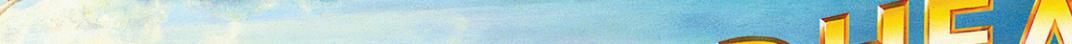


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Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience



BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

June 2010



Krsna-valley

A Transcendental Eco-village Community



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Please understand this Indian culture and try to give it to the western brothers in the prescribed standard method of the liberated persons. That will be an exchange of Indian culture with western material advancement, which will necessarily bring in a happy life in the world.

—Letter to
Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru,
Bombay, 4 August 1958



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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. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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(Ujwal Jajoo) • **PRODUCTION** Sat Cit

Ānanda Dāsa (Sanjiv Maheshwari), Sundar Rūpa Dāsa (Sudarshan Sapaliga)

• **GENERAL MANAGER (CIRCULA-**

TION) Panduraṅga Dāsa (Rajendra-kumar Pujari) • **ACCOUNTS** Sahadeva Dāsa (S.P. Maheshwari) • **SUBSCRIBER SERVICES**

Manjarī Devī Dāsī (Mira Singh)

OFFICE Back to Godhead, 33 Janki Kutir, Next to State Bank of Hyderabad, Juhu, Mumbai 400 049, India.

SUBSCRIPTIONS *Back to Godhead* is published twelve times a year. Subscriptions charges - one-year: Rs. 150/-, two-years:

Rs. 300/-, five-years: Rs. 700/- You can start subscription from any month. Send the amount to **Back to Godhead**, 302, Amrut Industrial Estate, 3rd floor, Western Express Highway, Mira Road (E) 401 104.

Tel: (022) 28457751

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To change your address or clear up any questions about your subscription, write to BTG Service Center & Marketing Office at above address.

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PRINTING Magna Graphics Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai.

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CLEVER WRITING

I went through your column and was impressed by the replies given to the readers queries. "Orkuting with Kṛṣṇa" was nice to read. The writer has used the idiom of internet to clarify many things. It is clever writing adopting the language of an internet-savvy person to make one realize the importance of following the steps to come to Godhead.

Aravind Rajesh N
Chennai

FULL OF DEVOTION

I am thankful to BTG for this wonderful śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhakti magazine, which brings closer all the devotees. I truly experienced it in the March issue in the column, In Your Own Words "What would you like to thank God for?" The idea of this column was commendable, and the replies were something that would be similar to ours.

I also support the views of Murāri Gupta Dāsa in the column "Debt and Death—the Policies of Errors." But there has to be a macro view on the whole scenario of ecology with coordination required from all the authorities and departments.

I enjoy reading *Back to Godhead* and *Bhagavad Darshan* and will be happy if everyone can understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings and apply them in their lives.

Sidharth Panwar

SUGGESTION ACKNOWLEDGED

Firstly, I would like appreciate the great work all the devotees at the BTG India office are doing by publishing wonderful, mature articles. I have a small suggestion to make. I have been

a regular reader of BTG for years, but off late I have noticed that the column "Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out" is changed to "Founder's Views." I see the term "Founder" sounds like any other human who created an institution like, say, "Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan." If we can rename the column as "Founder Ācārya's Views," it would be very appropriate, majestic, and more eloquent to the outside world.

Viśāla Gaurāṅga Dāsa

OUR REPLY: Thanks for straightening us out. Please see the new title on the next page. ☺

Write to us at: *Back to Godhead*, 3rd Floor, 302, Amrut Industrial Estate, Western Express Highway, Mira Road (E)-401104.

Email: ed.btgindia@pamho.net

VEDIC THOUGHTS

Our real love is continuous and unending, but because that love is reflected pervertedly in this material world, it lacks continuity and is inebriating. If we want real, transcendental love, we have to transfer our love to the supreme lovable object—Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

—Cc. Adi Introduction

To live in the forest is in the mode of goodness, to live in the city is in the mode of passion, and to live in a brothel is in the mode of ignorance. To live in the temple is transcendental, above goodness, pure goodness.

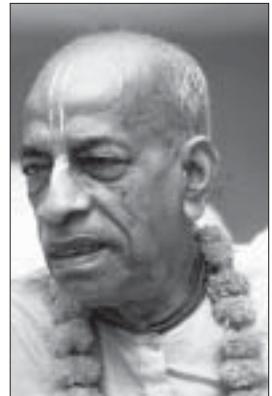
—Lecture on Śrī Īśopaniṣad, Los Angeles, October 30, 1968

Illusion of Progress

Darkness of the present age is not due to lack of material progress, but due to lack of spiritual advancement.

by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.



HUMAN V/S ANIMAL

What is “progress”? A dog’s jumping is progress? A dog is running here and there on four legs, and you are running on four wheels. Is that progress?

The Vedic system is this: The human being has a certain amount of energy—better energy than the animals’, better consciousness—and that energy should



A dog runs on four legs and a man runs on four wheels.

be utilized for spiritual advancement. So the whole Vedic system is meant for spiritual advancement. Human energy is employed in a more exalted direction than to compete with the dog.

Consequently, sometimes those who have no idea of religion notice that the Indian saintly persons are not working hard like dogs. Spiritually uncultured people think the dog race is life. But actual life is spiritual progress. (*Civilization and Transcendence*, Chapter 2)

ILLUSORY PROGRESS

The darkness of the present age is not due to lack of material advancement, but that we have lost the clue to our spiritual advancement which is the prime necessity of human life and the criterion of the highest type of civilisation. Throwing of bombs from aeroplanes is no advancement of civilisation from the

primitive, uncivilized way of dropping big stones on the heads of the enemies from the tops of the hills. Improvement of the art of killing our neighbours by inventing machine guns and by means of poisonous gases is certainly no advancement from primitive barbarism priding itself on its art of killing by bows and arrows, nor does the development of a sense of pampered selfishness prove anything more than intellectual animalism.

Thus, while others were yet in the womb of historical oblivion, the sages of India had developed a different kind of civilisation which enables us to know ourselves. They had discovered that we are not at all material entities, but that we are all spiritual, permanent and non-destructible servants of the Absolute.

(*Vyāsa-pūjā offering to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī* by Śrīla Prabhupāda, 1935)

In the materialistic conception, modern civilization

makes enormous arrangements for huge roads, houses, mills and factories, and this is man's conception of the advancement of civilization. People do not know, however, that at any time they themselves may be kicked out of the scene and forced to accept bodies that have nothing to do with these enormous houses, palaces, roads and automobiles. (*Bhāg.* 7.2.60, purport)

We may think that we are making good advancement in economic development, but there is no solution for these four problems, as enunciated by Bhagavad-gītā, janma, mṛtyu, jarā, vyādhi. There is no solution for birth. There is so much attempt for birth control all over the world, but still, in every minute or in every second some percentage of population is increasing. Mṛtyu, similarly, there are so many attempts to discover scientific measures to stop death, but it is not possible. Death is taking place. Rather, in the present age, death is taking place earlier than in years before. Formerly people were living, say, hundred years, eighty years, ninety years, and nowadays a man is living, utmost, seventy years, sixty years. ...So practically we are not making any progress.

(Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.3, Montreal, 3 June 1968)

HARD STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

In Kali-yuga modern civilization is mainly situated in the cities. A great city, however, is like a great forest. Actually city life is more dangerous than life in the forest. If one enters an unknown city without friend



or shelter, living in that city is more difficult than living in a forest. There are many big cities all over the surface of the globe, and wherever one looks he sees the struggle for existence going on twenty-four hours a day, people rush about in cars going seventy and eighty miles an hour, constantly coming and going, and this sets the scene of the great struggle for existence. One has to rise early in the morning and travel in that car at break-neck speed. There is always the danger of an accident, and one has to take great care. In his automobile, the living entity is full of anxieties, and his struggle is not at all auspicious. (*Bhāg.* 5.14.1, purport)

REAL WEALTH

It is understood that all the people depended on nature's gifts of fruits and flowers without industrial enterprises promoting filthy huts and slums for residential quarters. Advancement of civilization is estimated not on the growth of mills and factories to deteriorate the finer instincts of the human being, but on developing the potent spiritual instincts of human beings and giving them a chance to go back to Godhead. Development of factories and mills is called *ugra-karma*, or pungent activities, and such activities deteriorate the finer sentiments of the human being and society to form a dungeon of demons.

The impious trees are useless jungles only, and they can only be used to supply fuels. In the modern civilization such impious trees are planted on the sides of roads. Human energy should be properly utilized in developing the finer senses for spiritual understanding, in which lies the solution of life. Fruits, flowers, beautiful gardens, parks and reservoirs of water with ducks and swans playing in the midst of lotus flowers,



City life is characterized by a hard struggle for existence—rushing in cars (above) and working in hellish factories (right). Whereas beautiful gardens, parks and reservoirs of water (opposite page) are essential for developing the finer tissues of the human body.



and cows giving sufficient milk and butter are essential for developing the finer tissues of the human body. As against this, the dungeons of mines, factories and workshops develop demoniac propensities in the working class. The vested interests flourish at the cost of the working class, and consequently there are severe clashes between them in so many ways. (*Bhāg.* 1.11.12, purport)

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra had to collect heaps of gold to secure the paraphernalia for the horse sacrifice *yajñas* in days of sufficiency, so we can hardly think of such performance of *yajñas* in these days of insufficiency and complete scarcity of gold. At the present moment we have heaps of papers and promises of their being converted into gold by economic development of modern civilization, and still there is no possibility of spending riches like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra, either individually or collectively or by state patronization. (*Bhāg.* 1.12.34, purport)

DIRECTIONS TOWARD REAL PROGRESS

The basic flaw in modern civilization is that boys and girls are given freedom during school and college to enjoy sex life. Most of the children are *varṇa-saṅkara*, meaning "born of undesirable fathers and mothers." Consequently, the whole world is in chaos. Actually, human civilization should be based on the Vedic principles. This means that in the beginning of life boys and girls should undergo penances and austerities. When they are grown, they should get married, live

for some time at home and beget children. When the children are grown up, the man should leave home and search for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In this way one can make one's life perfect by going home to the kingdom of God. (*Bhāg.* 4.31.1, purport)

Modern civilization and economic development are creating a new situation of poverty and scarcity with the result of blackmailing the consumer's commodities. If the leaders and the rich men of the society spend fifty percent of their accumulated wealth mercifully for the misled mass of people and

educate them in God consciousness, the knowledge of *Bhāgavatam*, certainly the age of Kali will be defeated in its attempt to entrap the conditioned souls. (*Bhāg.* 1.17.24, purport)

The bestial civilization of eating, sleeping, fearing and sense-gratifying has misled modern man into forgetting how powerful a soul he has. The soul is a spiritual spark which is many, many times more illuminating, dazzling and powerful than sun, moon or electricity. Human life is spoiled when man does not realize his real identity with his soul. Lord Caitanya appeared with His disciple Nityānanda to save man from this type of misleading civilization. (*Easy Journey to Other Planets*, Chapter 1)

In modern civilization people are very much interested in exploiting the resources of material nature through the methods of science. Indeed, this is considered advancement. This is not actually advancement, however, but is simply pleasing to hear. Although we are advancing according to such concocted methods, we are forgetting our real purpose. Bhaktivinoda Thākura therefore says, *jaḍa-vidyā yata māyāra vaibhava tomāra bhajane bādhā*: "Materialistic studies are the glare of *māyā* only, for they are an obstacle to spiritual progress." The temporary comforts of life experienced either on this planet or on other planets are all to be taken as illusory because they do not touch the real purpose of life. The real purpose of life is to go back home, back to Godhead. (*Bhāg.* 4.29.47, purport)

Protecting Children from Bad influence

Tips from an expert parent.

by Aruddhā Devī Dāsī



Children in a Hungarian Hare Kṛṣṇa farm play roles of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

Our son Mohan is 11 years old and now in Standard VI. We are afraid about the bad

influences that schools bring to children. Kindly advise us about how we can protect him from such bad

influence and raise him as a good devotee.

Question from concerned parents.

ARUDDHĀ REPLIES: Since home-schooling your son is not possible, you could encourage him to attend the temple functions, evening āratis and some classes. However, don't push him too hard; he may become negative. Instead encourage and trick him by letting him participate in events such as dramas, doing some volunteer work during festivals, etc. You can teach him how to play mṛdanga or harmonium so that he can participate in temple or home programs in an active way.

Good firm friendship with adult devotees and other good devotee friends of his age will also keep him away from mundane attractions that he will pick up from his school friends. When sannyāsīs and gurus visit the local temple you can invite them to your house so that he gets a chance to associate with them in a personal way thereby receiving a lot of mercy from them. One day he may be willing to travel with them on short trips.

Keeping a devotional environment at home will also be helpful. Since he cannot attend a full morning program at the temple because of his school schedule, you can have a short one at home for him so that he can start the day right. Also do an evening ārati at home or temple. He will learn by your good example. Please do not turn on the television; it could be detrimental for his spiritual life, even though the show may appear harmless. You can encourage him to read a book on the subject instead. Teach him why eating only prasāda is important. All this you should do in a loving manner, not forced.

You can do some chanting in the evening with some reading and discussion from Prabhupāda's books

as a family together. Sometimes you can discuss with him the events at school so that you can teach him how to discriminate between the good and the bad through logic and philosophy of the scriptures.

The children at this age are easily influenced by their surroundings; their consciousness may drift away due to non-devotee association. However, if you keep his daily discipline of worshipping Deities, some chanting, morning

and evening program, reading some scriptures together with you—this will help keep his devotional mood. ☺

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.

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

BTG Yatra Seva presents a yatra to

Melkote

Melukote is in Pandavapura taluk of Mandya district, Karnataka, is one of the sacred places in Karnataka. The place is also known as Thirunarayanaapuram. It is built on rocky hills known as Yadavagiri or Yaugiri overlooking the Cauvery valley.

Places we will visit

- CHELVANARAYANA SWAMY TEMPLE
- YOGA-NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE
- KALYANI OR PUSHKARANI
- SRIRANGAPATNA
- KAVERI RIVER
- TONDANUR
- HIMAVAD GOPALASWAMY TEMPLE,
- BANDIPUR FOREST;

Date : 8 - 11 Sept 2010

Yatra Charges: Rs. 4500/- per head
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Yatra starts and ends at Bangalore.

For yatra registration, contact : Pandurangdas : 9324581718
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100
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Kṛṣṇa-valley

A Transcendental Eco-village Community

Glimpses from a Hare Kṛṣṇa community in Hungary.

By Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, András Kun and
Szilvia Rév of Eco-valley Foundation





October 15, 2009; 3 pm; Kṛṣṇa-valley, Central Europe, Hungary, in the outskirts of the Parish of Somogyvámos. We take part in a mid-afternoon sight-seeing tour of the second Sustainability Conference. Our guide is a monk living in Kṛṣṇa-valley, who relishes our round of the village with thrilling stories. It turns out that this is the second conference and even though last year there were merely 140 participants, this year more than 420 people came together for one of the largest sustainability conferences in Europe. However, the question may arise: why do the Hungarian Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees organize a scientific conference on sustainability? Why are people so interested in it? Why do they come from all over Hungary and from all over the world? These and all our other curious questions are answered during the afternoon.

The walk in time and space reveals the recent history of Kṛṣṇa-valley, which is a quite special, unique example of community building, collaboration of individuals and a lifestyle aiming at harmonious coexistence with natural environment. Kṛṣṇa-valley is far-famed for its favorable results regarding sustainability and the inhabitants' exemplary ecologic lifestyle. Dozens of scientists, teachers, university and college students come here to learn and ferret about the artfulness of organic farming. Tens of thousands visit every year to see this model of organic farming and the dairy farm. Nevertheless, there is a common destination during every walk: the temple. All visitors who

A beautiful mural of Kṛṣṇa oversees the vast expanse of Kṛṣṇa valley; (inset) Devotees going in a procession in the village.

come with manifold purposes and also the participants of this conference have had the auspicious opportunity to see the dearest secret of Kṛṣṇa-valley, the source of all prosperity: the altar with the presiding Deities of Hungary, the gleaming forms of Tribhuvana-sundara Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma-sundara.

A TRAVEL IN TIME: HISTORY OF KRŚNA-VALLEY IN A NUTSHELL

The history of Kṛṣṇa-valley goes back to the beginning of the 1990's. After the collapse of the communist regime the opportunity to fulfil a long-cherished wish became true: to follow and implement the instructions of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and lay the foundations of a Kṛṣṇa conscious farming community in Hungary. Following the desire of the Hungarian leader of ISKCON, Śrila Sivārāma Swami, and with the leadership of Gaura Śakti Dāsa, the community succeeded in buying a sizeable plot of rural land in 1993. And from then on such a thing commenced which—and this is possibly not an overstatement—is peerless in the history of ISKCON.

First the temple came in 1996. The temple walls were made out of brick and locally mined clay. Besides lime, clay, and cement, the most powerful bonding material, the devotion of the builders, makes the walls stable. All indoor works, decorations, sculptures, and paintings of the temple walls are works of devotee artists. The largest Kṛṣṇa



Sri Sri Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, the presiding Deities of Kṛṣṇa-valley (top), and His Holiness Śivārāma Swami leading a kirtana in the temple. On the opposite page (top) lakes and pavilions inside Kṛṣṇa-valley; (below) devotees performing boat festival for the Deities.

temple in Central Europe was completed in this way.

The Deities were installed in 1996 and Their presence in Kṛṣṇa-valley

has been more and more perceptible ever since then. Śrila Śivārāma Swami's pure devotion and tremendous effort make it possible for the

inhabitants to serve Rādhe-Śyāma. The Deities, on the other hand, shower Their mercy onto the devotees. This is the most confidential secret of Kṛṣṇa-valley and consequently the force through which Kṛṣṇa-valley's story has become a successful one from both a material and spiritual point of view.

Guests describe the place in the following way: "tranquil," "peaceful and silent," "attractive scenery," "calm and kind people." They come back if they have a chance.

Agriculture has been planned

and developed since 1995 and landscape has been formed by complex management. The important standpoints of agricultural planning and implementing are *ahimsā*, self-sufficiency, ecologic aspect and long-term sustainability. As a result, organic farming and moderate resource use is in progress from the very first day. On the 230-hectare land bought by the Hare Kṛṣṇa people, which used to be a large-scale plough-land and an intensive sheep-walk, we see something completely different...

A WALK IN PRESENT: SIGHTS OF KRṢNA-VALLEY

Kṛṣṇa-valley is not solely an eco-village developing in a plain valley as the ground is much diverse. The main valley is ramifying into smaller side-valleys and if we look around, we see gentle slopes and steep slants with wide hills in all directions. In the middle of the territory, in the deepest section of the valley, there is a streamlet. Its special feature is that the source is an affluent fountain found in the area of Kṛṣṇa-valley. The streamlet has been dammed up in several places creating various ponds and later on groves were planted around them with refreshing microclimate.

After we have passed the pillars marking the gate of Kṛṣṇa-valley



guarded by life-size sculptures of elephants, we arrive at a little pond situated along the bank of the stream. Next to it there is a red pavilion sparkling like a crest jewel in the sunny autumn. Wide stairs lead one from the pavilion to the pond and also under the water. As we are approaching, little fish and other tiny aquatics basking in the sunshine underwater scatter all over the pool. We are in Mathurā, one of the places where Lord Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes.

Last year in Kṛṣṇa-valley there

were fourteen places marked with pavilions each depicting holy places, or as guests call them, labyrinths. Actually, these are the principal scenes where the Lord performed His pastimes. Śivarāma Swami Mahārāja revealed the exact spot of these holy places during the last few years. Several dozen places were revealed later. The most significant ones have been developed to serve as a place of meditation and devotion. Tourists also love these small parks as they can relax in the shades of pavilions and trees, and in the meantime, even without being aware of it, they become associated with a spiritual experience.

If we go further along the stream, the valley unfolds in front of our eyes. Hills that were close to us gradually move away from each other, as the valley becomes wider and the stream quirky. On both sides of the road we see the flora of the Botanical Garden. These days there are around 900 different young tree and shrub species in the 12-hectare large botanical garden. As a matter of curiosity concerning valley and surrounding hills, the natural vegetation of the region has revived in smaller areas. Previously barren lands are rich in grass, the youthful weeping willows and shrubs on the banks of the stream have grown up and give shelter to the birds nesting in the area. So far 111 species have been observed.

In the last sixteen years not only ornamental trees were planted in Kṛṣṇa-valley, but around 250,000 other sorts of saplings as well. It is going to be a part of steadily growing forest belts, plantations and woods that will ensure appropriate windbreak and microclimate besides providing firewood for



the community.

Above the botanic garden on the side and top of the hills are the arable lands that provide wheat and other grains for the community as well as the pasture for cows and oxen. We diverge from the line of the stream and go uphill on a steep slope in be-



(From top to bottom)
Devotees pose after a hard day in the fields; Young Kaviraja with a calf; the gurukula building



due to global warming.

All machine tools in Kṛṣṇa-valley—like ploughs, cultivators, threshers and reapers, winnowers, fanners, etc.—operate on ox power. This is an important principle of self-sufficiency: minimizing the use of fuel, oil or petrol. Agricultural produce in Kṛṣṇa-valley provides full self-sufficiency for several years in cereals, fodder crops as well as soilage.

Besides providing ox power, the *gośālā* also supplies the community with milk and cow dung for agriculture. Manure is mainly used by the gardening department and for



(Clockwise from top) Kāmyavana Devī Dāsī weaving cloth at home; Līlārāṇī Dāsī carrying fresh flowers for the Deities; the Gośāla



tween pastures. On the spot of the most beautiful scenery encircled by harsh green lawn we arrive to a glittering yellow building. This is the *gurukula* or the school of Kṛṣṇa-valley. The exterior is decorated with elements of Indian architecture, but the interior has met the demands and functions of a school. Children of Kṛṣṇa-valley learn here from the age of six to fourteen. The school became state-accredited in 2009. Besides learning according to the national curriculum, the new generation is acquainted with the philosophy, music and drama of the Kṛṣṇa con-

scious culture as well as with indispensable bases of a farming community like organic farming and ecological elements.

Slowly we get to a hilltop strolling next to grazing cattle and pastures that greened out owing to autumn rainfalls. Here we find another imposing building: the *gośālā*, or the Centre for Cow Protection. This is the home to 18 cows, 19 oxen and one bull, Nandi. Nandi is from an Indian zebu breed and grew into a pedigree bull in Kṛṣṇa-valley. A special feature of zebu is that it can outstandingly endure heat and drought despite climate changes happening

cultivating plants in arable land. Devotees in Kṛṣṇa-valley developed a specific composting technology, where cow-dung is mixed with organic waste and scobs.

In the organic garden, which is near the temple complex, they grow nearly 70 kinds of vegetables and herbs. In summer when there is a lot to do in the gardens, all inhabitants of the village take part in communal work, which happens two times a week and lasts for an hour. At that time, gardeners serve alongside members of the community, tourist guides, teachers, accountants, cowherds, and cooks.

Self-sufficiency for the whole year became a reality when two years ago the works on the three-aisle cellar were finished. In this way gardeners are able to manage seasonality, which is so characteristic of temperate zones. In this manner all vegetables and different kinds of fruits can be well-stored from autumn until the time when first produces become ripe next year. In addition to all this, preservation of jams, bottled fruits and various juices complete the products of organic gardening.

MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

Mere living together is not the only factor that keeps the commu-



nity together. Kṛṣṇa-valley is primarily a spiritual community, centered on service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Syāmasundara. In the middle of Kṛṣṇa-valley, at the most prominent location is the temple. It also houses the lacto-vegetarian restaurant that is very popular with guests. From the terrace of the res-

taurant, one can see the houses of the spiritual community, where the paths are decorated with alleys and small gardens. Inhabitants do not lack guests: there are around 25,000 to 30,000 guests each year, who have a guided tour of the temple and have a glimpse into the daily activities of the eco-village and secrets of organic farming.

Among the many eco-vil-

lages founded in Hungary, Kṛṣṇa-valley is rated as the most successful. In the past 16 years, the population grew from the initial 40 people to nearly 140 by today. The favorable achievements of Kṛṣṇa-valley are most thoroughly described by sociologists: the community, their unifying faith of the community, their experience and transcendental knowledge are the elements that provide the inevitable energy for its functioning.

A few years ago the leaders of



(Top to bottom) Kundāvali Dāsī describing the Eco-Valley project to a group of guests; Śyāmālatā Dāsī painting a relief of Rādhā-Syāmasundara, and the front view of the temple.

Kṛṣṇa-valley decided that the village is ready to be demonstrated to the public as a model for sustainability. Ecological and economic crises in the world during the last decade made people sensitive regarding this matter. Insight into it shows that the 16-year-old spiritual community evolved on the basis of *Bhagavad-gītā* represents an exemplary model for sustainability even from the point of view of exacting scientific criteria.

Communicating this fact and demonstrating the model to the public can hardly wait as scientists claim that all the crises phenomena are going to get stronger if humanity in general does not change its present lifestyle. The secret of Kṛṣṇa-valley is not a secret in reality: all of it can be read in Vedic scriptures. If people follow principles described in those pages, then they can properly use all facilities of the material world. This is the same deduction which is suggested by the researches of modern science: if we destroy, pollute and waste our resources, then gradually they are going to vanish as a reaction to this.

Since 2008, the Eco-valley Foundation is the organizer of researches and educational programmes. They organize conferences and as it has already been mentioned they organized the second conference in 2009. Several dozens of university students and researchers coming to perform their studies, cooperative documentations signed regarding educational and research projects, numerous lectures in connection with this specific scientific field, as well as many articles and studies published likewise indicate great social interest.

We sincerely hope that more and more people will understand that irrespective of culture and religion it is in our own interest and a mutual target to accomplish sustainability. Furthermore, we hope that in the following years the circle of interested men and women, cooperative partners will increase and a lot more people will visit Kṛṣṇa-valley, the spiritual eco-village community.

For further information visit:
www.ecovalley.hu ☺

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Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa is Head of EVF-SSRI and a member of the Board of Directors of Kṛṣṇa-valley.



Mother Earth

A baby child is utterly under the protective care of the mother. Without the mother providing milk, providing love and protection, the child cannot survive. When the child is within the womb of the mother, he is 100% dependent on her for everything in its existence. Similarly, we are within the womb of mother earth. She truly is our mother. She is nourishing us, protecting us, supporting us in our helpless condition. All of our necessities, all things that we derive pleasure from, everything is provided by her. This is the gift of God the father, coming through the mother earth. But we think, 'This is mine.'

We do not even acknowledge what she is giving.

We do not in any way reciprocate love with her.

Rather we want to exploit and manipulate her. In so many ways humanity is trying to destroy her. This is our intoxication. This is our illusion.



Personal-Impersonal confusion

Does God have a form? Or not? Find out here.

by Caitanya Carana Dasa

Question: Is God personal or impersonal? The way we pray to God, the way the saints address God in their devotional prayers, it seems that God is a person whom we are calling by our prayers. But

then God is said to be unlimited. Will his being a person not limit Him?

Answer: That's quite a thoughtful analysis. Yes, both sides of the argument seem true. To reconcile

the two sides, we need to first understand the definition of God. The paramount Vedic text, the *Vedāntasūtra* (1.1.2) defines God or the Absolute Truth, *brahma*, as the source of everything. *Janmādyasya*

yatah. Another ancient text, the *Brahma-samhitā*, defines God similarly as the cause of all causes (*sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*). This concise definition of God is essentially in agreement with the understanding of God given by all the theistic traditions of the world.

So, if God is the source of everything that we see in this world, then God Himself should possess the essential attributes of everything, else He would be lesser than His creation. In this world, there exist both persons and impersonal forces, so both these aspects should be present in God. If God were not a person, then He, who by definition is the Complete Being, would be incomplete. Another simpler way of putting this is: if we as the children of God are persons, how can our father God not be a person?

Q: What you say makes sense. But still my question remains: do personality and form not limit God?

A: No, such a question arises because we superimpose our material conceptions on God. For argument's sake, even if we grant that form limits a thing, does divesting it of form make it unlimited? We are sitting in this room, which has a form and is limited. If its form were destroyed by, say, the explosion of a bomb, will the formless debris be limited or unlimited? Obviously, limited.

What causes limitation is not form, but matter. Due to the very nature of matter, all material objects are limited, whether they have form or not. When we think of God's form, we subconsciously project our experiences with matter on the form of God and so think that a form would limit God. But

God is not material; He is entirely spiritual. Spirit has characteristics different from matter; that which is spiritual has the potential to be unlimited, irrespective of whether it has form or not. So God's form being spiritual does not limit Him. This is how, due to His being spiritual, God is a person with a form and is still unlimited.

Q: This is an innovative explanation that reconciles both sides of the argument. But even if we accept that God has a form, why should He have a humanlike form? Isn't this an example of what you were saying earlier: of our projecting humanlike conceptions on God? Because we are human beings, so we imagine that God also has a humanlike form.

We think that because we have a humanlike form, we have conceived of God as humanlike. But could the reverse not be true?

A: This idea is technically called as anthropomorphism; *anthropos* refers to "humans" and *morphos* to "form." Though it may initially seem sensible, but if we think deeply, it arises due to our self-centered thinking, due to our placing ourselves at the center of things. We think that because we have a humanlike form, we have conceived of God as humanlike. But could the reverse not be true? What if God originally had a form and our present human form was modeled according to that original form of God?

When we want knowledge about physics, we refer to the authorized textbooks of physics. Similarly, when we want knowledge

about God, should we not refer to the authorized textbooks about God—the scriptures? The scriptures of the great religions of the world repeatedly refer to God in a personal, humanlike way. For example, the Bible talks about "under His feet" (Exodus 24:10); "inscribed with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18); "the hand of the Lord" (Exodus 9:3); "the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 38:7); "the ears of the Lord" (Numbers 11:1). Ezekiel (1:26) describes God as having "the semblance of a human form." Such phrases permeate the Biblical literature.

Similarly, in the Quran, there are references to "the face of your Lord" (055:027); "under My eye" (020:039); "under our eyes" (052:048) and (054:014); "the hand

of Allah" (048:010); (038:075) and (039:067).

Q: But, from what I have heard, these references are generally taken metaphorically.

A: Isn't that a human projection on the word of God? Aren't we imposing our interpretation on the self-evident statements of the scriptures? Further, even if we grant that such references are metaphorical, why would the scriptures repeatedly and consistently present God as having a humanlike form if in reality He didn't have one? Wouldn't that be a dangerous and misleading metaphor? Instead of audaciously claiming that the scriptures are presenting a misleading meta-

phor, isn't it humbler, safer and more logical to infer that it is our preconceptions, which are misleading and which need to be corrected by the words of the scriptures?

Further, there is the classic and clear statement in the Bible: "Man is made in the image of God." In which scripture is it said that God is made in the image of man? Nowhere. So the correct understanding is not that God is anthropomorphic (having a humanlike form), but that man is theomorphic (having a form modeled on God's original form).

The Vedic scriptures also con-

*aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-
manti
paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciram
jaganti
ānanda-cinmaya-sad-ujjvala-
vigrahasya
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham
bhajāmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose transcendental form is full of bliss, truth, and substantiality, and who is full of the most dazzling splendor. Each limb of that transcendental figure possesses in itself the full-fledged functions of all the other organs, and

God is not anthropomorphic (having a human-like form), but man is theomorphic (having a form modeled on God's original form).

tain similar statements about God having a form. But they go further by giving vivid descriptions of God's form. For example, the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.30) gives a detailed description of Kṛṣṇa's form.

*venūm kvaṇantam aravinda-
dalāyatākṣam-
barhāvatamsam asitāmbuda-
sundarāṅgam
kandarpa-koṭi-kamanīya-viṣeṣa-
śobham
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham
bhajāmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, who has blooming eyes like lotus petals, whose head is decked with a peacock feather, whose figure of beauty is tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and whose unique loveliness charms millions of cupids."

He eternally sees, maintains, and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane." (Bs. 5.32)

Q: But the Vedic texts do contain words like *arūpam*, which indicate that God does not have any form.

A: Yes, but these words generally occur in a context that is often ignored. That context generally also contains some words that describe God as having a form. Consider the following verse from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.19)

*apāṇi-pādo javano grahītā
paśyaty acakṣuḥ sa śṛṇoty akarṇaḥ
sa vetti vedyam na ca tasyāsti vettā
tam āhur agryam puruṣam
mahāntam*

This verse contains apparent contradictions. *Paśyaty acakṣuḥ:*

"God has no eyes, but He sees." How is this contradiction to be reconciled? If we neglect the statements that suggest the personal aspect of God, we are not being faithful to the scriptures.

The Vedic tradition contains a special *pramāṇa* called *arthapatti* (postulation) that is used for this purpose. For example, consider the two apparently contradictory statements:

1. Ravi does not eat food during the day.

2. Ravi is growing fat.

The *arthapatti* to reconcile these two statements would be: Ravi eats in the night.

Similarly, the *arthapatti* to reconcile the statements over God's form is: God has a form this is spiritual, not material.

That's why Śrīla Prabhupāda mercifully translates the above verse as follows: "The Supreme Lord has no material hands and feet but accepts whatever is offered to Him and moves very quickly. The Supreme Person has no material ears and eyes but sees and hears everything. He is the knower of everything, and He is all that is to be known. It is said that He is the best and the greatest of all persons."

Q: But why do scriptures say that God does not have body, form, senses etc., if He has them?

A: The word *body* has several connotations that do not apply to the Lord.

A body is that which is:

1. Separate from the real person, the soul.
2. A product of the past karma of the soul.
3. Tends to degrade the soul.
4. Has to be given up in due course

of time.

None of these apply to the Lord, whose body is the same as Himself, who has no karmic past, who is never degraded, and whose form is eternal.

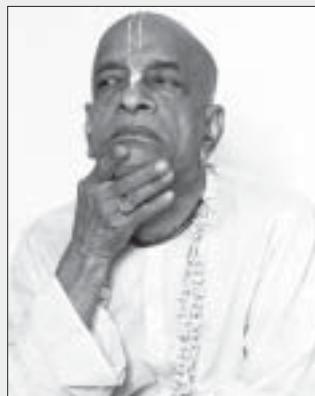
Because we tend to drag our material conceptions on God, therefore the scriptures may sometimes use words like *arūpa* to emphasize that God's form is not like ours. But as Śrīla Prabhupāda succinctly states, "Negation of the negative does not mean negation of the positive."

In fact, only when we get attracted to the form of God can we become free from our infatuation to the temporarily good-looking forms of this world. The notion that God does not have a form makes the material world with all its colorful variety appear more appealing than the spiritual realm. But when the all-attractive form of God is presented systematically to people, then their hearts get attracted, they experience the higher happiness of loving God and they can become free from illusory attractions with far greater ease than is otherwise possible. ☺

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ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA PASTIMES

Monkey and the Bananas



One evening in the middle of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture, a monkey darted into the room and lunged for the bananas. Viśākhā Dāsī quickly threw her *chaddar* over the monkey and tugged at the bananas as he ran past her. She managed to get most of the bananas, but within a few seconds, the monkey was gone with a prize banana in his hand.

"Just see how intelligent this monkey is," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. "This shows that in their own respect all living enti-

ties are intelligent. How long do you think it would have taken you to do that, run in and out of here and get the bananas? This monkey is so intelligent in regards to his eating. He can do it in a few seconds. Practically no one even saw him. He just took the bananas and ran out. This is what it is like in the material world. Everyone is very expert in his or her sphere. So, we have to become expert devotees, not expert like the monkeys."

The entire incident lasted about four seconds. Even though Śrīla Prabhupāda had been lecturing, he was aware of everything going on around him. Śrīla Prabhupāda was always aware of activities around him. He was expert at doing more than one thing at a time.

By Śrutakīrti Dāsa from
Śrīla Prabhupāda Uvāca

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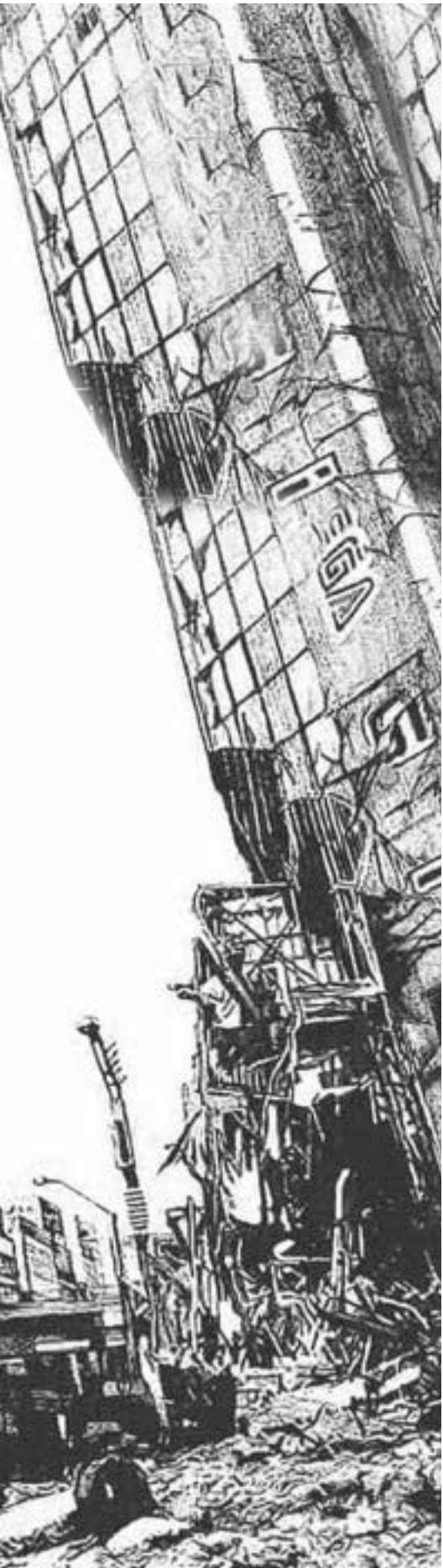
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Finding shelter in **Sufferings**

In the most hopeless situation, there is hope—when we turn to Kṛṣṇa.

by Murāri Gupta Dāsa





Can you please speak to my relatives," a doctor-friend requested me after a Sunday feast program in our temple. "Their youngest son died in an accident recently, and they are much traumatized."

I agreed and went to meet the family in a corridor outside the temple hall. The father told me how the son had gone to a picnic with his friends and had drowned in a river. He was just eighteen. I listened sympathetically, and when they asked questions I offered answers I thought would give them hope in their painful situation. After half an hour, some of the family members seemed consoled, though the mother had been silently shedding incessant tears.

As we parted, my thoughts veered to another story I had heard. It, too, took place near a lake and was a sudden catastrophe that struck a family, but the attitude of the victim turned a life threatening crisis upside-down.

NIGHTMARE ON AN EXCURSION

Once a mighty elephant named Gajendra, the head of his heard, went to a lake to bathe with his many wives, children, and other members of the herd. Thoroughly refreshed by the cool, clear water, they sported by spraying water over each other with their trunks. When everyone was laughing and enjoying water sports in the crystal-clear lotus-filled lake, a crocodile suddenly attacked Gajendra and would not let go. The elephant, sure of his mighty strength, fought valiantly but could not free himself. Seeing him in that grave condition, his wives cried. The other elephants tried to rescue him by grasping him from behind, but because of the

crocodile's great strength, they could not succeed. The fight continued for a long time, slowly draining away the elephant's strength.

THE INEVITABILITY OF DISASTER

This story, which is not over yet, is narrated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which through many such narrations offers us valuable life lessons. Gajendra can represent anyone afflicted by misery. He was living what most would consider an ideal life—terrific power, prestige and control, loving family and friends, and all the luxuries he could want. But now he found himself trapped in the jaws of a crocodile. Similarly, our world is full of agents of misery. They may not look as menacing as a crocodile, but can cause just as much pain. They come in different forms, such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, corruption, disease, and exploitation. These crocodiles are built into the world. We may feel safe now, but they are there, just a step away, waiting to clench their mighty jaws upon us. That is the world we live in.

We may feel that problems are indeed part of life and that we should fight them with courage and determination. But what is our usual strategy for crisis management? We pitch our personal strength, intelligence, and money, or garner support from friends, relatives, and political leaders. But sometimes all our support systems fail. Diseases, accidents, and terrorists don't avoid the rich, the famous, or the beautiful. Someday, when everything fails, then what? Whom will we turn to?

For the answer, let us go back to Gajendra.

SURRENDER TO THE SUPREME

When Gajendra saw that he had no power to defend himself and that none of his friends, relatives, or wives could help him, he became extremely afraid of being killed. He thought for a long time and finally decided, "It is by the will of provi-

the shelter of everyone, even of great personalities." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.2.31-33)

Gajendra prayed from his heart, and soon Lord Nārāyaṇa manifested right before him. Despite his great pain, Gajendra took a lotus flower in his trunk and with great difficulty offered it to the Lord, who

Gajendra.

When faced with our own problems, we should consider applying Gajendra's approach—turning to God. We, too, can find the ultimate shelter. Kṛṣṇa Himself might not come to us, but surely His help will.

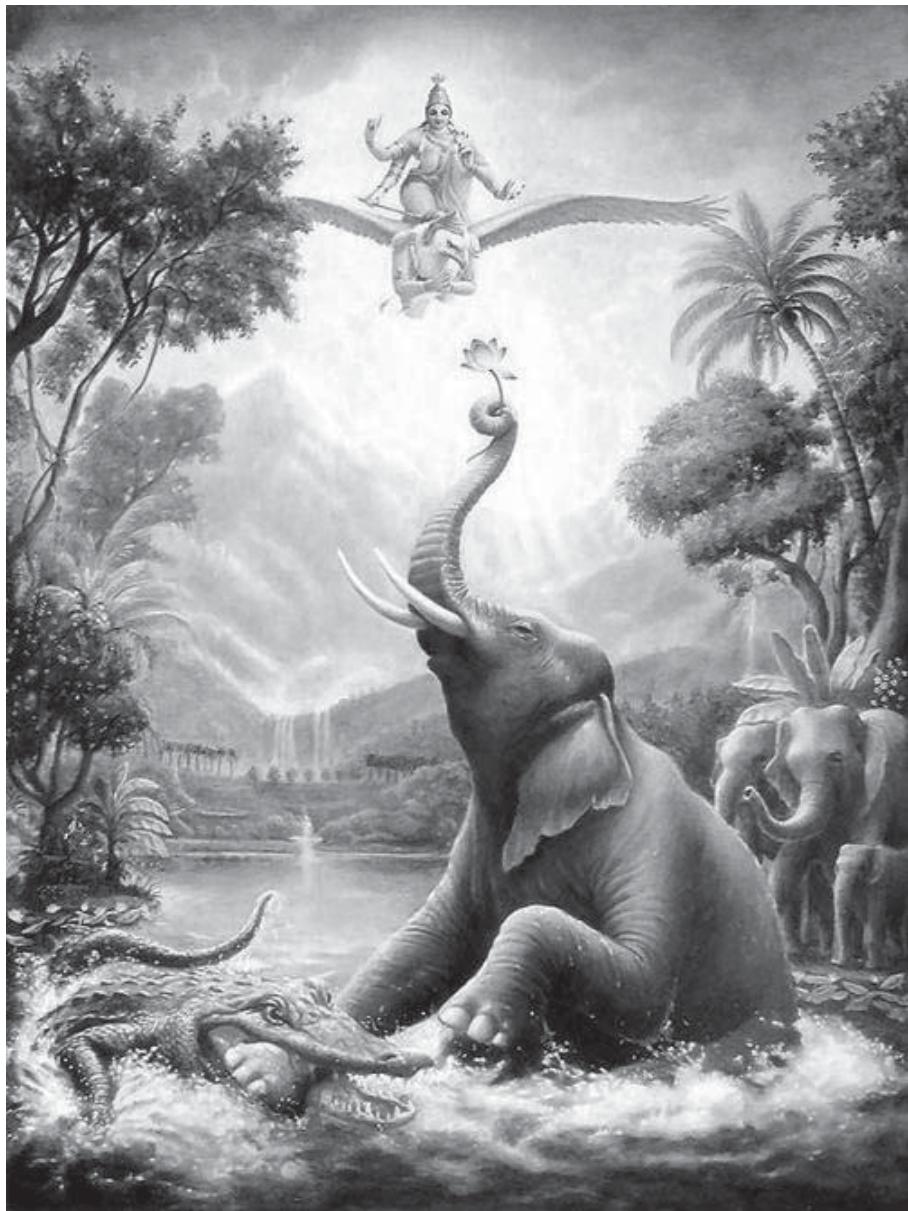
A CREATION OF CALAMITIES

We may feel reluctant to approach God for a solution, and we may want to just wait, either because life is comfortable or because we feel that the current tragedy will not last. But such inertia stems from ignorance of the powerful unseen dynamics that control this world.

The Vedic texts teach us that God creates the material world for us rebellious souls who have turned away from God to enjoy independent of Him. Being a loving father, He has created a place for us to enjoy to our hearts' content. But He wants us to enjoy the best, and not just be happy with the imitation. Therefore, He has employed His representative, Durgā Devī, the supervisor of material world, to gradually bring us to proper knowledge. Along with advice from scriptures and sages on how to transcend this world and go back to God, we have Durgā Devī's crocodiles biting us—to shake us out of our inertia and make us want to escape this miserable place.

The moment we come to the material world these crocodiles have us in their grips. Despite our best hopes and efforts, they won't let go. We can break loose from the crocodile jaws of the material energy only when, like Gajendra, we totally humble ourselves, realizing that we are completely helpless, and then surrender to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord.

We are not aware of our predica-



In utter helplessness, Gajendra prayed to the Supreme Lord, and the Lord immediately appeared before him.

dence that I have been attacked by this crocodile, and therefore I shall seek shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is always

pulled both Gajendra and the crocodile out of the water. Then the Lord severed the crocodile's head with His disc, thus saving

ment. And even if we sometimes are, we think it will go away. But unless we surrender to Kṛṣṇa, it won't.

KRŚNA, OUR COMPANION IN THE DARKEST TIMES

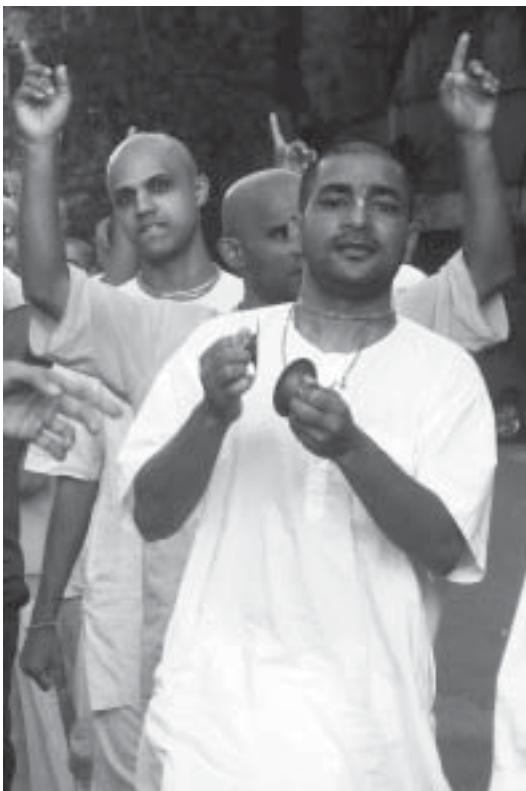
In every situation, even the most extreme, Kṛṣṇa is always there to help us. He never lets His devotee down. He is *suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām*: everyone's best friend. He is right there within our hearts, just waiting to give us a completely blissful life. No matter what we do, no matter what we have done, Kṛṣṇa never leaves us. Who could be a better friend? Birth after birth we have totally betrayed, blasphemed, and rejected Him, but He is still with us. His love is unconditional; He never leaves us. He is always waiting, always willing to give us a chance. At no time will Kṛṣṇa not deliver us, if we just turn to Him, as Gajendra did.

We have to choose the Lord's shelter moment after moment throughout our stay in the material world. At times when the crocodiles are not biting into our flesh, it is easy to forget Lord. Then our dormant desires to enjoy the illusion raise their heads again. We should learn from Gajendra in this regard. After being liberated, he was not thinking of enjoying again in this world. If that had been his desire, then Kṛṣṇa would have left him here. Kṛṣṇa would have said, "Oh! You want to enjoy here, but there is going to be another crocodile. You are not out of the real crocodile's mouth." But after Gajendra was freed from the crocodile, he didn't want to do anything except serve the Lord, love the Lord. He was

so grateful. Kṛṣṇa saw that Gajendra had no material desire, that he had lost all faith in *māyā*'s false promises in this world. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa not only freed him from the crocodile, but He put him on an airplane and sent him directly to Vaikunṭha the spiritual world.

THE HOLY NAMES, THE ONLY HOPE

In this age the holy names of the



Holy names of the Lord are the perfect shelter in this age.

Lord incarnate to liberate us from the crocodile jaws of the material energy and take us back home to the eternal world of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So in the spirit of Gajendra, we should learn to surrender to the Lord with a humble and sincere heart—not tomorrow but today. Filled with the spirit of humility and grateful tolerance—whereby we offer all respects to others and expect none

for ourselves—we can actually take shelter of the Lord. That's the meaning of "surrender." At a superficial level, "surrender" means doing what you are told. But deep-down surrender means to have the type of humility expressed by Lord Caitanya: "My Lord, I am Yours. You can trample me, embrace me, or break my heart. Whatever situation You put me in, my Lord, I am Yours." (*Sikṣāṣṭaka* 8)

The spirit of Gajendra and the lesson of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are to welcome adversities and transform them into blessings by sincerely and intensely taking shelter of the holy names of the Lord. Material existence is designed to give us the optimum situation in which we can really, seriously, following in Gajendra's footsteps, from our hearts cry out Kṛṣṇa's holy names. In every situation the crocodile of suffering and death is eminent. Supreme liberation is the rightful claim only for one who takes shelter of the Lord when difficulties come. When setbacks, intrusions, impediments, and disturbances come into our lives, we must welcome them with folded palms and grateful hearts, thinking, "I deserve worse, and this is only a token trouble given by Kṛṣṇa."

All dangers are actually blessings. Because our bodies will die—today, tomorrow, someday. If we can once take shelter of Kṛṣṇa and sincerely cry out His holy names, we can be delivered. Kṛṣṇa is inviting us into His eternal transcendental pastimes for total relief, shelter, and ecstatic joy. Why wait for the crocodile? ☺

This article is inspired by the lectures on Gajendra pastime given by His Holiness Rādhānāth Swami Māhārāja

EDUCATING ABOUT EDUCATION

Foreign universities are coming to India. What's in for us?

by Nanda Dulāl Dāsa

The brain drain seems to be fizzling out. Soon Indians pining for quality education may choose not to fly overseas in their hunt. If the Indian government has its way, very soon foreign universities like Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Carnegie Mellon, Purdue, Georgia Tech. will establish their campuses in India. Some like the University of Michigan have already opened an economic research center in Bangalore. Some years back The Indian School Of Business was set up in Hyderabad in association with Kellogg, Wharton and London Business School.

Last year the number of Indian students studying in the USA touched a whopping 103,260 of a total of 671,616 overseas students. Needless to say, we topped the list. As per the US Department of Commerce, Indian students have contributed around \$3 billion to the US economy last year by dint of their tuition fees and living expenses, out of a total of \$17.8 billion by over-

seas students. Indians are indeed very important to the Americans. On the other hand, students eager to get into prestigious Indian institutions like the IIT's and the IIM's face intense competition. Only 2% manage to get in. Students can study part time and earn their fees overseas. Given the contrast, it is not difficult to understand why so many Indians opt for overseas education.

CONCERNS

A report submitted by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development on 22 May 2006, however, is apprehensive about foreign educational institutions. Expressing concern about the entry of unqualified educational institutions or, worse still, use of double standards by good ones, the committee calls for the establishment of a body to oversee all activities of these institutions. It has even proposed setting up salaries for the faculty in these institu-

tions.

Another aspect is the criticism that the American system of education is facing from some leaders in the field of education in USA itself. Prominent American educationists like John Taylor Gatto, John Holt, to name a few, have written books highlighting the drawbacks of the current American system of education initially brought into play most prominently by John Dewey in 1899. Dewey was influenced by Marx, Hegel and brought about collectivism into school syllabi at the cost of disregard for traditional school subjects. For Dewey, it was all about how good a child would be as a part of a social structure. In *The School and Society*, Dewey declared that education doesn't occur "between teacher and pupil, or between teacher and parent." Rather education is a responsibility that society must execute using techniques "previously ignored as trivial, futile, or even condemned as positively

evil." Following the principles of Friedrich Froebel, "inventor" of kindergarten, Dewey proclaimed that schools should condition children for the desired "social order." Many today see his views as apt for creating a system of mass indoctrination. Do we really want such an education system—even partially—in this country?

Even if we want such a system, are we ready to pay the cost? Some years back, The Harvard Business School had announced a week-long course for executives at a cost of \$4500 (a staggering Rs 180,000). Such astronomical sums as fees for seven-day courses are really unnecessary. After such extra-vagance, what is the quality of people that

we get? Youngsters who are products of such an education system are victims of impure thoughts and habits. They are easily lured by vices. The greatest drawback of the modern system perhaps is that it fails to inculcate values in its students. Students fail to see anything beyond the immediate pressing concerns in their lives for meeting monetary needs. Ethical and moral components of life are totally ignored. Life becomes just a race "to keep up to the Joneses." Recognizing this hollow, the Maharashtra State Board for Education has started a program for teaching value education to students in government schools. This is what is urgently required for Indian stu-

dents. The West is already reeling under the pressures of an immoral and ethically uneducated society.

REAL EDUCATION

Cāṇakya Pañdita, whom Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted, gives three checks to identify whether someone is truly educated:

1. Mātr-vat para-dāreṣu—An educated person sees any female other than his wife as a mother. This means that the heart is free from any exploitative desires for the opposite sex—something that is very much desirable nowadays.

2. Para-dravyeṣu loṣṭra-vat—An educated person views others' property like discarded garbage on the street. This means that the



Sketch by Janardan BSalkar

heart is free from any desires to usurp and posses anything that doesn't rightfully belong to oneself. One is content with what is possessed by the will of providence. 3. *Ātma-vat sarva-bhūteṣu*—An educated person sees others as he would see himself. He treats others as he would want others to treat him. If he feels pain due to some activity, he wouldn't do that to anyone else.

To possess these three characteristics, one must be pure, contented and compassionate. Cānakya Pāṇḍita identifies such a gentleman as an educated person. The epitome of this line of thought

is in qualifying the student with material knowledge but in empowering him with spiritual knowledge.

We observe that more one is advanced in modern education, more he is averse to spiritual understanding.^[1] A person becomes excessively proud of his academic achievements and consequently starts putting more faith in his own ideas. With a parochial outlook, he looks down on any other system of knowledge other than the one that supports and supplements his. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.8-12), Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions twenty items of knowledge. The first two on the list are humility and pridelessness, in-

The true test of education is not in qualifying the student with material knowledge but in empowering him with spiritual knowledge.

is given by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.18) by defining the truly educated person as a person who "by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]." Such a person is respectful to others, guided not only by moral principles but by spiritual vision. He perceives the presence of the Supreme Lord in the form of the in-dwelling Supersoul in the hearts of all living entities and thereby maintains a standard of purity in his interactions (in terms of thoughts, words and actions) with them. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.40), Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions the best education to Uddhava: "Actual education is nullifying the false perception of duality within the soul." Thus, again, the true test of education is not

dicating that an educated person will necessarily develop these two characteristics. But we observe just the contrary in the world around us.

That is why the Vaiṣṇava saint Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mentions in one *bhajana*,

jaḍa-vidyā jata, māyāra vaibhava,
tomāra bhajane bādhā
moha janamiyā, anitya samsāre,
jīvake koraye gādhā

"All the so-called knowledge of this world is born of the flickering potency of Your illusory energy (*māyā*). It is an impediment to the execution of devotional service to You. Indulgence in mundane knowledge verily makes an ass of the eternal soul by encouraging his infatuation with this temporary world."

Modern education does not lead to development of character or mental powers even. Thus, this is not real education. His Holiness Hṛdayānanda Dāsa Goswami Mahārāja writes in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.63.26), "The process of education may be succinctly described as a way of eradicating ignorance through the attainment of knowledge. Through inductive, deductive and intuitive means, we attempt to refute the specious, the illusory and the imperfect and elevate ourselves to a platform of full knowledge." Thus, by Vedic standards, the best education (*rāja-vidyā*) reveals one's spiritual identity and encourages activities based on our spiritual nature. Material education, on the other hand, fosters bodily identification and leads to the wastage of precious human life in the pursuit of temporary, fruitless goals. The present education that teaches us knowledge about the material world and its workings is not helpful for elevating in this regard.

If the foreign universities are capable of bringing about this change for us, they are welcome. If not, we are better off without them. ☺

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Ref.^[1] Gallup poll 2009

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

A Prayer to my Dearmost Friend

Kṛṣṇa

by Sundarīpriya Devī Dāsī



Nothing but You
Kṛṣṇa,
I love You.

But I can offer myself
Kṛṣṇa,
Take me to You.

Take me to You
Kṛṣṇa,
Want to be with You.

I want nothing
Kṛṣṇa,
But surrender unto You.

Want to please You
Kṛṣṇa,
Want to serve You.

Want to serve You
Kṛṣṇa,
Want to please You.

I miss You so much
Kṛṣṇa,
Where are You?

I can cry out Your holy name
Kṛṣṇa,
In glorification of You

Want to glorify You
Kṛṣṇa,
Want to thank You.

That I can offer
Kṛṣṇa
As my best to You

You already have
my heart with You
Kṛṣṇa,
Offered it to You.

That's all I know
Kṛṣṇa,
Sweet name of You.

What else do I have
Kṛṣṇa?
All belongs to You.

Let me chant day and night
Kṛṣṇa,
Want to attract You.

I have nothing
Kṛṣṇa,
Everything belongs to You.

Let me forget everything
Kṛṣṇa,
Everything except You.

Nothing but You
Kṛṣṇa...
I love You.

In your own words ...



Who is your favorite character in *Rāmāyaṇa*, and why?

LORD RĀMA IS MY FAVORITE character in *Rāmāyaṇa*. I like the way He carried Himself throughout all that He went through. He descended to teach us by example. One incident in particular constantly amazes me. After shooting down Vāli, the powerful monkey king, Lord Rāma came before him. A desperate Vāli questioned the Lord about His alliance with Sugrīva. Upon hearing the story of the kidnapping of Mother Sītā and the Lord's making an alliance with Sugrīva to defeat Rāvaṇa, Vāli laughed. He narrated how he had captured Rāvaṇa in one hand and jumped to all four corners of India. If only Rāma could have directly approached Vāli, Rāvaṇa would have had no other choice but to give Sītā back out of fear of Vāli. And here was Vāli, almost dead, shot by Lord Rāma Himself. Any ordinary person would have lamented on such a big opportunity going haywire. But the Lord was perfectly calm and composed. Such qualities make Lord Rāma my favorite.

Rahul Danait

TO BE DETACHED FROM opulence when there is an opportunity to gain the whole kingdom is highly difficult. When Bharata

Mahārāja came back to Ayodhyā, the kingdom was kingless, so if He had desired to become the king there was none who could oppose. Still He came in search of Lord Rāma to give back the kingdom. It

undeterred. Even after Lord Rāma declined to accept His proposal, He brought Lord Rāma's footwear to place on the throne, rather than ascend the throne Himself. Bharata Mahārāja lived an austere life outside Ayodhyā until Lord Rāma returned. He, truly, is a loyal devotee.

Ganesh Subramaniyan



Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa
and their eternal servant Hanumān.

is very difficult to be faithful and loyal during turbulent periods of life. Bharata was doubted by many personalities in *Rāmāyaṇa* like Kauśalya, Vasiṣṭha, Guha, Bharadvāja Muni, and Lakṣmaṇa. Still His determination to return the kingdom to Lord Rāma was

LAKṢMAṆA IS MY favorite character in *Rāmāyaṇa* as He manifests the qualities of a devoted servant perfectly. If there is something against Lord Rāma then He could even destroy the whole world, but for Himself, He didn't want anything. During *vanavāsa*, Their exile in forest, He didn't eat or sleep for a single moment during all the 14 years. He was always serving Lord Rāma and Mother Sītā. That's the quality a disciple or servant should have: *guru-mukha-padma-vākyā, cittete kariyā aikya, āra nā kariha mane āśā*.

Nandagopāl Jīvana Dāsa
Visit: htt.co.in

RĀMĀYANA IS AN EMBLEM of ideal characters. Lakṣmaṇa is glorified for personal service to Lord Rāmacandra and assisting Him in every step. Bharata Mahārāja followed the order of Lord Rāma and administered the city of Ayodhyā, while Hanumān carried out the mission of Lord. All

these characters are glorious. In particular, Śrī Vaiṣṇavas glorify the character of Śatruघna for the service in separation and servant-of-the-servant attitude. Śatruघna had free will to choose, as He was not directly ordered by Lord to look after the kingdom. Neither was He appointed for any special mission as Hanumān. Śatruघna had the choice to be with Lord in His personal proximity and serve Him. But Śatruघna chose to serve in separation. Even in separation, He didn't take the position of frontiers, but simply assisted Bharata Mahārāja. Character of Śatruघna exhibits the mood of Vaiṣṇavas—to assist those who are executing the mission of Lord and guru, and while doing so not to be in lime-light or take the credit.

Pradyumna Miśra Dāsa

LAKṢMAṄA IS MY FAVORITE character because He was not only an ideal brother but also an ideal servant, one without any personal considerations. He sacrificed His own family life and accompanied the Lord in the forest. He served Lord Rāma without even sleeping for a moment for fourteen long years. And when Mother Sītā misunderstood His intentions while trying to protect Her from Rāvaṇa

IN YOUR OWN WORDS QUESTION FOR THE FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Which is the skill that you lack in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but would like to develop?

Deadline for submission is June 20

Answers will be published in August

Word limit: 150 words

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He did not retaliate; He maintained His service attitude. This is what Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches in Śikṣāṣṭaka (8): “O my Lord, whether You embrace me or You kick me, You still are my worshipable Lord, birth after birth.” This principle of pure unalloyed devotional service without any personal considerations can be seen exemplified by Lakṣmaṇa. Although being accused of trying to enjoy His elder brother's wife He still maintained the same degree of respect for mother Sītā and continued His service. That is His glory. Love when goes through fire shines. Where do we find such relations today when brothers rival each other for property and people are ready to break relations over minor trifles?

Śrī Nimāi Dāsa



Sādhus and....

(Continued from page 32)

unfortunately for the people of the world, and particularly so for Hindus, who should know it, is very little studied and even less followed. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement recognizes that there are many pious sādhus who are not grossly cheating others or making a personality cult around themselves. The derogatory comments in this article are not specifically directed against them.

FALLDOWN OF ISKCON DEVOTEES

Sometimes members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, including some of its prominent leaders, are also exposed for acts unbecoming of sādhus. However, a

devotee of Kṛṣṇa, particularly one who is seriously striving to surrender fully to Kṛṣṇa, is always in a better position than anyone else including those sādhus who are not exclusively focused on Kṛṣṇa yet rigidly adhere to moral principles. This may seem like a hypocritical statement, but it is not, because it is the statement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.30:

api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

“Even if engaged in most abominable activities, one who is desirous of fully surrendering to Me, who has no other object in life, is certainly to be considered a sādhu.” How is it possible that one who is fully focused on Kṛṣṇa as the goal of life could indulge in most abominable activities? It is possible because of previous bad habits, that a devotee, even a serious devotee, might circumstantially slip. But a sincere practitioner would regret the lapse and immediately attempt to rectify his situation by continuing to serve Kṛṣṇa with determination and enthusiasm.

Of course, this does not exonerate habitually bad activities in the name of *bhakti* nor give a license for using the banner of *bhakti* to cheat others, even within the realm of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Cheaters should be distinguished from genuine saints.

THE REAL SĀDHU

Who is a real sādhu? A real sādhu is one who follows *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, who understands the difference

between matter and spirit, who is not interested in material sense gratification, who lives in this world for the benefit of others without any personal desire, simply to serve Kṛṣṇa, who he understands from all the scriptures to be the Supreme Absolute Truth. No one else can properly be termed as a sādhu. Real sādhu means *vāco vegam manasah krodha-vegam, jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam*: "A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger and the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world." (*Nectar of Instruction, Sloka 1*) People should study this verse and the purport given by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

So our call to the people is *tamaso mā jyotir gamaya*: "Come out of the darkness and come in to the light." Kṛṣṇa—*sūrya-sama; māyā haya andhakāra yāhān kṛṣṇa, tāhān nāhi māyāra adhikāra*: "Kṛṣṇa is just like the sun, and *māyā* is just like darkness. If the sun is present, there is no question of darkness. Similarly, wherever Kṛṣṇa is present, there is no possibility of *māyā*'s influence. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 22.31*) *Utthiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpta varān nibodhata*: "Get up, wake up and attain the boon of human life." (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.14*) How many people are ready for that? Do you want the truth or do you want to be cheated? The choice is yours. ☺

Bhakti Vikāsa Swami is a senior disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and an ISKCON guru. He is author of numerous books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness including a three-volume biography of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thakur. www.bvks.com

RATHA YATRA IN DURBAN



Durban, South Africa: On April 2, ISKCON celebrated its 22nd Ratha-yātrā in Durban after a hard struggle with getting permission for the event.

BOAT FESTIVAL

New Delhi: The Utsav Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthaśārathi enjoyed Their first ever boat ride at the peak of summer in the pools of ISKCON temple. Floating flower petals forming intricate designs, colorful



balloons, and euphoric chanting of hundred of devotees accompanied the boat festival.

NEW TEMPLE IN ORISSA

Bhubaneshwar, Orissa: On March 24, ISKCON guru Bhakti Caru Swami laid the cornerstone

of ISKCON Bhubaneswar's forthcoming Jagannātha temple called "Śrī Guṇḍicā" in a colorful ceremony. The temple is expected to complete within one year.

ISKCON AT NATIONAL SAMMELAN

New Delhi: The 29th National Sanatan Dharma Mahasamelan was held on 17th of April at the FICCI Auditorium (New Delhi).



The meeting was organized by Shri Ramakant Goswami (Vice Chairman, Delhi Jal Board).

Representing ISKCON, His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami Mahārāja spoke on the gloomy ecological scenario and water problem. He quoted the verse "*annād bhavanti bhūtāni*" (Bg 3.14) and said, "Water comes from rain and rain comes from *yajña*. The *yajña* for this age is chanting the holy names of Lord. Smt. Meera Kumar (Lok Sabha Speaker of India) and Smt. Sheela Dixit (Chief Minister, New Delhi) honored Mahārāja by offering him garland.

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VAIŚNAVA CALENDAR 1 June - 15 July, 2010

- 2 Jun: Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya – Disappearance
- 8 Jun: Fasting for Aparā Ekādaśi
- 9 Jun: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:00 am - 10:25 am, Śrīla
Vṛṇḍāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura – Appearance
- 21 Jun: Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa – Disappearance, Gangā
Pūjā, Śrīmatī Gaṅgamātā Gosvāminī – Appearance
- 22 Jun: Fasting for Pāñḍava-nirjalā Ekādaśī (Total fast, even
from water, if you have broken Ekadasi)
- 23 Jun: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:03 am - 10:28 am
- 24 Jun: Pānihāṭī Cidā Dahī Utsava
- 26 Jun: Snāna-yātrā, Śrī Mukunda Datta – Disappearance,
Śrīla Śrīdhara Paṇḍita – Disappearance
- 27 Jun: Śrī Śyamānanda Prabhu – Disappearance
- 1 Jul: Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita – Appearance
- 7 Jul: Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita – Disappearance
- 8 Jul: Fasting for Yoginī Ekādaśi
- 9 Jul: Break fast (Mumbai) 06:07 am - 08:27 am
- 11 Jul: Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita–Disappearance, Śrīla
Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura – Disappearance (Fasting till noon)
- 12 Jul: Gūḍīcā-māṛjana
- 13 Jul: Ratha-yātrā, (Hera Pancami after 4 days), (Return
Ratha after 8 days), Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and
Śrīla Śivānanda Sena disappearance

Sādhus and Scandals

From time to time, the Indian press exposes some respected godman or *sādhu* for serious misbehavior, such as sexual impropriety. For a renunciant *sādhu*, any sexual activity is an impropriety. In some cases, there are accusations of murder and sometimes in-fighting within the organizations of such *sādhus*. The incident becomes a big issue, and several repercussions follow. People get angry with the so-called *sādhu*, many of his followers leave him, followers also become targets of public abuse; sometimes the *āśrams* of such *sādhus* are attacked. Further, the so-called rationalists or atheists take the opportunity to inform everyone that actually all *sādhus* are bogus: they are all cheating and such exposures prove this. The insinuation is that some *sādhus* are found out but probably most, if not all, are doing something that they should not be doing.

THE CHEATERS AND THE CHEATED

The root cause of the entire problem is the lack of sincerity in the people to seek genuine spiritual guidance. The people in general are not very thoughtful; otherwise they would have realized that these so-called *sādhus* were bogus, even before they were exposed as bogus. They are not bogus particularly because of their sexual misdemeanor or any other misdemeanor, but they are simply cheating the public by presenting themselves as spiritual leaders while they do not give the actual teachings of *śāstra*, nor the spiritual knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Instead of promoting Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which is the only and ultimate spiritual truth, and the only knowledge that can help people, they talk nonsense and take the money of their followers. Even if they don't indulge in impropriety or gross immoral acts, the very fact that they are posing

as spiritual leaders when they have nothing of spiritual benefit to offer is the worst immorality. Yet this is going on because in truth most people want to have a nice feeling of being somewhat spiritual and religious, but in fact they are totally materialistic. Therefore, they like the cheating *sādhus* who give blessings to their followers but never tell them to alter their consciousness and come out from the materialistic way of thinking and understand that everything in this world is temporary.

When these cheaters are exposed, people end up categorizing ISKCON devotees as being in the same league as the bogus *sādhus* who are now exposed. To be a member of ISKCON, one has to follow the four basic tenets of not eating meat, fish or egg; not gambling; not taking intoxication; and not indulging in illicit sexual connections. An ISKCON member has to follow a rigid *sādhana* of rising early and following many spiritual practices. So it is quite illogical for people to categorize ISKCON devotees with these charlatans.

Unfortunately, most people do not know what *sādhus* are actually meant to be. They manufacture a stereotype of what they expect from a *sādhu*—he should be nice, he should smile, give blessing, tell you to be good, and make you feel good—and there are many cheating *sādhus* who like to fit into this category. People think this is spiritual. But a real *sādhu* is one who tells you that material life is not good and simply being so-called good or even simply giving up tobacco and alcohol, is not in and of itself actual spiritual life. Spiritual life means to give up all material desires and completely surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

These comments on bogus *sādhus* are not meant as a sectarian diatribe, but should be understood in light of the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, which (please turn to page 29)