

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

BACK TO GODHEAD



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • March/April 2001 • \$4.00/£4.50

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SERVICE Perfecting
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Desire
To Serve

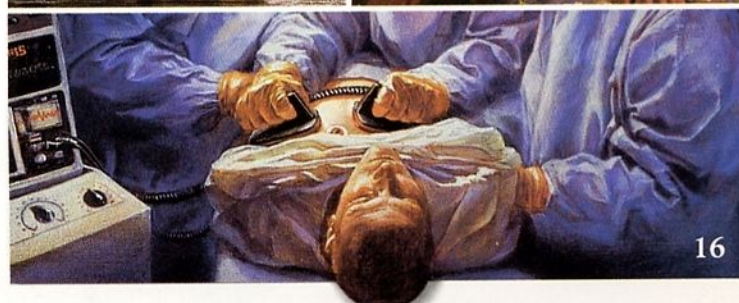
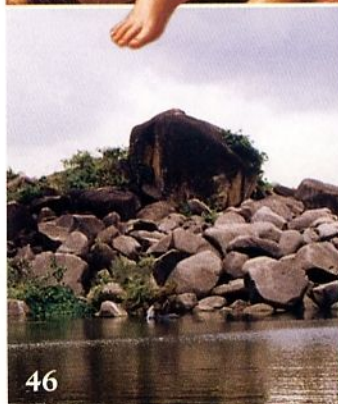


Challenges Facing Science and Religion • Suffering: Who Is to Blame? • No Time for Crime
Buddhism's Four Noble Truths • The Ax-Wielding Avatar • A Journey into Unknown India

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

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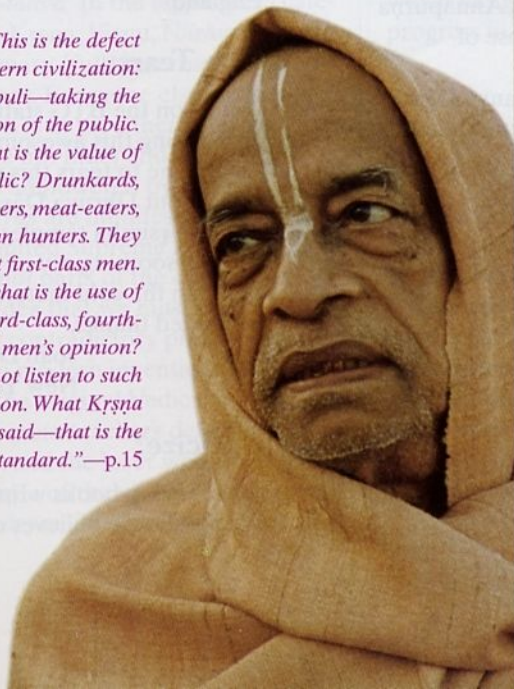
Religion Versus Faith

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COVER Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, His eternal consort and the personification of His pleasure-giving potency. The Vedic scriptures reveal the forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and teach that service to the Divine Couple is the highest goal of life. (Painting by Rāmaprasāda Dāsa)

“This is the defect of Western civilization: vox populi—taking the opinion of the public. But what is the value of this public? Drunkards, smokers, meat-eaters, woman hunters. They are not first-class men. So what is the use of such third-class, fourth-class men’s opinion? We do not listen to such opinion. What Kṛṣṇa has said—that is the standard.”—p.15



WELCOME



IN THIS ISSUE three articles deal with the similarities and differences of various philosophies. Bhaktivedanta Institute scientist Sadāpūta Dāsa writes in “Challenges Facing

Science and Religion” that there seems to be much that science and religion don’t know. He suggests that to draw a clear-cut line between the two is premature.

In “Who or What Is to Blame?” Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī surveys philosophies about the origin of suffering and shows how the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness tie up a lot of loose ends on the question.

Satyarāja Dāsa speaks to a group of Zen-Buddhists in “The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism.” He shows how Vaiṣṇava philosophy includes the Four Noble Truths and adds dimensions that he finds appealing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness in ways that would appeal to thinking, reasonable people. He emphasized that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not blind faith or dogma but a scientific approach to understanding truth. Scientists often speak of “elegant solutions,” but Prabhupāda taught that no solution to the problem of our quest for knowledge is more elegant than Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

OUR PURPOSES

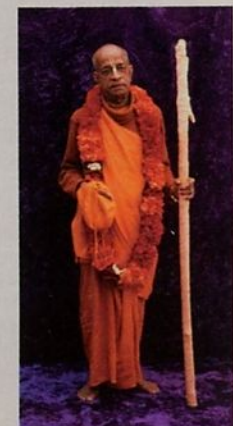
- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God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



Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and source of all material and spiritual worlds



Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa’s most recent incarnation, taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

Worth the Price

Subscribing to your magazine is the wisest thing I have ever done. It is a magazine worth spending one's time and money on. I request that you do more articles on raising young children within Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The mercy of devotees and your magazine is necessary, especially as we are also parents and family members.

Lungile Renene
South Africa

Glimpse of Vṛndāvana

The story by Annapūrṇa Devi Dāsī (Nov/Dec 2000) prompted me to pen a few lines to express my overflowing appreciation of her art and the article. A first glance of her paintings made me think that this was for minors. But a second look prompted me to have a third, fourth, fifth look. Only then I realized the untimely beauty of her simple water color paintings, which swept my heart away in waves of joy.

They are magical. They can attract the mind of any ordinary soul. As she has found peace in her work, we find solace in the beauty of Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes as depicted in her art. Thank you, BTG, for publishing this inspiring article, and thank you, Annapūrṇa Dāsī, for giving us a glimpse of Vṛndāvana.

Uttama Caitanya Dāsa
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

In the Top Five

The latest BTG (Jan/Feb) is definitely one of the top five best ones in the last twelve years. All compliments and obeisances to the crew. The photos and color are brilliant. Every article is first class, especially "Life-long Search" and "Ahovalam Revisited." The Draupadī history is captivating. I think Prabhupāda would be extra pleased with this issue.

I do have some complaints. In the letter on milk, we should respond that Prabhupāda told us to get milk from our own cows, who are treated properly. The next best choice is organic milk. That is the standard in ISKCON that Prabhupāda wanted. The Glossary is boring to me, but I understand that people may learn something from it.

Vivasvān Dāsa
Tampa, Florida

Stunning

The article on the artist Annapūrṇa was stunning. Her paintings are fresh and bursting with spiritual energy. Thank you for this inspiring window on Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Ārādhyā Devi Dāsī
Prabhupāda Village, North Carolina

Simple and Beautiful

The work of Annapūrṇa Devi Dāsī was different and a delight to see. It conveyed an element of innocence, purity, and calm which is so rare to capture in the times we live in today. The medium she used, watercolor, demonstrated her control of color and produced work that is not only simple but very beautiful.

Yogesh Mistry
Wolverhampton, West Midlands
England

Moved to Tears

Thank you all on the BTG staff for steadily producing this awesome magazine. It moved me to tears this morning as I read all about Dhruva Dāsa and his trip to the Nṛsiṃha temples [Jan/Feb]. BTG is a soothing ray of warm sunshine within the cold material world. Unlimited thanks.

Joan DeLisio
New York City

Why Criticize?

I have been reading books written by Śrīla Prabhupāda. He believes only in

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on in the modern world a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millenniums ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṣ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

Kṛṣṇa (and Nārāyaṇa incarnates) and considers all other Hindu "gods" demigods. He also doesn't believe in monistic Vedānta. Apart from not believing in these, he criticizes them sharply. He believes that Hare Kṛṣṇa is the only way to the Godhead.

Well, I find this totally contrary to the Hindu view of tolerance and respect. Kṛṣṇa Himself states in the *Gītā* that "all paths lead to Me, offerings to all lords are accepted by Me." The view of being only a Kṛṣṇa *bhakta* seems like the concept of Christianity, where all who don't believe in Christ are cursed to hell. Please clarify.

Varun Aggarwal
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Śrīla Prabhupāda disagrees with the idea that any philosophy is as good as any other. Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly says that worshipers of the *devas* (demigods) go to the *devas* and that worshipers of Him go to Him. These are not equal destinations. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66) Kṛṣṇa says, *mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: "Surrender to Me alone." He says that demigod worshipers are less intelligent. He says that He is the source of everything, including the demigods.

Vaiṣṇavism teaches that there are two categories of beings: *viṣṇu-tattva* and *jīva-tattva*. In the *viṣṇu-tattva* category are Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, and their plenary (full) incarnations and expansions. Everyone else, including the *devas*, is in the other category. The *devas* are not independently powerful; they are empowered by Kṛṣṇa.

We *jīvas* are infinitesimal parts of the unlimited Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We are *not* parts of the *devas*.

The idea that we must accept all kinds of contradictory philosophies as valid is a modern invention. It is not part of the original Vedic culture. Traditionally, great teachers debated one another, and the loser would become the disciple of the victor. That is how great *ācāryas* like Rāmānuja and

Madhva spread Vaiṣṇavism throughout India. So there is nothing wrong in holding one's ground—on the authority of Kṛṣṇa Himself—and arguing against philosophies that contradict Lord Kṛṣṇa's clear teachings.

Feeling BTG's Spirit

I am a new reader of BTG. I am very impressed and feel it contributes more than just a magazine. I give close reading to every single page, and I can feel the spirit of it.

During my childhood, I loved to see devotees chanting, and I wanted to read more books pertaining to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but I never got an opportunity. I managed to get two of Prabhupāda's books, and I read them several times. Once I finished high school, I came to another city to further my studies, and I got to know a friend who is in touch with ISKCON.

I visited the temple frequently, gave up meat-eating, began to chant, and read more of Prabhupāda's books. Gradually I developed a passion toward Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda, and his books.

I would like to pay a tribute to my friend Nagulan, who has shown me the way. And I would like to acknowledge BTG for its marvelous service, which has given me an opportunity to progress in spiritual life.

Misha
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Prabhupāda Photos

I really liked the photos of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the November/December issue, especially the one on page 6 and another great snap-shot on page 15. I don't remember seeing these two great pictures of Prabhupāda before, which is great! It's good to see some of the more rare photos of Prabhupāda.

Jugna-Hotra Dāsa
Ashcroft, B.C., Canada



Mercy From the Highest Court

*Kṛṣṇa dispenses reward and punishment
with perfect fairness.*

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
For Krishna Consciousness

*prāyeṇaitad bhagavata
īśvarasya viceṣṭitam
mitho nighnanti bhūtāni
bhāvayanti ca yan mithaḥ*

“Factually this is all due to the supreme will of the Lord, the Personality of Godhead. Sometimes people kill one another, and at other times they protect one another.”

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.15.24

A DISCIPLE READS the Purport: “According to the anthropologists, there is nature’s law of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. But they do not know that

behind the law of nature is the supreme direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is confirmed that the law of nature is executed under the direction of the Lord. Whenever, therefore, there is peace in the world, it must be known that it is due to the good will of the Lord, and whenever there is upheaval in the world, it is also due to the supreme will of the Lord.

“Not a blade of grass moves without the will of the Lord. Whenever, therefore, there is disobedience of the established rules enacted by the Lord, there is war between men and nations. The surest way to the path of peace is,

***Everybody is being carried by
the laws of material nature, but a foolish person
thinks he is doing everything himself.***

• • •

therefore, dovetailing everything to the established rule of the Lord. The established rule is that whatever we do, whatever we eat, whatever we sacrifice, or whatever we give in charity must be done to the full satisfaction of the Lord. No one should do anything, eat anything, sacrifice anything, or give anything in charity against the will of the Lord.

“Discretion is the better part of valor, and one must learn how to discriminate between actions which may be pleasing to the Lord and those which may not be pleasing to the Lord. An action is thus judged by the Lord’s pleasure or displeasure. There is no room for personal whims; we must always be guided by the pleasure of the Lord. Such action is called *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, or actions performed which are linked with the Supreme Lord. That is the art of doing a thing perfectly.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Everyone is suffering or enjoying. Actually, there is no enjoyment, only suffering. But in the struggle for existence, when we counteract the suffering we take it as enjoying.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority, says *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*: “The material world is the place for suffering.” That is a fact. One person is trying to accept suffering as enjoying, and another person is trying to end suffering. That is the difference between a sane person and an insane person. I’ll give you a practical example. In the prison some prisoners are called first-class prisoners. They are given special favor by the government. And there are third-class prisoners also. But both of them are prisoners, and prison is not meant for comfortable life. It is meant for suffering. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

therefore sings, *anādi karama-phale paṇi’ bhavārṇava-jale taribāre nā dekhi upāya*: “Because of my past fruitive activities, I have fallen into the ocean of material suffering, and I cannot find any way out of it.” A sane person knows, “I may be a first-class prisoner, but that does not mean I am not a prisoner; I am a prisoner.”

The suffering of prison is to have no independence to do anything. That is prison life. We are all thinking we are independent, but that is not the fact.

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni
guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā
kartāham iti manyate*

“The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.27] Everybody is being carried by the laws of material nature, but a foolish person thinks he is doing everything himself.

In today’s verse it is said, *prāyena naitad bhagavata īśvarasya viceṣṭitam*. We cannot do anything without the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just as in the state we cannot do anything without the sanction of the government. Without the sanction of the supreme state, the supreme order-giver—Kṛṣṇa, or God—we cannot do anything. But here it is said, *mitho nighnanti bhūtāni bhāvayanti ca yan mithaḥ*. Sometimes by Kṛṣṇa’s will we kill one another, and sometimes we protect one another. Does that mean that at different times Kṛṣṇa gives different intelligence? No. Kṛṣṇa’s action is *daiva*, superior, like that of a high-court judge who condemns someone,

“This man should be hanged,” and for another man, “He will get millions of dollars from that person.”

IMPARTIAL JUDGE

Now, is God partial? He is giving somebody millions of dollars and ordering somebody else to be hanged. Is He partial? No, He is not partial. He is simply administering the law. That’s all. One man has created such a situation that he should be condemned to death, and another man has created such a situation that he will be awarded millions of dollars. They are getting the results of their actions.

We are acting, and by superior administration—*daiva-netreṇa*—we are getting different types of bodies, and suffering or enjoying the consequences. That is our position. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, *samo ’haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu*: “I am equal to everyone.” Otherwise, how is He God? God is not partial in saying that somebody should be killed and somebody should be awarded ten thousand dollars. No. It is our own work; we create such situations. That you should know.

If I kill somebody, then, by the law of nature, or the law of God, I shall be killed also. But I forget that because I killed somebody, now that person is killing me. But Kṛṣṇa reminds us, “This person killed you,” or “This child killed you last life. Now you can kill this child in the womb.” *Viceṣṭitam*: He reminds us.

Kṛṣṇa is described as *upadraṣṭā*, the witness. He sees that one man has killed another, so He will give the victim the chance to kill his killer. Kṛṣṇa reminds him, “Kill him. Here is your opportunity.” Because He is equal to everyone, He gives the victim the chance to retaliate. That is going on.

God is impartial, just like the jail superintendent or the government. The government is not partial. The government is equal to everyone, but everyone enjoys or suffers according to his own work. So God reminds us, "This body, this being, killed you in your last life. Now I give you the sanction: You can kill him." This is called *nighnanti*.

And God also reminds us, "This man gave you protection, so you give him protection." So there is nothing wrong. It is equal justice. Don't think that because God, or Kṛṣṇa, gives sanction, He is partial. No. He is always impartial. We are suffering the results of our own activities. *Karmaṇā daiva-netreṇa*. We are getting different types of bodies and suffering.

THE WILL OF GOD

Therefore we should always try to understand the will of God. That is our duty. We can understand the will of God in the human form of life. That is our opportunity. The will of God is expressed very clearly. Nobody can say, "What is the will of God? I do not know." No, you know. God says, Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: "Give up all other business. Just become surrendered to Me."

"And then how shall I go on?"

Ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣa-yiṣyāmi: "I shall give you protection, and I shall release you from the effects of all sinful activity."

We suffer because of sinful activities, and we enjoy because of pious activity. That is the law. If you become nicely educated, cultured, then you get a good position in society. But if you are a rascal, then you suffer. Similarly, we are creating our position. That is called *karma-bandhana*. *Karma-bandhana* means that as long as we do not know what our duty is, we create positions for ourselves, and therefore sometimes we suffer, sometimes we enjoy.

Therefore we must know what our duty is. That we have forgotten. *Na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*. In the material condition of life we have forgotten what is our actual aim of life. Therefore Kṛṣṇa comes.

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham*

"Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.7]. When we forget our dharma, that is called *dharmasya glāniḥ*. Dharma is not a religious sentiment. Dharma means our occupational duty. So *dharmasya glāniḥ* means the deterioration of our real occupational duty.

Our real occupational duty is to serve the Supreme. We are meant for serving. But we forget serving Kṛṣṇa, and we try to serve so many other things. "So many other things" means our lust, our greed, our illusion, our many problems. We have to serve. That is our position. Nobody can be free from service. That is not possible. But we do not know where to give our service. That is our forgetfulness. Here, the human being, in ignorance, serves lust, greed—so many things. A man kills another body because of lust, or because of illusion, or because of so many other reasons. So we are serving. There is no doubt about it. But we are serving our *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mātsarya*: lust, anger, greed, illusion, envy.

Now we have to learn that we have been frustrated by serving so many things. Now we have to turn that service attitude to Kṛṣṇa. Teaching us that is Kṛṣṇa's mission. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: "You are serving already. You cannot be free from service. But your service is misplaced. Therefore, just turn your service to Me. Then you become happy." That is the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement: to give our service to Kṛṣṇa.

SERVING OUR LUST

We suffer because we serve our lust, anger, greed, and so on. For example, a greedy man suffers by eating more than required. Diseases like diabetes and dysentery are caused by overeating. We are suffering, but we continue to eat more than required because

BACK TO GODHEAD

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we are greedy and lusty. That is the cause. We are serving our lust, our greed, and we are suffering. That is practical. If you have no appetite and you eat, then you suffer. If you infect some disease, you'll suffer.

We are being infected by lust, greed, illusion, fear. If you steal, then you will be fearful: "Oh, I may be arrested." Because you have done something wrong, you are under the influence of fear. It is very easy to understand.

We are creating our situation and serving different types of desire. That's all. Sometimes we do something we

should not do. Although we have done so much to serve lust and greed, they are not merciful. They still dictate, "Go on doing this, go on doing this, go on doing this." A man is suffering, but still he follows the dictation of lust and desire. We create our own karma. Therefore any sane man will see, "I have served my desires for so long, but I am not happy, and the desires are not fulfilled."

The desire is never satiated. We may tell someone, "You have killed so many animals. Now don't kill anymore." No, he will go on killing, killing, killing, kill-

ing, killing, killing. He is never satisfied. "Now I have killed so many. No more. Stop." No, there is no stopping. The injunction is "Thou shalt not kill," but he will kill and kill and kill and kill, and still he wants to be satisfied. Just see. The Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill," and people are simply engaged in the killing business, and still they want to be happy. Just see the fun.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, "Yes, you be killed by an occasional world war. You must be killed. You have created this situation. You must be killed. You may be American or English or German or this or that. You may be very proud of your nationality. But you must be killed." This is the position. "You have killed so many animals. Now wholesale killing with one bomb. One atom bomb. Be killed."

Rascals do not know how things are going on. Tit for tat. That must be. In ordinary laws, in the state laws, if you have killed somebody you must be hanged. So do you think you can simply bluff the supreme authority, Kṛṣṇa? You are killing, killing, killing, and you will be saved? No. You will be killed by pestilence, by famine. Even within your mother's womb, you will be killed. Where there is supposed to be good protection, there also you will be killed. The human nation is degenerating in such a way. The killing business is increasing daily.

Therefore we must submit to Kṛṣṇa. We cannot get away from the laws of God. That is not possible. Therefore we must surrender: "Kṛṣṇa, God, I have acted freely for so many births. I did not become happy. Nor I am happy at the present moment. So now I surrender unto You. You say, 'I give you protection.' So kindly give me protection." That surrender is the aim of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Thank you very much. ☸

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Glossary

- Ācārya**—a spiritual master who teaches by example.
- Balarāma**—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.
- Battle of Kurukshetra**—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.
- Bhagavad-gītā**—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.
- Bhakti**—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.
- Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura**—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
- Bhakti-yoga**—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.
- Caitanya Mahāprabhu**—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.
- Dharma**—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).
- Godhead**—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.
- Gurukula**—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").
- Hare Kṛṣṇa**—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.
- ISKCON**—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- Japa**—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.
- Kali-yuga**—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.
- Karma**—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.
- Kirtana**—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).
- Kṛṣṇa**—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").
- Mahābhārata**—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.
- Māyā**—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.
- Māyāvādī**—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal or void.
- Modes of nature**—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.
- Nityānanda**—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- Prasādam**—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").
- Purāṇas**—Vedic histories.
- Rādhārāṇī**—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.
- Rathayātrā**—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").
- Sannyāsa**—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.
- Śrī**—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).
- Śrīla Prabhupāda**—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.
- Supersoul**—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.
- Upaniṣads**—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas*.
- Varṇāśrama**—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).
- Vṛndāvana**—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.
- Vaiṣṇava**—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).
- Vedas**—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.
- Vedic**—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.
- Viṣṇu**—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

WHO OR WHAT IS TO BLAME?

An investigation into the causes of suffering.

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

DHARMA, RELIGION personified, had taken on the form of a bull. Shaking in fear, he stood trembling on one leg, his other three legs broken. Kali, who personifies the present age of quarrel and hypocrisy, raised his club and swung it again and again, beating Dharma's legs.

Although a common laborer, Kali was falsely dressed as a king, just as a criminal might dress as a policeman to gain trust. It seemed Kali was ready to beat his victim to death. Then Parīkṣit, the real king, arrived.

After ordering Kali to stop, Parīkṣit asked the victim to say who had caused his broken legs and pitiable condition. Dharma answered that suffering comes from many causes and therefore he couldn't identify the real perpetrator. Besides, he said, the ultimate cause of everything is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he didn't wish to blame the Lord, who acts only for everyone's good.

Parīkṣit praised the answer and declared Dharma to be the personification of religion.

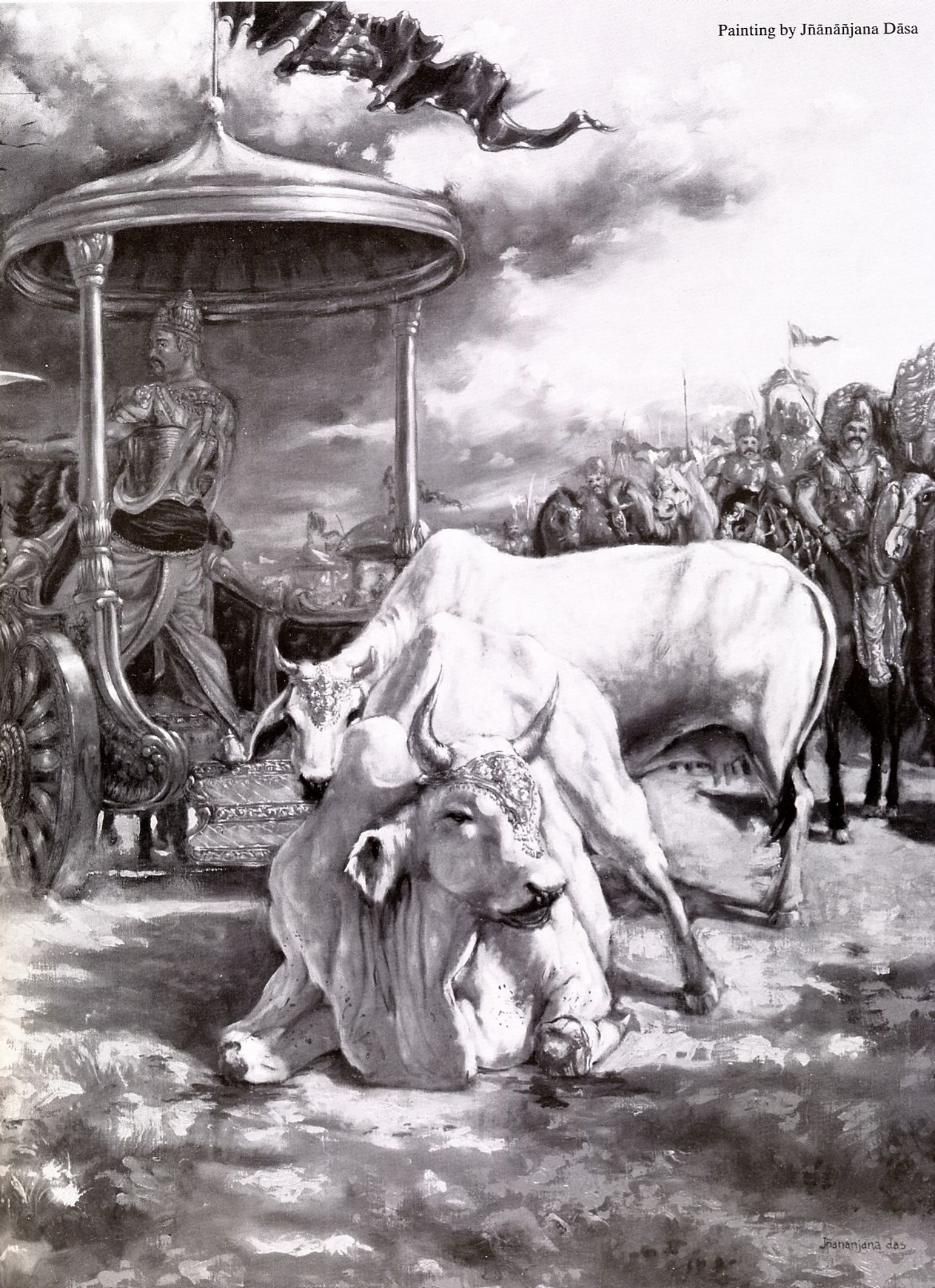
"The destination intended for the perpetrator of irreligious acts," Parīkṣit said, "is also intended for one who identifies the perpetrator."

As part of his kingly duty, Parīkṣit then prepared to bring Kali to justice.

Several classes of philosophers try to explain suffering. Some say that the cause is inscrutable and we simply have

Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the emperor of the world, prepares to punish Kali, who had been beating the legs of religion in the form of a bull.





The laws of nature bring us the reactions to our work, just as the “law of digestion” brings the plastic-eater stomach pain.

• • •

to bear grief without understanding its cause.

Others say that the laws of nature cause misery and, since those laws arise by chance, no one is responsible for suffering. These philosophers often seek to ease suffering through scientific advances that will, they hope, adjust nature to their own plan.

Other philosophers say that because all is spirit, Brahman, suffering is an illusion; it doesn't really exist. These philosophers wish to destroy grief by destroying individuality, either by dissolving the self or by merging it into the total spirit.

Philosophers who know something of reincarnation suggest that the reactions to our desires and actions cause suffering, that an automatic law metes out justice.

Some theistic philosophers explain that God, the supreme controller, arranges for suffering and we simply have to trust that His reasons are good and sensible.

THE FULL PICTURE

Each of these philosophies is incomplete. Each has part of the truth—like the blind men asked to describe an elephant. The man touching the tail said that an elephant was like a rope, the one touching an ear said that an elephant was like a fan, and the one touching the trunk said that an elephant was like a large snake.

Each of the philosophies I listed fails to give as complete and satisfying an explanation of the cause of suffering as we find in the Vedic literature. The *Vedas* explain that each soul that enters the material world does so voluntarily, desiring to imitate God, Kṛṣṇa. The soul by nature is a loving associate of the Lord, serving Him in unlimited activities of joy. But on entering this world, the soul develops desires and actions in disharmony with its very

self. Just as eating something indigestible—such as plastic—will cause suffering, so thinking, feeling, and doing anything against our nature causes misery. The laws of nature, including what we term the “law of karma,” bring us the reactions to our work, just as the “law of digestion” brings the plastic-eater stomach pain.

The misery karma brings does not really affect the self, or soul, in any way, as much as the suffering of the hero in a drama has no actual effect on the lives of the audience. They suffer by identification. The soul “suffers” by identifying with the body and mind acquired to fulfill artificial desires. Just as the staged drama is real (actually taking place) but not reality (eternal spiritual existence), so is one's suffering in this world.

This whole process—the soul's acting in disharmony with his constitution, the laws of nature then bringing suffering, the soul identifying that suffering as his own—takes place under Kṛṣṇa's direction. But the process is not simply mechanical. Like a judge in this world, Kṛṣṇa may choose to modify how the law is applied in a particular case.

The very complexity of the system makes the entire scheme inscrutable to a human mind. It involves the intertwining of many souls' reactions, the playing out of justice over many lifetimes, and the freedom to make new choices while suffering reactions to old ones.

THE PLACE OF COMPASSION

What about compassion for those who suffer? In our school we were studying the Native Americans known as the Cherokees. They fully adopted European-American culture and set up a Christian society with a government modeled after the American constitution. Completely assimilated, they were

model citizens who legally owned their land and homes. When government officials tried to seize their land, they won their case in court—as far as the Supreme Court. Yet the President ignored the ruling and allowed local officials to arrest the Cherokees and give away their land. Finally, the Cherokees were forced to migrate from Georgia to a reservation in Oklahoma. So many died on the way that the route is called “The Trail of Tears.”

As I study the suffering of the Cherokees, the injustice and greed of the perpetrators fill me with disgust. But does my pity for the law-abiding Cherokees who were robbed and exiled betray an ignorance of the laws of karma? After all, suffering doesn't truly affect the real spiritual self. And everything that happened to the Cherokees resulted from their past actions, either in this life or previous ones. Besides, the Lord supervised and approved the infliction of suffering.

Still, one rightly feels compassion for the powerful, effulgent, and wise soul who has sown seeds that yielded a thorny harvest. Do we not mourn a person born into wealth and education who through his own choices lies in his alcoholic vomit in the gutter? We know he got himself there, yet we do what we can to bring him back to his rightful place.

THE EVILDOERS

What of those who do evil? Is the perpetrator of evil really to blame if the victims are truly only victims of their own past actions? Every religious system has a code for defining crimes and penalties. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa, the ultimate designer of these codes, considers that an evildoer should be held responsible and accountable. The officers of the American government who stole the Cherokees' land, imprisoning

(please turn to page 40)

“What Is the Use of Public Opinion?”

Here we continue an exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and Australia’s director of research for the Department of Social Welfare. The meeting took place at the Melbourne ISKCON center on May 21, 1975.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We get so many new persons coming here to our center, and after some time they become cultured, dedicated devotees. The thing is, the definite method must be there: no illicit sex, no meat-eating, no intoxication, no gambling, and always chanting the Lord’s holy names. Because we have this definite method, we are increasing; our movement is not decreasing. For instance, we have opened a temple here. Not long ago, there was no temple, but now we have got a nice temple. In this way, all over the world our movement is increasing; it is not decreasing.

I came from India alone. After arriving in New York, in 1965, for one year I had no place to stay. I had no means to eat. I was loitering, practically, living at one friend’s house and then at another friend’s house. Then gradually everything developed. People came forward. I was chanting at a square in New York alone, for a full three hours in the afternoon. What was that—Tompkins Square? Yes. You have been to New York? So that was my beginning. Then gradually people came. *[To a disciple:]* You were in some club. What was that?

Disciple: Oh, in California?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Disciple: I was at Morningstar Ranch. *[Laughs.]*

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Ah—hah. *[Chuckles.]* That was another brothel.

Disciple: A hippie farm. You came there.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So you were there, and I

went there. The proprietor, the organizer—he took me there.

[Turning again to the director:] So I think that if you are serious, let us combinedly open an institution where people can be trained up in how to become first-class. Children should be trained up. That will make a solution.

Director: We must change society, then.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. No attempt to change society all at once. Let society be what it is. We simply have to train up some children. And, of course, some men, also—just as we have trained these men. So it is possible. This is a practical example. *[Glancing at disciple:]* Just like you were in that den, Morningstar.

Director (to disciple): Have many of your gentlemen been in delinquency in your life?

Disciple: Delinquency?

Director: Yeah. Have you been involved in troubles with the law before you joined?

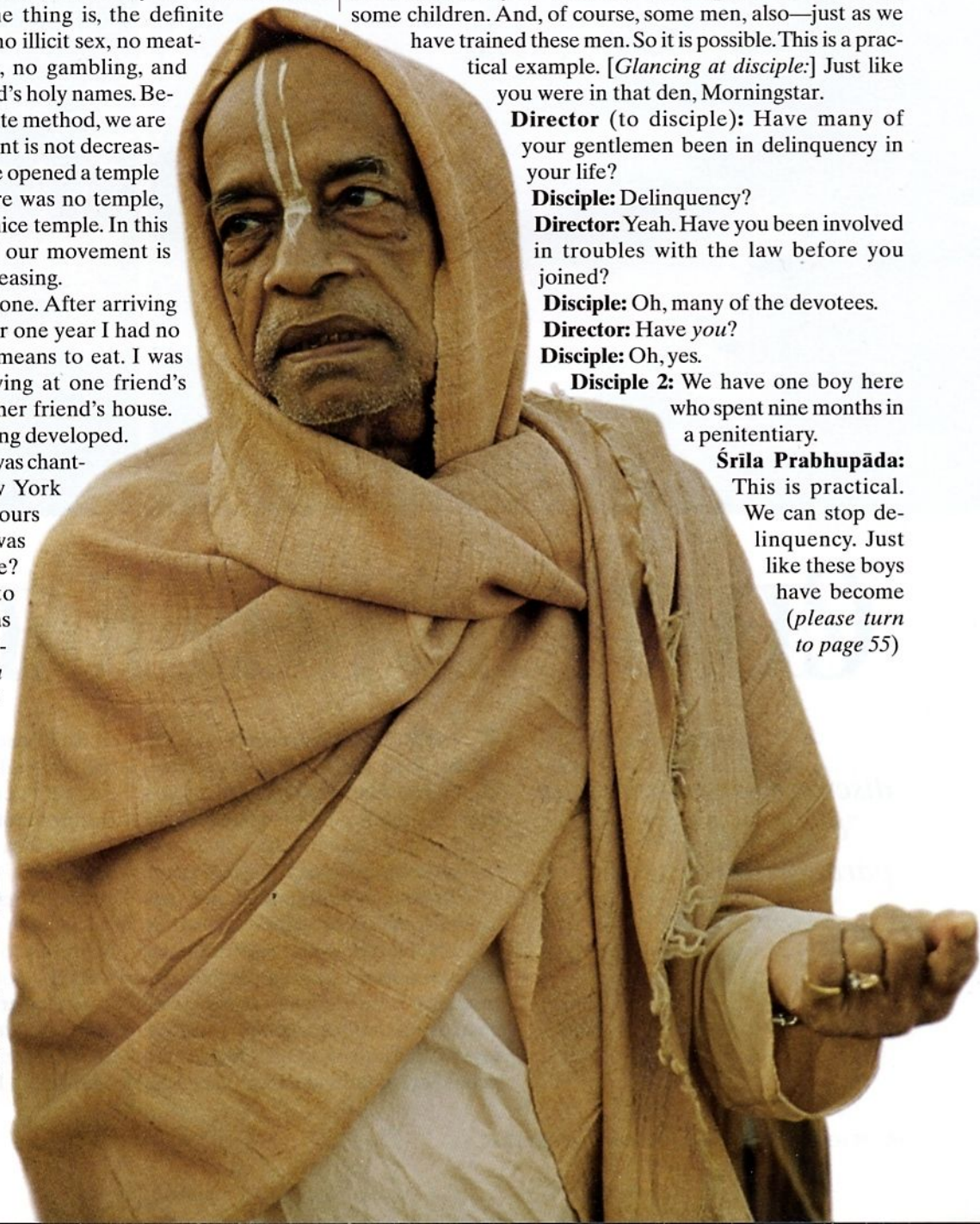
Disciple: Oh, many of the devotees.

Director: Have you?

Disciple: Oh, yes.

Disciple 2: We have one boy here who spent nine months in a penitentiary.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is practical. We can stop delinquency. Just like these boys have become *(please turn to page 55)*





CHALLENGES FACING S

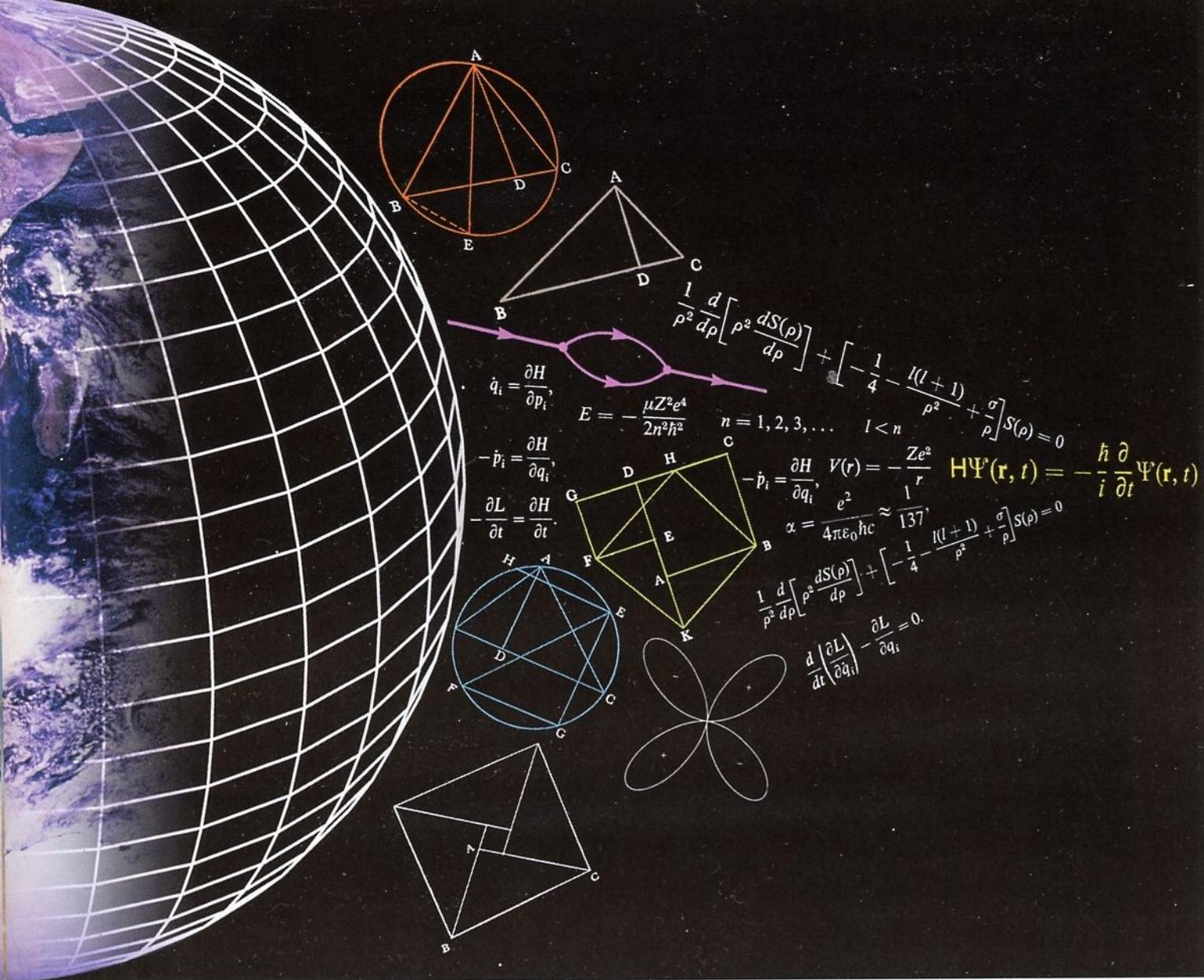
While scientific discoveries test religious dogma, religious and paranormal experiences challenge scientific theories.

by Sadāpūta Dāsa

IN THE VAIṢṆAVA tradition of India, God is defined as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān: the unlimited light of pure being underlying nature, the Lord within the heart, and the supreme transcendental Person. In Christian tradition, a similar idea can be found in the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In both traditions the emphasis is on God's personal nature. As a transcendental person, God controls nature on a grand scale, He acts within history, and He deals with people on an individual level.

This concept of God has been central to the lives of large numbers of people over many centuries, but at the present time it is not intellectually respectable. To be sure, it is often said that there is no conflict between science and religion. But this statement is true only if one makes a drastic redefinition of traditional concepts of God.

Consider the following conversation, which took place in 1959, between astronomer Harlow Shapley and biologist Julian Huxley:



Montage by Yamarāja Dāsa

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Shapley: And in that famous address in 1951 the Pope went along with evolution.

Huxley: He still said there must be a God who is somehow responsible in some way, didn't he?

Shapley: Well, he didn't deny God, no. And you don't either.

Huxley: I certainly do.

Shapley: Oh, no. If you defined God, you wouldn't.

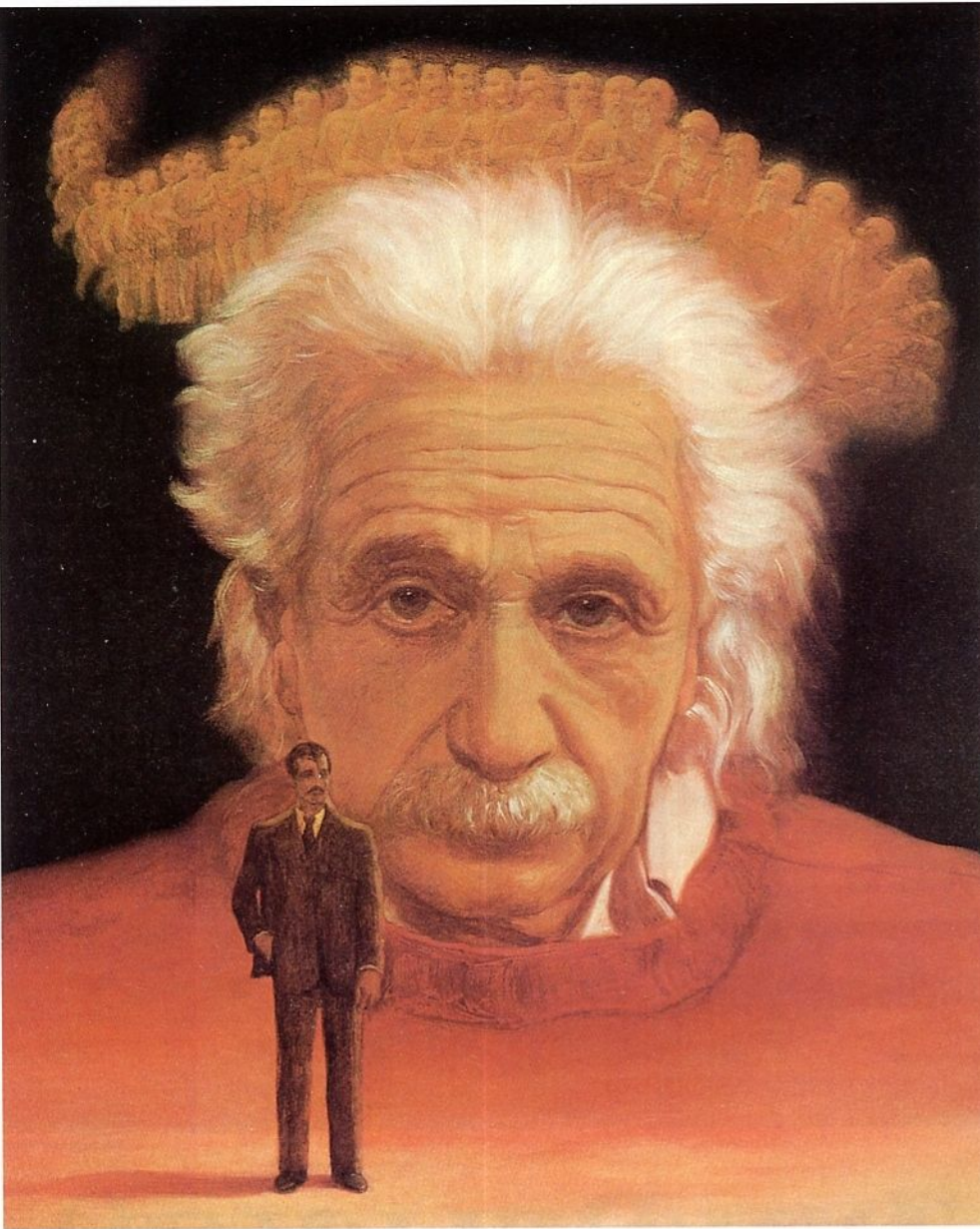
Huxley: Now don't go into semantics.

Shapley: You're not an atheist, Julian; you're an agnostic.

Huxley: I am an atheist, in the only correct sense, that I don't believe in a supernatural being who influences natural events.

The success of modern science depends on our ability to create mechanistic models of natural phenomena in which all natural causes are represented by formulas and numbers. Since God cannot be reduced to formulas, God has to be decoupled from nature. At most, God can be admitted as the ultimate cause of the laws used in

Above: Science and religion both claim to describe the world we live in. From the standpoint of religion, the world is an emanation of divine energy, full of life and meaning. From the scientific standpoint, the world is given by a pattern of data, prescribed by mathematical relationships. How can these two world views be reconciled?



Einstein believed that the passage of time is an illusion. The life of an individual exists timelessly as a fixed, space-time worm (shown above Einstein's head) that has a fertilized egg on one end and a deceased body on the other. This raises questions regarding the existence of free will.

scientific models. As physicist Steven Weinberg put it, "The only way that any sort of science can proceed is to assume that there is no divine intervention and see how far one can get with this assumption."

The elimination of God from nature begins with the rejection of stories that seem obviously contrary to natural laws—stories about the lifting of mountains (Kṛṣṇa) or the parting of seas (Jehovah). At first, this elimination can be seen as a rational reform

in which the dross of superstition is removed and the way is paved for a deeper spiritual understanding. An attractive approach is to make a distinction between the rational and the transcendental. One treats the rational domain according to the methods and findings of science, while positing a transcendental domain lying beyond reason and accessible only to higher, spiritual states of consciousness. The transcendental domain can be approached only through faith, accep-

tance of revealed knowledge, and submissive obedience to higher spiritual authority.

This approach to religion and science can be a useful rhetorical strategy, and it may be satisfactory for a rare person who truly lives on a high transcendental platform and directly knows what is transcendental. But for others, it suffers from the difficulty that it is hard to make a clear distinction between the rational and transcendental domains. How do we draw the line?

If we hold the line at a particular part of the intellectual landscape, we will come in conflict with science, which will insist on extending its established theoretical picture. If we let the line be completely flexible, we will find that nothing relevant to the world of our experience remains on the transcendental side. This lends weight to the perspective that the transcendental is strictly *anirvacaniyam*, having no impact whatsoever on our words or our actions. But this is a far cry from traditional conceptions of God as a supreme personality (with both describable and indescribable aspects) who takes an interest in individual lives.

On surveying the issues involving science and religion, my overwhelming impression is that there is

much that we do not know. I therefore think that it is premature to try to draw a clear-cut line between science and religion. Rather, we should realize that there is a broad gray area in which much further exploration needs to be done.

In the theoretical domains claimed by science, many fundamental questions remain. In the empirical study of nature, and especially in the study of human life, much data begs for an explanation and has not been assimilated

into the scientific world view. In the field of religion there are likewise many unanswered questions.

I will briefly discuss some important issues involving science and religion, and point out questions that need to be addressed.

GOD AND THE LAWS OF PHYSICS

Sir Isaac Newton is a good starting point. Newton's great contribution was to introduce a system of mathematical laws that could be verified with quantitative precision. In so doing, he created a domain of natural law that inevitably came into territorial conflict with the domain of divine action.

Newton himself believed that God is active in this world, and he was criticized by the philosopher Wilhelm Leibniz for his proposal that God makes periodic adjustments in the motion of matter. But the basic thrust of Newton's system of physics was to limit God's action to the enforcement of unchanging laws imposed at the time of creation.

The mathematical form of Newton's laws made this nearly unavoidable. A set of deterministic differential equations define the motion of material particles. Even if something is thought to exist outside the collection of material particles, there appears to be no way for it to influence their motion, and Newton's famous divine adjustments therefore appear awkward and unnatural.

But the key word here is "appears." In recent years it has been discovered that in many situations, Newton's equations give rise to a phenomenon known as deterministic chaos. This means that arbitrarily small changes in the motion of Newtonian particles are quickly amplified to produce large changes. It doesn't matter how small the changes are. If you make the changes a millionth as large or a million-millionth as large, they quickly amplify to produce big effects.

It has also been discovered that deterministic chaos gives engineers a practical opportunity to systematically control chaotic systems by making tiny adjustments. The implication is that God could readily control nature by

introducing adjustments far smaller than anything we could ever hope to measure. Could this be a way for God to exercise divine control over a semi-autonomous natural world?

THE SPECIAL THEORY OF RELATIVITY

Early in the twentieth century, Albert Einstein introduced fundamental changes into classical, Newtonian physics with his celebrated special theory of relativity. This theory yields the famous formula $E=mc^2$, which was demonstrated by the release of atomic energy. But apart from this, relativity theory has few practical consequences, since it predicts measurable effects differing from classical physics only for objects with velocities approaching the speed of light.

But Einstein's theory has profound philosophical implications. In the equations called Lorentz transformations, it allows time to be mapped into space and space to be mapped into time. This means that time and space must have the same geometric nature. Time, including past, present, and future, must exist as an extended continuum, just as space does. All events have their place in this continuum, and the passage of time is an illusion.

Einstein went so far as to use this idea to console a widow. When his friend Besso died, Einstein wrote to Besso's wife, saying, "Michael has preceded me a little in leaving this strange world. This is not important. For us who are convinced physicists, the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, however persistent."

This idea has serious consequences for the nature of consciousness. It seems, at first glance, to negate the idea of free will and to imply that everything is determined. It also raises the question of how even the illusion of time's passage arises in a world

in which time is a static geometric coordinate. What is it that experiences the illusion? If all events are just blips in an existing continuum, what room is there for an experiencer who moves through events in temporal order?

If these fundamental questions can be resolved, the further question arises whether or not an existing past and future can somehow be perceived by an experiencer not strictly bound to a shifting present moment. This brings to mind Christian ideas of prophecy and the Purāṇic idea of *tri-kāla-jñā*, or knowledge of past, present, and future. Like Newton's theory, Einstein's theory at first seems to restrict the scope of religion. But on further thought it shows potential for giving us deeper insights into traditional theological ideas.

QUANTUM PHYSICS

Quantum physics constitutes a great departure from the deterministic theories of classical physics and relativity. As such, it has sometimes been heralded as the gateway to a new synthesis of science and religion that will reintroduce spirit and consciousness

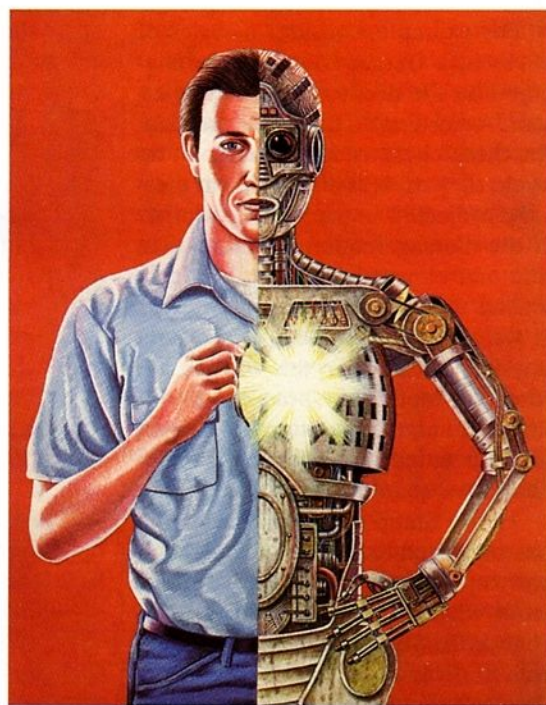


Illustration by Michael Adams

Is a human being a pure machine, working according to the laws of physics, or a spiritual entity interacting with a physical body?

into the world of matter. But this turns out to be easier said than done.

Quantum mechanics allows events to take place in two fundamental ways. First, there is the Schrodinger equation, which determines how the state of a physical system changes continuously with the passage of time. The Schrodinger equation is a partial differential equation fully as deterministic as any of its cousins in classical physics. There is no scope here for spirit to influence matter, except possibly through the technique mentioned above of controlling deterministic chaos. (This is a touchy issue: It turns out that the Schrodinger equation may be less prone to creating chaos than Newton's equations.)

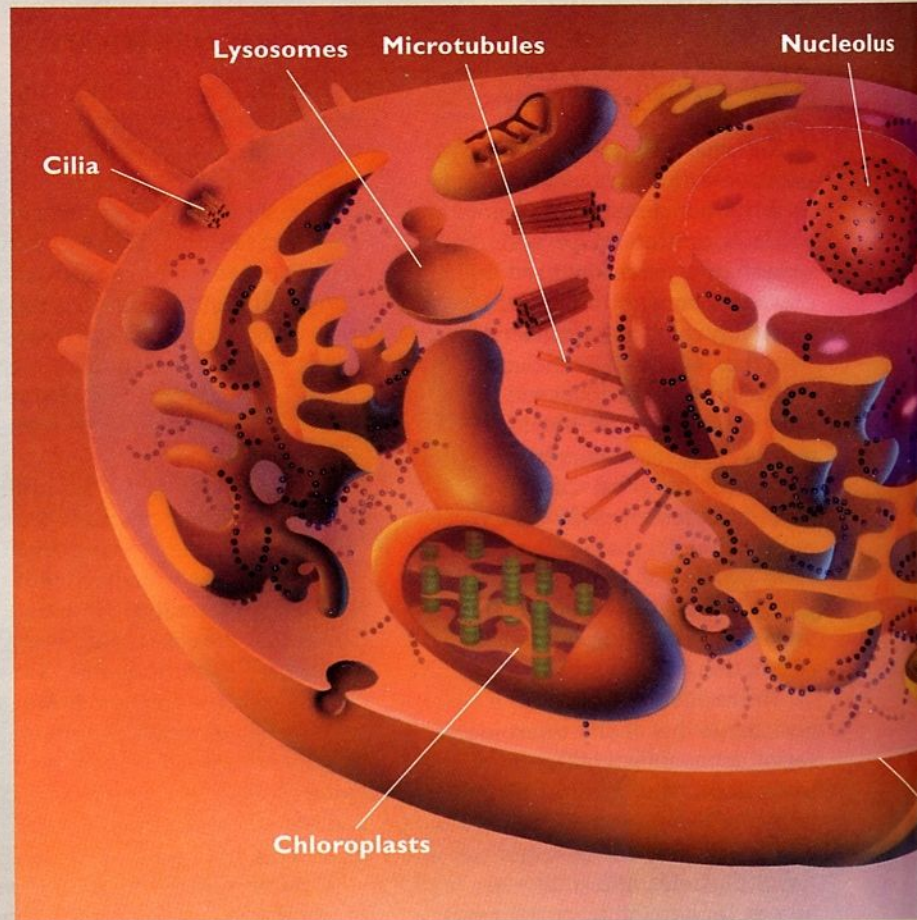
The second process of change is the famous quantum jump, sometimes called "collapse of the wave function." This happens purely by causeless chance. The system suddenly changes freely to a new state, and the only restriction on the change is that it must satisfy statistics encoded into the old state of the system. Since chance events are not determined, they might seem to provide a loophole for the control of matter by spirit. Unfortunately, this idea runs into a conflict with statistical laws.

For example, consider a series of clicks in a Geiger-counter tube triggered by the decay of radioactive atoms. According to quantum mechanics, these clicks occur at random. So could they express an intelligent message projected into matter by spirit? If the message contained more than one or two words, it would strongly violate the laws of probability theory. If we try to reconcile spiritual and physical causation in this way, we are forced to modify the accepted meaning of chance in quantum mechanics, and this entails a fundamental modification of quantum mechanics itself.

Henry Stapp is one physicist who has suggested that quantum mechanical randomness might be different from what we normally think of as chance. To Stapp, the idea that quantum choices come randomly out of nowhere should be seen as an "admission of contemporary ignorance, not as a satisfactory final word." Stapp seeks a possibility that agrees with

The Intricate Machinery of a Living Cell

Once thought to be a simple bag of chemicals, the cell is now understood to be an elaborate molecular system that surpasses a modern city in complexity.



IN DARWIN'S TIME living cells were regarded as simple bags of chemicals that could have arisen spontaneously from organic compounds. However, it is now clear that cells contain intricate biochemical machinery. The steps by which this machinery may have originated are unknown and difficult to imagine. Thus it is no longer justifiable to simply take it for granted that living cells have evolved from chemicals by physical processes. Some important structures of typical plant and animal cells are depicted in this illustration.

The **ribosomes** manufacture protein molecules by following blueprints encoded in messenger RNA. Although they appear here as mere dots, the

ribosomes have a complex structure.

The **endoplasmic reticulum** consists of a complex of membranes that form internal compartments used in the synthesis and transport of various compounds produced by the cell.

The **nucleus** contains the hereditary material, DNA, which carries instructions for the operation and perpetuation of the cellular machinery. Complex molecular processes are involved in replicating the DNA.

The **nucleolus** is a factory for the partial manufacture of ribosomes.

The **microtubules** form a complex latticework that gives form to the cell and enables it to systematically move and change shape.

Some cells possess **cilia**, whiplike



Illustration by Śrīnivāsa Dāsa

structures that execute a swimming stroke through the action of an internal arrangement of sliding rods.

Lysosomes contain enzymes that break down unwanted material within the cell.

The **chloroplasts** found in plant cells are complex chemical factories that carry out photosynthesis—the storage of solar energy in the form of sugar molecules.

The **cellular membrane** is equipped with many complex protein molecules that regulate the passage of molecules into and out of the cell and act as sensors informing the cell of external conditions.

The **mitochondria** are chemical factories that generate energy for the cell through the controlled breakdown of food molecules.

all scientific data but lies somewhere between “pure chance” and “pure determinism.” He concludes: “I think such a possibility is open, but to give this logical possibility a nonspeculative foundation will require enlarging the boundaries of scientific knowledge.”

Although Stapp is primarily concerned with individual consciousness, scientists such as William Pollard and Donald Mackay have seen chance as a loophole for introducing divine control into the world of physics. Pollard’s idea was summed up neatly by the physicist-priest John Polkinghorne: “Will not God’s power to act as the cause of uncaused quantum events (always cleverly respecting the statistical regularities which are reflections of his faithfulness) give him a chance to play a manipulative role in a scientifically regular world?” Polkinghorne dismissed this idea as contrived, saying that “Houdini-like wriggings” are required to insert control signals from mind or God into the straitjacket of physical processes.

The lesson of quantum mechanics seems to be that we must either discard the idea that spirit influences matter or be prepared to develop a new physics that includes some kind of spirit-matter interface. The latter program is far from easy to carry out, but we may find many rewarding insights if we make the attempt.

THE BRAIN AND CONSCIOUSNESS

In the scientific world, the theories of physics provide the basis for the life sciences and for our understanding of mind and consciousness. Thus Nobel laureate Francis Crick has recently announced what he calls the Astonishing Hypothesis. He claims, “‘You,’ your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.”

In one sense, this should be called the Standard Hypothesis. With a few exceptions, such as Sir John Eccles, neuroscientists take it for granted that mind and consciousness can be

fully understood in terms of physical brain processes.

Yet contemporary brain research does have an astonishing feature. Thus far, no one has been able to even suggest an intelligible connection between physio-chemical processes and the qualities of perception (called “qualia”) that make up conscious experience. Thus Crick admits, “I have said almost nothing about qualia—the redness of red—except to brush it to one side and hope for the best.”

In his book *Consciousness Explained*, the philosopher Daniel Dennett deals with qualia by denying their existence. He gives many examples suggesting that consciousness is an illusion, and that what really happens in the brain is quite different from what we imagine as our conscious experience. But we may ask: How can illusion (false awareness) arise without the prior existence of awareness? Could it be that there is an *ātma*, or soul, linked with the bodily machine, and could it be that qualia are functions of this nonphysical entity?

LIFE AFTER DEATH

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa refers to the body as a machine occupied by the soul and guided by the Lord in the heart. In contrast, both modern science and some schools of Christian thought have embraced the idea of the living being as a pure machine. Physicists such as John Polkinghorne propose that the self survives death through a process of physical reconstruction. Thus Polkinghorne says of the atoms that make up our bodies: “It is the pattern that they form which constitutes the physical expression of our continuing personality. There seems to be no difficulty in conceiving of that pattern, dissolved at death, being recreated in another environment in an act of resurrection.”

By implicitly accepting Crick’s astonishing hypothesis, Polkinghorne is able to suggest a scientific model of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. But if conscious self identity is distinct from the brain, as I proposed above, then survival after death must involve more than just the pattern of atoms in the body. The *Bhagavad-gītā*,

of course, presents the idea of transmigration, in which the personality is carried by the soul and subtle mind from one body to another.

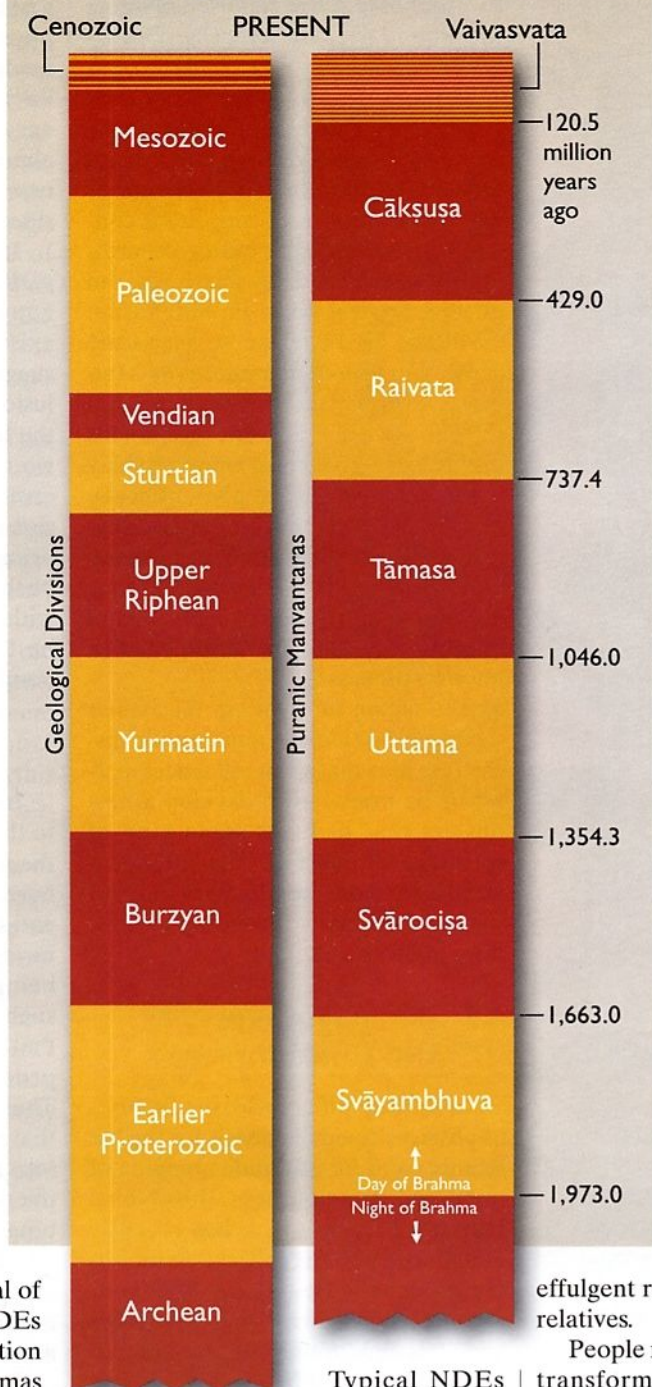
It is remarkable that there is a great deal of empirical evidence suggesting that transmigration may actually take place. The psychiatrist Ian Stevenson has studied thousands of cases in which a young child seems to spontaneously remember a previous life, without having had the opportunity to learn about that life by ordinary means of communication. Stevenson has shown that skills, interests, phobias, and other personality traits tend to show continuity from one life to another. He has also studied cases in which children have birthmarks corresponding to wounds causing death in their previous life.

Stevenson's work has been replicated by other researchers. It does appear to place transmigration in the arena of phenomena that might prove scientifically verifiable. Of course, this gives rise to the question of how transmigration works and what it has to do with the known laws of physics. The question also arises of whether "past life memories" of the kind studied by Stevenson may be an underlying cause for the acceptance of transmigration in various religious traditions.

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

NDEs provide another example of empirical evidence pertaining to the possible survival of the conscious self after death. NDEs are generally reported in connection with life-threatening physical traumas such as heart attacks, but they also resemble the spontaneous so-called mystical visions of people in a normal state of health. In addition, shamans, yogis, and mystics in many traditions have sought to deliberately separate the perceiving self from the body and travel in an out-of-body state.

Comparison Between the Puranic And Geological Time Scales



Typical NDEs involve an autoscopic and a transcendental phase. In the autoscopic phase, the subject sees his or her body from outside the body. In this phase, the person may remember seeing things that should have been invisible to the body's physical eyes, and this may be interpreted as evidence of

The fine bars at the top of the left-hand column represent divisions of the Cenozoic era. The Mesozoic, Paleozoic, and Vendian also have many subdivisions (not shown).

The fine bars at the top of the right-hand column represent the 27.9 divya yugas that have elapsed in the Vaivasvata manvantara. Each manvantara is divided into 71 divya yugas (not shown).

This day of Brahmā began with the Svāyambhuva manvantara about 2 billion years ago, and it was preceded by the 4.32-billion-year night of Brahmā.

As Carl Sagan noted, there is a remarkable similarity between these two time scales.

a non-ordinary state of consciousness.

In the transcendental phase, the subject often reports entering into another world, typically characterized by brilliant light, beautiful scenery, and a sense of universal knowledge. The subject may encounter other persons, ranging from

effulgent religious figures to departed relatives.

People reporting NDEs often seem transformed in a positive spiritual way by the experience. Clearly such experiences are highly relevant to our understanding of religion. On the one hand, NDEs may seem to verify religious traditions. On the other, it can be argued that religious traditions have been strongly influenced by this kind of experience, whatever



Illustration by Parikshit Datta

Persons medically near death have sometimes reported seeing their body from a vantage point outside the body. In some cases, they have accurately described events that occurred when their brains and physical sense organs should not have been in working order.

its underlying cause may be.

In the nineteenth century, the psychologist William James made a study of religious experience that led him to the conviction that our immediate world of sensations and physical laws is part of a larger reality. He proposed that "the world of our present con-

sciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that these other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also; and that although in the main their experiences and those of this world keep discrete, yet the two become continuous at certain points, and

higher energies filter in."

The NDE evidence shows that we have much to learn about such possible contacts with other worlds. For example, Satwant Pasricha and Ian Stevenson have published a report of sixteen near-death accounts from India. In these cases, the subject typically

reports being taken away from his sick-bed by horrible-looking persons who convey him into the presence of a judge. The judge then reprimands the subject's captors, saying, "Why did you bring the wrong man? Take him back!" The person is then returned to his home, where he wakes up bearing physical marks corresponding to his otherworldly experience.

These Indian cases seem to follow a different pattern from NDEs reported in the West, and one might be tempted to conclude that all such experiences are culturally conditioned fantasies. Pasricha and Stevenson note that their Indian subjects naturally identify their captors with the Yamadūtas of classical Hinduism. But they also point out that the experiences may be real, and that people in different societies may be subject to different kinds of experience on the boundary between life and death.

EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

Religious traditions in both India and the West are filled with stories of extraordinary encounters between humans and various kinds of beings, ranging from angels, demigods, and avatars to demons and evil spirits. Today, of course, it is customary to consign these stories to the mythological side of religion, since we know that such beings do not exist. We tend to assume, on the most charitable level, that such stories may have been created for the sake of conveying moral and spiritual lessons to a community of naive believers with an appetite for tall tales.

But the concept of God as a historical actor in Judeo-Christian tradition (Jehovah) and in Vaiṣṇava tradition (Kṛṣṇa) depends on the truth of extraordinary stories. If we relegate all of these stories to fantasy and myth, then the role of God in these traditions is drastically changed.

But how do we know that extraordinary events and beings are unreal?



Illustration by Yadupriya Devi Dash

Most of us go through life without experiencing such things, and it is natural to extrapolate from our own experience when evaluating events lying outside that experience. Then again, the known laws of physics seem to rule out many reported extraordinary events.

If we look at the available empirical evidence, however, we find many extraordinary events being reported today by ordinary people. Consider, for example, the notorious UFO abductions, in which people claim to be carried off by odd-looking humanoid beings who subject them to apparent medical procedures. Since thousands of people report these experiences, they constitute an important social phenomenon that demands an explanation.

The first explanation that comes to mind is that these people are crazy. But several psychological studies have indicated that mental imbalance does not explain the abduction phenomenon. For example, psychologist Nicholas Spanos and his colleagues at Carleton University in Canada published a study in *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology* showing that UFO experiencers' scores on tests of psychological health were as high as or higher than those of

members of control groups.

John Mack, M.D., a professor of psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School, has published a study of alien abduction encounters in which he argues that these experiences are in some sense real. He remarks: "To acknowledge that the universe (or universes) contains beings that enter our world and effect us as powerfully as the alien entities seem able to do would require an expansion of our notions of reality that all too radically undermines Western scientific and philosophical ideology." Mack heads an academic research group called Program for Extraordinary Experience Research that has pursued discussions of alien abductions in peer-reviewed psychological journals such as *Psychological Inquiry*.

The alien abduction phenomenon is clearly difficult to explain, whatever its true nature may be. It is also relevant to the understanding of religion. If we carefully compare contemporary UFO experiences with the mystical experiences reported in various religious traditions, we find a continuum characterized by both common traits and significant differences.

The similarities include the reported tendency of alien beings to communi-

In religious traditions, we find many stories of extraordinary events—accounts of interactions between this world and a higher spiritual dimension, and these stories remain enigmatic from a scientific perspective. In the story at left, Duhkhi Kṛṣṇadāsa found a mysterious golden anklet while sweeping a sacred area in Vṛndāvana. An old woman came to claim the anklet, and finally revealed herself as an inhabitant of the spiritual world. Below is illustrated the story of Kṛṣṇa lifting Govardhana Hill. Are the extraordinary elements in these stories always fictitious? The modern view of reality banishes such stories from physical reality. However, before we drastically revise the religious traditions, we should consider that future developments in science may render many extraordinary events acceptable.

encounters tend to follow lawful patterns that show up repeatedly all over the world, even though they violate the norms of ordinary experience. This suggests that common causal factors lie behind these experiences.

The differences mainly concern the identity of the reported beings. UFO aliens per se play no part in major religious traditions, though they may show some links with classical Christian demonology. The angels, *devas*, and saintly beings of one tradition are different from those of another, although sometimes there is apparent overlap.

This gives rise to many questions. Are extraordinary experiences simply generated within the mind according to cultural conditioning? Or are systems of belief within different cultures

angels and demons of traditional Christianity immediately come to mind.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.5–7) explicitly refers to a system that provides for many religions. It states: “All of the many universal species, along with their respective leaders, appeared with different natures and desires generated from the three modes of material nature. Therefore, because of the different characteristics of the living entities within the universe, there are a great many Vedic rituals, mantras, and rewards.” This statement gives a very general meaning to the word “Vedic,” which here seems to encompass all religions in the universe.

If the idea of a universal system of beings seems too extravagant, we can consider the possibility of explaining



Painting by Dhriti Devi Das

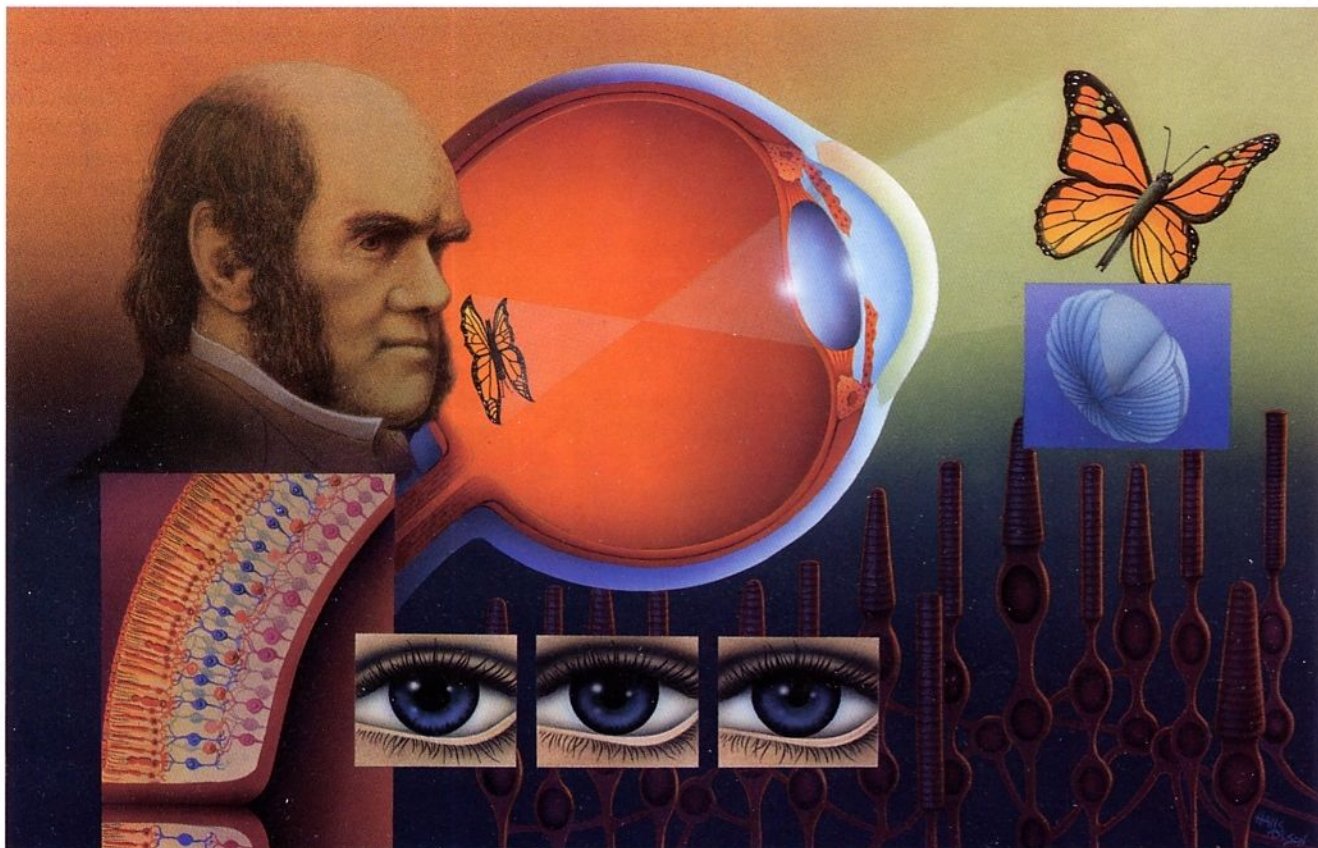
cate telepathically, to move by levitation, to pass through solid matter, and to appear and disappear mysteriously, often accompanied by inexplicable aureoles of light. These and other reported powers correspond to the mystic *siddhis* of the *Purāṇas* and to the charisms of Roman Catholic tradition. It seems that extraordinary

conditioned by an agency or agencies responsible for extraordinary experiences?

One possible answer is that there is a divine control system within the universe that maintains administrative divisions for different religions, while tolerating partly independent groups that pursue their own agendas. The

different extraordinary experiences as internally generated hallucinations. But what is a hallucination?

The psychologist Raymond Moody, M.D., published a study in which psychologically normal people sought visions of departed relatives by gazing into a mirror under carefully controlled circumstances. The project was inspired



“We never may be able to trace the steps by which the organization of the eye passed from simpler stages to more perfect, preserving its relations—the wonderful power of adaptation given to organization. This is really perhaps the greatest difficulty to the whole theory.” (Darwin’s Notes on Transmutation)

by extensive traditions about visions induced by gazing into crystals, mirrors, water, and other reflective surfaces. Moody reported that in some cases people had extremely vivid visions in which a person—generally a deceased relative—seemed to step out of the mirror in solid, 3D form and engage in an extended conversation. Hallucinations? Perhaps, but we have much to learn about what hallucinations really are and what causes them.

The Vaiṣṇavas’ story of Duhkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa illustrates how visions can contribute to a religious tradition. Very briefly, the story recounts how Duhkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa found a golden anklet while sweeping a sacred area in Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa’s traditional birthplace in India. He hid the anklet, but was later met by an old woman who asked for it, claiming that it had been lost by her daughter. After some conversation, the old woman revealed her beautiful form as Lalitā, one of the *gopīs* serving Kṛṣṇa’s eternal consort, Rādhārāṇī. After Duh-

khī Kṛṣṇadāsa gave her the anklet, which turned out to be Rādhārāṇī’s, Lalitā mysteriously disappeared. Later, Duhkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa’s guru received this story with skepticism, and in the course of trying to convince him, Duhkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa again met Lalitā. This time, however, he met her by entering into her world through meditation.

Stories of this kind play an important role in many religious traditions. From a scientific perspective, we have a long way to go before we can begin to understand them.

THE FOSSIL RECORD

We now turn from the discussion of present-day phenomena to the historical sciences, such as geology and evolutionary biology. It is here that some of the greatest conflicts have taken place between science and religion.

In the early nineteenth century, the developing science of geology began to reveal a very strange picture of the his-

tory of life on the earth. In its current form, the story begins with the formation of the earth about 4.5 billion years ago. After less than a billion years, life appeared in the form of bacteria and algae. This state of affairs persisted until about 500 to 600 million years ago, with the appearance of peculiar marine life forms, such as the Ediacara fauna and the creatures of the Burgess Shale. A wide variety of more familiar marine creatures appeared in the subsequent Cambrian period, and life began to seriously invade the land in the Devonian, about 400 million years ago. There followed the age of Carboniferous coal swamps, the age of early reptiles, and then some 150 million years of dinosaurs. After the dinosaurs mysteriously died out, the age of mammals prevailed for some 65 million years up to the present. Humans of modern form appeared at the very end of this period, no more than about 100,000 years ago.

This story does not explicitly appear

in the sacred books of any religion, as far as I am aware. Some Christian creationists deny it altogether and advocate a young earth, based on Mosaic chronology, which dates the creation of the earth to about 6,000 to 10,000 years ago. Other creationists prefer to reconcile the Bible with geology by interpreting the days of creation in Genesis as long ages. And some propose the existence of races of humans or semi-humans that preceded the recent appearance of Adam and Eve.

In Hinduism, the immensity of geological time does not pose a problem. Hindu chronology, as defined in the *Purānas*, is based on several major time intervals similar to those of the geologists. These are the *divya yuga* of 4,320,000 years, the *manvantara* of about 307 million years, and the *kalpa* of 4,320,000,000 years. Astronomer Carl Sagan remarked, "The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths . . . in which the time scales correspond, no doubt by accident, to those of modern scientific cosmology."

But whether this similarity is accidental or not, the Hindu account of what happened in the past is quite different from the geological story. It refers almost exclusively to the activities of superhuman beings who themselves live for millions or hundreds of millions of years. The Purānic stories hardly seem to refer to the earth as we know it at all, and it may well be that they were intended to refer to a higher, celestial realm.

DARWIN'S THEORY

Scientists interpret the fossil record as the history of the gradual development of life according

to the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution. I will refer to this briefly as Darwin's theory, but it was actually developed after the second World War as a synthesis of Mendelian genetics and Darwin's original ideas.

Darwin's theory is based entirely on the laws of physics and blind chance. In the words of Darwinian theorist Richard Dawkins, it attributes the origin of living species to a "blind watchmaker," completely devoid of intelligence, foresight, or purpose. For this reason, it has been strongly rejected by many conservative Christians, who take it that life was created by Divine Providence.

But other Christian groups, such as the Roman Catholics and the liberal

Protestants, profess to find no difficulty in seeing Darwinian evolution as God's method of creation. Some say that God is a strict Darwinian who simply stood by transcendently and let evolution produce worshipers in the fullness of time. Others compromise by proposing guided evolution, in which God gently nudges the Darwinian process in the desired direction. This, of course, is not accepted by mainstream science.

In principle, there is no reason why Darwinian evolution could not be God's method of creating species. In practice, however, the theory of evolution itself throws up obstacles against this. Among all of today's scientific
(please turn to page 56)

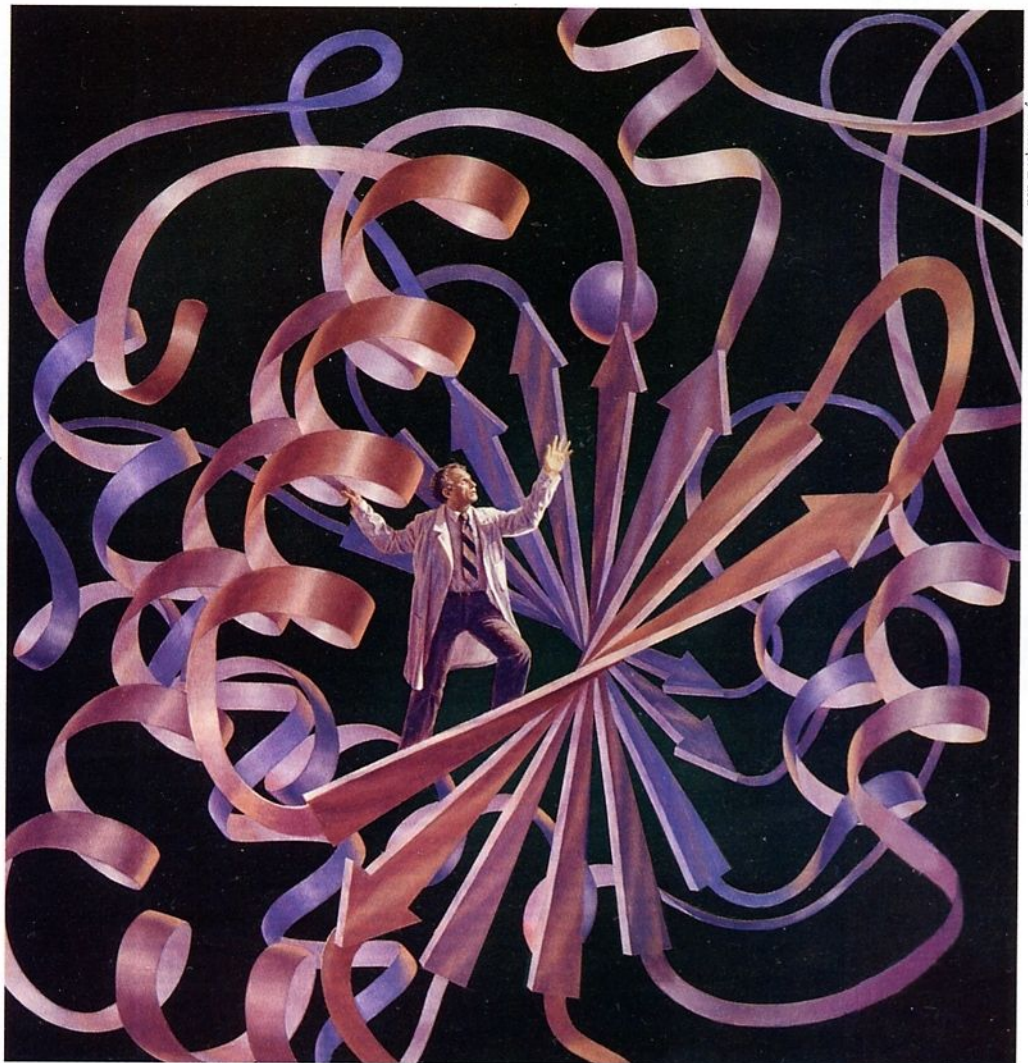


Illustration by Parkshil Datta

Here the structure of a protein molecule in a living cell is represented by an arrangement of coils and curved arrows. The intricacy of these molecules and the precision of their interactions have caused some biochemists to doubt that Darwinian processes could fully account for their origin.

Illustration by Ramachandra Dāsa



*Both Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism
speak of liberation from the cycle of saṃsāra,
in which the living being travels
from one body to another
in an endless cycle of birth and death.*

The Four Noble Truths Of Buddhism

How well does Vaiṣṇava philosophy align with the fundamental principles of Buddhism?

by Satyarāja Dāsa

REVERED participants: I stand before you as a representative of the Vaiṣṇava tradition, though, I must admit, I lack the qualities and realizations of the ideal Vaiṣṇava. Still, I will try to present the teachings of this prestigious and time-honored tradition as it has been conveyed to me by one of its most exalted teachers: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual preceptor of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. His Divine Grace also happens to be my spiritual master.

The Venerable Bodhi Santosh Rishi, leader and spiritual director of your society, has asked me to speak about the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. This will be a distinct honor, since these same truths lie at the basis of Vaiṣṇava thought. In this brief talk, I will explain how this is so.

Before beginning, however, I would



like to briefly mention just what these truths are. Please correct me if I am inaccurate in how I express them: (1) the truth of suffering, of the universality of suffering; (2) the truth of the origin of suffering, which is related to suffering as an ontological reality; (3) the truth of the cessation of suffering; and (4) the truth of the Path, which is integrally related to the cessation of suffering.

If there are no objections, then, I would like to begin by exploring the first two of the Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering and the truth of the origin of suffering.

FIRST AND SECOND NOBLE TRUTHS

In both Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism, we think deeply about life and material nature—not just the beauty of nature, but also the harsh reality of existence. Contrary to what many might think, to take a good, hard look at the difficult aspects of being is not necessarily negative. Rather, when

From a lecture at the Zen-Buddhist Society of New York on October 25, 2000

***Far from being a sour grapes sort of philosophy,
to acknowledge and even explore the implications
of pain and suffering is simply realistic.***

• • •

guided by a self-realized teacher, it can be a first step toward spiritual enlightenment. Unless we are frightfully aware of the distasteful side of life, we are likely to become its victims. Once victimized by material existence, pursuing higher matters is difficult.

The plain fact is this: All happiness or pleasure in this world is temporary; it must come to an end. So suffering, to one degree or another, is unavoidable. Therefore, far from being a sour grapes sort of philosophy, to acknowledge and even explore the implications of pain and suffering is simply realistic. Most of the world's spiritual traditions, therefore, recommend cultivating knowledge of nescience and transcendence side by side, so that one can gradually rise beyond the mundane and become situated in a life of true goodness.

This is a gradual evolution that takes time—from ignorance, to passion, to goodness, to pure goodness, or transcendence. To this end, Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism, in particular, do not shy away from educating adherents about the stark miseries of material life. Fundamental meditations in both Buddhist and Vaiṣṇava traditions are meant to make practitioners aware of the inevitability of birth, death, old age, and disease, for example, and how these phenomena affect people's lives. Knowledge of these things can serve as a catalyst to move beyond materialism and to pursue divinity in earnest.

Regarding birth, death, old age, and disease, the Buddha story is familiar to everyone here today: Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, was a noble prince, and in his youth he was sheltered from the miseries of life. When the prince traveled out of his kingdom for the first time and saw a dying person, a person giving birth, a diseased person, and an aged person, he asked his servant if such hardship, or suffering, was com-

mon. His servant responded by telling him that these calamities, in one way or another, necessarily afflict man in his sojourn through life. At that moment the Buddha resolved to find the solution to suffering.

The ancient Vedic texts of India home in on three kinds of suffering: suffering caused by one's own body and mind, suffering caused by the bodies and minds of others, and suffering that comes from natural calamities. In Sanskrit, suffering is known as *duḥkha*, a word that carries implications of "pain," "distress," "grief," "affliction," and "frustration." I believe you use this same term. In your tradition, you say that *duḥkha* comes from *avidyā*, or "ignorance." We say the same thing. My spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, began his work in the West with the notion that people are suffering due to want of knowledge. He claimed that spiritual knowledge was the only thing that could lessen their suffering. For this reason he tirelessly labored to translate ancient Vedic texts and to personally teach how to live a life of spiritual fervor—he felt deeply the suffering of others and wanted to help them rise beyond such suffering.

Ignorance begins with bodily identification. When the life-force, or the soul within the body, misidentifies with the aggregate of material elements—which is only the body, even if we see it as our actual selves—it begins a life of illusion, and this is the seed of all suffering to follow. The *Bhagavad-gītā*, a central text for the Vaiṣṇava tradition, boldly declares that the body and soul are different and that ignorance, illusion, and, consequently, suffering, come from the soul's erroneous identification with matter.

I realize that this is a touchy subject in Buddhist teaching. Bodhi Santosh Roshi and I have spent much time discussing the intricacies of Bud-

dhist thought on the soul and reincarnation. It is beyond the scope of this lecture to definitively talk about the various Buddhist positions on this point. I will, however, say—and I know that Bodhi Santosh Roshi agrees—that the earliest forms of Indian Buddhism accept the Vedic conclusion about the nature of the soul and reincarnation. This is true, too, of most forms of northern Buddhism, or Mahayana Buddhism, and it is fundamental to Tibetan Buddhism as well.

But even those forms of Buddhism that reject the idea of a soul are adamant that illusion, and thus suffering, comes from the body. Such forms of Buddhism merely start from the next step. That is, rather than focus on the difference between the body and the self, they ask, "What are the implications of bodily identification?"

So let us use that as a starting point. What are the implications of bodily identification? Well, for one, bodily identification breeds desire, or craving. In Buddhism, this is called *tāṇha* or *ṭṣṇa*, words that imply "greediness" and "pandering to the senses." If you have a body, it is natural to be concerned for its needs. But most people go far beyond the body's needs. They become absorbed in excessive sense gratification. Prabhupāda compared sense gratification to using salt in a food preparation: If you add too much you will spoil it, and if you add too little you will spoil it as well.

Thus, both Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism propose a "middle path," if you will, a path that does not deny the senses but does not overly indulge them either. As the *Gītā*'s second chapter informs us, all misery begins when one contemplates the objects of the senses. This contemplation leads to attachment and, eventually, selfish desire. This gives rise to anger. Why anger? Because the pleasures of this



Buddha in the Bhāgavatam

THEN, IN THE beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Añjanā, in the province of Gayā, just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful theists.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.24

Purport by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda:

Lord Buddha, a powerful incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, appeared in the province of Gayā (Bihar) as the son of Añjanā, and he preached his own conception of nonviolence and deprecated even the animal sacrifices sanctioned in the *Vedas*. At the time when Lord Buddha appeared, the people in general were atheistic and preferred animal flesh to anything else. On the plea of Vedic sacrifice, every place was practically turned into a slaughterhouse,

and animal-killing was indulged in unrestrictedly. Lord Buddha preached nonviolence, taking pity on the poor animals. He preached that he did not believe in the tenets of the *Vedas* and stressed the adverse psychological effects incurred by animal-killing. Less intelligent men of the age of Kali, who had no faith in God, followed his principle, and for the time being they were trained in moral discipline and nonviolence, the preliminary steps for proceeding further on the path of God realization. He deluded the atheists because such atheists who followed his principles did not believe in God, but they kept their absolute faith in Lord Buddha, who himself was the incarnation of God. Thus the faithless people were made to believe in God in the form of Lord Buddha. That was the mercy of Lord Buddha: he made the faithless faithful to him.

world are temporary, as we have noted, and so they inevitably come to an end—we eventually lose the objects of our attachment. This makes us angry. When we are angry, the *Gītā* says, we can't think straight. We become bewildered. This leads to loss of memory. At this point, intelligence is lost. (The *Gītā* defines intelligence as good memory and fine discretion.) Naturally, in such a state of mind one can't pursue spiritual life. So these are some introductory ideas about suffering and the causes of suffering.

THIRD NOBLE TRUTH

The third Noble Truth is that of the cessation of suffering. If all suffering comes from desire, then the cessation of suffering comes from the extinguishing of desire. This is somewhat problematic. Where there is self, there is self-interest. It is thus natural to desire. We want the best for ourselves and our loved ones. This is natural. The question, then, is not desire, but rather inordinate desire, or that desire which, again, is unnecessary or excessive. The Buddhist and the Vaiṣṇava both work at quieting unnecessary passions or desires, and, conversely, cultivating desires of the spirit, pursuing passion for truth.

To dedicate one's life to the path of Buddhism or Vaiṣṇavism requires commitment, determination, and, yes, passion. One must desire the goal of Buddhism or Vaiṣṇavism, of one's chosen path. Someone may put forth the Zen-like idea that one only reaches the goal when one ceases to pursue it. But this is only partly true. If one pursues truth for truth itself, devoid of ego, this is entirely appropriate. In other words, one must pursue it for the right reasons. Then it is okay. If one does not desire enlightenment, at least on some level, one will never achieve it.

The point is to get beyond selfish cravings, self-interested desires, and by so doing to realize one's bonding with all that exists. In Vaiṣṇavism this is called the *brahma-bhūta* stage, wherein one sees all living beings equally and does not distinguish between them or judge them because of material differences. If one can reach this level of enlightenment, one can raise oneself

beyond all material suffering. In Buddhism, it is said that this is achieved by following the Path—which means different things to different people.

FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH

In Buddhism, the Path tells us to do things in “the right way”—it is the Eightfold Path, consisting of the right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. In Vaiṣṇavism this is called the mode of goodness, and it is difficult to achieve. Indeed, in this age few are able to truly act properly, and if, after much practice, they find that they can, they will be doing a great thing for themselves and for the world around them. The Eightfold Path is thus the most noble of goals.

I must say, however, that, in my

opinion, if one actually achieves this goal—if one achieves it to perfection—one will be acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or Vaiṣṇavism. You see, my understanding of Vaiṣṇavism is not some sectarian religion that pits itself against all other religions. No. Rather, I see Vaiṣṇavism as *sanātana-dharma*, or the eternal function of the soul. Thus, I see all bona fide spiritual traditions as but various expressions of Vaiṣṇavism. It is for this reason that, when I contemplate the Eightfold Path of Buddhism, I can only see it as acting for God, for Kṛṣṇa, because to do something in the right way, as I understand it, means doing it for Him. Ultimately, to act properly is to act for our source. To behave in the right way is to behave in the way in which our creator intended.

This is a touchy issue, I know. Buddhism does not traditionally deal with

God or His nature. But the God question haunts us even if we find Him irrelevant or not necessary for liberation, as is often the case in Buddhist thought. When we deal with questions of ontology and teleology—the questions concerning where everything comes from and where everything is going—we can’t help but consider the existence of God. What religion in general, and Vaiṣṇavism in particular, has to offer is this: positive information about the world beyond suffering. Both Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism agree that this is a world of suffering, but what lies beyond this world? In Vaiṣṇava tradition, we learn of Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual realm, a place where the chief characteristics are eternity, knowledge, and bliss—the exact opposite of temporality, ignorance, and suffering. Although the material world is a land of exploitation, the spiritual realm is described as the land of dedication, the land of love.

There are Buddhist traditions, too, that speak of higher realms—lands of demigods and higher beings. But, to my knowledge, only in the Vaiṣṇava tradition does one find exacting details about the abode of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and how to get there. This is where I would like to go if I ever achieve perfection on my path, and that is perhaps why I have chosen the path of Vaiṣṇavism. Recently, when the Dalai Lama was in New York, I was fortunate enough to hear him lecture. After explaining that he respected all spiritual paths and that all paths have merit, he admitted that he was particularly partial to Buddhism, and that is why he is a Buddhist. I must confess that I too share a similar prejudice. While I acknowledge that all revealed traditions are respectable and have a good deal to offer, I can only attempt to approach the truth through the Vaiṣṇava tradition. This is my approach to spiritual life, and I hope you will indulge me that preference. Thank you very much. ☸

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

HARE KṚṢṆA
HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA
HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA
HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA
HARE HARE

PRONUNCIATION:

ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”)

Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

DEVAHŪTI PRAYS TO HER DIVINE SON

*Having heard transcendental knowledge from her son—
Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa—Devahūti glorifies Him
with prayers of deep philosophical import.*

CANTO 3: CHAPTER 32

42 बहिर्जातविरागाय शान्तचित्ताय दीयताम्
निर्मत्सराय शुचये यस्याहं प्रेयसां प्रियैः

*bahir-jāta-virāgāya
śānta-cittāya dīyatām
nirmatsarāya śucaye
yasyāham preyasāṁ priyaḥ*

bahir—for what is outside; *jāta-virāgāya*—to him who has developed detachment; *śānta-cittāya*—whose mind is peaceful; *dīyatām*—let this be instructed; *nirmatsarāya*—nonenvious; *śucaye*—perfectly cleansed; *yasya*—of whom; *aham*—I; *preyasām*—of all that is very dear; *priyaḥ*—the most dear.

This instruction should be imparted by the spiritual master to persons who have taken the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be more dear than anything, who are not envious of anyone, who are perfectly cleansed, and who have developed detachment for that which is outside the purview of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

PURPORT: In the beginning, no one can be elevated to the highest stage of devotional service. Here *bhakta* means one who does not hesitate to accept the reformatory processes for becoming a *bhakta*. In order to become a devotee of the

Lord, one has to accept a spiritual master and inquire from him about how to progress in devotional service. ❶ To serve a devotee, to chant the holy name according to a certain counting method, to worship the Deity, to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Bhagavad-gītā* from a realized person, and to live in a sacred place where devotional service is not disturbed are the first out of sixty-four devotional activities for making progress in devotional service. One who has accepted these five chief activities is called a devotee.

One must be prepared to offer the necessary respect and honor to the spiritual master. He should not be unnecessarily envious of his Godbrothers. ❷ Rather, if a Godbrother is more enlightened and advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one should accept him as almost equal to the spiritual master, and one should be happy to see such Godbrothers advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ❸ A devotee should always be very kind to the general public in instructing Kṛṣṇa consciousness because that is the only solution for getting out of the clutches of *māyā*. That is really humanitarian work, for it is the way to show mercy to

- (1) What are the first five of the sixty-four devotional activities?**
- (2) How should one accept a more spiritually advanced Godbrother?**
- (3) Why should a devotee instruct the general public in Kṛṣṇa consciousness?**

other people who need it very badly.

The word *śuśrūṣābhiratāya* indicates a person who faithfully engages in serving the spiritual master. One should give personal service and all kinds of comforts to the spiritual master. A devotee who does so is also a bona fide candidate for taking this instruction.

The word *bahir jāta-virāgāya* means a person who has developed detachment from external and internal material propensities. Not only is he detached from activities which are not connected to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but he should be internally averse to the material way of life. Such a person must be nonenvious and should think of the welfare of all living entities, not only of the human beings, but living entities other than human beings.

The word *śucaye* means one who is cleansed both externally and internally. ❹ To become actually cleansed externally and internally, one should chant the holy name of the Lord, Hare Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, constantly.

The word *diyātām* means that knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness should be offered by the spiritual master. The spiritual master must not accept a disciple who is not qualified; he should not be professional and should not accept disciples for monetary gains. The bona fide spiritual master must see the bona fide qualities of a person whom he is going to initiate. An unworthy person should not be initiated. The spiritual master should train his disciple in such a way so that in the future only the Supreme Personality of Godhead will be the dearest goal of his life.

In these two verses the qualities of a devotee are fully explained. One who has developed all the qualities listed in these verses is already elevated to the post of a devotee. If one has not developed these qualities, he still has to fulfill these conditions in order to become a perfect devotee.

43 य इदं शृणुयादम्ब श्रद्धया पुरुषैः सकृत्
यो वाभिधत्ते मच्चित्तैः स ह्येति पदवीं च मे

ya idam śṛṇuyād amba
śraddhayā puruṣaḥ sakṛt
yo vābhidhatte mac-cittaḥ
sa hy eti padaviṁ ca me

yaḥ—he who; idam—this; śṛṇuyāt—may hear; amba—O mother; śraddhayā—with faith; puruṣaḥ—a person; sakṛt—once; yaḥ—he who; vā—or; abhidhatte—repeats; mat-cittaḥ—his mind fixed on Me; saḥ—he; hi—certainly; eti—attains; padaviṁ—abode; ca—and; me—My.

(4) How can one be come cleansed externally and internally?

(5) What is the stage of *jīvan-mukti*?

(6) What is the result of understanding the basic principle of Sāṅkhya philosophy?

Anyone who once meditates upon Me with faith and affection, who hears and chants about Me, surely goes back home, back to Godhead.

CANTO 3: CHAPTER 33

मैत्रेय उवाच

1 एवं निशम्य कपिलस्य वचो जनित्री
सा कर्दमस्य दयिता किल देवहूतिः
विस्तस्तमोहपटला तमभिप्रणम्य
तुष्टाव तत्त्वविषयाङ्कितसिद्धिभूमिम

maitreya uvāca

evam niśamya kapilasya vaco janitrī
sā kardamasya dayitā kila devahūtiḥ
visrasta-moha-paṭalā tam abhipraṇamya
tuṣṭāva tattva-viṣayāṅkita-siddhi-bhūmim

maitreyaḥ uvāca—Maitreya said; *evam*—thus; *niśamya*—having heard; *kapilasya*—of Lord Kapila; *vacaḥ*—the words; *janitrī*—the mother; *sā*—she; *kardamasya*—of Kardama Muni; *dayitā*—the dear wife; *kila*—namely; *devahūtiḥ*—Devahūti; *visrasta*—freed from; *moha-paṭalā*—the covering of illusion; *tam*—unto Him; *abhipraṇamya*—having offered obeisances; *tuṣṭāva*—recited prayers; *tattva*—basic principles; *viṣaya*—in the matter of; *aṅkita*—the author; *siddhi*—of liberation; *bhūmim*—the background.

Śrī Maitreya said: Thus Devahūti, the mother of Lord Kapila and wife of Kardama Muni, became freed from all ignorance concerning devotional service and transcendental knowledge. She offered her obeisances unto the Lord, the author of the basic principles of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy, which is the background of liberation, and she satisfied Him with the following verses of prayer.

PURPORT: The system of philosophy enunciated by Lord Kapila before His mother is the background for situation on the spiritual platform. The specific significance of this system of philosophy is stated herein as *siddhi-bhūmim*—it is the background of salvation. People who are suffering in this material world because they are conditioned by the material energy can easily get freedom from the clutches of matter by understanding the Sāṅkhya philosophy enunciated by Lord Kapila. By this system of philosophy, one can immediately become free, even though one is situated in this material world. ❺ That stage is called *jīvan-mukti*. This means that one is liberated even though one stays with his material body. That happened for Devahūti, the mother of Lord Kapila, and she therefore satisfied the Lord by offering her prayers. ❻ Anyone who understands the basic principle of Sāṅkhya philosophy is elevated in devotional service

and becomes fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, or liberated, even within this material world.

देवहूतिरुवाच

2 अथाप्यजोऽन्तःसलिले शयानं
भूतेन्द्रियार्थात्ममयं वपुस्ते
गुणप्रवाहं सदशेषबीजं
दध्यौ स्वयं यज्जठराब्जजातः

devahūtir uvāca
athāpy ajo 'ntaḥ-salile śayānaṁ
bhūtendriyārthātma-mayaṁ vapus te
guṇa-pravāhaṁ sad-aśeṣa-bījaṁ
dadhyau svayaṁ yaj-jaṭharābja-jātaḥ

devahūtiḥ uvāca—Devahūti said; *atha api*—moreover; *ajāḥ*—Lord Brahmā; *antaḥ-salile*—in the water; *śayānaṁ*—lying; *bhūta*—the material elements; *indriya*—the senses; *artha*—the sense objects; *ātma*—the mind; *mayam*—pervaded by; *vapuḥ*—body; *te*—Your; *guṇa-pravāham*—the source of the stream of the three modes of material nature; *sat*—manifest; *aśeṣa*—of all; *bījam*—the seed; *dadhyau*—meditated upon; *svayam*—himself; *yaj*—of whom; *jaṭhara*—from the abdomen; *abja*—from the lotus flower; *jātaḥ*—born.

Devahūti said: Brahmā is said to be unborn because he takes birth from the lotus flower which grows from Your abdomen while You lie in the ocean at the bottom of the universe. But even Brahmā simply meditated upon You, whose body is the source of unlimited universes.

PURPORT: 7 Brahmā is also named Aja, “he who is unborn.” Whenever we think of someone’s birth, there must be a material father and mother, for thus one is born. But Brahmā, being the first living creature within this universe, was born directly from the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is known as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Viṣṇu form lying down in the ocean at the bottom of the universe. Devahūti wanted to impress upon the Lord that when Brahmā wants to see Him, he has to meditate upon Him. “You are the seed of all creation,” she said. “Although Brahmā was directly born from You, he still has to perform many years of meditation, and even then he cannot see You directly, face to face. Your body is lying within the vast water at the bottom of the universe, and thus You are known as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu.”

The nature of the Lord’s gigantic body is also explained in this verse. That body is transcendental, untouched by matter. 8 Since the material manifestation has come from His body, His body therefore existed before the material creation. The conclusion is that the transcendental body of Viṣṇu is not made of material elements. The body of Viṣṇu is the source of all other living entities, as well as the ma-

terial nature, which is also supposed to be the energy of that Supreme Personality of Godhead.

9 Devahūti said, “You are the background of the material manifestation and all created energy; therefore Your delivering me from the clutches of *māyā* by explaining the system of Sāṅkhya philosophy is not so astonishing. 10 But Your being born from my abdomen is certainly wonderful because although You are the source of all creation, You have so kindly taken birth as my child. That is most wonderful. Your body is the source of all the universe, and still You put Your body within the abdomen of a common woman like me. To me, that is most astonishing.”

3 स एव विश्वस्य भवान् विधत्ते
गुणप्रवाहेण विभक्तवीर्यः
सर्गाद्यनीहोऽवितथाभिसन्धि-
रात्मेश्वरोऽतर्क्यसहस्रशक्तिः

sa eva viśvasya bhavān vidhatte
guṇa-pravāheṇa vibhakta-vīryaḥ
sargādy anīho 'vitatha bhisanḍhir
ātmeśvaro 'tarkya-sahasra-śaktiḥ

saḥ—that very person; *eva*—certainly; *viśvasya*—of the universe; *bhavān*—You; *vidhatte*—carry on; *guṇa-pravāheṇa*—by the interaction of the modes; *vibhakta*—divided; *vīryaḥ*—Your energies; *sarga-ādi*—the creation and so on; *anīhaḥ*—the non-doer; *avitatha*—not futile; *abhisandhiḥ*—Your determination; *ātma-iśvaraḥ*—the Lord of all living entities; *atarkya*—inconceivable; *sahasra*—thousands; *śaktiḥ*—possessing energies.

My dear Lord, although personally You have nothing to do, You have distributed Your energies in the interactions of the material modes of nature, and for that reason the creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation take place. My dear Lord, You are self-determined and are the Supreme Personality of Godhead for all living entities. For them You created this material manifestation, and although You are one, Your diverse energies can act multifariously. This is inconceivable to us.

- (7) Why is Lord Brahmā called Aja?
(8) How can we understand that Lord Viṣṇu’s body existed before the material creation?
(9) Why does Devahūti say that Lord Kapila’s delivering her is not so astonishing?
(10) Why does Devahūti say that Lord Kapila’s taking birth from her womb is astonishing?

PURPORT: The statement made in this verse by Devahūti that the Absolute Truth has many diverse energies although He personally has nothing to do is confirmed in the *Upaniṣads*. There is no one greater than Him or on an equal level with Him, and everything is completely done by His energy, as if by nature. It is understood herein, therefore, that although the modes of material nature are entrusted to different manifestations like Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, each of whom is particularly invested with different kinds of power, the Supreme Lord is completely aloof from such activities.

Devahūti is saying, "Although You personally are not doing anything, Your determination is absolute. There is no question of Your fulfilling Your will with the help of anyone else besides Yourself. You are, in the end, the Supreme Soul and the supreme controller. Your will, therefore, cannot be checked by anyone else."

The Supreme Lord can check others' plans. As it is said, "Man proposes and God disposes." But when the Supreme Personality of Godhead proposes, that desire is under no one else's control. He is absolute. We are ultimately dependent on Him to fulfill our desires, but we cannot say that God's desires are also dependent. That is His inconceivable power. That which may be inconceivable for ordinary living entities is easily done by Him. 11 And in spite of His being unlimited, He has subjected Himself to being known from the authoritative scriptures like the Vedic literatures. As it is said, *śabda-mūlatvāt*: He can be known through the *śabda-brahma*, or Vedic literature.

12 Why is the creation made? Since the Lord is the Supreme Personality of Godhead for all living entities, He created this material manifestation for those living entities who want to enjoy or lord it over material nature. As the Supreme Godhead, He arranges to fulfill their various desires. It is confirmed also in the *Vedas*, *eko bahūnām yo vidadhātī kāmān*: the supreme one supplies the necessities of the many living entities. There is no limit to the demands of the different kinds of living entities, and the supreme one, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, alone maintains them and supplies them by His inconceivable energy.

(11) Despite His being unlimited, God can be known. How?

(12) Why is the creation made?

(13) In what form does the Lord sometimes appear at the time of the universal dissolution?

(14) What does Devahūti say the Lord teaches those who are fond of children?

(15) Why does the Lord lick His toe?

(16) Why did Lord Kṛṣṇa appear as Lord Caitanya?

4 स त्वं भृतो मे जठरेण नाथ
कथं नु यस्योदर एतदासीत्
विश्वं युगान्ते वटपत्र एकः
शेते स्म मायाशिशुरङ्घ्रिपानः

*sa tvam̐ bhr̥to me jaṭharena nātha
katham̐ nu yasyodara etad āsīt
viśvam̐ yugānte vaṭa-patra ekaḥ
śete sma māyā-śiśur aṅghri-pānaḥ*

saḥ—that very person; *tvam*—You; *bhr̥taḥ*—took birth; *me jaṭharena*—by my abdomen; *nātha*—O my Lord; *katham*—how; *nu*—then; *yasya*—of whom; *udare*—in the belly; *etat*—this; *āsīt*—did rest; *viśvam*—universe; *yuga-ante*—at the end of the millennium; *vaṭa-patre*—on the leaf of a banyan tree; *ekaḥ*—alone; *śete sma*—You lay down; *māyā*—possessing inconceivable powers; *śiśuḥ*—a baby; *aṅghri*—Your toe; *pānaḥ*—licking.

As the Supreme Personality of Godhead, You have taken birth from my abdomen. O my Lord, how is that possible for the supreme one, who has in His belly all the cosmic manifestation? The answer is that it is possible, for at the end of the millennium You lie down on a leaf of a banyan tree, and just like a small baby, You lick the toe of Your lotus foot.

PURPORT: 13 At the time of dissolution the Lord sometimes appears as a small baby lying on a leaf of a banyan tree, floating on the devastating water. Therefore Devahūti suggests, "Your lying down within the abdomen of a common woman like me is not so astonishing. You can lie down on the leaf of a banyan tree and float on the water of devastation as a small baby. It is not very wonderful, therefore, that You can lie down in the abdomen of my body. 14 You teach us that those who are very fond of children within this material world and who therefore enter into marriage to enjoy family life with children can also have the Supreme Personality of Godhead as their child, and the most wonderful thing is that the Lord Himself licks His toe."

Since all the great sages and devotees apply all energy and all activities in the service of the lotus feet of the Lord, there must be some transcendental pleasure in the toes of His lotus feet. 15 The Lord licks His toe to taste the nectar for which the devotees always aspire. Sometimes the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself wonders how much transcendental pleasure is within Himself, and in order to taste His own potency, He sometimes takes the position of tasting Himself. 16 Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, but He appears as a devotee to taste the sweetness of the transcendental mellow in Himself which is tasted by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the greatest of all devotees.

(continued in the next issue)

NO TIME FOR CRIME

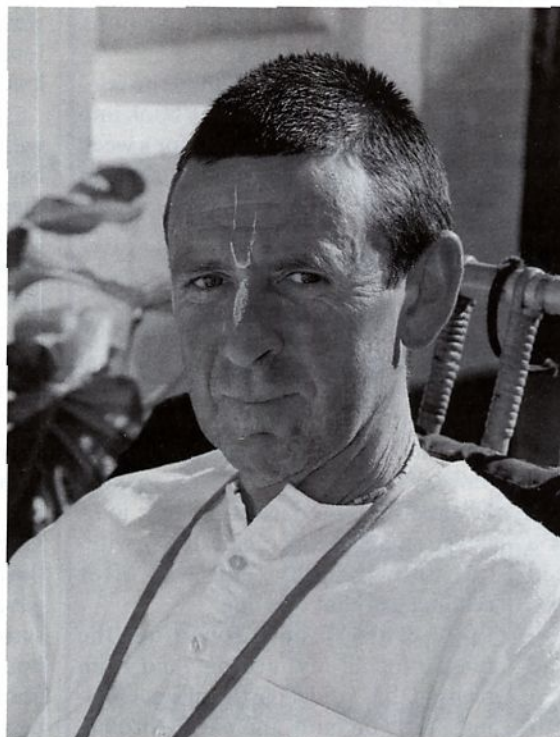
*After years at the crime desk,
a journalist writes his own (crimeless) story.*

by Andrew Whitlock

A LARGE WOODEN board hangs on the far wall of the Times Media Limited (TML) staff canteen at the company's Port Elizabeth office. On the board, in gold lettering, are the names of staff members who have served the group for thirty years or more. Some have devoted fifty years of their lives to the various newspapers. When they retire they receive a substantial amount of money, but by then many do not walk very well, their eyesight is bad from staring for hours at computer screens, and their health is poor from breathing polluted air.

I looked at that board many times while munching away at a hamburger or some unidentifiable food and wondered if my name might one day be etched in gold on that shiny wooden surface. And there were times when I thought it just might, if I could survive that long on the kind of food I was eating.

That was a decade ago, and it was a time when life started taking as many twists and turns as a rattlesnake cross-



ing a cactus-filled desert. There were signs I did not notice and some I ignored as they flashed by like train stations. I am sure you know what I mean. We all experience these moments in life, and thinking back on them we consider what might have happened if we

had chosen a different road, or if we had climbed off at a particular station to see what was there, instead of taking the ride to the end of the line, unable to get out of the seat.

My work as a journalist, sub-editor, news editor, and film critic kept me busy in the material world. There were other distractions, like a live-in surfer girlfriend and my four-year-old daughter I had custody of. I tell you these things so that you can have a picture of the life of this journalist who was moving along the track of life in the material world, looking at the different stations. It would be the same for doctors, lawyers, butchers, nurses. Get up in the morning, go off to work, drop my daughter off at preschool, drive the same route most days, see the same cars, people, robots,

hobos, shops, schools, churches. Park the car and walk up the steep narrow road to the back entrance of TML, the stale smell of diesel and damp paper hanging in the air.

I'd see a man who had done this for almost fifty years, parking his BMW.

*I had these thoughts because we are
spiritual beings and even in the semiconscious state
we walk around in, we have flashes of spirituality.*

• • •

Sometimes as I followed him I wondered what made him walk this path for so long. What was holding him, tying him and me to this path? I see clearly now that I had these thoughts because we are spiritual beings and even in the semiconscious state we walk around in, we have flashes of spirituality.

I was wondering about God and how I could get to know Him, while I wrote stories of life and death in the city. Crime stories mainly. The tragic and bizarre Walmer murders, still unsolved, the story of Port Elizabeth's first serial killer—many stories that took up a part of my life each day. The routine, material world spun around and around.

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

But there was a time, another of those spiritual moments—an opportunity—and even though I was an observant journalist, I admit I missed it. It was a summer's day, bright sunlight, and time for a break from the crime desk. So I took a walk down Main Street, enjoying the perfect weather. I only noticed the man when he took a step forward. I noticed that his head was shaved and he looked very healthy. He offered me a book.

"Would you like to take this? Read it. I'm sure you'll find it interesting."

I waited for him to ask me for money. I looked at the book's cover. Gold lettering that reminded me of the board in the canteen.

"Sorry I didn't bring any money," I said, as I felt around in my Levi's pockets and found a few coins.

"I've got two-rand-fifty," I said.

The book felt good in my hands, the

gold lettering raised ever so slightly on the cover.

"That's fine," he said with a smile.

I was struck by how content he looked and by his pleasant manner. I thought, *A bargain at last. Where can one get a book for two-rand-fifty? Even if I never read the book, I have a bargain.*

I flipped through it when I was back at my desk, thinking I might find some healthy food recipe.

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."

That was what I read. Then the telephone rang and I popped the book into my briefcase, where it stayed for a week before I placed it on the top shelf of my bookcase. I did not read it.

ANOTHER LOOK

I'm looking at a copy of that book now. It is five years later, and in that time I have resigned from the *Herald*, moved to Johannesburg, worked for the *Sunday Times*, resigned from the *Sunday Times*, moved back to Port Elizabeth, worked as a freelance journalist, and moved to Cape Town, without knowing why. This was after reading just that one line.

Of course, I have found out the reason for all my moving. And I am pleased that I did it partly on a gut feeling, partly on faith, and partly through having no choice.

The day I saw the book again, I had awoken with a particular thought on my mind, walked to a nearby pay phone, called 1023 and gotten the number I needed. I was given an address, and I made an appointment for 10:30 A.M. I have made many appointments

in the past eighteen years as a journalist, and I have never been late. This time, in what has turned out to be my own story, I was late. Instead of the place I was looking for, I found myself outside President Thabo Mbeki's residence.

"Do you know where Andrew's Road is?" I asked a policeman on gate duty. "I'm looking for the temple."

He looked at me blankly, as if he hadn't heard me. Suddenly a flash of morning sunlight twinkled on the SAP name tag. Van Wyk. He shifted his weight from one foot to the other and looked thoughtfully at the driveway leading to the President's residence.

"Is that the place where those okes with the long dresses and little handbags hang around? You'll find them at the small church next to Rondebosch station."

And he was right. But I was fifteen minutes late. I felt in the pocket of my jeans, and this time I had a ten-rand note. I knew this was the last of my cash. I had closed my bank account a few weeks earlier. But somehow, since then I had managed. At the same time I had reached the end of a journey, and the beginning of one.

From my years as a journalist I knew there were many men and women who gave up hope if they lost material possessions such as their house or car or household goods. I had written stories about people who had ended their lives because of financial difficulties. So I did not understand why I felt such joy as I handed the ten-rand note to the healthy looking man with the shaved head.

I told him the story I have told you, but added a few details. I told him that I had noticed how people seem to do the same thing over and over, that

there was no point to what they were doing. In the past few months I had broken some of the chains tying me to the material world. It had started when I sold my house, and now I had few possessions. I had the freedom to spend many hours walking along the beach at Sardinia Bay, listening to the sound of the waves.

The man simply agreed with what I said, as if he had known this for many years. He asked me if I would like to come to the temple the following morning. And this is where the real story begins.

THE SOUND OF WAVES

I arrived on time at 7:00 A.M. I had started reading the book the night before, and it made perfect sense. I had read many books, all kinds of books. But I had never read anything as clear as this. It was like the ringing of a giant bell. Seawater rock pools on a clear spring morning, clear like that.

Sitting at the temple with a group of chanting devotees, I was reminded of the sound of the waves. Every wave has a different voice, and in the temple, every devotee had a different chant. The sound is like bees in a hive. And when you hear this sound—and become part of the sound—time becomes fluid.

When I chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* for the first time, it seemed as if I was walking up a mountain. The second time I felt as free as a dolphin leaving the wave.

Now there is time for everything. No deadlines. There is continual learning, each bit of knowledge a tiny step closer to satisfaction, and to submission.

It is a huge change from journalist to devotee. I was fortunate in many ways because I had already broken some of the material chains on my way to beginning this spiritual journey, and there were some weak links in the other chains. So I continue on this journey that everyone should follow. ☀

Andrew Whitlock, now a member of the ISKCON temple in Cape Town, spent eighteen years as a journalist writing for leading South African newspapers.

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transcendental knowledge."**

—Bhagavad-gītā 4.38

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WHO IS TO BLAME?

(continued from page 14)

and exiling the Cherokees, did not have any right to cause such pain. And, through the laws of karma, they suffer for their sinful actions.

After all, God doesn't need the evildoers' help. All-powerful, He can independently deliver someone's destiny. He can send a natural disaster or a disease that brings as much pain and destruction as any demonic person or group can invent. Or He can use the evildoer by bringing together the criminal and those whose karma merits their being the object of a crime. The evildoer does the Lord's will then, certainly. Ironically he does so as an act of disobedience to that very will. How wonderful Kṛṣṇa is that He can bend the most wicked and cruel actions of men into His own plan. All serve Him, willing or not.

Evildoers only hurt themselves. By acting against codes of morality and religion, they exchange spiritual joy for bad karmic reactions.

Another question may arise: If people get what they deserve, why should the government get involved in administering justice? The *Vedas* teach that when a government punishes evil, it acts as Kṛṣṇa's agent to deliver some or all of the evildoers' reactions. As a bona fide agent of God, the government incurs no reaction in its

administration of proper justice.

Enlightened victims see those who perpetrate evil against them as messengers of karmic destiny, like postal workers delivering parcels they ordered. Persons in knowledge don't point to the perpetrator as the only or ultimate cause. Rather, they see the direct giver of pain as the messenger of their own karma and Kṛṣṇa's will.

The *Vedas* say that one who blames the evildoer as the ultimate cause is also guilty of the hate, anger, and other ignorant qualities that drove the perpetrator to perform evil. We can assign blame, but only to benefit the perpetrator through justice and, ideally, rectification.

Seeing the immediate cause of our suffering or enjoyment as the agent of God and our karma is easy when that cause delivers enjoyment. For example, we can sense the divine hand of Kṛṣṇa when someone, without our asking, gives us something we desire. At the same time, we are grateful to the gift-giver, who, for the good deed, gets karmic credit and, if giving with the desire to serve the Lord, spiritual progress.

Similarly, whoever assails us with the unwanted is rightly punished, but we can see the suffering we receive as Kṛṣṇa's mercy, just as when we are materially pleased. And the truly saintly persons, who see Kṛṣṇa with love everywhere and in everything, feel

connected with Him in both types of reciprocation.

WHAT ABOUT REMEDIAL MEASURES?

How does one who has developed this vision act? Scriptures such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describe saints who did nothing at all to remedy material suffering. They felt constant spiritual happiness and realized that the ultimate result of everything is good. They lived separate from society and sometimes seemed muddle-headed to common people.

Generally, however, even perfectly self-realized souls who always serve Kṛṣṇa with love take up ordinary means to counteract suffering. For example, when sick, they take appropriate medicine and treatment. If a crime is committed against them, they report it to the authorities and try to bring the criminal to justice.

While attempting to remedy the difficulty, they are always aware that the results are in Kṛṣṇa's hands, and do not consider that they are the ultimate "doer" of their actions. They act to show an example to those less spiritually advanced, who cannot gratefully embrace both joy and sorrow. And they act to preserve justice in the world. Since Kṛṣṇa wants justice, such actions are also part of serving Him.

Those of us who aren't saintly and fully realized can turn to remedies while depending on Kṛṣṇa. At least in theory we can understand that the Supreme Lord controls everything and that the efficacy of our cures depends on Him. Knowing that He is all good, we trust that if we continue to suffer despite remedies, the suffering is designed to assist us in coming to total spiritual joy. Life brings material happiness and suffering, just as it brings day and night or snowstorms and heat waves. When such changes no longer disturb us, inner, spiritual happiness begins. ☸

Ūrmilā Devi Dāsi and her family run a school in North Carolina. She is a frequent contributor to BTG and the major author and compiler of Vaikuṅṭha Children, a guide to Kṛṣṇa conscious education for children.



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CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Govinda

(February 9–March 9)

MARCH

6—Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

7—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

9—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by a breakfast of Ekādaśī prasādam (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.

Month of Viṣṇu

(March 10–April 8)

17—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

21—Pakṣavardhini Mahā-dvādaśī.

Fasting from grains and beans for Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī.

30—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the eleventh century.

APRIL

2—Śrī Rāma Navamī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till sunset, followed by feasting.

4—Kāmadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

8—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's springtime rāsa dance. Balarāma Rāsa Yātrā, Lord Balarāma's rāsa dance. Appearance anniversary of Hanumānjī, eternal servant of Lord Rāma. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

Month of Madhusūdana

(April 9–May 7)

18—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

19—Varūthini Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

23—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

26—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing Lord Jagannātha with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

MAY

2—Appearance anniversary of

Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

4—Mohiṇī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakā-dīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

5—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

6—Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting.

7—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Parameśvara Purī, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Trivikrama

(May 8–June 6)

12—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

19—Aparā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

20—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, a biography on Caitanya.

The Ax-Wielding Avatar

*From Vedic history comes the story of the
avatar who purged the earth of demonic kings
for twenty-one generations.*

by Patita Pāvana Dāsa Adhikārī

ONCE, MANY THOUSANDS of years ago in the age known as Tretā-yuga, the great sage Ṛcika approached Varuṇa, lord of the waters, and obtained one thousand horses, each as lustrous as moonlight and having one black ear. Ṛcika Muni presented the horses to the great king Gādhi as a dowry for his daughter, the beautiful and qualified princess Satyavatī.

After the marriage, Satyavatī naturally wanted to give her husband a son, so with prayers and mantras Ṛcika Muni created an oblation imbued with his powers of penance. By eating the oblation before procreative union, Satyavatī would have her desire fulfilled. The oblation was imbued with *brāhmaṇa* mantras, thus ensuring that their son would have the qualities of a peaceful, content, and forgiving *brāhmaṇa*.

Satyavatī's mother, King Gādhi's queen, asked that an oblation be created for her too. So Ṛcika Muni prepared the oblation, enchanted with appropriate *kṣatriya* mantras. This would bless the queen with a son of bold, courageous warrior qualities, willing to fight for truth and righteousness.

After preparing the two oblations, the sage went to the river for his ritualistic bath. Meanwhile, the queen, assuming that a husband out of natural affection would put a better effort into the oblation meant for his wife, exchanged the oblations, with her daughter's permission.

When Ṛcika Muni returned from his bath, he discovered the switch and scolded his wife.

"You have committed a great wrong," he said. "Because of this your son will be a fierce *kṣatriya* capable of punishing everyone. And your brother will be a scholar learned in all the spiritual sciences."

Satyavatī then begged that her son not be a *kṣatriya*. Pacified by her charm and devotion, Ṛcika Muni adjusted the reaction.

"Since the mantras must have an effect," he proclaimed, "your grandson, rather than your son, will have an invincible *kṣatriya* spirit."

Satyavatī became the mother of the austere and tolerant Jamadagni. His son was named Paraśurāma, or "Rāma with the ax [*paraśu*]." *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.20) says, "The sixteenth incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (as



Paraśurāma took up his ax, shield, bow, and arrows and pursued the thousand-armed king “as a lion chases an elephant.”

• • •

Paraśurāma) annihilated the *kṣatriyas* twenty-one times, being angry at their rebellion against the *brāhmaṇas*.”

POWERFUL KĀRTAVĪYĀRJUNA

The Ninth Canto continues the narration.

A great warrior king named Kārtavīryārjuna had received a thousand arms by worshiping the avatar Dattatreya. [See sidebar: “A Thousand Arms?”] The king had also received other opulence and mystic powers that only served to further inflate his ego.

Once Kārtavīryārjuna was sporting in the company of many beautiful women in the Narmada, one of India’s seven major holy rivers. With his thousand arms he stopped the river’s flow. Upstream, where the demon-king Rāvaṇa had halted with his army, the water overflowed its banks, flooding Rāvaṇa’s camp. The powerful Rāvaṇa challenged Kārtavīryārjuna over the insult, but he proved no match for the thousand-armed king, who captured and then neglectfully released Rāvaṇa as one might trap and then set free a wild monkey. King Kārtavīryārjuna now considered himself all-powerful and invincible.

Some time after this incident, King Kārtavīryārjuna traveled north and met the sage Jamadagni at his forest hermitage. With the help of his *kāma-dhenu*, a celestial wish-fulfilling cow, Jamadagni sumptuously fed the mighty king and his vast retinue. The envious Kārtavīryārjuna, unable to tolerate a mere hermit’s owning an opulence surpassing anything of his, ordered his men to steal the cow along with her calf. Kārtavīryārjuna then took the crying cows to Mahishmati, his capital on the banks of the Narmada in central India.

When Paraśurāma, the youngest son of Jamadagni, heard of this great

offense, he became, the *Bhāgavatam* describes, “as angry as a trampled snake.” Although born of a sage, Paraśurāma had been influenced by the *kṣatriya* oblations, as predicted by his grandfather Ṛcika Muni. Of course, the Supreme Lord or His plenary expansion is ever above the material world and cannot be influenced by the modes of material nature. Therefore, all these activities are simply His *līlā*, or pastimes. The display of His pastimes is to attract fallen conditioned souls of various natures back home, back to Godhead.

Paraśurāma took up his ax, shield, bow, and arrows and pursued the thousand-armed king “as a lion chases an elephant.” At Mahishmati, Kārtavīryārjuna gasped in fear as he saw the sixteenth avatar of the Lord swiftly approaching. Kārtavīryārjuna sent hundreds of thousands of troops to battle Paraśurāma, but the Lord slaughtered every one of them by rushing here and there as swiftly as the mind. The battlefield at his feet turned to mud from blood spilling from the headless and armless torsos of slain warriors.

The courageous Kārtavīryārjuna then decided to confront this ax-wielder on the field of battle. Taking up five hundred bows fixed with five hundred arrows, he issued a challenge. With only one bow, Lord Paraśurāma cut to pieces each of the king’s hundreds of bows and arrows. Furious, Kārtavīryārjuna uprooted trees and hills and rushed at the ax-bearer, intent on killing him. With great force and speed, Lord Paraśurāma sliced off each of the king’s thousand arms, then beheaded the horrified and helpless king, who followed his fallen army to a grisly doom. As the ten thousand sons of Kārtavīryārjuna witnessed their father’s defeat, they ran away in fear. Lord Paraśurāma then gently released

the stolen *kāma-dhenu* cow and her calf and returned them to his father’s ashram.

FATHER DISPLEASED

Bowing before his father and greeting his brothers, the warrior-*brāhmaṇa* explained every detail of the war and the heroic death of Kārtavīryārjuna. However, Paraśurāma’s father, the tolerant Jamadagni, scolded him.

“O great hero,” he said, “you have unnecessarily killed the king, who is supposed to be the embodiment of all the demigods. Thus you have committed a sin. We *brāhmaṇas* are worshipable by others only due to our quality of forgiveness. It is through this quality of forgiveness that Lord Brahmā has achieved the post of master of the entire universe. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Hari, the remover of obstacles, becomes pleased with those who are forgiving. Forgiveness is illuminating like the sun, and cultivation of this quality is the *brāhmaṇa*’s duty.”

Ṛṣi Jamadagni then told his son how to atone for the sin. With a father’s love he instructed, *tīrtha-saṁsevayā cānho jaly aṅgācyuta-cetanah*: “O son, expansion of my very self, you must worship the sacred places to atone for this sinful act. You must become Kṛṣṇa conscious.”

With that, the sage sent his son on a pilgrimage tour of Bharata, ancient India. Lord Paraśurāma visited the holy cities, abodes, rivers, hills, and lakes throughout the land.

Actually Lord Paraśurāma had committed no sin in the execution of his divine *līlā*. He awarded liberation to all the warriors who died valiantly before him. The Lord’s pilgrimage was to purify holy places and establish new ones blessed by his lotus feet. Since God is complete, all attributes

must reside within Him, from creation and birth, to destruction and killing. That which is not complete cannot be God. But to teach that killing is generally improper, sage Jamadagni ordered Lord Paraśurāma to “serve the holy spots” (*tīrtha-sevā*). Many people visit holy places just to bathe in a sacred lake or river and consider their sins washed away. But the real purpose of *tīrtha-sevā* is to associate with holy devotees who reside at these places for the sake of human welfare. The blessings of all the holy places can be found in the instructions of pure devotees like Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, whose very presence created holy places all over the world.

Sage Jamadagni’s instructions to his son included the admonition to wash out the sinful act through *acyuta-cetanaḥ*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus Jamadagni took the position of spiritual master and instructed his son to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. Here in the sacred *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is ancient scriptural proof that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not a new fad, cult, or invention. It is an ancient process that has been followed by billions of pious souls for billions of years. Here we see the fruit of love of God, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, being handed directly to Lord Paraśurāma. This pastime is displayed for our benefit. In the same way, Śrīla Prabhupāda took the position of *jagat-guru*, “world spiritual master,” and on behalf of his guru freely handed out the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Lord Paraśurāma’s example of obedience to his father is exemplary. He told his father, *tathā itī*: “Let it be so.” He then undertook a tour of India for a full year and increased the glory of many holy places by his exalted presence. Then he returned to the ashram of his family beside the Ganges.

THE MURDER

Meanwhile the miserable sons of Kārtavīryārjuna had been nursing a grudge against Lord Paraśurāma since the death of their father. One day while Paraśurāma was roaming the woods with his brothers, the vengeful sons of Kārtavīryārjuna invaded their forest

ashram. They murderously approached Jamadagni, sitting by the sacrificial fire and meditating on Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Reṇukā, Paraśurāma’s mother, entreated them not harm her husband, who was absorbed in trance. Despite her pleas, the invaders, devoid of noble *kṣatriya* qualities, beheaded the sage and absconded with his head.

Deep in the forest, Paraśurāma and his brothers heard their mother shouting, “O Rāma! O Rāma!” They rushed to the ashram and found her beating her chest in frantic despair over the sudden loss of her husband. Lord Para-

śurāma then vowed to rid the world of all devious members of the *kṣatriya* class twenty-one times.

Paraśurāma sped to Mahishmati, which was doomed by the murder of a peaceful *brāhmaṇa*, and extracted a terrible toll. Just as Kārtavīryārjuna’s sons had mercilessly beheaded his father, Paraśurāma created a mountain of heads severed from their bodies. When still other arrogant kings, who also lacked respect for *brāhmaṇas*, saw the river of blood created by the Lord, they trembled in fear.

(please turn to page 56)

A Thousand Arms?

In the following excerpt from Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy (pp. 39–40), Sadāpūta Dāsa, in commenting on a pastime of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s, gives a logical explanation for such seemingly impossible phenomena as a person’s having a thousand arms.

IT IS INTERESTING to note that the Brahmās visiting Kṛṣṇa had varying numbers of heads, ranging from four to hundreds of millions. It is rather difficult to understand how millions of heads could be arranged on one body in three-dimensional space, and it is also difficult to see how millions of Brahmās could all be seen simultaneously within one room. We suggest that these things are made possible by the fact that the underlying space is not three-dimensional.

Similar observations could be made about the incident in which Bāṇāsura used 1,000 arms to work 500 bows and shoot 2,000 arrows at a time at Kṛṣṇa. In this case we are dealing with a materially embodied being living on the earth. One might wonder how 500 material arms could be mounted on one shoulder without interfering with one another. And if this is possible, how could they aim 500 bows in the same direction at once? (Did the bows pass through each other?) We suggest that

stories of this kind implicitly require higher-dimensional conceptions of space.

We can sum up the idea of dimensionality of space by saying that the greater the degree of access between locations, the higher the dimensionality of the space. Since Kṛṣṇa has simultaneous access to all locations, He perceives space at the highest level of dimensionality. Different living beings will perceive space at different levels of dimensionality, and thus they will have access to different sets of locations (or *lokas*).

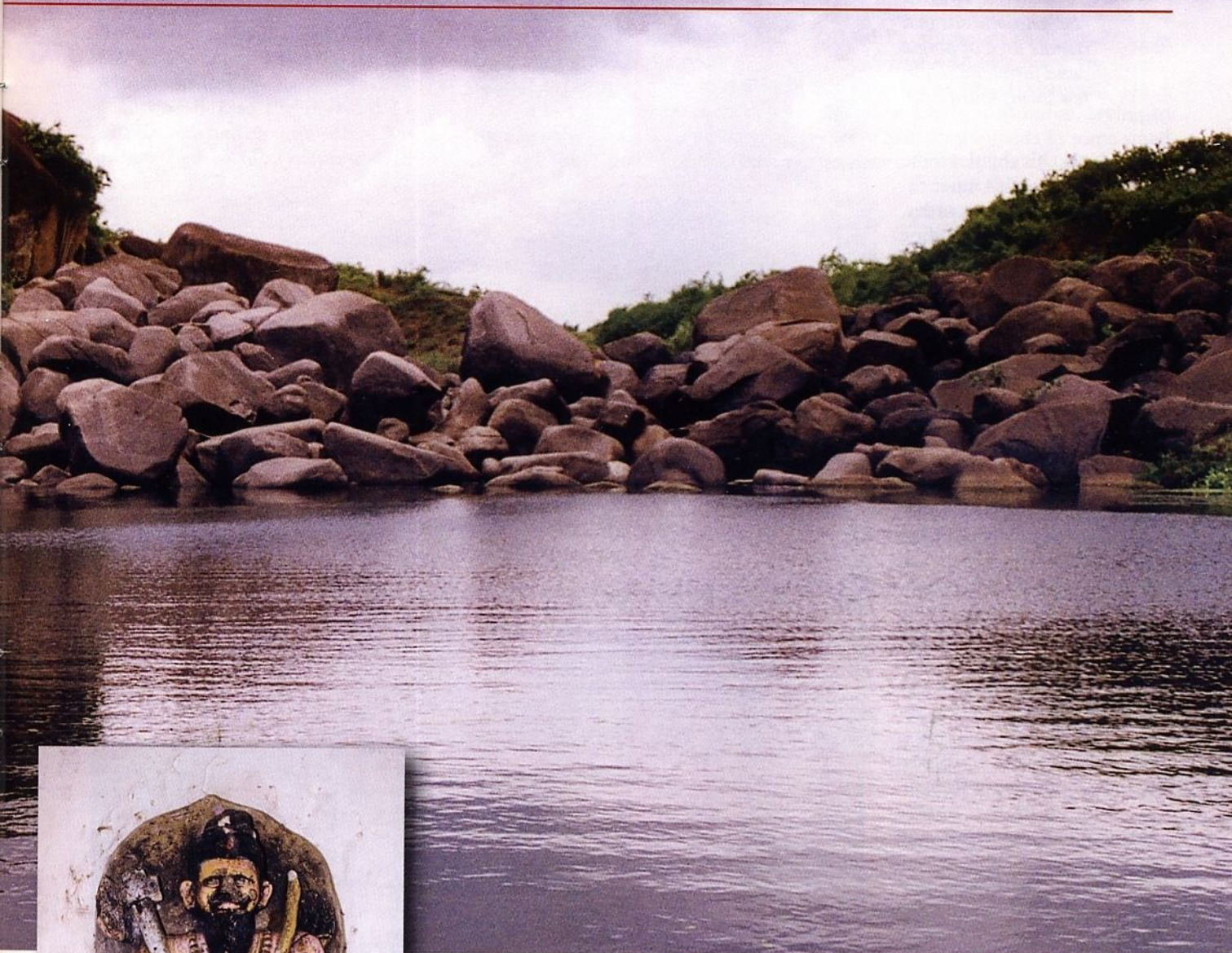
The idea of higher-dimensional access between locations is a key feature of quantum mechanics. The quantum mechanical atom cannot be represented in three-dimensional space. In fact, to represent something as commonplace as an atom of carbon, quantum mechanics makes use of a kind of infinite-dimensional space called Hilbert space. The three-dimensional bonding of carbon and other atoms is made possible by the higher-dimensional interactions within the atoms. Thus, although the idea of higher-dimensional realms may seem to be an extreme departure from accepted scientific thinking, it is possible to interpret modern physics as laying the groundwork for such an idea.



Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa

A JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN INDIA

*A Western pilgrim finds a rare,
nearly unknown shrine built in honor of
Lord Kṛṣṇa's warrior incarnation.*



Text and photos by Patita Pāvana Dāsa Adhikārī

YOU ARE ALL the descendants of the *kṣatriyas* [warriors] who ran from the ax of Lord Paraśurāma." The words stunned me. It was 1971, and I was sitting just at the feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, my spiritual

Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa (above), where Lord Paraśurāma performed penance, is located in the Vindhya Hills of Madhya Pradesh. A deity of Paraśurāma (left) stands in a small temple near the lake.

master. He was seated royally upon the holy *vyāsāsana* (seat of the guru), lecturing to a large gathering at the Brooklyn ISKCON temple. I paused to muse that somehow Śrīla Prabhupāda had the potency to speak astounding never-before-heard things in such a matter-of-fact way that the listener knew at once that whatever he heard was the truth. And I was excited to be hearing, learning, and realizing Kṛṣṇa consciousness all at once. Sitting at the lotus feet of His Divine Grace, I

The temple of Lord Paraśurāma sits in a remote area of jungle and farmland. Even few locals know of it.

could see that his abilities came not only through his inner realization of the highest order, but from a power descending via disciplic succession, like electricity through a wire.

ACROSS EUROPE AND ASIA

Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to explain how Lord Paraśurāma, an incarnation of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, had single-handedly defeated vast armies of errant warriors, emerging victorious after each encounter. Many of the *kṣatriyas* had escaped and traveled west across Asia, eventually settling in parts of Europe. Later I would realize that this provides one explanation for the Sanskrit influence upon languages of every European tongue—Germanic or Romantic—and upon the names of European countries and regions.

In only a few thrilling sentences, Śrīla Prabhupāda had linked all of us Westerners to his Vedic culture and civilization. Rebels of the sixties, we were now handed an identity we could be proud of.

Within a few years I found myself drawn to India. I was traveling by bus and train across Europe and western Asia, in a reversal of the migration of my past “ancestors.” I was moving slowly, keeping Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words in my mind and looking in France, Italy, Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan for vestiges of Vedic culture, which resettling *kṣatriyas* might have brought with them ages earlier. It would be no exaggeration to say that I saw hundreds of such reminders along the way.



In India I learned that temples and holy places connected with the worship of Lord Paraśurāma are rare. At the Himalayan town of Uttar Kashi, the “northern Benares,” I came across a very small Śrī Paraśurāma Mandir just above the famous temple of Ekādaśa

Rudra, “the eleven forms of Śiva.” A sadhu passing by explained to me that because Lord Paraśurāma had once performed penance at this spot, a tiny shrine had been built here many hundreds of years ago in his honor. He added that he knew of no other

Śrī Paraśurāma shrines except one, a Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa (lake) in Assam. (Unfortunately, a few years later the Brahmaputra River flooded the area, and in the late 1970's the shrine in Assam was lost.)

Sitting before the deity of Lord Paraśurāma and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on my beads, snow-capped Hima-

layan peaks high above me and the roaring Ganga just below, I felt a strong reverence for this incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. After all, any demon killed by the Supreme Lord is granted *mokṣa*, or liberation. Since my physical lineage is European and therefore from *kṣatriya* roots, I could have had ancestors liberated by the Lord's ax

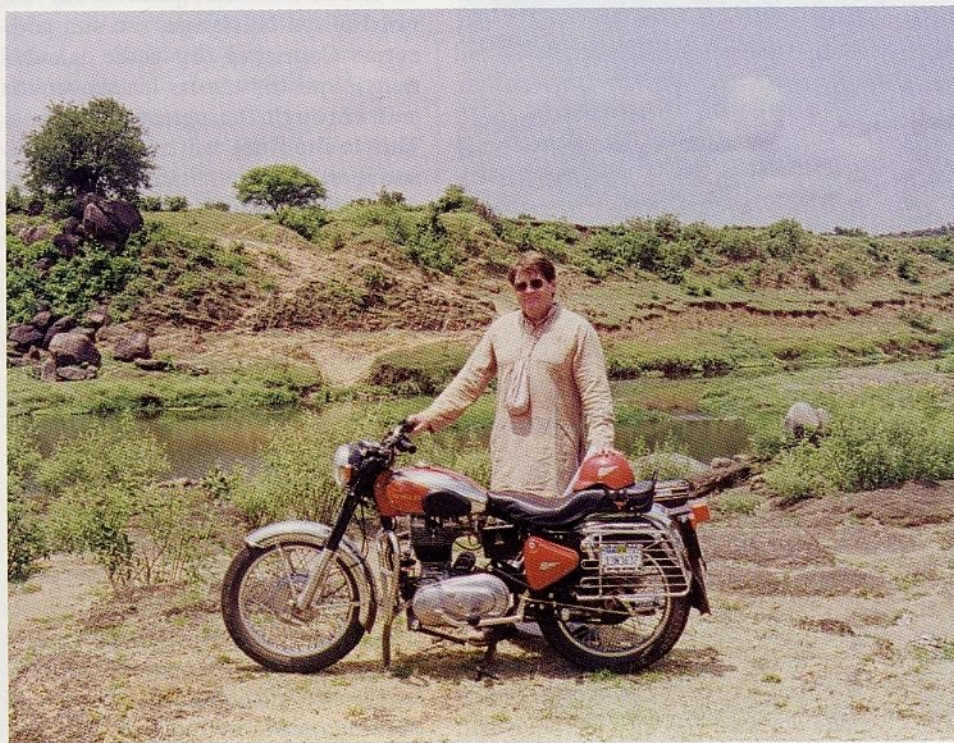
millions of years earlier.

I had to wait only a few months longer to discover the full version of Lord Paraśurāma's pastimes (*lilā*) in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. By then I would be at the developing Hare Krishna Land in Mumbai, trying to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda in some small capacity. Prabhupāda's Ninth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* had just arrived, and therein, in Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen, I was to learn more about Lord Paraśurāma's pastimes.

DISCOVERY OF PARAŚURĀMA KUṆḌA

Now fast forward with me from the time I first learned of the details surrounding Lord Paraśurāma's *lilā* to 1980. It was the time of my marriage to Raagini, a young

The author (left) at Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa with his rugged Indian-made Enfield Bullet, practically the only way to visit the kuṇḍa, other than hiking. Below, Mahankal Baba, overlooking the kuṇḍa, works to keep earth-digging brick-makers out of the area.



***“This śīla [stone] has been seen by
very few men,” he said, almost admonishingly,
daring me to find it.***

• • •

Hindu lady, a medical graduate from Jabalpur, in Madhya Pradesh. After an elaborate wedding in Lucknow and “honeymoon,” or, rather, pilgrimage, to the Himalayas, my bride and I traveled to stay with her family at Jabalpur, a large city nestled between the Vindhya Hills and the Narmada River. There I made friends with a few local *paṇḍitas*, and by day I would scooter about in my discovery of local holy places.

I visited the place where Hanumān and his friends played before they joined the army of Lord Rāma to defeat Rāvaṇa. I saw high above the Narmada in white marble cliffs the cave where Lord Dattātreyā, a combined incarnation of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, had meditated. I boated up the sparkling emerald Narmada to a place of the penance of Bāṇāsura, whose daughter married Lord Kṛṣṇa’s grandson, Aniruddha. Bāṇāsura was the descendant of Prahlāda Mahārāja and son of Bali Mahārāja. At Banasura Ghat, present-day Bhera Ghat, he worshiped millions of Śivaliṅgas. Hence it is from this place that the Narmada produces self-manifested (*svayambhu*) Śiva-liṅgas that are worshiped in temples all over India. Since Bāṇāsura’s daughter ̄sā married Kṛṣṇa’s grandson Aniruddha, son of Pradyumna, Bāṇāsura became a member of Kṛṣṇa’s family after a great war described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

I walked for days in the Vindhya Hills, once a towering mountain range whose great height had “the power to block the sun.” These mountains became hills when they bowed to the sage Atri, who had intervened on behalf of the sun-god. But the mountains left behind huge boulders betraying their once monumental past. Indeed, Jabalpur and the extended surrounding area is a charming and undiscovered part of the world containing holy spots where

devatas (demigods) once played. Today gentle village folk till fertile fields, and primitive tribals dwell in jungles along with tigers, deer, and wild bison.

One day while searching the area, I asked my guides if they knew of any nearby place of penance, or *tapo-bhūmi*, of Lord Paraśurāma. I knew that he had sheltered himself in the Vindhya Hills, and perhaps a place of his penance could be found.

One of my local guides, Sri Gyan Prakash Khare, told me of a Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa along the Pariat River, a Narmada tributary. Beside it was a lone hill called Paraśurāma Giri, part of the Vindhya. The place was in a remote area, part jungle and part farmland, and few locals knew of it.

The next day we hopped on our Vespa scooters and were off exploring. Beyond the bazaars, through the tiniest villages of mud and straw huts, we made our own way into the fields and pathless jungle till we stood overlooking the *kuṇḍa* formed by giant *tantaniya* stones, so named for the sound caused when the wind blows through them. A quarter mile beyond the *kuṇḍa* was the hill of Śrī Paraśurāma, which (a yogi would later tell me) has a stone at its top marked by the lotus footprints of Śrī Paraśurāma.

“This *śīla* [stone] has been seen by very few men,” he said, almost admonishingly, daring me to find it.

Between the hill of Paraśurāma and his *kuṇḍa* is a usually deserted Śrī Paraśurāma Mandir, erected a few generations ago by local village folk. Within the tiny temple’s sanctum is a rare smiling deity of Lord Paraśurāma holding his *paraśu* (ax) in much the same way as he does at his Uttar Kashi temple. As it is said, the Lord is very enchanting and inviting to the devotees, yet fearful to the demons.

A festival is held here each year on Makara Sankranti (in January), when

Lord Sūrya Nārāyaṇa, the sun-god, enters Capricorn (by Vedic calculations), and thus starts his six-month trek through the celestial regions. This is the only festival held here, and it attracts but a handful of villagers. The nearest village, Matamar, is about a mile away and consists of a few mud-and-straw huts. In the surrounding jungle dwell tribal Gonds, who live either by fishing and hunting or by menial jobs paying a day-to-day wage. Whenever I bathe here, several tribals will squat motionless behind the bushes to silently watch. They have their own religion, language, and customs that separates them from mainstream Hindus. Indeed, language and customs vary from tribe to tribe.

An English-speaking yogi moved into the area a few years ago. Nepali-born police officer M. K. Rana has now become renunciant Mahankal Baba. He lives in a hut and eats only things grown by his own hand on the banks of the *kuṇḍa*. He points to the huge trucks in the distance now intruding into the otherwise idyllic setting to make bricks out of the red soil.

“If I don’t stop them from desecrating the holy *bhūmi* [land] of Lord Paraśurāma, then who will?” he asks.

I once asked Baba Mahankal if any other foreigner had visited the *kuṇḍa* in recent memory.

“Are you kidding?” he chuckled. “Even locals don’t know of this place!”

While taking pictures for this article, I once asked him to sit on a boulder beside the *kuṇḍa*.

“Why should I sit there?” he demanded indignantly. “I have my own place to sit!”

Another yogi lives in the area, in a small cave beside Paraśurāma Giri. Because he lost a leg in an accident, villagers bring him a little rice each day.

Around his cave, lying abandoned, are archeological treasures: carved pillars of an ornate temple that once stood nearby many centuries ago. In the 1500's, the army of Akbar, Emperor of Delhi, invaded the area. The local queen of Gondwana, Maharani Durgavati, then in her early twenties, raised an army of Gond tribals and fiercely met the invading ranks astride her elephant. Unfortunately she was unfairly killed in the battle. Successive waves of invaders razed many temples, just as Aurangzeb, grandson of Akbar, desecrated the Śrī Rādhā-Govinda Mandir in Vṛndāvana. The pillars prove that a grand temple once stood here, but research is needed to find out the details. Queen Durgavati's *samādhi* tomb still stands about twenty-five miles away. Much revered by locals, it is behind the Gaur River, at the spot where she gave her life to protect Vedic civilization.

AN APPEAL

There is no proper pilgrimage site or temple anywhere in the world dedicated to Lord Paraśurāma. If this area around Śrī Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa were to be reestablished as a shrine, millions of people could learn about and worship this wonderful incarnation of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A motorable dirt trail into the area runs from Panagar on National Highway 7, the Jabalpur-Sihora Road. Thousands of pilgrims travel National Highway 7 each month to visit the Hill of Devi, Goddess Sharada of Maihar. Each pilgrim bus or van would surely stop to see the temples of Śrī Paraśurāma.

The lost jungle shrine of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's avatar Lord Paraśurāma could be turned into a place of pilgrimage once again, before industries, shopping centers, and horrendous megalithic apartment complexes encroach upon a spiritual treasure. Which will arrive first, bulldozers or devotees? ❁

Patita Pāvana Dāsa was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1968. He has written three books on Kṛṣṇa conscious astrology (available from Sagar Publications in India) and a guidebook to Vṛndāvana (available, as is Shri Pushpanjali, from The Hare Kṛṣṇa Bazaar.)



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4: PĀDA-SEVANAM

Service Supreme

After hearing about the Lord, glorifying Him, and remembering Him, devotees naturally seek the intimacy of His service.

by Dvāarakādhīśa Devī Dāsī

*Lakṣmī Devī,
the consort
of Lord
Nārāyaṇa (an
expansion of
Lord Kṛṣṇa),
is always
engaged in the
service of His
lotus feet.*



In the *ṛimad-Bhāgavatam*, the devotee *Prahlāda Mahārāja*, a great spiritual authority, says, “Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia, and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu [Kṛṣṇa], remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship . . . , offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one’s best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind, and words)—these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Kṛṣṇa through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge.” Here we continue our series on the nine processes of bhakti-yoga, or devotional service to the Lord.

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED how service defines our lives? We serve many masters: We sacrifice our time and money in the service of employers, creditors, and family members. We’re forced to submit to our physical needs and mental cravings. We’re servants of clocks and calendars, of public approval and trends, of traffic flow and weather changes. Just think through your daily activities. How much of your life do you spend filling the needs and desires of others?

An old story from India tells of an ambitious young man who, realizing service to be inevitable, resolved to serve the greatest person. He went to his village leader

and, submitting himself, became an indispensable aide-de-camp. One day the tax man visited and collected money from the village leader. Seeing the tax collector’s superior position, the young man left the village with him. Together they collected money from many village leaders. Finally, upon reaching the capital, they turned in the money to the governor’s office.

Understanding the governor to be superior to the tax collector, the young man enlisted in his service. In time the governor led him to the king, and the young man took up an obscure position in the king’s court. The young man felt he had found at last the worthiest person to serve.

Then one morning he saw the king enter the temple and bow before the deity of Kṛṣṇa. Finally the young man understood the ultimate goal of service and took up the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa.

WHY FEET?

The fourth of the nine processes of *bhakti-yoga* is *pāda-sevanam*: “serving the feet” of Kṛṣṇa. Why feet? To approach a person’s feet is a sign of humility. Even today in India children learn to touch their parents’ feet as a token of respect. The ordinary conception of feet is not altogether pleasing, conjuring sights and smells better left un contemplated. But the feet of the Supreme Lord are so sweetly beautiful that they’re known as “lotus feet.” Simply thinking of them brings devotees to deep feelings of love and longing. The mighty *devas*—controllers of the sun, wind, water, and all aspects of the material world—were delighted when Lord Kṛṣṇa wandered the forests of *Vṛndāvana*, leaving His footprints in the dust. And Kṛṣṇa’s dear friends the *gopīs* (cowherd girls) would press this dust against their heads and hearts, lost in ecstatic trance.

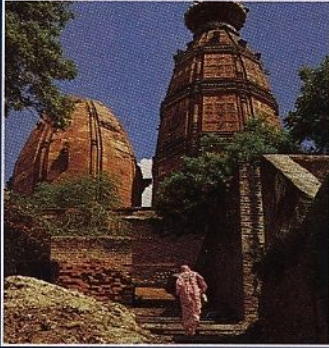
The Vedic scriptures describe the Lord’s feet in detail. On His soft reddish soles are the marks of the lotus, conch shell, club, disc, flag, thunderbolt, fish, and rod for controlling elephants. To worship someone’s feet is to accept the humblest of approaches, and yet the Lord makes this attractive with His exquisitely beautiful feet. Worship of the Lord’s lotus feet is a great spiritual blessing,



Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa

Coming Up!

You'll find these stories and more in the next issue of *Back to Godhead*.



TEMPLE OF THE SUPREME ENCHANTER

A visit to the temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-Mohana, the first of many Vṛndāvana temples built by the direct followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.



THE REAPPEARANCE OF ŚRĪ ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ-MĀDHAVA

The discovery of the ancestral deities of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

because anyone charmed by those transcendental feet loses attraction to temporal pleasures. The powerful *deva* Lord Brahmā prays, “For one who has accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Murāri, the enemy of the demon Mura, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf’s hoof print. His goal is *param padam*, or Vaikuṅṭha, the place where there are no material miseries, not the place where there is danger at every step.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.58)

LOGICAL PROGRESSION

Pāda-sevanam comes after the devotional practices of hearing about Kṛṣṇa, chanting about Him, and remembering Him. It’s a logical progression: After hearing and repeating someone’s glories, we naturally remember that person and in time seek the intimacy of service. As the ambitious young man realized, the urge to serve finds perfect fulfillment in God.

Yet skeptics assert that serving God exclusively is irresponsible. Aren’t we all born with many obligations? The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.41) addresses this concern:

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām piṭṛṇām
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇi ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇaṁ śaraṇyaṁ
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam*

“Anyone who has taken shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda [Kṛṣṇa], the giver of liberation, giving up all kinds of obligation, and has taken to the path in all seriousness, owes neither duties nor obligations to the demigods, sages, general living entities, family members, humankind, or forefathers.” Śrīla Prabhupāda compares the attempt to serve everyone to trying to water the leaves and branches of a tree. The same water applied to the root automatically reaches all parts of the tree. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa, God—the root of all beings—is the ideal recipient of service.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, a disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, offers the example of Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, as one who has become perfect by *pāda-sevanam*. Śrī Lakṣmī always

massages the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. This is remarkable, as noted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.11.33): “The goddess of fortune, although by nature very restless and moving, could not quit the Lord’s feet.” Most of us have some experience with Lakṣmī’s restless nature. As wealth and good fortune, she is painfully elusive and temporary. Mortals cannot control Lakṣmī, although many waste their lives trying.

A devoted servant of the Lord, the goddess of fortune will bestow her bounty only with His blessing. Temples, churches, and mosques fill with ardent worshippers bearing hidden agendas. Sometimes the plan is simple: If I go to church every week, drop some money into the collection plate, and act right, prosperity will follow. Sometimes the request is more poignant: A mother prays for money for her child’s operation. An unemployed man prays for a job.

But even though God does answer prayers in His way, and even though faith in His benevolence is well-placed, prayer and other forms of worship shouldn’t be bargaining chips for His favor. Think of the difference between someone who is kind to you out of love, and someone who is kind out of hope for a reward. Nothing in our hearts is hidden from God. The test of our love comes when our requests are unanswered, when even our most sincere entreaties fail to check poverty and illness and death. What happens to our love then? Do we offer the Lord heartfelt worship even as our hearts twist in agony?

So *pāda-sevanam* offers a tremendous spiritual lesson: It means approaching the Lord from the most humble position, as supplicants at His feet, understanding that even the goddess of fortune comes to Him in that way. All wealth, all honor, all fortune are but His servants. When the Lord does not employ these servants as our own, can we continue to supplicate ourselves at His feet? Can we aspire to serve in the mood of the goddess of fortune, humble and without expectation, content with the opportunity to render the lowliest of service?

For some, the answer is a definite no. The image of the goddess bent over the feet of her master brings to mind

the harsh dominion of men over women often seen in this world. Her image is not a transcendent one, but an example of the patriarchal hierarchy entrenched within religious systems built by mortal men. Her image shows that women serve, men enjoy. It is one more excuse for men to squash women into nothingness. And it can become one more excuse for women to reject religious disciplines.

How easy it could be to interpret Lakṣmī's service in that way, as nothing more than an example of a wife's submission to her husband. But the real import of Lakṣmī's dedicated service has little to do with our temporary

bodies. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains: "The living beings are by constitution feminine by nature. The male or enjoyer is the Lord, and all manifestations of His different potencies are feminine by nature." We may have a male body in one life and a female body in the next. The dominant role of men in this world, so often misunderstood as inherent superiority, is but a temporary relationship between embodied souls. Men, women, trees, and animals are all equally meant to serve God. Lakṣmī's service need cause no resentment or pride for any of us, because she is more than just a role model for good wives. She performs the task

most treasured by all realized souls: the gentle massaging of the Lord's lotus feet.

Let's return to our ambitious young man. In his service relationships, he encountered persons with opulence unknown in his village. Fortunately, he concluded that although wealth, beauty, fame, and power are wonderful, they are meant to be engaged, as is their mistress, Lakṣmī Devī, in constant service to the Supreme Lord. ❁

Dvārakādhiṣa Devī Dāsī is a frequent contributor to Back to Godhead. She lives with her husband and daughter in Alachua, Florida.

PUBLIC OPINION

(continued from page 15)

saintly persons. Everyone can become saintly. In India they are surprised: "How have you made these uncivilized Europeans and Americans so saintly?" They are surprised. Because in India the *brāhmaṇas* and others were under the impression that "These Western people—they are hopeless. They cannot become any kind of advanced religionists or spiritual persons." So when they see we have got many temples in India and that Westerners are now worshipping the Lord, managing everything, and chanting and dancing, they are surprised. After all, many swamis had gone to the West before me, but they had been unable to transform anyone's life. But it is not I who have transformed these persons. The method is so nice that they have become transformed.

Director: But people will say this is transforming only a very small percentage of the population.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. To undertake our method there is no question of high percentage. As I said, even if there is only a small percentage, there must be some ideal men. That way, at least people will see, "Here is the ideal man."

Just consider the experience we are having here at our center. Because our young people are chanting and dancing, many outsiders are coming, and they are also learning. They are also offering the Lord their obeisances. And gradually they are offering their service: "Please accept me."

Example is better than precept. If you have an ideal group of men, then people will automatically learn. That is wanted. But rest assured—at the present moment, in general I also don't find any ideal group of men in society. Even the Christian priests—they are going to the hospital for curing their drinking habit. Some time ago at a sanitarium, there were five thousand alcoholic patients, largely priests. Priests should be of ideal character. What's more, some priests are advocating homosex. So in modern society, where are the ideal-character men? If even the priestly class are going to the sanitarium for their drinking habit and they are allowing man-to-man marriage and homosex, then where is the class exemplifying ideal character?

Director: But homosexuality is a sickness. It's an illness. It's just like a person who can't see—you wouldn't punish him for not seeing. You can't punish

a person for being homosexual. That's what our society says.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Well, anyway, the priestly class are sanctioning homosex.

Director: Pardon?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Sanctioning. They are condoning homosex. And there was a newspaper report that a man and another man were actually married by a priest. Just imagine—a priest performing a man-to-man marriage. And some priests are even advocating the passage of a resolution that homosex is all right. And my disciples tell me that in Perth, university teachers are discussing homosex with their students, in favor of homosex. So where is the group with ideal character? If you want some tangible improvement in society, train some people to have ideal character. That is the purpose of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Director: How do you people respond when someone says, "What is ideal to

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you is not ideal to somebody else”?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I am upholding the principle of ideal character.

Director: Yeah, but that’s just one opinion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Principles and standards do not depend on public opinion. Opinion—what is the value of public opinion if the people are all asses? There is no question of public opinion. One should take what is enjoined in the *śāstras*, the scriptures. Not opinion. What is the use of taking the opinion of an ass?

So as long as the people are trained up just like dogs and asses, then what is the use of their opinion? If you are

to uplift them, you must take this approach. For instance, when I introduced this principle “No illicit sex,” I never cared about public opinion. If you ask for people’s opinion, immediately they will discuss their views. But what is the use of their views, their opinion? “*It must be done.*” The principle must be followed.

This is the defect of Western civilization: *vox populi*—taking the opinion of the public. But what is the value of this public? Drunkards, smokers, meat-eaters, woman hunters. They are not first-class men. So what is the use of such third-class, fourth-class men’s opinion? We do not listen to such opin-

ion. What Kṛṣṇa has said—that is the standard. That’s all. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme, and His version is final. No public opinion, no democracy.

When you go to a physician for treatment, does the physician submit his prescription to the other patients for their opinion? “I am prescribing this medicine for this gentleman—now please give me your opinion.” Does he do that? All the other patients—what do they know? The physician is the ideal person. Whatever he has written is the proper prescription. That’s all. But here in the Western world, everything depends on public opinion. What is the use of such opinion? ❁

AX-WIELDING AVATAR

(continued from page 45)

Eventually Lord Paraśurāma rid the world of sinful warriors twenty-one times. At Samanta Panchaka near Kurukshetra, where thousands of years later Lord Kṛṣṇa would speak the *Gītā*, Paraśurāma created nine lakes with the slain *kṣatriyas*’ blood.

Lord Paraśurāma returned with his father’s head to the ashram by the Ganges. There, with the power of mystic arts and mantras, he rejoined the head to his father’s body, which had been watched over by his brothers. By the touch of the Lord, Jamadagni

returned to life as if waking from a restful sleep. The all-victorious Lord Paraśurāma then completed his great sacrifice of ridding the world of unqualified leaders by taking his ritualistic bath in the Saraswati River.

These are some of the wonderful descriptions of Lord Paraśurāma’s *līlā* as narrated in the Ninth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Other *Purāṇas* say that after ridding the earth of the burden of defiant kings maddened by a lust for power, Lord Paraśurāma performed penance in the Vindhya Hills, a chain of small mountains running through central India, roughly follow-

ing the course of the Narmada River.

Lord Paraśurāma is known as one of three *cirañjīvas*, or persons who will live as long as the earth exists. (The other two are Vyāsadeva and Aśvatthāmā.) Before the Kurukshetra war five thousand years ago, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s brother Balarāma met Paraśurāma at Mahendra Parvata. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.16.26) states, “Lord Paraśurāma still lives as an intelligent *brāhmaṇa* in the mountainous country known as Mahendra [in Bihar State]. Completely satisfied, he has given up all the weapons of a *kṣatriya*.” ❁

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

(continued from page 27)

against this. Among all of today’s scientific theories, the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution is perhaps the easiest to criticize from a theoretical scientific point of view.

From its very inception, Darwin’s theory has not been able to explain in detail how complex organs such as brains or eyes come into being. The general idea is that organs develop by a series of tiny steps. For example, the eye is said to begin as a light-sensitive spot. The spot turns into a pit and thus develops directional sensitivity through shadowing. The pit closes over to form a pinhole camera, and then translucent skin forms a crude lens that collects and focuses light. Gradually, features and improvements are added, until we have the

eye of an eagle.

The problem is that this is simply a “just so” story that we are asked to accept on faith. It cannot be verified as we verify Newton’s theory by calculating a planetary orbit and then observing that the planet actually follows the orbit. The eye is simply too complex, and the more we study it, the more complex we find it to be.

With the recent development of biochemistry, the task of explaining the origin of complex organs and functions has become even more daunting. In Darwin’s day, the living cell seemed to be a simple bag of chemicals. Now it is seen to be a high-precision molecular machine far more complex than our most advanced computers.

The biochemist Michael Behe (who is not a creationist) has published a book arguing that the findings of bio-

chemistry are extremely difficult to explain by Darwin’s theory. He points out that even though scientists have taken an interest in the origin of bio-molecular systems, nothing has been published in the scientific literature that really comes to grips with how evolution is supposed to work on the molecular level. This absence of published work indicates an absence of scientific ideas about molecular evolution.

Of course, one can argue that vague evolutionary stories should be accepted if they cannot be decisively disproven. Darwinian evolution can be shown to work in many simple cases. It is consistent with the solidly established theories of physics, and it saves these theories from the onslaught of supernatural doctrines of creation.

The crux of the matter is this: Does

everything in nature work strictly according to impersonal mathematical laws, or is there a spirit-matter interface? If there is, then the drawbacks of Darwinian theory may eventually be overcome by reintroducing purpose and intelligent design into nature.

CONCLUSIONS

Although traditions of personal theism are ruled out by the spirit of modern science, they are not refuted

decisively by the still-evolving theories of physics. Indeed, even some of the extraordinary phenomena connected with theistic teachings may eventually find confirmation as physical and biological sciences come to grips with perplexing forms of human experience. This may provide the key to understanding how matter interacts with consciousness.

These developments may take a great deal of time. At present, our ignorance is overwhelming, but this is a hopeful sign, since the expansion of

knowledge also expands the boundary between the known and the unknown. The main danger we should avoid is to block the advancement of knowledge by prematurely imposing final conclusions, either from the side of scientific rationalism or from the side of religious dogmatism. ☸

*Sadāpūta Dāsa (Richard L. Thompson) earned his Ph.D. in mathematics from Cornell University. He is the author of several books, of which *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe* is the most recent.*



Detail from a painting by Viṣṇu Dāsa

A Pause For Prayer

O Lord, the powerful thieves of my senses have blinded me by stealing my most precious possession, my discrimination, and they have thrown me deep into the pitch-dark well of delusion. Please, O Lord of lords, extend Your hand and save this wretched soul.

—King Kulaśekhara,
Mukunda-mālā-stotra 36

Gatherings

The people listed here hold Kṛṣṇa conscious gatherings regularly in their homes—or they'd like to start. You're invited. Just give a call to find out when and where. If you hold Kṛṣṇa conscious gatherings and you'd like to be added to the list, please send your name, city, and phone number to Gatherings, BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA.

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E-mail: toronto@iskcon.net
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Fax: (604) 431-7251; Govinda's Restaurant: (604) 433-2428/ E-mail: jaygo@direct.ca

RURAL COMMUNITY

- Ashcroft, B.C.** — Saranagati Dhama (mail: P.O. Box 99, V0K 1A0, attn: Uttama Devi Dasi)/
Tel. (250) 453-2397/ Fax: (250) 453-2622 [attn: (250) 453-2397]/
E-mail: devadeva@wkpowlink.com

U.S.A.

- ◆ **Atlanta, Georgia** — 1287 South Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E., 30306/ Tel. (404) 378-9234/
Fax: (404) 373-3381/ E-mail: 76415.175@compuserve.com

Note for international phone calls: When dialing from outside the country, drop the "0" that begins most city codes (the numbers shown in parentheses). **Exceptions:** For Russia, the number to drop is the initial "8." Telephone numbers include country codes, identified by a +. To save space, we've skipped the codes for North America (1) and India (91).

★ New listing ◆ Temples with restaurants or dining ● Revised listing

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

- Austin, Texas** — 10700 Jonwood Way, 78753/ Tel. (512) 835-2121/
E-mail: iskconaustin@cs.com
- Baltimore, Maryland** — 200 Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville, 21228/ Tel. & fax: (410) 744-1624
- Berkeley, California** — 2334 Stuart St., 94705/ Tel. (510) 540-9215/ E-mail: berkeley@com.org
- Boise, Idaho** — 1615 Martha St., 83706/ Tel. (208) 344-4274/
E-mail: arun_gupta@hp-boise-omd.om.hp.com
- Boston, Massachusetts** — 72 Commonwealth Ave., 02116/ Tel. (617) 247-8611/
Fax: (617) 266-3744/ E-mail: premananda@juno.com
- Chicago, Illinois** — 1716 W. Lunt Ave., 60626/ Tel. (773) 973-0900/ Fax: (773) 973-0526/
E-mail: chicago@iskcon.net
- Columbus, Ohio** — 379 W. Eighth Ave., 43201/ Tel. (614) 421-1661/ Fax: (614) 294-0545/
E-mail: malati.acbsp@pamho.net
- ◆ **Dallas, Texas** — 5430 Gurlay Ave., 75223/ Tel. (214) 827-6330/ Fax: (214) 823-7264/
E-mail: tkrishnas@aol.com
- ◆ **Denver, Colorado** — 1400 Cherry St., 80220/ Tel. (303) 333-5461/ Fax: (303) 321-9052/
E-mail: nmd@com.org
- ◆ **Detroit, Michigan** — 383 Lenox Ave., 48215/ Tel. (313) 824-6000/ Fax: (313) 822-3748/
E-mail: fmansion@flash.net
- Gainesville, Florida** — 214 N.W. 14th St., 32603/ Tel. (352) 336-4183/ E-mail: krishna@afn.org
- Hartford, Connecticut** — 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, 06108/ Tel. & fax: (860) 289-7252/
E-mail: bhaktirasa@poboxes.com
- ◆ **Honolulu, Hawaii** — 51 Coelho Way, 96817/ Tel. (808) 595-3947/ Fax: (808) 595-3433/
E-mail: iskconhawaii@ureach.com
- Houston, Texas** — 1320 W. 34th St., 77018/ Tel. (713) 686-4482/ Fax: (713) 686-0669/
E-mail: hkty@starmail.com
- Kansas City, Missouri** — Rupanuga Vedic College (Men's Seminary), 5201 The Paseo, 64110/
Tel. (816) 361-6167 or (800) 340-5286/ Fax: (816) 361-0509/ E-mail: rvc@rvc.edu
- ◆ **Laguna Beach, California** — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (949) 494-7029/ E-mail: tuka@rupa.com
- Long Island, New York** — 197 S. Ocean Avenue, Freeport, 11520/ Tel. (516) 223-4909/
E-mail: nimainitai@aol.com
- ◆ **Los Angeles, California** — 3764 Watseka Ave., 90034/ Tel. (310) 836-2676/
Fax: (310) 839-2715/ E-mail: niranntara@juno.com
- ◆ **Miami, Florida** — 3220 Virginia St., 33133 (mail: P.O. Box 337, Coconut Grove, FL 33233)/
Tel. (305) 442-7218/ Fax: (305) 444-7145
- New Orleans, Louisiana** — 2936 Esplanade Ave., 70119/ Tel. (504) 486-3583/
E-mail: rrk196820@cs.com
- ◆ **New York, New York** — 305 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, 11217/ Tel. (718) 855-6714/
Fax: (718) 875-6127/ E-mail: ramabhadr@aol.com
- New York, New York** — 26 Second Avenue, 10003 (mail: P.O. Box 2509, New York, NY 10009)/
Tel. (212) 420-1130/ E-mail: dayananda@msn.com
- New York, New York** — 114-37 Lefferts Blvd., Queens 11420 / Tel. & fax: (718) 848-9010 /
E-mail: sunandanadas@hotmail.com
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — 41 West Allens Lane, 19119/ Tel. (215) 247-4600/
Fax: (215) 247-8702/ E-mail: vrmdavana@netreach.net
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — 1408 South St., 19148/ Tel. (215) 985-9335/
E-mail: savecows@aol.com
- **Phoenix, Arizona** — 100 S. Weber Dr., Chandler, 85226/ Tel. (480) 705-4900/ Fax: (480) 705-4901/
E-mail: 105613.1744@compuserve.com
- Portland, Oregon** — 2353 SE 54th Ave., Portland, OR 97215/ Tel. (503) 236-0417/
E-mail: portland_krishna@hotmail.com
- ◆ **St. Louis, Missouri** — 3926 Lindell Blvd., 63108/ Tel. (314) 535-8085/ Fax: (314) 535-0672/
E-mail: surapala@pamho.net
- San Diego, California** — 1030 Grand Ave., Pacific Beach, 92109/ Tel. (858) 483-2500/
Fax: (619) 483-0941/ E-mail: newgovardhan@cs.com
- San Jose, California** — 2990 Union Ave., 95124/ Tel. (408) 559-3197
- Seattle, Washington** — 1420 228th Ave. S.E., Issaquah, 98027/ Tel. (425) 391-3293/
Fax: (425) 868-8928/ E-mail: haribol@iskcon.net
- Spanish Fork, Utah** — Krishna Temple Project & KHQN Radio, 8628 S. State Rd., 84660/
Tel. (801) 798-3559/ Fax: (801) 798-9121/ E-mail: carudask@burgoyne.com
- Tallahassee, Florida** — 1323 Nlyic St., 32304/ Tel. & fax: (850) 224-3803/
E-mail: haridas.thakur.hdg@pamho.net
- ★ **Tampa, Florida** — 1205 E. Giddens Ave., 33603/ Tel. (813) 234-8841
- Towaco, New Jersey** — 100 Jacksonville Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 109), 07082/ Tel. & fax: (973) 299-0970/
E-mail: mrugesh_shroff@merck.com
- ◆ **Tucson, Arizona** — 711 E. Blacklidge Dr., 85719/ Tel. (520) 792-0630/ Fax: (520) 791-0906/
E-mail: 105613.1744@compuserve.com
- Washington, D.C.** — 1009 Noyes Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20910/ Tel. (301) 562-9662 or 765-8155/
Fax: (301) 765-8157/ E-mail: hpress@compuserve.com
- Washington, D.C.** — 10310 Oaklyn Dr., Potomac, Maryland 20854/ Tel. (301) 299-2100/
Fax: (301) 299-5025/ E-mail: potomac@pamho.net
- RURAL COMMUNITIES**
- Alachua, Florida (New Raman Reti)** — P.O. Box 819, 32616/ Tel. (904) 462-2017/
Fax: (904) 462-3468/ E-mail: alachua@pamho.net
- Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan)** — 31492 Anner Road, 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/
Fax: (601) 799-2924/ E-mail: talavan@tnbop.com
- Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill)** — P.O. Box 1338, 00778/ Tel. (787) 737-3917/
E-mail: nrshingha@aol.com
- Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka)** — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/
Tel. (919) 732-6492/ Fax: (919) 732-8033/ E-mail: bkgoswami@compuserve.com
- Moundsville, West Virginia (New Vrindavan)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 319, Hare Krishna Ridge, 26041/
Tel. (304) 843-1600; Guest House, (304) 845-5905/ Fax: (304) 854-0023/
E-mail: palaceofgold@juno.com

- Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka)** — 532 Murari Lane, 37359/ Tel. & fax: (931) 759-6888/
E-mail: giridhari108@hotmail.com
- Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 839, 17082/ Tel. & fax: (717) 527-4101/
E-mail: acyutadasi@acsworld.net

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

- Alachua, Florida** — Govinda's, 14603 Main St., 32615/ Tel. (904) 462-4500/ Fax: (904) 418-3524
- Eugene, Oregon** — Govinda's Vegetarian Buffet, 270 W. 8th St., 97401/ Tel. (503) 686-3531
- Gainesville, Florida** — Balaji Indian Cuisine, 2106 SW 34th St., 32608/ Tel. (352) 378-2955
- Greensboro, North Carolina** — Govinda's, 332 South Tate St./ Tel. (336) 373-8809
- San Juan, Puerto Rico** — Gopal, 201B Calle Tetuan, Viejo San Juan, 00901/ Tel. (787) 724-0229

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

- Belfast, Northern Ireland** — Brooklands, 140 Upper Dunmurray Lane, BT17 OHE/
Tel. +44 (0)1232 620530
- Birmingham, England** — 84 Stanmore Rd., Edgbaston, B16 9TB/ Tel. +44 (0)121 420-4999
- Cardiff, Wales** — 18 Greenfield Place, Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan/ Tel. +44 (0)2920 831579
- Cork, Ireland** — Highland Cottage, 81, Lower Glanmire Road, Cork City/ Tel. (021) 552976/
E-mail: cork@pamho.net
- Coventry, England** — Kingfield Rd., Radford, West Midlands (mail: 19 Gloucester St., CV1 3BZ)/
Tel. +44 (0)1203 552822 or 555420/ E-mail: haridas.kds@pamho.net
- Glasgow, Scotland** — Karuna Bhavan, Bankhouse Rd., Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, ML11 0ES/
Tel. +44 (01555) 894790/ Fax: +44 (01555) 894526/ E-mail: 106225.2716@compuserve.com
- Leicester, England** — 21/21A Thoresby St., North Evington, LE5 4GU/
Tel. & fax: +44 (0116) 236-7723/ E-mail: gauranga.sundara@pamho.net
- Liverpool, England** — 114A Bold St., Merseyside, L1 4HY/ Tel. +44 (0151) 512-9319/
E-mail: liverpool@iskcon.net
- ◆ **London, England (city)** — 9-10 Soho St., W1D 3DL/ Tel. +44 (020) 437-3662; residential /pujaris,
7439-3606; shop, 7287-0269; Govinda's Restaurant, 7437-4928/ Fax: +44 (020) 7439-1127/
E-mail: london@pamho.net
- London, England (country)** — Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Lane, Watford, Herts,
WD2 8EZ/ Tel. +44 (01923) 857244/ Fax: +44 (01923) 852896/ E-mail: bhaktivedanta.
manor@pamho.net; (for rooms:) accommodations.requests@pamho.net
- London, England (south)** — 42 Enmore Road, South Norwood, SE25/ Tel. +44 (0181) 656-4296
or 654-3138
- Manchester, England** — 20 Mayfield Rd., Whalley Range, M16 8FT/ Tel. +44 (0161) 226-4416/
Tel. & fax: +44 (0161) 860-6117/ E-mail: krishna.dharma@pamho.net
- Newcastle Emlyn, West Wales** — Ger-y-nant, Penrhiwpal, Rhydlewis, Near Newcastle Emlyn,
SA44 5QQ/ Tel. & fax: +44 (01239) 851178/ E-mail: mkramadasabc_uk@yahoo.co.uk
- Newcastle upon Tyne, England** — 304 Westgate Rd., NE4 6AR/ Tel. +44 (0191) 272-1911
- Plymouth, England** — 2 Windermere Crescent, Derriford, Devon, PL6 5HX/ Tel. (01752) 776708/
E-mail: dhirasanta@pamho.net
- Romford, England** — 3 Rowan Walk, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2JA/ Tel. +44 (01708) 454092

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Lisnaskea, Northern Ireland** — Govindadvipa Dhama, ISKCON Inisrath Island, BT92 9GN, Co.
Fermanagh/ Tel. +44 (013657) 21512 or 22682/ E-mail: 105400.2653@compuserve.com
- London, England** — (contact Bhaktivedanta Manor)

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ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

- Dublin, Ireland** — Govinda's Restaurant, 4 Aungier St., Dublin 2/ Tel. +353 (01) 475-0309/
E-mail: pragosa@connect.ie

AUSTRALASIA

AUSTRALIA

- Adelaide** — 25 Le Hunte St., Kilburn, SA 5084/ Tel. +61 (08) 8359-5120/ Fax: (08) 8359-5149
E-mail: adelaide@pamho.net
- Brisbane** — 95 Bank Rd., Graceville (mail: P.O. Box 83, Indurupilly), QLD 4068/
Tel. +61 (07) 3379-5455/ Fax: +61 (07) 3379-5880/ E-mail: brisbane@pamho.net
- Canberra** — 1 Quick St., Ainslie, ACT 2602 (mail: P.O. Box 1411, Canberra, ACT 2601)/
Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6262-6208/ E-mail: adi@actweb.net
- Melbourne** — 197 Danks St. (mail: P.O. Box 125), Albert Park, VIC 3206/ Tel. +61 (03) 9699-5122/
Fax: +61 (03) 9690-4093/ E-mail: melbourne@pamho.net
- Newcastle** — 28, Bull St., Mayfield, NSW 2304/ Tel. +61 (02) 4967-7000/
E-mail: shyamananda_das@hotmail.com.au
- Perth** — 144 Railway Parade (corner of The Strand) [mail: P.O. Box 102], Bayswater, WA 6053/
Tel. +61 (08) 9370-1552/ Fax: +61 (08) 9272-6636/ E-mail: perth@pamho.net
- Sydney** — 180 Falcon St., North Sydney, NSW 2060 (mail: P.O. Box 459, Cammeray, NSW 2062)/
Tel. +61 (02) 9959-4558/ Fax: +61 (02) 9957-1893/ E-mail: sraduucp@sradha.dialix.oz.au

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Bambra (New Nandagram)** — Oak Hill, Dean's Marsh Rd., VIC 3241/
Tel. +61 (052) 887383/ Fax: +61 (052) 887309
- Cessnock, NSW** — New Gokula Farm, Lewis Lane (off Mount View Rd., Millfield, near Cessnock
[mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock]), NSW 2325/ Tel. +61 (02) 4998-800/ Fax: (Sydney temple)
- Murwillumbah (New Govardhana)** — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 685), NSW 2484/
Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (02) 6672-5498

RESTAURANTS

- Adelaide** — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 79 Hindley St., SA 5000/ Tel. +61 (08) 8231-5258
- Brisbane** — Govinda's, 99 Elizabeth St., 1st floor, QLD 4000/ Tel. +61 (07) 210-0255

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

Brisbane — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 190 Brunswick St., Fortitude Valley, QLD/Tel. +61 (07) 854-1016/ E-mail: brisbane@pamho.net
Darlinghurst — Govinda's Upstairs, 12 Darlinghurst Road, NSW 2010/Tel. +61 (02) 9380-5162
Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., VIC 3000/Tel. +61 (03) 9650-2939/
 E-mail: crossways@iskcon.net
Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/Tel. +61 (03) 9650-1578
New Castle — Krishna's Vegetarian Cafe, 110 King Street, corner of King & Wolf Streets, NSW 2300
 Tel. +61 (02) 4929-6900
Perth — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 200 William St., Northbridge, WA 6003/
 Tel. +61 (08) 9227-1684/ E-mail: perth@pamho.net
Sydney — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 529B King St., Newtown, NSW 2042/
 Tel. +61 (02) 9550-6524

NEW ZEALAND, FIJI, AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Christchurch, NZ — 83 Bealey Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 25-190, Christchurch)/Tel. +64 (03) 366-5174/
 Fax: +64 (03) 366-1965/ E-mail: iskconchct@clear.net.nz
Labasa, Fiji — Delailabasa (mail: P.O. Box 133)/Tel. +679 812912/ E-mail: fiji@pamho.net
Lautoka, Fiji — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/Tel. +679 664112/ Fax: +679 663039/
 E-mail: fiji@pamho.net
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea — Section 23, Lot 46, Gordonia St., Hohola (mail: P. O. Box 571,
 POM NCD)/Tel. +675 259213
Rakiraki, Fiji — Rewasa, Rakiraki (mail: P.O. Box 204)/Tel. +679 694243/ E-mail: fiji@pamho.net
Suva, Fiji — Joyce Place, Off Pilling Rd. Nasinu 7½ miles, Samabula (mail: P.O. Box 2183,
 Gov't Bldgs.)/Tel. +679 393 599/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj
Wellington, NZ — 105 Newlands Rd., Newlands (mail: P.O. Box 2753)/Tel. +64 (04) 478-1414

RURAL COMMUNITY

Auckland, NZ (New Varshan) — Hwy. 28, Riverhead, next to Huapai Golf Course
 (mail: R.D. 2, Kumeu, Auckland)/Tel. +64 (09) 412-8075/ Fax: +64 (09) 412-7130

RESTAURANTS

Auckland, NZ — Gopal's, 246 Queen St./Tel. +64 (09) 306-4143
Labasa, Fiji — Hare Krishna Restaurant, Naseakula Road/Tel. +679 811364
Lautoka, Fiji — Gopal's, Corner of Yasawa St. and Naviti St./Tel. +679 662990
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Dolphins FNPF Place, Victoria Parade/
 Tel. +679 314154/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Opposite University of the South Pacific,
 Laucala Bay Rd./Tel. +679 311683/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 18 Pratt St./Tel. +679 314154
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 82 Ratu Mara Rd., Samabula/Tel. +679 386333
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Terry Walk, Cumming St./Tel. +679 312295

EUROPE (partial list)*

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 E-mail: amsterdam@pamho.net
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Bergamo, Italy — Villaggio Hare Krishna, (da Medolago strada per Terno d'Isola) 24040 Chignolo
 d'Isola (BG)/Tel. +39 (035) 494-0706/ Fax: +39 (035) 494-0705/
 E-mail: villaggio.hare.krsna@pamho.net
Berlin — Cuvvstrasse 1, 10997/Tel. & fax: +49 (030) 536 98789/ E-mail: hariballabha.hks@bbt.se
Budapest — Mariaremetei ut. 77, 1028 II/Tel. & fax: +36 (01) 275-8140/
 E-mail: 100263.3167@compuserve.com
Copenhagen (Hillerød) — Baunevej 23, 3400 Hillerød/Tel. +45 4828-6446/ Fax: +45 4828-7331/
 E-mail: iskcon.denmark@pamho.net
Gutenstein, Austria — Vedisches Kulturzentrum, Markt 58, 2770/Tel. & fax: +43 (02) 634-7731/
 E-mail: austria@pamho.net
Helsinki — Ruoholahdenkatu 24 D (III krs) 00180/Tel. +358 (9) 694-9879/ Fax: +358 (9) 694-9837/
 E-mail: krishna@saunalahti.fi
 ◆ **Lisbon** — Rua Dona Estefânia, 91 R/C 1000 Lisboa/Tel. & fax: +351 (01) 314-0314 or
 352-0038/ E-mail: dhira_krsna_das@mail.pt
Madrid — Espíritu Santo 19, 28004 Madrid/Tel. +34 91 521-3096
Oslo — Jonsrudvej 1G, 0274/Tel. +47 (022) 552243/ Fax: +47 (022) 558172
Paris — 31 rue du docteur Jean Vaquier, 93160 Noisy le Grand/Tel. & fax: +33 (01) 4303-0951/
 E-mail: nitai.gaurasundara.tkg@pamho.net
Prague — Jilova 290, Praha 5-Zlicin 155 21/Tel. +42 (02) 5795-0391 or -0401/
 Fax: +42 (02) 302-1628/ E-mail: prague@pamho.net
Rome — Hare Krishna Forum, Piazza Campo de' Fiori 27, 00186/Tel. +39 (06) 683-2660
 ◆ **Septon-Durbuy, Belgium** — Chateau de Petite Somme, B-6940/Tel. +32 (086) 322926/
 Fax: +32 (086) 322929/ E-mail: radhadesh@pamho.net
 ◆ **Stockholm** — Fridhemsgatan 22, 11240/Tel. +46 (08) 654-9002/ Fax: +46 (08) 650-881
Vienna — Bhaktivedanta-Zentrum Wien, Roetzergaase 34/3, 1170/Tel. & fax: +43 (01) 481-9212/
 E-mail: vienna@pamho.net
Warsaw — Mysiadlo, k. Warszawa, 05-500 Piaseczno, ul. Zakret 11 (mail: MTSK, 02-770,
 Warszawa 130, P.O. Box 257)/Tel. +48 (022) 750-7797 or -8248/ Fax: +48 (022) 750-8249/
 E-mail: warsaw@pamho.net
Zürich — Bergstrasse 54, 8030/Tel. +41 (01) 262-3388/ Fax: +41 (01) 262-3114/
 E-mail: kgs@pamho.net

RURAL COMMUNITIES

France (La Nouvelle Mayapura) — Domaine d'Oublaise, 36360, Lucay le Mâle/
 Tel. +33 (02) 5440-2395/ Fax: +33 (02) 5440-2823/ E-mail: argm@wanadoo.fr

Germany (Nava Jiyada Nrsimha Ksetra) — Zielberg 20, 94118 Jandelsbrunn/ Tel. +49 (08583) 316/
 Fax: +49 (08583) 1671
Italy (Villa Vrindavan) — Via Comunale Scopeti 108, 50026 San Casciano in Val di Pesa (FL)/
 Tel. +39 (055) 820054/ Fax: +39 (055) 828470
Spain (New Vraja Mandala) — (Santa Clara) Brihuega, Guadalajara/ Tel. +34 949 280436/
 E-mail: new.vrajamandala@pamho.net

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

Barcelona — Restaurante Govinda, Plaza de la Villa de Madrid 4-5, 08002/ Tel. +34 (93) 318-7729
Copenhagen — Govinda's, Nørre Farimagsgade 82, DK-1364 Kbh K/ Tel. +45 3333 7444
Milan — Govinda's, Via Valpetrosa 5, 20123/ Tel. +39 (02) 862417
Oslo — Krishna's Cuisine, Kirkeveien 59B, 0364/ Tel. +47 (02) 260-6250
Vienna — Govinda, Lindengasse 2A, 1070/ Tel. +43 (01) 522-2817
Zürich — Preyergrasse 16, 8001/ Tel. +41 (01) 251-8859

COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (partial list)*

Kiev — ul. Menjinskogo, 21-b., 252054/ Tel. +380 (8044) 244-4944/ E-mail: kiev@pamho.net
Moscow — 8/3, Khorochevskoye sh., 125284 (mail: P.O. Box 69)/Tel. +7 (095) 255-6711/
 Fax: +7 (095) 945-3317

ASIA (partial list)*

Dhaka, Bangladesh — 5 Chandra Mohon Basak St., Banagram, 1203/ Tel. +880 (02) 236249
 ◆ **Hong Kong** — 27 Chatham Rd. South, 6/F, Kowloon/ Tel. +852 (2) 7396818/
 Fax: +852 (2) 724-2186/ E-mail: iskcon.hong.kong@pronto.pamho.net
Jakarta, Indonesia — P.O. Box 2694, Jakarta Pusat 10001/ Tel. +62 (021) 489-9646
Kathmandu, Nepal — Budhanilkantha (mail: GPO Box 3520)/ Tel. +977 (01) 373790 or 373786/
 Fax: +977 (01) 372976 (Attn: ISKCON)/ E-mail: iskcon@wlink.com.np
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — Lot 9901, Jalan Awan Jawa, Taman Yarl, off 5½ Mile, Jalan Kelang Lama,
 Petaling/ Tel. +60 (03) 780-7355, -7360, or -7369/ Fax: +60 (03) 781-1644/
 E-mail: uttama.caitanya.jps@pamho.net
Manila, Philippines — 52 Copenhagen St., Merville Park Subdivision, Paranaque, Metro Manila
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 ★ **Myitkyina, Myanmar** — ISKCON Sri Jagannath Temple, Bogyoke Street, Shansu Taung, Myitkyina,
 Kachin State/ E-mail: sdsas108@hotmail.com
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Religion Versus Faith

IN 1969, JUST A FEW YEARS after Śrīla Prabhupāda started his movement in the West, he prepared a test for his disciples. Those who passed the test would receive a Bhakti Śāstrī degree, signifying their understanding of the basic philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I came across the test recently and was surprised to find that eight of its fifteen questions deal with the same point: How to distinguish between religion and faith. Śrīla Prabhupāda obviously felt this was an extremely important point.

Prabhupāda taught that Kṛṣṇa consciousness—God consciousness—is different from what is generally called religion. Taking up the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not the same as converting from one religion to another. Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees never say they converted from Christianity, Judaism, or some other faith. Prabhupāda came not to make converts to Hinduism, he would say, but to give genuine spiritual knowledge.

Because Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the eternal function of the soul, it can't be changed, as we might change our beliefs from one religion to another. We are all spiritual beings, by nature servants of God. To be Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to understand our true nature and act accordingly. It's that simple.

Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness is already there; we simply have to awaken it. We can't remove Kṛṣṇa consciousness from our very being any more than we can stop breathing, or any more than we can remove sweetness from sugar or liquidity from water.

The Sanskrit word *dharma* is sometimes translated as "religion," but *dharma* actually

means "essential characteristic." The *dharma* of fire is heat; the *dharma* of the soul is service to God.

Service is inescapable because it's intrinsic to the soul. We try to avoid service to God, but we're forced to serve Him indirectly through our subordination to His material energy. We might declare that we can live without serving others, but we must at least admit that we're unwilling servants of time, moving us unimpeded toward death.

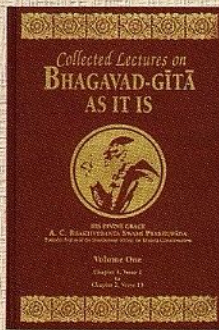
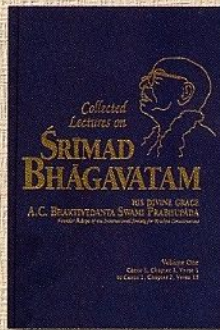
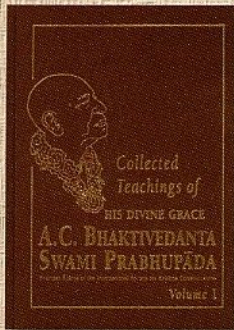
Kṛṣṇa consciousness can rightly be called a science. Students of Kṛṣṇa consciousness are studying truth, or the nature of reality. The soul's eternal function of service is a reality that shines forth whether we call ourselves Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jew, or atheist.

Religious traditions are meant to awaken us to the one true religion: service to God. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that the best religion brings us to pure, uninterrupted, unmotivated loving service to God. It doesn't say that the best religion is Hinduism, a word absent from the Vedic scriptures. The religion promoted by the *Vedas* is called *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal occupation of the soul.

The strife between adherents of various religions will end when everyone understands this non-sectarian, scientific definition of religion. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote dozens of books to enlighten people about this principle. Those books are available all over the world to anyone eager to rise above temporary religious designations and move on to eternal, universal truths.

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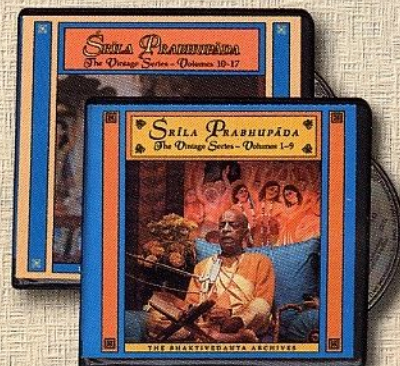
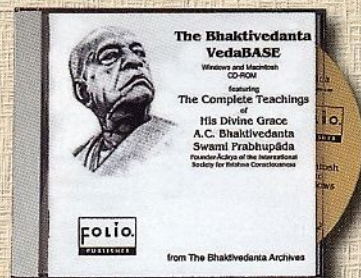
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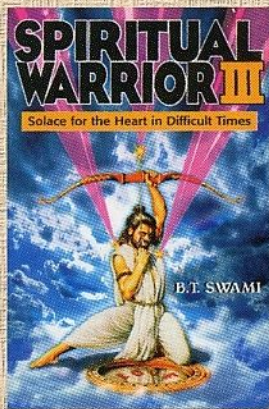
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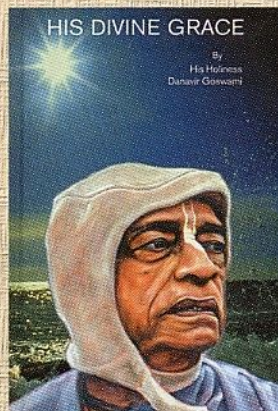
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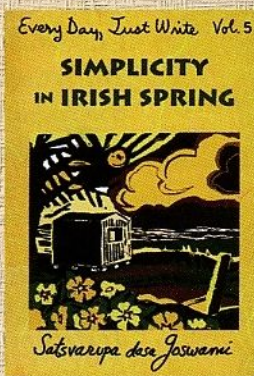


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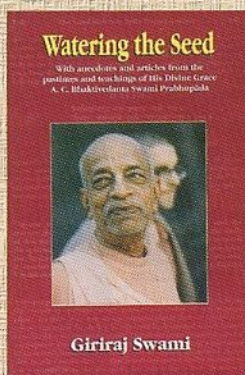
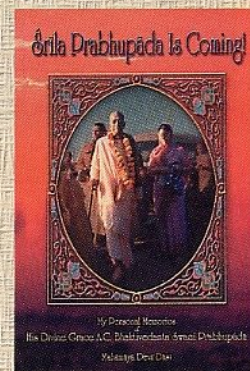


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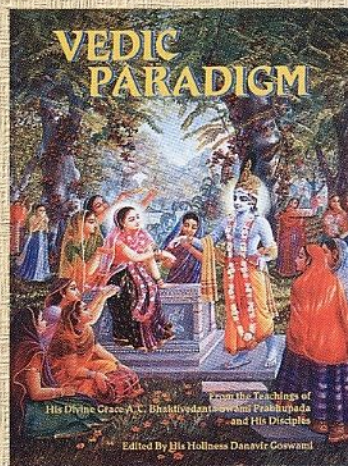
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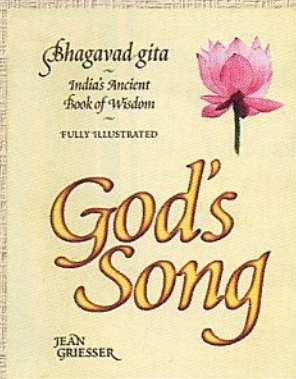


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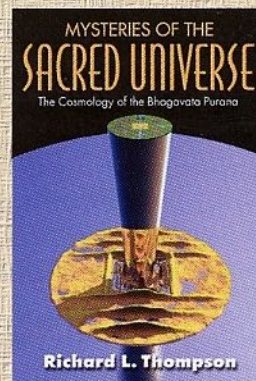


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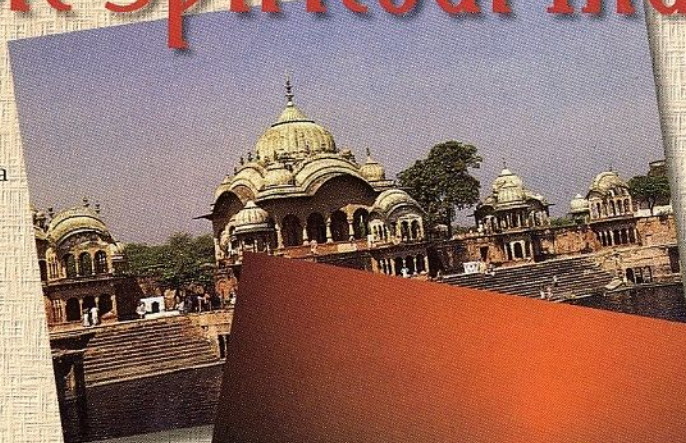
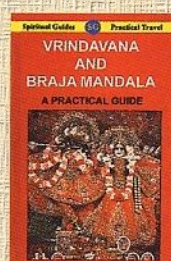
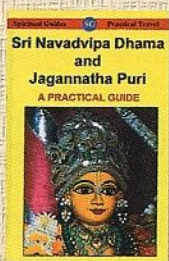
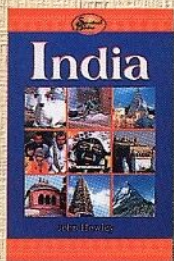
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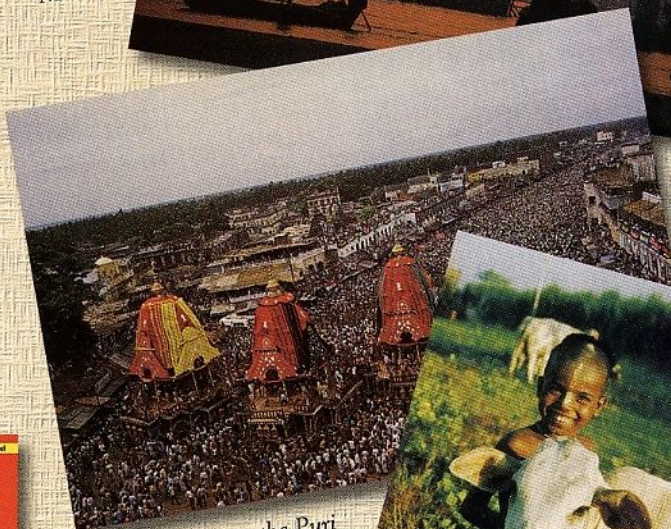
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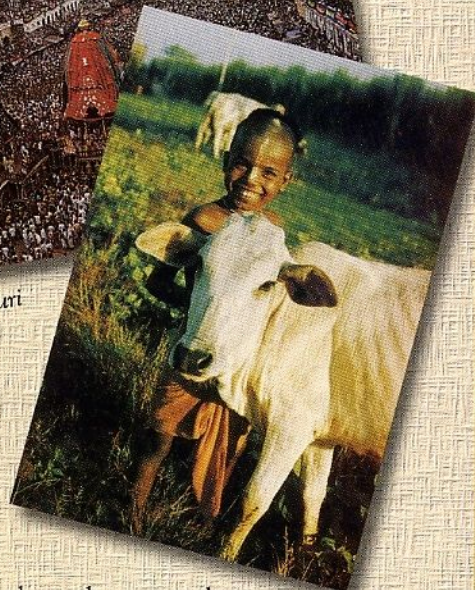
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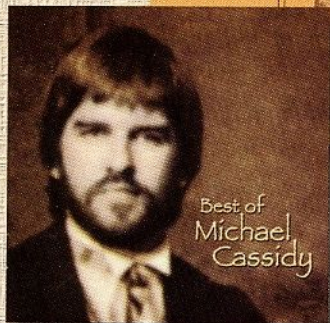
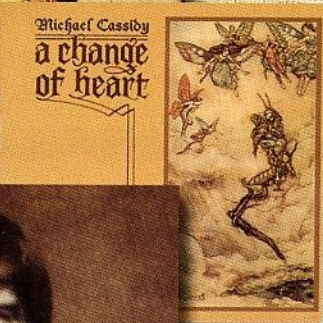
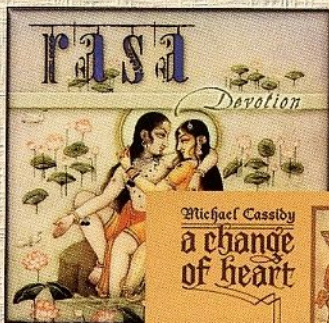
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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.18.16, Purport

Those who are afraid of material existence worship Vedic literature. Some worship *smṛti*, the corollaries to Vedic literature, and others worship the *Mahābhārata*.

As far as I am concerned, I worship Mahārāja Nanda, the father of Kṛṣṇa, in whose courtyard the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, is playing.

Raghupati Upādhyāya
Padyāvali 126

For a person devoid of devotional service, birth in a great family or nation, knowledge of revealed scripture, performance of austerities and penance, and chanting of Vedic mantras are like the ornaments on a dead body. Such ornaments simply serve the concocted pleasures of the general populace.

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 3.12

If one is unhappy to see the distress of other living beings and happy to see their happiness, his religious principles are appreciated as imperishable by exalted persons who are considered pious and benevolent.

Śrī Dadhīci Muni
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.10.9

Those who seriously follow the methods of achieving Me that I have personally taught attain freedom from illusion, and upon reaching My personal abode at last perfectly understand the Absolute Truth.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.37

Even though liberation destroys the bondage of material existence, I have no desire for liberation in which I would forget that You are the master and I am your servant.

Śrī Hanumān to Lord Rāmacandra
Cited in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.49

Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting [about Kṛṣṇa], the living entity naturally awakens.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
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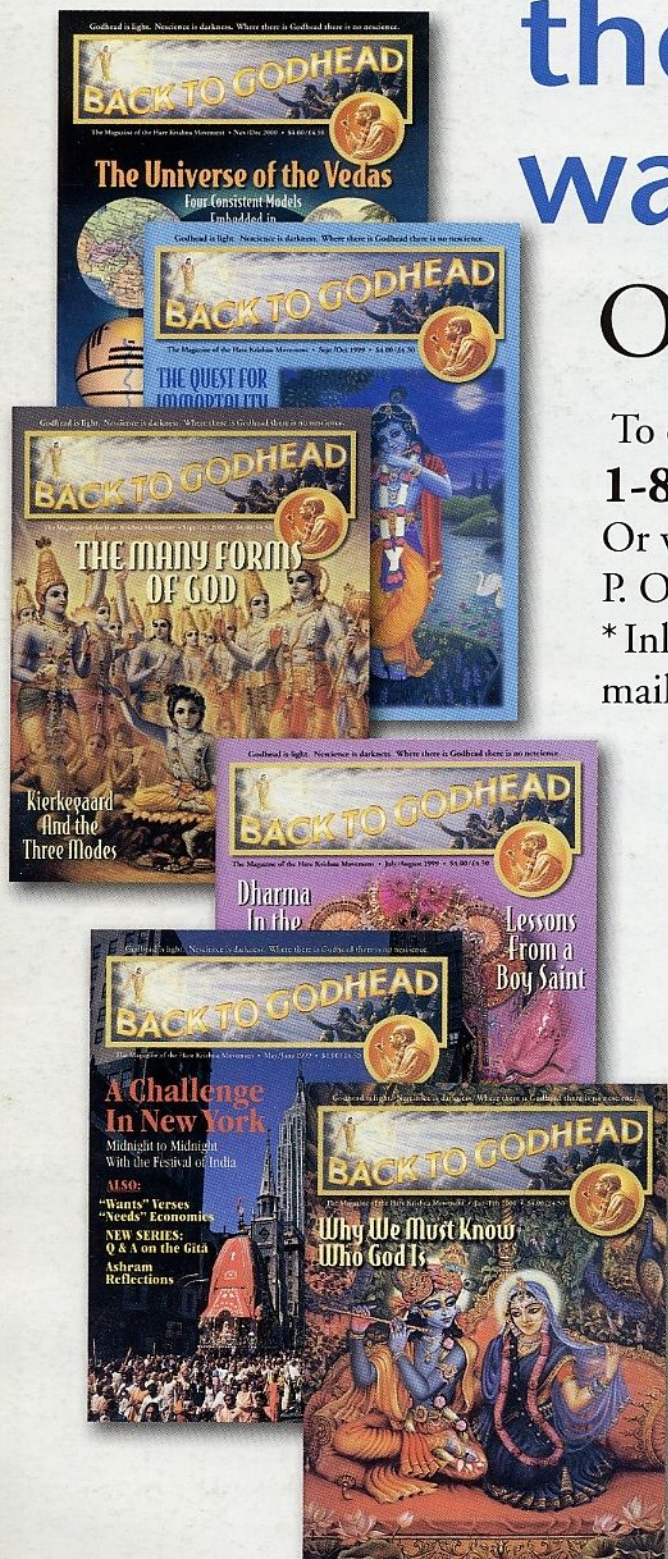
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