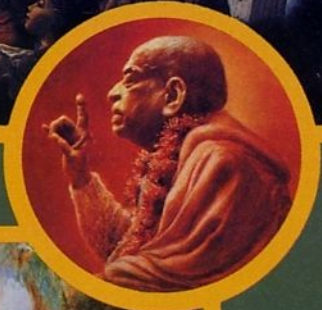


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

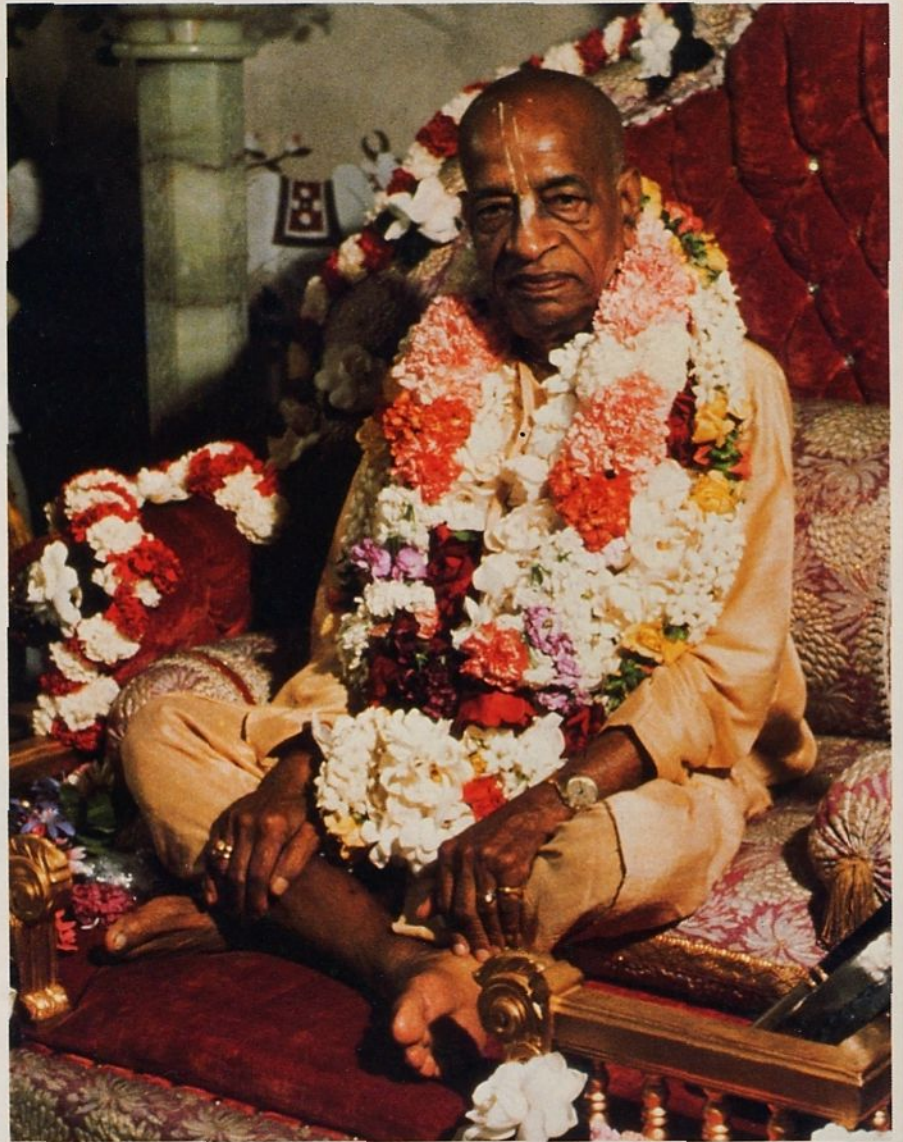
# BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol. 23 No.1

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of āśramas, schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in Vṛndāvana, India, the place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.



BACK TO GODHEAD is the monthly journal of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Society (in New York City, in 1966), he put into writing the purposes he wanted it to achieve. They are as follows:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books, and other writings.

# BACK TO GODHEAD

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
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A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda

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**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 hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ī** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **e** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch**, **jh**, **dh**, etc.) as in **staunch**-heart, **hedge**-hog, and **red**-hot. Finally, pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for **Kṛṣṇa** say **KRISHNA**, and for **Caitanya** say **CHAITANYA**.

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**COVER:** Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His elder brother, Balarāma, appeared on earth fifty centuries ago to establish religious principles, protect Their devotees, and defeat the demoniac. Once, on entering Mathurā—where They had been invited by the evil king Kāṁsa to a wrestling match meant to spell Their deaths—Kṛṣṇa beheaded a wicked washerman simply by touching the washerman's neck with His fingertips. Then Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, assisted by Their cowherd friends, decorated themselves with the washerman's valuable cloth just according to Their liking. (Painting by Puṣkara dāsa.)

# MAKING PROGRESS

“Because they have taken up some false duty  
and are working to discharge it, they are all asses.  
They are forgetting their real business.”

A lecture in Philadelphia on July 12, 1975  
by HIS DIVINE GRACE  
A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*sa evaṁ vartamāno jñō  
mṛtyu-kāla upasthite  
matim cakāra tanaye  
bāle nārāyaṇāhvaye*

“When the time of death arrived for the foolish Ajāmila, he began thinking exclusively of his son Nārāyaṇa” (*Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.27).

In material life everyone is situated under certain conditioning. I am situated in a certain consciousness, and you are situated in a certain consciousness. According to the modes of nature, we have different conceptions of life and different kinds of consciousness. That is material life.

Generally, materialists think life is meant for sense gratification. Everyone is planning: “I shall live like this; I shall acquire money like this; I shall enjoy like this.” Everyone has a program for sense gratification.

So, Ajāmila also had such a program. What was it? His program was that since he was very much attached to his youngest child, his whole attention was absorbed in how the child was moving, how he was eating, how he was talking. Sometimes Ajā-

mila was calling him, sometimes he was feeding him . . . Ajāmila’s whole mind was absorbed in the activities of his child.

Not only Ajāmila but everyone is absorbed in a certain type of consciousness. And what is that consciousness due to? How does it develop? As mentioned in the previous verse, Ajāmila was absorbed in the activities of his son because of strong affection (*sneha-yantritaḥ*). *Sneha* means “affection,” and *yantritaḥ* means “a machine.” So, everyone is affected by this machine of affection. This body is a machine that is being worked by nature, and direction is coming from the Supreme Lord. We wanted to enjoy in a certain way, and Kṛṣṇa has given us a certain type of body, or *yantra*.

For example, in America you have different makes of motorcar. Somebody wants a Buick, somebody else wants a Chevrolet, another a Ford, and all these cars are ready to buy. Similarly, our body is like a car. Somebody is a “Ford,” somebody is a “Chevrolet,” somebody is a “Buick.” Kṛṣṇa has given all of us the chance to enjoy in a certain way. He says, “Oh, you wanted this kind of ‘car,’ or body? Sit down and enjoy.” This is our material position.

After changing our body, we forget what we desired and why we have our present body. But Kṛṣṇa is situated within our heart, so He does not forget. He gives us what we want. Kṛṣṇa is so kind. If someone wants a body with which he can eat all kinds of nonsense, Kṛṣṇa gives him the body of a pig. Then he can eat even stool. And if someone wants a body with which he can dance with Kṛṣṇa, he gets that kind of body. Now, it is up to you to decide whether you are going to get a body with which to dance with Kṛṣṇa, talk with Kṛṣṇa, and play with Kṛṣṇa, or a body with which to eat stool and urine. In this human life we must answer this question.

Now, you may say, “I don’t believe in the next life,” but nature’s law will act. *Karmaṇa daiva-netreṇa*: according to how you are acting in this life, you are preparing your next body. And after death—when this body is finished—you will get another

**Celebrated as the greatest fool**, the ass works very hard carrying heavy burdens without making any profit for itself; all it gets for its labor is a little grass, which is available anywhere. Similarly, foolish human beings work hard for sense gratification, which is available anywhere, and forget about the goal of life.



body immediately, because you have already done the fieldwork to determine what kind of body you will get.

Ajāmīla was taking care of his child very nicely. His whole mind was absorbed in the child. Therefore he has been described as *mūḍha*, foolish. Like Ajāmīla, we are forgetting that the day is coming which is called *mṛtyu-kāle*, “the time of death.” We forget that. This is our imperfection.

Ajāmīla was so very busy as an affectionate father that he forgot about his approaching death. We are all like Ajāmīla. We have so many relationships—whether with affectionate friends or envious enemies—and being completely absorbed in these relationships, we are forgetting that death is ahead.

Therefore materialistic people are called *mūḍhas*. The word *mūḍha* means “rascal,” “ass,” “one who does not know what his actual interest is.” In India we often see an ass loaded with a ton of clothing by a washerman. The ass can barely walk, but still he has to carry the load. He does not think, “I am carrying so much clothing on my back, but what interest do I have in it? Not a single cloth belongs to me.” No, rather he thinks, “It is my duty to carry so much clothing.” Why is it his duty? Because the washerman gives him grass. He has no sense to think, “Grass I can get anywhere. Why do I have to accept this duty?” This is the ass’s mentality.

Everyone is anxious about his duty. Somebody is a politician; somebody is a householder; somebody is something else. But because they have all taken up some false duty and are working hard to discharge it, they are all asses. They are forgetting their real business.

We have to understand that death will come, that it will not avoid us. (When something is certain, we say it is “as sure as death.”) So, before death comes we have to act in such a way that we will attain a position in the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana, and live permanently with Kṛṣṇa. This is our real duty.

But people do not know that (*na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*). We are in this conditioned state of life because we are separated from the original person, Kṛṣṇa. We are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, but we have forgotten this. We are thinking we are part and parcel of America or India. This is illusion.

Somebody is interested in his country, another is interested in his society or family, and we have created so many duties in relationship to these things. Therefore, the *śāstra* [scripture] says the rascals do not know what their actual self-interest is: *na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*. And because they are ignorant of their real self-interest, they are *durāśayaḥ*—hoping for something that will never be fulfilled. They are trying to adjust

things within this material world to become happy, but they do not know that as long as they remain in this material world there is no question of happiness.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that this place is *duḥkhālayam aśāvatam*, “full of miseries, and temporary.” In this material world we are forced to change bodies, one after another. This is misery. I am permanent (*na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*), so why do I have to change my body? This is the question we should be asking.

To get the answer to this question, we have to receive knowledge from the perfect source. And Kṛṣṇa, the supreme perfect person, is personally giving us knowledge in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. But if we are so unfortunate that we do not take the perfect knowledge—if we concoct, specu-

**We have to understand that death will come, that it will not avoid us. Before death comes we have to act in such a way that we will attain a position in the spiritual world and live permanently with Kṛṣṇa. This is our duty.**

late, create our own idea—then it is to be understood that we are *durāśayaḥ*, hoping for the impossible. We are thinking, “I shall be happy in this way; I shall be happy in that way.” No, you shall never be happy unless you go back home, back to Godhead. This is perfect instruction.

Suppose there is a mad boy who has forsaken his father. His father is a rich man, with everything for the boy’s comfort, but the boy has become a hippie. We in this material world are like that. Our father is Kṛṣṇa, and we can live in His kingdom very comfortably, without any botheration or endeavor for earning money. But we have decided that we shall live here in this material world. This is the ass’s mentality—*mūḍha*. We do not know what our self-interest is, and we are hoping against hope: “I shall be happy in this way; I shall

be happy in that way.”

Sometimes the washerman sits on the ass’s back and takes a bunch of grass and puts it in front of the ass. The ass wants to take the grass, but as he moves forward the grass also moves forward. The ass thinks, “Just one step forward and I shall get the grass.” Because he is an ass, he does not know that the grass is situated in such a way that he may go on walking for millions of years but will not get it. Similarly, the materialistic person does not come to his senses and understand, “For millions and trillions of years I have tried to become happy in this material world, but I will never be happy here.”

Therefore, you have to take knowledge from the *guru*, who knows things as they are. The *guru* is worshiped in this way:

*ajñāna-timīrāndhasya  
jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmlītaṁ yena  
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“I was blinded by ignorance, but my spiritual master opened my eyes with transcendental knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.”

The blind politician will promise you happiness: “Give me your vote, and I shall bring heaven for you. As soon as I become president, I will give you such-and-such benefit.” So you elect Mr. Nixon—and again you become disappointed. Then you say, “Mr. Nixon, get out.” And you accept another fool. This is going on. In this way you will never get the information by which you can become happy.

Wherefrom shall I get the right information? The *Vedas* say, *tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet*: “If you want the right information, then go to the *guru*.” And who is the *guru*? Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains, *āmāra ajñāya guru hañā*: “Become a *guru* on My order.” So a *guru* is one who carries the order of Kṛṣṇa. (Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa.) Nobody can become a *guru* unless he carries the order of the Supreme Lord and serves the Supreme Lord.

Unfortunately, people do not know this. Therefore anyone can come and say, “I am a *guru*.” How have you become a *guru*? “Oh, I am self-perfected. I don’t need to read any books. I have come to bless you.” [Laughter.] The foolish rascals do not know that unless one follows the *śāstra*, the supreme authority of Kṛṣṇa, no one can become a *guru*. So they accept so many bogus *gurus*. This is going on.

You should know that a *guru* is one who carries the order of the Supreme Lord. This is a simple definition of *guru*. And any rascal who manufactures some idea cannot be *guru*. Immediately kick him out. Immediately. He is a rascal, not a *guru*. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, a *guru* is the faithful servant of God. So first you have

to ask a person presenting himself as a *guru*: “Are you a faithful servant of God?” If he says, “No, I am God,” then kick him on the face immediately. [Laughter.] Kick him out immediately: “You rascal! You have come to cheat us!”

The Vedic literature says, *tadvijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet*: “If you want to know the science of spiritual life, you must approach a *guru*.” And if someone is without a *guru*, if he is manufacturing his own way of life, then he is a *mūḍha*, a rascal. This was Ajāmila’s position. He was thinking, “I am such an affectionate father; I am taking care of my little son. I am feeding him; I am patting him. I am a very faithful and honest father.”

But here the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that Ajāmila is a *mūḍha*, a rascal. Why? *Na vedāgatam antakam*: because he did not realize that death was coming. He did not think, “Behind me Death is waiting, and he has come to take me.” How could Ajāmila’s affection for his so-called son and society and family save him from death? That he could not answer.

So, we must be prepared for death. We must always know that death is behind us and can at any moment capture us by the neck and drag us away. That is a fact. Is there any guarantee that you shall live one hundred years? No. If you go on the street you may immediately meet death. There may be heart failure, there may be a motorcar accident . . . so many dangers.

Actually, to live is wonderful. To die is not wonderful, because you are meant for death. As soon as you took your birth, you immediately began to die. Someone may inquire, “When was this child born?” and you may say, “One week ago.” That means the child has died one week. We are thinking that he is living one week, but actually he has died one week. It is wonderful that he is still living, that he has not died. Death is not wonderful, because it is sure. It will come after one week or after one hundred years. Therefore we should utilize our remaining time to make a solution to the real problem of our life—that we are repeatedly dying and again accepting another body.

How will people understand this spiritual knowledge unless they come to the proper *guru*? Therefore the *sāstra* says, *tadvijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet*: “If you want to know the real problem of your life, and if you want to be enlightened about how to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, how to become eternal and go back home, back to Godhead, then you must approach a bona fide *guru*.” And who is the bona fide *guru*? That we have explained: The bona fide *guru* is he who follows the orders of Kṛṣṇa and serves Kṛṣṇa. The genuine *guru* never manufactures his own idea—“Do this and give me money and become happy.” That is not what a real

*guru* teaches. That is simply a process for earning money.

Like Ajāmila, everyone is simply living in a fool’s paradise, manufacturing his own idea. Somebody has taken one thing as his duty, another has taken something else as his duty. But they are all fools. You must know from the *guru* what your real duty is.

[*Śrīla Prabhupāda* addresses his disciples.] Every day you are singing *guru-mukha-padma-vākya*, *cittete koriyā aikya*, *ār nā koriho mane āśā*. This is life. You accept the bona fide *guru*, and whatever he orders, you carry out. Then your life is successful. *Ār nā koriho mane āśā*. And you do not desire anything else. Are you not singing this daily? But do you understand the meaning? Or are you singing only? What is the meaning? Who will explain?

**You have to approach a guru—a faithful servant of God—and take his instruction on how to serve the Lord. If you concoct—“I am more intelligent than my guru; I can make additions and alterations”—then you are finished.**

**Devotee:** “My only wish is that my mind may be purified by the words coming from the lotus mouth of my spiritual master. I have no desire but this.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. *Guru-mukha-padma-vākya*, *cittete koriyā aikya*. *Citta* means “consciousness” or “heart.” The disciple must think, “I shall do what my spiritual master orders.” My Guru Mahārāja [*Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī*] told me to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West. So, it is not my pride, but I can say for your instruction that I did it. Therefore, whatever little success you see, it is due to my following his order. I have no independent capacity, but I took the words of my *guru* as my life and soul. This is a fact.

So, everyone should do that. But if you make any addition or alteration, you are

finished. No addition or alteration. You have to approach a *guru*—a faithful servant of God, Kṛṣṇa—and take his instruction on how to serve the Lord. Then you will be successful. If you concoct—“I am more intelligent than my *guru*; I can make additions and alterations”—then you are finished.

Sing further.

**Devotee:** *Śrī-guru-carāṇe rati, ei se uttamagati.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** If you want to make real progress, you must be firmly faithful at the lotus feet of your *guru*. Then?

**Devotee:** *Ye prasāde pure sarva āśā.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** By the *guru*’s mercy, all desires are fulfilled. You’ll find this instruction throughout the whole of Vaiṣṇava philosophy. So, unless we become absorbed in serving a bona fide *guru*, we remain *mūḍhas*, asses.

Today we are reading a verse about Ajāmila. Here Vyāsadeva says that the rascal was absorbed in the service of his son, Nārāyaṇa. Ajāmila was not calling the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa; he was calling his son: “Nārāyaṇa, please come here. Nārāyaṇa, please take this.” Still, Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that He took it that Ajāmila was chanting His name, Nārāyaṇa. Ajāmila never thought, “I am going to Lord Nārāyaṇa.” Out of affection he simply wanted his son. But Ajāmila got the opportunity to chant the holy name of Nārāyaṇa, and that was his good fortune.

Ajāmila is described as *mūḍha* and *ajña*. *Mūḍha* means “rascal,” and *ajña* means “ignorant.” Not just Ajāmila but all persons in this material world are ignorant rascals because they do not care that they will have to meet death, when everything will be finished—all their plans, all their assets, everything. They do not know that. Or rather they know it, but they don’t care to think of these things. Therefore everyone is *mūḍha* and *ajña*.

Now, when Ajāmila was dying, he thought of his child. Fortunately, his child’s name was Nārāyaṇa. So Ajāmila was delivered. But suppose I am similarly affectionate to my dog. Then what is my position? Naturally I will think of my dog at the time of death, and immediately I shall get the body of a dog. That is nature’s law: *yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram taṁ taṁ evaiti*: “Whatever you think of at the time of death will determine your next life.” Ajāmila was very affectionate toward his son, so he thought of him at the time of death. Similarly, if you are very affectionate toward your dog or to something else, you will think of that at the time of death. Therefore, practice chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa so that at the time of death you can think of Kṛṣṇa and make your life successful.

Thank you very much. ❧





# ABOVE THE LAW

Without hearing from self-realized souls,  
we can easily misunderstand the transcendental  
significance of Kṛṣṇa's "immoral" acts.

by KUNḌALĪ DĀSA

Last spring I lectured in a philosophy class at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The topic was India's Vedic culture. I argued that to understand the Vedic culture, in which Kṛṣṇa consciousness has its roots, we in the West must resist the urge to weigh it against our values and traditions; we must let the tradition speak for itself.

Afterwards I answered questions and distributed Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and *Back to Godhead* magazines. The students seemed appreciative of the opportunity to find out all they ever wanted to know about Hare Kṛṣṇa.

When the class period ended, ten or twelve students approached me. Among them was a slim, keen-eyed Indian youth, whom I'd noticed frowning and shaking his head during my talk. I'd expected to hear from him when I took questions, but he hadn't said a word, except to whisper to two classmates on either side of him.

Now, accompanied by his two friends, both Indians, he spoke up.

"I'm a Hindu," he said pointedly, "but I don't follow my religion. Some things I just can't accept."

A hush came over the knot of people

around me. My dilemma was obvious. If born Hindus doubted their tradition, that could cast a shadow over me and all I'd said. Still, I was confident that whatever his problem, we could resolve it with Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"What can't you accept?" I asked.

"Kṛṣṇa's immorality. Why should we be moral when He did so many immoral things? From His very childhood He used to steal and cheat. Why is that?"

Kṛṣṇa's so-called immorality was a familiar charge. Some people question His moral character out of genuine confusion. Others do so because they resent their obligation to observe moral law. They think, "If I have to toe the line, so must God; otherwise, I want to transgress moral codes, too."

Those who have trouble with Kṛṣṇa's "immorality" usually prefer to speculate about Him rather than understand Him as He explains Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The young man before me was a speculator.

"In the Kurukṣetra war," he continued, "Kṛṣṇa made Yudhiṣṭhira tell a lie, and He broke His word and attacked Bhīṣma after He had promised not to fight in the battle. All through His life Kṛṣṇa bent the rules to suit Himself.

"When Arjuna and Duryodhana went to see Kṛṣṇa to get His help in the battle, Kṛṣṇa tricked Duryodhana. He said Arjuna had first choice because he sat at Kṛṣṇa's feet, while Duryodhana sat at His head. But Kṛṣṇa made that up on the spot,

just to give Arjuna first choice, because Arjuna was His friend."

"What did they have to choose between?" I asked.

"Between having either Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa's armies on their side in the battle."

"Right. So do you think it mattered who chose first? Duryodhana would never have chosen Kṛṣṇa. He was a materialist; he was only interested in Kṛṣṇa's army. He had no faith in Kṛṣṇa. When Arjuna chose Kṛṣṇa, Duryodhana's only choice was Kṛṣṇa's armies. Kṛṣṇa let Arjuna choose first to make it easy for Duryodhana to get what he wanted. What's so bad about that?"

No reply. I turned to the other students, smiled apologetically, and explained that for obvious reasons they might not be able to follow our conversation.

"That's okay," one student said gamely. "You go ahead; we're listening." That drew a few chuckles. They were enjoying the fun.

Turning to the Indian youths, I said, "For a minute there I thought you were going to bring up the whole thing about Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* and His queens—"

"Oh, yes, His sixteen thousand wives. You really believe that? How could God have sixteen thousand wives?" he asked earnestly.

"Sixteen thousand one hundred eight," I corrected.

"Sixteen thousand one hundred eight—how could He be God? How could God have one standard for Himself and a

**Caught in the act of stealing butter and yogurt** from mother Yaśodā's storeroom and feeding it to the monkeys, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma look at her as if with great anxiety. Though the uninformed may criticize Kṛṣṇa's mischief, these pastimes inspire the highest exchanges of love between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

different one for us?"

"That's not difficult to understand," I replied. "God is the supreme independent person. He can do whatever He likes, whenever He likes, wherever He likes. He's free to decide whether He wants one wife, a hundred thousand, or no wife. Otherwise, what do you think it means to be God? What do you think it means to be omnipotent?"

"I'm not questioning whether He is able to do it. I'm only questioning the morality of it. If He is not moral, how can He expect us to be moral?"

"Because we're under the law and He's above the law. He's above all laws—moral, natural, or otherwise. He doesn't have to be moral just to satisfy us.

"Actually, morality exists in this world because of the retributive law of *karma*, which gives us a choice between pious and impious activities. But it's not absolute; it only applies to mundane reality. There's no morality on the absolute, spiritual plane, where the only law is the law of love. Everything there is governed by love. That is higher than morality.

"Out of love, Kṛṣṇa does many things that may seem immoral in our estimation, but they aren't. They are loving exchanges between the Lord and His pure devotees. His motives have no tinge of lust or self-gratification. He does many things for the pleasure and satisfaction of His devotees. Such pure love is beyond all morality and only exists on the spiritual plane.

"The proof is that neither the liberated souls nor the Lord suffers karmic reactions for their so-called immoral behavior; but if we imitate them, we suffer."

My questioner offered no response, but it was obvious he still couldn't accept that Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to mundane morality. He was too attached to his idea of how God should be.

"Let me ask you something," I said, still trying to help him understand. "In your house, your parents make up the rules, and they expect you to follow, right?"

"Not anymore. They used to, but I'm too old for that now."

"Okay, but in the days when they made the rules, what time did they have you come in at night when you were, say, eleven or twelve?"

"Nine, nine-thirty."

"Did they observe that curfew as well?"

"No."

"Why not?"

Silence.

"Because," I said, "our parents are the supreme persons in our households. If they make rules for us, you don't expect, realistically, that they would be obliged to follow the same rules, do you? They might follow, of course, but it's understood that they are free to transcend them at anytime, right?"

A murmur of assent went through the group.

"That's an example of a lawmaker who is above the law," I said.

"Well . . . I see what you're saying . . . But it still makes sense to me that God should be more moral than anybody."

"Okay. Suppose we all agree with you, and all the theologians in the world also agree with you, but who will enforce it? Who will make God abide by moral laws?"

"No, nobody would have to enforce it. God has to be moral—period."

"You mean by definition He would be incapable of being immoral?"

"Exactly," he said triumphantly, pleased that I had understood.

Our observers thought he'd made a good point.

"So," I asked, "you're saying Kṛṣṇa can't be God, because He's immoral: He had

*When Kṛṣṇa lies or pulls a prank, devotees glorify it on stage and in art and literature, because by spiritual realization they fully appreciate that everything about Kṛṣṇa is transcendental.*

Yudhiṣṭhira tell a lie, and He had so many wives?"

"Well, I'm not saying exactly that. I just find the whole idea of Kṛṣṇa being God too fantastic, too hard to accept, that's all."

"That's because you're trying to understand God by speculating, comparing Him to yourself. But you can't understand something beyond the reach of your senses and mind by speculating. You have to try to understand God on His terms, not yours. Doesn't that make sense?"

Again no response. I took it to mean he couldn't disagree, but he wasn't ready to agree either.

I continued. "Śrīla Prabhupāda cautioned us about the futility and danger of speculating about the Absolute Truth, who is beyond our sense perceptions and speculations. He said our free thinking is futile when it comes to God, because no amount of conjecture, even if based on the

best available logic or reason, can lead to any conclusive realizations, simply because our opinions about God are all unverifiable.

"But even worse than that, speculation is dangerous because if you become too enticed by your own little gems of conjecture and fail to recognize and accept transcendental knowledge as it is, that can wreak havoc with your spiritual life."

I paused to let him respond, but again he said nothing. I couldn't tell what was going on in his mind, but he was listening, and so were the others.

"By the way," I said, "do you realize that Kṛṣṇa's marrying sixteen thousand one hundred eight wives is a good argument for His being God?"

Interest perked up all around.

"How is that?" he asked, squinting, trying to determine if I was serious.

"Well," I said, "do any of you know an ordinary man who could marry and maintain that many wives?"

This drew some smiles and laughs.

"But seriously," I continued, "it's a fact, isn't it? No ordinary man could do that. We may say Kṛṣṇa is immoral, but nevertheless, like so many of His other feats, marrying and maintaining so many wives is far beyond anything we could do, though we might like to imitate Him. Even if we say Kṛṣṇa is immoral, still, His so-called immorality is beyond our scope to imitate. So even His 'immoral' pastimes stand as proof of His supreme position.

"Furthermore, an analysis of Kṛṣṇa's so-called immoral behavior shows that many persons, especially His devotees, benefit from His activities. That's why when Kṛṣṇa lies or pulls a prank, devotees glorify it on stage and in art, music, and literature for generations, because by spiritual realization they fully appreciate that everything about Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, supramundane. He has no tinge of selfish motive or whimsy. His devotees benefit from His actions because everything about Him is divine."

Someone then asked a question related to my talk earlier, putting an end to our discussion of Kṛṣṇa's morality. Others wanted a chance to ask their questions. The three friends stayed a few moments longer, then left. As they went out the door, Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and *Back to Godheads* in hand, I caught their eyes, and their spokesman gave me a polite nod, but I could see he wasn't completely satisfied.

I could empathize with him, for he had made a fairly common mistake. In my trying to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I had also sometimes made the mistake of not letting go of my private notions of what God can and cannot do, trying to make the Unlimited and Inconceivable compatible with my own ideas. In the face

*(continued on page 35)*



## Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine

# Gifts From the Seed-Giving Father

When the mystery tree in our yard turned out prolific, we appreciated its fruits as gifts of the earth, the rain, the sun—and Kṛṣṇa.

by VIŚĀKHĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

On a dank February day last year, my family and I moved to a rented house. We were glad to be relocated, despite the heavily-trafficked four-lane drive outside our door. In our new home a comfortable distance buffered us from our neighbors, the kids had a front and back yard to roam, and we had trees for summer shade: evergreens and a dogwood in the front, maples and oaks behind, and on the far side of the driveway—well, we didn't know what it was. After a few months it carried longish, pointy leaves.

In June we half-anticipated a quick trip to the local hospital for stomach pumping when the children insisted on eating the

abundant green, olivelike fruits our mystery tree produced. Then in July the olivine things got bigger and turned red. Then dark red. Then purple.

Plums!

Branches that had angled up twelve or fifteen feet bowed now, laden with fruit.

I thought of plum pudding, plum pie, plum jam, plum nectar, plum jelly, plum preserves, plum ice cream. And they remained pleasant thoughts when, after my morning walks, I'd pick the biggest plums, wash them, offer them to Kṛṣṇa, and eat them with breakfast, amazed at their juiciness, sweetness, and silky softness.

When we went visiting, we'd bring a bag

of plums. (Were we getting more invitations than usual?) Neighbors came over and filled up a box to take home now and again. When someone did us a favor, we'd invite them to take some plums for their family. When some friends and I went to the park, we munched plums under the night sky. On Lord Balarāma's appearance day, I got the longest ladder in the house and bagged the most delectable fruits for His offering. And still the tree was laden. When I walked under it to find ripe plums, my shoes would become purple from scrunching the juicy plum-carpet.

Finally, around mid-August, after we'd bagged a bunch for Janmāṣṭamī (Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance day), I noticed that our tree was gradually straightening up, like someone slowly rising after bending over. And by the last week of the month, it stood as before: a dozen dried-up plums dangled like huge raisins from its branches, while below, the crushed ones lay as scarred reminders of the glorious plum-laden days past.

On seeing a tree like ours, a horticulturist sees horticultural explanations for the lavish production of luscious fruits. A plum-lover sees the object of his desires. One who doesn't like plums sees nothing of much value. And a devotee sees Kṛṣṇa, the seed-giving father.

A devotee thinks how no person or machine can produce a single plum (even a scrawny, dry one), which houses a seed capable of producing a plum tree, which is capable of producing hundreds of delicious plums, each one capable of producing another tree. He sees that the simple, relishable plum is a gift of the earth, the rain, the sun, and ultimately the Supreme Lord Himself. In return for this gift, we have nothing to offer but our gratitude and whatever love we can muster for Kṛṣṇa, who has so kindly given it. ❧

### Plum Chutney

Preparation time: 30 minutes  
Servings: 4-6

8 cups plums  
2 tablespoons ghee (clarified butter)  
or vegetable oil  
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated  
2 dried chilies, crushed  
2 teaspoons ground coriander  
½ teaspoon ground cardamom seeds  
½ teaspoon rose water  
2 cups sugar

Pit the plums and cut them into chunks. Heat the ghee or vegetable oil in a saucepan over a medium-low flame. Add the ginger and crushed chilies, then stir-fry for one minute. Add the plums and the remaining ingredients and cook to a chunky purée. Cool and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

# THE VEDIC

## Transcendental Commenta

### THE BALD TRUTH

by Kuṇḍalī dāsa

Not every Hare Kṛṣṇa male sports a shaved head. It's not an absolute requirement, but it's part of the tradition, and there are good reasons for it. So most Kṛṣṇa conscious men prefer to shave their heads and keep the tuft in the back, called a *śikhā*. I remember the first time my mother saw me with a shaved head. She wanted to know why.

"Because it is cleaner," I said. "Hair attracts and keeps a lot of dirt. We believe 'Cleanliness is next to godliness.' But the main reason is that shaving is an expression of surrender to the Lord."

"What does a shaved head have to do with surrender to God?" she asked archly.

"Hair is very important for people in bodily consciousness," I explained. "They associate it with youth and beauty. But in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we learn that the first principle of spiritual life is to transcend identification with the body and to identify oneself as a spiritual soul."

"Because most people consider hair an essential aspect of their beauty and intrinsic to their identity, they are very attached to it. So when a man takes up spiritual life, shaving his head is a significant step. It indicates that he is very serious about surrendering, and it pleases the spiritual master to see the disciple advance in renunciation."

My mom disagreed. She harrumphed a bit, then asserted that she didn't think my point about people being attached to their hair was well founded. All the same, she admitted she liked me better with mine.

Our conversation occurred almost fifteen years ago, but it came to mind recently when I read an article on baldness. Victims of baldness can now smear on a drug that induces hair growth, or they can get hair transplants, or they can try the most recent development: scalp-reduction surgery.

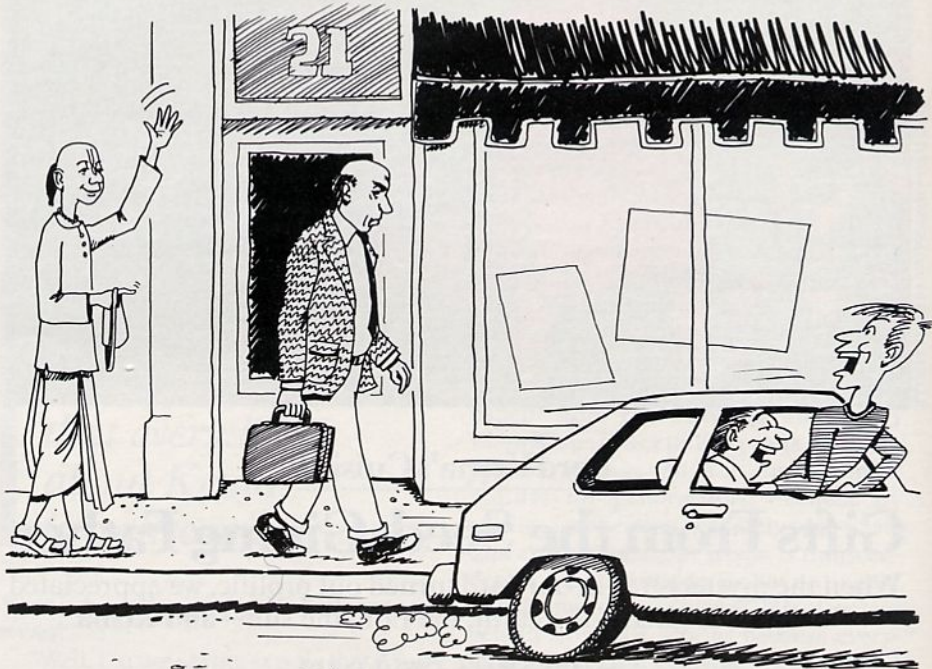
In this operation strips of bald scalp are surgically removed, and the hair-bearing section of the pate is pulled up and sutured together to reduce the bald area. Afterwards, if any baldness remains, hair is im-

planted to fill the space.

The operation can cost as much as five thousand dollars. Still, it is much more economical than the drug treatments, which cost a thousand dollars a year. My stepfather, for instance, who started balding at thirty-four, would have spent twenty thousand dollars on drugs by now. If he lived to eighty, he would spend forty-six

identify yourself with your body, which is withering even as you read this, you'd consider the discovery of a cure for baldness a cause for celebration.

This kind of news item confirms why Śrīla Prabhupāda referred to ours as a "misguided civilization." For as a pursuing perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, embodied souls, trying to prolong



"Hey, baldy!"

thousand dollars on his hair alone.

These advances in the bald wars, the article pointed out, have brought hope into the lives of some thirty million men who consider baldness a real setback, a virtual neon indicator of "lost youth and vigor."

Upon reading this, I could not help thinking, *Well, Mom, there you are. After all these years, here is proof that a devotee's shaved head is surrender. Men are so attached to their hair that they are willing to pay handsomely to get it back.*

To a person trained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, who understands that the body is temporary, these measures against baldness seem silly. But if you happen to

their illusion of happiness in the material world, are obliged to engage in such trivial pursuits, instead of thinking how to end repeated birth and death altogether.

### MUTABLE MORALITY

by Dvārakādhīṣa-devī dāśī

Years ago, my juvenile mind had it all figured out. Good people were those who lived happily within the law, working diligently and honestly, going to church on Sundays, and thinking of their children's future. Bad people, on the other

# OBSERVER

ntary on the Issues of the Day

hand, lived in dark places and had cruel expressions on their faces. They stole money from the good people and spent it on whiskey. Children had to be wary because bad people would try to give us candy laced with poison.

Fortunately, laws protected the good people from the bad people.

I was jolted, then, when I deciphered from one of my mother's hushed conversations the news that my uncle Rob was in jail. Uncle Rob? But he's my godfather! The clear-cut division between good and bad became blurred. Was he a good person turned bad, or had he always been bad? Or was he still good . . . sort of?

My theory further eroded over the years, until I became attuned to the Great American Revelation: Everyone must intuit for himself what is right or wrong behavior. Integrity is based not on an absolute standard of behavior, but on the individual's tenacious belief that what he is doing is right. Civil law does not pretend to instill moral guidelines, but hovers on the periphery, mirroring what society as a whole will tolerate. Thus laws are mutable rather than rigid, and only as effective as the citizens' adherence to them.

For example, abortion and homosexuality were once illegal, abhorred by the majority of the population. Now both are commonplace. In a spirit of liberalism, behavior once considered immoral is largely accepted by society.

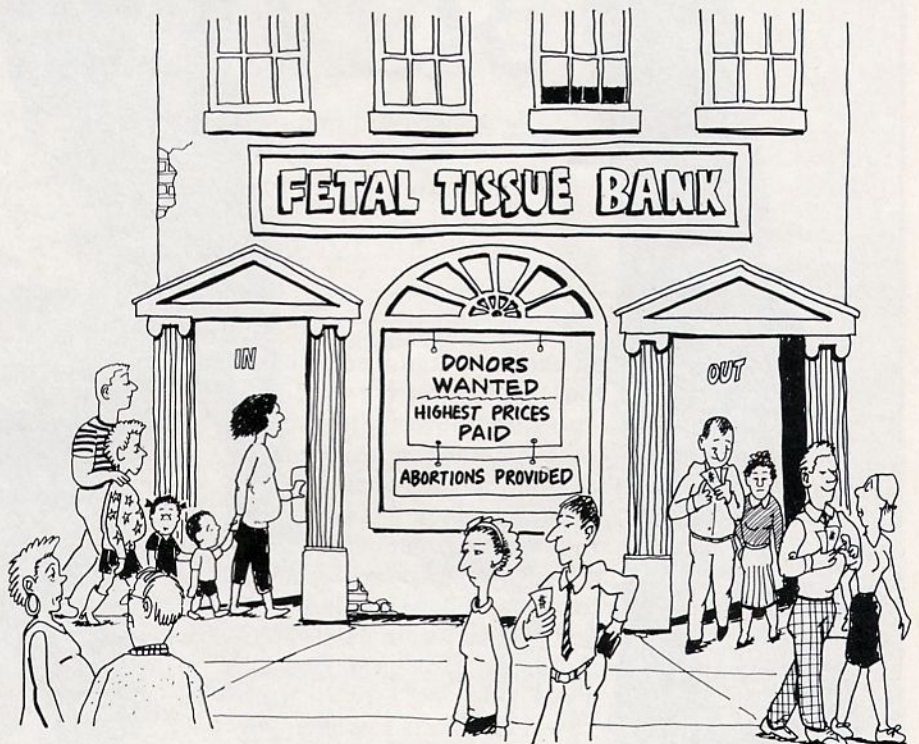
Such deterioration of morality is possible when state laws are divorced from God's laws. As people move further from acceptance of God's absolute authority, they forget the moral logic distinguishing good or bad behavior. A God conscious person will think, "If God says it's so, then it's for the best." But today people are prone to consider, "Well, if I don't feel bad about doing it, it must be okay." This is atheism disguised as open-mindedness. Simply because we ignore God and His expressed desires does not mean we are no longer answerable to Him.

When the only moral framework for a body of laws is society's whimsy, the laws become increasingly impotent. Something so temporal is easy to bend; why trouble ourselves to abide by laws that to-

morrow may be obsolete? Laws made by man can be adjusted by man.

But our liberal adjustments pit our judgment against the will of the Lord, and our leniency boomerangs. We permit abortion, and our daughter has three by the time she's eighteen. We espouse sexual freedom, and our loved ones contract AIDS. But rather than turn to God for so-

moral values, where people must forage like beasts for food, shelter, and sex. But we must understand that moral values are desirable specifically because they are advocated by God. As the creator, He is familiar with all the universal laws governing behavior, and therefore His recommendations carry perfect insight. The Vedic scriptures are His benevolent direc-



lutions to our problems, we further alienate ourselves with bitter exhortations: "If there's a God, why would He let this happen to me?" We ignore God when we adjust our laws, then criticize Him when we suffer the reactions.

Our suffering comes not from God, but from our own lust and greed, which mundane legislation can never subdue. People have to understand philosophically why they should discipline themselves under superior guidance. If our laws fail to promote upliftment in the spiritual consciousness of the people, slow and certain degradation is inevitable.

No one really wants a society without

tions for avoiding decadence and suffering. Understanding this, we can follow not with blind faith but with the conviction that He is offering us real happiness.

If one studies the Vedic literature and carefully seeks out a spiritual guide, one can learn what is true right and wrong behavior. The spiritual master understands and teaches faithfully the desires of Kṛṣṇa. The knowledge he reveals results not only in the external harmony of society, but in the internal purity of the individual. Laws guided by scripture can then be used and appreciated not as bureaucratic nuisances, but as blessed revelations from God. ☐



Coming to Kṛṣṇa

# FINDING A PERFECT MASTER

From a Zen master to a *haṭha-yogī*  
to an “enlightened” psychology professor—  
a young man’s search for his *guru*.

by GIRIRĀJA SWAMI

---

**D**uring my college years, I had the idea to attain perfection. I started reading spiritual books and learned I needed a *guru*. So whenever I heard about a *guru* anywhere—even a thousand miles away—I would go to meet him.

One *guru* I met was a Zen master, supposedly enlightened and certified by another enlightened master in Japan. During a weekend camp at his *āśrama*, he held meditation

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**Girirāja Swami** (left) accompanies Śrīla Prabhupāda on an early-morning walk along Juhu Beach in Bombay.

sessions in which everyone had to sit up very straight and look at the wall, concentrating on some object he would give us. The master walked around with a stick, and if he thought we were falling asleep or that our minds were wandering, he’d hit us. After one such session, some of his students asked him about his becoming angry recently. “Yes, it’s true,” he said. “I lost my temper; I shouldn’t have.” I started to doubt whether he was my *guru*. But because I had read that a Zen master is supposed to appear ordinary, I thought, “Maybe this is part of it.” Later he came to Boston.

After his talk and demonstration, someone in the audience asked about *Vedānta*. "I have enough trouble keeping up with Zen. How do you expect me to know about *Vedānta*?" I thought, "He's not my perfect master."

Then a *hatha-yogī* came to Brandeis University, near Boston, where I was a student. He had long hair and a beard and flowing robes. He said that by *yoga* you could attain complete mastery over your bowels: "Ascending colon, advance! Transverse colon, advance! Descending colon, advance!" and finally, "Rectum, pass!" I was really looking for a *guru*, so I thought, "Anyway, maybe." From the university he went to the airport, and I drove there with some of his students to see him off. There he was—long, flowing hair, beard, draping orange robes, a flower in his hair, a twinkle in his eyes—the very picture of Indian spirituality. But on seeing him embracing his women disciples, I thought, "Well, maybe he's not the perfect master. I have to keep looking."

Then I heard of an enlightened soul, a professor of psychology at a progressive university. I wanted to see him immediately. It was a Friday—no classes the next day—so I drove for many hours. With great anticipation and eagerness I inquired about the professor. He was playing golf. "Playing golf? I thought he was supposed to be enlightened." "That is his Zen," was the reply.

The campus was full of people interested in spiritual life. Some students started to tell me about a *guru* who had visited the campus recently. He had said, "The *guru* is in the heart, where he sits on a lotus flower." From what they said I got a very strong impression that there is a divine personality in our hearts with whom we can have a sublime, personal relationship. I became very eager to meet him.

I had gotten the idea from reading books that you don't have to find the *guru* or choose him; he is already there. I even had a mental picture of what he looked like—and my *guru* didn't have hair. All the other swamis and *yogīs* had long hair and beards, so I was thinking, "How am I ever going to meet my *guru*?"

One day I saw a poster on campus announcing that Swami Bhaktivedanta would be speaking on *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Although I was supposed to go to the movies that night, I wanted to hear Swami Bhaktivedanta. My friends were saying, "Why can't you be normal like other people? Why do you always have to chase after these swamis?" I really didn't want to disappoint them, so I tried to go along with their idea. But there was something inside me that kept forcing me to go to the lecture. Finally I said, "Okay, this will be the last one I go to."

My friends reluctantly came along, but because we'd been arguing, we arrived at the auditorium late and missed the lecture. Śrīla Prabhupāda was still sitting on the stage, and Satsvarūpa was leading the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. The devotees were also onstage, dancing in ecstasy in a circle. Some of the students in the auditorium jumped onto the stage and joined in. I also felt like going up, but I knew my friends wouldn't approve.

When the *kīrtana* ended, the devotees announced that they needed a lift to Harvard Square in Boston. Since the movie was at Harvard Square, I invited them to ride with us, and everyone piled into my station wagon. Satsvarūpa was squeezed in the back compartment with my best friend. They were discussing philosophy, my friend declaring that every-

*As Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke, I got the clear impression that he knew everything about me and was seeing right into my apartment, right to the sign on the wall where I had engraved in very ornate lettering—  
YOU ARE GOD.*

thing is void, and Satsvarūpa insisting that there is no void in the creation of God.

When we got to Harvard Square, I let the devotees out. But as I was driving away, I realized I didn't know how to get in touch with them. I immediately stopped the car in the middle of Harvard Square and ran after them. I caught up to one of the devotees. "I want to meet the Swami," I said. He told me I could come, and he would try to arrange an appointment. *An appointment?* I thought, *A guru isn't supposed to be busy!* . . . "Well, anyway, okay, give me the address."

Meanwhile, about twenty cars had lined up behind mine and were honking their horns. I quickly noted the address of the temple. "Come at seven tomorrow night," he said.

The small temple room was already

packed when I arrived. Śrīla Prabhupāda began speaking. Because I wasn't used to his Bengali accent and because the philosophy was new to me, I had difficulty understanding. But I did hear him say that out of many thousands of men, one will seek perfection. I thought, "That's me!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for questions. I raised my hand. "There are so many swamis and masters, and each one is recommending a different method of self-realization and saying his is best. How do I know which is actually best?"

Prabhupāda responded, "What is your goal? Do you want to serve God, or do you want to become God? If you want to become God, it means that now you are not God. So how can not-God become God? God is God. He is always God. He never has to become God by practicing *yoga* or meditation. Kṛṣṇa is God. He's God when He's playing on the lap of mother Yaśodā. He's God when He's speaking *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna. God is God."

Then he said, "The real *guru* teaches that God is in your heart and that you can become godly—but that you cannot become God."

As Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke, I got the clear impression that he knew everything about me and was seeing right into my apartment, right to the sign on the wall where I had engraved in very ornate lettering—YOU ARE GOD.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said gravely, "What do you think? Do you want to serve God, or do you want to become God?" I was just about to lie, but then I said, "I want to serve God, but I realize that actually I wanted to become God." Śrīla Prabhupāda affirmed emphatically, "Yes!" I offered my obeisances. I knew that he was my spiritual master.

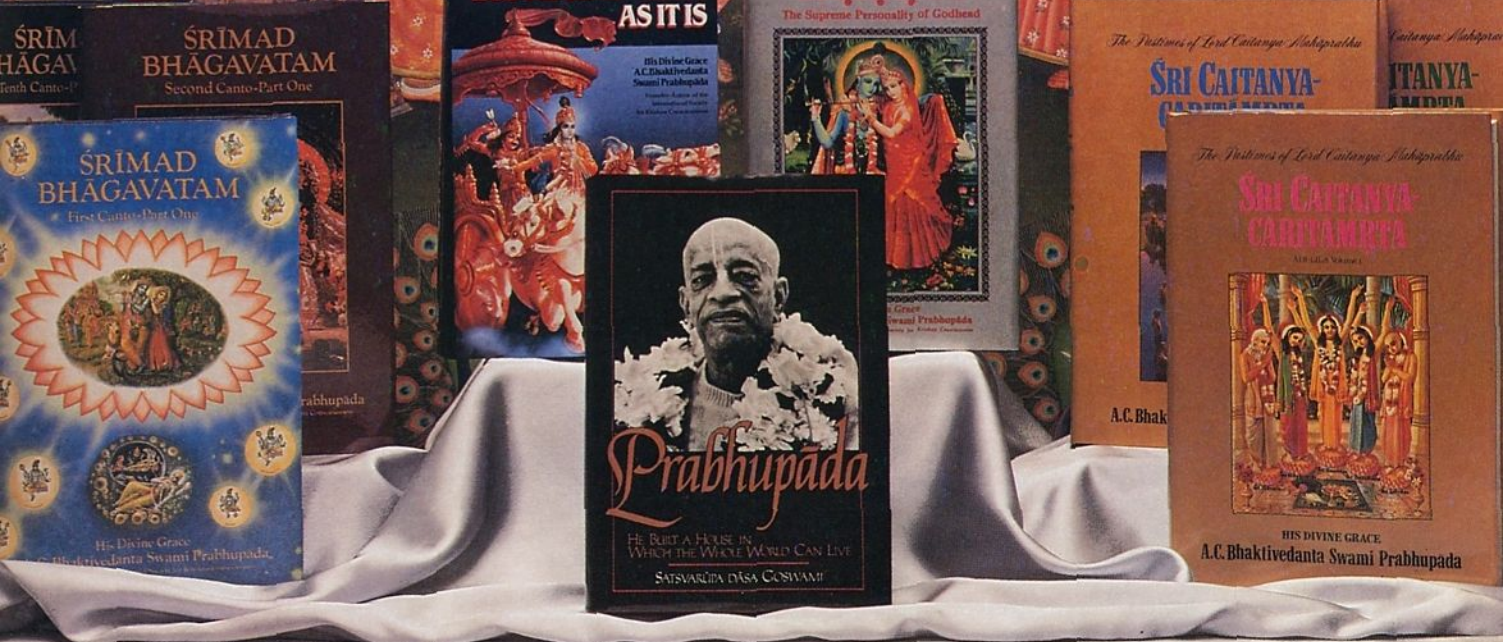
A devotee then brought a huge plate of *prasādam* to Śrīla Prabhupāda. "I'm not God; I cannot eat all of this," quipped Prabhupāda. He took a little bit and told the devotee to distribute the rest.

From that first meeting, my whole life's purpose became to bring people to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was able to do that for many years, but when Śrīla Prabhupāda passed away, I was wondering, "What will be my service now?" because my whole service had been to bring people to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Now I understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda is always present, and that by speaking of him, hearing about him, remembering him, and, most significantly, by studying his books, we can experience his presence. So I can continue doing what I was doing when he was personally present—introducing souls to Śrīla Prabhupāda—and that is what I feel natural doing. Because I know that somehow or other, if someone comes in touch with Śrīla Prabhupāda, his life will be successful. ☐



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# KŪRMAK



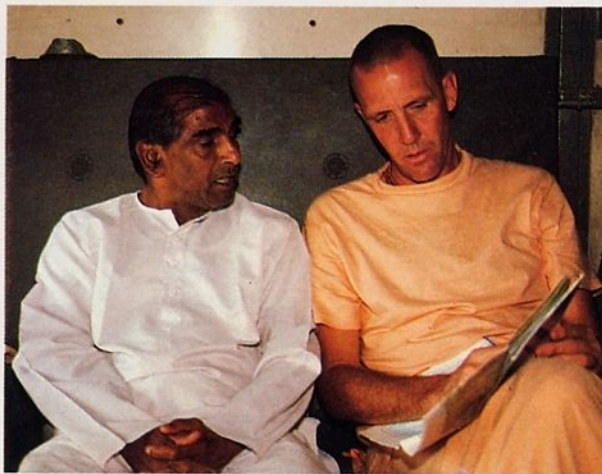
# ṢETRA



Lord Caitanya visited this sacred place more than four centuries ago, yet His instructions to one of its residents are remembered even today.

by JAGATGURU SWAMI

PHOTOS BY BHAVĀNANDA RĀYA SWAMI



Assuming the form of a giant tortoise (far left), Lord Viṣṇu simultaneously supports Mandara Mountain and sits on top of it while the demons and demigods churn the ocean of milk to produce immortal nectar. At left, Jagatguru Swami (on right) and Mr. Dosi look over a map as their train rumbles on its way to Kūrmaṣetra, site of the world's only temple of the tortoise incarnation.

**I**t was early April when our group of four devotees from the United States arrived in Calcutta. We were on pilgrimage to Kūrmaṣetra, a remote holy place on the southeastern coast of India.

To the people of South India, Kūrmaṣetra is an important holy place owing to its magnificent temple of Śrī Kūrma, a Deity of Lord Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead, in the form of a *kūrma*, or tortoise. Kūrma-avatāra is one of the ten incarnations of Godhead known in India as Daśavatāra. As described in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the incarnations of Godhead appear in this world to deliver the devotees and vanquish the miscreants.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that during the early days of the universe Lord Viṣṇu appeared as Kūrma to help the demigods and demons produce the nectar of immortality by churning the milk ocean. Lord Kūrma submerged Himself within the ocean, and His back became the pivot for Mandara Mountain, which was used as a churning rod. By the Lord's arrangement, the nectar produced was distributed only to the demigods.

We were eager to visit Kūrmaṣetra be-

cause even though the pastimes of the Kūrma-avatāra have been widely portrayed throughout India's history in paintings, sculpture, literature, songs, and drama, the temple of Śrī Kūrma at Kūrmaṣetra is unique, for no other temple of Lord Kūrma has ever existed.

There was another reason for our pilgrimage: we wanted to retrace the footsteps of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes Lord Caitanya's visit to Kūrmaṣetra during His travels through South India almost five hundred years ago. At Kūrmaṣetra—as in all the places He visited—Lord Caitanya introduced the *saṅkīrtana* movement by dancing in ecstasy and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that in this age no other process for self-realization is as effective as the congregational chanting of the holy names of God.

It was typically hot and humid when we arrived in Calcutta. After refreshing ourselves at our hotel, we went straight to the



Government of India Tourist Bureau and purchased four train tickets to Kūrmakṣetra via Śrī Kākulam.

The next morning, we were up early, and by 4:30 we were in a taxi headed for Howrah Station. There is no such thing as “beating the rush hour” in Calcutta. At the Howrah bridge, which crosses the Ganges River, the cars and buses were already bumper to bumper.

At the station we struggled through the crowds and haggled with the porters over price. Once inside the train, we put our baggage under the seats and waited. The train was twenty passenger cars pulled by an old steam-powered locomotive. At 6:30 the engineer blew the whistle, and the train inched away from the platform. After around forty-five minutes the train cleared the outskirts of the city, and we enjoyed watching the Bengal countryside pass by our window.

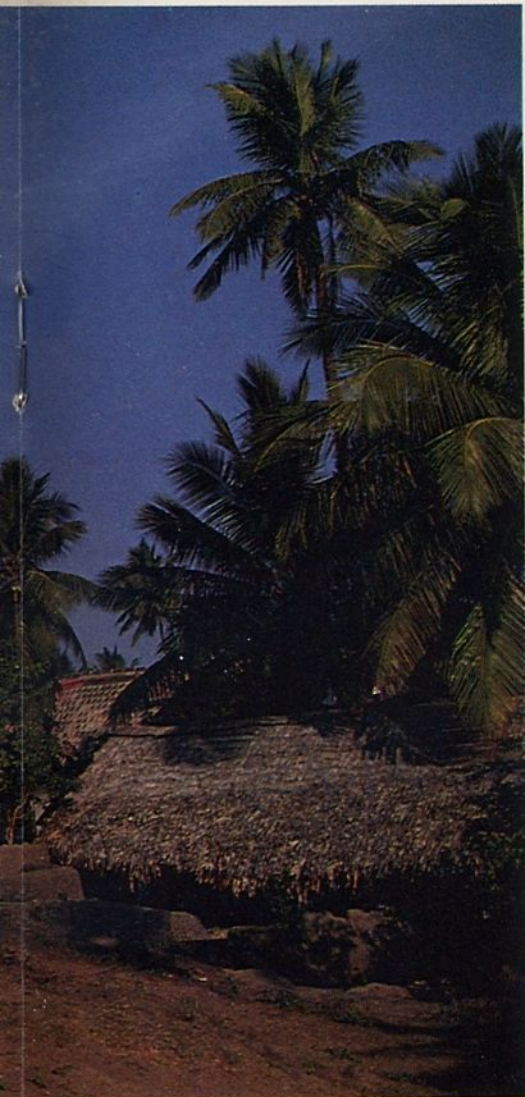
By late afternoon we entered the state of Orissa, which marked a significant change in scenery—from lush green jungle to semi-arid plains. I took out my Bartholomew map of the Indian subcontinent

and marked our route along the coast. We chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa on our beads and read *Bhagavad-gītā* as we rumbled along.

The next day an Indian gentleman entered our cabin. He wore traditional Hindu clothing, a white cotton shirt and matching pants. “Yes, you can sit here, sir,” I said, pointing to the seat next to me. The gentleman sat down and introduced himself as Mr. Gopalam Dosi. Mr. Dosi said this was the first time he had ever met Western devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He said our meeting was God’s arrangement.

When I asked Mr. Dosi where he was from, he said, “Kūrmakṣetra. Are you going there?” “Yes!” I replied. “We are on pilgrimage.” I explained to Mr. Dosi that we were members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and that our mission was to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. I mentioned that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted everyone born in India to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In a half-serious tone I suggested that Mr. Dosi might take *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life, and become a preacher of Lord Caitanya’s





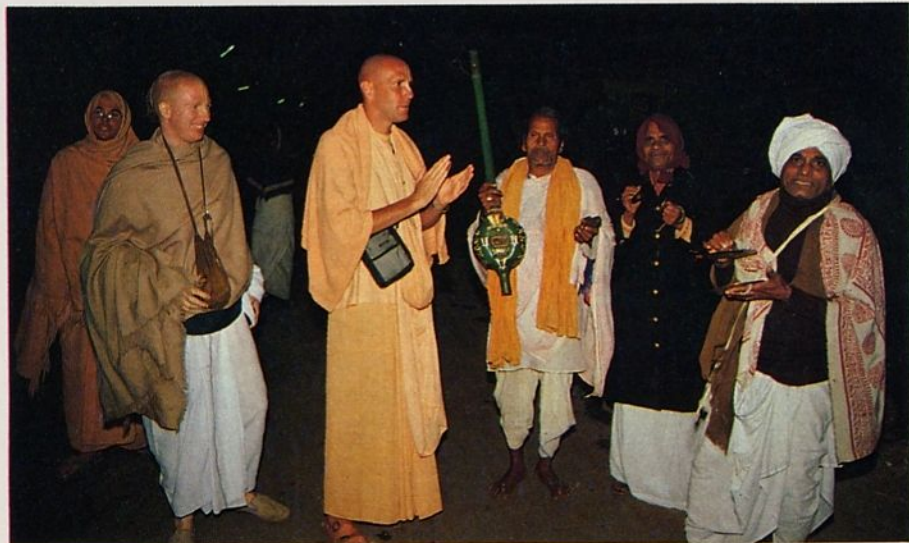
movement. "Yes," he said, "that would be good. But we are householders; our duty is to stay at home."

"Perhaps you know," he continued, "Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to Kūrmakṣetra a long time ago. He told the people of our village to remain in their homes and chant the name of Kṛṣṇa." I was surprised to hear Mr. Dosi's conviction about chanting Kṛṣṇa's name, and I was especially surprised to hear him mention Lord Caitanya.

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes that when Lord Caitanya came to Kūrmakṣetra, He stayed in the house of a local *brāhmaṇa*. When the Lord was preparing to leave, the *brāhmaṇa* wanted to take *saṅnyāsa* and travel with Him, but Lord Caitanya forbade him to do so. He instructed

the *brāhmaṇa* to remain at home and always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya said, "Don't speak like that again. Better to remain at home and chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Kṛṣṇa as they are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land. If you follow this instruction, your materialistic life at home will not obstruct your spiritual advancement. If you follow these regulative principles, we will again meet here, or rather, you will never lose My company."

While speaking with Mr. Dosi, we became absorbed in thoughts of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement and became more eager to see the temple of Śrī Kūrma.



Perched on a knoll in Kūrmakṣetra (above, left), a small shrine houses the footprints of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Above, Western Vaiṣṇavas in Sri Kakulam—Jagatguru Swami, Govinda-bhāṣya, and Jaya Gopāla—join a group of local businessmen out for daily *saṅkīrtana* before beginning their day's work. Offering protection and benedictions, these Deities of Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃha (far left) and Lord Kṛṣṇa (left) are worshiped in Śrī Kakulam.

Suddenly the train began to slow down. The conductor stuck his head into our compartment and announced, "Śrī Kākulam! Next stop, Śrī Kākulam." Mr. Dosi turned to me and said, "This is where we get off." When the train came to a stop at the platform, we parted company.

The railway station was about ten miles from the center of town. We spent the night in a hotel and were up early the next morning, intent on seeing some of the temples in Śrī Kākulam before going on to Kūrmakṣetra. It was still a little dark when we left our room and went out onto the street, already alive with activity. People were moving about performing their morning duties—drawing water from the neighborhood well, milking the family cow, and going to and from the temples for morning worship.

As light began to appear on the horizon, we met with a group of local chanters—three men emerged from the dawn playing musical instruments and chanting the *mahā-mantra*. What a wonderful sight! It was as if they had appeared from the pages of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. At their request we

joined in the chanting and continued along the road.

Shortly we came to a small neighborhood temple. After more chanting we sat down and got acquainted with our new friends. Each of the men owned a small business in the marketplace but came out on the chanting party each day before going to work. They begged us to continue with them, but we had to start for the temple of Śrī Kūrma, and so we bid farewell.

Boarding a fifty-two-seat bus with at least seventy-five other passengers, we began our twenty-two-mile journey to the village of Kūrmakṣetra. Half the passengers were pilgrims, and the other half were local farmers. The bus stopped along the road about every mile or so to either pick someone up or drop someone off. Within an hour we arrived at Kūrmakṣetra.

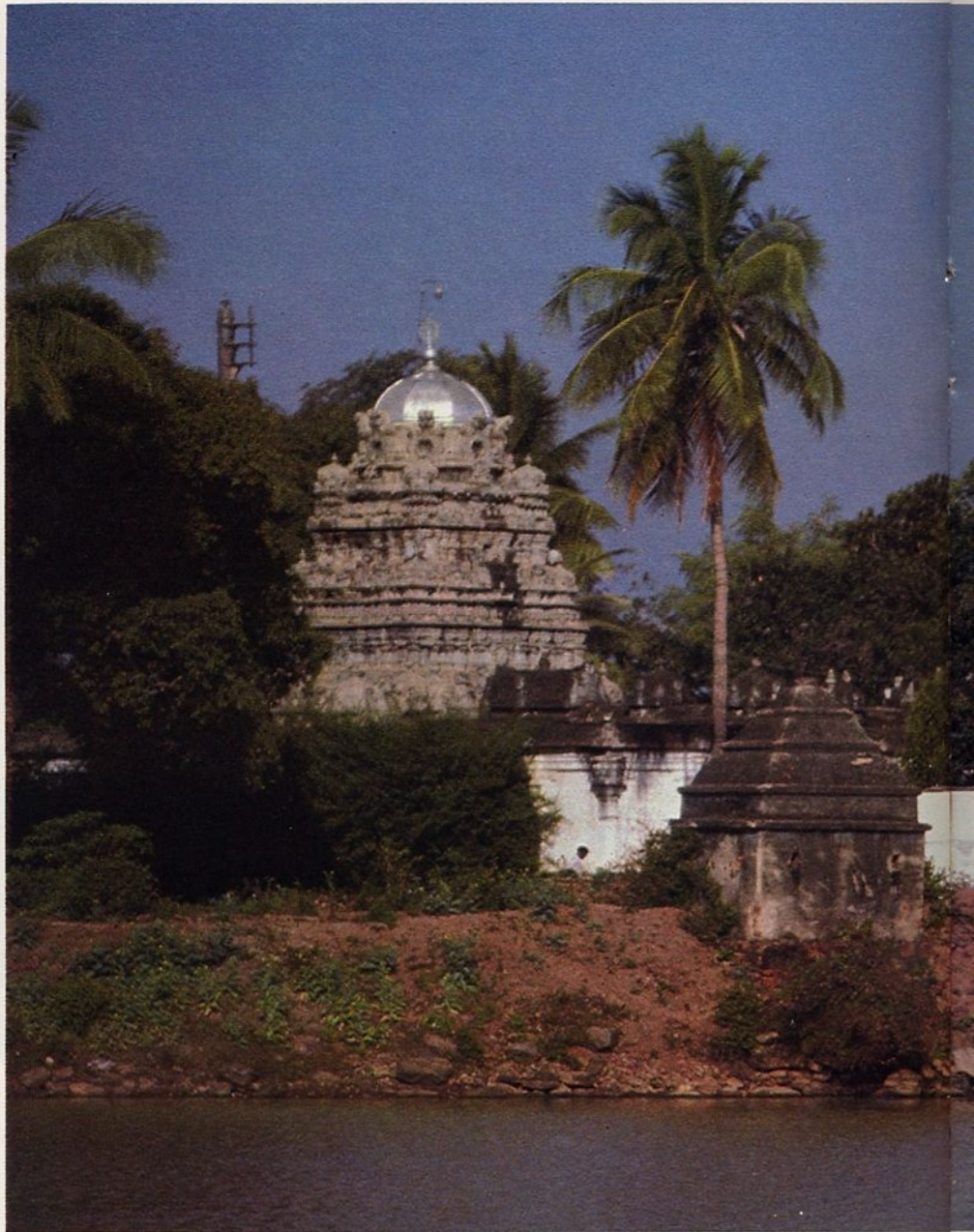
Getting off the bus, we decided to follow the flow of the other pilgrims. We walked along the narrow village streets filled with children at play and past the thatched-roof dwellings until we came to a still lake. Looking across, we got our first view of the ancient temple of Śrī Kūrma.

Rows of stone steps led up from the lake toward the temple. Beyond a stand of palm trees towered the temple gate and the main shrine of the Deity. Our path led us around the left bank, and as we drew nearer, many of the pilgrims began to run toward the temple as if it might vanish before they could reach it. Their enthusiasm was like that of small children about to fulfill their heart's desire.

When we reached the main entrance, many pilgrims were sitting and waiting. The temple doors were closed. It would be another hour before they opened. So, cameras in hand, we began to circumambulate the outer wall of the temple.

On the way, a village boy started to tag along. He turned out to be a guide and offered to show us around—for one rupee. On the southern side of the temple, we came upon a small shrine perched on a knoll. As we approached the shrine, the boy said, "Mahāprabhu *pāda*, Mahāprabhu *pāda*." I understood that he was saying, "Mahāprabhu's feet," but I wasn't quite sure what he meant. When we reached the shrine, the boy went inside and pointed, "Here." We looked inside and saw two large footprints in a marble slab. Below, an inscription in Telegu read: "Mahaprabhu visited Kurmaksetra in A.D. 1512. Caitanya footprints installed by Paramahansa Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami in 1930."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, had the shrine built to commemorate Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pilgrimage to Kūrmakṣetra. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta had laid the footprints in their place. As we stood by the shrine,



Its silver dome glistening in the sunshine, the temple of Śrī Kūrma (above) stands on the shore of Kūrma Lake, where pilgrims descend ancient steps to bathe in the sacred waters. At right, in a rare photograph, the Deity of Śrī Kūrma.





Decorated with traditional *tīlaka* markings identifying devotees of Lord Viṣṇu, *brāhmaṇa* priests (left) of the Śrī Kūrma Deity pose for a photograph in the courtyard of the temple.

we felt the inspiring presence of our *parama-guru*. Now there was a third dimension to our pilgrimage: we were following in the footsteps of Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Suddenly, conchshells blew and the temple bells rang, announcing the opening of the temple doors. Our hearts leaped, and we ran toward the temple.

Leaving our shoes behind, we merged in the column of pilgrims passing through the massive doorway. The temple was vast—a seemingly endless array of  
*(continued on page 26)*

# FLOOD!

Śrī Māyāpur is the sacred place where Śrī Caitanya Mahārabhu appeared and inaugurated the Hare Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana* movement five hundred years ago. It is also the world headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, ISKCON. To members of ISKCON the thought of Śrī Māyāpur brings visions of a sublime abode peacefully nestled by the banks of the Ganges River, and remembrance of Śrī Caitanya's transcendental pastimes.

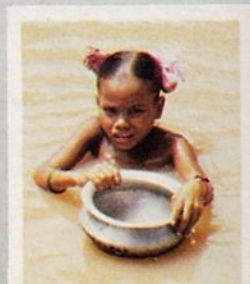
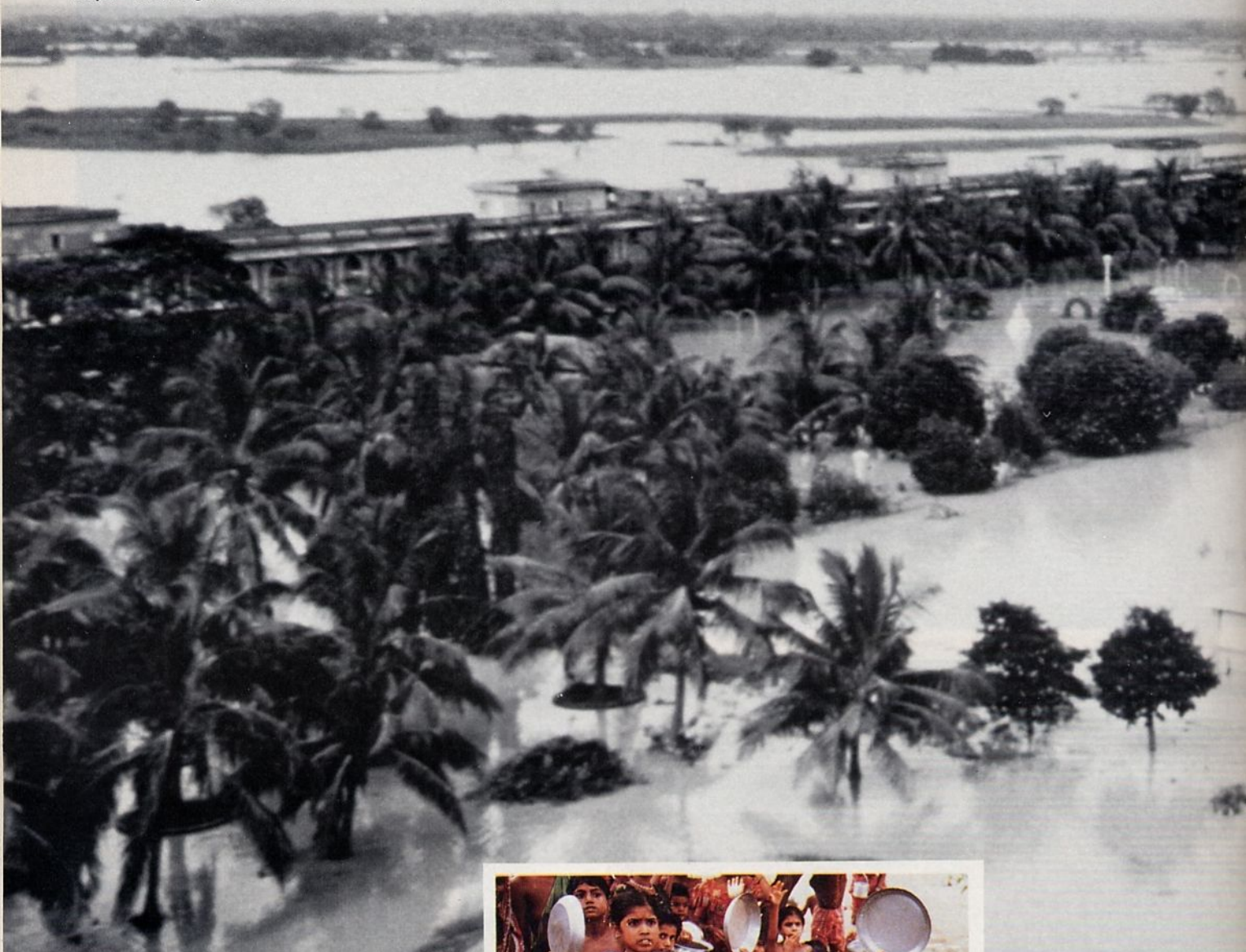
But there is another side to Śrī Māyāpur, that of a backward rural community struggling with the vagaries of nature to eke out a living from simple farming and village crafts. Every year the inhabitants of Śrī Māyāpur look to the monsoon rains with both hope and apprehension. Hope—for enough rain to support their most important crop of the year. And

apprehension—that those same rains might bring ravaging floods.

Last year, on August 27, their hopes were destroyed with swift and relentless fury. The Ganges broke over the dikes and bunds holding back her swelling waters and spread quickly over the countryside, sweeping away their simple mud houses and bamboo structures and destroying their crops. Hundreds of homeless villagers rushed to the shelter of ISKCON's sturdy, multistoried structures. Within hours the water had risen to more than eight feet in places, creating the worst flood in many years.

ISKCON devotees quickly mounted a relief effort. Obtaining boats from supporters, they organized a massive food distribution program. Every day the devotees prepared and delivered to thousands of stranded villagers hundreds of pounds of nutritious *kicchṛī* (a stew of rice and beans), a favorite of the local people. The flood lasted more than thirty days, making it the longest in recent history, and throughout that time ISKCON Food Relief was present, serving more than two hundred thousand meals and saving thousands of people from certain disaster.

Now the flood waters have receded, but the work has just begun. The flood destroyed all standing crops and hundreds of homes. The vil-





lagers of Śrī Māyāpur are on the brink of complete ruin. They need our help.

The food distribution must continue. Many now go hungry except for what ISKCON Śrī Māyāpur provides. And only through an extensive rehabilitation program can the villagers recover from the devastation. Homes must be rebuilt; farmers need vital economic aid. All of this must be done now. It can only be done with your help. ISKCON Śrī Māyāpur's resources are drained. Now others must come forward to give their support.

Śrī Māyāpur Project, U.S.A., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation established expressly to support the Śrī Māyāpur Project, has set up the Śrī Māyāpur Flood Emergency Relief Fund solely for channeling your contributions toward this effort. Donations to this fund will be sent to a similar fund set up in Śrī Māyāpur and administered by a committee of ISKCON devotees and life members.

Let us remember the spiritual significance of Śrī Māyāpur. And let us remember the special position of its residents. They need our help now. Please take a moment to complete the coupon and send your contribution today. Your Kṛṣṇa conscious charity will certainly be spiritually rewarded many times over.

## Śrī Māyāpur Flood Emergency Relief Fund

Organized by Śrī Māyāpur Project, Inc.

I want to help the victims of the Śrī Māyāpur flood.  
Enclosed is my contribution of

\$5    \$10    \$25    \$50    \$100    \$\_\_\_\_\_

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Make checks payable to: Śrī Mayapur Flood Emergency Relief Fund. Mail to: Śrī Mayapur Project, Inc., 1125 S. Cedar Crest Blvd., Allentown, PA 18103. Phone: (215) 821-1240. All contributions are tax deductible. In addition to an official receipt, all contributors will receive a newsletter detailing the relief efforts.



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Founder-Ācārya: His Divine Grace A. C. I.

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Sydney—112 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst, N.S.W. 2010 (mail: P.O. Box 159, Kings Cross, N.S.W. 2011)/ (02) 3575162

### FARM COMMUNITIES

Colo (Bhaktivedanta Ashram)—Lot 11, Upper Colo Rd., Central Colo, N.S.W. (mail: P.O. Box 157, Windsor, N.S.W. 2765)/ (045) 755284  
Murwillumbah (New Govardhana)—"Eungella," Tyalgum Rd. via Murwillumbah, N.S.W. 2484 (mail: P.O. Box 687)/ (066) 721903  
Riverina (New Gaudadesh)—Old Renmark Rd., via Wentworth, N.S.W. 2648 (mail: P.O. Box 2446, Mildura, Victoria 3500)/ (050) 278226

### RESTAURANTS

Adelaide—Govinda's, 79 Hindley St., Adelaide, S.A. 5000/ (08) 515258  
Melbourne—Crossways, First Floor, 123 Swanston St., Melbourne, Victoria 3000/ (03) 650 2939  
Melbourne—Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., Melbourne, Victoria 3000/ (03) 650-1578  
Sydney—Gopal's, 180 Falcon St., N. Sydney, N.S.W. 2060/ (02) 926164  
Sydney—Govinda's and Govinda's Take-away (both at ISKCON Sydney)/ (075) 501642  
Sydney—Hare Kṛṣṇa Free Food Centre, 231 Victoria St., King's Cross, N.S.W. 2011/ (02) 3575162

### NEW ZEALAND AND FIJI

Auckland, New Zealand (New Varshan)—Hwy. 18, Riverhead (next to Huapai Golf Course) (mail: R.D. 2, Kumeu, Auckland)/ (9) 4128075  
Christchurch, New Zealand—83 Bealey Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 25-190 Christchurch)/ (3) 61965  
Labasa, Fiji—Delailabasa (mail: Box 133)/ 82916  
Lautoka, Fiji—5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ 61-633, ext. 48  
Rakira, Fiji—Rewasa (mail: Box 129)/ 94243  
Suva, Fiji—P.O. Box 6376, Nasinu/ 391-282  
Wellington, New Zealand—2 Kensington St., (mail: P.O. Box 2753, Wellington)/ (4) 850876

### RESTAURANTS

Auckland, New Zealand—Gopal's, 1st fl., Civic House, 291 Queen St./ (9) 34885  
Lautoka, Fiji—Gopal's, Cnr.—Yasawa St. & Naviti St./ 62990  
Suva, Fiji—Cnr.—Pratt St. & Joske St. (opp. Reserve Bank)/ 314154

## AFRICA

Abeokuta, Nigeria—Ibadan Rd., Obantoko, behind NET (mail: P.O. Box 5177)  
Abidjan, Ivory Coast—01 BP 8366, Abidjan  
Accra, Ghana—582 Blk. 20, Odokor, Official Town (mail: P.O. Box 01568, Osu)  
Buea, Cameroon—Southwest Province (mail: c/o Yuh Laban Nkesah, P and T, VHS)  
Cape Town, South Africa—15 Bishoplea Road, Claremont 7700/ (21) 641 559  
Durban (Natal), S. Africa—Chatsworth Circle, Chatsworth 4030 (mail: P.O. Box 560003)/ (31) 435-815  
Freetown, Sierra Leone—13 Bright St. Brookfields (mail: P.O. Box 812, Freetown)  
Johannesburg, South Africa—"Misty Hills," Plot 69, Reitfontein Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 723, Muldersdrift (Tvl.), 1747)/ (11) 666-2716  
Harare, Zimbabwe—46 Crowhill Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 2090)/ 8877801

# Krishna Consciousness AND THE WORLD

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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**Lagos, Nigeria**—No. 2 Murtala Mohammed International Airport Expressway, Mafaluku  
(mail: P.O. Box 8793, Lagos)  
**Mauritius**—123 Sir Guy Forget Ave., Quatre Bornes (mail: P.O. Box 108, Quatre Bornes/ 46804  
**Mombasa, Kenya**—Hare Krishna House, Sauti Ya Kenya and Kisumu Rds. (mail: P.O. Box 82224,  
Mombasa/ 312248  
**Nkawkaw, Ghana**—P.O. Box 69, Nkawkaw  
**Nairobi, Kenya**—Muhuroni Close, off West Nagara Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 28946, Nairobi/ 744365  
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(mail: P.O. Box 4429, Trans Amadi)  
**Tokoradi, Ghana**—64 Windy Ridge (mail: P.O. Box 328)  
**Warri, Nigeria**—1 Ogunu St., Bendel Housing Estate, Ugborikoro (P.O. Box 1922, Warri/ 053-230-262

## FARM COMMUNITY

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## RESTAURANT

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## ASIA

### INDIA

**Agartala, Tripura**—Assam-Agartala Rd., Banamalipur, 799001  
**Ahmedabad, Gujarat**—7, Kailas Society, Ashram Rd., 380 009/ 449935  
**Bamanore, Gujarat**—N.H. 8-B, Surendranagar (city office: 32 Ananta Nagar, Kalavad Rd.,  
Rajkot 360 003)  
**Bangalore, Karnataka**—210 Bellary Road, Sadashiva Nagar, 560 080/ 361 539  
**Bangladesh, Bengal**—Sarkarkhil, Raozan, P.O. Fakir Taki, Chittagong  
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**Bhubaneswar, Orissa**—National Highway No. 5, Nayapali, 751 001/ 53125  
**Bombay, Maharashtra**—Hare Krishna Land, Dakshin Marg, Sector 36-B, 160 036/ 44634  
**Calcutta, W. Bengal**—3 Albert Rd., 700 017/ 443757  
**Chandigarh, Punjab**—Hare Krishna Land, Dakshin Marg, Sector 36-B, 160 036/ 44634  
**Chhaygharia (Haridaspur), W. Bengal**—Thakur Haridas Sripatbari Sevashram, P.O. Chhaygharia,  
P.S. Bongaon, Dist. 24 Paragonas  
**Gauhati, Assam**—Post Bag No. 127/ 781 001  
**Hyderabad, A.P.**—Hare Krishna Land, Nampally Station Rd., 500 001/ 51018  
**Imphal, Manipur**—Hare Krishna Land, Airport Road, 795 001  
**Kakinada, A.P.**—7-1-919, Vishnupriya, behind boat club, 533 003/ 5961  
**Madras, Tamil Nadu**—232 Kilpaik Garden Rd., Madras 600 010/ 662286  
**Mâyapur, W. Bengal**—Shree Mâyapur Chandrodya Mandir, P.O. Shree Mâyapur Dham (Dist. Nadia)  
**Moirang, Manipur**—Nongban Inghkon, Tidim Rd.  
**Nagpur, Maharashtra**—70 Hill Road, Ramnagar, 440 010/ 33513  
**New Delhi**—M-119 Greater Kailash I, 110 048/ 6412058  
**Pandharpur, Maharashtra**—Hare Krishna Asrama, across Chandrabhaga River, Dist. Sholapur, 413304  
**Patna, Bihar**—Rajendra Nagar Road No. 12, 800 016/ 50765  
**Peta-Kakani, A.P.**—Guntur District  
**Pune, Maharashtra**—4 Tarapoor Rd.  
**Silchar, Assam**—Ambikapatti, Silchar, 788004, Cachar Distrct  
**Siliguri, W. Bengal**—Subash Pally, Siliguri  
**Surat, Gujarat**—Rander Rd., Jahangirpura, Surat, 395 005/ 84215  
**Triupati, A.P.**—Hare Krishna Land, Hare Krishna Farm, Katwada (contact: ISKCON Ahmedabad)  
**Trivandrum, Kerala**—T.C. 24/1485, WC Hospital Rd., Thycaud, 695 014/ 68197  
**Vrindavana, U.P.**—Krishna-Balaram Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Mathura/ 178

## FARM COMMUNITIES

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**Ahmedabad District, Gujarat**—Hare Krishna Farm, Katwada (contact: ISKCON Ahmedabad)  
**Chamorshi, Maharashtra**—78 Krishnanagar Dham, District Gadchiroli, 442 603  
**Hyderabad, A.P.**—P.O. Dabulpur Village, Medchal Taluc, Hyderabad District, 501 401  
**Mâyapur, W. Bengal**—(contact Mâyapur)

## RESTAURANTS

**Bombay, Maharashtra**—Govinda's (at Hare Krishna Land)  
**Vrindavana**—Krishna-Balaram Mandir Guesthouse

## OTHER COUNTRIES

**Bali, Indonesia**—Jalan Sagamona 17, Renon, Denpasar  
**Bangkok, Thailand**—139, Soi Purtha-Osoth, New Road/ 233-2488  
**Chittagong, Bangladesh**—Caitanya Cultural Society, Sri Pundarik Dham, Mekhala, Hathazari/ 108  
(city office and mail: 23 Nandan Kanan, Chittagong/ 20-2219)  
**Colombo, Sri Lanka**—188 New Chetty St., Colombo 13/ 33325  
**Hong Kong**—27 Chatam Road South, 6/F, Kowloon/ 3-7396818  
**Jakarta, Indonesia**—Yayasan Kesadaran Kṛṣṇa Indonesia, J.L. Kamboja 10-12, Tomang Raya/ 599 301  
**Kathmandu, Nepal**—Vishnu Gaun Panchayat Ward No. 2, Budhanilkantha/ 4-10368  
**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**—Lot 9901, Jalan Awan Jawa, Taman Yarl, off 5½ Mile, Jalan Kelang Lama,  
Petaling/ 730172  
**Manila, Philippines**—170 R. Fernandez, San Juan, Metro Manila/ 707410  
**Taipei, Taiwan**—(mail: c/o ISKCON Hong Kong)  
**Tehran, Iran**—Keshavarz-Dehkedeh Ave., Kamran St. No. 58/ 658870  
**Tel Aviv, Israel**—[17 B] Gordon St., P.O. Box 48163, Tel Aviv 61480/ 03-238-239  
**Tokyo, Japan**—2-41-12 Izumi, Suginami-ku, Tokyo T168/ (3) 327-1541

## FARM COMMUNITY

**Cebu, Philippines (Hare Krishna Paradise)**—231 Pagsabungan Rd., Basak, Manduae City/ 83254

## RESTAURANT

**Cebu, Philippines**—Govinda's, 26 Sanchiangko St.

## LATIN AMERICA

### BRAZIL

**Belém, PA**—Av. Gentil Bittencourt, 1002 (entre Generalíssimo e Quintino Bocaiuva)/ (091) 222-1886  
**Belo Horizonte, MG**—Av. Gentílico Vargas, 167, Funcionários/ (031) 223-2776  
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**Curitiba, PR**—Av. 7 de Setembro, 1594, Alto da Rua 15/ (041) 264-6634

**Florianópolis, SC**—Rua Duarte Schutel, 61-Centro  
**Fortaleza, CE**—Rua José Laureço, 2114, Aldeota/ (085) 244-7068  
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**Pôrto Alegre, RS**—Rua Dr. Thimoteo, 753-Moinhos de Vento  
**Ribeirão Preto, SP**—Rua Cerqueira Cesar, 480, Centro  
**Rio de Janeiro, RJ**—Ladeira da Glória, 98, Glória/ (021) 285-5643  
**Salvador, BA**—Rua Álvaro Adorno, 17, Brotas/ (071) 244-1072  
**Santos, SP**—Rua Nabuco de Araújo, 151-Embaré/ (0132) 21-3596  
**Sao Jose dos Campos, SP**—Rua Paraná, 266-Vila Maria  
**São Paulo, SP**—Rua Bom Pastor, 798, Ipiranga (mail: C. P. 4855)/ (011) 63-1674  
**São Paulo, SP (Centro Cultural)**—Rua Itavuru, 269-Indianapolis  
**Sorocaba, SP**—Rua Cesário Motta, 130, Centro  
**Vitória, ES**—Rua Chafic Murad, 218, Praia do Soá/ (027) 227-9860

## FARM COMMUNITIES

**Caruaru, Pernambuco**—Distrito de Murici (mail: Rua do Norte, 61, Sala 3, Centro)  
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CEP 12.400/ (0122) 42-5002

## RESTAURANT

**Belém, Pará (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Prasāda)**—Av. Gentil Bittencourt, Passagem Mac Dowell, 96 (entre Dr. Moraes  
e Benjamin Constant/ (091) 222-1886

## MEXICO

**Guadalajara**—Pedro Moreno 1791, Sector Juarez, Jalisco/ 26-12-78  
**Mexico City**—Gob. Tiburcio Montiel 45, San Miguel Chapultepec, Mexico, D.F. 18/ (905) 271-0132  
**Mexico City**—Govinda's Cultural Center, Insurgentes Sur 2384-1, Mexico City 01000 D.F./ 548-9323  
**Monterrey**—Zaragoza 1007, nte. Zona centro, 74-69-76  
**Morelia**—Ticame No. 52 pte., Col. Selix Ireta 58070, Morelia, Mich.  
**Vera Cruz**—Calle 3, Carebelas No. 784, Fraccionamiento Reforma/ 50759

## FARM COMMUNITY

**Tulacingo, Hidalgo (Nueva Gauda-Manḍala Bhūmi)**—(contact ISKCON Mexico City)

## PERU

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**Cuzco**—San Juan de Dios 285 Altos/ 222353  
**Chosica**—Parque Echenique 122  
**Huancayo**—(contact ISKCON Lima)  
**Lima**—Avenida San Martin 135, Barranco/ 670405  
**Lima**—Jiron Junin No 415/ 289491  
**Trujillo**—Bolívar 738

## FARM COMMUNITY

**Asociacion Krishna**—Correo De Bella Vista, DPTO. De San Martin

## RESTAURANTS

**Arequipa**—(at ISKCON Arequipa)  
**Chosica**—(at ISKCON Chosica)  
**Cuzco**—Calle Espaderos 128 (near Plaza de Armas)  
**Lima**—Av. Grau 137, Barranco  
**Lima**—Av. Schell 634, Miraflores

## OTHER COUNTRIES

**Bogota, Colombia**—Calle 78, #42-05/ 2258412  
**Buenos Aires, Argentina**—Centro Bhaktivedanta, Andonaequi 2054, (1431)  
**Calí, Colombia**—Avenida 9 Norte, 17-33/ 621688  
**Caracas, Venezuela**—Prolongación Ave. Las Palmas, Calle Capriles, Quinta Pollita/ 782-1939  
**Christ Church, Barbados**—31 Goodland Park/ (809) 42-84209  
**Cochabamba, Bolivia**—P.O. Box 3988/ 46441  
**Concepción, Chile**—Nongüen, 588/ 23150  
**Córdoba, Argentina**—Montevideo 950, Paso de los Andes/ (051) 262229  
**Cranbrook Creek, Guyana**—Grant 1803, Sec. D, Corentyne, Berbice  
**Guayaquil, Ecuador**—Pje. Paucarbamba & Gral. Veintimilla Barrio-las-Chirimollas/ (07) 82-93-58  
**Georgetown, Guyana**—24 Urvlught Front, West Coast Demerara  
**Guatemala, Guatemala**—Apartado Postal 1534  
**Guayaquil, Ecuador**—Velez 1915 (between Carchi & Tulcan)/ 36-16-47  
**La Paz, Bolivia**—Calle 16 Obrajes 460 (mail: P.O. Box 10278)/ 783556  
**Medellín, Colombia**—Calle 56 (Bolivia), Parque de Bolívar  
**Montevideo, Uruguay**—Pablo de Maria 1427  
**Panama, Republic of Panama**—Via las Cumbres, entrada Villa Zaita, frente a INPSA No. 10  
(mail: P.O. Box 6-29-54, Panama)/ 31-2057  
**Quito, Ecuador**—Carron 641 Amazonas/ 520466  
**Rosario, Argentina**—Centro Bhaktivedanta, Corrientes 925, Rosario 2000  
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de Oca, Casa No. 49 (mail: P.O. Box 166, Paseo Estudiantes, Z-1002)  
**San Salvador, El Salvador**—Avenida Universitaria 1132, Media Quadra al sur de la Embajada  
Americana, San Salvador (mail: P.O. Box 1506)/ 25-96-17  
**Santiago, Chile**—Manuel Carvallo 771, Nunoa/ 392734  
**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**—Calle Cayetano Rodriguez No. 254  
**Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies**—Prabhupada Ave., Longdenville, Chaguanas

## FARM COMMUNITIES

**Guayaquil, Ecuador (Nuevo Ntlacala)**—(contact ISKCON Guayaquil)  
**Guyana**—Seawell Village, Corentyne, East Berbice  
**San Salvador, El Salvador**—Carretera a Santa Ana, Km. 34, Canton Los Indios, Zapotitán,  
Dpto. de La Libertad

## RESTAURANTS

**Cuenca, Ecuador**—Govinda's, Anexo Hotel, Crespo  
**Guatemala, Guatemala**—Callejor Santandes a una cuadra abajo de Guatel, Panajachel Soloh  
**Guayaquil, Ecuador**—Govinda's (contact ISKCON Guayaquil)  
**La Paz, Bolivia**—Restaurant Manjari, Calle Potosi 1315, esq. Colón  
**San Salvador, El Salvador**—25 Avenida Norte 1132  
**Santa Cruz, Bolivia**—Restaurant Govinda's, Calle Florida 594, esq. Cañoto  
**Santa Cruz, Bolivia**—Snack Govinda, Av. Argomosa (1° anillo), esq. Bolívar  
**Santiago, Chile**—Govinda's (contact ISKCON Santiago)

# KÜRMAKṢETRA

(continued from page 21)

sculptured stone columns, colonades, corridors, domes, and passageways. We crossed a large, open courtyard in which stood a bronze pillar with Garuḍa, the great carrier of Viṣṇu, at the top. In an awesome *maṇḍapa* (pavilion) with five hundred magnificent pillars, each with a different design, a group of musicians sat playing classical South Indian melodies. The sounds of the drums, hand cymbals, and *shenai* (wind instrument) created a celestial atmosphere. At the far end of the courtyard we entered a small corridor barely wide enough to allow more than two people through at a time.

Now our progress was slow. The way was dimly lit by occasional ghee lamps along the walls. The scents of ghee smoke, sandal, and camphor mixed in the air. The only sound was the murmuring of prayers as we inched our way forward through the winding passage. With only a few feet to go—the air surcharged with feelings of devotion—we stood humbly with folded hands waiting our turn.

Then we entered the ancient Deity sanctum. It was gorgeous. The room was well lit by burning torches. The walls and ceiling were adorned with colorful paintings depicting the pastimes of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. From the high ceiling hung a thousand-petaled stone lotus.

The highly polished black-and-white marble floor reflected everything in the room.

Bare-chested *brāhmaṇa* priests wearing white silk *dhotīs* and adorned with marks of *tilaka* (sacred clay) on their foreheads, arms, and torsos, moved about the room as they performed their duties of administering sacred rites to the pilgrims. On the left side of the sanctum stood the main altar, covered in silver and decorated with flowers and the leaves of the *tulasī* plant.

There we saw the Deity of Śrī Kūrma, with His raised back. He was wearing a golden crown studded with valuable jewels and topped with a peacock feather, the symbol of the Viṣṇu *avatāras*.

To the right stood another altar, where the consorts of Lord Viṣṇu known as Śrī Devī and Bhū Devī were being worshiped in great opulence. The room was filled with the fragrance of incense, and flickering light from torches and ghee lamps danced along the ancient stone walls.

A brass chain stretching between two pillars kept us from going farther. The *brāhmaṇas* were busy presenting offerings of fruits and flowers to the Deity. Suddenly one of the *brāhmaṇas* noticed us and turned to us with folded hands. Removing the brass chain, he beckoned us to come closer. We were now standing right next to the altar of Śrī Kūrma.

The *brāhmaṇa* asked our names and began chanting Vedic hymns, requesting the

Deity to bestow mercy and good fortune upon us. Then we were each given *caran-āmṛta*—three drops of sacred water—in the palm of our hand. The Vedic scriptures state that whoever takes *caran-āmṛta* before the Deity of Lord Viṣṇu becomes free from the miseries of material existence and becomes eligible to enter into the eternal kingdom of God.

The head priest then came before each of us and placed upon our head a large pair of silver slippers marked with the four symbols of Viṣṇu—the conch, disc, club, and lotus—while the other *brāhmaṇas* chanted a sacred *mantra*: *om tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam sadā paśyanti sūrayo divīva cakṣur ātatam/tad viprāso vipanyava jāgrvamsaḥ samindhate viṣṇor yat paramaṁ padam*. “The abode of Lord Viṣṇu is the supreme worshipable object of all the demigods. The Lord’s lotus feet are as effulgent as the sun” (*Rg Veda* 1.22.20).

The *brāhmaṇas* then placed fruits, flowers, and sweets from the Deity in our hands. Feeling great awe and reverence for the Lord, and grateful for the special treatment we’d received, we withdrew from the Deity room and walked down the long corridor out into the courtyard.

The moments we had spent before the Deity of Śrī Kūrma now seemed fixed in eternity. We walked again to the shrine of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s footprints and, after paying our humble respects, began our journey home. ☐

## Śrī-Śrī-Gaura-Nityāndera Dayā

(The Mercy of Gaura and Nityānanda)

by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura

January 11 marks the anniversary of the passing of Śrīla Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya noted for his Bengali devotional songs.

*parama karuṇa, pahuṁ dui jana,  
nitāi-gauracandra  
saba avatāra—, sāra śiromaṇi,  
kevala-ānanda-kanda*

*bhaja bhaja bhāi, caitanya-nitāi,  
sudṛḍha viśvāsa kori  
viśaya chāḍiyā, se rase majiyā,  
mukhe bolo hari hari*

*dekha ore bhāi, tri-bhuvane nāi,  
emona dayāla dātā  
paśu-pākhī jhure, pāśāna vidare,  
śuni yāra guṇa-gāṭhā*

*somsāre majiyā, rohili paḍiyā,  
se pade nahilo āśa  
āpana koroma, bhuñjāye śamana,  
kohoye locana-dāsa*

### PURPORT

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

This is a song by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura. *Pahuṁ* means “Lord,” and *dui jana* means “two.” Locana dāsa Ṭhākura declares that the two Lords Nitāi-Gauracandra—Lord Nitāi and Lord Caitanya—

are very merciful (*parama karuṇa*). *Saba avatāra—sāra-śiromaṇi*. *Avatāra* means “incarnation,” and *saba* means “all.” They are the essence of all incarnations. The specific significance of these incarnations is that prosecuting Their way of self-realization is simply joyful (*kevala-ānanda-kanda*), for They introduced chanting and dancing. There are many incarnations like Lord Rāma—and even Kṛṣṇa, who taught *Bhagavad-gītā*, which requires knowledge and understanding. But Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda introduced a process that is simply joyful—which is simply to chant and dance. Therefore, Locana dāsa requests everyone: *bhaja bhaja bhāi, caitanya-nitāi*. “My dear brother, I request that you just worship Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda with firm conviction and faith.” Don’t think that this chanting and dancing will not lead to the desired goal. It will. It is the assurance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu that one will get all perfection by this process. Therefore one must chant with firm faith and conviction (*viśvāsa kori*).

But what is the process? The process is *viśaya chāḍiyā, se rase majiyā*. If one wants to be Kṛṣṇa conscious by this process, one has to give up his engagement in sense gratification. That is the only restriction. If one gives up sense gratification, it is sure that he will reach the desired goal. *Mukhe bolo hari hari*: one simply has to chant *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hari Hari*, without any motive of sense gratification.

*Dekha ore bhāi, tri-bhuvane nāi*. Locana dāsa Ṭhākura says, “My dear brother, you just try and examine this. Within the three worlds there is no one like Lord Caitanya or Lord Nityānanda, because Their merciful qualities are so great that They make even birds and beasts cry, what to speak of human beings.” Actually, when Lord Caitanya passed through the forest known as Jhārikhaṇḍa, the tigers, elephants, snakes, deer, and all other animals joined Him in chanting *Hare Kṛṣṇa*. It is so nice that anyone can join. Even the animals can join, what to speak of human beings. Of course, it is not possible for ordinary men to induce animals to chant, but if Caitanya Mahāprabhu could inspire animals to chant, at least we can encourage human beings to adopt this path of *Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra* chanting. It is so nice that even the most stonehearted man will be melted. *Pāśāna* means “stone.” It is so nice that even stone will melt.

But Locana dāsa Ṭhākura regrets that he is entrapped by sense gratification. He addresses himself. “My dear mind, you are entrapped in this sense gratification process, and you have no attraction for chanting *Hare Kṛṣṇa*. Since you have no attraction for the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, what can I say? I can simply think of my misfortune. Yamarāja, the superintendent of death, is punishing me by not allowing me to be attracted by Lord Caitanya’s movement.”

# Every Town

# And Village

The worldwide activities of the International

Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)



## Demonstrations Held Worldwide for Soviet Devotees of Kṛṣṇa

Los Angeles—On September 15, ISKCON members in more than forty cities worldwide staged demonstrations to demand the release of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees incarcerated in prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals in the Soviet Union. In Moscow fifty Soviet devotees held a press conference attended by Western reporters.

The demonstrations received widespread media coverage, including reports by international wire services, BBC radio, Voice of America, National Public Radio (USA), Radio Liberty, and many local television stations and newspapers around the world.

*Back to Godhead* magazine devoted its November issue to "Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in the USSR." The special issue was rushed to press, and devotees were able to distribute it at many of the demonstrations, including the New York demonstration, held in front of the United

Nations headquarters. During the four-hour demonstration there, devotees chanted continuously and collected hundreds of signatures on petitions requesting freedom for the persecuted Soviet devotees.

Devotees demonstrated outside the Soviet embassies in Washington, D.C.; Gothenburg, Sweden; Ottawa, Ontario; and other cities; and in Kingston, Jamaica, devotees met for more than an hour with the Soviet consul general.

The demonstrations were organized by the Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas, which is working to legalize Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the USSR. Although the Soviet government has released three devotees because of efforts by the committee, twenty-three devotees remain incarcerated under intolerable conditions. The committee promises that more demonstrations and other types of pressure will continue until all the Soviet devotees are given freedom to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

## Kṛṣṇa Consciousness For Calcutta Youth

Calcutta—Devotees at ISKCON's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda temple here have inaugurated—under the direction of Bhakti Rāghava Swami—the Calcutta branch of the Bhaktivedanta Youth Services (BYS), a youth club meant to encourage



At the recent Ratha-yātrā (Festival of the Chariots) in Calcutta, Bhakti Rāghava Swami speaks with new and prospective members of the Bhaktivedanta Youth Services in the Śrīla Prabhupāda exhibit.

college and high school students in the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. BYS members agree to chant at least two rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* on their beads daily and read from Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* at least twenty minutes a day. Members also attend training seminars every Sunday at the temple.

The motto of BYS is "Compassion, Cleanliness, Discipline, and Truthfulness," the four pillars of religion, as mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Devotees will soon be opening BYS branches in Orissa and Bihar. Sarva-jñāna dāsa, originally from Italy, is the director of the Calcutta BYS, which now has thirty-five members.

## NEWS BRIEFS

Madison, Wisconsin, home of the largest campus of the University of Wisconsin, with an enrollment of 45,000 students, is now also the home of a center for

YAMARĀJA DĀSA



Across from the United Nations headquarters in New York City, devotees demonstrate for the release of imprisoned Soviet Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees.

## Every Town and Village

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Mitrasena dāsa and his wife, Mahārḥa-devī dāsī, recently opened a center there and hold a program every Tuesday and Thursday at 5:30 P.M. that includes chanting, feasting, and a discourse on the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The center is located at 1149 E. Dayton Street. Phone: (608) 255-8883.

ISKCON Kerala has organized a unique program for introducing schoolchildren to Kṛṣṇa consciousness—an interschool quiz competition on Purāṇic history, consisting of questions from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, and other Vedic literatures. Held around the time of Janmāṣṭami, the competition, which takes place between teams of two students, has become an annual event in several cities in Kerala. Teams that win written competitions qualify for the oral finals. Winners are awarded Śrīla Prabhupāda's books as well as cash prizes, and the schools they represent receive trophies.

The Honorable W. Wilson Goode, mayor of Philadelphia, was the keynote speaker at the opening ceremonies of the new Hare Kṛṣṇa Food For Life shelter in downtown Philadelphia. The shelter will house one hundred homeless women and children, who will receive three meals a day of nourishing vegetarian *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa). The devotees have already been successfully running a men's shelter, and government agencies and welfare organizations have come forward with financial assistance for the new shelter.

## RESOURCES

**Listen to transcendental dramatic narration** of stories about *avatāras* and saints, recorded by Amalabhakta dāsa with musical accompaniment, on audiocassette—an excellent way to develop spiritual awareness while walking, working, housekeeping, exercising, or just relaxing. For a free catalog, write to Krishna Productions, 3305 Cardiff Ave., Dept. BTG, Los Angeles, CA 90034, or call (213) 838-4474.

**Enjoy the writings of Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami**, the author of a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He continues to produce essays, poems, and other writings for everyone interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For a list of publications, write The Gītā-nāgarī Press, 138 S. Rosemont Blvd. #217, Virginia Beach, VA 23452.

**Hear the message of Kṛṣṇa** directly from His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures, interviews, and conversations are available on more than seven hundred audiocassettes. Also available, on microfilm: all his letters, as well as transcriptions of all his recorded lectures. For a catalog, send \$5 to the Bhaktivedanta Ar-

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## Festivals & Calendar

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

### Month of Mādhava (January 5–February 2)

**January 9**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, direct followers of Lord Caitanya.

**January 10**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, a great spiritual master and the author of *Gītā-govinda*.

**January 11**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, a great spiritual master whose Bengali devotional songs perpetuate the simple Kṛṣṇa conscious method of self-realization. (See page 26.)

**January 15**—Ṣaṭ-tilā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

**January 23**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* and author who appeared in the seventeenth century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā-devī, consort of Lord Caitanya.

**January 25**—Appearance anniversary of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa's expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu and a close associate of Lord Caitanya. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

**January 27**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a famous Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

**January 28**—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a famous eleventh-century philosopher and spiritual master.

**January 29**—Bhaimī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting for the appearance of Lord Varāha.)

**January 30**—Appearance anniversary of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation.

**January 31**—Appearance anniversary of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, a close associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Lord Balarāma.

**February 2**—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a famous spiritual master in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who composed many devotional songs in Bengali.

## Book Section

# ŚRĪMAD~BHĀGAVATAM

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the "cream of the Vedic literatures" of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## Third Canto: "The Status Quo"

### CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

#### Victory of Hiraṇyākṣa Over All the Directions of the Universe

*In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the sage Maitreya begins to describe to Vidura, a great devotee of the Lord, how the powerful demon Hiraṇyākṣa challenged Lord Viṣṇu, who had appeared in His boar incarnation.*

#### TEXT 30

पश्यामि नान्यं पुरुषात्पुरातनाद्  
यः संयुगे त्वां रणमार्गकोविदम् ।  
आरावधिष्यत्यसुरर्षभेहि तं  
मनस्विनो यं गृणते भवाद्दृशाः ॥३०॥

*paśyāmi nānyaṁ puruṣāt purātanād  
yaḥ saṁyuge tvāṁ raṇa-mārga-kovidam  
ārādhayiṣyaty asuraṛṣabhehi taṁ  
manasvino yaṁ gṛṇate bhavādrśāḥ*

*paśyāmi*—I see; *na*—not; *anyaṁ*—other; *puruṣāt*—than the person; *purātanāt*—most ancient; *yaḥ*—who; *saṁyuge*—in battle; *tvām*—to you; *raṇa-mārga*—in the tactics of war; *kovidam*—very much skilled; *ārādhayiṣyati*—will give satisfaction; *asura-ṛṣabha*—O chief of the asuras; *ihi*—approach; *taṁ*—Him; *manasvinaḥ*—heroes; *yam*—whom; *gṛṇate*—praise; *bhavādrśāḥ*—like you.

#### TRANSLATION

You are so skilled in war that I do not see anyone else but the most ancient person, Lord Viṣṇu, who can give satisfaction in battle to you. Therefore, O chief of the asuras, approach Him, whom even heroes like you mention with praise.

#### PURPORT

Aggressive materialistic warriors are actually punished by the Supreme Lord for their policy of unnecessarily disturbing world peace. Therefore Varuṇa advised Hiraṇyākṣa that the right course to satisfy his fighting spirit would be to seek to fight with Viṣṇu.

#### TEXT 31

तं वीरमारादमिषद्य विसयः  
शुषिष्यसे वीरशये श्मिर्भित्तः ।  
यस्त्वद्विधानामसतां प्रशान्तये  
रूपाणि घञे सदनुग्रहेच्छया ॥३१॥

*taṁ vīram ārād abhipadya vismayah  
śayisyase vīra-saye śvabhīr vṛtaḥ  
yas tvad-vidhānām asatām praśāntaye  
rūpāṇi dhatte sad-anugrahechchayā*

*tam*—Him; *vīram*—the great hero; *ārāt*—quickly; *abhipadya*—on reaching; *vismayah*—rid of pride; *śayisyase*—you will lie down; *vīra-saye*—on the battlefield; *śvabhīh*—by dogs; *vṛtaḥ*—surrounded; *yaḥ*—He who; *tvad-vidhānām*—like you; *asatām*—of wicked persons; *praśāntaye*—for the extermination; *rūpāṇi*—forms; *dhatte*—He assumes; *sat*—to the virtuous; *anugraha*—to show His grace; *icchayā*—with a desire.

#### TRANSLATION

Varuṇa continued: On reaching Him you will be rid of your pride at once and will lie down on the field of battle, surrounded by dogs, for eternal sleep. It is in order to exterminate wicked fellows like you and to show His grace to the virtuous that He assumes His various incarnations like Varāha.

#### PURPORT

Asuras do not know that their bodies consist of the five elements of material nature and that when they fall they become objects of pastimes for dogs and vultures. Varuṇa advised Hiraṇyākṣa to meet Viṣṇu in His boar incarnation so that his hankering for aggressive war would be satisfied and his powerful body would be vanquished.

*Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Third Canto, Seventeenth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "Victory of Hiraṇyākṣa Over All the Directions of the Universe."*

### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

#### The Battle Between Lord Boar and the Demon Hiraṇyākṣa

#### TEXT 1

मैत्रेय उवाच  
तदेवमाकर्ण्य जलेऽशमापितं  
महामनास्तद्विगणय्य दुर्मदः ।  
हरेर्विदित्वा गतिमङ्ग नारदाद्  
रसातलं निर्विविशे त्वरान्वितः ॥ १ ॥

*maitreya uvāca  
tad evam ākarṇya jala-śa-  
mahā-manās tad vigaṇayya durmadaḥ  
harer viditvā gatim aṅga nāradaḥ  
rasātalam nirvivīṣe tvarānvitah*

*maitreyaḥ*—the great sage Maitreya; *uvāca*—said; *ta*—that; *evam*—thus; *ākarṇya*—hearing; *jala-śa*—of the controller of water, Varuṇa; *bhāṣitam*—words; *mahā-manāḥ*—proud; *ta*—those words; *vigaṇayya*—having paid little heed to; *durmadaḥ*—vainglorious; *hareḥ*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *viditvā*—having learned; *gatim*—the whereabouts; *aṅga*—O dear Vidura; *nāradaḥ*—from Nārada; *rasātalam*—to the depths of the ocean; *nirvivīṣe*—entered; *tvarā-anvitah*—with great speed.

TRANSLATION

Maitreya continued: The proud and falsely glorious Daitya paid little heed to the words of Varuṇa. O dear Vidura, he learned from Nārada the whereabouts of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and hurriedly betook himself to the depths of the ocean.

PURPORT

Materialistic warmongers are not even afraid to fight with their mightiest enemy, the Personality of Godhead. The demon was very encouraged to learn from Varuṇa that there was one fighter who could actually combat him, and he was very enthusiastic to search out the Supreme Personality of Godhead just to give Him a fight, even though it was predicted by Varuṇa that by fighting with Viṣṇu he would become prey for dogs, jackals and vultures. Since demonic persons are less intelligent, they dare to fight with Viṣṇu, who is known as Ajita, or one who has never been conquered.

TEXT 2

ददर्श तत्राभिजितं धराधरं  
प्रोक्षीयमानानवनिमग्नदंष्ट्रया ।  
मुष्णन्तमक्ष्ण्णा स्वरुचोऽरुणश्रिया  
जहास चाहो वनगोचरो मृगः ॥ २ ॥

dadarśa tatrābhijitam dharā-dharam  
pronnīyamānavanim agra-damśṭrayā  
muṣṇantam akṣṇā sva-ruco ṛṇa-śriyā  
jahāsa cāho vana-gocaro mrgaḥ

dadarśa—he saw; tatra—there; abhijitam—the victorious; dharā—the earth; dharam—bearing; pronnīyamāna—being raised upward; avanim—the earth; agra-damśṭrayā—by the tip of His tusk; muṣṇantam—who was diminishing; akṣṇā—with His eyes; sva-rucaḥ—Hiranyākṣa's own splendor; aruṇa—reddish; śriyā—radiant; jahāsa—he laughed; ca—and; aho—oh; vana-gocaraḥ—amphibious; mrgaḥ—beast.

TRANSLATION

He saw there the all-powerful Personality of Godhead in His boar incarnation, bearing the earth upward on the ends of His tusks and robbing him of his splendor with His reddish eyes. The demon laughed: Oh, an amphibious beast!

PURPORT

In a previous chapter we have discussed the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Varāha, the boar. While Varāha, with His tusks, engaged in uplifting the submerged earth from the depths of the waters, this great demon Hiranyākṣa met Him and challenged Him, calling Him a beast. Demons cannot understand the incarnations of the Lord; they think that His incarnations as a fish or boar or tortoise are big beasts only. They misunderstand the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even in His human form, and they deride His descent. In the Caitanya-sampradāya there is sometimes a demonic misconception about the descent of Nityānanda Prabhu. Nityānanda Prabhu's body is spiritual, but demonic persons consider the body of the Supreme Personality to be material, just like ours. Avajānanti mām mūḍhāḥ: persons who have no intelligence deride the transcendental form of the Lord as material.

TEXT 3

आहैनमेवमहं महीं विमुञ्च नो  
रसौकसां विषमृजेयमर्पिता ।  
न खल्वि यास्यस्यनया ममेक्षतः  
सुराधमासादितसूकराकृते ॥ ३ ॥

āhainam ehy ajña mahim vimuñca no  
rasaukasām viśva-srjeyam arpitā  
na svasti yāsyaśy anayā mamekṣataḥ  
surādhamāsādīta-sūkarākṛte

āha—Hiranyākṣa said; enam—to the Lord; ehi—come and fight; ajña—O fool; mahim—the earth; vimuñca—give up; naḥ—to us; rasā-okasām—of the inhabitants of the lower regions; viśva-srjā—by the creator of the universe; iyam—this earth; arpitā—entrusted; na—not; svasti—well-being; yāsyaśy—You will go; anayā—with this; mama iṣyataḥ—while I am seeing; sura-adhama—O lowest of the demigods; asādīta—having taken; sūkara-ākṛte—the form of a boar.

TRANSLATION

The demon addressed the Lord: O best of the demigods, dressed in the form of a boar, just hear me. This earth is entrusted to us, the inhabitants of the lower regions, and You cannot take it from my presence and not be hurt by me.

PURPORT

Śrīdhara Svāmī, commenting on this verse, states that although the demon wanted to deride the Personality of Godhead in the form of a boar, actually he worshiped Him in several words. For example, he addressed Him as vana-gocaraḥ, which means “one who is a resident of the forest,” but another meaning of vana-gocaraḥ is “one who lies on the water.” Viṣṇu lies on the water, so the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be properly addressed in this way. The demon also addressed Him as mrgaḥ, indicating, unintentionally, that the Supreme Personality is sought after by great sages, saintly persons and transcendentalists. He also addressed Him as ajña. Śrīdhara Svāmī says that jña means “knowledge,” and there is no knowledge which is unknown to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indirectly, therefore, the demon said that Viṣṇu knows everything. The demon addressed Him as surādhamā. Sura means “the demigods,” and adhama means “Lord of all there is.” He is Lord of all the demigods; therefore He is the best of all demigods, or God. When the demon used the phrase “in my presence,” the implied meaning was, “In spite of my presence, You are completely able to take away the earth.” Na svasti yāsyaśy: “Unless You kindly take this earth from our custody, there can be no good fortune for us.”

TEXT 4

त्वं नः सपत्नैरमवाय किं भृतो  
यो मायया हन्त्यसुरान् परोक्षजित् ।  
त्वां योगमायाबलमल्पपौरुषं  
संस्वाप्य मूढ प्रमृजे सुहृच्छुचः ॥ ४ ॥

tvam naḥ sapatnair abhavāya kiṁ bhṛto  
yo māyayā hantyaśuran pāroḥṣa-jit  
tvāṁ yogamāyā-balam alpa-pauruṣaṁ  
saṁsthāpya mūḍha pramrje suhṛc-cucaḥ

tvam—You; naḥ—us; sapatnaiḥ—by our enemies; abhavāya—for killing; kim—is it that; bhṛtaḥ—maintained; yaḥ—He who; māyayā—by deception; hanti—kills; asurān—the demons; pāroḥṣa-jit—who conquered by remaining invisible; tvām—You; yogamāyā-balam—whose strength is bewildering power; alpa-pauruṣam—whose power is meager; saṁsthāpya—after killing; mūḍha—fool; pramrje—I shall wipe out; suhṛt-sucaḥ—the grief of my kinsmen.

TRANSLATION

You rascal, You have been nourished by our enemies to kill us, and You have killed some demons by remaining invisible. O fool, Your power is only mystic, so today I shall enliven my kinsmen by killing You.

PURPORT

The demon used the word abhavāya, which means “for killing.” Śrīdhara Svāmī comments that this “killing” means liberating, or, in other words, killing the process of continued birth and death. The Lord kills the process of birth and death and keeps Himself invisible. The activities of the Lord's internal potency are inconceivable, but by a slight exhibition of this potency, the Lord, by His grace, can deliver one from nescience. Śucaḥ means “miseries”; the miseries of material existence can be extinguished by the Lord by His potential energy of internal yogamāyā. In the Upaniṣads (Śvetāsvatara Up. 6.8) it is stated, parāśya



*śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate.* The Lord is invisible to the eyes of the common man, but His energies act in various ways. When demons are in adversity, they think that God is hiding Himself and is working by His mystic potency. They think that if they can find God they can kill Him just by seeing Him. Hiranyākṣa thought that way, and he challenged the Lord: "You have done tremendous harm to our community, taking the part of the demigods, and You have killed our kinsmen in so many ways, always keeping Yourself hidden. Now I see You face to face, and I am not going to let You go. I shall kill You and save my kinsmen from Your mystic misdeeds."

Not only are demons always anxious to kill God with words and philosophy, but they think that if one is materially powerful he can kill God with materially fatal weapons. Demons like Kāṁsa, Rāvaṇa and Hiranyakaśipu thought themselves powerful enough to kill even God. Demons cannot understand that God, by His multifarious potencies, can work so wonderfully that He can be present everywhere and still remain in His eternal abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana.

#### TEXT 5

त्वयि संस्थिते गदया शीर्णशीर्ष-  
प्यस्मद्भुजच्युतया ये च तुम्यम् ।  
बलिं हरन्त्यृषयो ये च देवाः  
स्वयं सर्वे न भविष्यन्त्यमूलाः ॥ ५ ॥

*tvayi samsthite gadayā śīrṇa-śīrṣaṇy  
asmad-bhuja-cyutayā ye ca tumyam  
balim haranti ṛṣayo ye ca devāḥ  
svayaṁ sarve na bhaviṣyanty amūlāḥ*

*tvayi*—when You; *samsthite*—are killed; *gadayā*—by the mace; *śīrṇa*—smashed; *śīrṣaṇi*—skull; *asmad-bhuja*—from my hand; *cyutayā*—released; *ye*—those who; *ca*—and; *tubhyam*—to You; *balim*—presentations; *haranti*—offer; *ṛṣayah*—sages; *ye*—those who; *ca*—and; *devāḥ*—demigods; *svayam*—automatically; *sarve*—all; *na*—not; *bhaviṣyanti*—will exist; *amūlāḥ*—without roots.

#### TRANSLATION

The demon continued: When You fall dead with Your skull smashed by the mace hurled by my arms, the demigods and sages who offer You oblations and sacrifice in devotional service will also automatically cease to exist, like trees without roots.

#### PURPORT

Demons are very much disturbed when devotees worship the Lord in the prescribed ways recommended in the scriptures. In the Vedic scriptures, the neophyte devotees are advised to engage in nine kinds of devotional service, such as to hear and chant the holy name of God, to remember Him always, to chant on beads Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, to worship the Lord in the form of His Deity incarnation in the temples, and to engage in various activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to increase the number of godly persons for perfect peace in the world. Demons do not like such activity. They are always envious of God and His devotees. Their propaganda not to worship in the temple or church but simply to make material advancement for satisfaction of the senses is always current. The demon Hiranyākṣa, upon seeing the Lord face to face, wanted to make a permanent solution by killing the Personality of Godhead with his powerful mace. The example of an uprooted tree mentioned here by the demon is very significant. Devotees accept that God is the root of everything. Their example is that just as the stomach is the source of energy of all the limbs of the body, God is the original source of all energy manifested in the material and spiritual worlds; therefore, as supplying food to the stomach is the process to satisfy all the limbs of the body, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or developing love of Kṛṣṇa, is the sublime method for satisfying the source of all happiness. The demon wants to uproot this source because if the root, God, were to be checked, the activities of the Lord and the devotees would automatically stop. The demon would be very much satisfied by such a situation in society. Demons are always anxious to have a godless society for their sense gratification. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, this verse means that when the demon would be deprived of his mace by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, not only

the neophyte devotees but also the ancient sagacious devotees of the Lord would be very much satisfied.

#### TEXT 6

स तुद्यमानोऽरिदुरुक्तोमरै-  
र्दंष्ट्राग्रगाम्बुपलक्ष्य मीताम् ।  
तोदं मृषन्निरगादम्बुमध्याद्  
ग्राहाहतः सकरेणुर्यथेभः ॥ ६ ॥

*sa tudyamāno 'ri-durukta-tomarair  
daṁṣṭrāgra-gām gam upalakṣya bhūtām  
todam mṛṣaṇa nira-gād ambu-madhyād  
grāhāhataḥ sa-kareṇur yathebhaḥ*

*saḥ*—He; *tudyamānaḥ*—being pained; *ari*—of the enemy; *durukta*—by the abusive words; *tomarair*—by the weapons; *daṁṣṭra-agra*—on the ends of His tusks; *gām*—situated; *gām*—the earth; *upalakṣya*—seeing; *bhūtām*—frightened; *todam*—the pain; *mṛṣaṇa*—bearing; *nira-gāt*—He came out; *ambu-madhyāt*—from the midst of the water; *grāha*—by a crocodile; *āhataḥ*—attacked; *sa-kareṇuḥ*—along with a she-elephant; *yathā*—as; *ibhaḥ*—an elephant.

#### TRANSLATION

Although the Lord was pained by the shaftlike abusive words of the demon, He bore the pain. But seeing that the earth on the ends of His tusks was frightened, He rose out of the water just as an elephant emerges with its female companion when assailed by an alligator.

#### PURPORT

The Māyāvādī philosopher cannot understand that the Lord has feelings. The Lord is satisfied if someone offers Him a nice prayer, and similarly, if someone decries His existence or calls Him by ill names, God is dissatisfied. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is decried by the Māyāvādī philosophers, who are almost demons. They say that God has no head, no form, no existence and no legs, hands or other bodily limbs. In other words, they say that He is dead or lame. All these misconceptions of the Supreme Lord are a source of dissatisfaction to Him; He is never pleased with such atheistic descriptions. In this case, although the Lord felt sorrow from the piercing words of the demon, He delivered the earth for the satisfaction of the demigods, who are ever His devotees. The conclusion is that God is as sentient as we are. He is satisfied by our prayers and dissatisfied by our harsh words against Him. In order to give protection to His devotee, He is always ready to tolerate insulting words from the atheists.

#### TEXT 7

तं निःसरन्तं सलिलादनुद्रुतो  
हिरण्यकेशो द्विरदं यथा श्वः ।  
करालदंष्ट्रोऽनिनिखनोऽब्रवीद्  
गतहियां किं त्वसतां विगर्हितम् ॥ ७ ॥

*taṁ niḥsarantaṁ salilād anudruto  
hiraṇya-keśo dviradam yathā jhaṣaḥ  
karāla-daṁṣṭro 'sani-nisvano 'bravid  
gata-hriyām kiṁ tvasatām vigarhitam*

*taṁ*—Him; *niḥsarantaṁ*—coming out; *salilāt*—from the water; *anudrutaḥ*—chased; *hiraṇya-keśaḥ*—having golden hair; *dviradam*—an elephant; *yathā*—as; *jhaṣaḥ*—a crocodile; *karāla-daṁṣṭraḥ*—having fearful teeth; *asani-nisvanaḥ*—roaring like thunder; *abravīt*—he said; *gata-hriyām*—for those who are shameless; *kiṁ*—what; *tu*—indeed; *asatām*—for the wretches; *vigarhitam*—reproachable.

#### TRANSLATION

The demon, who had golden hair on his head and fearful tusks, gave chase to the Lord while He was rising from the water, even as an alligator would chase an elephant. Roaring like thunder, he said: Are You not ashamed of running away before a challenging adversary? There is nothing reproachable for shameless creatures!

(continued in next issue)

# WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT GOD'S NAMES?

Lord Jesus Christ, Mohammed, and all the world's scriptures emphasize glorifying God's names. What is unique about this kind of prayer?

by BHAKTICĀRU SWAMI

According to Vedic calculation, great time spans are measured in *yugas*, or ages. The *Vedas* describe four *yugas*—Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga, Dvāpara-yuga, and Kali-yuga—which repeat themselves in cyclical order like the four seasons. The duration of Satya-yuga is 1,728,000 years; Tretā-yuga is 1,296,000 years; Dvāpara-yuga, 864,000 years; and Kali-yuga, 432,000 years.

In Satya-yuga people are very pious. They almost never perform sinful activities. In Tretā-yuga they are more inclined to sinful life, and even more so in Dvāpara-yuga. Finally, in Kali-yuga impiety is almost completely dominant. Kali-yuga is like the winter of the *yuga* seasons.

The Vedic scriptures prescribe a specific kind of religious process for each of these ages. In Satya-yuga the process is meditation upon the form of the Lord. In Tretā-yuga the process is offering sacrifices to the Lord. In Dvāpara-yuga the process is gorgeous worship of the Deity in the temple. And in Kali-yuga the process is chanting God's holy name. Being merciful, the Lord makes the process easier in each successive age, as people become less qualified because of the increase of sinful life.

Now it is the age of Kali, the most degraded of the four ages. We can see in our own lifetime how people are becoming more sinful. Meat-eating, gambling, intoxication, and illicit sex—the four pillars of sinful life—continue to increase everywhere. We can see that as these activities increase, the world becomes more and more miserable. All scriptures recom-

mend chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names to get free of misery.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that chanting is the only good thing about this age. Lord Jesus said, "Glorify the name of thy Father." Similarly, Mohammed said, "Allah alone should we glorify." These instructions are given repeatedly throughout the world's great religions.

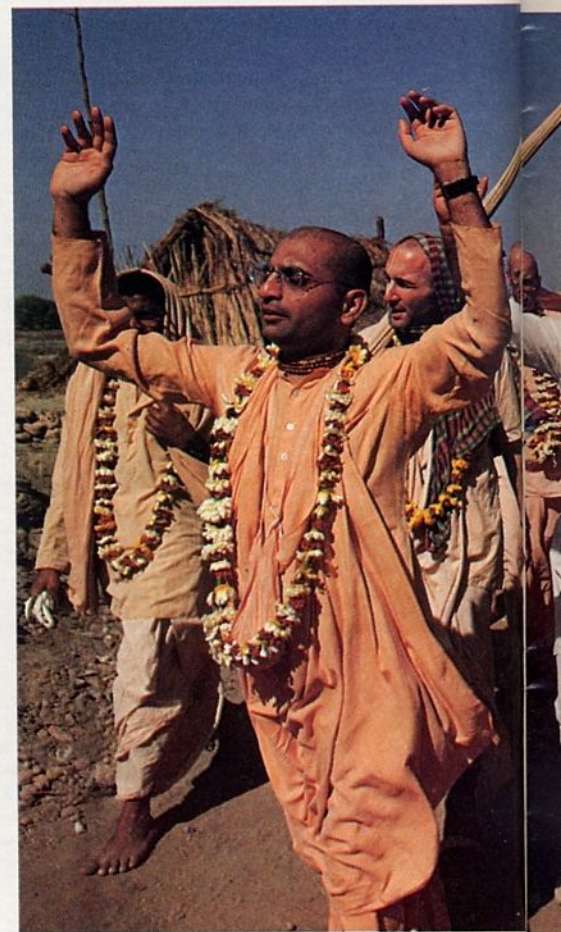
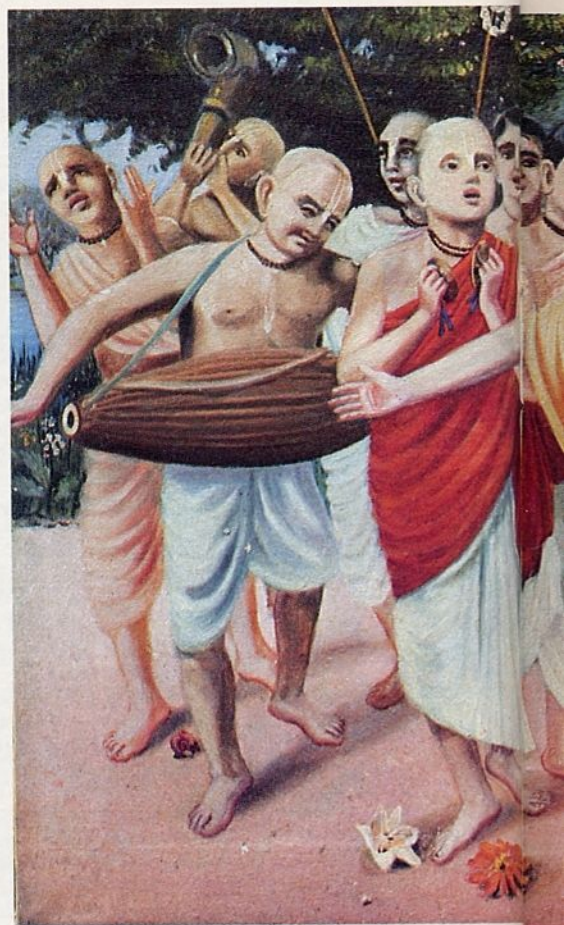
The question arises: "What's so special about God's names?" God does not have names like ours, which are mundane sounds given to us for the sake of our physical identity. God has no need for such identification. He has no physical identity; He is completely spiritual. But according to His divine, unlimited qualities and pastimes, He has innumerable names.

For example, in the Bible He has names that describe Him as "Almighty" and "Omnipotent." Similarly, in the Sanskrit Vedic scriptures He has numerous names. The name *Kṛṣṇa* means "all-attractive." The name *Rāma* means "giver of supreme pleasure."

Because God has no mundane qualities, His name is not a mundane sound. It is spiritual and nondifferent from Him. And because God is absolute, His holy name is also absolute. When one chants His name, one is directly in touch with Him. When we begin chanting, however, we may not immediately feel His presence, because of our materially contaminated consciousness.

But because He is the Supreme *Personality* of Godhead, calling on His names is the most personal and intense form of prayer. If we practice chanting sincerely,

**Chanting the names of God and dancing** through the streets of Navadvīpa, West Bengal (right, above), Lord Caitanya—who is Kṛṣṇa Himself—introduced the religious process for this age five hundred years ago. Last year devotees of Kṛṣṇa from around the world (right) joined together to chant the holy names during a twenty-five-day tour of Vṛndāvana, the land of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Bhakticāru Swami is on the left at the front of the chanting party with his arms raised.





we will soon feel God's presence.

The Vedic literatures contain many *mantras* and prayers to the Lord, but only one *mahā-mantra*, or great prayer. That prayer—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—addresses the Lord in His most sublime features: as Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive person, and as Rāma, the giver of supreme pleasure. It means, "O all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead! O Supreme Enjoyer! Please deliver me from this material existence. Please engage me in Your loving devotional service."

Prayers are appeals to God to fulfill our desires. In material consciousness we pray, "Lord, give me food; Lord, give me money." But in spiritual life, instead of asking this or that for oneself, one wants to offer whatever he has to the Lord. One wants to serve Him. That's why the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is the highest form of prayer: it makes no selfish demands on the Lord. It is simply an appeal for engagement in His devotional service.

To teach the chanting of His holy name, Kṛṣṇa appeared in this age in a wonderful form. Although He is the supreme proprietor, the supreme enjoyer, the possessor of all opulences, He appeared in this age as a mendicant—Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He accepted the renounced order, traveled all over India, and taught everyone, from scholars to kings to beggars, to chant the *mahā-mantra* with firm faith.

To say that Śrī Caitanya is God is not mere sentiment, a claim I make simply because I am His follower. No. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Mahābhārata*, and other scriptural sources describe His identity and predict His appearance in detail. They describe that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descends to establish the religion of the age. During His appearance, Lord Caitanya predicted that the *saṅkīrtana* movement of chanting the names of God would spread all over the world, and that has come true. Overlooking all sectarian conceptions, anyone who tries to understand Śrī Caitanya's real identity can easily recognize that He is the Supreme Person.

Now, it does not matter that Śrī Caitanya appeared in India. God doesn't belong to any geographical setting. He descends to bestow His mercy upon all. Wherever the Lord appears, it is for our benefit, if we follow His instructions.

Today, for example, most people in the Western world are followers of Lord Jesus Christ. They do not follow him because of where he appeared. They follow him because he is the son of God. Sincere devotees follow the Lord or His representative wherever they may appear. Devotees understand that the Lord and His representatives are actually from the divine realm

YAMARAJA DASA

# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

## “Come On, Rascal Scientists”

*This is the continuation of a conversation that took place between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and biochemist Thoudam Singh, Ph.D., in Bhubanesvara, India, on February 3, 1977.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** So why is the government fostering this godless “evolution” science—this dishonesty? Because the government leaders are themselves dishonest. They want simply to accumulate money by inducing people to work in their big industries. So they are cheating the people out of their birthright: to live the simple, natural life, to become God conscious, and at life’s end, to go back home to God.

The government must make sure that people develop genuine God consciousness. That is the government leaders’ actual business. They should promote genuine God consciousness, strict following of God’s natural laws. Anything not genuine should be finished. Nothing bogus allowed. This is real government. This we are working for.

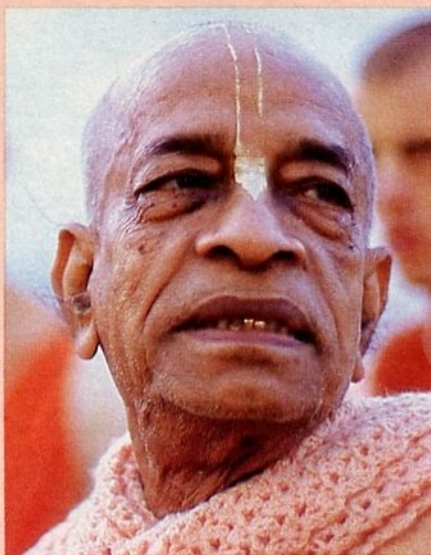
The government leaders’ business is to see that the scientific or intellectual group is giving the students a sense of the transcendent Personality of Godhead, a sense of the divine.

**Dr. Singh:** Nowadays, the government leaders are seeing that the intellectuals impart a sense of all-pervasive matter, with no soul and no Supreme Soul. A sense of the demoniac, one might say. It’s hard to imagine these demoniac types being convinced by godly arguments.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Never mind. We must push forward. Gradually the whole world will see that here are first-class gentlemen and here is first-class culture. Vedic, godly culture. Real culture. We must always remember, people are inclined to this God conscious culture. It is natural. And Lord Kṛṣṇa wants it.

Why should we care about some rascal’s objections? Do something to spread God conscious culture. It is Kṛṣṇa’s business. Print books. Travel all over the world. Challenge this godless government policy.

Challenge their intellectual hirelings. “Come on, rascal scientists. You have given yourself to spreading materialism and godlessness. We shall scientifically establish the existence of the spiritual self—the soul—and God.” *Karmaṇy evādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu*. It doesn’t matter whether they have a change of heart or not. We shall go on with our duty.



**Dr. Singh:** One scientist remarked what an astonishing wealth of information on the soul we can gain from just the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It’s unlimited.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Very good. He’s understanding these things.

**Dr. Singh:** For instance, we’ve taken this one sentence from the *Gītā*: *nainam chindanti śastrāṇi*—“The soul cannot be cut to pieces by any weapon.” And we can very easily corroborate this statement from many modern scientific findings. Scientific data and the *Gītā* agree.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Well, that is natural. *Bhagavad-gītā* means “The Song of God,” the Supreme Lord personally speaking. Who can be a greater authority? Hmm? Others may say whatever they like, but we know He is the greatest authority.

**Dr. Singh:** Another scientist and I gave a presentation at the University of Florida, to a class in physics. During our presentation, my colleague made a mathematical calculation demonstrating the probability of life arising from matter. The calculation showed that even if life were able to arise from dead matter—which of course is an absurdity—it would take something like ten to the 167 billion years.

So the physics professor—once he saw the calculation written out, he said, “That’s completely wrong.” And he went on like that for a while.

Then my colleague said, “Let’s see how this whole calculation works, step by step.” And he showed, step by step, how the calculation makes sense mathematically—how, mathematically speaking, the theory that mere matter can produce

life is rubbish; it completely falls apart.

My colleague went through the calculation very methodically, and finally the physics professor admitted to being wrong about life coming from matter.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This is a great success. *Idam hi puṁsas tapasaḥ śrutasya vā . . . yad-uttamaśloka-guṇānuvarṇanam*: “Greatly learned scholars have positively concluded that knowledge culminates in the transcendental descriptions of the Lord.” *Nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam*: these descriptions of the Lord are the real, ripened fruit of science.

**Dr. Singh:** My colleagues and I joke at the way so-called scientists call God consciousness antiscience or brainwashing. Actually, we’re washing their dusty brains with genuine science.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, brainwashing in the best sense. Clearing away the godless dust and grime. These so-called scientists should be grateful. “Brainwashing”? If Kṛṣṇa were present, He would have been brain-cutting. Such rascals.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord speaks very definitely: *Jñānam te ’ham sa-vijñānam . . . jñātavayam avaśiṣyate*. “I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge, both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know.” Science means to comprehend and convey knowledge of the supreme scientist. That’s all. Apart from that, who cares about your so-called scientific “view”?

**Dr. Singh:** Should we avoid the word *view*?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. In real science, everything is absolutely certain, because we receive our knowledge from the Absolute. And in our experimentation we corroborate and amplify this knowledge that we have received from the Absolute.

So we’re not speaking of some “view.” As soon as you say “view,” this or that puny-minded rascal will come forward to give his “view.” Simply confusion.

Another name for the Lord is Brahman—the supreme, all-embracing mind. Through the scriptures He has already given us all information. So how can there be some other “view”?

**Dr. Singh:** Still, the scientists want to have their own “view.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But we say, “You do not know. Here is the Lord’s knowledge, the real knowledge. Your so-called knowledge is simply speculation. Your ‘view’ has no value.”

(To be continued.)

and are not ordinary, mundane persons from a particular geographical area. Wherever such extraordinary persons appear in this world, that place becomes an extension of the spiritual world.

Still, if someone has difficulty accepting an "Indian" as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that's all right. No one should accept blindly, just on our saying so. But at least he can study the life and

teachings of Śrī Caitanya and see for himself whether it benefits his spiritual life. That is a practical test.

If we understand that God is our original and supreme father, it isn't difficult to understand that He wants us to go back to Him. Nor is it difficult to understand that He makes various arrangements to take us back. In this degraded Kali age, when we have all but lost our spiritual vision, His

holy name is His merciful arrangement to take us back.

Through chanting the holy name one comes to understand God's form, abode, qualities, activities, and associates. On becoming fixed in transcendental knowledge, one realizes that everything belongs to God and, therefore, engages fully in His devotional service. That realization is the perfection of religion in all ages. ❏

## ABOVE THE LAW

(continued from page 8)

of Śrīla Prabhupāda's invincible arguments, however, I had no choice but to give up my foolishness—or be a hypocrite.

Later on, thinking over our discussion, I remembered some examples Śrīla Prabhupāda gave to help us appreciate the limitations of our intellect and the futility of speculating about the inconceivable.

Our speculating about the Absolute Truth, he said, is like trying to illuminate the sun with a candle.

One other example he gave was that speculating about Kṛṣṇa is as futile as a five-year-old girl's attempt to understand how babies are made. In terms of her knowledge and experience, such a thing is completely inconceivable. As she grows intellectually and physically, however, she is able to understand what was inconceivable to her before.

Similarly, trying to understand the Absolute Truth by speculation is futile, because in the realm of transcendental knowledge we are as inexperienced as five-year-olds. We have to hear about

transcendence from revealed scriptures and self-realized souls, and gradually, as we grow spiritually, the knowledge will germinate, grow, and ripen into full God realization.

The process of spiritual growth includes detecting and discarding one after another our many layers of speculative conceptions of God. The person who's unwilling to make that sacrifice cannot understand the unlimited and sublime transcendental autocrat—Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa—as He is, no matter how much he or she tries. ❏

We welcome your letters. Write to  
BACK TO GODHEAD  
41 West Allens Lane  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

## LETTERS

I am seventeen years old, and for the last year I have been reading *Back to Godhead* and various books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I've greatly enjoyed them. I have come up with many questions, but out of all of them I have chosen two.

First, why do you worship God (Kṛṣṇa) in the form of a statue? Is God not everywhere we look and even within us? Why must we bow down to something of clay or rock?

Second, are Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples who have become bona fide teachers worshiped by bowing down to them, or by creating statues of them and worshipping those? If so, why?

I would be honored if you would explain these things to me and thus solve my problems.

Judith Ann Gavin  
Auckland, New Zealand

prayers and devotional rituals we invite the Lord—for whom nothing is impossible—to accept our service through those forms. Although the Deity may appear to be a lifeless statue, in many instances the Deity has openly reciprocated His devotee's service and devotion.

The omnipotent Personality of Godhead is fully capable of making spirit into matter and matter into spirit. Therefore, he can easily appear in the home or temple of His loving devotees in His Deity form. In our present materially contaminated state we cannot see God in His original, spiritual form. He therefore mercifully comes before us in a form we can see. By learning to see God—and develop love for Him—as the Deity, we will eventually be able to see Him everywhere.

Of course, one may not arbitrarily fashion a form and worship it as God. One has to worship the authorized form, just as, for example, in mailing this letter to you, I have to deposit it in an authorized mailbox. I cannot put it in any box that happens to be on the sidewalk and expect it to be delivered to you.

To worship a concocted form as the Deity is idolatry. One has to consult the scriptures and worship according to their directives. That purifies the heart of a devotee and prepares him or her for rendering direct, personal services to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

There are numerous important points

to be made in this connection, but that would take many pages. I want to answer your other question as well. I refer you, therefore, to the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, both translated into English by Śrīla Prabhupāda, for further explanations of the philosophy of Deity worship, as understood by the great saintly devotees in our line since time immemorial.

Now for your second question. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself teaches that the disciple should accept the spiritual master to be as good as God because he is God's representative. Understanding that the *guru* is the instrument of divine grace, the disciple bows in humility at his feet, thus attracting the merciful glance of the Lord.

In our modern world, people tend to overreact when they see that a *guru* accepts a disciple's display of humility. And they generally fail to appreciate that the *guru* also has a spiritual master, to whom he bows in all humility. But humility is the crown jewel of all spiritual qualities. It is the principle by which saintly persons conduct themselves in a spiritual society or culture.

That's why the disciples of spiritual masters after Śrīla Prabhupāda continue to practice bowing before their spiritual masters. We do not worship the new *gurus* in "statues," however, because this is generally not practiced while the *guru* is still present. After he goes to the spiritual world, his disciples may continue to remember and worship him in a deity form. Far more important, however, is that the disciple carry out the order of the spiritual master and help him spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. ❏

OUR REPLY: Your first question is one often raised by persons of Judeo-Christian background, largely because of the commandment against worshiping graven images. We also accept this commandment. The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is based on scripture. A devotee never acts whimsically. Even one who has attained spiritual perfection must continue to follow scriptural injunctions.

The scriptures of the Vedic tradition direct us to make authorized forms of the Lord from material elements. By certain

# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

## The Romance of Spiritual Life

I recently received a letter from a man in India who likes to read the biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda, as well as “the history, and if I may say so, the *romance* of ISKCON [the International Society for Krishna Consciousness].” His use of the word *romance* was interesting. It made me think of ISKCON as an indomitable spirit, despite its ups and downs, and that those who are sincerely participating in ISKCON are high-spirited knights of faith.

There is an undeniable urge for spiritual life in the heart of every human being. When we respond to this call, it is our best love story, our most heroic and mysterious adventure. Some say that an organized religious movement cannot embody the purity and liveliness of the spiritual quest. But as spiritual romance is possible individually, it is also possible in communities and internationally.

To protect the true spirit of a religious institution, its members must struggle to reform its imperfections, and they must never forget that they are responding to the sublime call to the higher nature. Spiritual life calls one to give up the temporary material world and to live an entirely different way. As *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.20) states, “Yet there is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter.”

Every one of us has sometimes felt the urge to quit the oppressive world of material reality and seek something better. Maybe we thought of going to live as a recluse in the mountains, as expressed victoriously in the poems of many hermits:

In solitude by the brushwood gate  
where no one else arrives,  
in an empty grove  
I meet alone with the white clouds.  
—Wang Wei

To think we could become a North American hermit or Himalayan *yogī* covered with deerskin was fictional romance. But Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. Now a devotee can pursue spiritual life to his heart’s content, even while living in a city, with a family and a job. Spiritual life is as down-to-earth as the everyday practice of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa according to quota and avoiding the four pillars of sinful life—meat-eating, intoxication, illicit sex, and gambling.

Still, although spiritual life is readily

available, there will no doubt be obstacles. For example, when persons, even spiritually minded ones, try to work together, there may be disagreements. And there will be disagreements between sects, and especially between spiritually minded persons and the materially minded. One may also be faced with corruption in the name of religion, and even slander against one’s own sincere efforts. But the jewel mine of spiritual truth remains inexhaustible, always open for those who seek freedom from birth and death.

True spiritual life is the greatest adventure. By comparison, external adventures—such as sky-diving, running for political office, making war—seem childish or insane. Satisfied in the pursuit of the higher goal, even the neophyte transcendentalist is sure he will never go back to his old ways.

Giving up the world, becoming enlightened and free of anxieties, seeking and finding God—these are the goals for the high-spirited human beings. Literatures such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* encourage us to try for this with all our hearts, and never again remain stuck in the blind well of materialistic life.

A poem by Mīrābhāi, “Why Mīrā Can’t Go Back to Her Old House,” states, “Approve me or disapprove me; I praise the lifter of Govardhana Hill day and night. I take the path that ecstatic human beings have taken for centuries.”

Mādhavendra Purī, a fifteenth-century spiritual master, also took this path, even though his friends and relatives didn’t approve:

Let the sharp moralist accuse me of being illusioned; I do not mind. Experts in Vedic activities may slander me as being misled, friends and relatives may call me frustrated, my brothers may call me a fool, wealthy mammonites may point me out as mad, and the learned philosophers may assert that I am much too proud; still my mind does not budge an inch from the determination to serve the lotus feet of Govinda, though I am unable to do it.

And when five-year-old Prahlāda was asked by his demoniac father, “What is the best thing you have learned in school?” Prahlāda replied:

O best of the *asuras*, king of the demons, as far as I have learned from my spiritual master, any person who has accepted a temporary body and temporary household life is certainly embarrassed by anxiety because of having fallen into a

dark well where there is no water but only suffering. One should give up this position and go to the forest. More clearly, one should go to Vṛndāvana, where only Kṛṣṇa consciousness is prevalent, and one should take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

—*Bhāg.* 7.5.5

The romance of spiritual life is not all celebration and praise. There is a bitter-sweetness to renunciation, to the degree of one’s attachment to the false, material forms. The relatives of a latter-day Mādhavendra Purī may resort to “deprogramming.” Latter-day Mīrābhāis are sometimes dragged back to their houses, and their love for Kṛṣṇa is severely tested. When this happens, the exasperated devotee may think, “How can Kṛṣṇa expect me to give up the whole world?” But these obstacles are also part of the romance. How else can we prove to the Supreme Lord that we want to go back to Godhead, except when we resist the opposition in whatever form it takes?

I was thankful to be reminded that ISKCON is a romantic adventure. But whether it be considered romantic or realistic, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the absolute truth, and we *must* pursue it.

This sense of an imperative is mentioned by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.47) when He describes the *yogī* as *bhajāte yo mām*, “rendering transcendental service to Me.” In his commentary to this verse Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

The English word “worship” cannot be used in the same sense as *bhaja*. Worship means to adore, or to show respect and honor to the worthy one. But service with love and faith is especially meant for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. . . . Every living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus every living entity is intended to serve the Supreme Lord by his own constitution. Failing to do this, he falls down.

When we deny the inner call to render transcendental loving service, we deny the voice of God, and that is the greatest loss. To remain mundane is to undergo repeated miseries of transmigration through the species. Missing out on love of God is the ultimate failure. Reflecting on these matters, I wrote this prayer: “May Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is in our hearts, bless us with the yearning to assist Him in the perfection of His loving affairs. And may we do this by assisting Śrīla Prabhupāda in his mission of worldwide *saṅkīrtana*.”—SDG

# en-lit'nd

**Enlightened: freed from ignorance and misinformation;  
filled with spiritual understanding; informed; illuminated.**

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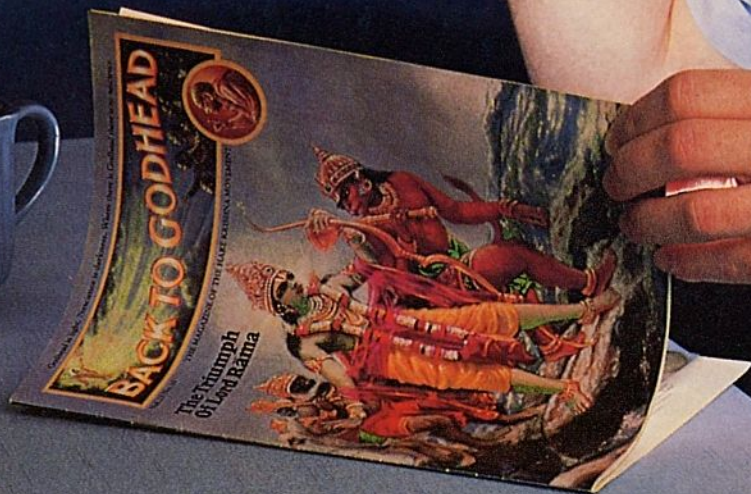
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