rādhā Dyūti Dāsa and Dr. Sagar Tupe.

Redefining Progress

Let's make things people better.

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

To hear India's space mission—the crowning glory of India's scientific accomplishments—being called a waste of time is intolerable to me," Amit poured out as soon as we sat down for our meeting

"I had also felt like that a dozen years ago," I said, smiling reassuringly. "Amit," I continued, "I too loved space research since childhood. In fact, when I was studying engineering, I decided to change my career to do a post-graduation in astrophysics and scientifically pursue my childhood fascination."

Amit's eyes opened wide. "What happened then?"

As I contemplated on how to answer, my mind spontaneously went back to a fateful meeting some 13 years ago, a meeting that had changed my life's direction.

A SMOKY EYE-OPENER

One of my classmates told me about his brother Rabi, a double Ph.D, working as a scientist at the Inter-University Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), a premier space research institute in Pune, Maharashtra. I was excited, almost awed, to meet him. He had achieved what I was dreaming of: a graduate degree from IIT, two doctorate degrees from eminent American uni-

versities, and a respectable position in a leading research institute.

Rabi was a tall, fair, bearded, bespectacled young man in his thirties. As we were walking together to his house through the labs filled with captivating pictures of distant galaxies, I couldn't help but wonder if I was dreaming. Suddenly, something jolted me out of my dream. Rabi lit a cigarette nonchalantly as we walked. I was taken aback, but I put aside my emotion.

We reached his quarters and the door swung open to reveal a scholarly-looking, fair young lady. "She's my wife, Razi." (Rabi and Razi, I later learnt, were "cool" versions of their traditional names, Rabindranath and Raashi). "We met in America during our college days. She's done her Ph.D in mathematics, and we are working together at IUCAA."

Over snacks, we talked for hours about their work and their life. I was pleasantly surprised to see how friendly they were. Perhaps my classmate had told them that I had bagged the top rank in GRE in Maharashtra that year, and so they saw me as a promising future colleague. But one thing spoiled the relish; the cigarette never left Rabi's hand—he seemed to be a chain smoker.

Razi said casually, "You know, he smokes too much. I have told him to decrease, but he just can't."

Her facetious tone and the mischievous look in her eyes puzzled me, but it didn't prepare me for what came next.

Razi opened her purse, took out a thin female cigar and started puffing.

Our meeting soon ended.

I couldn't sleep that night. I was not gazing at stars in the sky. I was trying to make sense of the stars that had fallen in the sky of my heart.

Since early childhood, I had seen science as an ennobling, uplifting search for the higher truths of life. The pleasures of the scientific quest, I had thought, would raise me far above the petty desires and demands of the body and the mind.

My dream was attacked during my college days. Co-students, who, I had to grudgingly admit, were brighter than me, smoked and drank freely. A final-year student with the enviable record of being the topper in all his eight semesters in college was a chain smoker. He was selected by the best MNC during campus interviews, but died due to lung cancer in his first year at work. One of my professors, a brilliant author of several books on electrical engineering, did not get a coveted prize in a paper presentation competition and





My meeting with a leading scientist and his wife was a smoky encounter.

killed himself.

How could those who saw through the enigmas of science not see through the illusions of bad habits? Rabi and Razi were nice, clever people. They were not the typical foolhardy street smokers and drunkards that I had encountered in my childhood town. Why could those who were relishing the intellectual pleasure of space research (which, to me, represented the highest of all scientific pleasures) not give up the self-destructive pleasure of smoking?

MISDIRECTED PROGRESS

As we returned to the discussion, Amit added soberly, "From my life in IIT, I know that students use their internet connections far more to download pornography than to do academic research."

I then qualified our observations: "Of course, both of us know

scientists and intellectuals who lead sensible, regulated lives. But the number of intellectually brilliant people leading reckless lives is distressingly high. This contradiction—brilliance in professional life and recklessness in personal life—bewildered me for years, until the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness revealed the answer."

"What was that answer?" Amit asked eagerly.

"Our modern society operates on a fundamentally flawed notion of progress," I began. "This notion of progress is distilled in a famous slogan: 'Let's make things better.' The Vedic notion of progress can be expressed as: 'Let's make *people* better.' Or, more pragmatically, 'let's make *ourselves* better.' Today, a society is considered progressive when it helps develop things, facilities, gadgets, for its people. In the Vedic paradigm, a society is considered progres-

sive when it helps develop qualities and virtues in its people."

"That's an interesting way to put the difference," Amit remarked.

I summarized, "Albert Einstein put the problem well: 'It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.'"

PROGRESS FOR A HIGHER SELF

I paused as Amit pondered on our discussion. He asked thoughtfully, "Science helps develop our technology, but how do we develop our humanity?"

"Your question brings us to the topic of what constitutes real progress," I replied. "The Vedic texts explain that all of us have a higher self and a lower self. The higher self inspires us to be selfless, broad-minded and principled, whereas the lower self incites us to

be selfish, mean-minded and opportunistic. The higher self is who we actually are: pure, godly souls; the lower self is who we think we are: our material bodies and minds, which cover and pervert our godly nature. Among all the species of life, the human form alone offers us the opportunity to conquer the lower self with the higher self. The victors in this inner battle attain the ultimate goal of life: a life of eternal, enlightened, ecstatic loving harmony with the Supreme.

individually, socially, and globally. Normally the lower self is regulated by the higher self. But nowadays, people, being preoccupied with “progress,” spare little, if any, to nourish their higher self, resulting in the deterioration of whatever little good qualities they have. And we end up with the contradiction of people who are walking encyclopedias but living failures. Thus, the modern notion of progress, by pandering to our lower self and distracting us from our higher self, perpetu-

space mission is not only unproductive, but even conter-productive.

“If all the energy and money spent on the moon mission were used to educate and train people in mantra meditation, millions of people would have become equipped to curb their lower self and tap virtues like self-discipline. That would reduce obesity, check the AIDS menace, decrease the global health expenditure by billions of dollars, and free our scarce monetary resources for basics like food for the starving millions. Thus real progress, spiritual progress, would lead to holistic development, with more food and better health for millions of people.

“Let me conclude with a quote by the British scholar C. S. Lewis: ‘We all want progress, but if you’re on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive.’ India, with its profound philosophical wisdom and ancient spiritual culture, has the unique opportunity to lead the world in turning back from the road of unbalanced materialistic progress. Turning back doesn’t mean giving up all material progress, but giving up the undue emphasis on material progress and focusing on holistic progress.

“Still there are signs of hope. The global acceptance of yoga, meditation and chanting has prompted many Indians to re-examine their national, spiritual legacy. But will India rise to its full potential as a global spiritual leader? Time alone will tell.”
Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa holds a degree in electronics and telecommunications engineering and serves full-time at ISKCON Pune. To subscribe to his free cyber magazine, visit thespiritualscientist.com



All of us have a lower self and a higher self.

Therefore, a truly progressive society facilitates its people to nourish the higher self and starve the lower self.”

“But modern society deems the facilities that feed the lower self as signs of progress,” said Amit, catching on.

“Exactly,” I replied, delighted to see his perspicacity. “With this notion of progress, our society directs all human energy, even scientific energy, principally for catering to the desires of the lower self. But the lower self, filled as it is with insatiable desires for selfish enjoyment, causes people to act in ways that harm them

ates our suffering.”

A MISSION OF MASS DISTRACTION

“But the moon mission doesn’t perpetuate our suffering,” Amit protested.

“The moon mission is a prime example of a mission of mass distraction,” I answered. “It infatuates our ego, which is the basis of our lower self, with the sense of having accomplished something wonderful, while distracting us from the truly wonderful work of conquering our lower self. Thus, from the perspective of real progress, the



Padayātrā

by Vraja Bihārī Dāsa

Bhakta Prabhajan, part of His Holiness Lokanātha Swami Mahārāja's *padayātrā*, recollects this once-in-a-lifetime experience. This is not a fairy tale but a true account.

"The news spread like wild fire. We were already attracting atten-

tion with our dress, bulls, cart, etc. and suddenly our *padayātrā* party, thanks to this "crazy" man, was a sensation in this small town near Allahabad.

country, we couldn't really recollect having met this man so many years ago. Others in the town, however, informed us that this gentleman had bought a *Bhagavad-gītā* during our last visit here and as he began reading, declared he will observe *mauna-vrata*, a vow of si-

his association with his newly wed wife also to a bare minimum.

A huge *paṇḍāl* was erected and the whole town was there. Men, women, and even children filled the *maidān* to its capacity. We made the best use of being on center-stage by distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's

books by the hundreds. As the momentous hour arrived, he entered the podium with the whole crowd cheering him and showering flowers on him. He then delivered a fiery speech, speaking uninterruptedly for next four hours. He spoke nothing but pure Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda. If the audience was spell bound, so were we by the convictions and confidence that exuded from his talk. At one time of the speech, his mother made a dramatic entry and declared her guru to be God. This man, outraged by her audacity, roared back that this so-called guru of hers is a bogus *māyāvādī* and, smashing the philosophy to

shreds, he repeatedly quoted from *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is.

A huge feast was sponsored by the town folk and we later left this place wondering what new surprises awaited us at our next destination. ❁



Padayātrā party with their bullock-driven temple.

As the *padayātrā* takes six years to complete one full trip of the

lence, until we came back again. Now the town was abuzz with excitement, anticipating him to at last break his six-year silence. We were also informed that during this period, he followed all the regulative principles strictly, in fact keeping

tion with our dress, bulls, cart, etc. and suddenly our *padayātrā* party, thanks to this "crazy" man, was a sensation in this small town near Allahabad.

In your own words ...

How will the world be if everyone becomes a Hare Kṛṣṇa?

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS will wipe out all the barriers of caste, color, creed, nation and religion, and unite the world on the principle of attainment of love for God.

Constitution will be based on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Terrorism, divorce, and recession will end since devotees will be free from greed and anger. Rather than Indians going to the West, westerners will come to the holy land of India to become spiritual scientists. Yamadūtas will abandon our planet since they will find no candidates here. Peace will pervade, prosperity will reign, the holy names will resound, and all quarrels will come to an end. *Sarve sukhino bhavantu* will come true.

Sudhir, Hyderabad

LORD CAITANYA ALONG with His associates will be pleased and will dance in ecstasy. All men will be in *dhoti-kurtā* and women in *sārīs*, and everyone will carry bead bags. Everybody, including the animals, will be in bliss. Parrots, cuckoos, and peacocks will sing Hare Kṛṣṇa. The denizens of the heavenly plants will come to join *kīrtana*. They will shower rains and flowers. The Yamadūtas will dance in *kīrtana* with the Viṣṇudūtas.

Mother earth will approach Lord Brahmā, not to complain but to invite him to join in the *kīrtana*. There will be no bars, no slaughterhouses, but only flourishing cows and dairies. No meat shops, only sweet shops. Riv-

ers will flow heavily. Psychiatrists, police, criminal lawyers, etc. will cease to exist, because they are only present because of instability in the lives of people. Kṛṣṇa personally will appear as the holy names to destroy all insecurity and protect everyone.

Yogiraj Baheti,
Latur, Maharashtra

IT WILL BE LIKE GETTING VACCINATED against diseases like anger, envy, greed, pride, lust, and illusion, which are not only epidemic, but also fatal—not only to the mind and body, but to our very existence, our soul. Today, devotees have a source of distraction and discouragement when they turn away from devotees. But once everyone is engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa, there will be no room for distractions or

disturbances. And when everybody will chant and dance together, the sound of the *mahā-mantra* will be so loud that Kṛṣṇa will hear it in Goloka.

Rashi Parikh, Mumbai

EVERYONE JUST CHANTS, dances, feasts and sings the glories of Gaurāṅga 24 x 7, non-stop. Even mother earth participates in the unending *kīrtana*, spreading the vibrations throughout the whole planetary system and material universe. The concept of time transcends the three modes. Guess what happens next? All differences between Goloka Vṛndāvana and *Bhāratavarṣa* cease to exist. The whole planet, now Kṛṣṇa-ized, rises from its orbit. As the denizens from higher planetary systems watch



earth moving above towards Vaikuṅṭha, they feel dumb-founded. As the earth crosses the material universe, it enters the spiritual world and becomes the satellite of Goloka Vṛndāvana, inspiring the rest of material world to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Santhosh R,
Hyderabad.

THE TRAIN NAMES WILL all be Kṛṣṇa-ized, like Kṛṣṇa Express, Rūpa Gosvāmī Express, Jagannātha Express, etc. So will be the cities. For example, Mumbai will be Mādhava, New York City will be Nandanandana, Paris will be Pārthasārathi, etc.

This world of bliss will be bad news for some industries. They will close down because no one will be interested in them as they harm body, mind, and soul. These would be soft drinks, wine, gambling, slaughter, and films (unless they produce Kṛṣṇa conscious movies). Schools, parliament, industries, and other organizations will function only for the sole purpose of pleasing Lord Hari as mentioned in the *Vedas: saṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam*. It will be a new world of Hare Kṛṣṇas. This is very soon going to happen as Lord Caitanya predicted.

Hari Chaitanya,
Raichur, Karnataka

WHEN PERSONS WORSHIP Lord Kṛṣṇa, bhakti imbibes them with pure goodness (*sattvam visuddham vasudeva-sabditam* (Bhāg. 4.3.23) and therefore they beget all the following transcendental qualities: Fearlessness; purification of one's existence; cultivation of spiritual knowledge; charity; self-control; performance of sacrifice; study of the *Vedas*; austerity; simplicity; non-violence; truthfulness; freedom

from anger; renunciation; tranquility; aversion to faultfinding; compassion for all living entities; freedom from covetousness; gentleness; modesty; steady determination; vigor; forgiveness; fortitude; cleanliness; and freedom from envy and from the passion for honor (Bg. 16.1-3). Then, Kali-yuga will be transformed into Satya-yuga, and the earth will be like a mini-Goloka Vṛndāvana, which even the demigods would envy.

R.M.Manoharan,
Chennai

HEAVENLY BLISS—WHAT ELSE can it be if everyone becomes a Kṛṣṇa devotee? The entire universe will become Goloka Vṛndāvana, under the personal protection of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

P. K. V. Menon,
Kerala

THE UNFULFILLED DESIRE of Śrīla Prabhupāda can be implemented easily viz the *varṇāśrama dharma*. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.4.18 purport), “. . . simply by glorifying the Lord's holy name, a tremendous change of heart can take place by which the complete misunderstanding between the human nations created by politicians can at once be extinguished. And after the extinction of the fire of misunderstanding other profits will follow.” In the same purport Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions about *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The whole world becoming Hare Kṛṣṇas will set the proper context for reestablishing the Vedic way of life, especially the *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

Ganesh Subramaniyan,
Chennai

THERE WILL BE NO MORE PROSTITUTION, divorce,

women hunting, terrorism, frustration, depression, and anxiety. The devotees will create peace, happiness, and love among the living entities without envy, aversion, greed, and lust.

Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the scene in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29): “The sages, knowing Me as the ultimate purpose of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attain peace from the pangs of material miseries.”

Partha, Bhimapur, Orissa

THE WORLD WILL TURN INTO VAIKUṅṬHA, a place without any anxiety. Education system will be founded on *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Gorgeous temples, *kīrtanas*, festivals, and Ratha-yātrās will be everywhere. Pubs and discotheques will turn into *nāma-haṭṭa* centers, hotels and fast-food corners into Govinda's restaurants distributing *mahā-prasāda*. All activities will be eco-friendly, and cow-based organic farming will be the main occupation.

Shridhar, Mumbai.

NEWSPAPERS WILL NEED TO SEARCH for news apart from Hare Kṛṣṇa celebrations, as there would be no crime or crude politics. Everyone will follow the laws of nature, so there will be no natural calamities.

Deepak Verma, Faridabad

POLITICIANS WILL CHANT 16 ROUNDS and follow four regulative principles. Parliament sessions will start with *śikṣāṣṭakam*. Instead of fighting in parliament, leaders will glorify each other and beg forgiveness.

Dr. Navnath Janjale,
Nasik

CENTRES IN INDIA

Founder-Acarya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivendanta Swami Prabhupada

Correct
as of
30 April.
2009

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Bhubaneswar, Orissa — N.H. No. 5, IRC Village, 751 015/ Tel. (0674) 255-3517, 253-3475, or 255-4283/ iskconbhubaneswar@rediffmail.com

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Brahmapur, Orissa — N.H. No. 5, Dist. Ganjam, 760 008. Tel. (0680) 2209400, 09437179400/ panchratna.gkg@pamho.net

Cachar, Assam — Ambikapatti, Silchar, 788 004/ Tel. (03842) 34615

Chandigarh — Sector 36-B, 160 036/ Tel. (0172) 260-1590 or 260-3232/ bhaktivinode.gkg@pamho.net

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Coimbatore, TN — 100 ft. New Scheme Road, Aerodrome P.O., Coimbatore 641 011/ Tel. (0422) 262-6509 or 262-6508/ info@iskcon-coimbatore.org

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Haridwar, Uttaranchal — Gauranga House, Nai Basti,

Mahadev Nagar, Bhimgoda, 249401/ Tel. (01334) 260818/ Mobile: 9411371870.

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

Kanpur, U.P. — Sri Sri Radha Madhav Mandir, Maimawati Marg, Bithur road, Nawabganj, 208002/ Tel. 09307188117, E-mail: iskcon.kanpur@pamho.net

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

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

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

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

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Nasik, Maharastra — Behind Poornima Bus stop, Vrindavan colony, General Vaidya nagar, Dwarka, Nasik 422 011/ Tel. (0253) 6450005/ 9850071227/ siksastakam.rns@pamho.net

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Nellore, AP — Hare Krishna Road, 524 004/ Tel. 0861-2314577/ Mobile: 9215536589/ sukadevaswami@gmail.com

New Delhi — 41/77 Punjabi Bagh West, 110 026/ Tel. 25222851, 25227478, 55136200.

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Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (08712) 426182

Vaiṣṇava Calendar 1 June - 15 July 2009

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

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

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

5 JUN: Pānihāṭī 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

18 JUN: Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita – Disappearance

19 JUN: Fasting for Yoginī Ekādaśī

20 JUN: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:02 am - 10:27 am

22 JUN: Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita – Disappearance, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura – Disappearance (Fasting till noon)

23 JUN: Guṇḍicā Mārjana

24 JUN: Ratha-Yātrā (Herā Pañcamī after 4 days, Return Ratha after 8 days), Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī – Disappearance, Śrī Śivānanda Sena – Disappearance

28 JUN: Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita – Disappearance

3 JUL: Fasting for Śāyana Ekādaśī

4 JUL: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:06 am - 08:07 am

7 JUL: Guru (Vyāsa) Pūrṇimā, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī – Disappearance, First month of Cāturmāsya begins (Fast from śāk, green leafy vegetables, for one month.)

(Cāturmāsya is not observed during Puruṣottama Adhika Māsa.)

12 JUL: Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī – Disappearance

15 JUL: Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī – Disappearance

Shoe Power

Art by Janardan Salkar (2)



A new kind of fear has gripped the politicians. It began with the former President of the United States of America being subjected to a shoe-attack. An

angry

Iraqi

hurled

his shoe at the ex-President while he was addressing a press conference. Taking inspiration, someone hurled a *chappal* (obviously, this is India and shoes are costly) at an Indian

minister, and then some days later at the leader of the opposition. At least in the Indian context there is no need to fear “a foreign hand” in these attacks. And as both the ruling party as well as the opposition has been subjected to the same treatment, even they cannot accuse each other of “disturbing internal peace.”

How infuriating to know that someone out there, hidden in the masses, is actually plotting to hurl his footwear at you! Even though politicians may claim popularity, as a profession, politics lies at the bottom of the table when honesty is considered. So should we leave the matter as it is and say that the politicians deserved it? Or, what else can the masses do when they see that the people whom they vote into power now in turn rob them?

When a Kazi (local magistrate) had stopped the congregational chanting of the holy names and broken a *mṛdaṅga* (drum), Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu had rallied all the people of Navadvīpa for a massive non-violent protest march. People were told to prepare torches and march to the residence of the Kazi while roaring the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* at top volume. The sight was extraordinary to say the least. Thousands upon thousands assembled with flaming torches

in their hands and when the whole crowd marched to the residence of the Kazi, he simply hid on the top floor. As slogans of “kill the Kazi” and “burn his house” filled the air, the Kazi feared for his life, but Lord Caitanya had made it very clear that He had no desire to resort to violence of any kind. At last the Kazi relented and had a lengthy philosophical discussion with Lord Caitanya. The matter ended amicably with the Kazi issuing a new proclamation that no one should hinder the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord in the future. Even his descendents remained faithful to his decree.

Could non-performance of duty be the root of all problems facing politics today? Could politicians be reminded of the fact that they are appointed to rule human society’s minuscule government as representatives of a higher cosmic government already put to work by the Supreme Lord Himself? Most politicians (if not all) will choose not to believe in a Supreme Lord, and even if they did, it may be only for some superficial reason.

The *Vedas* assert that a king or a ruler be addressed as *naradeva*, a representative of God in human form. Kings like Yudhiṣṭhira, Parikṣit, Śibi, Ambarīṣa and many, many others lived their lives exactly as the above description, and there were others like Vena who lost their lives because they dared to disobey. If politicians start to behave like Rāvaṇa and Kāṁsa, then even if they show glittering economic development and a fantastic array of weaponry, nothing will be able to protect them from the judgment of the Supreme Lord. Seems like the shoes and *chappals* are like early warnings! ❁

- Śyamānanda Dāsa

