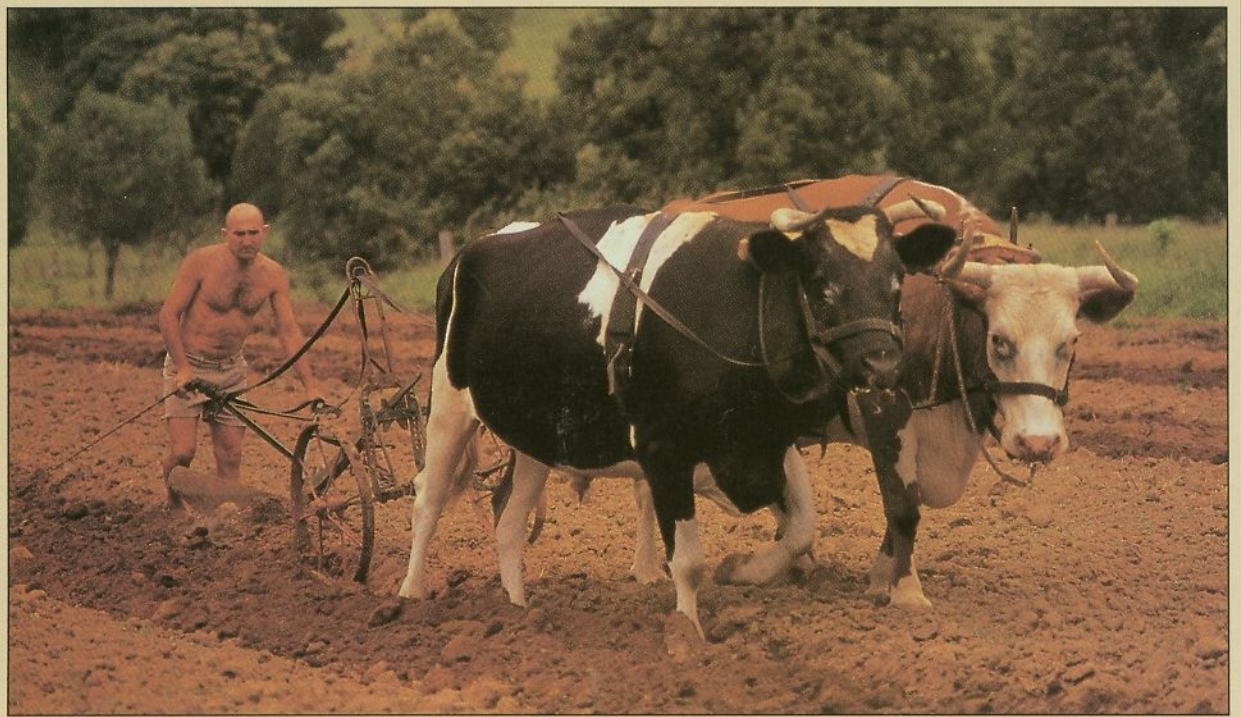


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“Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the Forest of Vṛndāvana”

Oil painting by Viṣṇu Dāsa

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

Founded 1944 • Vol. 25, No. 3 • May / June 1991

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COVER: At a Hare Kṛṣṇa farm in Australia, Laguḍi Dāsa tills the earth the traditional way, with gentle, powerful oxen. This scene represents more than a return to the simple life, for ox-powered farming provides economic stability and ecological balance, both sorely needed today. In this issue of *Back to Godhead* we examine the benefits to be reaped by getting back into harmony with the bull and the land. Please see the article beginning on page 24. (Photo by Amogha Dāsa.)

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BACK TO GODHEAD



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

SPIRITUAL NAMES Members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with Dāsa (Dāsī for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

EDITORIAL OFFICES Send editorial correspondence to Back to Godhead, P.O. Box 90946, San Diego, CA 92169-0864. Phone: (619) 272-7384. Fax: (619) 272-3673.

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Statement Of Purposes

Back to Godhead, the magazine of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, is a cultural presentation to respiritualize human society. It aims at achieving the following purposes:

1. To help all people distinguish more clearly between reality and illusion, spirit and matter, the eternal and the temporary.
2. To present Kṛṣṇa consciousness as taught in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.
4. To offer guidance in the techniques of spiritual life.
5. To expose the faults of materialism.
6. To promote a balanced, natural way of life, informed by spiritual values.
7. To increase spiritual fellowship among all living beings, in relationship with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
8. To perpetuate and spread the Vedic culture.
9. To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God through the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

FROM THE EDITOR

Toward an Enlightened New World Order

“We’ve got a real *kṣatriya* for a president!” an American devotee said to me, his face beaming. The Allies were trouncing whatever was left of the Iraqi armies, and George Bush was making it clear the Allies would keep striking till the Iraqis utterly surrendered.

My devotee friend knew, of course, that George Bush could hardly match the valor and nobility of true *kṣatriyas* like King Yudhiṣṭhira and King Parīkṣit. Still, Bush and his allies had waged a splendid war.

Power, skill, drive, heroism—these are attributes of the *kṣatriya*, the noble warrior who leads his forces to victory. A *kṣatriya* at the helm is inspiring. And Mr. Bush has emerged a powerful, inspiring figure.

But the man eats cow flesh.

So what my friend was saying, in effect, was this: “He waged such an excellent war, he could almost be a *kṣatriya*.”

Almost. Because *kṣatriyas* are not only heroic and tough; they’re also spiritually cultured and enlightened. And that’s not the kind of man who feasts on the flesh of his mother.

The true *kṣatriya* respects the cow as his mother and the bull as his father because by Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement the cow, like a mother, gives us milk, and the bull, like a father, feeds us by his work.

So if a true *kṣatriya* were around, George Bush would be on the defensive. A true *kṣatriya* wouldn’t tolerate a president eating cow flesh any more than Mr. Bush put up with Saddam Hussein trying to devour Kuwait.

And more than just morality is in question here. For a *kṣatriya* sees in the

cow what Mr. Bush and his allies see in the oil fields of the Middle East—survival.

What survival ultimately calls for, the *kṣatriya* knows, is not petroleum but food. And food for human beings comes most abundantly, by God’s mercy, from tilled land and the udder of the cow.

Mr. Bush has spoken of “a new world order,” though he hasn’t made clear what it might be. We suggest it should have these features:

1. It should draw its prosperity from cultivating the earth and protecting the cow and the bull, not from ravaging the earth’s resources and slaughtering its creatures.

2. Its presidents, prime ministers, and kings should be men trained and strong in spiritual understanding and culture.

3. The advisors those leaders rely on should be self-realized souls who see that a world in proper order is a world making progress back to Godhead—and who see how to help that progress come about.

The victory in the Persian Gulf hasn’t solved the problem of dependency on oil for an artificial way of life. And it certainly hasn’t solved the still more basic problem of forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa.

Back to Godhead aims at keeping us mindful of Kṛṣṇa. And in this issue, starting on page 40, we speak of Kṛṣṇa’s alternative to dependency on oil.

The best model for a new world order has already been given to us by Lord Kṛṣṇa. We’d be inspired to see a real *kṣatriya*—a stronger, gentler *kṣatriya*—lead the world in putting that order into place.

—Jayādvaita Swami

LETTERS

Premiere Issue

Congratulations on the Premiere Issue of the new BTG. I liked everything about it—from the mature writing and design all the way down to the stately page numbers at the bottom. It even smells better!

Sureśvara Dāsa
Port Royal, Pennsylvania

Just came back from Vrindavana to find the Premiere Issue of BTG in my mail. Excellent service by all of you. What a surprise! It was like when I found my first copy of BTG on my doorstep over 20 years ago and experienced the nectar.

Rathayātrā Dāsa
San Francisco, California

It seems to me that *Back to Godhead* as it is now presented can truly become the “backbone” of our movement as Prabhupada said that it should be.

Navadvīpa Dāsa
High Spring, Florida

This is the first time in years that I've looked forward to reading BTG cover to cover. It seems you were able to incorporate most of the suggestions you received, from women's issues to international events to resources available. It's been a real pleasure distributing these.

Harināma Dāsī
Atlanta, Georgia

Really enjoyed this “new” BTG. I'm sure Srila Prabhupada is pleased with its mood, art, current topics, and faithfulness to our mission of glorifying and serving the Supreme Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Bhaktin Karen
Nevada City, California

I am grateful as a householder that BTG is back to press and its nectar is reaching the devotees. I am especially grateful for the column by Rohini-

nandana Dasa. As a devotee who lives away from the temple, “Bhakti-yoga At Home” will be something I turn to first.

Dhanañjaya Dāsa
Topeka, Kansas

Instead of thinking how the magazine will be read by others, the new BTG made me consider my own position as Kṛṣṇa's servant in Kṛṣṇa's movement. Especially Yadurani Prabhu's article, which dealt more with the position of the spirit soul than that of women, was enlivening.

Labāṅgalatikā Dāsī
Denmark

I just received the Premiere Issue of *Back to Godhead* at the federal prison where I have been residing for the past ten months. Words cannot express the transcendental feelings I experienced when I opened the package. I immediately ran back to my cell, offered obeisances to Srila Prabhupada, and with great excitement and trembling hands opened it up and lost myself in spiritual bliss as I devoured every word from cover to cover. It is certainly true that absence makes the heart grow fonder. Keep up the wonderful work and please send an additional copy if you can, as I have a waiting list of readers and I just can't seem to let go of my copy.

Dharmātmā Dāsa
Jesup, Georgia

I want an immediate refund of my subscription price. I cannot believe Prabhupada's magazine has gone so low in quality. Where are the color photographs and paintings of Kṛṣṇa? The magazine has the look (and excitement) of some quarterly business journal. The black and white photographs are not even clear. I didn't read much because it was too disheartening.

Nanda Dāsa
Los Angeles, California

Women In Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

Since male chauvinism is the desire to feel superior to women, the “Women in the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Movement” article made it clear that the label does fit and the problem goes a lot deeper than a few ISKCON men acting chauvinistically. ISKCON, no doubt, will keep the label as long as devotee men see their spiritual advancement as more important than women's and see themselves as superior on the material platform.

Rūpacandra Dāsī
Bonners Ferry, Idaho

Here are some thoughts on the “women's issue.” I liked all the articles presented in that section of BTG! I think as women that the best policy is *sad-acara* [behavior according to religious principles]. If we act properly, we will also be seen by Kṛṣṇa, and we don't have to overendeavor to see Kṛṣṇa. If we try to stick as closely as possible to the qualities of a woman as found in *sastra*, we won't be losers, but will have everything to gain. Every qualified woman in spiritual life is naturally and gracefully protected by Kṛṣṇa, and allowed to serve Him in so many ways. The sweet taste of service to Kṛṣṇa and our relationship with Him have to be the most important part of any “role” in spiritual life, not the fact that we are engaged in a certain type of body.

Karuṇā Devī Dāsī
Gurabo, Puerto Rico

Yadurani's comments about accepting responsibility and knowing that Kṛṣṇa is in control are very inspiring and true. However, what good has it done for women to sit quietly all these years? If we don't speak out, we not only hurt ourselves, but the Society as a whole. ISKCON needs to make much needed changes, and women must continue to speak out. Yes, “we are the architects of our own future,” . . . with the direction of Kṛṣṇa in our hearts. We cannot continue to use the fact that “we have to accept our lot” as an excuse not to

act—both on the part of ISKCON officials and individuals.

Sanandānanda Mañjarī Dāśī
(Amy Williams)
Boulder, Colorado

In the name of women's lib, please don't feel free to put pictures of the ladies with heads uncovered. I would feel very uncomfortable if it was me, and I'm not a "fuddy-duddy"! I have a lot of service, and part of it is dressing properly so I can preach properly. And many people locally have appreciated it and the proper Vedic culture it represents.

Kamrā Devī Dāśī
Alachua, Florida

The articles on devotee women were excellent. These women accurately represented the views of women in ISKCON. Now that these issues have been brought to the attention of the GBC, I would like to hear from the GBC and see what they are actually going to do to resolve these important issues concerning women.

Vṛndāvana-līlā Devī Dāśī
Norwalk, California

The new *Back to Godhead* has finally arrived, and it was certainly worth the wait—all the articles were excellent! I especially appreciated the offerings by my beloved Godsisters Yamuna Devi (always a source of great inspiration), Visakha Devi Dasi (living proof that women can be as intelligent as men), Jadurani Devi Dasi (her straight-arrow commentary goes right to the heart), and the always-outspoken and astute Sita Devi Dasi.

Dinadayādrī Dāśī
(Jeanne Zakheim)
Ferndale, Michigan

I was interested to read the women's articles, as I thought it was only my lack of understanding that led me to feel that ISKCON women are sometimes thought of as second-class devotees. I therefore think it is important

for these feelings to be brought forward, discussed, and sorted out.

Julie Penfald
Hoddesdon, England

Bad Press Award

Why a "Bad Press Award"? Must we continue to present ourselves as woe-folly persecuted martyrs? No one can hurt us unless we allow them to, and Kṛṣṇa gives all protection to His devotees. Why should we give the impression that it might be otherwise?

Sarasvatī Dāśī
Quakertown, Pennsylvania

The "Bad Press Award" is excellent. You have to get right out there and deal with what people are really saying about us, not live in an ISKCON ivory tower.

Dhanañjaya Paṇḍita Dāśa
All Trains, New York

I do not think that your policy in the newly formulated "Bad Press Award" will contribute to the overall effectiveness of the magazine. It is good to point out sloppy journalism that is misleading and unfavorable to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, but unless you are willing to print the entire thirdate article, then you will also be criticized for sloppy journalism. The readers of BTG should be able to read the entire article and then BTG's rebuff in order to more clearly ascertain the reasoning behind the critique.

Rāmanātha-śuka Dāśa
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Statement of Purposes

The "Statement of Purposes," I noticed, is different than that which has been given by Sri Prabhupada. Although I have not found anything objectionable in the new statement, is the intent of the new statement the same as the original statement? If so, why get rid of Prabhupada's words?

Suresh Vyasa
Redlands, California

OUR REPLY: We used to print Śrīla Prabhupāda's purposes for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Now we print the purposes for *Back to Godhead* magazine. The purposes are similar, of course, but not exactly the same. For example, BTG has no intention of building temples, one of the purposes Śrīla Prabhupāda set for ISKCON. We feel it is more appropriate to print BTG's purposes.

Prabhupāda's Picture

I was very much disturbed to see that there was no picture of Srila Prabhupada on the inside cover. I feel it is of the utmost importance that Srila Prabhupada be presented as the founder-acarya as he was in previous BTG's. Every devotee I have spoken to feels the same.

Madana Mohana Mohiṇī Devī Dāśī
Vancouver, Canada

OUR REPLY: Although we've had Śrīla Prabhupāda's photograph on the inside front cover for quite a while, Śrīla Prabhupāda never instituted this practice. In fact, he once suggested that instead of running his photo we could sometimes print photos of his spiritual master and other previous *ācāryas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is still prominent in BTG. His article appears first in the magazine, along with his name, title, and photograph. And we have the new "Remembering Prabhupāda." Most important, the articles are based on Prabhupāda's teachings, and therefore the authors often naturally make references to Srila Prabhupada. Also, we feel that Śrīla Prabhupāda would appreciate the Kṛṣṇa conscious art now appearing on the inside front cover, and we hope readers will find it to be an added attraction to BTG. ☸

We welcome your letters. Send correspondence to The Editors, *Back to Godhead*, P.O. Box 90946, San Diego, CA 92169-0864, U.S.A.

COMPASSION WELL PLACED

*Despite the honorable intentions
of philanthropists, even their most efficient programs
for helping others don't go far enough.*

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



IN THE NAME OF philanthropy. . . people are feeling compassion for suffering humanity throughout the world,"¹ Śrīla Prabhupāda writes. But "no one knows where compassion should be applied. Compassion for the dress of a drowning man is senseless. A man fallen in the ocean of nescience cannot be saved simply by rescuing his outward dress—the gross material body."²

"Without knowing the need of the dormant soul, one cannot be happy simply with emolument of the body and mind. The body and the mind are but superfluous outer coverings of the spirit soul. The spirit soul's needs must be fulfilled."³

"Material compassion, lamentation, and tears are all signs of ignorance of the real self. Compassion for the eternal soul is self-realization. . . ."⁴

"A Vaiṣṇava is *para-duḥkha-duḥkhi*; he is always unhappy to see the conditioned souls in an unhappy state of materialism."⁵

"It should be understood that sages, saintly persons, and devotees are not unconcerned with the people's welfare. . . . Actual devotees and saintly persons are always anxious to see how the people can be made happy. . . ."⁶

"Forgetful men do not know the right path of peace and prosperity. However, the sages know it well, and therefore for the good of all men they are always anxious to perform acts which may bring about peace in the world. They are sincere friends to all living entities, and at the risk of great personal inconvenience they are always engaged in the service of the Lord for the good of all people.

"Lord Viṣṇu is just like a great tree,

COMPILED BY NĀGARĀJA DĀSA



**“When a person is advanced in
spiritual consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he naturally
becomes very sympathetic toward
all living entities suffering in the material world.”**



and all others . . . are like branches, twigs, and leaves of that tree. By pouring water on the root of the tree, all the parts of the tree are automatically nourished. . . . The modern materialistic society is detached from its relation to the Supreme Lord. And all its plans which are being made by atheistic leaders are sure to be baffled at every step. Yet they do not wake up to this.”⁷

“A nondevotee works for his personal sense gratification or for the sense gratification of his family, society, community, or nation, but because all such activities are separate from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they are considered *asat*. The word *asat* means bad or temporary, and *sat* means permanent and good. Activities performed for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa are permanent and good, but *asat* activity, although sometimes celebrated as philanthropy, altruism, nationalism, this “ism” or that “ism,” will never produce any permanent result and is therefore all bad. Even a little work done in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a permanent asset and is all-good because it is done for Kṛṣṇa, the all-good Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is everyone’s friend.”⁸

“One should understand that in the material world, however one may try to make adjustments, he cannot be happy. To cite an example I have given many times, if you take a fish out of water, you can give it a very comfortable velvet bedstead, but still the fish cannot be happy; it will die. Because the fish is an animal of the water, it cannot be happy without water.”⁹

“Anyone who misunderstands this perishable body to be the self and who works for it in the name of sociology, politics, philanthropy, altruism, nationalism, or internationalism, under the false plea of the bodily conception of life, is certainly a fool and does not

know the implications of reality and unreality.”¹⁰

The Mission of Life

Lord Kṛṣṇa taught, “It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence, and words.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, “This is the mission of life. One’s own body and the bodies of his friends and relatives, as well as one’s own riches and everything else one has, should be engaged for the benefit of others. . . .

“Of course, in human society there are many institutions to help others, but because philanthropists do not know how to help others, their propensity for philanthropy is ineffectual. They do not know the ultimate goal of life (*śreya*), which is to please the Supreme Lord. If all philanthropic and humanitarian activities were directed toward achieving the ultimate goal of life—to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead—they would all be perfect.”¹¹

“Humanitarian work may be temporarily beneficial for the body, but because a living entity is spirit soul, ultimately one can show him real mercy only by revealing knowledge of his spiritual existence.”¹²

The true humanitarian, therefore, is one who gives spiritual knowledge. Such a person must be spiritually qualified as a servant of God.

“Only a person who is fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be said to be engaged in welfare work for all living entities. When a person is actually in the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of everything, then when he acts in that spirit he acts for everyone.”¹³

“If man does not serve God, how can he know how to serve humanity? If he does not receive information from God

about how to serve humanity, what is the value of his humanitarianism? The best way to serve mankind is to preach the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* so that everyone can become a faithful servant of God.”¹⁴

“When a person is advanced in spiritual consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he naturally becomes very sympathetic toward all living entities suffering in the material world. Naturally such an advanced person thinks of the suffering of the people in general. However, if one does not know of the material sufferings of fallen souls and becomes sympathetic because of bodily comforts, . . . such sympathy or compassion is the cause of one’s downfall. If one is actually sympathetic to fallen, suffering humanity, he should try to elevate people from material consciousness to spiritual consciousness. . . . As far as the material body is concerned, we cannot do anything for anyone.”¹⁵

“There are different kinds of welfare activities in this material world, but the supreme welfare activity is the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Other welfare activities cannot be effective, for the laws of nature and the results of *karma* cannot be checked. It is by destiny, or the laws of *karma*, that one must suffer or enjoy. For instance, if one is given a court order, he must accept it, whether it brings suffering or profit. Similarly, everyone is under obligations to *karma* and its reactions. No one can change this.”¹⁶

“However, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, we may raise a person to spiritual consciousness if we ourselves follow the rules and regulations. If we give up our own spiritual activities and simply become concerned with the bodily comforts of others, we will fall into a dangerous position.”¹⁷

(please turn to page 56)



Turning Fifty

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

IF I CLAIM “I’m middle-aged,” I’m lying. When you turn fifty, you’re facing old age.

By now I ought to know what I’m doing. Why continue pretending with the little time I have left? When you start getting older, people begin to respect you for your seniority, so you shouldn’t let them down by behaving like a young fool who can’t make up his mind whether he wants to be a devotee of Kṛṣṇa or something else.

Yet still there’s confusion. For example, I can’t be sure whether I’m a hypochondriac or just sensible. When I attend the temple programs, I can’t figure out whether my dislike for the too-fast *kīrtanas* is because of my evolved spiritual taste or because I’m too old to jump and dance. When the young devotees make gung-ho speeches saying everyone should go out and convert the demons, I often see through their hype. But is that my mature vision or loss of nerve? Nowadays I also tend to see the Absolute Truth in various philosophies and religions. Is that a sign that I’m reaching universal realization, or does it mean I’m drifting and becoming unchaste? When I lecture I can’t figure out if I’m enthralling people or boring them. Have I gone from stable to stodgy?

In some ways I think I’m becoming more Kṛṣṇa conscious. But illusion may come even to an old man. When I was younger, *māyā* used to present one kind of calling card. I thought I was handsome. Now that’s no longer possible, because my face is full of lines and my teeth and hair are falling out. But *māyā* has some new calling cards. I think I’m accomplished and better than other people. Young people often seem foolish and superficial to me. And when I think about my own youth, I romanticize the 1960’s, when “we were more idealistic than young people today.” I don’t want to kid myself, but these illusions keep coming even at my age.

The most frightening thing is death.

It’s coming nearer, but I haven’t become much more serious about it.

What does frighten me, though, is that time is passing more quickly than it used to and I’m not living up to my expectations or the ones Śrīla Prabhupāda had for me. I’ve been given the greatest gift, the association of a pure devotee. From those to whom much has been given, much is expected. But I’m afraid that all I’m doing is routine and mediocre. I’m not accomplishing anything wonderful. If something wonderful is going to come out of me at all, when will it be? The realization that my total life’s output is not going to amount to much is a hard thing to accept. I have failed in big ways, but I haven’t come to regret it much. And maybe I’m too old now to make major reforms. All I can do is pray to Kṛṣṇa to please help me become aware of my small place.

Some things are getting better. The essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness stands out to me more clearly. I’m getting down to the basics of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and hearing from *Bhagavad-gītā*. I also think I’m advancing in my attraction for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Maybe it’s just because my senses are growing older, but I feel less inclined for sex. Recently I’ve also begun to pray, for the first time in my spiritual life. I reminisce about my personal association with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I’m writing down my memories and praises of him. So good things are happening, and I sense more of this good fortune ahead. I can hardly wait to appreciate more what it really means to be a follower of Prabhupāda and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, but I understand that the key is humility and service, as always. I just hope it’s not too late for me to make it.

What Śrīla Prabhupāda has written about old age is encouraging. He says that if a person is Kṛṣṇa conscious he can work like a young man even when he’s seventy-five or eighty years old. Prabhupāda gives the example of

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, who when very old wrote the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the most wonderful book about the activities of Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī began their spiritual lives at an old age, after they retired from their occupations and family lives.

The effects of old age don’t harass a devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

Apparently a devotee may grow old, but he is not subjected to symptoms of defeat experienced by a common man in old age. Consequently, old age does not make a devotee fearful of death, as a common man is fearful of death. . . . A devotee knows that after death he is going back home, back to Godhead; therefore he has no fear of death. Thus instead of depressing a devotee, advanced age helps him to become fearless and thus happy.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
4.27.24, Purport

I realize I’m just a newcomer to old age. The challenges of infirmity and debility lie ahead. As Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sings, *vrddha kāla āola saba sukha bhāgala*: in old age, all kinds of happiness disappear. I hope that when it gets difficult, I will be able to depend on Śrīla Prabhupāda and get through without dishonor. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personal example is a light for the darkness that lies ahead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, *your* old age was glorious! Though I can’t imitate you, how can I think of retiring when you, my own spiritual master, kept traveling, preaching, and writing even into your eighties? Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give me the strength to serve you.

Let me dedicate my remaining life to serving you with youthful vigor.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami is the author of more than two dozen books, including a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda.



Cross-Cultural Traces Of Vedic Civilization

by Sadāpūta Dāsa

THE ANCIENT GREEK WRITER Aratos tells the following story about the constellation Virgo, or the virgin. Virgo, he says, may have belonged to the star race, the forefathers of the ancient stars. In primeval times, in the golden age, she lived among mankind as Justice personified and would exhort people to adhere to the truth. At this time people lived peacefully, without hypocrisy or quarrel. Later, in the age of silver, she hid herself in the mountains, but occasionally she came down to berate people for their evil ways. Finally the age of bronze came. People invented the sword, and “they tasted the meat of cows, the first who did it.” At this point Virgo “flew away to the sphere”; that is, she departed for the celestial realm.¹

The Vedic literature of India gives an elaborate description of the universe as a cosmos—a harmonious, ordered system created according to an intelligent plan as a habitation for living beings. The modern view of the universe is so different from the Vedic view that the latter is presently difficult to comprehend. In ancient times, however, cosmologies similar to the Vedic system were widespread among people all over the world. Educated people of today tend to immediately dismiss these systems of thought as mythology, pointing to their diversity and their strange ideas as proof that they are all simply products of the imagination.

If we do this, however, we may be overlooking important information that could shed light on the vast forgotten period that precedes the brief span of recorded human history. There is certainly much evidence of independent storytelling in the traditions of various cultures, but there are also many common themes. Some of these themes are found in

highly developed form in the Vedic literature. Their presence in cultures throughout the world is consistent with the idea that in the distant past, Vedic culture exerted worldwide influence.

In this article we will give some examples of Vedic ideas concerning time and human longevity that appear repeatedly in different traditions. First we will examine some of these ideas, and then we will discuss some questions about what they imply and how they should be interpreted.

In the Vedic literature time is regarded as a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being. As such, time is a controlling force that regulates the lives of living beings in accordance with a cosmic plan. This plan involves repeating cycles of creation and destruction of varying durations. The smallest and most important of these repeating cycles consists of four *yugas*, or ages, called Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali. In these successive ages mankind gradually descends from a high spiritual platform to a degraded state. Then, with the beginning of a new Satya-yuga, the original state of purity is restored, and the cycle begins again.

The story of Virgo illustrates that in the ancient Mediterranean world there was widespread belief in a similar succession of four ages, known there as the ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron. In this system humanity also starts out in the first age in an advanced state of consciousness and gradually becomes degraded. Here also, the progressive developments in human society are not simply evolving by physical processes, but are superintended by a higher controlling intelligence.

It is noteworthy that Aratos’ story specifies the eating of cows as a sinful

act that cut mankind off from direct contact with celestial beings. This detail fits in nicely with the ancient Indian traditions of cow protection, but it is unexpected in the context of Greek or European culture.

One explanation for similarities between ideas found in different cultures is that people everywhere have essentially the same psychological makeup, and so they tend to come up independently with similar notions. However, details such as the point about cow-killing suggest that we are dealing here with common traditions rather than independent inventions.

Another example of similarities between cultures can be found among the natives of North America. The Sioux Indians say that their ancestors were visited by a celestial woman who gave them their system of religion. She pointed out to them that there are four ages, and that there is a sacred buffalo that loses one leg during each age. At present we are in the last age, an age of degradation, and the buffalo has one leg.²

This story is a close parallel to the account in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* of the encounter between Mahārāja Parīkṣit and the bull of Dharma. There, Dharma is said to lose one leg with each successive *yuga*, leaving it with one leg in the present Age of Kali.

According to the Vedic system, the lengths of the Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali *yugas* are 4, 3, 2, and 1 times an interval of 432,000 years. Within these immense periods of time the human life span decreases from 100,000 years in the Satya-yuga to 10,000 years in the Tretā-yuga, 1,000 years in the Dvāpara-yuga, and finally 100 years in the Kali-yuga.

Of course, this idea is strongly at

odds with the modern evolutionary view of the past. In the ancient Mediterranean world, however, it was widely believed that human history had extended over extremely long periods of time. For example, according to old historical records, Porphyry (c. 300 A.D.) said that Callisthenes, a companion of Alexander in the Persian war, dispatched to Aristotle Babylonian records of eclipses and that these records covered 31,000 years. Likewise, Iamblicus (fourth century) said on the authority of the ancient Greek astronomer Hipparchus that the Assyrians had made observations for 270,000 years and had kept records of the return of all seven planets to the same position.³ Finally, the Babylonian historian Berosus assigned 432,000 years to the total span of the reigns of the Babylonian kings before the Flood.⁴

We do not wish to suggest that these statements are true (or that they are false). The point here is that people in the old Mediterranean civilization evidently had a much different view of the past than the dominant view today. And this view was broadly consistent with Vedic chronology.

Although the Bible is well known for advocating a very short time-span for human history, it is interesting to note that it contains information indicating that people at one time lived for about 1,000 years. In the Old Testament the following ages are listed for people living before the Biblical Flood: Adam, 930; Seth, 912; Enos, 905; Kenan, 910; Mahaleel, 895; Jared, 962; Enoch, 365; Methuselah, 969; Lamech, 777; and Noah, 950. If we exclude Enoch (who was said to have been taken up to heaven in his own body), these persons lived an average of 912 years.⁵

After the Flood, however, the following ages were recorded: Shem, 600; Arphachshad, 438; Salah, 433; Eber, 464; Plelg, 239; Reu, 239; Serug, 230; Nahor, 148; Terah, 205; Abraham, 175; Isaac, 180; Job, 210; Jacob, 147; Levi, 137; Kohath, 133; Amaram, 137; Moses, 120; and Joshua, 110. These ages show a gradual decline to about 100 years, similar to what must have happened after the beginning of Kali-yuga, according to the Vedic system.

Here we should mention in passing that the Biblical Flood is traditionally said to have taken place in the second or third millennium B.C., and the traditional date in India for the beginning of Kali-yuga is February 18, 3102 B.C. This very date is cited as the time of the Flood in various Persian, Islamic, and European writings from the sixth to the fourteenth centuries A.D.⁶ How did the middle-eastern

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Flood come to be associated with the start of Kali-yuga? The only comment we can make is that this story shows how little we really know about the past.

In support of the Biblical story of very long human life-spans in ancient times, the Roman historian Flavius Josephus cited many historical works that were available in his time:

Now when Noah had lived 350 years after the Flood, and all that time happily, he died, having the

number of 950 years, but let no one, upon comparing the lives of the ancients with our lives . . . make the shortness of our lives at present an argument that neither did they attain so long a duration of life. . . .

Now I have for witnesses to what I have said all those that have written Antiquities, both among the Greeks and barbarians, for even Manetho, who wrote the Egyptian history, and Berosus, who collected the Chaldean monuments, and Mochus, and Hestiaeus, and beside these, Hiernonymus the Egyptian, and those who composed the Phoenician history, agree with what I here say: Hesiod also, and Hecataeus, Hellanicaus, and Acuzilaus, and besides Ephorus and Nicolaus relate that the ancients lived a thousand years: but as to these matters, let everyone look upon them as he sees fit.⁷

Unfortunately, practically none of the works referred to by Josephus are still existing, and this again shows how little we know of the past. But in existing Norse sagas it is said that people in ancient times lived for many centuries. In addition, the Norse sagas describe a progression of ages, including an age of peace, an age when different social orders were introduced, an age of increasing violence, and a degraded “knife-age and axe-age with cloven shields.”⁸ The latter is followed by a period of annihilation, called Ragnarok, after which the world is restored to goodness.

The Norse Ragnarok involves the destruction of the earth and the abodes of the Norse demigods (called Asgard), and thus it corresponds in Vedic chronology to the annihilation of the three worlds that follows 1,000 yuga cycles, or one day of Brahmā. It is said that during Ragnarok the world is destroyed with flames by a being named Surt, who lives beneath the lower world (appropriately called Hel) and was involved in the world’s creation. By comparison, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.11.30) states that at the end of Brahmā’s day, “the devastation takes place due to the fire emanating from the mouth of Saṅkarṣaṇa.” Saṅkarṣaṇa is a plenary expansion of Kṛṣṇa who is “seated at the bottom of the universe” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.8.3), beneath the

lower planetary systems.

There are many similarities between the Norse and Vedic cosmologies, but there are also great differences. One key difference is that in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all beings and phenomena within the universe are clearly understood as part of the divine plan of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In contrast, in the Norse mythology God is conspicuously absent, and the origin and purpose of the major players in the cosmic drama are very obscure. Surt, in particular, is a “fire giant” whose origins and motives are unclear even to experts in the Norse literature.⁹

One might ask, If Vedic themes appear in different societies, how can one conclude that they derive from an ancient Vedic civilization? Perhaps they were created in many places independently, or perhaps they descend from an unknown culture that is also ancestral to what we call Vedic culture. Thus parallels between the accounts of Surt and Saṅkarṣaṇa may be coincidental, or perhaps the

Vedic account derives from a story similar to that of Surt.

Our answer to this question is that available empirical evidence will not be sufficient to *prove* the hypothesis of descent from an ancient Vedic culture, for all empirical evidence is imperfect and subject to various interpretations. But we can decide whether or not the evidence is consistent with this hypothesis.

If there was an ancient Vedic world civilization, we would expect to find traces of it in many cultures around the world. We do seem to find such traces, and many agree with Vedic accounts in specific details (such as the location of Surt’s abode or the sacred buffalo’s loss of one leg per world age). Since this civilization began to lose its influence thousands of years ago, at the beginning of Kali-yuga, we would expect many of these traces to be fragmentary and overlain by many later additions, and this we also see. Thus the available evidence seems to be consistent with the hypothesis of a Vedic origin.

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BHAKTI-YOGA AT HOME

In the Kitchen

by Rohiṇinandana Dāsa

MRS. MADHU SHARMA, at home in an Indian village, is about to begin cooking the family meal. Her mother is already squatting on the spotless stone floor, dexterously grinding spices and chopping fresh herbs. Her sister minds the children, giving the other women freedom to concentrate on the cooking. Mrs. Sharma’s teenage niece runs in, ready to help, a bunch of fresh vegetables under her arm. The kitchen looks bare except for the sparkling iron pots and the glowing *tandooris*.¹

The women cook for an extended family of fifteen people. When the cooking is done, Mrs. Sharma makes up a special plate, places it on a small altar, and offers the meal to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the household Deities.

While the family eats, the women

continue making hot buttered *capātīs*² at tremendous speed, making sure everyone is amply supplied. After everyone is fully satisfied, the women take their meal. When they’re done, they distribute the leftovers to the animals and birds, and the leaf-plates to the family cow. They take the pots to the hand pump and take turns pumping water and washing pots, using earth and ash as a cleansing agent. Finally, they sluice down the entire kitchen, which will remain empty and clean until the next cooking session.

This is a typical scene of a family meal in an Indian village, nearly unchanged for thousands of years. It’s easy to appreciate how the peacefulness, simplicity, cleanliness, and devotion surrounding this tradition, with

roots in the ancient Vedic culture, foster the family’s health and, most important, their spiritual growth.

Should we try to re-arrange our kitchen, and indeed the rest of our house, as a facsimile of Mrs. Sharma’s? Should we rip out the cupboards with their packets and tins, throw out the machines and gadgets, and burn all the furniture? Now that we are attempting to be Kṛṣṇa conscious, should we try to squat on the floor, eat with our hands, and wear robes? And no more local, traditional dishes—now our diet should consist only of rice, *dāl*, *sabji*, *capātīs*, and *halvā*?³

I’ve been eating and immensely enjoying Lord Kṛṣṇa’s *prasādam*, Indian style, for twenty years, but mention a childhood staple like baked beans, chips, cornflakes, rhubarb

crumble, or cheese sandwiches, and my mouth still begins to water. Will Lord Kṛṣṇa accept a *kacauri*⁴ and not rhubarb crumble?

Two considerations come to mind.

The first is that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a spiritual culture, replete with its own style of art, cooking, and living. Accepting Kṛṣṇa's culture is good for our spiritual advancement.

The second consideration is that Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be added to our present life. It is the "one" in front of the zeros, the finishing touch, as Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say. Applying this principle, Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to offer what is locally available to the Deity in the temple. Similarly, in our homes we may offer the Lord food according to our own taste and custom, as Śrīla Prabhupāda once explained to Allen Ginsberg.⁵

Of course, the Indian, or, more appropriately, the Vedic tradition does offer a wonderful chance to enter another realm of cooking. After all, the preparations are replicas of those enjoyed by the Lord in the spiritual world. We would do well to explore this realm with the help of accomplished ISKCON cooks such as Yamuna Devi and Ādirāja Dāsa.⁶

In the meantime we must work with what we have. Our kids still have a hard time with those "Indian" preparations we are unskilled at preparing. And we still lay out those forks and knives.⁷ Yet we want our diet to be solely Kṛṣṇa *prasādam*, and we want to be Kṛṣṇa conscious and to center our home on the Lord.

Let's go back to the kitchen and take another look at that shelf of jars, tins, and packets. Are their contents offered or unoffered?⁸ Well . . . maybe some are offered, others unoffered. Perhaps we're not sure if the salt is offered or not. We can immediately make a simple change on our shelves and in our refrigerator—keep (clearly marked) separate areas for offered and unoffered items. And to avoid any confusion, keep items like salt, sugar, butter, jam, and so on, in distinct containers, one kind for offered, and another for unoffered.

Because we are trying to prepare dishes solely for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure and at the same time cater to the needs,

tastes, and perhaps whims of a growing family, we may sometimes feel perplexed. How can we think that we are exclusively cooking for Kṛṣṇa as we rush to get the porridge and toast ready so that John and Susan won't be late for school?

We have to remember, of course, that Lord Kṛṣṇa has entrusted these children to us to look after. But they belong to Him; they are His devotees (even if they don't yet realize it). So

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by serving them in the right consciousness, we are serving Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.27) that whatever we do should be done for Him. So as we butter the toast we can think, "I'm doing this for Kṛṣṇa."

Should we offer every piece of toast to Kṛṣṇa? No, that's not necessary. Devotional service is simple, easy, and practical. Kṛṣṇa wants to enhance our busy lives, not hamper them. Śrīla Prabhupāda once told a

devotee⁹ who was running a restaurant that he should make a nice offering especially for Kṛṣṇa in the morning, and then whatever would be cooked during the rest of the day would also be *prasādam*. We may therefore initially offer the basic items of the breakfast to Kṛṣṇa, and when requested for more by our family, we don't have to keep making further offerings.

Suppose you are asked for something that is not part of the initial offering. Here are a few possible measures you could take:

a. Don't allow anyone to ask for anything not on the table.

b. Keep a basket of offered fruit or a tin of biscuits or other snack food permanently on hand. In the early days of ISKCON Śrīla Prabhupāda kept a jar of *gulābjāmunas*¹⁰ always available for his peckish spiritual children.

c. Have a place in the kitchen for quick offerings. In our home we offer the main meal of the day on the altar in our temple room. Other meals, snacks, and beverages are offered in front of a small picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the kitchen. If, for instance, one of the children suddenly requests a piece of fruit during breakfast, it does not take long to offer it and bring it to the table.

d. Follow the principle of association: If an unoffered item comes in the close vicinity of something offered, it also becomes *prasādam*.¹¹ Suppose you have heated some milk, offered it, and served most of it out. Susan wants another cup—more than what remains in the pot. If you open a fresh carton of milk and pour some into the pot, it can now be considered offered. The same principle can apply to sugar, salt, and so on. We must be careful, however, that such expediency does not lead to casualness and laziness, and as far as possible we should make fresh offerings.

In many ways we are pioneers on a spiritual frontier, and therefore may feel puzzled occasionally about what is the correct way to do things. This column seeks to focus on different issues, discuss them, offer suggestions, and find solutions. The present discussion, which we will continue in the next issue, may have raised

questions, or you may have further ideas or points to add. Please write to me at the address below, and I will be happy to reply. We can work together to reach a synthesis of theory and practice.

Rohiṇinandana Dāsa lives in southern England with his wife and their three children.

NOTES

1. A small clay oven.
2. Thin, round, unleavened bread.
3. *Dāl*: spicy pea or bean soups; *sabji*: vegetables or vegetable dishes; *halvā*: a

sweet made with roasted farina.

4. A spicy, vegetable-stuffed fried pastry—one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's childhood favorites.

5. *Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda*, Vol. 1, p. 324.

6. See Yamuna Devi's column on p. 14. Ādirāja's cookbook is called *The Hare Krishna Book of Vegetarian Cooking*. It's available through local temple stores.

7. The Vedic custom is to eat with one's fingers. Śrīla Prabhupāda specifically avoided using forks and knives when he came to the West, explaining that he had come not to take our customs but to give us the Kṛṣṇa conscious culture.

Whether we should all dispense with

such trappings of Western society makes for an interesting discussion.

8. Unoffered food is called *bhoga* ("enjoyment") because it is meant for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Offered food is called *prasādam* ("mercy") because after Kṛṣṇa enjoys it, He mercifully leaves it for our pleasure and purification.

9. The devotee was Sarvabhāvana Dāsa.

10. Round sweets made from powdered milk that are deep-fried in ghee and then soaked in sweet water with a touch of rose essence; affectionately known as "ISKCON Bullets."

11. This is another reason we should be careful to avoid placing offered and unoffered items together.



LORD KRṢṆA'S CUISINE

Eating Right

by Yamuna Devi

Is Your Vaiṣṇava Diet Healthy?

As a food writer and teacher, I am often asked questions about the Vaiṣṇava diet. What are its elements? Does it meet USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) vegetarian guidelines? Are legumes considered proteins or starches? Since, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, foods in the mode of goodness are sweet, juicy, and fattening, should they be the basis of a Vaiṣṇava diet, and in what proportion?

In the first twenty years of my Vaiṣṇava life, I answered such questions hesitantly, often with cursory knowledge. Information in the field of Vaiṣṇava health and nutrition, education programs, and suggested dietary guidelines are difficult to come by. This lack of information, along with a keen personal interest in weight control, has led me to research the subject for the last three years.

Elements of a Vaiṣṇava Diet

A Vaiṣṇava diet is essentially lacto-vegetarian, one that includes grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, and dairy products. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā* (17.8–10), these foods are in the mode of goodness. They

increase life-span, purify the mind, and strengthen the body.

For millennia, Indian temple chefs have used these naturally pure foodstuffs in cooked offerings meant for the pleasure of the Lord in His Deity form. Of course, endless culinary expressions are possible using these ingredients. Śrīla Prabhupāda often said that even regional Indian vegetarian traditions offer hundreds of thousands of varieties.

Vaiṣṇava temple and home chefs consider foods in one of two categories—*pakka*, or "cooked," and *kaccha*, or "raw." These are roughly categorized according to the way they're cooked. Cooked foods include all those cooked in fat: shallow-, pan-, or deep-fried. Raw foods include those cooked with little or no fat: steamed, baked, boiled or stewed, braised or stir-fried.

Anyone who has studied cooking in India immediately notices that baking and ovens are almost nonexistent. With the exception of large drum-shaped *tandoori* ovens, most cooking is done on the stovetop. While breads, savories, cakes, light meal snacks, and pastries are often baked in the West, in India the same dishes are fried. You don't need to be a nutritionist to know that fried foods, although scrumptious,

should be eaten sparingly in a healthy diet.

Food Groups And Daily Requirements

Vegetarianism covers a broad range of diets, some good and some bad. Vaiṣṇava vegetarians have long stressed variety from five major groups: starch from breads, cereals, and grain products; vegetables; fruits; protein from legumes, cheese, and alternates; and dairy from milk and its products. Foods in these groups provide the protein, vitamins, minerals, starch, and dietary fiber needed for good health. The sixth group, which includes fats, nuts, and seeds, is necessary for calories, but more important, for an essential fatty acid called linoleic acid. Nutrient and caloric needs vary from person to person depending on age, sex, body size, and activity level. But no matter what the different requirements of household members, you needn't have different plans for each person.

Patterns for Daily Food Choices

In America, nutrition educators are encouraged by the public interest in health and diet that developed in

Food Groups	STARCH	VEGETABLES	FRUITS	PROTEIN	DAIRY	FAT
Suggested Daily Servings	6–15 portions	6–15 portions	2–4 portions	2–3 portions	2–3 portions	—
What is a Portion?	½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal ½ cup cooked barley, kasha, bulgar, or millet ⅓ cup cooked brown rice 1 oz. cold cereal, unsweetened 1 six-inch whole wheat <i>chapati</i> or corn tortilla ½ of a six-inch pita 1 slice whole wheat bread ½ cup English muffin or bagel ½ cup corn, peas, mashed potatoes, or sliced water chestnuts 1 two-inch potato 3 oz. sweet potatoes	¾ cup (uncooked) broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cabbage, eggplant, okrá, cauliflower, kale, beans, green summer squash, spaghetti squash, tomatoes, or cucumber ½ cup celery root, snow peas, pimento, winter squash, or pumpkin ¼ cup baby lima beans	½ cup berries, orange juice, or pineapple 2 apricots 10 cherries 1 two-inch apple ½ banana 12 large grapes 20 small grapes 2 dates 1 fig 1 kiwi 1 two-inch nectarine or peach 1 small pear 2 plums ½ small mango 2 tablespoons raisins 1 small pomegranate ¾ cup cubed melon	½ cup cooked chickpeas, pinto beans, mung beans, or cooked legumes 3 oz. firm tofu 2 oz. extra-firm tofu 1 oz. firm <i>panir</i> cheese 2 oz. soft <i>chenna</i> cheese ¼ cup lowfat cottage cheese, dry-curd cottage cheese, farmers' cheese, pot cheese, hoop cheese, or part-skim ricotta cheese 1 oz. cheddar, Muenster, edam, Jack, or Swiss ¾ oz. sprouted legumes	1 cup nonfat or whole milk, yogurt, kefir, buttermilk, ice milk, or sherbet ½ cup evaporated skim or whole milk ¼ cup powdered skim milk	1 teaspoon oil, butter, <i>ghee</i> , or margarine ⅓ small avocado 1 tablespoon cream or cream cheese ½ tablespoon sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds 1 oz. olives 1 teaspoon peanut butter

the eighties. Shoppers are reading labels, not only to count calories but, more important, to see the fat, sodium, and cholesterol content of foods. Throughout history, Vaiṣṇava vegetarians have been uniquely aware of food and health. Because the Vedic culture is spiritual, founded on love for God and His creation, there is a natural focus on harmony from the earth to the table. Purity, freshness, and variety are essential elements in food preparation and menu planning.

Remarkably, the USDA's newest recommended dietary guidelines fall in with those long recognized in the Vaiṣṇava tradition. If you are new to this style of cuisine, the suggested servings above, based on 1991 recommendations from the USDA, will be helpful. You will immediately notice the low number of protein servings. According to Eileen Newman, of the Human Nutrition Information Service, the official belief in the need for a high-protein diet is a thing of the past. Today the public is encouraged to include variety in the diet, understand topics such as the importance of fiber,

and learn about portion control.

Newman stresses the long practiced Vaiṣṇava standard, "It is important to choose different foods from within each group because they differ in the types and amounts of nutrients they provide."

She further suggests, "Be sure to choose at least the minimum number of servings recommended from each group every day. Many women, older children, and most teenagers and men need more. The top range shown above is about right for an active man or teenage boy."

No specific number is given for daily servings of fat. Fat should be kept at about thirty percent of the total caloric intake. Fat is present in varying degrees in many foods, so you need to consider that when calculating your total daily intake.

Planning Menus

Even if you think you don't plan menus, you do when you shop. Food choices are influenced by habit, occasion, nutrition, and likes and dis-

likes. If you get into the practice of planning meals before shopping, you can increase variety, save time, effort, and money, and help control your intake of fat, sugar, and sodium.

The cooking method you use will greatly affect the health value of your foods. Contrary to popular belief, starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn, and peas are not high in calories—unless coated in fatty sauces or fried. If you prepare your vegetables based on *kaccha* techniques of steaming or stir-frying, they will retain a bright color, crisp texture, and light taste. Instead of deep-frying vegetables and *pānir* cheese, try grilling or broiling them. The rich, smoky flavor of grilled *pānir* or tofu, bell peppers, eggplant, or summer squash will lend excellent flavor to dishes that traditionally call for these ingredients to be deep-fried. You can "lighten" any favorite braised or stewed dish by simply cutting the fat content in half.

Although the Sunday Feast dinners served at many ISKCON temples throughout the world are rich and sweet, that does not reflect the

sensible standards of weekday meals. Health-aware cooks exploring Indian cuisine have long appreciated light entrées such as *doṣa* pancakes, steamed *iddli* dumplings, and succulent vegetable-grain *kicchāri* stew. All of these dishes combine a starch with a protein and, in the process, increase food value substantially. Dishes such as Caribbean-style black beans and rice or Southern “Hoppin’ John” with black-eyed peas are other healthy examples of this formula.

Savvy Western temple chefs are now trying to include some type of whole-grain-and-vegetable entrée salad in daily menus. Using the vast array of seasonal produce and grains available today, these salads can often be the best fare of the day, as mouth-watering as they are nutritious.

Checklist for Healthy Menus

Write out your menus and answer the following questions:

1. Does a day’s menu provide at least the lowest number of servings from each of the major food groups shown on the chart and below:

- 6 servings of grain products?
- 2 servings of fruit?
- 6 servings of vegetables?
- 2–3 servings of protein?
- 2 servings of milk or its products?

2. Do the menus have several servings of whole-grain bread, cereal, or pilaf each day?

3. Do menus for a week include several servings of dark-green leafy vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, lettuce, or green beans?

4. Are the menus practical for you in time, cost, and acceptance?



OVEN FRENCH FRIES

Even though I had seen recipes for no-oil fries in cookbooks and magazines, until I tried them I wasn’t convinced they could be delicious. Instead of surprising the potatoes with hot oil, you expose them to a blast of hot air. This results in a creamy interior and crisp brown crust bathed in the scent of the seasonings used.

In this variation, the potatoes are treated with seasonings similar to Bengal’s *āloo bhāji*. You can use almost any seasoning. Depending on your taste preferences, try a dusting of herb salt, mild paprika, lemon pepper, cayenne powder, or crushed spice seeds. You can also cut the potatoes into country-style wedges, ½-inch julienne, or crinkle cuts. Take this recipe as an inspiration to come up with scores of variations. Serve with a splash of lemon juice, ketchup, or fresh chutney.

Ingredients:

russet or Idaho-type baking potatoes
(Quantities required: ¼ pound per person as an appetizer; ⅓ pound per person as a snack or side dish; ½ pound per person as the basis of a meal.)
olive-oil spray
turmeric
mild paprika
salt or herb salt
cumin seeds, coarsely crushed or ground

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Spray or brush two nonstick baking trays with oil. Slice the peeled or unpeeled potatoes lengthwise or crosswise into rounds ¼-inch thick. Alternatively, cut them into ⅓-inch julienne sticks. Place rounds or sticks in a bowl and sprinkle with turmeric, paprika, salt, and cumin. Toss to mix and place the rounds in a single layer on the prepared trays.

Place the trays in the upper and lower middle of the oven. Bake until the potatoes are a deep golden-brown, 20–25 minutes. Some potatoes will soufflé, or puff up, and others will blister. If necessary, rotate the trays to get even browning. Serve piping hot.

Yamuna Devi is the author of Lord Krishna’s Cuisine: The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking. The above recipe is from a forthcoming book, Yamuna’s Kitchen, to be published by E. P. Dutton.



THROUGH THE EYES OF SĀSTRA

Pointing

by Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa

SOMETIME IN THE 1730’s, a young Scottish philosopher tried, and failed, to find himself. David Hume reflected upon this experience in his first book, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739). The passage is much quoted and anthologized. I encountered it frequently as an undergraduate philosophy major, for my teachers regarded it as a watershed in Western philosophy.

They revered David Hume—progenitor of the hard-nosed, no-nonsense style of empiricism they professed—and they amused their classes by reproducing in a Scottish burr a famous remark by the great philosopher’s mother: “Oor Davie’s a fine, good-natured crater, but uncommon wake-minded.”

Well, sons are sometimes hard on

mothers, too. That was why I had the afternoon last fall to take my two grandsons in a search for the self, some 260 years after Davie had looked in vain. This Saturday my harried daughter needed a break, so my wife and I were at her house trying to load Parameśvara (age five), Bhakti-vinoda (three and a half), and all their weekend gear into our car. In the

midst of a great deal of coming and going, Parameśvara and I found ourselves at one point alone together in the car. We chatted. I was struck once more by how bright this lanky, tow-headed boy was, and I wondered how much of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness he understood. I decided to begin with what Śrīla Prabhupāda called the "first lesson."

Making sure I had his attention, I said, "Parameśvara, do you know you're not your body?"

"I'm *not*?" he exclaimed in amazement. He looked at me expectantly, awaiting explanation.

"That's right. You're not. You're the soul, the spirit soul."

He knew plenty of Kṛṣṇa stories, but, it seemed, no philosophy. Was he too young? His astonishment told me he was ready—my statement didn't just go past him or bewilder him. Yet

how could I get him to understand the soul? I did not want him simply reciting stock, catechistic responses that had no meaning for him.

Before I could go any further we were interrupted: "Jaga! Jaga! Help me!"

This was Bhaktivinoda, stranded on the sidewalk with a spill of paraphernalia, calling his older brother, whose in-house name is "Jaga" or "Jaga-bear." (I can't tell you why.) After we had packed the trunk and settled back-seat territorial disputes, Jaga went back inside to look for the trip snack-bag, leaving me alone with Bhaktivinoda, or, conveniently, "T-Node." T-Node is a roly-polly kind of kid with a pale, circular face that's surrounded by a sunburst of curly hair so blonde it's nearly white. A toddler's lisp overlays his low, gravelly voice.

I had him alone: How would someone this young respond? Would he be interested at all?

"T-Node," I asked in a serious voice, "do you know you're not your body?"

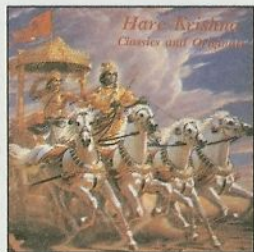
"I'm *not*?" he exclaimed at once, his eyes wide with astonishment. He looked up at me, waiting.

"No, you're not. When Jaga comes back I'll explain it." I began making plans.

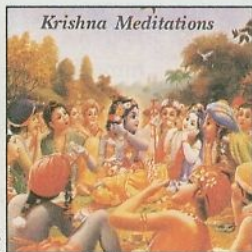
My wife agreed to drive, and by the time we made the turnpike I was ready. I had remembered how Śrīla Prabhupāda had taught some schoolchildren and decided to try it.

I twisted around to face the boys in the back seat. "Now I'll show you that you're not your body. First stick your pointing finger out straight, like this. OK? Good. Now just do what I tell you. Ready?"

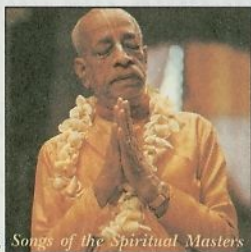
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They were; they were into it.
“Now: point to your nose!” I pointed to my nose, Jaga to his, T-Node to his.

“Now point to your belly!” We all did. I led them through a sequence: elbow, eye, foot, knee, chest . . . (Once they got going I stopped pointing.) I hammed it up a bit and gradually gained speed until I reached the punchline: “Now point to your self!” Consternation. Pointing fingers waved about aimlessly, eyebrows knit together in bafflement. They laughed . . . “What? What?” Jaga said, his finger looping around like a bottled-up fly.

“See!” I said. “You *can’t* point to yourself. That’s because you are *not your body!* You’re the soul.”

T-Node was thunderstruck; he had clearly undergone an intellectual breakthrough. His face was lit up with the wonder of discovery.

“Do it again! Do it again!” T-Node begged. We went through the sequence a few times, and each time it worked to both boys’ satisfaction. “I’m not my body,” I heard T-Node saying to himself. “I am the soul.” It seemed to sound right to him.

But I felt an unease, a mental chill, almost a presence. It was the ghost of David Hume. With suave, measured tones that nicely set off a hint of contempt, I heard the words of the *Treatise* announcing the position about to be demolished:

“There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our *self*. . . .”

But where, Hume asks, could we get the idea of a *self* from? All real ideas are based on “impressions”—on sensations, passions, or emotions. We must be able to analyze or dissect ideas down to show ultimately the impressions that produced them. If we cannot, then the so-called idea is meaningless. What impression, Hume asks, is responsible for the idea of a single, simple, enduring, changing self?

If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist

after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot therefore be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is derived; and consequently there is no such idea.

Yet don’t we need a self to possess or unify all our particular impressions? Well, where is it?

• • •

“Do it again! Do it again!” T-Node begged. We went through the sequence a few more times, and each time it worked to both the boys’ satisfaction.

“I’m not my body,” I heard T-Node saying to himself. “I am the soul.”

• • •

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.

A person may attest that he perceives “something simple and continued, which he calls *himself*,” Hume says, “though I am certain there is no such principle in me.” Setting such “metaphysicians” aside, Hume affirms

that humans “are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.”

Haunted by Hume, I kept on conversing with the metaphysicians in the back seat while the Pennsylvania croplands poured away behind them. They were learning to discriminate between matter and spirit. I held a rubber ball in my hand and beat it with a fist.

“See? I can hit it over and over again—*hard*—and it never goes ‘Ow!’ It never cries. But if I hit you”—they bobbed away from my slow-motion punch—“you’ll feel it. You’ll cry. That’s because there is a soul—you—in your body. But there’s no soul in this ball.”

“This morning Jaga hit me and made me cry,” T-Node said.

“If you hit a cat or dog, it feels it,” Jaga quickly put in. “It is also a spirit soul.”

“Even ants or spiders,” I added. T-Node looked down guiltily. He’s been known to step on ants on purpose.

How could Hume have missed himself? Was he being willfully obtuse? Imagine him conducting an inventory of his mental contents, like an auctioneer appraising the contents of an estate up for sale. He walks through each room, examining each object. Picking it up, setting it down. Looking for something in particular. “Is this myself? Is this? Is this?” After an exhaustive search, he reports—truthfully enough—that he didn’t find it.

But *who* is looking? Who is inspecting this memory, this joy, this love, this fear, this regret, this ambition, this or that train of thought? David, you could not find your *self* in all that because none of that, taken separately or all together, is your self. The self is not the seen but the seer, not the experience but the experienter. You are not even David Hume, but rather the experienter of being David Hume.

Teaching my grandsons had given me a new insight into the *Treatise*. Like T-Node and Jaga, David Hume

had been playing the pointing game. T-Node and Jaga played by pointing to different parts of their bodies, while David played by pointing to different parts of his mind—the subtle body. I could take Davie through it point by point, running through the inventory of mental goods, until: “Point to your self!” And the indexical Humean finger wavers, finding no object. “See!” I’d say. “You’re not your mind. You’re the spirit soul.”

For we are no more to be identified with our minds than with our bodies. The mind belongs to the category of the not-self as much as the body does. Both mind and body are material, the former being merely finer or subtler

than the latter. Vedic seers know this, but Western philosophers have conflated the spiritual and the mental; “mind” and “soul” are synonymous. David Hume discovered in the *Treatise* that the mind was not the self, but he drew a false conclusion: there was no self, no soul, at all.

My grandsons were doing better: “What happens if I attack the soul with ninja swords?”

“Nothing! It can’t be cut!”

“What happens if I drop a huge rock on it?”

“It can’t be smashed!”

“What happens if I put a blowtorch to it?”

“It can’t be burnt!”

“How can I kill the soul?”

“You can’t! You can’t kill the soul!”

They were good students. They made me wish I had Davie in my class along with them. I thought about that. Since the presence of such a great philosopher might intimidate me, I would want his mother along too. She sounded like a formidable woman, and she seemed to know her son.

Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa, ISKCON’s Governing Body Commissioner for the U.S. mid-Atlantic region, lives at the Philadelphia temple, where he joined ISKCON in 1971. He holds a Ph.D. in religion from Temple University.



SCHOOLING KṚṢṆA’S CHILDREN

The Company We Keep

by Urmilā Devī Dāsī

CAN WE MAKE OUR CHILDREN turn out the way we want?

Śrīla Prabhupāda once said, “If you place a child in good association, he will act properly, and if you place him in bad association, he will act improperly. A child has no independence in that sense. . . . According to Vedic civilization, as soon as a child is four or five years old, he is sent to a *gurukula*, where he is disciplined.”

Anyone who has worked with children knows they are vulnerable to their environment. Yet children also carry from their previous lives a complex burden of good and bad *karma* and a particular tendency of character. In fact, the mentality of the parents during conception attracts a particular soul—with particular inclinations—to become their child. Because of this, enlightened parents prepare themselves so that they can be in spiritual consciousness during conception. Thus their child will be receptive to the training they will give him. Śrīla Prabhupāda says, “You can mold the children in any way. They are like soft dough.” So the mold is essential when considering the shape of the final piece of sculpture. But the quality of the material one puts into

the mold is also important.

On the other hand, our children’s tendencies from their previous lives and present conceptions can change. Their real personality is spiritual, filled with love for Kṛṣṇa at every moment. Their natural position is that of eternal knowledge and bliss. Therefore it is entirely reasonable and possible to transcendently mold anyone, of any previous disposition. After all, the spiritual “mold” is the shape of the real self.

The principle of such molding is quite simple. We need to surround the child with saintly association, eliminating all false and negative concepts. To do so is difficult not because it is unnatural or burdensome, but because modern Western society, saturated with materialism, discourages spiritual growth.

We might feel, though, that we should not “isolate” our child. We might be afraid that our child won’t be able to cope with society if raised in a spiritual atmosphere. Yet we teach our children to eat properly by feeding them healthy food; we don’t give them a taste for junk food to help them cope with supermarket aisles. Nor do we give them small doses of

beer or marijuana to help them conquer the urge for intoxication.

So rather than expose our children to materialism, we should train them to become saintly. Then as masters of their mind and senses, they will be happy in all circumstances. And rather than becoming allured by material life, they will create a spiritual atmosphere around themselves that will attract others.

Vedic education’s most important feature is to surround children with teachers and other students who want to know their true self. Such persons live free from lust, greed, and envy and therefore do not eat meat, fish, or eggs, take intoxication, gamble, or have illicit sex. And the true teacher, according to Vedic standards, is one who is absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth. The true teacher does everything for Kṛṣṇa, doesn’t hanker or lament for material things, and is always in a state of spiritual happiness.

Such a teacher, however, need not neglect the material, academic side of education. We require practical knowledge in this world. Yet we should not want to acquire knowledge simply to build up another false

material identity that will disappear in the next death and rebirth. Nor should we want academic knowledge for its own sake, which will also be lost when we change bodies. But when academic knowledge and practical skills are learned in the service of the higher self, the benefit is eternal.

Throughout the world, societies train children to be economically and

socially productive members of their culture. They may also learn a religious faith, with its doctrine and rituals. But imagine if some children, even a small group, were molded to be above all material designations, all influences of the material atmosphere. These children could lead mankind into an era of righteousness and harmony.

Urmilā Devī Dāsī became a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1973. She has been involved in ISKCON education for the last seven years, primarily as the principal of the Detroit gurukula. She recently moved with her husband and their three children to the ISKCON community in Hillsborough, North Carolina, where she is working to establish a model of spiritual education.



INDIA'S HERITAGE

How Should We Educate Our Children?

by Navīna Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

WE WANT OUR CHILDREN to get an education, so we send them off to school—kindergarten through twelfth grade and then on through college.

We want them to acquire all the information they need to become successful adults. We also expect our schools to properly enculturate our children, turning them into upstanding citizens and fine human beings who will interact acceptably with other educated adults.

But what is actually happening in the schools today? I was astonished recently to come across a comparison of the top seven disciplinary problems confronting schools in 1940 and those confronting schools today, compiled by the California Federation of Police and the California Department of Education.

Top Disciplinary Problems in 1940

1. Talking
2. Chewing gum
3. Making noise
4. Running in the halls
5. Getting out of line
6. Wearing improper clothing
7. Not putting paper in the wastebasket

Top Disciplinary Problems Today

1. Drug abuse
2. Alcohol abuse
3. Pregnancy

4. Suicide
5. Rape
6. Robbery
7. Assault

Shocking, isn't it? Yet when we understand that the primary purpose of traditional education is to socialize children, it's not so surprising. In school, children learn and practice the value system of the dominant local culture. The top problems in schools today, therefore, undoubtedly reflect the problems of the dominant local culture.

How have things run amuck? According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the problem is that people falsely conceive of the body as the self. Because of this misconception, they try their best to manipulate the material energy to get what they consider to be the most out of life. For persons in bodily consciousness, this means sensual and mental pleasures. These may appear dazzling and refined when one comes into the realm of M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s, but they are based on a misconception nonetheless. And, as in a mathematical equation, when the first assumption is wrong, everything that follows will also be wrong.

So what is real education? What is real knowledge? And how do we help our children obtain these things? In Vedic times children were given the

skills they needed for their occupation. But most importantly, their teachers instilled in them admirable qualities like truthfulness, piety, and self-control. Having these qualities, people naturally performed their duties, and society was peaceful. The atmosphere was thus suitable for spiritual practices, allowing everyone the opportunity to progress toward the real goal of life—liberation from repeated birth and death in the material world.

This, then, is what is missing today—understanding the *goal* of human life. The *Vedas* tell us that the human body is awarded to the living entity only rarely, and that it is a fit boat for crossing over the ocean of nescience. Unless we can deliver our dependents from the cycle of birth and death, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, we should not become parents. We have to understand what a rare opportunity our children have to get out of this ocean of suffering once and for all. Our real obligation is to help our children achieve liberation. Education that leads them to this end is real education.

Navīna Kṛṣṇa Dāsa (Naveen Khurana) was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1975. Originally from New Delhi, he holds an M.S. and an M.B.A. from the University of Illinois. Write to him c/o BTG.

THE VEDIC OBSERVER

THE WORLD SEEN THROUGH EYES OF VEDIC KNOWLEDGE

GOD AND COUNTRY

by Drutakarmā Dāsa

THE PILGRIMAGE TOWN of Ayodhyā, about 345 miles southeast of New Delhi, has become the focus of a conflict that threatens the stability of the Indian secular state.

The present town of Ayodhyā is named after the capital of Rāma, an incarnation of the Supreme Lord who appeared in India long ago. Rāma demonstrated the character and behavior of a perfect king. Familiar to all Indians, the history of Lord Rāma is told in the Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, which through the centuries has inspired classic works of art, drama, dance, and song.

The exact history of Rāma Janmasthanā, the birthplace of Lord Rāma, is in dispute. According to some accounts, the Islamic emperor Babar built a mosque there in the sixteenth century. A temple dedicated to Lord Rāma is said to have previously existed at the same spot.

Following a court decision in 1986, a Deity of Lord Rāma was installed in the Babri mosque, which had not been used as a Muslim place of worship for many years. Recently, a number of Hindu organizations and parties have intensified their campaign to build a temple to Lord Rāma on the land now occupied by the mosque, inspiring opposition from Muslims and others.

Over the past two years, three successive Indian governments (headed by Rajiv Gandhi, V. P. Singh, and Chandra Shekar) have sought to defuse the crisis, without much success. Indeed, the fall of the last government, that of V. P. Singh, was directly related to the Rāma temple dispute. Prime Minister Singh, after defeating Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party in the 1989 elections, headed an unusual coalition that included his own Janata Dal Party, Com-

munists, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which some have labeled a fundamentalist Hindu party. The BJP supported the Hindu organizations, such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, seeking to erect the Rāma temple on the site occupied by the Babri mosque. Late last year, L. K. Advani, head of the BJP, was arrested as he proceeded through northern India in a motorized chariot toward Ayodhyā.

In November 1990, government

a coalition in order to rule. Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress (I) Party pledged support to Chandra Shekar, thus allowing him to head the government.

Under the parliamentary system, the prime minister must command a majority, and as soon as he loses a vote of confidence, he must either form a new government or call national elections.

Some political commentators believe that Rajiv Gandhi agreed to support



A paramilitary policeman beats down a Hindu in Ayodhyā last October. Police opened fire on Hindus who stormed the Babri Mosque.

troops and police turned back crowds of protesters who had come from all parts of India to begin construction of the Rāma temple. Press reports said twenty-four persons were killed in Ayodhyā, and hundreds more died throughout India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh in incidents related to the dispute.

After the arrest of Advani, the Bharatiya Janata Party withdrew from the ruling coalition, precipitating the resignation of Prime Minister Singh. Chandra Shekar, head of a socialist faction of the Janata Dal Party, was chosen as the new prime minister. With only a small minority of seats in parliament, Chandra Shekar had to form

Chandra Shekar in order to postpone national elections until India has had time to recover from the recent wave of Hindu-Muslim violence.

The Chandra Shekar government would like to see the Indian Supreme Court decide the controversy about the history of the Ayodhyā site and work out an acceptable solution regarding the future of the present mosque and the proposed temple.

Meanwhile, the disturbances arising out of the Rāma temple dispute have sparked an intense debate about India's future as a secular state. Since its founding in 1949, the Indian government, following Western models, has

been avowedly secular. But in practice political leaders have often attempted to win points by playing up to the religious sentiments of the Hindu majority and the influential Muslim minority. And this, some say, violates the principle of secularism.

Some observers have suggested that the only way to achieve social peace and harmony is to craft a national government that is free from any connection with God and religion.

A recent signed editorial in the *Times of India* criticized government leaders for participating in religious ceremonies. The author complained that when leaders do this they "send the unmistakable message that the public expression of religious belief is not only not frowned upon by the state but is actually encouraged by it."

"A genuinely secular state," said the author, "does not have to be aggressively antagonistic to religion. But it must insist on . . . the exclusion of religious observances in the public domain. And while not systematically campaigning against religion, . . . it must

vigorously propagate the ideology of scientific rationalism."

Scientific rationalism, in the mind of the editorial's author, is an ideology that is fundamentally atheistic and materialistic. This ideology, he says, should be the official doctrine of the secular state.

Persons attracted to such views should carefully consider what is happening in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, where the world's most truly secular governments have collapsed, or are collapsing, and religion is thriving anew.

Of course, it is natural that some might be discouraged when confronted with violence growing out of religious differences. But abandoning religion in favor of pure secularism is not going to help. Stalin was a truly secular person, a great admirer of scientific rationalism, but he killed millions of his countrymen.

Just because there is counterfeit money circulating does not mean that a government should abandon currency. Rather, efforts should be made to identify counterfeit bills and withdraw

them. The same is true in matters of religion. Sectarian religious views that promote communal antagonism and violence are antithetical to genuine religion. They should be discouraged by governments.

But beyond this, what position should a government take regarding religion? One possibility, which has been given too little attention, is that a government can involve itself in promoting non-sectarian religious principles.

That such a policy can be beneficial for a state has been suggested by President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, who said during a visit to Italy in December 1989 that "the moral values which religion generated and embodied for centuries can help in the work of renewal in our country. . . . We need spiritual values."

Can religious principles really be nonsectarian? Śrīla Prabhupāda once said, "God is neither Christian nor Hindu nor Muslim." And the individual soul, being part of God, the Supreme Soul, is also neither Christian nor Hindu nor Muslim.

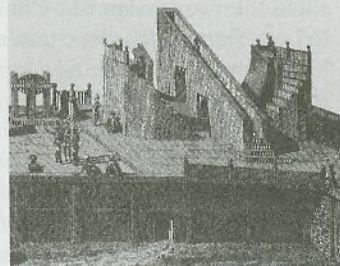
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***Despite the claims of scientific rationalism,
the soul and God are real, and communicating nonsectarian
spiritual values based on knowledge of
God and the soul is a proper function of the state.***



Christian, Hindu, Jew, and Muslim are simply designations of the body, and they can change. A Christian can become a Muslim, and a Hindu can become a Christian. But the soul's eternal loving relation to God can never change.

Many people speak about love of God without knowing who God is or how exactly to love Him. But to truly love God, one must know both His personality and how to please Him directly. That knowledge, hinted at in various scriptures, is fully explained in the Vedic literature.

Properly understood, the Vedic literature is not the sole property of India or Hinduism. The Sanskrit word *veda* simply means knowledge, and the knowledge of God and the soul in the *Vedas* can be applied in all times, in all places, by all people. Vedic knowledge unifies rather than divides.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been organized to educate people everywhere about the Vedic spiritual values, which transcend the narrow bounds of competing sectarian religions.

According to books of Vedic knowledge such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, governments should actively assist in the all-important work of promoting genuine spiritual values. In this connection, Śrīla Prabhupāda observed, "The principles of religion, namely austerity, cleanliness, mercy, and truthfulness, . . . may be followed by the follower of any faith. There is no need to turn from Hindu to Mohammedan to Christian or some other faith. . . . The *Bhāgavatam* religion urges following the principles of religion. The principles of religion are not the dogmas or regulative principles of a certain faith."

If the government does not help

promote the nonsectarian principles of religion, then, says the *Bhāgavatam*, "irreligious principles like greed, falsehood, robbery, incivility, treachery, misfortune, cheating, quarrel, and vanity will abound."

Unfortunately, too many people in government, under the influence of "scientific rationalism," have become convinced that there is no God or soul or that communicating knowledge of God and the soul is not the business of government. But despite the claims of scientific rationalism, the soul and God are real, and communicating nonsectarian spiritual values based on knowledge of God and the soul is a proper function of the state.

If people neglect spiritual progress, they will suffer in this life and the next. But if the citizens of any state adopt genuine nonsectarian spiritual values, they become free from the miseries of birth, death, old age, and disease and will eventually achieve the highest good, pure love of God. Any state truly interested in the ultimate welfare of its citizens should welcome this.

And how should governments relate to the existing sectarian religions? In 1973, the Indian ambassador to Sweden discussed this sensitive topic with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Stockholm. The ambassador suggested, "As a government we should not take too strong a policy about any particular religion, even though it is the religion of the majority of the people."

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Secular state means neutral to any kind of religion. But it is the duty of government to see that people are religious. Not that, 'Because government is secular, let the people go to hell.'"

"No, that's true," said the ambassador.

"Yes," continued Śrīla Prabhupāda, "if you are a Muslim, it is my duty as government to see that you are actually acting as a Muslim. If you are a Hindu, it is the government's duty to see that you are acting as a Hindu. If you are a Christian, it is the government's duty to see that you are living up to the Christian standards. You cannot give up religion. *Dharmena hināḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*. If people become irreligious in the name of secularism, then they are simply animals. So it is the government's duty to see that the citizens are not becoming animals. He may profess any type of religion. That doesn't matter. But he must be religious. That is the secular state. Not that secular state means the government is callous: 'Let the people become cats and dogs, without religion. The government doesn't care.'"

So what should be done in India? Perhaps it is time for the Indian people to urge their government to re-evaluate its commitment to the Western-style secular state and begin actively promoting India's greatest natural resource—the science of universal spiritual values contained in the timeless Vedic literature. Let the followers of all faiths be measured against the standard of genuinely universal religious principles. If they are truly advancing on the path of love of God and love of all God's creatures, none of them will have anything to fear, from the state or from each other. 🌸

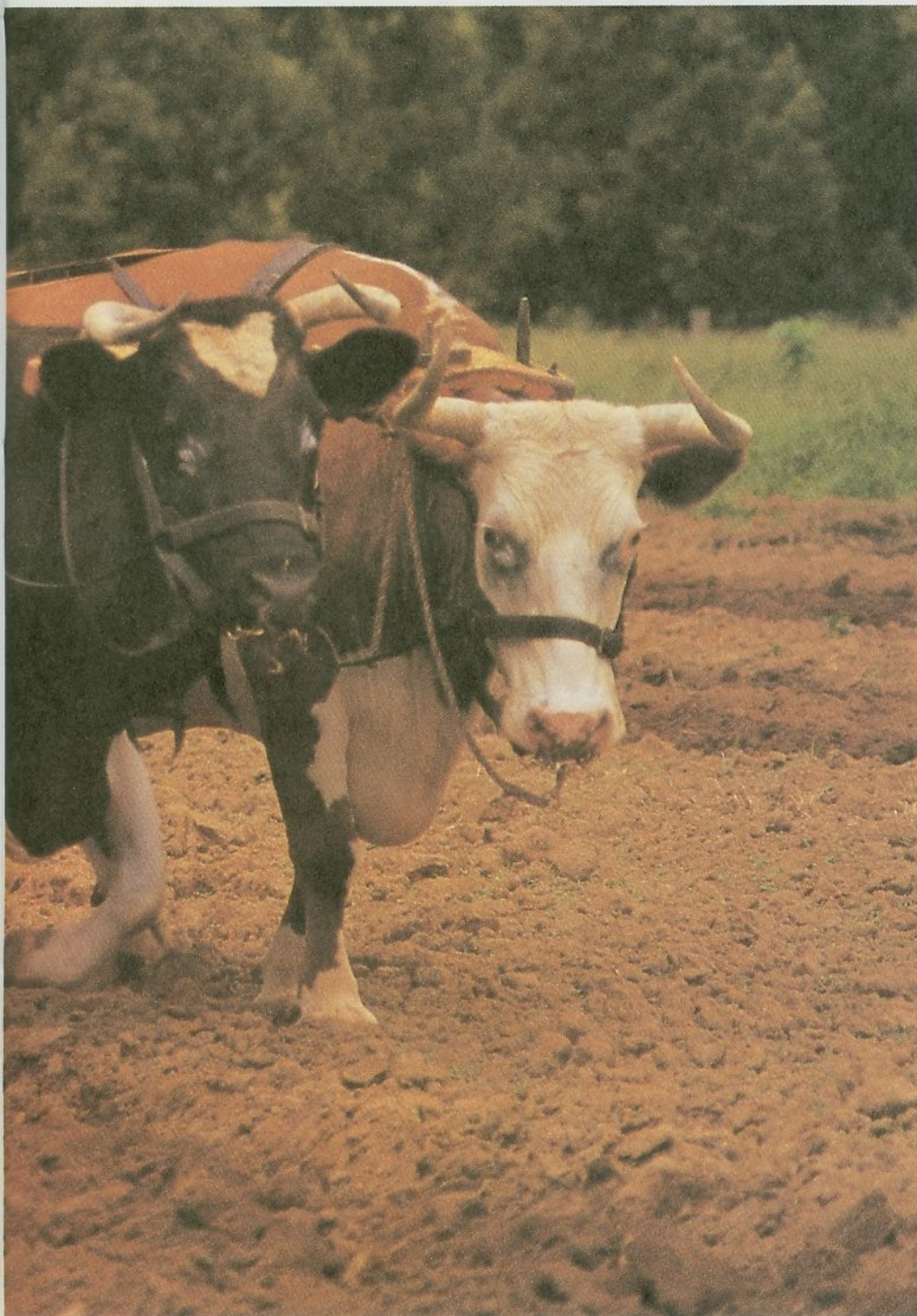
Drutakarmā Dāsa is an associate editor of Back to Godhead, an associate editor of ISKCON World Review, and a science writer for the Bhaktivedanta Institute in San Diego. Portions of this article appeared in ISKCON World Review (December 1990).

THE CASE FOR OX

The world's economy and ecology are in danger, victims of the modern way of life. The situation demands a return to the natural life, based on cows, bulls, and the land.



POWER



LAST JANUARY I visited ISKCON's Śaraṅāgati community in British Columbia. Jāmbavān Dāsa, who lives there, had recently participated in the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver.

The organizers of the event, the largest annual fair in western Canada, had invited the community to bring two oxen. During the opening parade, the oxen pulled a covered wagon like those used by the early settlers in North America.

Afterwards, many visitors came to the community's exhibition, especially to see the oxen. The question most often asked was, How do you get them to grow so big?

And Jāmbavān would tell them the secret to raising big oxen.

"Really?" said one visitor. "That's all there is to it?"

"I can't believe it," said another. "It's too simple."

"You're kidding," said another.

What was Jāmbavān's secret? It's easy: The oxen grow big because we don't eat them.

I couldn't understand the problem. "What's so strange about a big ox?" I asked. Then Jāmbavān explained that almost all the bulls in North America are butchered before they are two years old.

I thought about the words of the Vedic sage: "My dear butcher, do not

Laguḍi Dāsa guides powerful oxen as they pull a plow through the fertile earth at New Govardhana, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's 1000-acre farm near Murwillumbah, Australia.

live and do not die. Your life is hell, and your death will be hell.”

Modern man could turn his hellish life toward a bright future if he would try to understand and adopt the way of life given in the *Vedas*. In this issue of *Back to Godhead* the editors want to focus on one aspect of that way of life: protection of the bull.

The bull is one of the greatest assets of the Vedic *varṇāśrama* society. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* calls him the symbol of religion and the father of mankind because he pulls the plow and works the land, producing grains for sacrifice and nourishment.

And Father Bull's consort, the cow, is the mother of mankind because she supplies milk, the most perfect of all foods. Human beings who mistreat these important animals degrade and eventually destroy human culture.

People in the machine age have forgotten the value of the bull and placed their affection in machines. People depend on and love their cars, their tractors, and their computers, but dependence on machines is artificial and dangerous.

Instead of living simply and using their intelligence for spiritual development, humans have dedicated themselves to a pursuit of technological advancement, the utopian dream of a perfect material world. The machine age has unbridled the greed of the human being with the promise of newer and better machines to make life more comfortable and to help him exploit the material world for more enjoyment.

The machine age takes away the finer qualities of the human being. Everything and everyone in the world becomes an object of exploitation.

Pushed by greed, humans become insensitive and cruel toward each other, toward other living beings, and toward Mother Earth. But the karmic reactions will soon catch up with humanity, and we can expect to see the end of the machine age, thank God.

If enough people understand and begin now to practice simple living and high thinking, humanity can hope to see the revival of a natural lifestyle and higher consciousness.

In the articles that follow, the authors will show that when human beings are satisfied with simple living and high thinking, the bull can do wonderful

things for them. Father Bull becomes dear to his human children when he is allowed to play his natural role. To those who engage him properly, he becomes a cherished member of the family and a helpmate on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

—*Jagadīśa Goswami,*
ISKCON Governing Body
Commissioner

• • •

Ox Power's Economic Imperatives

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

“ACCORDING TO VEDIC economics, one is considered to be a rich man by the strength of his store of grains and cows. With only these two things, cows and grain, humanity can solve its eating problem. Human society needs only sufficient grain and sufficient cows to

slavelike labor of the working class and the speculative investment of the mercantile class. The results are wasteful and destructive.

Experts warn that this artificial economic system is not sustainable: “It is only a question of which will collapse first, the global economy or its ecological support system.”¹ Global problems of hunger, homelessness, unemployment, and international debt highlight the precarious state of the world's economy. Beyond this, the problems in the Middle East are threatening supplies of oil, constantly referred to as the “lifeblood of the economy.”

Opponents of international involvement in the Middle East advocate shifting to other energy sources to eliminate dependence on petroleum. But neither side can answer crucial questions now facing an oil-dependent economy. For example, How will farmers be able to produce crops? In the United States, agriculture relies on petroleum more



Oxen haul firewood to the temple at Nova Gokula farm in Brazil.

solve its economic problems. All other things but these two are artificial necessities created by man to kill his valuable life at the human level and waste his time on things that are not needed” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.29, Purport).

Instead of basing its economy on the cow and the land, as prescribed by Kṛṣṇa, modern society bases its economy on industry and commerce, that is, on the

than any other industry. More than 90 percent of its energy comes from petroleum.²

How will it be possible to maintain road systems without petroleum products and petroleum-fueled equipment? Can a centralized economy survive without good roads and cheap transportation? How will it be economically feasible to ship food to food processors and consumers? The transportation

sector relies on petroleum for most of its fuel.³

In other words, how will it be possible to feed people without petroleum? The agriculture and dairy industries in industrialized countries already face serious problems. The Department of Agriculture of the state of Maine estimates that the average dairy farmer pays more to produce a gallon of milk than he receives for it.⁴

And the oil crisis threatens to make the farmer's troubles even worse. *Hoard's Dairyman*, the leading trade publication of the U.S. dairy industry, predicts that due to the crisis in the Persian Gulf, "farmers throughout the U.S. will pay from 25 to 35 percent more to plant crops" in 1991.⁵

But suppose the Middle East crisis is somehow resolved. Then what? "If the cumulative consumption of oil and gas continues to double every fifteen to twenty years, . . . the initial stock will be eighty percent depleted in another thirty to forty years."⁶

There is a solution, but it does not lie in hoping for more oil to prop up an overcentralized, exploitative economic system. It lies in developing a localized village economic system that depends on the labor of the bull to produce, process, and transport foodstuffs—most significantly, grains.⁷

Even today, trained oxen provide Third World countries with a high degree of insurance against the impact of the oil crisis because they free these countries from dependence on oil. According to N.S. Ramaswamy of the Indian Institute of Management, "DAP [draft animal power] provides energy for the cultivation of nearly fifty percent of the world's cultivated area as well as for hauling over 25 million carts."

According to Mr. Ramaswamy, replacement of draft animal power by petroleum-based power would require 30 million tractor and tiller units costing between \$200 and \$300 billion, plus \$5 billion annually for petroleum fuel (in 1985 prices).⁸ Thus the productive oxen even in today's economic system are worth hundreds of billions of dollars and provide the means of feeding millions of people without petroleum.

Industrialized countries need to reintroduce ox power in order to feed the people as petroleum becomes scarce. Right now there are millions of

A Testimony

WHEN I MILKED THE COWS at Gītā Nāgarī, I had to leave for the barn halfway through the morning class, long before breakfast. After milking, I would clean up the barn. It was wonderful work, more physically demanding than anything I had ever done in my life, but it was great.

I would finish at about 10:30 or 11:00, dirty and exhausted. I'd take off my barn boots on the shoe porch and still have alfalfa leaves all over my socks.

Then I would go into the temple and pay obeisances to the sweet and peaceful Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara. They were always ready to offer Their blessings. Kṛṣṇa would be leaning on a stick, playing His flute. Sometimes He carried a buffalo horn to call the cows, and sometimes He carried a rope to tie their legs.

I began to understand that these items were not merely decorations. They were things Kṛṣṇa uses to take care of the cows. Cows need music to be pacified. Sometimes they kick when you milk them, so you have to be prepared. You have to call them in to milk them, and you need a good stick for herding them. By taking care of the cows, I had obtained what was for

me an intimate view of the Lord.

But that wasn't all. My Godsister Linda would always save breakfast for me. It was a coarse, cooked cereal made from wheat grown with the help of Kṛṣṇa's oxen.

Linda would add some warm *kṣīra*, a kind of homemade condensed milk offered to the Deities at *maṅgala-ārati*, the first ceremony of the day. She called it a "*kṣīra* float."

My *kṣīra* float was always cold by the time I ate it, but it was wonderful. And I enjoyed it even more because it was provided by the very cows I was milking and by our own bulls. Breakfast time was when I most appreciated the cow as my mother and the bull as my father. I felt as if they were reciprocating with me, encouraging me in devotional service.

The combination of seeing the Deities and then taking Their *prasādam* as wheat cereal coming from Father Bull and *kṣīra* from Mother Cow made me feel overwhelmingly thankful and protected, and it made we want to share that feeling with everyone else. That's why I write about ox power. I want everyone to gain this kind of access to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

—Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsi

young bulls that could be trained to produce grain. The danger is that as increasing petroleum prices force up the price of grains, cows and bulls will be the first targets of massive slaughter because they require the most feed.

Although cow slaughter is always present in modern economics, it increases sharply during times of economic stress. In the United States, cow slaughter increased during the depression of the 1930's, during the 1973 oil crisis, and during the 1988 drought.

What will dairy farmers and ranchers do as escalating petroleum prices make it impossible for them to maintain their herds? We cannot wait to find out. It may be too late.

Somehow the followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must quickly and effectively demonstrate that protecting the cow and the bull is not a waste of petroleum

but a miraculous replacement for it.

We should become the leaders in appropriate technology and sustainable agriculture and show that labor-intensive, ox-powered agriculture is not an anachronism but the answer to unemployment and crime.

We must show that simple village life is not torturous boredom but the ideal setting for fulfilling the real purpose of human life: chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and serving the Lord in a life rich in spiritual culture. For the sake of fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire, we must take up this mission immediately.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsi has been involved in Kṛṣṇa consciousness since 1978. She moved to Gītā Nāgarī in 1985 and was initiated by Paramānanda Dāsa in 1986. She now lives in Maine, where she is the research secretary for the Ox Power Alternative Energy Club (OPAEC), which distributes literature on the

technical, socio-economic, and spiritual aspects of cow protection and ox power. You can write to her c/o OPAEC, 9B Stetson St., Brunswick, Maine 04011.

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Living Within The Ecosystem

Compiled by Umāpati Swami
from articles
by Kamrā Devī Dāsī and
Vyāpaka Dāsa

MANY FARMERS are beginning to wonder whether it makes any sense to farm at all. With the price of inputs—fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides—going up continually and market forces pushing the price of crops lower and lower, year after year, it seems that profit can only be found in government subsidy programs.

But nature has been offering a solution all along, and ox power plays an important part in it.

The solution? Farming within nature's own ecosystems.

An ecosystem is a grouping of plants, animals, and microbes interacting with each other and their environment in such a way that the grouping perpetuates itself.

An ecosystem is by definition self-sufficient. It is a kind of circle turning on energy provided by the sun: each living entity in the system acquires food and produces waste, which becomes food for the next living entity along the

ecological feeding trail. In this way the nutrients move through a large, diverse population of mammals, insects, bacteria, plants, and others until they return to their point of origin and start again.

The industrial farmer finds himself dependent on a constant supply of agricultural inputs. His nitrogen fertility, for example, comes at great expense from a distant petrochemical plant that ships its wares across the country by an energy-intensive transport system.

The same nitrogen could be produced effortlessly and economically by bacteria at the roots of a legume. Being a cash cropper, however, the farmer finds it financially difficult to leave any land fallow and planted to a grass legume.

In a cash-cropping operation, a monoculture or very limited rotation is generally the rule. Oxen, however, force the farmer to live within the ecosystem because they demand a more diverse crop rotation, including hay, pasture, and small grains—a production more conservation-oriented than the extended back-to-back annual production of row crops.

Since the different kinds of plants do not share pests, the risk of pest populations building up is reduced because the pests' food source is restricted. The farmer can thus eliminate the use of pesticides and allow the reestablishment of balanced pest predator populations, providing further ecological balance.

As the rotation is established, the mixing of plant cultures, coupled with improved and timely tillage, checks the growth of weeds. The farmer can eliminate herbicides, another costly input.

The design and careful implementation of a well-balanced rotation, combined with the recycling of nutrients around the farm through the application of composted cow and ox manure, can reduce or abolish the import of inorganic fertilizers.

It is estimated that seventy-five percent of the nutrients found in the feed ends up in the animals' waste. Through the use of compost, the farmer can divert stocks of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium from pasture and hay fields onto grain fields, where they are more needed. The increased recycling potential of the farm results in lower costs through self-sufficiency.



Gopinātha Ācārya Dāsa holds organically grown wheat, manually harvested from this oxen-plowed field at New Govardhana, Australia.

Work That's Natural

FEW PEOPLE UNDERSTAND how important cow protection is for success in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for going back home, back to Godhead. And, of course, cow protection includes ox power. Śrīla Prabhupāda said many times that if you do not put the ox to work, you will soon be thinking, "Let me kill him."

One may object that this is all a utopian theory. How many devotees are willing to commit themselves to farming for Kṛṣṇa? It may not be their nature.

I didn't think it was my nature either. I am forty-two years old, and I weigh 120 pounds. I was an academic secretary for fifteen years. When I was a little girl, I always wanted to stay indoors and play jacks during recess.

My first reaction on seeing cows was, "Boring." My next reaction was, "She's going to kick me." (She did, too.) Is it my nature? It doesn't seem like it.

But I can say that milking the cows and working around the oxen is the sweetest work I have ever done. It's exciting, like riding the crest of a wave.

And it's spiritual. You're right there with Kṛṣṇa's cows and oxen. You learn their personalities. Prabhupāda's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purports spring to life, and you have a greater appreciation of Kṛṣṇa's Vṇḍāvana pastimes. It all works because it is Kṛṣṇa's arrangement for us.

Is farming your nature? You won't know until you try.

Some may object that it is cruel to work the oxen, but Śrīla Prabhupāda has said that oxen by their nature enjoy hard work. It is their *dharma*. An Olympic jumper wants to jump. A horse wants to run. It is their nature.

Oxen have big muscles, and they want to use them. That is natural. It is satisfying for the oxen to perform strenuous labor, because they are strong.

Anyone, materialist or devotee, who works with oxen can testify that the oxen like to get yoked up and go out and work. It is more interesting to them than loafing around the barn.

If the system were cruel, it would not function. The ox must be treated with kindness as well as firmness, or he will not be a good worker. It is the working oxen who are the most affectionate. They come right up to be petted. Abused animals do not. They are afraid.

And what is the alternative? What if your father were unemployed? Wouldn't you rather see him work on a farm than have his head sawed off? The scriptures tell us that the bull is also our father, because he tills the ground and produces grains. Training, then, is our father's life insurance.

It is hard to find a logical argument against ox power. The tractor is definitely on its way out. How much longer can it last? Then what? Who will want to go out with a shovel and plant an acre of wheat by hand?

The idea of working the oxen is coming from a higher, completely pure authority. Therefore, there is no question of its being cruel or exploitative. On the contrary, the economic alternative to working the oxen is definitely cruel.

It is cruel to turn other human beings into industrial slaves so that we can live a life of ease. "The productive energy of the laborer is misused when he is occupied by industrial enterprises," says Śrīla Prabhupāda. "Industry of various types cannot produce the essential needs of man, namely rice, wheat, grains, milk, fruits, and vegetables. The production of machines and machine tools increases the artificial living fashion of a class of vested interests and keeps thousands of men in starvation and unrest. This should not be the standard of civilization" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.9.26, Purport).

When I spend my money on tractor-produced flour, I am voting for the very thing Prabhupāda denounces as anti-spiritual to spiritual life. I vote that someone has to work in a mine, someone has to work on an oil derrick, someone has to work in a tractor factory—and someone has to work in a slaughterhouse to kill the unemployed ox.

They are all suffering miserably. This is the real cruelty, and somehow or other we must extricate ourselves from such a demonic role.

—Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsi

When animal waste is returned to the soil, its high nitrogen content makes it a good fertilizer. If it is unreturned—dumped into a water supply, for instance—much of its nitrogen turns into ammonia and nitrates.

The dumping of animal waste into water—a common practice among commercial dairies—can pollute rural wells and even city water supplies with nitrates. Last year the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation found high nitrate levels in the ground water at nine dairies.

An excessive intake of nitrates can be dangerous, causing brain damage and death to infants and health problems in the elderly.

Cow manure is the best of natural fertilizers and stabilizers of soil struc-

ture. The Hoosefield experiment in Rothamsted, England, showed that applications of cow manure over a period of twenty years resulted in more soil humus and higher barley yields even fifty years after the applications had been discontinued.

In 1974 Bronner and Janick studied 154 Austrian farms growing sugar beets. On the sixty-five farms that had cows, the humus content of the soil was 20.2 percent higher than on the others, the humic acids were 21 percent higher, and the soil structure was more stable by 13 percent.

The farms with cows needed 53 percent less fertilizer application of nitrogen, 39 percent less of phosphorus, and 32 percent less of potassium.

Cow manure can also be put into

tanks to generate methane gas for cooking and heating, and the residue can be used as fertilizer. Yet today's industrial society goes to great lengths to import petroleum-based fuel while running its local supplies of fuel into rivers and water supplies as a pollutant.

Petroleum Usage

Draught Animal News #11, published in 1989 by the Center for Tropical Veterinary Medicine of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, offers further evidence of the ecological and economic value of ox farming:

The bullock cart is not only the mascot of the Indian rural community, but also its very back

bone. Eighty-four million draught animals supply the equivalent of 30kW, providing the energy to cultivate 100 million hectares and for hauling about 30,000 million tonne kms of freight in 15 million carts. These work animals save six million tonnes of petroleum a year, valued at Rs 24,000 million at imported prices.

Transporting goods by ox power also reduces the need for packing materials. Since the produce is transported only short distances, it arrives fresh, and thus does not require fungicides and other preservatives.

Ox-drawn equipment does not compact the soil and reduce aeration and drainage, as does modern heavy equipment. Ox equipment is simple, and does not require heavy industry for manufacture, repair, or replacement parts. And an ox team can be maintained for 1/6 the cost of a team of horses.

Farm Safety

Safety on the farm has also suffered. Doyle Conner, the former commissioner of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, noted that in 1989 farming overtook mining as the most dangerous occupation in the United States. The accidental-death rate of 48 per 100,000 farm workers is five times the national average for industries. Farm equipment, toxic gases, chemicals, dust, and noise have made the farm a dangerous place. And since most farmers live on their farms, their family members are exposed to the same risks.

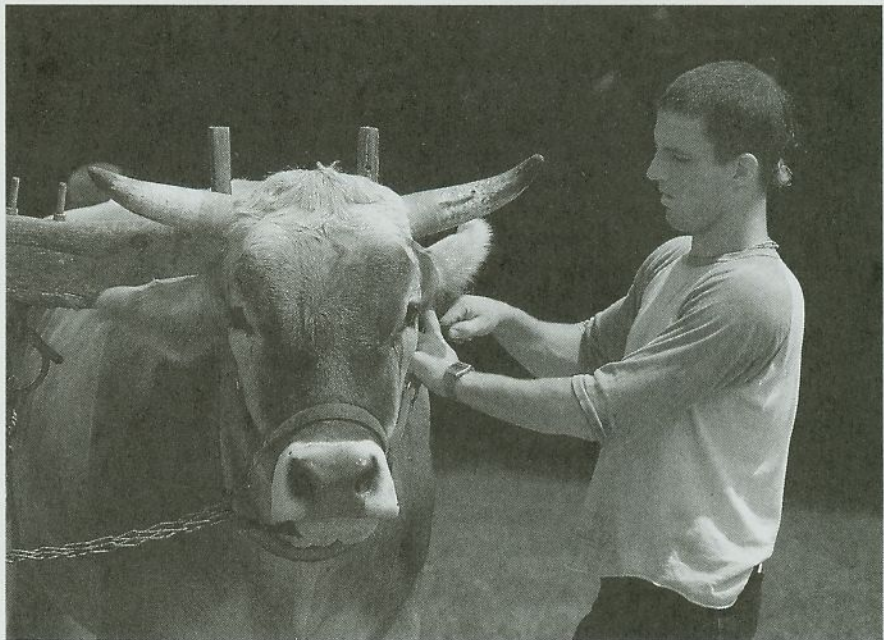
Ox-powered farming eliminates the heavy, dangerous farm machinery. It eliminates chemical pesticides and herbicides, as oxen cooperate with nature's ecosystem and ox-powered farms tend toward smaller plots, which allow this work to be done by hand or with small amounts of organic products. The ox-power farmer is spared the all-day fumes and roar of a diesel engine.

Devotees are not the only ones who know the value of animal power. There are thousands of animal-powered farms in the United States, and these farmers also scoff at the irony of our centralized system based on petroleum and large-scale production. But they, for the most part, raise animals for food and sell their old work horses and oxen at the market.

Only Śrīla Prabhupāda has been able to give the spiritual solution for material problems. He has written:

Our farm projects are an extremely important part of our movement. We must become self-sufficient by growing our own

newsletter for the Save the Cow program. Her husband, Brajendranandana Dāsa, a disciple of Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami, manages the farm's herd of cows and trains and works the oxen. You can write to Kamrā and Brajendranandana c/o Save the Cow, Route 2, Box 24, Alachua, FL 32615.



Vaiṣṇava Dāsa yokes an ox for plowing at Gītā Nāgarī farm near Harrisburg in eastern Pennsylvania.

grains and producing our own milk. Then there will be no question of poverty. They should be developed as an ideal society depending on natural products, not industry. Industry has simply created godlessness, because people think that they can manufacture everything that they need. Our Bhagavad-gita philosophy explains that men and animals must have food in order to maintain their bodies. And the production of food is dependent on the rain and the rain of course is dependent on chanting Hare Krishna. Therefore, let everyone chant Hare Krishna, eat nicely, and keep the body fit and healthy. This is ideal life style.

—letter to Rūpānuga Dāsa,
December 18, 1974

Kamrā Devī Dāsī was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1975 and helped start ISKCON's Gītā Nāgarī farm in Pennsylvania. She now lives at the New Ramaṇa Retī farm in Alachua, Florida. She is the corresponding secretary of the

Vyāpaka Dāsa joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1975. He spent several years on an ISKCON farm in Ontario. In 1987 he completed a two-year course on organic farming and is currently employed as a farm inspector in the organic foods industry.

A Neglected Source of Wealth

*A Preliminary Study
And Practical Suggestion*

by Narasimha Dāsa

I SOMETIMES ASK the following question to devotees and other spiritually inclined people. One day Kuvera, the lord of wealth, appears before you, offering a choice of two benedictions: as much gold as you want, any time, any place, and as often as you want, or as much cow manure as you want, any time, any place, and as often as you

Varnāśrama Overview

“ACCORDING TO THE three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of society are created by Me” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13).

The four divisions of society—*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*—are part of the social system known as *varṇāśrama*, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s own plan for a perfect society.

Every society has an economic base. In today’s machine-age society, the base is the unstable, dwindling supply of petroleum. In Lord Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual society, the economic base is the cow, the bull, and the land.

At the head of the four orders are the *brāhmaṇas*, the saintly teachers, priests, and intellectuals. Their duties are offering sacrifices to satisfy the transcendental senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa and teaching for the spiritual progress of society in general: “The hunger of the Lord is to accept the fruits of sacrifice. The *brāhmaṇas*, or intelligent class, must be very expert in performing such sacrifices, and the subordinate class must join in such sacrifices” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.5.37, Purport).

The protection of the cow and bull enables the *brāhmaṇas* to fulfill both duties. They can educate society, and at the same time they can satisfy the Lord with the rarest and most opulent of sacrifices—not jewels and gold but a daily offering of food to the Deities prepared with milk from protected cows and flour grown and ground by protected bulls.

Why is this a great sacrifice? Because the whole society has to work together to produce it. Lord Kṛṣṇa is especially pleased when all the citizens, even the animals, are properly engaged in devotional service.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the prime protector of brahminical culture and the cow,” says Śrīla Prabhupāda. “Without knowing and respecting these, one cannot realize the science of God, and without this knowledge, any welfare activities or humanitarian propaganda cannot be successful.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.21.38, Purport).

The *brāhmaṇas* are the head of the social body, and if the brahminical influence is weak, then the whole

society courts disaster, like a man without intelligence.

The status of cow protection in a society is an indicator of the brahminical strength. If the brahminical strength diminishes, the cow and the bull are mistreated. If it increases, cow protection also increases:

At the present moment in this age of Kali, both the bull and the cow are being slaughtered and eaten up as foodstuff by a class of men who do not know the brahminical culture. The bull and the cow can be protected for the good of all human society simply by spreading brahminical culture as the topmost perfection of all cultural affairs. By advancement of such culture, the morale of society is properly maintained, and so peace and prosperity are also attained without extraneous effort. When brahminical culture deteriorates, the cow and bull are mistreated. . . .

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
1.16.18, Purport

The second order of society is the *kṣatriyas*, the kings and administrators. Their duty is to protect all the citizens, including the animals: “O chaste one, the king’s good name, duration of life, and good rebirth vanish when all kinds of living beings are terrified by miscreants in his kingdom. It is certainly the prime duty of the king to subdue first the sufferings of those who suffer” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.10–11).

Śrīla Prabhupāda adds, “*Praja* means one who has taken birth in the state, and this includes both men and animals. Any living being who takes birth in a state has the primary right to live under the protection of the king. The jungle animals are also subject to the king, and they also have a right to live. So what to speak of domestic animals like the cows and bulls.”

Five thousand years ago, the great king Parikṣit drew his sword to punish a low-class man who was beating and torturing a cow and a bull: “You rogue, do you dare beat an innocent cow because Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, the carrier of the Gāṇḍīva bow, are out of sight? Since you are beating the innocent in a secluded place, you are considered a culprit and deserve to be killed” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.6).

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, “At least up to the time of Mahārāja Parikṣit, no one could imagine the wretched conditions of the cow and the bull. Mahārāja Parikṣit, therefore, was astonished to see such a horrible scene. He inquired whether the bull was not a demigod assuming such a wretched condition to indicate the future of the cow and the bull” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.8, Purport).

Later, the faultless king Parikṣit again emphasized the importance of the cow and bull when he blamed himself for the improper action of a *brāhmaṇa* boy: “I am uncivilized and sinful due to my neglect of brahminical culture, God consciousness, and cow protection. Therefore I wish that my kingdom, strength, and riches burn up immediately by the fire of the *brāhmaṇa*’s wrath so that in the future I may not be guided by such inauspicious attitudes” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.19.3).

The third order of society is the *vaiśyas*: “The *vaiśyas* are meant to protect the cows and bulls and utilize them to produce grains and milk” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.1, Purport).

“Lord Kṛṣṇa, as the teacher of human society, personally showed by His acts that the mercantile community, or the *vaiśyas*, should herd cows and bulls and thus give protection to the valuable animals” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.29, Purport).

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself takes care of cows and bulls, in both the spiritual world and this world. He spent his childhood in the home of a *vaiśya* family, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* tells of Kṛṣṇa’s playing with calves and being transported by ox-cart.

By engaging in cow protection, devotees are learning how to live in the spiritual world by following Kṛṣṇa’s example. Whatever devotees are learning here, they can continue eternally—singing to Kṛṣṇa, bathing Him, dressing Him, feeding Him, and taking care of His cows and bulls.

The fourth order of society is the *śūdras*, whose business is crafts and service to the other classes. If the rest of the society is engaged in working with the cow and bull, the *śūdras* will naturally follow.

—*Umāpati Swami*

want. Which would you choose?

I add that Lord Kuvera tells you to put aside considerations of purity, convenience, and religion and choose the benediction that will give the most wealth.

Stop here. Think about it for a minute or two. Answer the question yourself. Some devotees have suggested there is no right or wrong choice. The choice, they say, will simply indicate an individual's own inclination. I believe, however, that one choice is far superior to the other.

Most people I've talked to say they would take the gold and use it for good or transcendental purposes. With unlimited gold they could print billions of spiritual books and build many grand temples. After all, everything can be used in Kṛṣṇa's service. Right?

Yes, but using so much gold in Kṛṣṇa's service could be dangerous and difficult. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* tells us that Kali, the personification of this degraded age, resides wherever gold is hoarded. We would need to spend all the gold immediately, yet gold circulating in such great amounts would gradually lose monetary value until at last it became as common and inexpensive as iron.

Gold is limited as a form of wealth—as are all currencies.

With unlimited cow manure, however, the entire planet could be made as opulent as heaven in just a few years. Sound fantastic? The *Mahābhārata* says that the dung and urine of the cow are residences of Śrī Lakṣmī Devī, the goddess of fortune.

Cow manure could transform desert soils, such as those in the Middle East and northern India, into fertile, humus-rich soils that would retain moisture and support vegetation even with scarce rainfall.



PARAMĀNANDA DĀSA

As the ground-cover vegetation became more lush and trees started growing, moisture retention would increase the natural opulence of the land with beneficial microbes and plants and soil-building insects and animals.

Manure, in fact, makes cow protection highly profitable even if the milk production is low and the bulls are not fully engaged.

Cow protection and bull protection are one and the same, of course, but people usually think the monetary profit is found in milk. Manure can be more

profitable, however, because it leads to greater milk and grain production.

ISKCON'S experiments with cow protection in the West have not always produced happy results. Part of the problem has been an overemphasis on milk production. Devotees have usually chosen temperamental, troublesome breeds because of their reputedly high milk production.

When bulls were born, everyone moaned and groaned and wondered what to do with another nonmilker because few devotees had come forward



An ox-driven sawmill at Gītā Nāgari demonstrates one of many uses for oxen. As the oxen walk in a circle, a mechanism of pulleys, shafts, and gears delivers the power generated by the oxen to the saw at the lower right of the picture.

pasture will support more cows and bulls.

In two weeks, twenty-five medium-sized bulls will leave four thousand manure deposits—some six tons fresh, or nine percent of the surface of a fifteen-acre pasture. After two weeks, the bulls should be moved and the pasture harrowed.

In one year these twenty-five bulls will produce 156 tons of fresh manure, enough to fully blanket thirty-five acres. (Statistics are based on research done by the University of Kentucky.)

After two or three years the rich pastures can be plowed and planted with row crops or grains or left as pasture, to become richer and richer almost without limit.

A bull, of course, may be used to pull the chain harrow, a simple, low-energy operation, but the point is that bulls are valuable even if we can't fully engage them immediately. The wealth is the manure itself.

With enough cow and bull manure, plowing and cultivation can be greatly minimized or even eliminated. In Vedic farming, the main purpose of plowing is to loosen the top layers of soils that have been compacted by rain and feet. Soils rich in manure are also rich in humus. They need little or no plowing because they resist compacting and retain a soft, pliable texture suitable for planting.

Smaller farms—family farms of only a few acres—can keep two, three, four, five, or even more bulls in a small barn or in the courtyard of the home and feed them hay, fresh grass, and silage. If there is a sufficient year-around supply of fresh grass, such as in Hawaii and South India, milking cows and bulls doing light work can live on grass alone.

The manure should be raked up, pitched out, or washed out daily, along with the straw bedding, if any, and collected in a pile. If the pile is covered

to train bulls and put them to work.

Nor have many of the farm leaders emphasized the necessity of working the bulls, although Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "If you don't make a program to engage them [bulls], you'll make a program to kill them."

What to do, then, with all the bulls?

I suggest we use all extra bulls to prove that Goddess Lakṣmī does indeed reside in the dung of the cow and bull.

We should first engage bulls and oxen in grazing and in eating silage. Grains

should not be fed to mature bulls who are not working hard. It is expensive and unnecessary, and makes them unruly. By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement, bulls can live on grass and on the husks and stalks of corn, wheat, and rice, all of which are nutritionally valueless to man.

Grazing bulls should be rotated among various pastures, and the pastures should be raked often with chain-drag harrows to spread the manure around evenly and help it mix quickly with the upper soil. Soon the grass will become thick and green, and the same

Farm Information

Here are the responses to a questionnaire we sent to all ISKCON farms.

New Caitanya Candrodaya Mandir

Address: ISKCON, Almviks Gärd, 15300 Jarna, Sweden
Phone: (46) 755-52050 or -52073
Contact: Locana Dāsa
Deities: Śrī Śrī Pañca-tattva
Number of devotees and families: 41 adults, 18 children, 13 families
Size: 67 hectares (165 acres)
Distance from nearest city: 60 km from Stockholm
Accommodations: Guest room
Climate: Sub-arctic, below 0° C (32° F) for six months
Growing season: June–August
Land under cultivation: 22 hectares
Crops: Grass (hay), wheat, oats, rye, potatoes, carrots, beetroots, cabbage, fruit trees (apple, pear, plum, cherry), flowers
Herd: 5 milking cows, 6 oxen, 19 young or nonproductive cows
Special projects: 45-hectare forest, large sawmill for community's needs, bakery, *gurukula*, mustery (fruit juice) under development, hand looms, seeds, ox training
Comments: "Our aim is to give an example of Kṛṣṇa conscious life and economic self-sufficiency."

Gītā Nāgarī

Address: R.D. 1, Box 839, Port Royal, Pennsylvania 17082
Phone: (717) 527-4101
Contact: Bhakta Steve
Deities: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara
Number of devotees and families: 21 devotees on the farm, 20 more nearby
Size: 325 acres
Distance from nearest city: 50 miles from Harrisburg
Accommodations: Property near the farm for sale
Climate: Hot summers, cold winters

Growing season: Late April to early October
Land under cultivation: 150 acres cultivated for animal feed and a 5-acre organic garden
Crops: Corn, oats, and a variety of grasses used for hay and pasture. The garden provides a wide variety of vegetables.
Herd: 2 milk cows, 67 other cows, either dry heifers or retired, 1 bull calf, and 61 oxen
Special projects: A small dried-flower business with some basket-making and arranging
Needs: Manager and means of financial support
Comments: "We are working towards Prabhupāda's goal of simple living and high thinking based on cow protection and working the oxen. By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement we are being forced to move away from mechanized ways of farming and learn to depend more on the oxen. We hope to establish some type of self-sufficiency in the future."

ISKCON of Tirilund

Address: Gl. Kirikevej 3, Tirilund, 6650 Broerup, Denmark
Phone: 75-392921 or 75-393761
Contact: Pañca Mukha Dāsa
Deities: None installed
Number of devotees and families: 1 couple
Size: 31 hectares (77 acres)
Distance from nearest city: midway between Kolding and Erlijeng, 250 km from Copenhagen
Accommodations: Guest room
Climate: Temperate
Growing season: April–October
Land under cultivation: 25 hectares (62 acres)
Crops: Grains, beans, and vegetables
Herd: None
Needs: Money and manpower
Comments: "Small farm with buildings in good shape but no accommodations yet."

Śaraṅāgati Dhāma

Address: Box 99, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0 Canada
Phone: (604) 378-2358

Contact: Vaiṣṇava Dāsa
Deities: Not installed
Number of devotees and families: 7 families as residents, 30 more as shareholders, a few *brahmacāris*
Size: 1,700 acres
Distance from nearest city: 20 miles from Ashcroft (pop. 3,000), 65 miles from Kamloops (pop. 63,000)
Accommodations: Lifetime 5-acre shareholder leases transferable to children's lifetime. Grants for free land available to qualified *brāhmaṇas*.
Climate: Temperate/mountain
Growing season: 80–120 days, greenhouses required for long-season crops
Land under cultivation: 5 acres hay, 200 acres pasture, 2 acres organic gardens
Crops: Alfalfa hay, pasture, vegetables, and greens
Herd: 2 milking cows, 4 oxen, 1 retired cow
Special projects: Sawmill, backhoe, community water system, homes being built
Needs: Qualified *brāhmaṇas* and *sannyāsis* to enliven the devotees and develop Deity worship, book distribution, and preaching. *Vaiśyas* for economic base to provide employment for members and sponsor community projects.
Comments: "Very initial stage. Farm is paid off. Facilities are being developed to aid in self-sufficiency programs and Kṛṣṇa conscious programs for all, especially householders, to live peacefully and execute *sanātana-dharma*. Some devotees aim to farm without machines; others incorporate machinery but on a small scale. Many members are financially independent."

New Govardhana

Address: P.O. Box 687, Murwillumbah 2484, Australia
Phone: (06) 672-1903 or (06) 672-4448
Contact: Temple president
Deities: Rādhā-Govardhanadhārī, Gaura-Nitāi, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma
Number of devotees and families: 54 devotees
Size: 1,000 acres
Distance from nearest city: 12 km from

fine hay or leaves and not allowed to remain very wet, it will decompose quickly without producing foul odors.

The composted manure can then be dried, pulverized, and sifted to produce a fine, light powder that's easy to store and spread.

I have seen gardeners in India restore

extremely deficient soils and transform already fertile soils into lush, rich, well-textured supersoils after just two or three years of applying cow manure.

As the world moves away from Kṛṣṇa's perfect system of global economics based on cow protection, great industrial centers devour huge amounts

of resources, filling the air and water with foul and poisonous by-products.

Brainwashed farmers pour chemicals and poisons on the earth, destroying valuable topsoils and creating contaminated drylands and deserts.

Future historians will surely reflect with astonishment on how effectively

Murwillumbah, 150 km from Brisbane

Accommodations: Guest house—8 families rent from farm

Climate: Subtropical

Growing season: 9 months

Land under cultivation: 100 acres

Crops: Vegetables, flowers, oats, cowpeas, wheat

Herd: 28 milking, 1 bull, 12 working oxen, 40 nonworking

Special projects: Large *gurukula*.

Needs: Qualified *brāhmaṇas*.

Comments: "Very strongly aiming at self-sufficiency—water, vegetables, grains, milk, butter, honey. We also receive many visitors. Bus tour groups come regularly."

New Tālavana

Address: 31492 Anner Rd., Carriere, Mississippi 39426

Phone: (601) 798-8533

Contact: Yogindra Vandana Dāsa Adhikāri

Deities: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhākānta and Gaura-Nitāi

Number of devotees and families: 21 families and a few single people

Size: 1,300 acres

Distance from nearest city: 60 miles from New Orleans

Accommodations: Free: small housing for students or austere *brāhmaṇas*. Lease, rent, or own: trailers and trailer spaces. Own: land for building.

Climate: 55° average winter, 90° average summer; spring and fall are pleasant.

Growing season: March–July, September–January

Land under cultivation: All 1,300 acres are used for timber, pasture, or crops.

Crops: Sugar cane, vegetables, greens, nut and fruit trees or vines

Herd: 10 milkers, 4 bulls, 4 oxen, 10 calves, 125 retired cows and oxen

Special projects: Cow program, Deity program, *gurukula*, business opportunities

Needs: Good, serious devotees specializing in any *varṇa* or *āśrama* who are ready to settle down for some time and offer their love to Their Lordships.

Comments: "We are encouraging any

devotee to develop his or her service to the Personality of Godhead, His devotees, and people in general by living in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We're hoping a thriving community of Vaiṣṇavas will develop and set an example of mature Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At present our community is small but growing and desiring association of committed individuals who can support themselves, their families, and other *āśramas*, and who love the association of good, honest, hard-working *bhaktas*."

Murāri-sevaka

Address: Murāri Project, Rt. No. 1, Box 146-A, Mulberry, Tennessee 37359

Phone: (615) 759-7331

Contact: Paramparā Dāsa

Deities: Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi

Number of devotees and families: 4 families, 1 *brahmacārī*

Size: 250 acres

Distance from nearest city: 75 miles from Nashville, Tennessee

Accommodations: 6 two-room cabins available for residents or guests

Climate: Mild, occasional hard winter, 4 distinct seasons

Growing season: March–November

Land under cultivation: 40 acres hay, 2 acres garden

Crops: Hay, vegetables, apples

Herd: 30 retired cows and oxen

Needs: Devotees with their own income who can serve on the farm

Comments: "We are trying to establish *varṇāśrama* as Śrīla Prabhupāda envisioned it."

New Ramaṇa Reti

Address: P.O. Box 819, Alachua, Florida 32615

Phone: (904) 462-2017

Contact: Haṁsa Rūpa Dāsa

Deities: Gaura-Nitāi

Number of devotees and families: 10 families on the farm, 50 families in the area

Size: 127 acres, many devotees own land around the farm

Distance from nearest city: 11 miles from Alachua

Accommodations: *Brahmacārī āśrama* and guesthouse being built; soon to be 2 rooms for ISKCON Life Members.

Climate: 69° average annual temperature, 49 inches of rain yearly, no severe winter, not very hot

Growing season: Year-round with protection

Land under cultivation: 15 acres certified organic, 1-acre garden at temple, householders have their own gardens

Crops: All varieties of vegetables and fruits except tropical

Herd: 1 brahma bull, 5 milking cows, 5 teams of oxen in training (one team is with Padayātrā), 4 retired cows, 2 retired oxen

Special projects: Strong ties with Gainesville college preaching and *prasādam* distribution. Potential for tourists because of nearby interstate highway.

Comments: "We are trying to operate the farm using Planned Unit Development (P.U.D.). We hope to become self-sufficient."

New Goloka

Address: Rt. 6, Box 701, Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278

Phone: (919) 732-8033

Contact: Bir Krishna Dāsa Goswami

Deities: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Golokānanda

Number of devotees and families:

9 devotees in temple, 40 initiated and congregational devotees in the area

Size: Temple: 16 acres; householder subdivision: 125 acres

Distance from nearest city: 20 miles from Durham, North Carolina

Accommodations: Guest room at temple, land for sale

Climate: Mild

Growing season: February–November

Land under cultivation: 3 acres

Crops: Vegetables, flowers

Herd: 1 cow, 2 oxen

Special projects: Ox power

Needs: Construction people

Comments: "*Varṇāśrama*."

governments and big corporations tricked nations of farmers into believing that chemical fertilizers and pesticides were a blessing of progressive science.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted devotees to create counterparts of Goloka Vṛndāvana in this world because only practical examples of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can

change the course of our misdirected civilization.

But first, the devotees themselves must realize the benefits of cow protection and understand the practical formula for engaging bulls. The first step is to understand that even their manure is a most valuable resource. ☸

Narasimha Dāsa was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1972. He spent several years in India and wrote a novel entitled The Way of the Vaiṣṇava Sages, published in 1987. He is now practicing self-sufficiency on eight acres on the island of Hawaii. His address is P.O. Box 1041, Pepeekeo, Hawaii 96783.

Deviant Vaiṣṇava Sects

*From the time of Lord Caitanya
to the present day, His pure followers have defended
His teachings against philosophical perversions.*

• • •
by Suhotra Swami

PART ONE: Caste Gosvāmīs and Smārta-brāhmanas

From time to time a devotee of Kṛṣṇa is faced with touchy questions about the shadow side of his religion. “Is it true there are *gurus* in West Bengal who do dope when they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?” Or, “What about that place in West Virginia where they mix Kṛṣṇa, Christ, New Age, and everything else?”

It’s best to keep a broad historical perspective when considering this problem. Hybrid versions of Kṛṣṇa worship, or even downright perversions of it, are nothing new. They all tend to fit a pattern laid down long ago in India by thirteen deviant sects known as *apasampradāyas*.

But before looking at the deviants, one should understand the correct culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Fashionable or not, there is a definite standard of spiritual life. It is called *sampradāya*.

The word *sampradāya* implies “genuine instruction that has been received through *guru paramparā*, or disciplic succession” (*guru paramparā-gatu sad upadeśasya*, from the *Amara-kośa* Sanskrit dictionary). In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares Himself to be the original source of genuine spiritual instruction and says that a person is connected to His teachings only through disciplic succession.

Genuine spiritual instruction is meant to foster ideal qualities in the

human being. Truthfulness, cleanliness, austerity, mercy, humility, and freedom from material desire are called *daivi-sampat* (transcendental qualities) because they have their origin in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental Supreme Person. But fallen souls have no way of associating with Kṛṣṇa directly. The scriptures therefore say, *sarva mahā-guṇa-gaṇa vaiṣṇava-sarire*: in this world, all the best qualities are embodied by the Vaiṣṇavas, Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotees. Vaiṣṇava spiritual masters instill these qualities in their disciples through association and instruction. The disciples of a Vaiṣṇava *guru* thus become qualified to impart *daivi-sampat* to their own disciples in turn. This is the meaning of disciplic succession.

In Kali-yuga, the present age, there are only four genuine *sampradāyas* wherein saintly Vaiṣṇava association can be found. One of these is the Brahmā Sampradāya, established in South India by the great *ācārya* Madhva. This *sampradāya* was accepted by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He received initiation into the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* from His *guru*, Śrī Īśvara Purī. Then, in Bengal (Gauḍadeśa), Lord Caitanya began His movement of *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* mission, of which the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is the worldwide exponent, is known as the Brahma-Mādhva-

Gauḍīya Sampradāya.

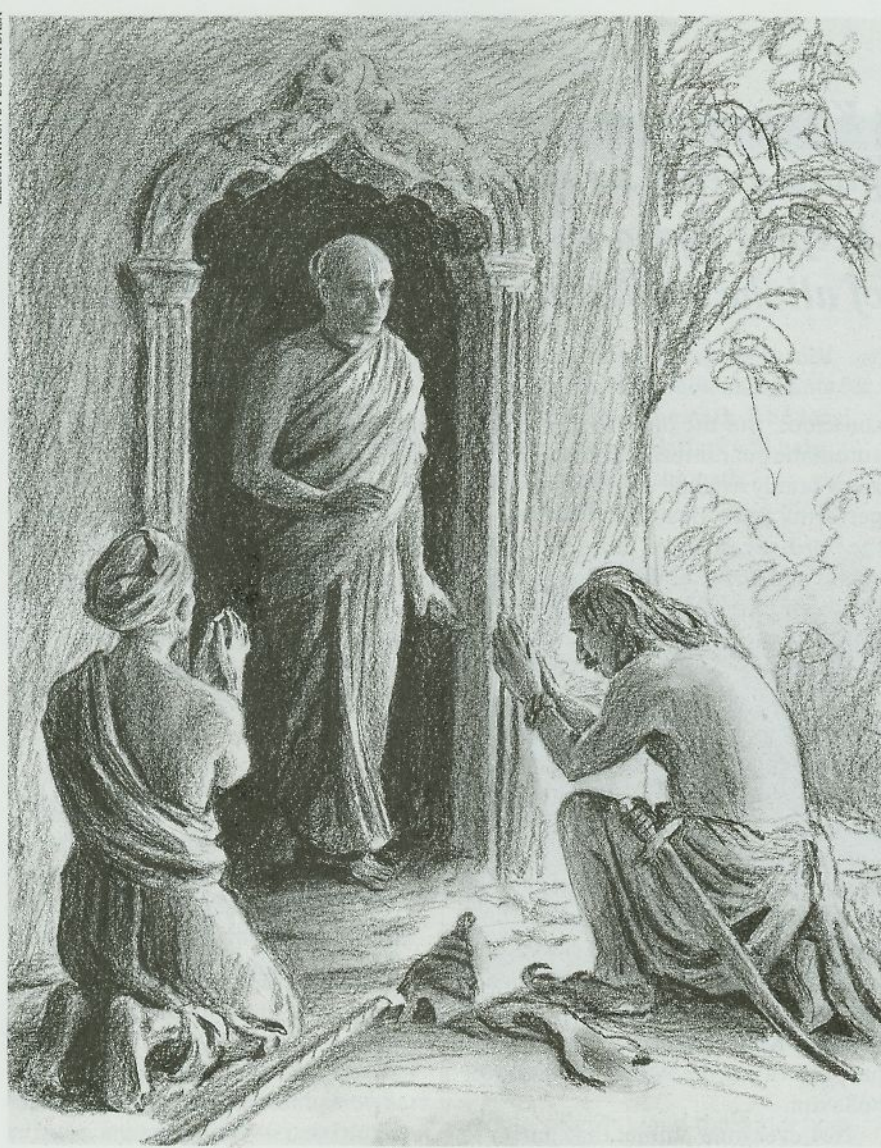
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has identified thirteen *apasampradāyas* that claim to have inherited Lord Caitanya’s mission, though they have nothing to do with the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya. They are known by the names *āula*, *bāula*, *kartābhāja*, *neḍā*, *daraveṣa*, *sānī*, *sahajiyā*, *sakhībhekī*, *smārta*, *jāta-gosānī*, *ativādī*, *cūḍadhārī*, and *gaurāṅga-nāgarī*. Because these *apasampradāyas* (*apa* means “deviated”) do not nurture Vaiṣṇava qualities, their missionary activities are condemned as cheating.

As mentioned in *Vaiṣṇava Ke*, by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, the *apasampradāyas* display only inauspicious qualities. One is *anītya-vaibhava*, the hankering for material success. Another is *kāminīra-kāma*, illicit sexual affairs that are usually passed off as “transcendental.” And a third is *māyāvāda*, philosophical speculation that undercuts the personal nature of God as taught by the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*.

What follows is an in-depth look at the deviations of each of the thirteen *apasampradāyas*. In this article’s first installment, two of the most important, the *jāta-gosānī* and the *smārta*, are dealt with.

Caste Gosvāmīs

The word *jāta* means “by birth” or “by family.” *Gosānī* is a Bengali form of



Having gained the pure association of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, the repentant King Narasiṅha and Śrī Rūpa Nārāyaṇa fall to their knees.

the Sanskrit word *gōsvāmī*, which means “one who controls his senses.” The word *jāta-gosāñī* is used in a critical sense to refer to those who take the position of *gurus* only on the basis of heredity, without having the required spiritual qualifications as well. The point here is that it is not enough to claim family connections to associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. One must be a pure devotee of the Lord.

The devotees in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* follow the original six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. These six devotees, who were all in the renounced order of life, were most illustrious disciples of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. About these Gosvāmīs, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya has written:

The six Gosvāmīs—Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa, Śrī Jīva, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa—are worshipable because they renounced their aristocratic family life as insignificant and became mendicants to preach and deliver the fallen souls. They are always bathing in the waves of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

Thus the six Gosvāmīs set the ideal example of pure devotional service.

To follow in the footsteps of the six Gosvāmīs, one must strictly follow the rules and regulations of devotional service, as explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (*The Nectar of Devotion*).

Sometimes, however, persons who

neglect these devotional principles claim to be *gōsvāmīs* simply on the basis of heredity. They have inherited the name Gosvāmī but not the consciousness of a *gōsvāmī*.

Without proper devotional training, such *jāta-gosāñīs*, or caste *gōsvāmīs*, disregard the regulative principles, neglect the devotional service of the Lord, and use the temple as a place for their own family comforts.

As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī used to say, such untrained persons use the worshipable form of the Lord as “stones for cracking nuts” (that is, as a means of income for sense enjoyment).

On the other hand, in India there are still families that are learned and devoted by tradition and training. They strictly follow regulative principles, they render excellent service to the Lord, and they foster Kṛṣṇa conscious devotional service generation after generation.

Those born in such *gōsvāmī* families have the fortunate opportunity to serve the Lord, and when properly trained they may also become pure devotees. They are then to be accepted as *gōsvāmīs* not only in name but in fact.

The essential consideration, therefore, is pure devotional service. Whether born in a high family or a low family, anyone, from any part of the world, can become a pure devotee of the Lord. As stated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, sūdra kene naya yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei ‘guru’ haya

The pure devotee is one one knows the science of Kṛṣṇa and follows its principles. Such a person can be accepted as a bona fide spiritual master.

What is objectionable, therefore, is the claim that pure devotional service can be performed or spread only by a particular caste or clan. This idea is contrary to Lord Caitanya’s teachings.

An example of such a clan is the so-called Nityānanda Vaṁśa, who claim to descend from three grandsons of Lord Caitanya’s great associate Lord Nityānanda. The members of the Nityānanda Vaṁśa sometimes say that Lord Nityānanda’s divine essence is carried in their family blood line.

This is mendacious on two counts. First, the ancestors of the Nityānanda

***If we forget Kṛṣṇa, we unavoidably transgress
the spirit of the scriptures even if we observe them to the letter,
because keeping Kṛṣṇa always in mind
is the purpose of all the scriptural codes of behavior.***



Vaiṣṇava were actually disciples, not sons, of Lord Nityānanda's only and childless son, Śrī Vīrabhadra Gosvāmī. Second, a person is known to be a Vaiṣṇava not by birth from a particular womb but by his character.

Up until the early part of this century, the Nityānanda Vaiṣṇava held lower-caste Vaiṣṇavas in a thrall of superstition and wrong teachings.

But beginning in the late 1800's, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura challenged them in his popular Bengali-language books like *Jaiva Dharma* and *Hari Nāma Cintāmaṇi*. He proclaimed that it is not enough to accept a spiritual master merely on the basis of caste. Before taking initiation, the candidate must be sure that the initiator is fully conversant with the scriptures and can lift his disciples out of ignorance. The *guru* should be of spotless character; if he is addicted to sinful acts, then even those he has already initiated must reject him.

Bhaktivinoda's books unleashed a wave of reform in Bengal. But the confrontation came to open war when his son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, took over the Gauḍīya mission.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī publicly smashed the arguments placed before him by those who held that devotional service was a monopoly of their own caste. Such ideas, he said, were products of "skin disease."

The basic misunderstanding in materialistic life is that the body is the self. Under illusion, one thinks of oneself as American, British, or Indian, young or old, man or woman, white or black. In fact, however, these are merely bodily designations, labels for the skin. And so too are designations of family and caste. To take birth in a high family may offer one an opportunity to become Kṛṣṇa

conscious. But the birth itself is not an automatic guarantee. Nor does birth in a low family exclude one. Anyone who performs pure devotional service to the Lord, regardless of *jāti*, or birth, becomes a member of the transcendental family of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is Lord Caitanya's teaching.

Smārta-brāhmaṇas

The *Padma Purāṇa*, a text of Vedic teachings, states that if we always remember Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa (*smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇoḥ*) before performing our duty, we automatically fulfill all scriptural rules and regulations. If we forget Him, we unavoidably transgress the spirit of the scriptures even if we observe them to the letter, because keeping Kṛṣṇa always in mind is the purpose of all the scriptural codes of behavior.

Not everyone admits that purpose. There are three classes of *brāhmaṇas*: the *dvija*, the *vipra*, and the Vaiṣṇava. The third-class *dvija* is ritualistically initiated, the second-class *vipra* is learned in the *Vedas*, and the first-class Vaiṣṇava knows that the goal of the *Vedas* is to always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. A *dvija* or *vipra* who is not a devotee can't know the real sense of the rules and regulations of scripture; like a crooked lawyer, he'll use the law to enrich himself materially. The nondevotee *dvija* or *vipra* is what is meant by the term *smārta-brāhmaṇa*.

Smārta-brāhmaṇas totally reverse the instruction of the *Padma Purāṇa*: rather than always remember Kṛṣṇa and thus fulfill the rules and regulations, they remember the rules and regulations and always forget Kṛṣṇa. The *ācāra* (behavior) of a strict *smārta-brāhmaṇa* and a strict Vaiṣṇava may externally be

almost the same, but the consciousness is completely different.

In its subtlest form, the *smārta* contamination is a shift of *values* more than of behavior or even philosophy. *Smārta* values are called *puruṣārthika*, whereas Vaiṣṇava values are *parama-puruṣārthika*. The difference between the two is explained by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 7.24, Purport):

Puruṣārtha ("the goal of life") generally refers to religion, economic development, satisfaction of the senses, and, finally, liberation. However, above these four kinds of *puruṣārthas*, love of Godhead stands supreme. It is called *paramapuruṣārtha* (the supreme goal of life) or *puruṣārtha-śiromaṇi* (the most exalted of all *puruṣārthas*).

Smārta-brāhmaṇas think that one must be born in the *brāhmaṇa* caste to be a *guru*. But as already mentioned, Lord Caitanya taught that a person from any family, race, color, or creed can be a *guru* as long as he or she knows the spiritual science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The *smārtas* also claim the exclusive birthright to worship the *śālagrāma-silā* (Lord Viṣṇu's form as a black stone, which only qualified *brāhmaṇas* may worship). And they never marry outside of the *brāhmaṇa* caste—a taboo they follow so rigidly that a *smārta* father would rather give his daughter to the son of a priest of the tantric school (which uses black rituals and offerings of meat and wine) than to a non-*brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava.

The *smārtas*, then, are afflicted by upper-caste pride. But although the *jāta-gosāñis* who overemphasize birthright may also be afflicted by

(please turn to page 54)

PROFILE

HERE'S A Kṛṣṇa conscious project you might like to support or get involved in. We'll tell you what the goals are, who's involved, what's going on, what's blocking the way, and how you can give a hand.

PROJECT

Reviving the sacred forests of Vṛndāvana.

HEADQUARTERS

London, England.

PROJECT LEADER

Ranchor Dāsa, 40, from London. Ranchor joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1970. He is a writer and a consultant on multi-faith and environmental issues.

GOALS

Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's holy land and one of the most popular pilgrimage centers in India, is in a serious state of deforestation, environmental neglect, and pollution.

"We aim to stop this decline," Ranchor Dāsa says, "and to encourage a sense of ecological responsibility among the local people through education and community action."

Ranchor Dāsa will use the Vṛndāvana project as an opportunity to work internationally with the World Wide Fund for Nature to promote an awareness and understanding of the environmental values contained within the Vedic tradition.

DETAILS

The focus of the project will be the restoration of the pilgrimage path around the town of Vṛndāvana, regularly walked by large numbers of pilgrims. A tree nursery and information center will be established to raise

indigenous trees, flowering shrubs, and religious and medicinal plants for replanting along the path. The local community and pilgrims will help plant and restore the path.

The program will educate local

of tree husbandry, forestry, or gardening is particularly welcome.

Help is needed to raise funds from international government agencies, voluntary agencies, and charitable trusts.

Limited funds are available to support the right persons to work in India. For further information contact: Ranchor Prime, 10 Grafton Mews, London W1P 5LF, England; phone: (0)71 380 0749. Or contact: Toṣaṇa Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, ISKCON Guest House, Raman Reti, Vrindavana, U.P., India. ☸



A section of Ramaṇa Reti, one of the few unspoiled stretches of the path around Vṛndāvana. This woodland area is now under threat from developers.

people, pilgrims, and the wider community of devotees about the care of Vṛndāvana.

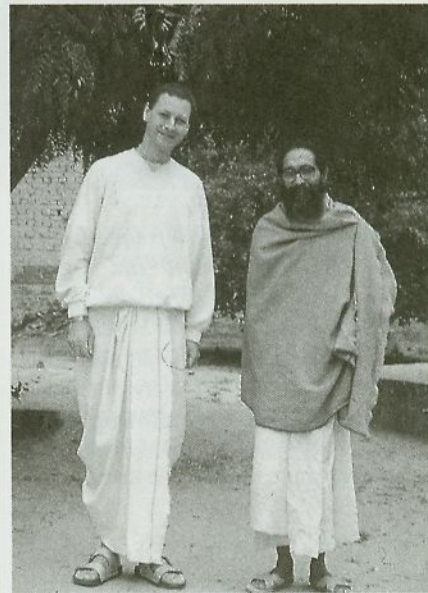
IMMEDIATE PLANS

The nursery is being established now. In September 1991 design work will begin on the exhibition and information center at the nursery site. Janmāṣṭamī 1992 (August) will see the official launch of the project: the first trees will be planted along the path; the exhibition and information center will be opened to the public; and books and resources for schools, the local community, and pilgrims will be published.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Volunteers are needed to work in Vṛndāvana as organizers, community workers, and researchers.

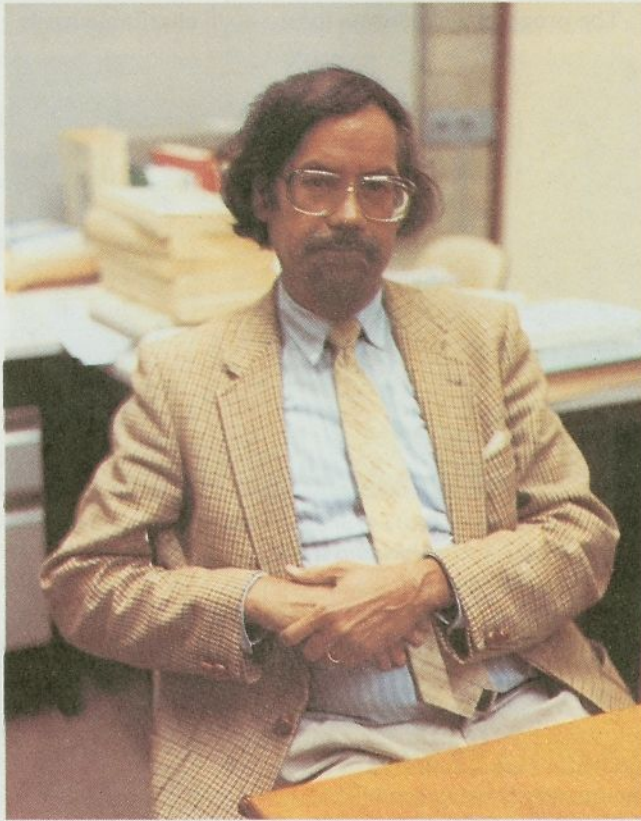
Anyone with a special knowledge



Ranchor Dāsa (left), project leader, with Sewak Saranji, founder of a conservation group dedicated to the restoration of Vṛndāvana's forests.

The Most Important Holy

An Indologist works to awaken interest in the glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.



VRNDA DEVI DĀSĪ

“If one really wants to understand Kṛṣṇa and the profound Vaiṣṇava philosophy that surrounds His activities, one will need to understand Vraja.”

Dr. Mohan K. Gautam, a frequent contributor to religious and Indological journals, is the distinguished director of The International Overseas South Asian Research Centre and the chief professor of Indology at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. The following interview took place in his office on November 6, 1990.

SATYARĀJA DĀSĀ: Dr. Gautam, can you tell me a little about the research you are conducting in Vṛndāvana?

DR. MOHAN K. GAUTAM: Yes. In the 1960's I discovered that although

Western scholars were familiar with the stories of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, as revealed in the Vedic literature, they knew very little about Vṛndāvana, or the Vraja area in general. This is significant, because unless one knows Vraja, the pastimes do not really come to life. If one really wants to understand Kṛṣṇa and the profound Vaiṣṇava philosophy that surrounds His activities, one will need to understand Vraja.

This begins by coming to terms with an important point: Kṛṣṇa's activities can be broken up into two major categories. First, you have His youth, with His parents, His friends, and the

gopīs, and then you have His later activities, when He went to Mathurā and Dvārakā and so on. Now, that first period, which takes Kṛṣṇa up to the age of eight years, is very significant. And scholars have sorely misunderstood this period in Kṛṣṇa's manifest pastimes.

SD: For example?

MG: For example, His love dalliances with the *gopīs*. Scholars try to attribute some mundane characteristic to these spiritual interactions. No. If you take the story as it is presented in the original texts, Kṛṣṇa is eight years old—where is the question of prurient interest?

After Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes, He came back to His birthplace of Mathurā; He killed Kamsa; He handed over the entire empire to His granduncle; He left for the kingdom of Dvārakā; and then you get the *Mahābhārata* story—a second part to Kṛṣṇa's activities—quite removed from Vraja.

So while doing my research in the sixties I found that the *Mahābhārata* aspect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was fairly well known in much of Europe and even in America, especially after the founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. But the early part of Kṛṣṇa's *lilā* was largely unknown. Rādhā was almost entirely unknown. An enigma. And since I originally come from the Vraja region, I initially wanted to set this straight. After all, the Vaiṣṇavas are especially fond of Kṛṣṇa's early *lilā*, especially the Gaudīyas. And the early *lilā* with Rādhā is particularly significant. So I set out to uncover these things for a Western scholarly audience. Initially I was interested in geographical information about the Vraja area, with special attention to Lord Kṛṣṇa's early

Place in the Universe

lilā. For the last sixteen years or so, I have focused on Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the sacred lake of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is in fact considered the most important holy place of Rādhā—the most important place in all of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. And it was re-discovered by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

SD: Do historians of Vraja support that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu discovered Rādhā-kuṇḍa?

MG: Oh, yes. It is said that he discovered it in 1516. It was a small village. It was later developed by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. Kabir, Nanak, Caitanya—they were contemporaries—and the history of that time is well known to researchers. The Muslim invasions, Aurangzeb's destroying the temples—it is all in the history books. But my point is this: The Vraja region, especially Vṛndāvana, Mathurā, even Govardhana, was not particularly well known to scholars, and the most important of these places—Rādhā-kuṇḍa—was least known of all.

SD: This is not without its virtues. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is quite an esoteric place. And if one tries to penetrate her mysteries without the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, it could be devastating. Even with the help of a bona fide guru, it can be devastating. One must be ready for that level of spiritual revelation. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said that if one prematurely tries to enter the understanding of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, one will instead be entering into the understanding of Naraka-kuṇḍa.

MG: Hmmm. “The lake of hell.”

SD: Yes. It is considered very offensive to go to the holy Rādhā-kuṇḍa and to act as though one were an advanced Vaiṣṇava. Most people try to understand Rādhā-kuṇḍa without even following the basic principles of spiritual life.

Prabhupāda spoke out very strongly against this. Chant Kṛṣṇa's name according to a vow and don't engage in illicit sex, intoxication, gambling, and meat-eating. These are the preliminary qualifications. Then one requires some modicum of genuine advancement and the blessings of the guru. Otherwise, understanding Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is not possible. It is not a cheap thing.

MG: Yes. I know. But a scholarly study can be useful. No, it is invaluable. Urgent. This is the point. The history, the geography. The world actually needs information about this very important—most important—holy place.

SD: I agree. From that perspective, yes, it is of great use, both for scholars and for devotees. It is one of the most important parts of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava heritage. And it should be explored in this way. But the cautions cannot be over-emphasized.

MG: Of course. So, as I see it, Rādhā-kuṇḍa can be studied in two ways. First and foremost, of course, is in terms of the books, the philosophy. What have the Vaiṣṇava saints written about it? What does it mean theologically? There is ample literature by Rūpa Gosvāmī and others. This will give us some insight into Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The basis can be found in texts taken from the *Varāha Purāna*, the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāna*, the *Padma Purāna*, and so on.

The basic story, as given in those

Purānas, is very interesting. It seems that Kṛṣṇa, after killing the bull-demon known as Ariṣṭāsura, had to make some kind of atonement. After all, Ariṣṭāsura was from the bovine species, and so Rādhā insisted that since Kṛṣṇa had indeed killed him, He must bathe in all of the holy rivers to purify Himself from the offense.

So Kṛṣṇa tried to please Rādhārāṇī by calling all the holy rivers to that spot. He kicked His right heel into the ground, creating a large indent. Then He summoned all of the world's sacred rivers. In personified form it is said that they identified themselves: Gōdāvarī, Kāverī, Brahmāpūtra, Gandakī, Yamunā—all of them. With all of these waters Śrī Kṛṣṇa filled what came to be known as Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Then He bathed, as Rādhā had suggested.

But then He started to joke with Her: “Now where is Your lake?” Reacting to His question, She found one of Ariṣṭāsura's big hoofprints on the western side of Śyāma-kuṇḍa, and there She broke one of Her bangles and started digging. With the help of Her *gopī* friends, She created Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Still, there was no water—only a big concavity. Soon, all of the holy rivers again appeared and filled Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

The other way to understand Rādhā-kuṇḍa—and this is the way I am pursuing it—is through historical or empirical study. In other words: not only through the scriptures, but through objective, observable research. This is also valuable. That means, as an anthropologist, I would like to see the situation now, by interviewing those who live there now and also by analyzing the physical territory now—the dimensions of the lake, etc. I would like to compare it to

“The information is invaluable and inspirational, for devotees and scholars, and it will get them to take note of this most important of all holy places. The history is enchanting.”



the same information that has been preserved by historians, documenting the same information from the past. In other words, how has it changed? In the minds of the residents, in the minds of scholars, in the minds of devotees, and in the objective historical records.

This is the research I started sixteen or seventeen years ago. So I have been continuing this work, on and off, since that time. I studied the maps of the area, from several historical periods, and I went from house to house making a survey of the people's statements. Which of them were Caitanyites? Which were general Kṛṣṇa devotees? What is their fascination with Rādhā-kuṇḍa? The results are very interesting. And I will soon publish them as two scholarly studies, one directed toward scholars and the other for laymen who have an interest in such things.

SD: Is there a lot of work in this area? Did you get some assistance?

MG: It is growing, yes. You see, in the mid-seventies there was a new wave in the anthropological and sociological world to locate the sacred places in the East, especially in northern India. It was a new interest. Of course, for me, it was an old interest. But I took advantage [laughter]. It really helped my research. There was a move to go through the records and to research. Like the Judaeo-Christian concept of “the Promised Land.” A similar thing is there with Vraja. If not with the physical location always, at least conceptually. “I want Kṛṣṇa's name on my tongue when I die.” Or sometimes people say, “I want Rādhā's name on my tongue as I leave this body.” Why? Because it transports them to the Promised Land, Vraja.

SD: Who initially inspired you in this work?

MG: The first person was a professor

from Chicago. He did his doctorate on Gaya. He was studying under Dr. Milton Singer, a very famous anthropologist at that time, at the University of Chicago. Of course, there were many others at the time. There were studies of Ayodhyā, Benares, so many things . . . But the tradition teaches that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is most important, does it not? Do you know those references?

SD: Yes. It is mentioned by Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*. The ninth text tells us that Mathurā—even terrestrial Mathurā—is superior to Vairāṅgha, the spiritual world. This is because Kṛṣṇa took His birth in that holy land. Then it says that the forests of Vṛndāvana are even superior to Mathurā—because it is said that in this sacred area Kṛṣṇa's esoteric *rāsa-līlā* pastimes took place. But it goes further. It says that higher still is Govardhana Hill, for it was raised by Kṛṣṇa's divine hand, and other loving pastimes occurred there as well. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is spiritually superior to even Govardhana, because this lake embodies the Lord's love for Rādhā and Her love for Him.

MG: Yes. So the scriptures endorse that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the holiest of places.

SD: But *Upadeśāmṛta* ends with a warning. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is *asulabham*, or “difficult to attain.” What does this mean? Not that it is difficult to find by rīksha. Nor will a mystical wand stop us from bathing in her waters. No. It means that we cannot really penetrate her mysteries—her inner meaning—unless we develop pure devotion.

MG: Yes. True enough. But as we agreed earlier, the other information is invaluable and inspirational, for devotees and scholars, and it will get them to take

note of this most important of all holy places. The history is enchanting. You can read in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Lord Caitanya's discovery of Śyāma-kuṇḍa and Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Then, with his followers, how it developed. Specifically Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. It is so interesting. How the original two paddy lands, Gauri and Kari, were purchased by Raghunātha Dāsa for Jīva Gosvāmī. There are documents. The story of how twenty-some-odd steps were built on all sides of the lakes. How it was developed, in 1817 or thereabouts, by Lala Babu, a rich landlord from Bengal. This information should not be withheld.

SD: I agree.

MG: So I have been working on two books which will give all of the details, with much of the results of my last seventeen years of research. One book will focus on Rādhā-kuṇḍa from a scholarly point of view, and the other will be more for laymen, so that anyone can understand. In this I am a supporter of ISKCON. The work that Swami Prabhupāda has done—making a rich, complex tradition accessible to all sincere souls—is incomprehensible. It is an achievement. We must bow down to that. I see my work as a humble contribution to this same tradition. A humble offering, using my scholarly capabilities. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is a very confidential place, no doubt. But we feel that this information should be given to the world. 🌸

Satyārāja Dāsa was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1975. He is the author of six books. This interview is excerpted from Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism: Ten Distinguished Scholars Discuss the Roots of Kṛṣṇa Worship, to be published late this year. Write to him c/o FOLK Books, P.O. Box 400716, Brooklyn, NY 11240, U.S.A.

A GIFT OF TRANSCENDENTAL VISION

Rendered from Sanskrit into English,
with commentary,
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
For Krishna Consciousness

The sage Kardama Muni is pleased by the devoted service of his wife, Devahūti. As Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Kardama shows her the spiritual results she has achieved through her service.

giving; *abhayān*—which are free from fear; *aśokān*—which are free from lamentation.

Kardama Muni continued: I have achieved the blessings of the Lord in discharging my own religious life of austerity, meditation and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although you

THIRD CANTO/CHAPTER 23

7 ये मे स्वधर्मनिरतस्य तपःसमाधि-
विद्यात्मयोगविजिता भगवत्प्रसादाः ।
तानेव ते मदनुसेवनयावरुद्धान्
दृष्टिं प्रपश्य वितराम्यमयानशोकान् ॥ ७ ॥

*ye me sva-dharma-niratasya tapaḥ-samādhī-
vidyātmā-yoga-vijitā bhagavat-prasādā
tān eva te mad-anusevanayāvaruddhān
dṛṣṭim prapaśya vitarāmy abhayān aśokān*

ye—those which; *me*—by me; *sva-dharma*—own religious life; *niratasya*—fully occupied with; *tapaḥ*—in austerity; *samādhī*—in meditation; *vidyā*—in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; *ātma-yoga*—by fixing the mind; *vijitā*—achieved; *bhagavat-prasādā*—the blessings of the Lord; *tān*—them; *eva*—even; *te*—by you; *mat*—to me; *anusevanayā*—by devoted service; *avaruddhān*—obtained; *dṛṣṭim*—transcendental vision; *prapaśya*—just see; *vitarāmi*—I am



With his mystic power, Kardama Muni creates an aerial mansion for his wife, Devahūti.

have not yet experienced these achievements, which are free from fear and lamentation, I shall offer them all to you because you are engaged in my service. Now just look at them. I am giving you the transcendental vision to see how nice they are.

PURPORT: Devahūti engaged only in the service of Kardama Muni. She was not supposed to be so advanced in austerity, ecstasy, meditation, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but, imperceptibly, she was sharing her husband's achievements, which she could neither see nor experience. Automatically she achieved these graces of the Lord.

What are the graces of the Lord? It is stated here that the graces of the Lord are *abhaya*, free from fearfulness. In the material world, if someone accumulates a million dollars, he is always full of fear because he is always thinking, "What if the money is lost?" But the benediction of the Lord, *bhagavat-prasāda*, is never to be lost. It is simply to be enjoyed. There is no question of loss. One simply gains and enjoys gaining. *Bhagavad-gītā* also confirms this: when one achieves the grace of the Lord, the result is that *sarva-duḥkhāni*, all distresses, are destroyed. When situated in the transcendental position, one is freed from the two kinds of material diseases—hankering and lamentation. This is also stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*. After devotional life begins, we can achieve the full result of love of Godhead.

Love of Kṛṣṇa is the highest perfection of *bhagavat-prasāda*, or divine mercy. This transcendental achievement is so greatly valuable that no material happiness can compare to it. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī said that if one achieves the grace of Lord Caitanya he becomes so great that he does not care a fig even for the demigods, he thinks of monism as hellish, and for him the perfection of controlling the senses is as easy as anything. Heavenly pleasures become to him no more than stories. Actually, there is no comparison between material happiness and transcendental happiness.

By the grace of Kardama Muni, Devahūti experienced actual realization simply by serving. We get a similar example in the life of Nārada Muni. In his previous life, Nārada was a maidservant's son, but his mother was engaged in the service of great devotees. He got the opportunity to serve the devotees, and simply by eating the remnants of their foodstuff and carrying out their orders he became so elevated that in his next life he became the great personality Nārada. For spiritual achievement the easiest path is to take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master and to serve him with heart and soul. That is the secret of success. As stated by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his eight stanzas of prayer to the spiritual master, *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādaḥ*: by serving or receiving the grace of the spiritual master, one receives the grace of the Supreme Lord. By serving her devotee husband, Kardama Muni, Devahūti shared in his achievements. Similarly, a sincere disciple, simply by serving a bona fide spiritual master, can achieve all the mercy of the Lord and the spiritual master simultaneously.

8 अन्ये पुनर्भगवतो भ्रुव उद्विजृम्भ-
विभ्रंशितार्थरचनाः किमुक्रमस्य ।

सिद्धासि भ्रुङ्क्व विभवान्निजधर्मदोहान्

दिव्यान्नरैर्दुरधिगान्पविक्रियाभिः ॥ ८ ॥

*anye punar bhagavato bhruva udvijrmbha-
vibhramśitārtha-racanāḥ kim urukramasya
siddhāsi bhuṅkṣva vibhavān nija-dharma-dohān
divyān narair duradhigān nṛpa-vikriyābhiḥ*

anye—others; *punaḥ*—again; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Lord; *bhruvaḥ*—of the eyebrows; *udvijrmbha*—by the movement; *vibhramśita*—annihilated; *artha-racanāḥ*—material achievements; *kim*—what use; *urukramasya*—of Lord Viṣṇu (far-stepping); *siddhā*—successful; *asi*—you are; *bhuṅkṣva*—enjoy; *vibhavān*—the gifts; *nija-dharma*—by your own principles of devotion; *dohān*—gained; *divyān*—transcendental; *naraiḥ*—by persons; *duradhigān*—difficult to obtain; *nṛpa-vikriyābhiḥ*—proud of aristocracy.

Kardama Muni continued: What is the use of enjoyments other than the Lord's grace? All material achievements are subject to be annihilated simply by a movement of the eyebrows of Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By your principles of devotion to your husband, you have achieved and can enjoy transcendental gifts very rarely obtained by persons proud of aristocracy and material possessions.

PURPORT: Lord Caitanya recommended that the greatest achievement of human life is to achieve the grace of the Lord, love of God. He said, *premā pumartho mahān*: to achieve love of Godhead is the highest perfection of life. The same perfection is recommended by Kardama Muni to his wife. His wife belonged to a very aristocratic royal family. Generally, those who are very materialistic or who possess material wealth and prosperity are unable to appreciate the value of transcendental love of God.

Although Devahūti was a princess coming from a very great royal family, fortunately she was under the supervision of her great husband, Kardama Muni, who offered her the best gift which can be bestowed in human life—the grace of the Lord, or love of God. This grace of the Lord was achieved by Devahūti by the good will and satisfaction of her husband. She served her husband, who was a great devotee and saintly person, with great sincerity, love, affection, and service, and Kardama Muni was satisfied. He willingly gave love of God, and he recommended that she accept it and enjoy it because he had already achieved it.

Love of God is not an ordinary commodity. Caitanya Mahāprabhu was worshiped by Rūpa Gosvāmī because He distributed love of God, *kṛṣṇa-premā*, to everyone. Rūpa Gosvāmī praised Him as *mahā-vadānya*, a greatly munificent personality, because He was freely distributing to everyone love of Godhead, which is achieved by wise men only after many, many births. *Kṛṣṇa-premā*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is the highest gift which can be bestowed on anyone whom we presume to love.

One word used in this verse, *nija-dharma-dohān*, is very significant. Devahūti, as the wife of Kardama Muni, achieved an invaluable gift from her husband because she was very faithful to him. For a woman the first principle of

religion is to be faithful to her husband. If, fortunately, the husband is a great personality, then the combination is perfect, and the lives of both the wife and the husband are at once fulfilled.

9 एवं ब्रुवाणमबलाखिलयोगमाया- विद्याविचक्षणमवेक्ष्य गताधिरासीत् ।

सम्प्रश्रयप्रणयविह्वलया गिरेषद्-
त्रीडावलोकविलसद्दसिताननाह ॥ ९ ॥

*evaṁ bruvāṇam abalākhila-yogamāyā-
vidyā-vicakṣaṇam avekṣya gatādhīr āsīt
sampraśraya-praṇaya-vihvalayā gireṣad-
vṛīḍāvaloka-vilasat-dhasitānanāha*

evaṁ—thus; *bruvāṇam*—speaking; *abalā*—the woman; *akhila*—all; *yoga-māyā*—of transcendental science; *vidyā-vicakṣaṇam*—excelling in knowledge; *avekṣya*—after hearing; *gata-ādhiḥ*—satisfied; *āsīt*—she became; *sampraśraya*—with humility; *praṇaya*—and with love; *vihvalayā*—choked up; *girā*—with a voice; *iṣat*—slightly; *vṛīḍā*—bashful; *avaloka*—with a glance; *vilasat*—shining; *hasita*—smiling; *ānanā*—her face; *āha*—she spoke.

Upon hearing the speaking of her husband, who excelled in knowledge of all kinds of transcendental science, innocent Devahūti was very satisfied. Her smiling face shining with a slightly bashful glance, she spoke in a choked voice because of great humility and love.

PURPORT: It is said that if one is already engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is rendering transcendental loving service to the Lord, then it can be supposed that he has finished all the recommended courses of austerity, penance, religion, sacrifice, mystic *yoga*, and meditation. Devahūti's husband was so expert in the transcendental science that there was nothing for him to argue about, and when she heard him speak she was confident that since he was very much advanced in devotional service he had already surpassed all transcendental educational activities. She had no doubt about the gifts offered by her husband; she knew that he was expert in offering such gifts, and when she understood that he was offering the greatest gift, she was very satisfied. She was overwhelmed with ecstatic love, and therefore she could not reply; then, with faltering language, just like an attractive wife, she spoke the following words.

देवहृतिरुवाच

10 राद्धं बत द्विजवृषैतदमोघयोग-
मायाधिपे त्वयि विभो तद्वैमि भर्तः ।

यस्तेऽभ्यघायि समयः सकृदङ्गसङ्गो
भूयाद्गरीयसि जुगः प्रसवः सतीनाम् ॥१०॥

devahūtīr uvāca
rāddham bata dvija-vṛṣaitad amogha-yoga-

*māyādhipē tvayi vibho tad avaimi bhartaḥ
yas te 'bhyadhāyi samayaḥ sakṛt aṅga-saṅgo
bhūyād gariyasi guṇaḥ prasavaḥ satīnām*

devahūtīḥ uvāca—Devahūti said; *rāddham*—it has been achieved; *bata*—indeed; *dvija-vṛṣa*—O best of the *brāhmaṇas*; *etat*—this; *amogha*—infallible; *yoga-māyā*—of mystic powers; *adhipē*—the master; *tvayi*—in you; *vibho*—O great one; *tat*—that; *avaimi*—I know; *bhartaḥ*—O husband; *yaḥ*—that which; *te*—by you; *abhyadhāyi*—was given; *samayaḥ*—promise; *sakṛt*—once; *aṅga-saṅgaḥ*—bodily union; *bhūyāt*—may be; *gariyasi*—when very glorious; *guṇaḥ*—a great quality; *prasavaḥ*—progeny; *satīnām*—of chaste women.

Śrī Devahūti said: My dear husband, O best of brāhmaṇas, I know that you have achieved perfection and are the master of all the infallible mystic powers because you are under the protection of yogamāyā, the transcendental nature. But you once made a promise that our bodily union should now fulfill, since children are a great quality for a chaste woman who has a glorious husband.

PURPORT: Devahūti expressed her happiness by uttering the word *bata*, for she knew that her husband was in a highly elevated, transcendental position and was under the shelter of *yogamāyā*. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, those who are great souls, *mahātmās*, are not under the control of the material energy. The Supreme Lord has two energies, material and spiritual. The living entities are marginal energy. As marginal energy, a person may be under the control of the material energy or the spiritual energy (*yogamāyā*). Kardama Muni was a great soul, and therefore he was under the spiritual energy, which means that he was directly connected with the Supreme Lord.

The symptom of this is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, constant engagement in devotional service. This was known to Devahūti, yet she was anxious to have a son by bodily union with the sage. She reminded her husband of his promise to her parents: "I will remain only until the time of Devahūti's pregnancy." She reminded him that for a chaste woman to have a child by a great personality is most glorious. She wanted to be pregnant, and she prayed for that. The word *strī* means "expansion." By bodily union of the husband and wife their qualities are expanded: children born of good parents are expansions of the parents' personal qualifications. Both Kardama Muni and Devahūti were spiritually enlightened; therefore she desired from the beginning that first she be pregnant and then she be empowered with the achievement of God's grace and love of God. For a woman it is a great ambition to have a son of the same quality as a highly qualified husband. Since she had the opportunity to have Kardama Muni as her husband, she also desired to have a child by bodily union.

11 तत्रेतिकृत्यमुपशिक्ष यथोपदेशं
येनैष मे कश्चितोऽतिरिंसयात्मा ।
सिद्धयेत ते कृतमनोभवधर्षिताया
दीनस्तदीश भवनं सदृशं विचक्ष्व ॥११॥

tatreti-kṛtyam upaśikṣa yathopadeśam
yenaīṣa me karśito 'tiriraṁsayātmā
siddhyeta te kṛta-manobhava-dharṣitāyā
dīnaḥ tad īśa bhavanam sadṛśam vicakṣva

tatra—in that; iti-kṛtyam—what is necessary to be done; upaśikṣa—perform; yathā—according to; upadeśam—instruction in scripture; yena—by which; eṣaḥ—this; me—my; karśitaḥ—emaciated; tiriraṁsayā—due to intense passion not being satisfied; ātmā—body; siddhyeta—it may be rendered fit; te—for you; kṛta—excited; manaḥ-bhava—by emotion; dharṣitāyāḥ—who am struck; dīnaḥ—poor; tat—therefore; īśa—O my dear lord; bhavanam—house; sadṛśam—suitable; vicakṣva—please think of.

Devahūti continued: My dear lord, I am struck by excited emotion for you. Therefore kindly make what arrangements must be made according to the scriptures so that my skinny body, emaciated through unsatisfied passion, may be rendered fit for you. Also, my lord, please think of a suitable house for this purpose.

PURPORT: The Vedic literatures are not only full of spiritual instruction but are also instructive in how to prosecute material existence very nicely, with the ultimate aim of spiritual perfection. Devahūti asked her husband, therefore, how to prepare herself for sex life according to the Vedic instructions. Sex life is especially meant for having good children. The circumstances for creating good children are mentioned in *kāma-śāstra*, the scripture in which suitable arrangements are prescribed for factually glorious sex life. Everything needed is mentioned in the scriptures—what sort of house and decorations there should be, what sort of dress the wife should have, how she should be decorated with ointments, scents, and other attractive features, etc. With these requisites fulfilled, the husband will be attracted by her beauty, and a favorable mental situation will be created. The mental situation at the time of sex life may then be transferred into the womb of the wife, and good children can come out of that pregnancy. Here is a special reference to Devahūti's bodily features. Because she had become skinny, she feared that her body might have no attraction for Kardama. She wanted to be instructed how to improve her bodily condition in order to attract her husband. Sexual intercourse in which the husband is attracted to the wife is sure to produce a male child, but sexual intercourse based on attraction of the wife for the husband may produce a girl. That is mentioned in the *Āyurveda*. When the passion of the woman is greater, there is a chance of a girl's being born. When the passion of the man is greater, then there is the possibility of a son. Devahūti wanted the passion of her husband to be increased by the arrangement mentioned in the *kāma-śāstra*. She wanted him to instruct her in that way, and she also requested that he arrange for a suitable house because the hermitage in which Kardama Muni was living was very simple and completely in the mode of goodness, and there was less possibility of passion's being aroused in his heart.

मैत्रेय उवाच

12 प्रियायाः प्रियमन्विच्छन् कर्दमो योगमास्थितः ।
विमानं कामगं क्षत्तस्तर्होवाविरचीकरत् ॥१२॥

maitreya uvāca
priyāyāḥ priyam anvicchan
kardamo yogam āsthitaḥ
vimānam kāma-gaṁ kṣattas
tarhy evāviraçikarat

maitreyaḥ—the great sage Maitreya; uvāca—said; priyāyāḥ—of his beloved wife; priyam—the pleasure; anvicchan—seeking; kardamaḥ—the sage Kardama; yogam—yogic power; āsthitaḥ—exercised; vimānam—an airplane; kāma-gam—moving at will; kṣattaḥ—O Vidura; tarhi—instantly; eva—quite; āviracikarat—he produced.

Maitreya continued: O Vidura, seeking to please his beloved wife, the sage Kardama exercised his yogic power and instantly produced an aerial mansion that could travel at his will.

PURPORT: Here the words *yogam āsthitaḥ* are significant. The sage Kardama was completely perfect in *yoga*. As the result of real *yoga* practice there are eight kinds of perfection: the *yogī* can become smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, or lighter than the lightest, he can achieve anything he likes, he can create even a planet, he can establish influence over anyone, etc. In this way yogic perfection is achieved, and after this one can achieve the perfection of spiritual life. Thus it was not very wonderful for Kardama Muni to create a mansion in the air, according to his own desire, to fulfill the desire of his beloved wife. He at once created the palace, which is described in the following verses.

13 सर्वकामदुघं दिव्यं सर्वरत्नसमन्वितम् ।
सर्वद्र्युपचयोदर्कं मणिस्तम्भैरुपस्कृतम् ॥१३॥

sarva-kāma-dugham divyam
arva-ratna-samanvitam
sarvaddhy-upacayodarkam
maṇi-stambhair upaskrtam

sarva—all; kāma—desires; dugham—yielding; divyam—wonderful; sarva-ratna—all sorts of jewels; samanvitam—bedecked with; sarva—all; ṛddhi—of wealth; upacaya—increase; udarkam—gradual; maṇi—of precious stones; stambhaiḥ—with pillars; upaskrtam—adorned.

It was a wonderful structure, bedecked with all sorts of jewels, adorned with pillars of precious stones, and capable of yielding whatever one desired. It was equipped with every form of furniture and wealth, which tended to increase in the course of time.

(continued in the next issue)

What Happened In Māyāpur?

*A report on the annual meeting
of ISKCON's highest governing body.*



A session at the annual meeting of ISKCON's governing body, February, 1991.

For ten days every year, thirty men gather in Māyāpur, West Bengal, a village on the Ganges seventy miles north of Calcutta, to guide the course of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

This is the GBC, the Governing Body Commission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

While Śrīla Prabhupāda was physically on earth, he had final authority in guiding the movement. Before he left, he entrusted this authority to the GBC.

Śrīla Prabhupāda first formed the GBC in 1970. He chose twelve disciples to serve on the body, assigned each

a geographical “zone” of the world, and referred to these men as his “zonal secretaries.” In each zone, he said, his secretary should spread and maintain Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't like big bureaucracy. Legally and managerially, he said, each ISKCON center should be independent. But the GBC men should set an ideal spiritual example and see that each center followed the Kṛṣṇa conscious standards he had taught.

How well did the GBC do? So-so. Sometimes they did splendid, sometimes botched it.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda saw a secretary getting too “puffed up,” Śrīla Prabhupāda would verbally cut him down. And once when the GBC pulled a move that especially displeased him, he wrote to all his temples that for now the GBC was dissolved.

But soon he put his GBC men back in action, and over the years he “trained them up,” as he would say, and placed more weight on their shoulders.

Finally, as he left, he directed that the GBC should be the final managing authority for the whole Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. One man might make a mistake, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, but he trusted that together his GBC men would make the right decisions.

The main time and place for making decisions, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, was “once a year at Māyāpur.” Māyāpur is the birthplace of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and there the GBC holds its annual meeting, right before the festival for Lord Caitanya's birth.

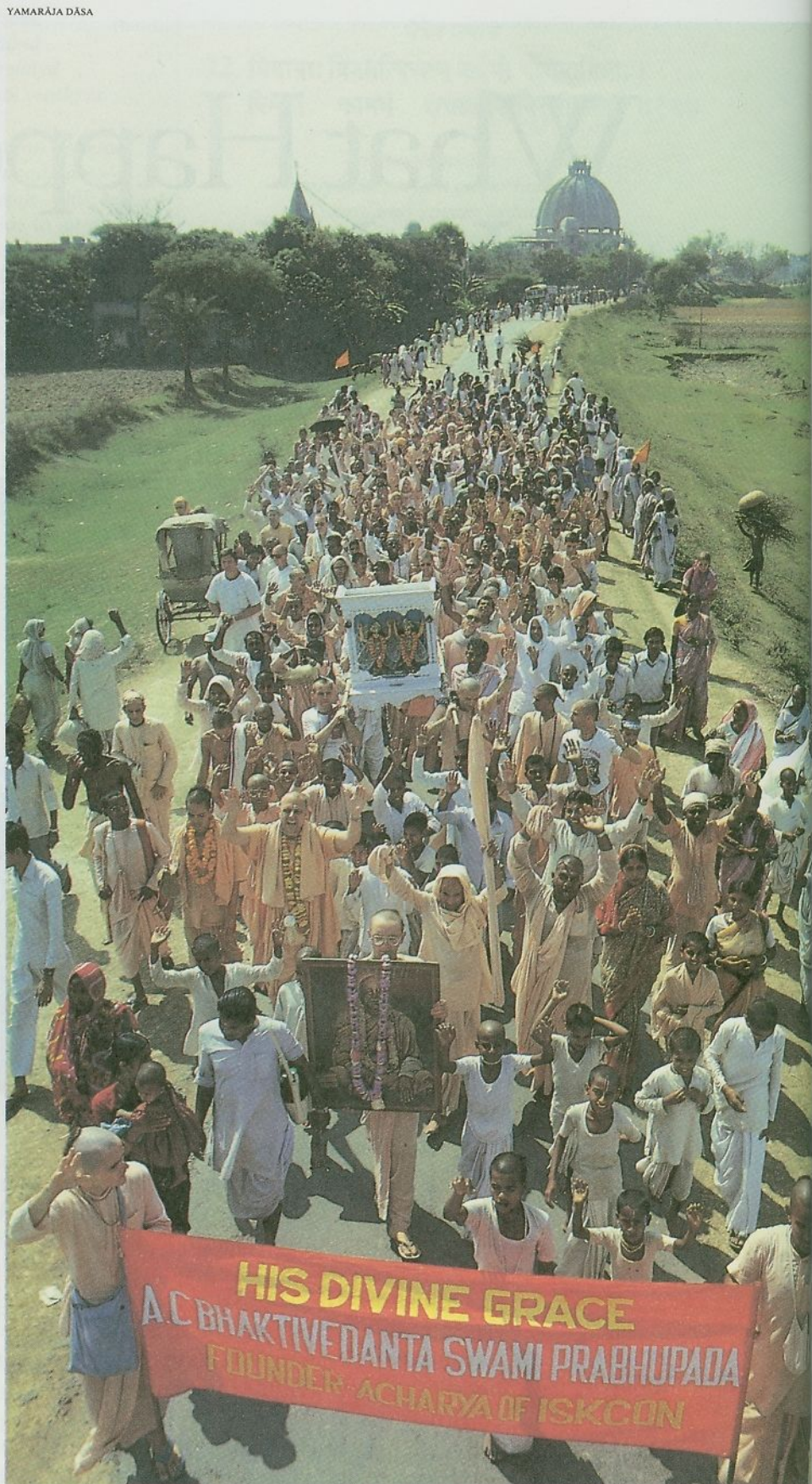
Here is a summary of the decisions the GBC made this year.

Officers for the Year

Each year the GBC rotates its officers. This year the chairman is Virabāhu Dāsa, a native of Argentina. The vice chairman is Bhūrījāna Dāsa, an American serving in India. And the secretary is Jayapatāka Swami, born American but granted Indian citizenship several years ago.

Zones Assigned

Every year the GBC looks at the map, and from time to time the body redraws zones or makes shifts in who will cover each area.



Devotees from around the world chant and dance on the road outside ISKCON's Māyāpur community as they set out to visit some of the many holy sites in the area. Śrīla Prabhupāda's memorial shrine (puṣpa samādhī) can be seen in the background.

Śrīdhāma Māyāpur was virtually neglected twenty years ago, when ISKCON first began working there. Now Māyāpur attracts busloads of pilgrims every day from Calcutta and from around the world.



This year the main place for change was Africa. People in Nigeria and nearby countries have shown a great interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and the GBC wants to be sure they receive proper spiritual guidance. Last year, the GBC expressed its concern that its member serving in west and central Africa was drifting in his duties. So this year the GBC entrusted his GBC duties to another devotee. The GBC also plans to have other senior devotees visit Africa to strengthen the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

New Members

Two new members joined the GBC: Suhotra Swami will help guide the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and Czechoslovakia. And Śrīdhara Swami will oversee ISKCON's programs for life membership.

Service to ISKCON Life Members

Throughout the world, ISKCON has several thousand life members, who have given generously to help maintain and spread the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

In return, they receive various benefits from their local temples, and ISKCON temples throughout the world offer lodging, *prasādam*, and hospitality to life members and their families when they travel.

Śrīdhara Swami will now help coordinate these programs, to offer better service to ISKCON life members worldwide.

Śrīdhāma Māyāpur: Lord Caitanya's City of Pilgrimage

A major focus of energy for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Poised on the Ganges in the Nadia

district of West Bengal, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur was virtually neglected twenty years ago, when ISKCON first began working there. Now Māyāpur attracts busloads of pilgrims every day from Calcutta (about four hours away) and from around the world.

ISKCON's Māyāpur center—the Society's largest—includes a temple, guesthouses, parks, gardens, agricultural fields, and a children's school. Also included: a printing press, handicrafts projects, a cow-protecting dairy, and a charitable center for free distribution of food. Gradually the center is developing into a full-scale Kṛṣṇa conscious city.

The GBC, therefore, spent two full days going over plans for Māyāpur's growth.

At the center of the Māyāpur city will be a large temple, combined with a Vedic planetarium. For the last two years, the GBC's main advisor on plans for the temple has been Mr. A. G. Krishna Menon, an architect from New Delhi. This year the GBC chose Mr. Menon to design the structure.

He has quite a task ahead of him. According to the guidelines the GBC has given, the temple should be large enough to hold ten thousand people at a time. And it should be made of brick rather than reinforced concrete (the main stuff of most modern Western structures). Though concrete allows greater freedom of design, it crumbles after about a hundred years; brickwork lasts indefinitely.

Mr. Menon has also advised the GBC on the layout of the Māyāpur city itself. Traditional Vedic plans, found in scripture, offer various geometrical patterns for city planning. The patterns assign places to temples, fields, houses, and so on, in a way to foster both social and spiritual harmony. Mr. Menon has sug-

gested ways to put these patterns in place at the Māyāpur site.

Memorial for Śrīla Prabhupāda

The main building now in progress in Māyāpur is the "*puṣpa samādhi*" of Śrīla Prabhupāda. When Śrīla Prabhupāda passed away, flowers adorning his body were brought from Vṛndāvana to Māyāpur, to be enshrined in a memorial.

That memorial, long delayed in construction, has taken the form of a huge museum. Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciple Matsya Avatāra Dāsa, a professional designer, has taken charge of the details for finishing the building.

But the managers of the Māyāpur project told the GBC that more devotees are needed to complete the work on schedule. Art directors are needed to supervise local craftsmen in the detailed artistic work. And apart from work on the *samādhi*, devotees are needed to oversee construction of other buildings for the Māyāpur project. (Interested devotees may get in touch with the project director, Harikeṣa Swami, at Korsnäs Gård, 14792 Grödinge, Sweden.)

Project in Puri

South of Māyāpur, in the state of Orissa, ISKCON owns thirty acres of land in the holy city of Jagannātha Puri. The land, donated to ISKCON several years ago, includes five acres on the oceanfront. The other land is nearby.

This year the GBC appointed a committee of seven devotees to see to the use of this land for a new ISKCON center.

Book Distribution

For spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the GBC reemphasized what Śrīla Prabhupāda had said: the most effec-

*For spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness,
the GBC reemphasized what Śrīla Prabhupāda had said:
the most effective way to spread the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement
is by distributing Kṛṣṇa conscious books.*

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tive way to spread the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is by distributing Kṛṣṇa conscious books.

By distributing these books, the GBC said, "We can make a revolution in the hearts of the people of this world and save these people from material existence."

As more books go out, more devotees come in to join the movement, and as more devotees come in, again more books go out. So the GBC called on the movement's leaders—and especially its *gurus*—to inspire more and more people to join the movement and distribute more and more books.

Philosophical Research Group

From time to time, philosophical questions come up on which even leading ISKCON devotees have differing opinions. The GBC has appointed a "Philosophical Research Group" to study such questions.

This year, the GBC has asked the group to offer guidelines on the use of Vedic astrology. Another question for the group to study: May ISKCON devotees serve as *gurus* in their own *gurus'* lifetime? The GBC has also asked the group to write a paper, from research already done, about the origin of the soul.

You'll find out more about these and other such questions in upcoming issues of BTG.

History of "Guru Reform"

After Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure, ISKCON went through troubles and reforms over how devotees should serve as *gurus*. The GBC Body has now asked one of its members, Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa, to write a historical and philosophical account of those turbulent and

highly instructive events.

Readers of BTG who wish to offer advice, thoughts, documents, recollections, or other input are welcome to write to Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa, 41 W. Allens Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19119, USA. (He asks to hear from you by August 1.)

ISKCON Journal

Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa is also the editor of *ISKCON Journal*, which the GBC started last year to clarify major philosophical themes for the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

This year, the GBC loosened up the *Journal's* editorial mandate to allow for more open-ended discussions. The GBC asked that the *Journal* appear twice this coming year.

Also to come out this year will be an ISKCON handbook for worship of the Deity.

Children's Schooling

Overseeing children's schools in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has been the duty of an ISKCON Board of Education. This year the GBC made adjustments to the board, decentralizing it. So now, under the international Board of Education, six GBC members look after six regional boards for schools in various part of the world. (Two more GBC members see to ISKCON's schools in eastern and western India.)

The international board has drafted rules setting strict limits on punishment, to make sure that children are disciplined wisely, with sensitivity and restraint. It has widely distributed a guidebook, "Preventing Child Abuse in ISKCON." And it is placing at least one parent always on the scene, in each school, to make sure the kids get the

care and attention that come from mature parental experience.

The Order of Renunciation

To accept *sannyāsa*, ISKCON devotees must receive permission from the GBC. In recent years the GBC has been tight about this. New candidates must generally undergo several years of waiting.

This year, the GBC approved *sannyāsa* for Mahāviṣṇu Dāsa, an elderly devotee from Maharashtra, India, living in London. It also made a new rule: by a four-fifths vote, the GBC could waive all its other rules and allow an especially fit devotee to take *sannyāsa* at once. The GBC then invoked this rule to allow *sannyāsa* for Avināśa Candra Dāsa, a leading devotee from Germany.

Getting Things Done

This year the GBC devoted several days to examining the GBC body itself. What are the specific aims it wants to lead ISKCON toward reaching, and how does it help ISKCON reach them?

The aims, it found, were yet to be clearly set forth and defined, and ISKCON's ways of moving toward them were fitful and uncoordinated.

First, therefore, the GBC drafted statements to articulate ISKCON's purposes. Then it made changes in its own workings so that it can do a better job of leading the Society toward them.

The GBC assigned each stated aim to one devotee. During the year, this devotee is to work with each GBC man to monitor and encourage progress inreaching the aim in each part of the

(please turn to page 60)



EVERY TOWN & VILLAGE

*The worldwide activities of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).*

WORLD NEWS

North America

Hare Krishna Food For Life in Denver has started

a newsletter entitled *Our Newsletter*. It reports on Hare Krishna Food For Life around the world, carries classified ads and announcements, and features tasty recipes. For a copy, write to *Our Newsletter*, P.O. Box 200535, Denver, Colorado 80222.

Denver devotee Rohiṇī Suta Dāsa is fully certified by the Colorado Division of Disaster Emergency Services and is a member of the Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Team and COVAD, Colorado Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster. He has equipped a walk-in van with commercial-band radio and an electronic telephone-paging system, making him ready to provide Hare Krishna Food For Life to victims of floods, fires, tornados, toxic spills, industrial explosions, and extreme snow conditions. He also plans to supply Food For Life to relief workers at emergency sites.

The Houston Chronicle ran a major story on the Houston temple in February. Photographs of the temple interior, the Deities, and devotees performing *kīrtana* and preparing *prasādam* filled three quarters of the front page of the religion section. The article accurately presented the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Professor Burke Rochford will be traveling to temples throughout ISKCON this year interviewing devotees for a book he's writing on the role of children's education in the future of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. In 1985 he published a book entitled *Hare Krishna in America*.

"While I consider this research significant," Professor Rochford said, "ultimately nothing is more important than the welfare of ISKCON's young people. This will remain in the forefront of my mind throughout my research efforts."

Soviet Union

Devotees in Moscow will be starting their own *gurukula*

soon. Śrī Rāma Dāsa of the Board of Education will work with devotees there to design a *gurukula* system suited to

their needs. Bhāva Dāsa, headmaster of the New Zealand *gurukula*, will spend a few months in the Soviet Union this summer training teachers.

Kīrtirāja Dāsa wrote in his annual report to the GBC that the Soviet Union now has about five hundred grand-disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda and ten thousand serious practitioners of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kīrtirāja is the governing body commissioner for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Moscow devotees are renovating the building they're leasing for use as a temple. It has seven hundred square meters of floor space and is the home of uninstalled Deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, donated by Rādhāpāda Dāsa of Calcutta. Up to seventy-five devotees will live in the building when the renovation is complete.

India

Ten thousand guests attended the opening of ISKCON's Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, on January 28. Śrīla Prabhupāda had laid the cornerstone for the temple in 1977. His Excellency Rabi Ray, honorable speaker of the Indian parliament, was chief



ISKCON's newly opened Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple in Bhubaneswar, India.

guest at the opening ceremonies for the four-day festival.

The temple is located in a fast-developing area of Bhubaneswar. Śrīla Prabhupāda had said that it would become one of ISKCON's major centers.

The New Delhi ISKCON center has received permission from city authorities to build a large temple complex on a site near the famous Bahai center. A prominent architect has drawn plans, and the Hinduja Foundation, a charitable trust of one of India's wealthiest families, has pledged major financial support.

Africa **Hare Krishna Food For Life has expanded** its services to primary health care in Kisumu, Kenya. Besides feeding three hundred

children and elderly persons every day, Vidura Dāsa, an Irish devotee who runs the program, teaches hygiene and provides basic treatment for such ailments as measles and parasites. The local Indian community provides full financial support for the program.

Philippines **Devotees danced and chanted** at the annual Dinagyang festival in Iloilo in January. "Dinagyang" in the Ilonggo dialect means to dance ecstatically and make loud noises. As the predominantly Catholic population of Iloilo took to the streets to dance in honor of Santo Niño, their patron saint, and ethnic tribes paraded in native costumes, ISKCON devotees chanted and served *prasādam* in two booths set up in the city plaza.

MĀYĀPUR-VṚNDĀVANA NEWS

Here's news from the two places most sacred to Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees: Māyāpur (90 miles north of Calcutta) and Vṛndāvana (90 miles south of New Delhi).

Māyāpur **Constant Chanting**
Round-the-clock chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* now sanctifies the atmosphere at ISKCON's Māyāpur project. Devotees chanting in shifts keep the vibration going twenty-four hours a day.

Foundations for New Buildings
If all goes as planned, the foundations for six new buildings should be in place before June, when the monsoon rains begin: a new residence for unmarried students, several new housing complexes for families, a building for book publishing, and a new guesthouse.

Congregational Festival
More than a thousand devotees from all over Bengal, Assam, and Orissa gathered March 28 and 29 for the annual Nāma Haṭṭa Festival, a meeting of village-based ISKCON congregations.

Four Gopis Still to Come
The four more *gopī* associates of Kṛṣṇa to be installed in the Māyāpur temple are still being carved. They are scheduled to join Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and the four *gopīs* already on the altar sometime after August.

Spiritual Food Distribution
Prasādam is flowing at Māyāpur. Pilgrims to ISKCON Māyāpur have several ways to get *prasādam*, food first offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

For five rupees (about thirty cents), pilgrims can sit for a full *prasādam* lunch. Every week up to seven thousand people, mostly from Indian villages, take advantage of the opportunity.

For somewhat more—fifteen rupees—pilgrims coming to Māyāpur in bus tours from Calcutta feast on a lunch of fifteen to twenty items. Pilgrims served: about three thousand a week.



Pilgrims receive cups of kicchari *prasādam* in Māyāpur.

And about a hundred people a day offer twenty-five rupees for Lord Kṛṣṇa's extra-opulent meal, *rāja bhoga*. Apart from all this, on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays every pilgrim who passes through the ISKCON Māyāpur gate receives a free cupful of the tasty rice-and-bean preparation known as *kicchari*.

Vṛndāvana **Samādhi**
Work on Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi*, the memorial where his body is buried, is still going slow. The holdup, still, is the carved marble to ornament the structure.

The marble companies are losing the craftsmen who design the carvings, says Kadamba Kānana Dāsa, ISKCON's president in Vṛndāvana. "They're getting old and dying, and the new generation's not into it. So our

previous contractors can't supply what we need anymore.

"We're negotiating with new suppliers," he says, "but it's difficult." Meanwhile, for some of the work, devotees are looking into alternatives to carved marble.

New Irrigation System

A new irrigation system will supply water for crops on ISKCON's agricultural land in Vṛndāvana, thanks to a donation of eighty thousand rupees by Mr. Prakash Soni of Kisumu, Kenya. Mr. Soni will personally take part in arranging for the tanks, electric pumps, and other components to be installed.

Later this year, devotees intend to experiment with pumps driven by bullock power.

Veteran Book Distributor Passes Away

Buddhimānta Dāsa, a pioneer in distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, passed away in Vṛndāvana on February 13. He was thirty-eight years old.

In the 1970's in San Francisco, Buddhimānta had been

one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first disciples to try approaching people to ask a donation and give out a Kṛṣṇa conscious book. His efforts succeeded, and soon he was distributing large numbers of books every day.



Buddhimānta Dāsa

After several years dedicated to this service, Buddhimānta strayed from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He seemed to forget about Kṛṣṇa and become ensnared in *māyā*, Kṛṣṇa's material energy.

But along with the illusion of enjoyment, *māyā* also gave Buddhimānta a brain tumor. So as Buddhimānta saw his life coming to a close, he returned to Vṛndāvana to spend the last year of his life. He passed away in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, surrounded by devotees chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

PADAYĀTRĀ NEWS

Padayātrā India

In April the Padayātrā left Trivandrum, on the southwest coast of India, and traveled north to Guruvayor, in Kerala, where the worship of the famous Deity of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is said to have been regularized by the saint Śaṅkarācārya.

In June the party will be in the state of Karnataka, in the area of Uḍupī, headquarters of the thirteenth-century scholar and devotee Madhvācārya, from whom the present-day Hare Kṛṣṇa movement descends.

From Uḍupī the Padayātrā will travel through the tiny state of Goa, best known as a tourist resort, into the state of Maharashtra. There they will visit Pandharpur, site of the temple of the four-armed Viṣṇu Deity Viṭṭhala,

worshiped by Tukārāma, a Maharashtrian disciple of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Padayātrā America

The American Padayātrā has reached its goal—Miami, Florida—on a 1,500-mile walk that started in Boston. At least forty newspapers ran stor-

ies on the Padayātrā along the way. What's next? Perhaps a journey through the American southwest.

Padayātrā Europe

On May 1, Padayātrā Europe resumes. The theme: "On the Road for Change." Putting on more than a dozen Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals along the way, the Padayātrā party will walk through Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leicester and finally reach London by July 14.

After England: Holland, Belgium, and France. In October the party will halt for the winter in New Māyāpur, the Hare Kṛṣṇa farm in southern France.

Elsewhere

Padayātrās are planned for Malaysia (December), Australia (January 1), and Fiji (at the end of January).

For more information about Padayātrā, write to:

International Padayātrā
M-119 Greater Kailash 1, New Delhi 100 048, India
Phone: 641-3249 or 641-2058

Padayātrā America
4969 Mills St., Apt. 10, La Mesa, CA 91941
Phone: (619) 461-2594

Padayātrā Europe
Tribhūvanātha Dāsa, Bhaktivedanta Manor, Letchmore Heath, Watford, Hertfordshire WD2 8EP, England
Phone: (09) 2385-7244



Śrī Śrī Nītāi-Gaurasundara, the Deities of Padayātrā America.

***When the students came to the shops of Rāmakṛṣṇa
and Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa, they were dumfounded to find that these
merchants spoke perfect Sanskrit and were eager
not to do business but to engage in philosophical disputation.***



SECTS (continued from page 38)

pride, the two communities differ in their mode of worship. Caste *gōsvāmīs* are exclusively priests of Kṛṣṇa temples; ritualistically, at least, they are Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas*. Caste *brāhmaṇas*, on the other hand, worship according to the Māyāvādī *pañcopāsana* conception. Thus they regard Lord Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu to be one of five forms of Brahman. Of the five (Durgā, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Śiva, and Viṣṇu), Bengali *smārtas* have always preferred goddess Durgā because she supplies her devotees with material opulence.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries A.D., the importance of the Bengali *smārta* community was practically nullified by Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Among the great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of that period, Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura stands out as the preacher who most cut down their pride.

The *smārtas*, considering Narottama just a low-born *kāyastha* (the clerical caste in Bengal), became so infuriated at his making disciples from among their ranks that they enlisted the king, Rāja Narasimha, and a conquering *pañḍita* named Śrī Rūpa Nārāyaṇa to lead a crusade to somehow expose Ācārya Ṭhākura as a fraud. The king, the *pañḍita*, and a large party of caste *brāhmaṇas* made their way to Kheturi, where Śrīla Narottama Dāsa had his headquarters.

When Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya and Śrī Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī, two Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas*, came to know of the *smārta* conspiracy, they disguised themselves as *sūdras* and set up two small shops in the Kumarapura market: one a *pān* and betel nut shop and the other a store selling clay pots.

As the party arrived at Kumarapura,

the *smārtas* sent their disciples to the market to purchase wares for cooking. When the students came to the shops of Rāmakṛṣṇa and Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa, they were dumfounded to find that these merchants spoke perfect Sanskrit and were eager not to do business but to engage in philosophical disputation. Finding themselves outmatched, the distressed students called for their *gurus*, who arrived on the scene with Rāja Narasimha and Rūpa Nārāyaṇa. When the *smārtas* fared no better than their disciples, Rūpa Nārāyaṇa himself was drawn into the debate and was soundly defeated.

The king demanded they introduce themselves. The two shopkeepers humbly submitted that they were low-born and insignificant disciples of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura Mahā-sāya. Shamed, Rūpa Nārāyaṇa and the *smārta-brāhmaṇas* lost interest in proceeding to Kheturi. They returned immediately to their respective homes.

That night, Rāja Narasimha had a dream in which an angry Duṛgā Devī threatened him with a chopper used for killing goats. Glaring at him with blazing eyes, the goddess said, "Narasimha! Because you greatly offended Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, I shall have to cut you to pieces! If you want to save yourself, then you had better immediately go and take shelter at his lotus feet."

His sleep broken, the frightened king quickly bathed and set out for Kheturi. Arriving there at last, he was surprised to meet the *pañḍita* Rūpa Nārāyaṇa, who sheepishly explained that he'd had a similar dream. They went to the temple of Śrī Gaurāṅga to meet Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura.

Ācārya Ṭhākura was absorbed in his devotions, but when a disciple informed him of the arrival of the two guests, he

came out to meet them. Simply by seeing his transcendental form, the two offenders became purified and fell down to offer their obeisances at the Ṭhākura's lotus feet. Finally he initiated them with the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

Because their leaders had become Vaiṣṇavas, many lesser *smārtas* thought it fashionable to externally adopt Vaiṣṇava customs. This is how the *smārta apasampradāya*, or Vaiṣṇavism compromised by caste brahmanism, began.

In the late nineteenth century a well-known member of this community claimed to be the incarnation of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He established a missionary movement that preached the worship of Kālī-Kṛṣṇa, a concocted deity blending the forms of goddess Kālī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura soundly defeated the *smārta apasampradāya* at the town of Valighai Uddharanapura, West Bengal, in September 1911. He presented a work in which he conclusively argued the superiority of Vaiṣṇavas to *brāhmaṇas*. He read the paper before a gathering of more than ten thousand *pañḍitas*, and though he was the youngest speaker present, the judges acclaimed Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī the winner of the dispute.

Nowadays, the *smārta-brāhmaṇa* community of Bengal has largely succumbed to secularism and exerts little influence in spiritual affairs. 🌸

Suhotra Swami, an American disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, has taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Europe since the mid-seventies. He was recently appointed ISKCON's Governing Body Commissioner for Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and Czechoslovakia.

Remembering Śrīla Prabhupāda

Disciples recall the pastimes of a pure devotee.

December 5, 1975
Vṛndāvana, India

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA would sometimes sit in his *darśana* room after breakfast and chat with his servants for a while, usually commenting on the state of the world in the present day. These moments were especially sweet—to be with Prabhupāda as he sat, relaxed and casual, and bathe in the warmth of his intimate association.

This morning was particularly memorable. The sun was shining brightly through the tall, narrow windows, casting patches of dazzling light on the clean white sheets on the floor. He sat comfortably in the middle of the floor, his legs crossed, right ankle resting on the left knee. His fingers loosely intertwined, he closed his eyes briefly and enjoyed the warmth of the sun as it danced upon his golden form. Seeing the opportunity, Hamsadūta and I sat on either side of him, just happy to be with him in a quiet moment.

He began to reflect on the unfortunate state of the world's inhabitants. Due to a lack of knowledge about the Supreme Lord, he said, people are suffering. Under the false impression

of being independent, they commit all kinds of sinful acts, not knowing and not caring for the results, foolishly thinking they are free to do as they like. But when the volume of sinful life becomes too great, they suffer the consequences in the form of pestilence or war. They think that by politics and meetings they can avoid such things, but that is not possible. They are helpless to prevent them, and therefore they receive their punishment through the threefold miseries of life. At just the right moment, nature brings the demons together and engages them in war.

To illustrate the point, Prabhupāda gave an amusing but striking example of how *māyā* works.

“In my young days we had one teacher. Whenever there was any misbehavior between the boys, the teacher would stop them and bring them out to the front of the class. He would make them stand face-to-face

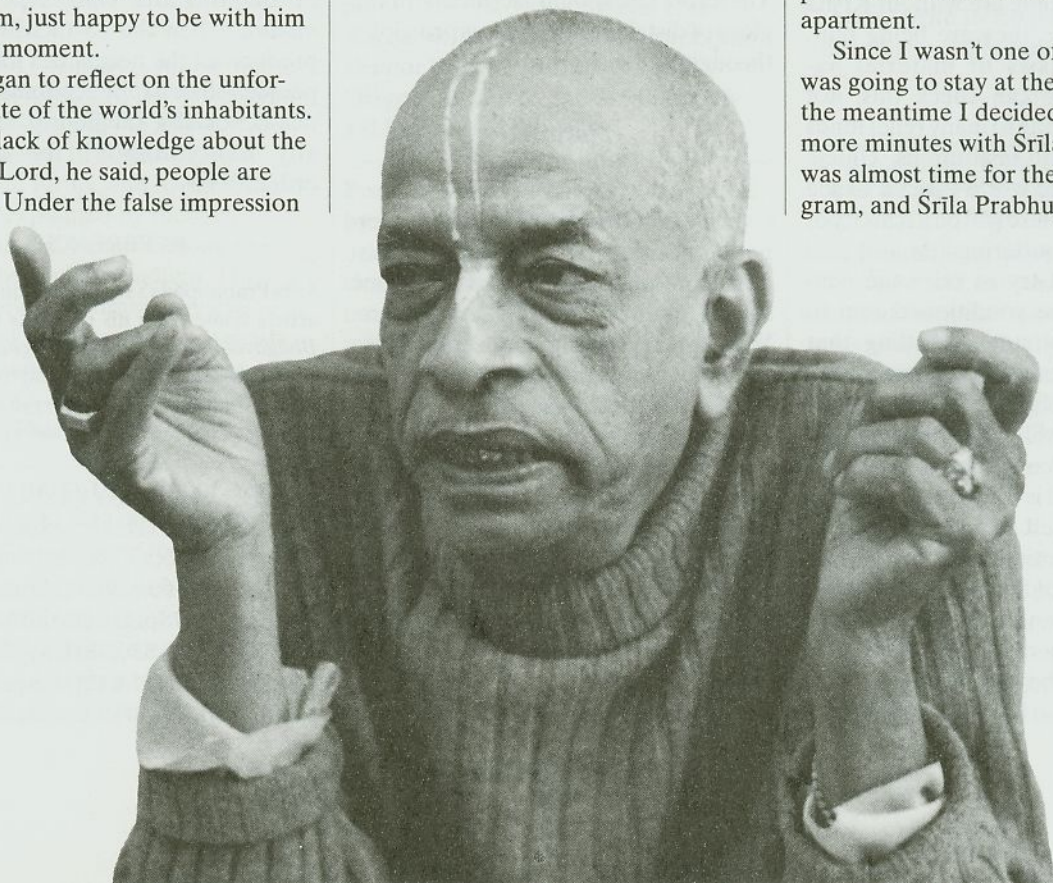
and each take hold of the ears of the other and on his order make them pull. So the one, he is pulling, and the other is hurting, so he pulls back even harder, and each one is pulling and crying. But they cannot let go because the teacher is ordering, ‘No, you cannot stop. You must go on pulling!’ Similarly, *māyā* brings together one Churchill and one Hitler—‘Now, rascal, pull!’ And neither can stop. And the foolish people glorify them.”

Hari Śauri Dāsa
Los Angeles, California



IN EARLY 1968 I FLEW with Śrīla Prabhupāda and a few of his other disciples from Los Angeles to San Francisco. We were taken to what had been the *brahmacārī āśrama*, an apartment on Willard St. The *brahmacāris* had moved to the temple, a few blocks away. Śrīla Prabhupāda and his personal servants would now live in the apartment.

Since I wasn't one of the servants, I was going to stay at the temple, but in the meantime I decided to spend a few more minutes with Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was almost time for the evening program, and Śrīla Prabhupāda told one of



his servants to send word that he would not be going to the temple that evening.

Then, while we were all talking with Śrīla Prabhupāda, he changed his mind and decided to go to the evening program, so we all set out for the temple.

In those days, the evening program was *kīrtana* followed by a lecture and then more *kīrtana*. Evening *āraṭi* had not yet been introduced into ISKCON. When we arrived at the temple, the first *kīrtana* had just ended, and the devotees were bowing their heads to the floor, reciting prayers. None of them expected to see their spiritual master, and none of them saw him come in and

sit on the *vyāsāsana*. When they looked up, there was Prabhupāda.

Suddenly the room was filled with smiles and cries of “*Jai!*” and “*Hari bol!*” Prabhupāda lectured and then led a sweet, mellow *kīrtana*. The disciples were all on their feet, chanting, swaying, hands in the air or clasped and pressed against their chests. Prabhupāda was here.

The next morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda and a few disciples were walking in Golden Gate Park. “Were you chanting last night?” he asked a disciple.

“Oh yes,” he answered.

Prabhupāda asked another, “Were

you chanting?”

“Yes. It was wonderful.”

To another, “Were you dancing?”

“I wanted to, but there were so many people, I couldn’t move.”

Prabhupāda turned to another. “Were you chanting?”

“No. I was afraid I would cry.”

“When you are with ordinary people, you should not cry,” said Prabhupāda, “because they will not understand. But when you are with devotees, you can cry because they will know that you are crying for Kṛṣṇa.”

Umāpati Swami

San Diego, California

COMPASSION

(continued from page 8)

“Love of humanity means raising people to the point where they can understand the real goal of life. We do not serve humanity by keeping people in darkness. We must enlighten others with knowledge, and ultimate knowledge means understanding God, our relationship with God, and the activities of that relationship. That is real humanitarian work. Mankind must be informed of the nature of the body and the soul and the necessities and goal of the soul.”¹⁸

Everyone’s Friend

“Because people are without Kṛṣṇa consciousness . . . they are being punished by the laws of material nature. . . . No one can check this, not even by introducing so many relief funds and humanitarian institutions. Unless the people of the world take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there will be a scarcity of food and much suffering.”¹⁹

“One should try to raise the consciousness of the conditioned soul to the platform of understanding that Kṛṣṇa is his actual friend. If one makes friendship with Kṛṣṇa, one will never be cheated, and he will get all help needed. Arousing this consciousness of the conditioned soul is the greatest service, not posing oneself as a great friend of another living entity.

“The power of friendship is limited; therefore we cannot be of any real benefit to the people in general. The best service to the people in general is to awaken them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness

so that they may know that the supreme enjoyer, the supreme proprietor, and the supreme friend is Kṛṣṇa. Then this illusory dream of lording it over material nature will vanish.”²⁰

“People are lacking knowledge of God, and we are preaching this knowledge. This is the highest humanitarian work: to elevate the ignorant to the platform of knowledge.”²¹ Therefore, “Everyone. . . with a materially comfortable condition in this world should join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to elevate the fallen souls. . . . Instead of wasting one’s life for temporary bodily comforts, one should always be prepared to give up one’s life for better causes. After all, the body will be destroyed. Therefore one should sacrifice it for the glory of distributing religious principles throughout the world.”²²

Spiritual Philanthropy

Śrīla Prabhupāda started the International Society for Krishna Consciousness on the principle that everyone should work for the highest welfare. While others were opening hospitals to attend to the needs of the temporary body, Śrīla Prabhupāda was opening hospitals for the soul.

“There are medical clinics to cure bodily diseases,” he writes, “but there are no such hospitals to cure the material disease of the spirit soul. The centers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are the only established hospitals that can cure man of birth, death, old age, and disease.”²³

In the centers for Kṛṣṇa conscious-

ness and elsewhere, people can solve the problems of life by performing the simple and easy sacrifice recommended for this age: “If people somehow or other assemble together and are induced to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, all the purposes of *yajña* [sacrifice] will be fulfilled. The first purpose is that there must be sufficient rain, for without rain there cannot be any produce. . . .

“Therefore, in this age of Kali people all over the world should refrain from the four principles of sinful life—illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling—and in a pure state of existence should perform the simple *yajña* of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Then the earth will certainly produce all the necessities for life, and people will be happy economically, politically, socially, religiously, and culturally. Everything will be in proper order.”²⁴

REFERENCES

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statements quoted in this article come from his purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (SB), *Bhagavad-gītā* (BG), and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (CC), and from *Dialectic Spiritualism* (DS) and *Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, the Topmost Yoga System* (TYS).

(1) SB 5.8.10, (2) BG 2.1, (3) SB 1.2.8, (4) BG 2.1, (5) SB 6.10.9, (6) SB 4.14.7, (7) SB 1.1.4, (8) SB 8.9.29, (9) TYS, Chapter 3, (10) SB 3.5.11, (11) SB 6.10.10, (12) SB 4.29.1b, (13) BG 5.25 (14) DS p. 251, (15) SB 5.8.9 (16) SB 8.7.44, (17) SB 5.8.9, (18) DS p. 409, (19) SB 4.18.8, (20) SB 3.27.4, (21) DS p. 16, (22) SB 6.10.8, (23) CC Adi 10.51, (24) SB 9.20.26.

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sions to ISKCON," "Christian and Jewish Responses to ISKCON," etc. By devotees and scholars, i.e. Hopkins, Ellwood, Brooks, Ravindra Svārūpa (GBC), Śubhānanda, and others. University published. 295 pages, cloth; list: \$39.95, BTG reader's discount price: \$34.50; US postage/insurance: \$2.50, foreign: \$5.50. Vaishnava Scholarly Press, P.O. Box 3414, Merrifield, VA 22116.

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MĀYĀPUR (continued from page 50) world. In this way, the monitors should provide the GBC an account of the state of the movement and its progress in reaching its aims in various locations.

The monitors cluster into six committees. The GBC envisions that these committees will speed through much of the work that till now would get stuck in the gears of the larger GBC body.

For Kṛṣṇa, managing the entire universe is easy. He can do it all with merely a glance. For Kṛṣṇa's devotees, managing ISKCON takes a little more work. ❁

ISKCON's Aims

At the annual meeting in Māyāpur, the GBC drafted the following statements articulating ISKCON's aims. Each aim is assigned to a devotee, who will work within one of six committees designed by the GBC to help ISKCON achieve its goal.

KṢETRA COMMITTEE ONE

1. Gurukula

To provide children with a lifelong devotional foundation and to progressively train them according to their natural propensities in occupational duties of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

2. Self-Sufficient Communities

To reform the economic and social structure of all communities in the world by demonstrating the God-centered culture that depends on the land and the cows.

3. New Devotees

To convince receptive people all over the world to commit themselves to rendering devotional service, as taught by Śrīla Prabhupāda, under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master.

4. Training New Recruits

To teach new devotees, through proper Vaiṣṇava association and instruction, the philosophy and basic devotional practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

KṢETRA COMMITTEE TWO

1. Deity Worship

To attract all peoples of the world to the personal service of the Lord, to engage them as devotees in that service, and to train them in the principles and techniques of that service.

2. Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana

To develop and maintain, for devotees and society, Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana and other such holy places dedicated to the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

3. Spiritual Standards

To establish and maintain in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and its members the high standards of Kṛṣṇa conscious understanding and practices taught by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

4. Temples

To manage temples so that all aspects of

temple life offer inspiration to all visitors at all times to engage in the devotional service of the Lord.

KṢETRA COMMITTEE THREE

1. ISKCON Constitutional

2. ISKCON Property Affairs

3. Justice

4. Legal Affairs

5. Unity of ISKCON

6. Zonal Affairs

[Statements still to be drafted.]

KṢETRA COMMITTEE FOUR

1. Finance and Accounting

To ensure that every ISKCON organization and program meets standards of excellence in handling fiscal matters.

2. Fund-Raising

To establish systems and programs of fund-raising throughout the world to provide ISKCON with adequate funds to realize its goals.

3. Management and Administration

To ensure that the leadership of ISKCON is characterized by devotion to *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, spiritual purity, compassion, integrity, commitment, consistency, competency, and accountability, and to ensure that the devotees and assets of ISKCON are appropriately engaged, protected, and increased.

4. Life Membership

To engage every member of the Indian community and others interested in Vedic culture, everywhere in the world, in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the mission of Lord Caitanya in this and all generations to come.

KṢETRA COMMITTEE FIVE

1. Book Publication and Distribution

To publish and distribute the books and periodicals of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers in all languages and distribute them in ever-increasing numbers and with ever-increasing effectiveness, so that an ever-growing collection of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature is enshrined in every household in the world.

2. Public Chanting and Festivals

To celebrate the congregational chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa by regularly organizing public chanting and joyous festivals in every city, town, and village of the world.

3. Speaking the Message of Kṛṣṇa

To present the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in public media and other public and private forums—educational, religious, social, or political—to awaken in receptive people everywhere an attraction to the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

4. Padayātrā

To bring the congregational chanting of the holy name to every town and village of the world through organized Padayātrā festivals.

KṢETRA COMMITTEE SIX

1. Congregational Programs

To bring to all homes in the world the continuing association of devotees and the regular practice of devotional activities.

2. Cultural Programs

To reveal Vedic culture as the universal and essential culture of all the world's peoples, and to supplant all mundane productions of literature, drama, music, and art with Kṛṣṇa conscious alternatives.

3. Food for Life

To establish massive free *prasādam* distribution programs all over the world so that all human beings are adequately fed and nourished with Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* and there shall be no hunger anywhere.

4. Public Relations

To win respect for and trust in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in all nations and among all people of the world.

5. Restaurants

To establish Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* restaurants in every city and town and make them famous all over the world so that millions eat in them every day.

6. Vedic Science

To convince all people of the world of the errors of materialistic science and philosophies and to research, elucidate, and teach God-centered science, based on bona fide Vedic knowledge.

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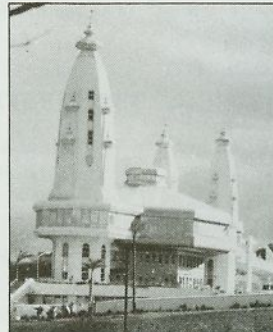
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The Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

Month of Puruṣottama

(April 15–May 14)

MAY

10—Śuddha Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

24—Mohinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

25—Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīṣa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

26—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Ratha-yātrā festival to the Western world.

27—Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, the half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

28—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Parameśvara Purī, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

Month of Trivikrama

(May 29–June 27)

JUNE

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

9—Trispr̥ṣā Mahādvādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans for Aparā Ekādaśī. Appearance anniversary



PAINTING BY CARUHĀSA DĀSA

Lord Nṛsimhadeva, the half-man, half-lion incarnation

of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, a famous biography of Lord Caitanya.

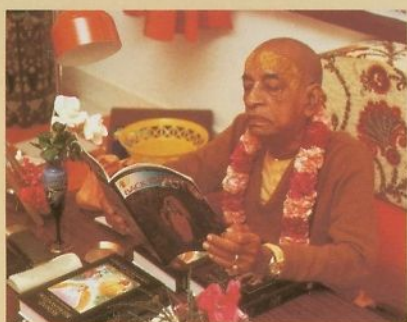
21—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, a prominent spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (disciplic succession), and the author of *Govinda Bhāṣya*, an important commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmīnī, a famous woman spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

22—Bhīma Nirjalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

24—Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's chipped-rice-and-yogurt festival at Pāṇihāṭī.

27—Snāna Yātrā, the bathing festival of Lord Jagannātha. Disappearance anniversaries of Śrīla Mukunda Datta and Śrīdhara Paṇḍita, two great devotees of Lord Caitanya.

Calendar calculated for Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. Dates may vary for other locations.



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