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VAIṢṆAVISM IN SIKHISM

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Welcome

The cover story this month, by Rādhikā Kṛpā Devī Dāsī, focuses on the similarities between Vaiṣṇavism and Sikhism. A major focus of both is chanting of God's holy names and in "Walking around the World", Murāri Gupta Dāsa interviews the members of Padayātrā India, the walking pilgrimage that has covered whole of India six times widely distributing the holy names and teachings of the Lord. And seeing God is not difficult; just observe nature deeply, says Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa in "The Language of God."

— Hare Kṛṣṇa

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First mad cow, then bird flu and now swine flu

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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AN EYE-OPENER

While reading Śrīla
Prabhupāda's books fill me with joy
and peace, I still cannot help but
cringe when the subject of Vedic
astronomy is discussed. The entire
canto six of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
that discusses the arrangement of
the universe has my head reeling.

Lately, I had decided that these
concepts be best left alone for the
experts and I only pray to Guru and
Kṛṣṇa to reveal the truths when
they feel it appropriate. Otherwise,
these relatively insignificant details
interfere with the blissful process
of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The article by Caitanya Carāṇa
Dāsa "The Moon mission" (BTG
May '09) comes like a shower of
mercy to shallow intellectuals like
me and I have no words to express
my gratitude to him. Not only in
his article there is (very
appropriately) so much emphasis
on humility but a tremendous
amount of insight which
undoubtedly the paramparā has
revealed to this great soul.

Kalānidhi Dāsa, *via email*

"The Moon mission" (BTG May
'09) convincingly explains the subtle
difference between cosmology from
both divine and human perspec-
tives. The explanation together
with the graphical presentations is
highly convincing. I strongly opine
that the moon flights may have been
hoaxed. If only the scientists take up
the Vedic tools for their research,
wisdom about the true concept of
cosmology will surely dawn upon
them.

Manoharan Muthusamy,
(Rtd.) Additional Secretary,
Finance Department,
Government of Tamil Nadu.

FEAR OF CRITICISM

I want to become a pure,
unmotivated devotee of Lord
Kṛṣṇa. Yet I am fearful of criticism
of people. Please advise.

Gaurav Talwalkar, *via e-mail*

OUR REPLY: Any endeavor to
advance will be opposed by others.
We may fear ridicule by members
of society. Sometimes, however, it
may even be our own lack of faith.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions in
his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that
pure devotional service is *śrī-kṛṣṇa-
ākarsinī*—it attracts even Kṛṣṇa.
When we become pure devotees of
the Lord, we become so d

ear to the Lord that He wants
to have loving relationships with us
and engage us in His loving service.
This is verily the highest possible
fulfillment of any aspiration ever
possessed by a devotee. What then
remains to be attained? A life full
of eternal bliss with the object of
our love awaits us.

So, when we understand truly the
benefits of becoming a pure devotee
of the Lord, no impediment would
have sufficient power to check our
efforts to advance on the path of
Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We can
explain others about the benefits of
bhakti, but if they do not listen,
better to avoid them.

*Reply to the letter was written by
Nanda Dulāla Dāsa.*

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A SACRED BOND

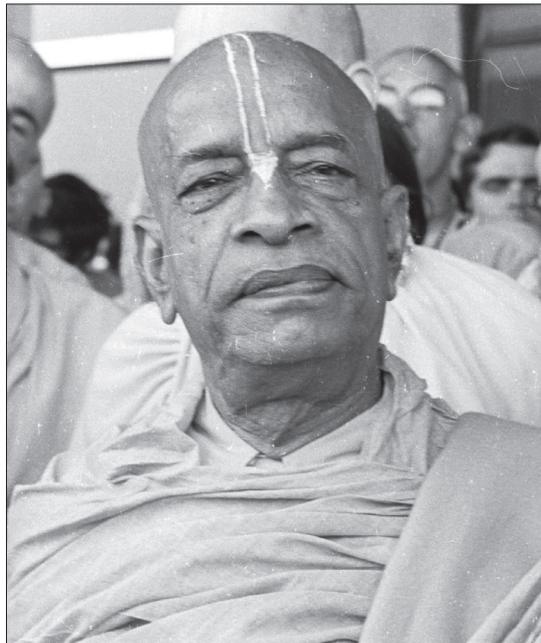
Kṛṣṇa conscious marriage should help devotees make progress further and further towards spiritual realization of Kṛṣṇa.

by His Divine Grace

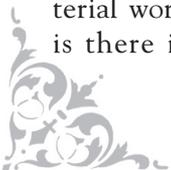
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Prabhupāda: *Ālola-candrakalasaḍ-vanamālyavamaṁśī-ratnaṅgadam praṇaya-keli-kalāvilāsam* [Bs. 5.31]. In this verse, the description of Govinda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is given. Govinda is not impersonal, and is distinctly stated here: "The Lord is decorated with flower garland, and He has a flute in His hands." And *praṇaya-keli-kalāvilāsam*: "And He is engaged in transcendental, conjugal love, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa." So this love, which we see between man and woman in our experience within this material world, is not unnatural. It is there in God also. And the



Brahma-sūtra, Vedānta-sūtra, says in the beginning, "Who is Brahman, the Supreme Person or the Absolute Truth?" *Athāto brahma jijñāsā*: questioning "What is that Absolute Truth?" The answer is *janmādy asya yataḥ*: "The Absolute Truth is that from whom everything emanates." [Bhāg. 1.1.1] Very simple definition, that means the fountainhead of everything, the source of everything. Here in this material world we see that the attraction between man and woman is so prominent. Not only in human society, but even in the society of cats, dogs, birds, etc., there exists attraction between the



male and the female. Why? The answer is in the *Vedānta-sūtra*. *Janmādy asya yataḥ*: Because it is there in the Absolute Truth. Without being present in the Absolute Truth, how it can be manifested in the relative truth?

IT'S A RELATIVE WORLD

This world is called relative world; it is not Absolute. There is difference or duality. We cannot understand a man without knowing a woman. We cannot understand father without understanding the son or mother. Relativity. But in the Absolute world, everything is one.

According to the Vedic system, everyone has to follow the *Vedānta-sūtra*. There are two section of philosophers in India, namely the impersonalist and personalist. The Vaiṣṇavas accept that the Absolute Truth is a person, and the Māyāvādī philosophers say that the Absolute Truth is impersonal. That is the difference. Otherwise their process is almost the same. Now our Vaiṣṇava philosopher's argument is that how can the Absolute Truth be impersonal? Because here, in this world, in our experience, we see everything is personal. So unless the personality, the individuality, or the individual attraction are there in the Absolute Truth, how can they be represented here in the relative truth?

Our presentation is that this conjugal love

between man and woman is not unnatural. It is natural, because it exists in the Absolute Truth. We find from Vedic description that the Absolute Truth, Personality of Godhead, is engaged in conjugal loving affairs, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. But the same Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa love matter has permeated through matter. Therefore it is a perverted reflection. Here in this material world, the so-called love is not actual love; it is lust. Here the male and female are attracted not by love but by lust. So in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness society, because we are trying to approach the Absolute Truth, the lust propensity has to be converted into pure love. That is the proposal. So in India still, amongst the strict followers of Vedic principles, this lust

affair is adjusted spiritually. How is that? The boys and girls are not allowed to mix freely before marriage. Here, one of our students, when he was in India, tried to talk with a young girl on the street, and she was insulted. He was surprised. Because the practice is that young boys and girls do not talk with each other. Of course, now it is different. Even up to our young time we have seen that without being married, girls and boys couldn't mix together. So this lust affair, this attraction, was little bit controlled. The parents of the girl and the parents of the boy would select the partner; the children had no personal selection. And that selection was made very scientifically, taking the horoscope of the girl, taking the



horoscope of the boy, and calculating, “How this boy and girl will amalgamate? How their lives will be happy?” So many things were considered. And when everything was settled, then the marriage would take place. That is the system of old Indian, Vedic principle.

So far free love is concerned, as we understand, that was allowed only in very high circles, or princely order—because the girl was educated and grown up and she was given to select her husband, but not directly. We find in so many historical evidences from Vedic literature that the girl used to express her desire, “I want to marry that boy.” This was amongst the *kṣatriyas*, the princely order, not with others. And the father would give a challenge, a bet. And if somebody would come and become victorious, then the girl would be offered. That was in special cases.

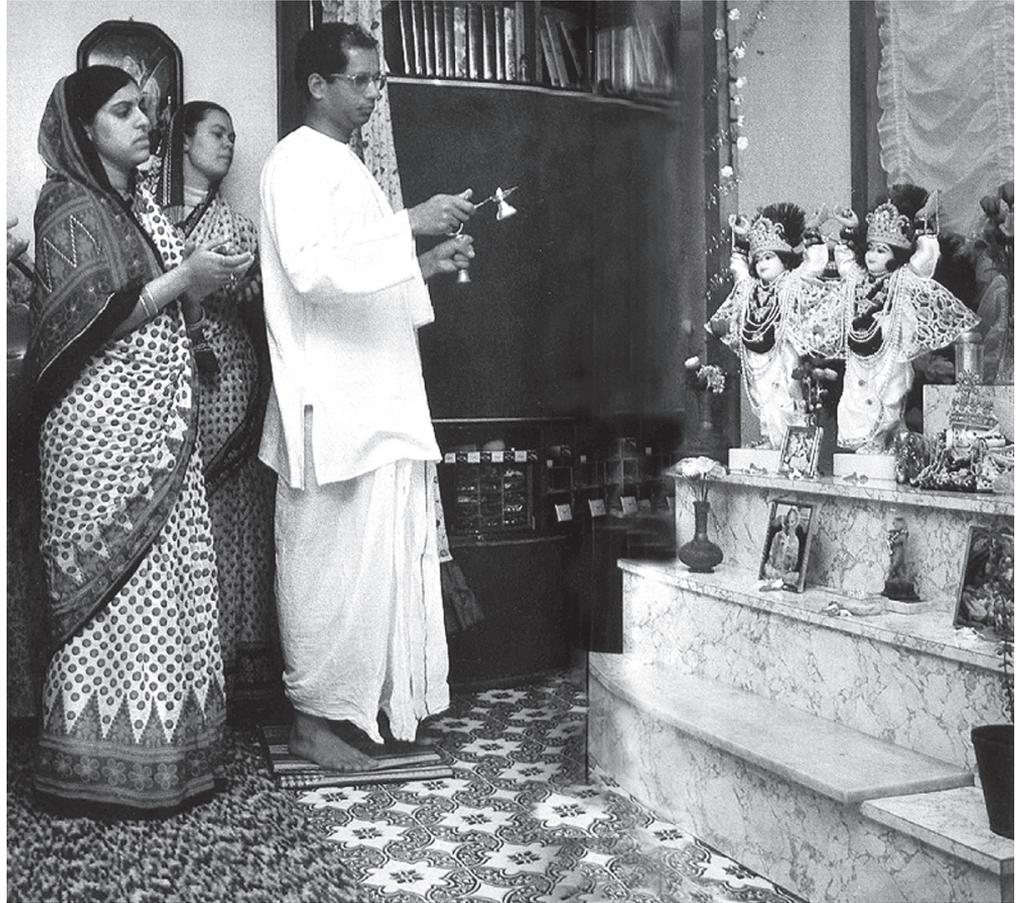
YUKTA-VAIRAGYA

In this age, according to our Vaiṣṇava principles, marriage is allowed because there is male, there is female. Why should they not unite? But not illegally. When I first came to New York, some of the boys and girls offered to become disciples. I saw that most of them were keeping boy-friends and girlfriends, so I requested them, “If you want to make progress in spiritual life, you have to refrain from four kinds of sinful activities: illicit sex life, nonvegetarian diet, intoxication, and gambling.” Unless one is free from these four principal activities, one cannot make progress in spiritual life. Because God is pure—

pavitram paramam bhavān—no impure soul can approach Him. This body is the sign of impurity because soul has no material body. So anyone in this material world who has this material body is to be considered sinful. But how to get out of this? By dovetailing everything with spiritual life. *Nirbandhe kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yukta-vairāgyam ucyate*. Take, for example, milk. If you take

and you are prescribing another preparation of the milk?” Yes, the doctor prescribes because it treats the disease. Similarly, this lust propensity between man and woman, if it is properly treated, can turn into love of Godhead.

So I am a *sannyāsī*; I have renounced my family life. I have children, grandchildren, and my wife still living, but I have separated



A family should come together to worship the Lord at home.

too much milk, then you will have bowel disorders. But if you approach a physician—an Āyur-Vedic physician—he will prescribe curd or yogurt with some medicine. So the disease caused by drinking milk is cured by the same milk preparation under the direction of the physician. The patient cannot argue to the physician, “I have become diseased by drinking milk,

from them. This is called *sannyāsa*. Why am I again taking interest in the family life of my students? Because I want to see them properly progress in spiritual life. Therefore, although it is not the business of a *sannyāsī* to take part in marriage ceremonies, in this country, just to save my students from sinful activities, I am personally taking interest, so they may become good



gentlemen and ladies by marriage. I am very happy to see that those boys and girls who have got married, and are having children are very happy. Many of them are present in this meeting. From their face, from their activities, it appears they are very happy.

AIM OF MARRIED LIFE

So in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness society, if a boy or a girl wants to get married, I help. But the bride and bridegroom must know certainly that this marriage is not for sense gratification. This marriage is for purification of life. So there is no question of divorce. Don't get married if you have got this propensity. Our first principle is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and other things are secondary. *Putrārthe kriyate bhāryā*. If you can produce nice Kṛṣṇa conscious children, you will do the greatest service to human society. Because the human society is now producing children like cats and dogs, there is great trouble. How can you expect peace and prosperity in a society of cats and dogs? Therefore there is necessity to produce Kṛṣṇa conscious children, to train them from the very beginning. You will be all glad to know that some of our students, very small boys in San Francisco, are being trained, and they are making wonderful progress. So there is no fault of these hippie boys and girls. They have not been trained. Not only here, every part of the world, the educational

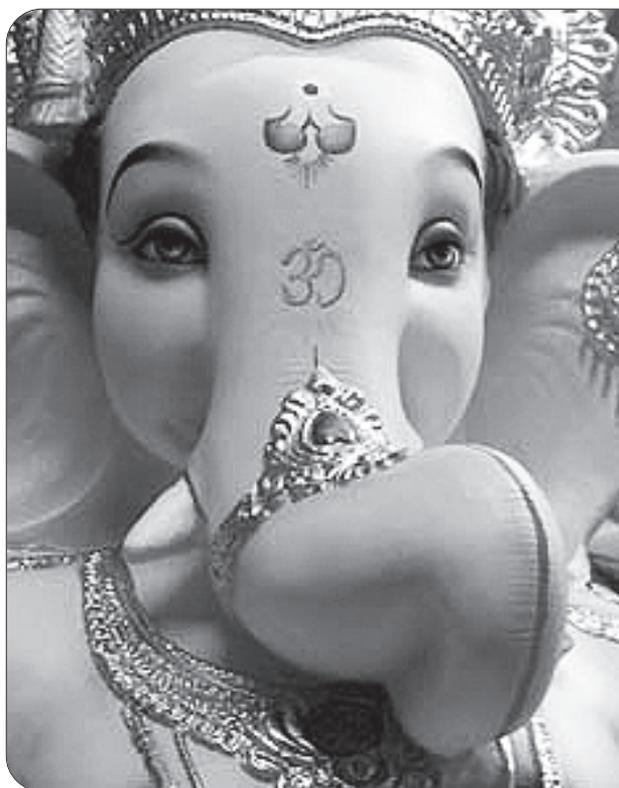
system is not very satisfactory. From the very beginning of their life they are allowed to mix freely, and they are allowed to enjoy sex life unrestrictedly. This is neither good for their health nor for education. Therefore we are getting now the result of education: communists and hippies. So people, those who are guardians of the society, should take serious note of it and make life very regulated.

Because we have this material body, we must eat, sleep, defend, and mate. These are the demands of this body. But they should be so regulated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that it will not become disturbing elements, but instead help us make progress further and further towards spiritual realization of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the best service to human society is to produce nice children. Don't produce cats and dogs. That is my request. Otherwise don't produce. Remain separate. Separate means there is no separation, but don't produce children. *pitā na sa syāj jananī*

na sā syāt. The *Bhāgavata* says, "One should not become a father or a mother, unless one is able to protect the children from the imminent danger of death." [*Bhāg* 5.5.18] What is that? The cycle of birth and death. If you can train your children to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, then your child will go back to Godhead in this life. That should be the aim. As you will try to go back to Godhead in this life, similarly, you shall take charge of your children, so they can also go back to Godhead in this life. The mother must think, "This child is born out of my womb, and this is the last phase of his life—to come into this womb of any animal or man. No more material body." That should be the responsibility of father and mother.

So my dear children, please live happily. There is no restriction. We don't restrict eating, sleeping, mating, or defending. But do it in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and be happy in this life and next life.

Thank you very much. ❁



COMING UP

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- Birth of Gaṇeśa
- How Gaṇeśa removes all obstacles
- Special Hymns and Stories to be recited on Gaṇeśa caturthī.
- Gaṇeśa worship in the 21st century

Lord
Gaṇeśa
Special Issue

The Language Of God

by Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa

Imagine that you are on a trek in a foreign land. Suddenly you see a person rushing toward you with both fists raised shouting madly in a foreign language. Instinctively you raise both hands to counter-attack. But that person rushes by and you hear a heavy blow landing on someone else. Surprised, you turn around and suddenly understanding dawns. A ruffian had been stealthily creeping in to attack you from behind and the person ahead had been rushing to save you from the ruffian. In his foreign tone he had been warning you, but being unable to understand his language you had completely misunderstood his intentions. You regret: "If only I had known his language. . ."

Could this be the way we misunderstand God when problems suddenly rush into our lives? There is an amazing intelligence that ar-



*From clouds God gives rain,
and from rain He gives grains.*

ranges for all our basic needs—air, heat, light, water and food. Equally awesome is the organization that enables all the life-sustaining bodily mechanisms like metabolism, respiration, blood circulation. Sadly most people hardly spare even a thought to understand the purpose of the universe. And when things don't work out according to the plans they make in a few minutes with their puny brains, they conclude that God is perverse, negligent or non-existent. Like in the above story, they can't understand the language in which God speaks.

Therefore, God gives us scriptures to serve as translators for us to understand His message and His plan. The Vedic scriptures—and indeed all religious scriptures—assert unequivocally that God is our greatest well-wisher. Through them God alerts us about the imminent onslaught of misery, old age, disease and death. God's ultimate plan is to save

us from all suffering and reinstate us in our eternal blissful life in His abode. As a part of His plan, God often breaks things to transform them into something far more valuable. He breaks clouds to give rains,



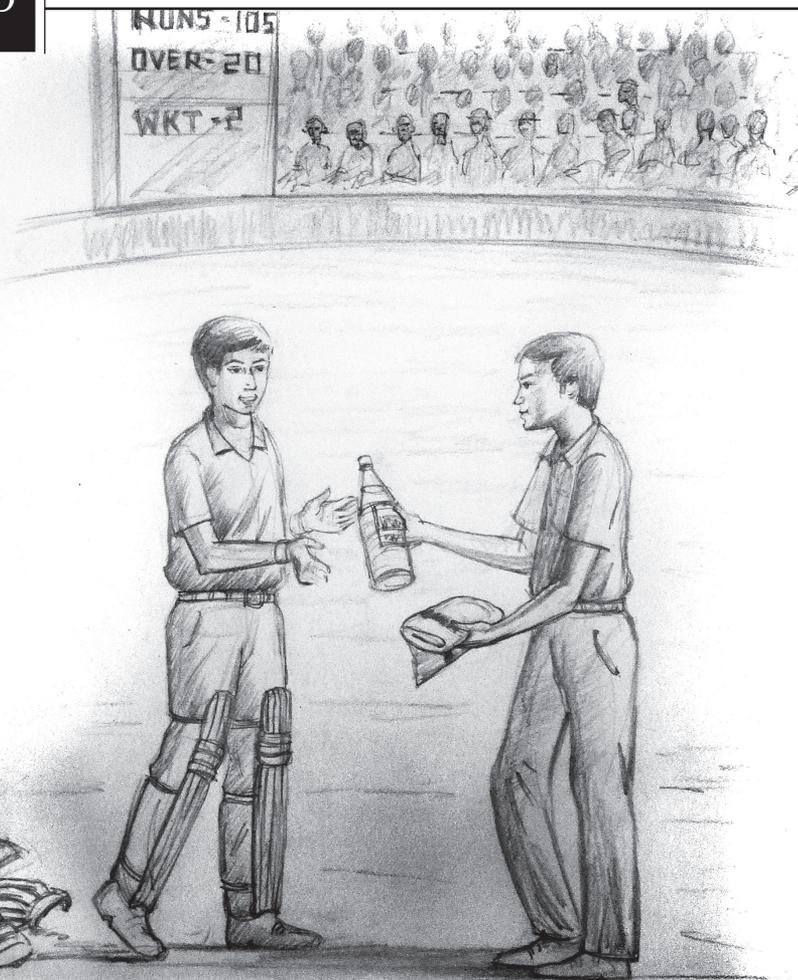
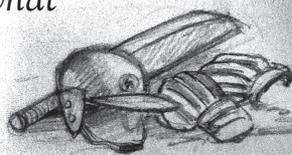
breaks soil to give grains, breaks grains to give bread and breaks bread to give nourishment. Similarly, He sometimes has to break our plans for temporary material enjoyment to enrich us with everlasting devotional bliss. Therefore, next time when providence seems to be inimically charging toward us, let us empower ourselves with divine vision and wisdom. ☸

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

The Twelfth Man

He enters the playground only to provide drinks to the main players. He is unimportant, perhaps you think. But what does God think? . . .

by Yugāvatāra Dāsa



I was an avid fan of this funny game called cricket. After being introduced to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, I learned there are better alternatives to playing cricket: playing eternally with Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world.

The other day, while scanning the newspaper, I saw photographs of the silver jubilee celebrations of India's victory of World Cup cricket in 1983. I felt nostalgic. Squeezing and peeping through a packed crowd of many cricket fans in front of the only small black-and-white television set in my small neighborhood, I had watched every game of the World Cup with great enthusiasm. Like the demigods who peep into the *rāsa-līlā* dance of Lord Kṛṣṇa to behold every minute of the divine

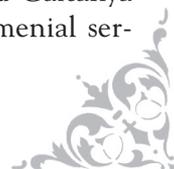
dance, I used to stand there hours to watch every affair of the game. As a pure devotee constantly remembers the pastimes of the Lord, I would regularly remember all the exciting and thrilling moments of the World Cup. And now I was attracted to this mundane newspaper describing the silver jubilee celebrations of India's World Cup victory in much the same way a pure devotee is spontaneously attracted to the transcendental narrations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

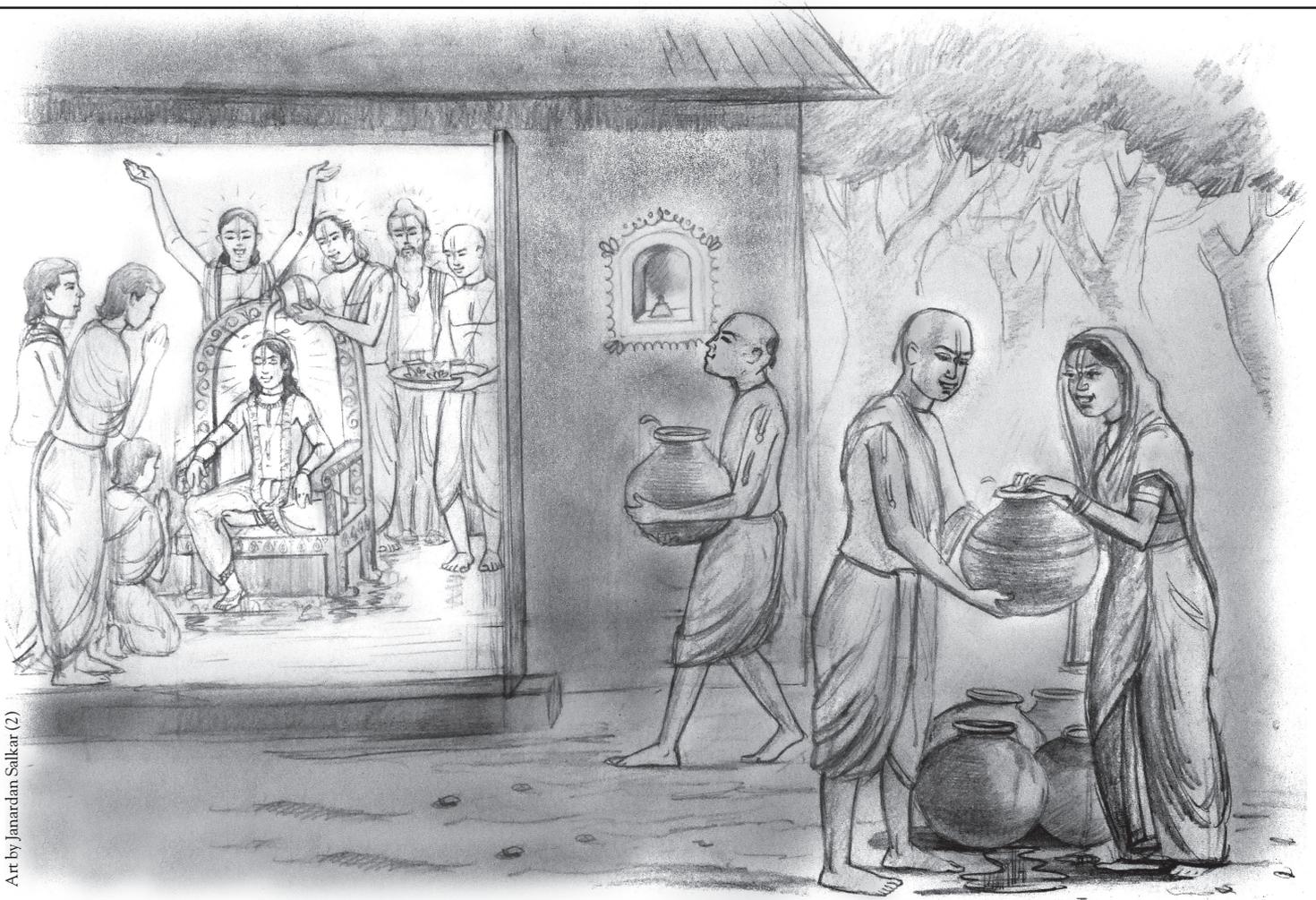
I looked at the photograph of the victorious team with the World Cup. There I saw a face unfamiliar to me. He stood as a part of the winning team, radiating so much pride and confidence that he seemed to be thinking that he was instrumen-

tal in winning the World Cup. I scratched my brain failing to recall his contribution in any of the matches. Finally I remembered, "Yes, he was the twelfth man." He used to enter the playground only to provide drinks and water to the main players.

A SPIRITUAL QUIVALENT

Providing water—my mind jumped from cricket to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the biography of Lord Caitanya, the devotional form of God. A maid servant did this menial work of providing water for the senior devotees during the *abhiṣeka* ceremony of Lord Caitanya. Her name was Dukhī, or "the unhappy one." Lord Caitanya recognized her humble menial ser-





Art by Janardan Salkar (2)

vice and blessed her with love of God and renamed her as Sukhī, “the happy one.” This is the principle Srila Prabhupāda taught us: Never try to be on the forefront. Just help the senior elevated souls in spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

The example is given of an expert surgeon. The junior surgeons prepare the patient for surgery; the senior surgeon comes for few minutes, rectifies the pathology and leaves, as the junior surgeon completes the remaining minor part of stitching the patient’s skin. Most people in this world are like sick patients, forgetful of their eternal, joyful spiritual nature and undergoing numerous sufferings due to their bodily misidentification. As the el-

evated souls are operating upon the pathologies of the materially afflicted, we should do the menial job of the junior surgeon so that the seniors can use their expertise on many in times of need. Lord Caitanya taught us this principle of becoming the humble servant of the servant. He says that this humility is the qualification needed for getting His mercy.

I again looked at the newspaper. I saw that twelfth man of the Indian cricket team standing as a part of the winning squad just because he humbly served his colleagues. I thought, “We in ISKCON are a team. Like India won the world cup, we also want to win the world by spreading the holy name everywhere. Srila Prabhupāda is our expert captain, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is our coach. And

we know that Kṛṣṇa’s team always wins although only five Pāṇḍavas are fighting against the hundred Kauravas. The mission is to spread the holy name to every town and village. That will be our victory, the victory of ethical and spiritual integrity, of selfless devotion and of eternal love, and the defeat of Kali, of quarrel and hypocrisy, of self-centered exploitation and of fleeting lust. Lord Caitanya has already predicted the victory. So if we want to be a part of the winning squad, let’s get up and start humbly serving by helping to spread the holy name everywhere. The whole world is our playground.” ❀

Yugāvatāra Dāsa is an Associate Professor in Anatomy and a regular contributor to BTG.

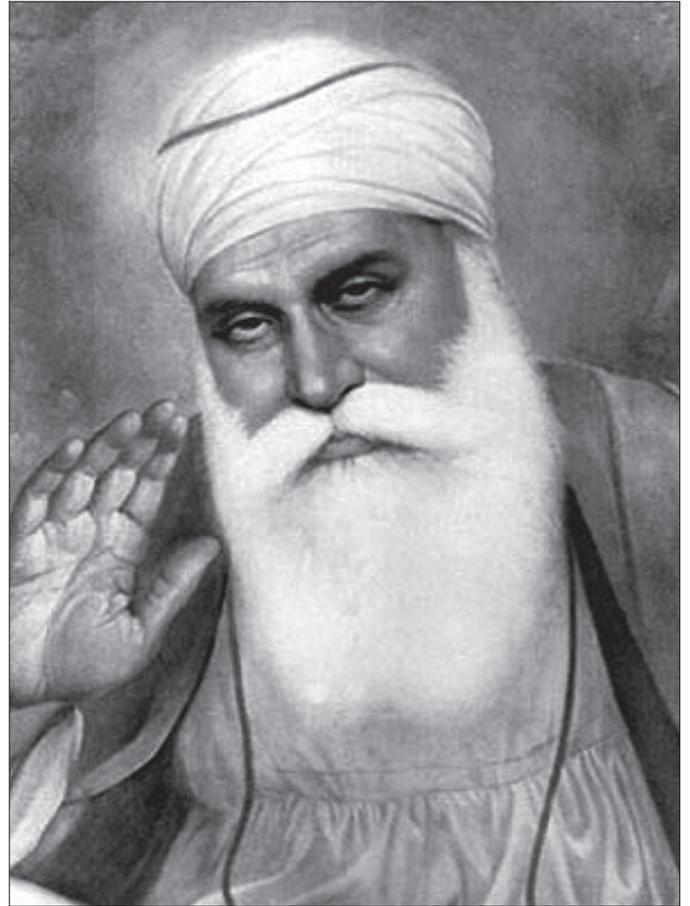
Vaiṣṇavism in Sikhism

*The Sikh tradition is deeply rooted in Vaiṣṇava principles
as revealed by the teachings of great Sikh gurus.*

by Rādhikā Kṛpā Devī Dāsī

For me, accepting Kṛṣṇa consciousness was not hard, but being its member became a challenge. I was born to Sikh parents, married into a Hindu Punjabi family. My transformation from Randeep Anand to Rādhikā Kṛpā Devī Dāsī, an initiated Kṛṣṇa devotee in ISKCON, was the most decisive moment of my life. I was quite apprehensive of taking a right path at that crossroad of life. Inspiration, courage, and determination played a vital role. I had to confront queries, doubts, arguments that were often hit with a view to defy. Not ready to be defeated I stood the trial, as I was amidst two different faiths. I sought a solution which could pacify all. With the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and my spiritual master His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, I immersed myself in the study of *Śrī Guru Grantha-sāhib* (the religious scripture of Sikhs) as well as *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. I prayed to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāmasundar to let me derive a conclusion that would satisfy all the rivals. They answered my prayers enlightening me to fathom the depth of both the scriptures. I could now clear most of the doubts and suspicions quite authentically quoting from the scriptures.

Here are some enlightening thoughts and quotes that reveal a lot for the intelligentsia.



The following are mystical lines from the sacred *Śrī Guru Grantha-sāhib*. This is a compilation of verses sung in the praise of Hari, Govinda, Rāma and guru. The scripture recommends one to become a “Sikh” (*śiṣya*), or a disciple of the spiritual master, in order to attain the shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord. *Śrī Guru Grantha-sāhib* is composed in a poetic form in various classical *rāgas*.

Guru Nānakadevajī, the first Sikh guru, recites in the *rāga rāmakali mahalā 1, dakhṇī omkār* as follows:

*Ik omkāra satgur prasāda
Omkāri brahmā utpatti
Omkārau kiā jini citi
Omkāri saila juga bhaya
Omkāri veda nirmāya
Omkāri sabadi udhera
Omkāri gurmukhi tera
Onama akhara suṇahu bīcāru
Onama akhara tribhavaṇa sāru
Suṇi pānde kiā likhahu janjālā
Likhu rāma nāma gurmukhī gopāla*

Translation: God is one and is realized by the grace of the guru. Absolute Truth Om is the creator of

Brahmā. Brahmā stored Om in his heart, in his consciousness. Absolute Truth is the creator of mountains and eras (*yugas*). From the Absolute Truth came the Vedas, and Omkāra is the word that liberates. By following the instructions of the guru and chanting Omkāra the living entity achieves liberation. Hear and ponder the meaning of Om; it is the essence of the three worlds. Listen O paṇḍey! Why do you pen down all the worldly deeds; write, by the mercy of the guru, only about the name of Rāma and Gopāla.



Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.8), *praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu*: “I am syllable om in the Vedic mantras.” Thus

there is no ambiguity about the real nature of the Absolute Truth. Guru Nānakadevajī also mentions how Kṛṣṇa is the source of Brahmā in *Gujari mahalā 1*:

*Nābhi kamal te brahmā upaje veda paḍahi mukhi
kaṇṭhi savāri
tā ko antu na jāi lakhṇā āvata jāt rahai gubāri*

*Pṛitama kiu
bisarahi mere prāṇa
adhāra
Jākī bhagati
karahi jana pure
muni jana sevahi
gura vīcāri || || || ||
rahāu
ravi sasi dīpaka jā
ke tribhavaṇi ekā joti
murāri
Gurmukhi hoi su
ahinisi nirmalu
manmukhi rāiṇi
andhāri*

Translation: After appearing from the lotus stem originating from Lord Viṣṇu’s naval Brahmā cleared his throat and got absorbed in the



Lord Brahmā appearing from Lord Viṣṇu’s naval (above). *Ik omkāra*, the sacred symbol of the Sikhs (top). Guru Nānakadevajī (left)



Vedas. He entered the stem of the lotus and traveled up and down but could not find the source of his creation. O my beloved Lord, how can one forget the Supreme on whom all are dependant? The devotees are absorbed in devotion to Him; the sages and the saints, under their guru's instructions, are engrossed in serving Him. Sun, moon and stars all are created by Him; in all the three worlds, there is only one light: Murāri. One who follows the instructions of the guru forever lives, but one who is a mental speculator forever wanders in the darkness.

Translation: You have lotuslike eyes, sweet words like honey, and millions of associates who glorify You. You are that Kṛṣṇa, whom Mother Yaśodā lovingly feeds curd and rice. Seeing Your most beautiful face she is captivated by motherly affection, and when You plays Your anklets and waist-belt make a melodious tinkeling sound. The pen that writes the order of death is in Your hand O Lord! Tell, who can escape it? Śiva and Brahmā etc., want to bear the knowledge and meditation given by You within their hearts. You are the embodiment of Absolute Truth. Goddess Laxmī is Your maidservant and You are the oldest person (*ādi puruṣa*), *parabrahman*. You are *vāheguru*, *vāheguru*, *vāheguru*. I glorify You eternally. ||1116||



Mother Yaśodā lovingly feeds baby Kṛṣṇa

The lines below quite clearly portray the Supreme Lord, leaving nothing to imagination:

*Kaṇvala naina madhura baina koti saina sanga sobha
kahata mā jasodā jisahi dahī bhātū khahi jīu.
Dekhi rūpa ati anūpu moha māha maga bhāi kinakanī
sabada jhanatakāra khelu pāhi jīu.
kāla kalama hukamu hāthi kahahu kaunu meti sakai isu
bramhu jñānu dhyānu dharata hīai cahi jīu.
sati sacu śrīnivāsu ādi purukhu sadā tuhī vāhiguru
vāhiguru vāhiguru vāhi jīu ||1116||*

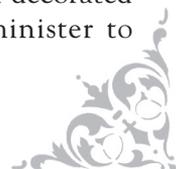
*Rāma nāma parama dhāma sudha budha
nirīkāra besumara sarabara kao kāhi jīo
sudhara cita bhagata hita bhekhu dhario
hirnakhsu hario nakh bidārī jīu
saṅkha cakra gadā padama āpai āuṣu kīso
chadama āparamaṣāra pārabhrama lakhai
kaunu tahi jīu
sati sacu śrīnivāsu... ||2117||*

Translation: Rāma's name is the ultimate abode and pure wisdom. You are infinite and have no material form. Who can match You? For the love of Your devotee You disguised Yourself as Śrī Nṛsimhadeva, to tear apart Hiraṇyakaśipu with Your nails. You bear conch, disc, mace, and lotus. You are the one who cheated King Bali (in Your form of Vāmanadeva). O infinite Supreme God who can know You ?

You are the Absolute Truth... ||2117||

*pīta basan kuda dasana priā sahita kaṇṭha māla
mukutu sīsa mora paṅkha cahi jīu
bey vazira bade dhīra dharma anga alakha
agama khelu kīā āṇnai ūchāhi jīu
akatha kathā kathī na jāi tīni loka rahiā
samāi sutaha sidha rūpa dhario sāhana kai sāhi jīu
sati sacu śrīnivāsu ... ||3118||*

Translation: Dressed in a yellowish attire, Your teeth are beautiful like buds of jasmine flower. You enjoy with Your consort (Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī), wear a long garland made of forest flowers and a crown decorated with peacock feathers. You require no minister to



render any advice; You are most patient; embodiment of religion, inaccessible, and You are the creator of this whole play, O lovable! O king of the kings, lovable, Your story cannot be narrated (to the full); You are pervading in the three worlds, and You can adopt any form You desire. You are the Absolute Truth... ||3||8||

Nestled in the *Svayyā mahalā* 4 the lines quoted above define and glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord is addressed here as *vāha guru*.

MEANING OF VĀHE GURU

The followers of Sikh tradition chant *Satanāma vāheguru*. The meaning of word *vāhaguru* is described by Bhāi Gurdāsajī in his book *Vārā*. He is the one who penned down the *Guru Grantha-sāhīb* while the fifth guru Śrī Arjunadevajī recited it. In the section of 1 of *Vārā*, *paṇḍi* 49 he says:

*Satijugi satigura vāsdev
vavā visna nāmu jaṇḍāvai
duāṇari satiguru hari kriṣana
hā hā hari hari nāmu jaṇḍāvai
tete satiguru rāma jī
rā rā rāma jaṇḍe sukha ḍāvai
kalijugi nānaka gura govinda
gagā govinda nāmu alāvai
cāre yāgī cāhu yugi paṇchīna vica jāi samāvai
cāro akṣara ika kara vāhaguru jaṇḍa mantara jaṇḍāvai
jāhā te upjīā ḍhira tahā samāvai*

Translation: In Satya-yuga to attain the Lord, meditation on the Vāsudeva form is advocated. The letter *v* of *vāha guru* reminds of Viṣṇu. In Dvāpara-yuga Hari Kṛṣṇa appeared; the letter *h* of *vāha guru* reminds of Hari. In Tretā-yuga Rāma appeared; the letter *r* of *vāha guru* reminds of Rāma. In Kali-yuga came Nānaka as a guru to make others chant Govinda. The letter *g* of *vāha guru* reminds of Govinda. Thus the four *yugas* have concluded this. The four letters combined together to form this mantra (*vāha guru*). By chanting this mantra the living entity goes back from where he has come.

HOLY NAME

Non-different than the *mahā-mantra* Hare Kṛṣṇa



Bhāi Gurdāsajī penned down the Grantha Sāhīb while the fifth guru Śrī Arjunadevajī recited it

Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare, the *Grantha-sāhīb* describes the glories of singing: “Hari Hari Hare ...Hare Hṛṣīkeśa Hare..., Hare Govinda Hare Govind..., Hare Nar Narhare Nar Narhare...” as the highest devotion.

The *Grantha-sāhīb* in *Vārā*, *rāga kanra mahalā* 4 recites:

*Rāma nāma nidhana hai hari
gurmata rakha ura dhārada
dāsana dāsa hoaya rahu hau-maya bikhi-ā māra
janama ḍadarath jīti-ā kadaya nā āvai hāra
dhana dhana vadbhagī nānkā jina
gurmata hari rasa sāra
govinda govinda govinda hari govinda gunī nidhana
govinda govinda gurmata dhiāi-ai tā
dargaha ḍāi-ai māna
govinda govinda govinda jaṇḍa mucha ūjlā ḍāra dhāna
... Sabh kahhu mukhahu hari hari hare hari hari hare
hari bolat sabh ḍāpa lahogīā*

Translation: Through the the wisdom obtained from the guru, always treasure the name of Rāma in your heart. Destroy the poison of false ego and be the



servant of Lord Rāma's servant. Thus you will win the real wealth of human life and never face defeat. Nānaka says, "Those fortunate souls are glorious who by the mercy of the spiritual master taste the nectar of Hari and always remember Him."

By reciting "Govinda Govinda Govinda," one gains purity and radiance. All join together to chant Hari's (Kṛṣṇa's) name and Hare (His internal potency) as this would lead to the forgiveness of the past sins.

Further it says:

*hari hari hari hari nāma hai gurmukha pāvai ko-ay
hau-maya mamtā nāsa ho-aya
durmata kādhaya dho-aya
..sabha kahhu mukhahu ḥṛṣīkeśa hare
ḥṛṣīkeśa hare jita pāvahi sabha fala falnā*

Translation: Only some are fortunate enough to be blessed by the spiritual master with the name of Hari, as this is the only name. By chanting Hari, the false ego, worldly ties, and bad qualities are cleansed.

Let us all chant "Hṛṣīkeśa" (Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses) and "Hare" (His consort) so as to obtain all rewards.

QUALITIES OF A VAIṢṆAVA

A Vaiṣṇava has the topmost human consciousness as described in the scriptures. It has also been advocated in the *Grantha-sāhib*. In the 9th verse (*Astaṭāṭi*) of a hymn *Sukhmaṇi-sāhib* composed by Guru Arjunadeva, the word *vaiṣṇava* has been well defined: "one who is bound to attain *parama gati*, the highest destination."

It recites:

*mithiā nahī rasna paraśa
mana mahi prīti niranjana darasa
par strī rūpa na pekhey netr
sādha kī ṭahal satsang heyt*

Translation: Falsehood his tongue does not touch and for a glimpse of the Lord his heart longs. His eyes



do not look at the beauty of other women, and he serves the saints and remains in their association

*karan na suneh kahu ki nindā
sabh tay jānay āpas ko mandā
guru prasadi bhikhi-da
parhāray
mann kī bāsnā mann tey taray
indrījīta panch dokh tey rāhata
nānak kotimadhay ko aisa
apras ||1||*

Translation: His ears do not hear anyone's criticism, and he considers himself lower than everyone else. By the grace of the spiritual master he is able to give up bad habits, and lust leaves his mind as he conquers his senses. He conquers his senses and is free from the five faults (anger, lust, greed, envy, and illusion). Nanaka says, one among millions is such a detached soul.

*vaiṣṇava so jisa
ūpara suparsana
bishana ki māya
tay ho-ay bhinna
karma karat hovai nihkarama
tisu baiṣṇo kā nirmal dharam*

Translation: Vaiṣṇava is one with whom the Lord is pleased. He is untouched by the worldliness created by the Lord. One who acts in inaction (without desire for fruit), only his (Vaiṣṇava's) religion is one with purity.

*kāhu phal ki ichcha nahī bāchai
keval bhagati kīrtana sangi rācai
mana tana antari simran goṣāl
sabh ūpari hovat kirpāla*

Translation: He works with no aspiration for fruits. He is only engrossed in devotion and kīrtana of the Supreme. One who Within his heart and by the activities of his body is always remembering Gopāla. He is compassionate to all.



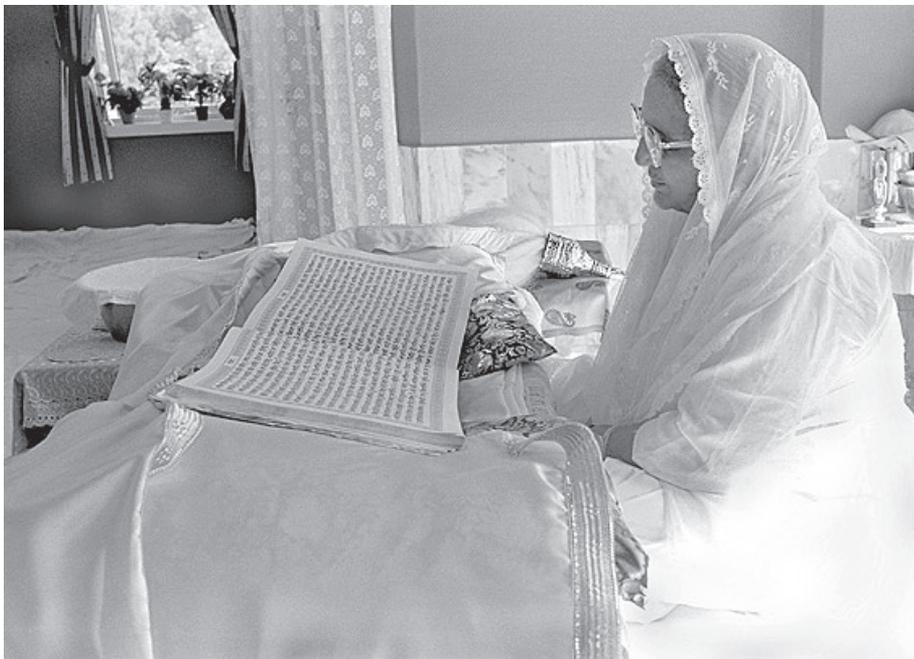
Guru Arjuna Devaji (above). Sikh devotees chanting the names of God (left)

*āpi driḍai avroh nāmu japāvai
nānaka oh vaiṣṇava parama gati pāvai
bhagauti bhagvant bhagati ka rangu
sagal tīa gay dusat ka sangu*

Translation: He is determined in devotional service and also makes others chant the holy names. Nānaka says, such a Vaiṣṇava attains the liberation (parama gati). He is immersed in the color of bhakti, and stays away from the company of the wicked.

*mann tay binsai sagalā bharamu
kar pūjāi sagala pārabrahamu
sādha sangi pāyā malu khovai
tisu bhaguti kī mati ūttama hovai*





serves the Lord following proper rules and regulations, who surrenders all activities of the body and mind in service and love of the Lord, who enshrines the lotus feet of the Lord within the recesses of his heart, Nānaka says only such a devotee can obtain God.

These revelations put at rest all the doubts instilling a novel, innovative approach. Vaiṣṇavism is no wonder the language of Sikhism. Such literary endeavors build up bridges and break walls leading to communal harmony, peace, and universal brotherhood, with the core no doubt being Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ☀

Translation: All doubts in his mind are destroyed. He realises that the Lord is everywhere and worships Him. One who washes the dirt of contamination of this world in the association of saintly devotees, his wisdom is the best.

*bhagvant ki ṭahals krai nitanīti
manu tanu arpai biṣana prīti
hari ke caraṇa hṛdaya basāvai
nānaka aisā bhāgūtī
bhagvanta kau pāvai*

Translation: That devotee who

Rādhika Kṛpā Devī Dāsī is a disciple of His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswamī Mahārāja. She is an author of a book of devotional poetry and Vaiṣṇavism in Sikhism from which this article was compiled. She lives with her family in Delhi.



**HARE KṚṢṆA
HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA
HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA
HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA
HARE HARE.**



A HUNTING EXCURSION

by Mohana Rūpa Dāsa

When I was young I would visit my ancestral village during vacations. The biggest attraction during those trips was a hunting excursion. Around fifty men would surround the base of a mountain and beat drums and create a shrill sound. Scared by loud noise and cornered by the large crowd, various animals would scuttle atop, only to run into men armed with guns, and meet their death.

During one such occasion an antelope with big horns darted from the bushes, but was felled by a volley of bullets. The villagers ran to him and tied him with ropes. I came nearer. There were big holes in his beautiful body; he was gasping and bleeding from his mouth and wounds. The men began cutting him up.

“Why have you done this?” I asked. “He was so beautiful!” No one answered me. In a short while, his body was cut into lumps of flesh and distributed.

“I will never eat meat again,” I told my relatives when I returned.

A DIFFERENT ENCOUNTER

After one month I met a friend

who had been indulging in various bad habits. But now he was completely changed. He was wearing *tilaka* and *tulasī* beads around his neck. He wanted to take me to an ISKCON program in Kolhapur. I refused two or three times. The fourth time, simply to



please him, I agreed to visit. I liked the question and answer session in the program. Then the devotees showed a special video on Srila Prabhupada. I saw foreigners dancing in *kīrtana*. “Oh! White men and women! How are they singing Hare Kṛṣṇa with an old Indian gentleman?” I wondered.

One Friday, Akrūra Dāsa spoke

about Lord Caitanya—how the Lord has so many fruits that He cannot distribute alone. “I need volunteers to distribute this fruit of love of God,” the Lord proclaimed. I thought, Why don’t I join Lord Caitanya and help in the preaching mission?

The next day it was announced that Padayātrā India was in the town for three days. On the last day I decided to join them.

“Just give me two times *prasāda*,” I told the devotee in-charge, “and I will distribute books all day.”

My family members came to meet me after some time. I politely, but firmly expressed my decision to them. Some time later they began to chant. Now most

of them are chanting 16 rounds.

It is my ninth year in *padayātrā*, and I am completely blissful.☪

(As told to Murāri Gupta Dāsa)

Mohana Rūpa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Lokanātha Swami Mahārāja and a member of Padayātrā India.



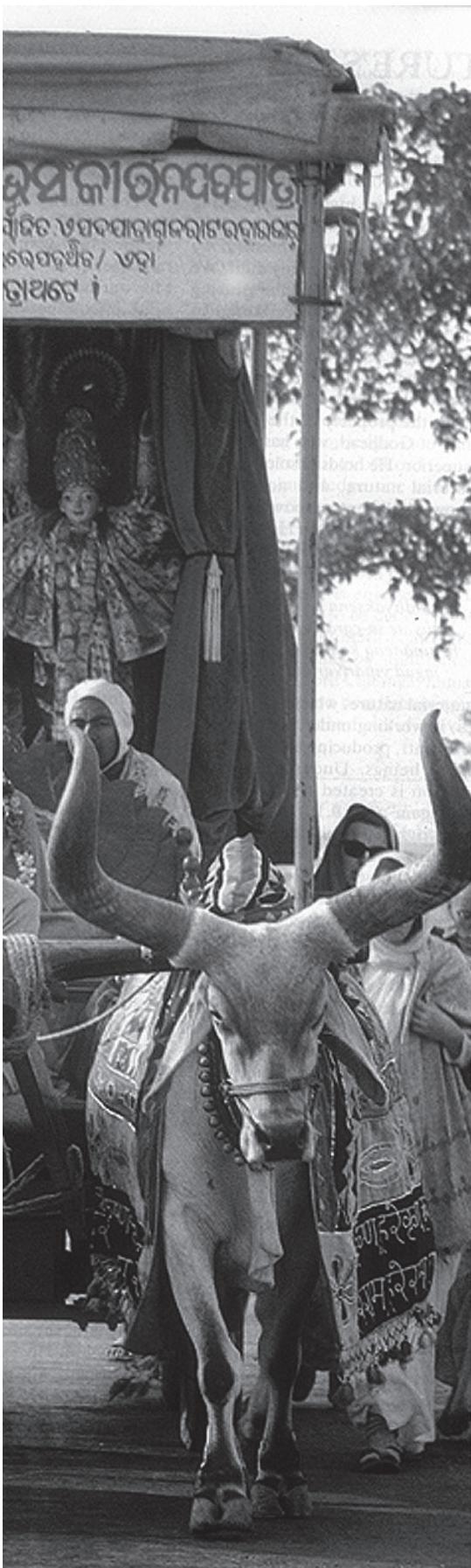
Padayātrā devotees with His Holiness Lokanātha Swami Mahārāja



Walking Around the World

The world's longest running pilgrimage on foot is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Here is a report on its activities.

by Murāri Gupta Dāsa



25 years, 1,15,000 km on foot, and six circles of India later, Padayātrā India is celebrating its silver jubilee on Rādhāṣṭamī 2009. With a temple on cart pulled by bulls, a tractor with three attached wagons, and a crew of twenty plus

devotees on foot, the *padayātrā* is a moving carnival that travels all over India displaying Kṛṣṇa consciousness in areas you have never seen, been there, or heard about. Inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda and implemented by his disciple His Holiness Lokanātha Swami, Padayātrā India is the longest running project of its kind, and a motivation for nearly hundred such *padayātrās* all over the world—from a couple-with-kids' travel in a horse-driven cart in USA, to solitary monk's walk across Canada. Efficiently organized and robustly equipped, the *padayātrā* attracts all varieties of members, from veteran Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, to the latest entrants in

Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

They must be having a lot of fun, I thought, as I found them in March 2009 in Belgaum, Karnataka, celebrating the Gaura Pūrṇimā festival and also undertaking much-needed renovation of their equip-



*Padayātrā leader
Rūpa Gosvāmī Dāsa*

ments. Their leader Rūpa Gosvāmī Dāsa readily agreed for an interview, and the next morning after heaving boxes of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in to the wagon, he washed his hands and took me to his quarters where we had a pleasant discussion sitting on floor mats.

BTG: Since how long have you been associated with *padayātrā*?

Rūpa Gosvāmī Dāsa (RGD): Over eight years. Before joining *padayātrā*, I worked as a company secretary in Delhi for some time.

BTG: Please tell us about your daily routine.

RGD: We follow the temple schedule, but with some alterations.





Maṅgala-ārati is at 4:30 am. Then we chant *japa* for two hours and after *darśana* at 7:30, the devotees and the *ratha* carrying Gaura-Nitāi Deities and Śrīla Prabhupāda move. The cooks stay behind to prepare breakfast and once it is ready they load everything into the wagons, and leave with the tractor catching up with the devotees by 9 am. We halt after a walk of about 6-7 km and have breakfast near some source of water. Again, the tractor, cooks, and the *pūjārī* leave for a pre-arranged destination, and cooking for lunch begins.

The cart and devotees catch up with them at 1-2 pm after a walk of 12-15 km. Juice or buttermilk greets the weary and thirsty travelers. Some bathe, some read, and others stretch out. Hot lunch of rice, *dāl*, two vegetables, *capāti*, and sweet is served at 4:30. While honoring *prasāda* we hear lectures, followed by a class at 5:30pm. An hour later we do *harināma* in the village where we pass out pamphlets and invite people for the evening program. At 7 pm there is *ārati* and a program for villagers. When we are in a city with some devotees, they



Clock wise from above: People coming to accept *caraṇāmṛta*
The tractor trolley. Devotees honoring lunch feast.
An evening program in a village

arrange evening programs for us.

The evening program has a talk of 40 minutes, a CD show on Hare Kṛṣṇa world or cow protection. After lecture we serve *prasāda* of *khicarī* and *halavā*, and go to bed by 9 pm. The next day we move on. In the cities, where we stay for 2-3 days, we conduct talks and pro-

grams in schools and colleges.

BTG: Where do you spend the night?

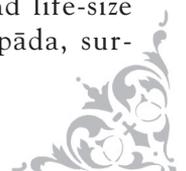
RDG: We stay in schools, temples, or community halls. In the village the village chief generally arranges for the residence and contributes grains, milk, and ghee for us and fodder for the bulls.

BTG: How do you manage the finances?

RDG: The *padayātrā* runs on book distribution and donation of well-wishers. If we have twenty devotees we can manage our expenses by book distribution.

BTG: How do people respond to the *padayātrā*?

RDG: They are shocked! The *padayātrā* procession stops you dead in your tracks. First our bulls. Massively built with strikingly big horns, they invariably force you to take a second look. The ornately carved wooden altar with brilliant Gaura-Nitāi Deities and life-size *mūrti* of Śrīla Prabhupāda, sur-





of offerings—fruits, grains, vegetables etc.,—and apologized for their misconduct. One night of Kṛṣṇa consciousness changed life-long enmity!

Another time in Pratapgarh, UP, I was part of the advance party. I arranged a place for the coming day and was returning to the base camp, when it began to pour. It was 8:30 pm, dark with no street lights. A heavy wind blew against my moped. So many trucks were rushing from the opposite sides and their headlights were creating myriad patterns on my wet glasses almost blinding me. Then a truck seemed to loom straight at me and I lost control. The moped skidded

rounded by dozen or so devotees chanting and dancing, followed by a tractor pulling three trolleys appearing like a train—nobody has ever seen anything like this.

We go to villages who have never heard about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Students and villagers join us for a walks and programs. There are different cultures in India, but we see that even if majority of them are poor, they still have the culture and faith to come, take *darśana* of the Lordships, and accept *caraṇāmṛta*. But now gradually the village culture is going down.

AN ACCIDENT IN THE RAINS

BTG: Can you please tell us some of your memorable experiences during *padayātrā*?

RDG: Of course. Once we reached a village in Satana near Citrakūṭa, found a well and went to fetch water. Immediately all the women gathered there, began shouting and would not allow us near the well. When we ignored them and went ahead they threw their pots down, pouring out all the

water in protest. The cause of their protest: For centuries the upper cast people had suppressed the lower castes not allowing them water from their wells. Now the lower castes were in majority and it was their turn to

persecute the upper caste. Seeing our saffron robes, the women perceived us as upper caste *brāhmaṇas* and dissented. Fortunately a *brāhmaṇa* arrived at the scene and he took us some distance away to a well in his farm.

Later in the evening program most of the villagers came for *darśana* and we distributed *prasāda* to all without any discrimination, and every one accepted it. Next day, all those people who had objected to our presence the previous day, came to us with plates full



from the road into a ditch about 50 feet deep. I fell away from the plunging moped, grasped a bush and held on. Badly bruised and drenching wet I pulled myself up on the road. I tried to search for the moped, but I could not even make out my hand before my face in the pitch darkness. I gave up.

I waved to the passing vehicles but nobody stopped. It was almost 10:30 pm. Our place was 8-9 km away; on foot it would take about two hours. I became desperate. I remembered how it was so nice in my



office, where I worked earlier as a company secretary. It was difficult at times, but not as difficult as now! (Smiles) I was new in *padayātrā* then. I prayed helplessly to Nitāi-Gauracandra, the presiding Deities of *padayātrā*. “Please, Nitāi-Gauracandra, help me.”

Two or three trucks later a jeep arrived. I was so anxious that I jumped right in the middle of the road and frenetically waved my arms. The jeep screeched to a halt. The passengers peeked from the windows, “We know you,” they said. “We saw your *ratha* in the school today.” The jeep was going to the same village as I. I mentioned my moped. No one will come in the jungle to pick it up,

they told me. Muddy, bruised, and with bleeding knees and elbows, I sat in the vehicle and reached the devotees at 11:30 pm. Every one was awake, worried; there were no cell-phones those days. After some much-needed first-aid, I went to bed.

The next day I reached the spot of the accident. The moped lay in sticky mud. After a wash we tested it—it was fine!

I realized that when we pray, Lord Kṛṣṇa protects. But we should

not wait for calamity to pray. We are always in danger; therefore we should not wait for a real calamity to fall upon us to pray. Pray always.

Here, Kerala is the best place for book distribution. The state with the highest literacy rate also seems to have the most interested readers, with many Christian and Mus-

Dāsa, a *padayātrī* for nine years. How he came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is an interesting story. (See “A Hunting Excursion”, page 17.) He narrated his experience:

“One day I was driving the tractor and took a turn from the end of a big bridge to a steep road below.

The advance party devotees and the *ratha* had successfully negotiated the turn and were going ahead. A devotee sitting beside me advised, ‘It is a slope, so switch to neutral gear and let the tractor roll gradually. Brake intermittently to control.’ ‘Do you think I am a fool?’ I answered back, ‘I know how to drive.’ I shifted to the first gear, hoping that it was sufficient to slow



Padayātrā cart before a South Indian temple.

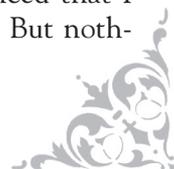
lims also buying books. In two months we sold 6,300 books.

I thank Rūpa Gosvāmī Dāsa and leave, later meeting Holland-born Akhilādhāra Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. A *padayātrā* veteran, he was a former member of Padayātrā America and Padayātrā India, and now has been traveling with Padayātrā India for the past few months. His talk appears in the side bar.

I then spoke to Mohana Rūpa

down the massive tractor.

“A couple of moments later the tractor toppled over, due to the sheer weight of the trolleys. I was still on the seat with the steering wheel in my hands; the only difference was that the wheels rolled over my head. Somehow my entire body was shielded by the inverted seat. I experienced as if I was no more inside my body. Then I felt the impact of one trolley toppling over the tractor. I was convinced that I was going to be crushed. But noth-



More is less and less is more

by Akhilādhāra Dāsa

In *padayātrā* you learn the meaning of simple living and high thinking. Every day you have new conditions, and when moving place to place, you always find yourself dependent on Lord Kṛṣṇa to get through difficulties. Kṛṣṇa always gives you the strength, the ability, or the external circumstances to get through every difficulty, and makes all the arrangement for your day-to-day facility.

We never want for anything. It is like in the temple, only that external situation is different every day. Every thing is new and changing every day.

In holy places you get extra mercy. Especially in *Padayātrā* India you realize that all of Bhārata is Lord Kṛṣṇa's playground—either directly or through the pastimes of His devotees. It is ever easy to increase your attachment to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this *padayātrā*. With that inspiration I try to share that with the local people who have forgotten the real glories of Bhārata. In today's world this appreciation is vanishing. With the *sāṅkīrtana* movement especially distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, encouraging people to take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy names and appreciate

the nectar of *prasāda*, people can give up the desires to go to the US and appreciate the great fortune they have of taking birth in this holy land. In this way I make many friends every day, and I find my family increasing without limit. Lord Kṛṣṇa gives me more and more happiness.

Before I came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in 1975 in Amsterdam,



Akhilānanda Dāsa (right) on a atop a padayātrā trolley.

Holland, I had no faith in anyone except the supreme Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa has given me Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers as my most important friends and guides. Because of Śrīla Prabhupāda I can realize my eternal relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa and all the living beings. *Padayātrā* is a wonderful way to do this all over Bharat, in Lord Kṛṣṇa's land, to revive that consciousness in the hearts of people in every town and village.

This way I feel my life has some purpose: living and dying for in my journey back home, back to Godhead with Śrīla Prabhupāda and his loving devotees in the eter-

nal sankīrtan army of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. My strong desire is to spend the rest of my life in this *Padayātrā* India party. Every day I pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa and His different expansions, different demigods, and other devotees who can give strength to continue on. It is an ongoing struggle. But that struggle becomes a very intimate relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. How He pre-

serves what I have, provides what I need, to keep going internally and externally. In this way my attachment to Him deepens everyday in a very intense, dynamic exchange and simultaneously my relationship with devotees in *padayātrā* deepens more and more wonderfully. The relationships with Lord Kṛṣṇa and His sold-out

devotees are essential nectar of my life. Of course that is there with devotees all over the world, and with people you meet on the road. But when you are on the frontline of a battlefield with the special forces team, you come to appreciate and depend on each other—very deeply.

All of India is a holy place—everywhere you go there are pastimes of devotees or personal pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is Bhārata and through *Padayātrā* India I have come to understand this very deeply. I have come to feel that all Bhārata is my home. ☀

As told to Murārī Gupta Dāsa

ing happened. Then the second and third trolleys toppled over; I was still breathing.

“The impact shook me to consciousness. I tried to switch off the tractor, and then somehow crawled my way outside. People were shocked to see me alive. A group of fifty villagers arrived with two tractors for help and towed our trolleys and the tractor.

“Many of the villagers went to the bridge, stopping the passing vehicles, pointing to them our plight, and begging money for us. Our kitchen was damaged; we only had some puffed rice and halva, which we distributed to them.

“Perhaps we have to pay them for towing out our tractor, I thought. In the evening, however, the *mukhiya* (village chief) came to me and handed me Rs. 7,000/, their collection. They did not want anything.

“Meanwhile the *ratha* returned to the spot of causality. There were three devotees beside me on the tractor, and baring one, everyone escaped without any injury. Throughout this major accident the Lord sheltered me like the way one securely packs fruits for export. My heart went out to Him. I came before Nitāi-Gaurasundar. ‘Why did You save me?’ I asked Them, realising that if we serve Lord Kṛṣṇa, even if little bit, the Lord saves us from the greatest danger. *Nehābhikrama-nāśo ‘sti. . .* I also learnt that whenever we get good advice—whether from a senior or junior—we should listen.

THE MERCIFUL LORD

I also met Vajrāṅgi Dāsa, who joined *padayātrā* in 2002 in Dvārakā. He says:

“Once in a village in Tamil Nadu we were performing the evening *ārati* with about 70-80 people. Suddenly around 25 people, who were

completely drunk, arrived on the scene and began pushing, pulling, and shoving others while dancing, disturbing us so much that we finally stopped the program and distributed *prasāda*.

“The next day during *darśana*, these men arrived again. We braced ourselves for more problems.

“‘Please stay for one more day,’ they were repenting. ‘Please forgive us for our acts last night. We could not get proper guidance from you because of our inebriated state.’

“Our program was fixed so we could not stop, but they were so apologetic that they walked with us for the next ten km.

“I was wondering how much mercy they must have got by dancing before Gaura-Nitāi. I was reminded of the words of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura. *Adhama patita jīver dvāre dvāre giyā harināma mahā-mantra deno bilāiyā:* ‘Going from door to door in the residences of the most fallen and wretched souls, Lord Nityānanda freely distributes the gift of the *harināma mahā-mantra*.’

“We see in *padayātrā* how the Lord is so merciful. This is what gives us all the bliss.”

The next day, the *padayātrā* was ready to leave to the next destination. After the devotees loaded their belongings on the trolleys they gathered around Nitāi-Gaurasundara doing blissful *kīrtana*, and the bulls were yoked to the cart. Soon amongst waving hands and parting embraces the cart moved and the devotees walked away...to a new destination. I recalled the words of Vajrāṅgi Dāsa, “We see in *padayātrā* how the Lord is so merciful. This is what gives us all the bliss.” Perhaps this is the spirit that keeps the *padayātrā* rolling. ❀

By Murāri Gupta Dāsa

To know more about the *padayātrā*, call its leader Rūpa Gosvāmī Dāsa at 9444546075



First Mad Cow...

(Continued from page 32)

one likes to become old and invalid it is inevitable for everyone.

We are originally part and parcel of the pleasure potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of pleasure Himself. However due to contact with material nature we have forgotten our actual position. This forgetfulness has trapped us in the evolutionary process of transmigration from one body to another. Once trapped we find ourselves in constant struggle with the agents of material nature. These agents could be powerful tsunamis or tornadoes or even down to the most minuscule virus. It is not *their* power that we are confronting, rather it is their *boss* (material nature personified as the terrible goddess, Durgā Devī) with whom we must contend.

The Goliath of scientific progress is felled by a tiny stone of a flu virus. ❀

-Śyāmānanda Dāsa

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

QUESTION FOR THE
FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Which devotee in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* inspires you the most and why?

Deadline for submission is July 30.
Answers will be published in
September and October
Word limit: 150 words

E-mail:
ed.btgindia@pamho.net



Crisis and Prayers

by Bhakta Gopal

Once on *padayātrā*, I was guiding the tractor up on a by-lane that met with a busy highway. Below was another road. One by one, every one got down from the tractor and the trolley.

Could the tractor take the load of all the trolleys together, uphill? It could, we thought and continued. Suddenly the driver stood up straight and shouted, "Brake failed! Brake failed! Somebody stop the tractor." He was standing with his full weight on the brakes, but slowly the tractor began to roll down.

Everyone began picking up big stones and piling them before the wheels of the tractor and the trolleys, but it was unstoppable. Even the bystanders joined us in lifting and placing the stones. I looked below—a busy road was moments away.

"Everyone will blame me for picking this stretch of road," I thought. I nearly lost my equilibrium and in desperation tried to stop the tires with my bare hands. In sheer hopelessness, I cried, "Nitāi-Gaurasundara! Please save me."

Immediately, both the tractors and the three trolleys stopped—by stones placed before them all at the same time. We carefully detached the trolleys and guided the tractor

to safety.

WATER WORKS

Another time I took the *padayātrā* to a place where there was no clean water supply. The only

When I returned there was a big queue of villagers on the spot. They were beaming and carrying pots full of fresh clean water. "What is the matter?" I went and checked. Clean water was gushing out of a tanker and the whole village was filling their buckets and pots from there. Devotees had just finished bathing and cooking with that water.

What transpired was that a devotee found a switch that seemed dysfunctional. He repaired it and switched it on—it was the switch of a pump that filled the tank with underground water. When the pump started functioning the tank filled up in no time. Apparently none of the villagers knew about it. Now everyone thanked the *padayātrā* team for the wonderful gift of water. And I thanked Nitāi-Gaurasundara for another of Their miracle. ☀

As told to Murāri Gupta Dāsa



Śrīla Prabhupāda and Nitāi-Gaurasundara

source of water was a small dirty pond from where the entire village fetched water. There had been no rain for years in that village. I left the place to arrang for the next day's shelter, but on the way I felt bad for not arranging some tanker of fresh water for the devotees.

"Nitāi-Gaurasundar," I prayed, "Please arrange something."

Bhakta Gopal is a member of advance party of the padayātrā.

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

**ISKCON DEVOTEE SELECTED AS
TEDGLOBAL FELLOW**

Aṣṭottara-śata Dāsa (Alexander Petroff), son of



BTG author Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī has been named a 2009 TEDGlobal fellow for his Working Villages International Varṇāśrama project in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He'll be presenting at a conference with the

other TED fellows on July 21-24 in Oxford, England. The 2009 TEDGlobal Fellows comprise an eclectic group of individuals; all are committed to the spread of great ideas. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. The annual conference now brings together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers.

For more details see <http://www.workingvillages.org/main.html> and <http://www.ted.com/fellows>

SOLAPUR RATHA-YĀTRĀ

27 March: Ratha-yātrā festival was held in Solapur, Maharashtra with over 4,000 devotees from Maharashtra and other parts of the world attending.



A PRAYER FOR THE MAYOR

April 8: Nityānanda Candra of the Dallas, USA Hare Kṛṣṇa temple was given the honor of presenting an invocation prayer before the Dallas City Council. This is done before every Council Meeting.

**HARE KṚṢṆA PROGRAM
ON TELEVISION**

UK: A team of devotees from Bhaktivedanta Manor headed by Rāmānuja Dāsa have set up a TV program called *Hare Kṛṣṇa Culture*. This program has lectures and *kīrtanas* by ISKCON devotees around the world. It can be viewed in UK and Europe on a free Sky channel called MATV, channel 793 at 10.00 am every Sunday and is repeated on Wednesday at 4.30 am (UK time). In India, Middle East, and Far East, the program will be broadcast on Sanskar TV at 10.00 pm (India time) every Saturday.

MUSICAL YOGA WITH KĪRTANA

An increasing number of Americans are connecting with the yoga of *kīrtana*. At the Omega Center in Rhinebeck, N.Y., attendance to its Ecstatic Chant festival has doubled over the last five years. Jo Sgammato,



57, the center's general manager, said the Friday-night *kīrtana* would have about 25 participants 10 years ago; now the center will sometimes host 400 in a single weekend. At the Jivamukti Yoga School in Manhattan, 700 people came last September to see Kṛṣṇa Dāsa setting a record for *kīrtana* at the center.

As with meditation, the intent of chanting is to calm and focus the mind, relieving it from its usual chatter—grocery lists, money worries, petty arguments. “Chanting works well because it engages the mind and because it’s musical,” said Mitra Somerville, 49, who leads Integral’s community *kīrtana*. “The melody and the vibration of the words are very soothing and uplifting, so people can really connect with it.”



ISKCON HELPS CLEAN VRINDAVANA'S SACRED LAKES

As part of an ongoing effort to maintain Vraja, the ancient sacred lakes, Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma kuṇḍa, are being cleaned for the first time since 1987. Full cleaning will take about a month and a half to complete. Besides pumping the lake, the Indian government is rebuilding the steps leading down to both lakes.

DELHI CHIEF MINISTER FELICITATES ISKCON

Delhi: The Government of Delhi recently orga-



nized a Sankalp Utsav 2009 in Pragati Maidan, Delhi. The Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dikshit, invited ISKCON to present ISKCON'S Food For Life program achievements. ISKCON was also given the honor of lighting the inauguration lamp on this occasion. The event was cov-

ered by all major electronic and news media.

Balabhadra Dāsa and Mr. Piyooosh Goyal of ISKCON received the appreciation award from the Chief Minister for ISKCON's program for feeding the poor in seven different areas of Delhi, daily. The program is entitled *Aap Ki Rasoi* ("your kitchen").

SOUTH AFRICA EXPERIENCES 21 YEARS OF JAGANNĀTHA'S FESTIVAL

Durban, South Africa: For the past 21 years, ISKCON Durban has held its annual Ratha-yātrā festival over the course of Easter weekend. The four day festival, which took place from April 10–13, is widely considered to be the largest Ratha-yātrā outside of India, attracting an estimated quarter million people over the four days.

KṚṢṆA LUNCHES BECOME A UNIVERSITY TRADITION

For more than 38 years, ISKCON devotees in Gainesville, Florida, have been distributing prasāda in

the University of Florida campus. Students can enjoy a healthy vegetarian meal for a donation of \$4.



CROATIA WELCOME NEW DEITIES

Karlovac, Croatia: Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gauracandra were installed in the Karlovac ISKCON temple, in Croatia. Candramauli Swami, who had inspired the Karlovac devotees in their endeavors over the years, led the whole event.



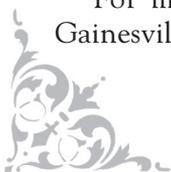
ISKCON SCHOOL DECLARED BEST

Amar Ujala, a daily Indian newspaper, has selected ISKCON's Bhaktivedanta Gurukula and International School in Vṛndāvana (BGIS) as the top school in the Mathura district and the second best school in the State



of Uttar Pradesh. The selection was released in the Newspapers' Education and Career section on May 6.

Reports by Vrajendra Nandan Dāsa, Ekalavya Dāsa, Rupa Jagernauth, and Madhava Smullen.



In your own words ...

Describe one incident in your life where you clearly felt the presents of Kṛṣṇa?

EVERY YEAR DURING ISKCON'S Jagannātha Rathayātrā in Hyderabad, my husband was able to donate only 516 rupees. This year I asked him to give 5,116 rupees. I remembered him telling me he'd helped a friend a year ago, and I suggested he ask this friend to repay the debt. I told my husband to ask for 10,000 rupees, so that his friend would give us at least 5,000. My husband refused. But the next day, the friend arrived at our house uninvited and gave us 10,000 rupees. My husband hadn't mentioned his friend's name before, so it came as a bit of a shock. "Pleased to meet you," he said, introducing himself to me. "My name is Jagannatha Reddy."

Meenakshi Veerapaneni,
Hyderabad

IT WAS MAY 15, 2008. There was Deity welcoming ceremony in my home. All arrangements were done. The program was about to start with a lecture by Gaurāṅga Prabhu. But in the beginning only the mike of the sound system failed. In my small town there was no possibility of bringing new mike system immediately. Gaurāṅga Prabhu told all the devotees that they should take prasāda first, then lecture would start.

But I was still under tremendous anxiety of arranging new sound system. Suddenly a person came forward. He was not invited for the program; he came with one relative. He was a technician and soon fixed the problem, and the lecture started. It was a unique program

where there was first prasāda and then lecture and *kīrtana*.

Initially I was thinking that I had made perfect arrangements for the Deity welcoming, but after the incidence I realized that ultimately all arrangements are done by Kṛṣṇa only.

Dr. Navnath Janjale,
Nasik

DURING THE OPENING OF RĀDHĀ PAṆDHARĪNĀTHA temple in 2005, my service was to drive visitors. I had no time to see what was happening inside the temple because I was too busy. At the end of the ceremony, I was extremely tired, and I decided not to do anymore driving. But a senior devotee approached me asking if I could drive home a guest. I agreed although I hadn't slept well in the last two nights.

While driving on the Mumbai-Pune highway, I started dozing off. In my half-asleep state, a beam of light from a speeding truck pierced my eyes. I saw death fast approaching. The truck was only a few meters away when I loudly cried out for Kṛṣṇa. How I was saved I don't know, but I feel it couldn't have happened without Kṛṣṇa's involvement.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita Dāsa,
Solapur, Maharashtra

4.30AM. CLOSED STRUCTURE, LOFTY STEPS and stuck in the steep slopes reaching to the Tirupati temple, I was breathless, clueless, and had no strength to climb any further. With no help in sight, I sank to a seat hoping for

some rescue. Finally I saw someone coming—a devotee chanting with a resounding clear voice. She stopped and encouraged me, "Chant, chant" and then continued climbing further. Trying for one last time, I started chanting and climbing. I started pondering over what I was going through.

Indeed I felt the presence of the Lord in His holy names—He who is non different from His names, who has invested all His energies in them and has not maintained any rules for chanting these names, thus enabling us to easily approach Him. Indeed by His mercy, I reached up the hills without gasping, at a stretch covering over two thousand steps in just a few hours.

Brajasvāmini Devī Dāsī,
Mumbai

I WAS IN PURĪ TO ATTEND THE 2006 Ratha-yātrā. The day before the Ratha-yātrā, I was diagnosed with malaria, but I still went to attend. Unfortunately I got caught up in stampede a dozen pilgrims crushing me from all sides. Somehow the Lord saved me, but I left breathless, exhausted, and without taking *darśana*.

Feeling highly despondent, I kept chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa until 3 am the next morning. I prayed to Lord Jagannātha, "You allowed everyone to take Your *darśana*, but me. I cooked *chappan bhoga* for You—was there any mistake in it? I beg forgiveness, and if You really love me, please allow me to take your *darśana* tomorrow morning."

The next morning, a devotee



offered to take me for Jagannāthaji's *darśana*. I was ready in no time despite my weakness, and soon I was in front of Lord Jagannātha. It was a miracle. With tears of repentance and heart filled with joy, I begged forgiveness and offered my grateful prayers.

Shridhar,
Mumbai

DURING MY SCHOOL-DAYS, with my bicycle, I not only perfected race driving but also mastered the art of taking sharp turns and cuts with perfect timing. Once

surprisingly untouched by either the speeding car or the parked truck. Still this miraculous escape is beyond any engineering theory or present scientific understanding. It was the Lord Kṛṣṇa who not only saved but nicely taught me the lesson of my life against rash driving.

Rajesh Kumar Mishra,
Mumbai

ON 26TH JULY, 2005 I left my office to go home—just a 15 minutes drive. Half way through, the bus stopped due to traffic jam because of heavy flooding. Just then,

floating; the bus could not maintain the balance in waist deep water. Soon after, the bus completely broke down. But when I looked around, the place hardly had any waterlog, and was so near my house.

Many of my colleagues were stuck in the office, which had meanwhile flooded up to neck level, for two days without proper food and water. Lord Kṛṣṇa guided me to safety.

Vraja Vijayā Devī Dāsi,
Mumbai

AS A NEW ENTRANT TO ISKCON and a parched soul

trapped in material life, I was trying to have my fill of its every glorious pleasure. Suddenly, my employers announced a fast track promotion process for top executive cadre and I was eligible. Office was agog with every eligible candidate in feverish preparation alone and in groups with one notable omission. I was too immersed in my blissful world! I underwent the promotion process indifferently.

In each of the three steps, I surprised everyone, mainly me! There I was the only successful candidate among a 100, and one of 13 among 1000! I was transferred out of Mumbai and my heart broke. Yet, devotees showered me with their blessings and here I am, seven years and many cities later, still in the cooling shelter of loving Vaiṣṇavas. That really is the mercy of Kṛṣṇa!

Kalānidhi Dāsa, Hyderabad



Gajaveśa (elephant dress) of Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā at ISKCON Māyāpur

I was crossing a highway, I saw a truck coming with speed. I judged and decided to cross. After crossing that lane, suddenly I found another speeding car very close. On the opposite side, there was another truck parked on the road. That moment, I found no way I could have saved myself and simply closed my eyes. When I opened my eyes, I found myself not only on the other side of the road safely driving but

right in front of my eyes, I saw one of the walls of Hotel Jal collapse. The severity of the situation penetrated my head; till then, sitting by the window of the bus, I was enjoying the rainfall. I pulled out my bead bag and started chanting intensely.

After sometime, the bus moved through unknown by lanes, rain water slowly seeping into the footboard. Further ahead, I felt like

CENTRES IN INDIA

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

Correct
as of
31 May
2009

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nagpur, Maharashtra — Bharathwada Road, Near Gulmohar Nagar, Ramanuja Nagar, Kalmana Market, Nagpur- 8/ Tel. (0712) 6994730, 937015638/9371064102/ 9423635311/ iskcon.nagpur@pamho.net

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

New Delhi — Sant Nagar Main Rd., East of Kailash, 110 065/ Tel. (011)26235133,34,35,36,37/ Fax: (011) 2621-5421 or 2628-0067/ neel.sunder@pamho.net

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

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

Noida, UP — B-4, Sector 31, 201 301/ Tel. (095120) 245-4912 or 245-5015/ vraja.bhakti.vilas.lok@pamho.net

Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Hare Krishna Dham (East bank of Chandrabhaga river), 413 304/ Tel. (02186) 267242 or 267266/ Mobile: 9423335991/ iskcon.pandharpur@pamho.net

Patna, Bihar — Arya Kumar Rd., Rajendra Nagar, 800 016/ Tel. (0612) 687637 or 685081/ Fax: (0612) 687635/ krishna.kripa.jps@pamho.net

Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapur Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (020) 41033222, 41033223/ iyfpune@vsnl.com

Puri, Orissa — Bhakti Kuti, Swargadwar, 752 001/ Tel. (06752) 231440

Raipur, Chhatisgarh — Alopi Nagar, Opp. Maharshi Vidyalaya, Tatibandh, 492 001/ Tel. (0771) 5037555, 9893276985/ iskconraipur@yahoo.com

Salem, TN — Rajaram Nagar, 636 007/ Tel. (0427) 2418245/ iskcon.salem@pamho.net

Secunderabad, AP — 27, St. John's Rd., 500 026/ Tel. (040) 780-5232/ Fax: (040) 814021

Siliguri, WB — ISKCON Road, Gitalpara, 734 406/ Tel. (0353) 426619, 539046 or 539082/ Fax: (0353) 526130

Solapur, Maharashtra — Bhaktivedanta Marg, Old Akalkot Naka, District Solapur, 413005 . Tel. 09371178393

Sri Rangam, TN — 93 Anna Mandapam Rd., A-1 Caitanya Apartments, 620 006/ Tel. (0431) 433945

Surat, Gujarat — Jahangirpura-3, 395 005/ Tel. (0261) 2765891 or 2765516/ surat@pamho.net

Thane, Maharashtra — Srusti Complex, Opp. Royal College, Mira Road (E), 401 107/ Tel. (022) 2811-7795 or -7796/ Fax: (022) 2811-8875/ jagjivan.gkd@pamho.net

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala — T.C. 224/1485, WC Hospital Rd., Thycaud, 695 014. Tel. (0471) 2328197. jsdasa@yahoo.co.in

Tirupati, AP — Sri Sri Radha Govinda Asta Sakhi Girirajji Mandir, Hare Krishna Land, Hare Krishna Road, Tirupati - 517 507 Andhra Pradesh. Phone: (0877) 2231760, 2230009

Guest House Booking: guesthouse.tirupati@pamho.net

Udhampur, J&K — SrilaPrabhupada Marg, Srila Prabhupada Nagar/ Tel. (01992) 270298 or 276146

Ujjain, MP — Bharatpuri, 456010/ Tel. 0734-235000/ Fax: 0734-2536000/ iskcon.ujjain@pamho.net

Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat — Opposite Polytechnic, 388 121/ Tel. (02692) 230796 or 233012

Varanasi, UP — B 27/80 Durgakund Rd., Near Durgakund Police Station, 221 010/ Tel. (0542) 276422 or 222617

Vellore, TN — Chennai Ext. Centre, 10-12, 10th East Cross Road, Gandhi Nagar, 632006

Vijayawada, AP — Venkatapalem Karakatta Rd., Undavalli Village, Tadepalli Mandal, 522 501/ Tel. (08645) 272513/ mmdasiskconvijayawada@gmail.com

Vishakapatnam, AP — Sagaranaagar, 530045/ Tel. (0891) 5537625/ samba.jps@pamho.net

Vrindavan, UP — Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, 281 124/ Tel. (0565) 254-0021 (Guesthouse:) 254-0022/ Fax: (0565) 254-0053/ vrindavan@pamho.net; (Guesthouse:)

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

Vaiṣṇava Calendar 1 July - 15 Aug 2009

3 JUL: Fasting for Śayana 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

16 JUL: The incorporation of ISKCON in New York

18 JUL: Fasting for Kāmikā Ekādaśī

19 JUL: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:11 am - 10:33 am

25 JUL: Śrī Raghunandana Ṭhākura – Disappearance, Śrī Varṇśīdāsa Bābājī – Disappearance

1 AUG: Rādhā Govinda Jhulana Yātrā begins

2 AUG: Fasting for Pavitropaṇā Ekādaśī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī – Disappearance, Śrī Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita – Disappearance

3 AUG: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:16 am - 10:35 am

5 AUG: Jhulana Yātrā ends, Lord Balarāma – Appearance (Fasting till noon),

Second month of Cāturmāsya begins (Fast from yogurt for one month)

7 AUG: Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure for the USA

14 AUG: Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī: Appearance of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (Fasting till midnight)

15 AUG: Nandotsava, Śrīla Prabhupāda – Appearance (Fasting till noon)

First MAD COW, then BIRD FLU and now SWINE FLU

A new virus is threatening us—the Swine Flu virus. It is discussed on hundreds of blogs and discussion forums. Some experts say it is brand new, some feel it isn't, others fear it may grow to pandemic proportions, still others hope it can be controlled. The blame game has begun—right from the livestock industry to some third world countries, and things in between, are the usual suspects. Meanwhile the common man remains a mute observer, if the flu has not hit him yet, and a poor victim, if otherwise.

Medical science has made rapid strides, and almost every day we hear a new discovery which will certainly herald the end of a particular disease. The book *Mirage of Health: Utopia, Progress and Biological Change* is a pioneering study of medical history written in the late 1950's by a physician named Rene Dubos. Here is what he says matter-of-factly:

“Progress toward some utopia of health is an illusion. Disease will never be “conquered.” Disease is so inescapable a part of our human condition that today's remedies inevitably become the agents of tomorrow's ills.” Dr. Dubos compiled enough historical evidence to show how the diseases we suffer from arise out of the complex social, political, and economic dynamics of our particular society. As society changes, our diseases change with it. Some diseases fade away, and others, out of the inexhaustible bounty of material nature, rise to take their place.

In modern industrial societies, as Dr. Dubos points out, we no longer suffer and die from smallpox, typhus, typhoid, diphtheria, and the other microbial plagues of the past. We have made “progress”: We suffer and die instead from cancer, AIDS, coronary heart disease, emphysema, and mental disorders (with their attendant drug abuse and suicide).

Surprisingly, Dr. Dubos comes to the conclusion that our brilliant scientists had little to do with the disappearance of infectious diseases. These afflictions

were retired mainly by the social and economic reforms that followed industrialization. At the same time, that same process was ushering in a whole new set of scourges. And even those old diseases are by no means “conquered,” Dubos warns. They are merely held at bay (at a high price), and they can re-enter human history any time the conditions are right.

Lord Kṛṣṇa states that to perceive the evil of birth, death, old age, and disease means real knowledge. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to paraphrase this simple truth in this way: Material life means these four things. Birth of the material body, after some time the body grows old, it gets diseased, and then there is death. These problems of material existence—birth, old age, disease, and death—cannot be counteracted by accumulation of wealth and economic development. In many parts of the world there are states which are replete with all facilities of life, which are full of wealth and economically developed, yet the problems of material existence are still present. Actually, pure happiness cannot be had within this material world. If we wish to enjoy something, we must suffer for something else. On the whole, suffering is the nature of this material world, and whatever enjoyment we are trying to achieve is simply illusion. After all, we have to suffer the miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death. We may discover many fine medicines, but it is not possible to stop the sufferings of disease or death. Actually, medicine is not the counteracting agent for either disease or death. On the whole there is no happiness in this material world, but an illusioned person works very hard for so-called happiness. Indeed, this process of working hard is actually taken for happiness. This is called illusion.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* aptly describes invalidity of old age as the daughter of the time factor. Although no one likes her, she is very much anxious to accept anyone as her husband. This means that although no

(please turn to page 24)

