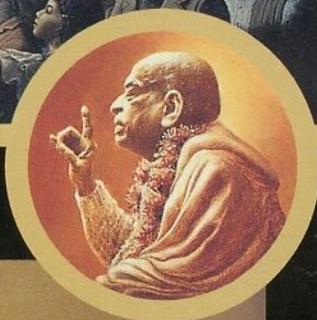


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Sept/Oct 1998 • \$4.00 / £4.50



Spotlight on India's True Glory

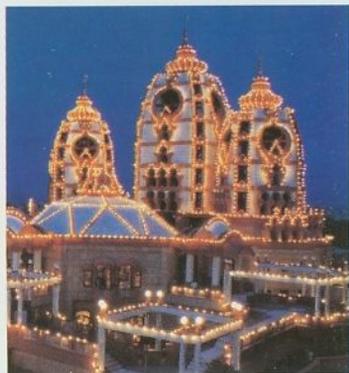
In New Delhi, Vedic Culture Shines at New Hare Kṛṣṇa Temple and Museum

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 32, No. 5 • September/October 1998

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Spotlight on India's True Glory

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COVER

Images from the new Hare Kṛṣṇa temple complex in New Delhi. Please see the story beginning on page 16. (Photos by Rājāśekhara Dāsa.)

WELCOME



We human beings have the ability to search for truth. But since our limited, imperfect senses can deceive us, we can't always be sure what's true and what's not. For

example, what looks like a table is really atoms and space. How do we know that? Because we've heard from scientists, accepted authorities on the subject.

But scientific investigation can go only so far. To get at the truth of things beyond matter, we have to hear from spiritual authorities. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement relies on the authority of the Vedic scriptures and self-realized teachers of the Vedic tradition, who accept the *Vedas* as perfect knowledge coming from God.

Two articles in this issue raise the topic of mistaken perception and present the truth in the light of Vedic authority. The first, "Even God's Killing Is Good," points out the mistake in thinking that God sometimes does bad things. The other, "Channeling: Extrasensory Deception?" shows how we can be fooled by believing everything we hear from entities "on the other side."

The books and temples of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement are all meant to help people see reality. In this issue you can read about the new temple just opened in New Delhi.

If you're a new reader, you might want to start by browsing the Glossary (page 15).

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

*Nāgarāja Dāsa
Managing Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

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



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



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



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

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

FOUNDER

(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta
Swami Prabhupāda

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Letters

Vedic Personality Index

Many readers responded to our offer to analyze their responses to The Vedic Personality Index (May/June 1998). The results are quite varied. Some replies indicated a balance between goodness, passion and ignorance, while others emphasized one nature or another.

The goal of the survey is to help one understand the natural qualities one has picked up by association with material nature. But as Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, by devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness one can rise above all three modes of nature and perfectly stand on the spiritual platform.—The editors

“Land of the Gods”?

Some time ago I followed a heated debate between BTG and a Hindu organization over the position of the demigods and monotheism in the *Vedas*. It seemed to me that BTG’s position on this issue was that there is only one Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and that all other deities, including Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, are His expansions, potencies, incarnations, etc. I was surprised, therefore, when I noticed that on the front cover of the May/June issue you have included a title that reads “Journey to the Land of the Gods.” Who are the other Gods?

Vātsalya Rasa Dāsa
Tallahassee, Florida, USA

OUR REPLY: Śrīlā Prabhupāda uses the term “gods” variously—sometimes as an equivalent to “demigods” (thus Nārada is “the sage among the gods”) and sometimes to refer to both the Supreme Lord and the demigods (as in *Kṛṣṇa* book: “My dear Lord, as for the three gods—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva—they are also not independent of You”).

Among the deities prominently worshiped in the Himalayas are Lord Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Vaiṣṇo Devī.

Though on other occasions we have focused on the distinction between the Supreme Lord and the demigods, our cover story this time didn’t dwell on it. So we used the word “Gods” neutrally. (The capital “G” occurs because we capitalize most words in our cover lines.)

Kṛṣṇa’s Violent Pastimes

In Kṛṣṇa’s Dvārakā pastimes, Kṛṣṇa is troubled by and has to kill so many demons and deal with opposing forces, so many wars, so many violent situations. In the material world there is violence, and bad things happen. But how is it that in the spiritual sphere of Kṛṣṇa’s Dvārakā pastimes there is violence and all that? One would expect peace.

Mr. Bhatt
San Jose, California, USA

OUR REPLY: First of all, as you know, the Lord enacts His pastimes in both the material and spiritual worlds. The demons are present only in the material world. Śrīlā Prabhupāda once said that in the spiritual world there are only “rumors of demons.”

Everything about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes is eternal, full of bliss and knowledge. And everything is purified in the presence of Kṛṣṇa. So the apparent violence in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes does not have the same effect as ordinary, mundane violence. For example, demons sometimes threaten Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, but in such situations the devotees take shelter of Kṛṣṇa and increase their attachment for Him. And of course Kṛṣṇa always protects them, so they can never be harmed by the demons.

We shouldn’t think that Kṛṣṇa is somehow disturbed by the demons. They are tiny, insignificant creatures whom Kṛṣṇa can easily kill with His material energy if He so desires. But in fact He wants to fight with them, so He allows them to become relatively powerful in the material world. His fighting with them is for His pleasure and the pleasure of His devotees.

Actually, Kṛṣṇa kills everyone sooner or later. As the *Gītā* states, He is all-devouring death. But no one is really killed. We are all eternal souls, and we continue to exist after the annihilation of the material body. To think there is something wrong in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes of killing demons is simply an illusion. There is really no violence, because rather than the demons being harmed, they are liberated when killed by Kṛṣṇa.

In the material world, we can't have happiness without peace, but in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, every situation is one of uninterrupted happiness. The apparent violence and other such things simply add to the variety of Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment.

The Right Pronunciation

How do we correctly pronounce the Lord's name? Is it "Krishna" or "Krishn." An Indian swami has written that it is "Krishn." Has this difference arisen due to regional or linguistic variation in India? Shall we not follow the correct Sanskrit pronunciation of the Lord's name?

Hari Pada Dhar
College Station, Texas, USA

OUR REPLY: In Sanskrit, consonants are assumed to include the vowel "a" when no other vowel is given. So the Lord's name is pronounced "Krishna." "Krishn" is the Hindi pronunciation, as the practice in Hindi is to often drop the "a" after consonants. In different parts of India, people will pronounce the Lord's name differ-

ently. Śrīla Prabhupāda downplayed concern over the exact pronunciation of the Lord's name. Kṛṣṇa is attracted by devotion and not by pronunciation. So, above all, we should strive to chant His name with devotion.

Give Us More!

The theory that Bhūmaṇḍala is an accurate model of our solar system is staggering. Dr. Thompson must be a genius. More! More!

Keith Joy
via the Internet 🌸

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The *Back to Godhead* staff would like to thank columnists Rohiṇinandana Dāsa and Yamuna Devi for their contributions to BTG since 1991. Rohiṇinandana has been the main writer for Bhakti-yoga at Home, and Yamuna Devi has written Lord Kṛṣṇa's Cuisine for every issue. They're both moving on to other services, but we hope they'll still find time to write occasionally for BTG. (Yamuna Devi's last column will appear in the next issue.)

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What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

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

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

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

Pronunciation

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

Spiritual Names

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."



Details from original paintings by Yadurāṇi Devi Dāsī (top) and Parikṣit Dāsa (bottom).

EVEN GOD'S KILLING IS GOOD

*A true devotee of the
Lord loves to hear about all His activities,
including those that seem violent.*

• • •

A lecture given in London, on July 10, 1973

by His Divine Grace **A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*atra śūrā maheṣvāsā
bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi
yuyudhāno virāṭas ca
drupadaś ca mahā-rathaḥ*

“Here in this army are many heroic bowmen equal in fighting to Bhīma and Arjuna: great fighters like Yuyudhāna, Virāṭa, and Drupada.”

—*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.4



herd girlfriends—in the Tenth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Such *sahajiyās* distinguish between Kṛṣṇa’s fighting pastimes and His *rāsa-līlā*. But the two pastimes are in fact the same, because Kṛṣṇa is the center of both. And whatever is connected with Kṛṣṇa becomes Kṛṣṇa. That is the idea.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has taught, *prāpañcikatayā buddhyā . . .* Everything has a connection with Kṛṣṇa be-

cause ultimately everything is Kṛṣṇa’s energy. *Prāpañcikata* means “material.” The material world is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s energy, made up of five gross elements (earth, water, air, fire, and sky) and three subtle elements (mind, intelligence, and ego). Kṛṣṇa says, *bhinnā me prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*: “These material elements are separated from Me, but they are My energy.”

For example, a cloud is created by the sun’s energy. Sea water evaporates and forms clouds. So the cloud is created by the energy of the sun, but when

At left: Whether Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes involve exchanges of love or exhibitions of violence, we become purified by hearing of them. Because He is the all-good Supreme Absolute Truth, no impurities can ever touch Him.

Kṛṣṇa wanted to bring together on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra all the demoniac powers and kill them.

• • •

there is a cloud you cannot see the sun. The sun is covered. Similarly, the material energy is Kṛṣṇa's energy, but when we become covered by the material energy, we do not see Kṛṣṇa. That is our position.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes,

*prāpañcikatayā buddhyā
hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo
vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate*

“One who rejects anything without knowledge of its relationship to Kṛṣṇa is incomplete in his renunciation.” *Mumukṣu* means those who are after the liberation of merging into the Supreme, such as the Māyāvādīs. The Māyāvādīs say, *brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā*: “This world is false; only Brahman, spirit, is reality.” But we ask why the world should be false if it is coming from the reality. We do not agree with the Māyāvādīs. We do not accept that this world is false. We can say that it is a temporary manifestation. But it is not false.

We are living in this house. If someone says, “It is false,” we say, “Why is it false?” We are using the house. We are using the microphone. We are using the dictaphone. Why would they be false?

They are not false, because they have a relationship with Kṛṣṇa—*sambandha*. Anything material is made of earth, water, fire, and air, and these are Kṛṣṇa's energies. Therefore everything has a direct relationship with Kṛṣṇa. And if Kṛṣṇa is reality, why should His energy be false? It is not false. We must know how to use it.

Kṛṣṇa is on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, and everything there—soldiers, commanders-in-chief, chariots, ground—is Kṛṣṇa's energy.

If we remember that everything is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's energy, there is no question of materialism.

Everything is spiritual energy, so we have to use everything for Kṛṣṇa.

KṚṢṆA WANTED THE BATTLE

Many soldiers had gathered on the battlefield at Kurukṣetra, and Kṛṣṇa would display one of His energies. *Paritrāṇāya sādhnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*: He wanted to kill all the demons. That is a side of His business. As one of His sides is to give protection to the devotees (*paritrāṇāya sādhnām*), the other side is to vanquish all the demons (*vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*). If you want to grow paddy in a field, first you have to destroy all the unwanted weeds. Then you sow the seeds, and the paddy will come out nicely.

These two are required: destruction and construction. Both are Kṛṣṇa's activities or energies. We have to understand that both are working as different manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's energy. *Parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*. In the *Vedas* it is said that the Absolute has multi-energies. One energy works in one way; another energy works in another way. When we do something, we require varieties of energy to make that activity perfect. Everything—Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's material world and spiritual world—is working in order under His different energies.

So we should not neglect hearing the names of these warriors. Kṛṣṇa wanted to bring together on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra all the demoniac powers and kill them. That was His plan.

Kṛṣṇa has His plan. We should not be attached to things as they are but should try to understand everything in its relationship with Kṛṣṇa. As soon as we recognize anything's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, we can use it properly. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

EVERYTHING FOR KṚṢṆA

Everything can be used for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is not a stereotyped, stagnant block. Kṛṣṇa is a dynamic force. Therefore everything can be dovetailed in Kṛṣṇa's service. One should simply learn the art of dovetailing, under proper guidance. That art will be the perfect form of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Read the next verse.

[A disciple reads:]

*dhṛṣṭaketuś cekitānaḥ
kāśīrājaś ca vīryavān
puruḥit kuntibhojaś ca
śaibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ*

Translation: “There are also great heroic, powerful fighters like Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna, Kāśīrāja, Puruḥit, Kuntibhoja, and Śaibya.”

[Śrīla Prabhupāda continues:] In the Battle of Kurukṣetra, great warriors from all parts of the world came and joined. Some of them joined one side, and others joined the other side. We have not given all the information on these great warriors in our *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, because that would have increased the number of pages. But information about them is available in a book called *The Personalities of Mahābhārata*.

Bhagavad-gītā is part of the *Mahābhārata*. *Mahābhārata* means “greater India.” *Mahā* means “greater,” and *bhārata* refers to India. The whole planet was originally known as Bhārata-varṣa. There was only one flag. The whole planet was ruled by one king, from Hastināpura [modern-day Delhi]. The Battle of Kurukṣetra would determine who would be the king—Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira or Duryodhana.

Kṛṣṇa had decided, “Duryodhana is unfit. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is fit.” Kṛṣṇa wanted Yudhiṣṭhira to be king.

Therefore the Battle of Kurukṣetra took place. Kṛṣṇa wanted to wipe out all unwanted demons from the face of the world and enthrone Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira because Yudhiṣṭhira was the exact representative of Kṛṣṇa.

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUS MONARCHY

Monarchy or dictatorship is welcome. Now the Communists want dictatorship. That is welcome, provided the dictator is trained like Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Not that simply by the votes of the rascal population one becomes a dictator, then another rascal comes, and another big rascal comes. The Communist dictator Stalin is said to have been the greatest criminal in the history of the world. He would not tolerate anyone going against him. As soon as he found that someone was against him, he would call that person before him and say, "Take poison, or I shall kill you." That was his policy. In that way he killed so many enemies, not only the Czar family. His business was killing.

That kind of dictatorship is not wanted. A dictator is wanted by whose direction the citizens will be so happy that they will not have any anxiety.

We read the other day in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* of the three miserable conditions of life: *adhyātmika* (miseries caused by one's own body and mind), *adhibhautika* (miseries caused by others), and *adhidaivika*. The *adhidaivika* miseries, such as famines and earthquakes, are caused by the higher beings, the demigods. These things are not under your control. At any time there may be earthquakes, famine, pestilence, floods. These are called *daiva*, "controlled by demigods." For example, Indra wanted to flood Vṛndāvana, being angry at the residents. But Kṛṣṇa saved them as Giridhārī—the lifter of Govardhana Hill.

These disturbances are there—*adhyātmika*, *adhibhautika*, *adhidaivika*—the king or dictator should be so perfect and should guide the citizens in such a way that they will not feel these disturbances. That kind of dictatorship is wanted.

Adhibhautika means "You are envious of me; I am envious of

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you." There is always cold war, struggle. Under the dictator's rule this should be stopped. There should not even be excessive heat or cold. People should feel happy in all respects.

Such a condition existed under

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, his forefathers, and his grandson. The sons of the Pāṇḍavas all died in the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the grandson of the Pāṇḍavas, was within the womb of his mother, and he was

saved. During his reign and the reigns of his ancestors the whole planet was very nicely governed by dictatorship.

We can bring in such dictatorship, provided the dictator is perfectly Kṛṣṇa conscious. Then he will know how to conduct the kingdom, how to make everyone happy.

So here is another list of fighters. The real purpose of this battle is to bring all the big fighters of the world together, and under Kṛṣṇa's guidance they would all be killed. *Nimitta-mātram bhava savya-sācin*. When Arjuna declined to fight, Kṛṣṇa ultimately said, "My dear Arjuna, whether you fight or not it doesn't matter. These people are not going back home. It is already settled. You can simply take credit that you have fought and killed. They are already killed, because that is My plan."

Kṛṣṇa wanted to kill them, and the result was—you will find in *Bhagavad-gītā*—they all attained *svarūpa*, their eternal form. All who died on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, in the presence of Kṛṣṇa, attained their original, constitutional position, their spiritual form. They all went back home, back to Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa is absolute, so His killing and His protecting are the same. Don't think that Kṛṣṇa is killing. No. Anyone killed by Kṛṣṇa gets liberation at once. The liberation for which great, great saintly persons, sages, undergo severe austerities life after life—one gets that simply by being killed by Kṛṣṇa.

So if by becoming Kṛṣṇa's enemy one gets that benefit, just think of the benefit of becoming Kṛṣṇa's friend. That is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Māyāvādīs, impersonalists, are after liberation. But that liberation is granted even to the enemies of Kṛṣṇa.

The Māyāvādīs are also Kṛṣṇa's enemies. *Kṛṣṇe aparādhī*. They are offenders to Kṛṣṇa because they do not accept the form of Kṛṣṇa.

Everything studied in relationship with Kṛṣṇa is perfect knowledge, and that is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. We are not like *sahajiyās*, the sentimental pseudo devotees, who are interested in Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance but not in His fighting on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. That attitude is not wanted.

Thank you very much. ❁



• KRṢṂA ON THE NET •

URLs for the main Kṛṣṇa conscious sites on the World Wide Web

<http://www.krsna.com> or <http://www.krsna.com/~btg>

BACK TO GODHEAD ONLINE

Site for BTG, the Bhaktivedanta Archives, the Hare Kṛṣṇa Catalog, and the full text of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

<http://www.shamantaka.org> or <http://www.iskcon.org>

HARE KRṢṂA, THE COMPLETE PICTURE

A visually dynamic site from the North European BBT.

<http://www.harekrishna.com/>

HARE KRṢṂA HOME PAGE

Book excerpts and more from the BBT in Los Angeles.

<http://www.iskcon.org/hkindex/>

THE HARE KRṢṂA INDEX

Leads you to any ISKCON-affiliated site on the Web.

THE BTG MAILING LIST

An e-mail group where readers, writers, and staff talk about the topics found in *Back to Godhead*.

To join, send a message to btg-talk@unforgettable.com



What Is Real?

by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

OUR IDEAS OF THE REAL and the unreal are formed early in life. Life is filled with sensual and subtle impressions that condition us to accept certain things and reject others. Those impressions also lead us to form habits, good and bad, and to learn to feel happy or unhappy according to our perception of pleasure. We also learn fear and, usually, learn that most of our fears are imaginary—they aren't real. I remember being frightened by the action in a movie when I was a child. My mother consoled me, "Don't be afraid. It's not real."

Not real? If it wasn't real, then why was she so absorbed in it? Why did it seem so real? If it wasn't real, what was?

To know what is real, we have to question what we are. Am I real? If so, which part is the real me? My body? It feels real, especially when put through pain. And beyond the self, what about the house I live in or the road outside or any of the other myriad objects I perceive with my senses? Why is it that when I interact with all these real things, I feel unsettled, as if something's not quite what I expect it to be?

As we grow up, we learn to escape that unsettled feeling by going to the movies or diving into fictional accounts of people living out more perfect lives—heroes and antiheroes who experience events bigger than anything we have known as possible. That doesn't seem to satisfy either, but at least it's a distraction. Where

is that real form to satisfy us? Where is the story with real meaning?

Real life is the life of the soul, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the highest substance of reality. The very reality of Kṛṣṇa's nature is almost too awesome to contemplate. He is omnipotent, all-pervading, the source of everything we are and know, and He is the eternal form of love. He exceeds time and space, so He can lift us above the confusion of misidentifying illusion as truth. Finding Kṛṣṇa is the work we have before us in this world if we are to actually come to know reality and the story of the soul in its relationship with the Supreme.

The best way to find Kṛṣṇa is to hear about Him from those who know Him and from the scriptures. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes (in *Kṛṣṇa*, "The Salvation of Tṛṇāvarta"):

If someone takes advantage of hearing the pastimes of the Lord, the material contamination of dust, accumulated in the heart due to long association with the material nature, can be immediately cleansed. Lord Caitanya also instructed that simply by hearing the transcendental name of Lord Kṛṣṇa one can cleanse the heart of all material contamination. There are different processes for self-realization, but this process of devotional service—of which hearing is the most important function—when adopted by any conditioned soul, will automatically cleanse him of the material contamination and enable him to realize his real constitutional

position. Conditional life is due to this contamination only, and as soon as it is cleared off, then naturally the dormant function of the living entity—rendering service to the Lord—awakens. . . .

Note the phrase "The dormant function of rendering service to the Lord . . . awakens." The reality of life and the soul's nature is uncovered not by escaping into other forms of illusion but by hearing from a higher source. That higher source (scriptures, the guru) appears to be something outside our self, but actually it touches the inherent nature of the soul.

The constitutional relationship between God and the soul is objective reality, but covered. By studying reality we can come to see that only God's mercy keeps us alive and arranges all our adventures and misadventures in this world. I say mercy because it descends from the spiritual world to cleanse us of false concepts and awaken us to our inherent spiritual nature, and ultimately to grant us love of God.

This is not merely dogma; it is reality. As an aspiring devotee, I can't claim that I'm awake in the eternal reality of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but my goal is to live in that reality and not to remain in the temporary world, which comes and goes like a dream.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami travels extensively to speak and write about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is the author of many books, including a six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda.



COOKING CLASS—LESSON 37

Kheer—Classic Milk Puddings

by Yamuna Devi

MORE?"

"Aah, yes. More sweet rice please."

Or, "Mmm, some ambrosial sweet rice please."

Two typical requests for seconds on what devotees in ISKCON call "sweet rice." In India the dish is more aptly known as *chaval kheer*. *Kheer* is a common term for several varieties of condensed-milk pudding, and *chaval* means "rice." (The Sanskrit word for *kheer* is *kṣīra*.)

Depending on the region of India, *kheer* might also be called *pāyāsa*, *basundi*, or *pāyesh*. Readers of Vaiṣṇava literature are likely familiar with the beautiful Deity Kṣīra-cora Gopīnātha, or "Krishna, the *kṣīra* thief." This Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Remuna, Orissa, is famous for having stolen a pot of *kheer* as a gift for His devotee Mādhavendra Purī. Visitors to the temple today can sample some of Gopīnātha's delicious *kheer prasādam*.

Varieties of Kheer

In its simplest form, *kheer* is nothing more than sweetened milk that has been reduced by boiling it down to one-half or one-third its original volume. To that condensed milk one can add numerous other ingredients for body and flavor, yielding such varieties as rice *kheer*, nut *kheer*, yam *kheer*, pumpkin *kheer*, zucchini *kheer*, semolina *kheer*, cracked-wheat *kheer*, shredded-carrot *kheer*, fresh- or dried-fruit *kheer*, angel-hair-thin-vermicelli *kheer*, and more. In preparing the original manuscripts for the cookbook *Lord Krishna's Cuisine*, I came up with more than twenty-five varieties. (After editing, we left seven.)

When *kheer* is cooked down further, to one quarter or less of its original volume, it is known as *rabri*. Though little except some crushed cardamom pods is usually added, Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes requested *rabri* with added sliced mango, banana, papaya, or orange segments. He enjoyed it served chilled, although that's not traditional.

Subtlety

If you've been faithfully following this cooking class series, you know that you have homework over and above preparing the recipe here. Make at least three kinds of *kheer* from the class textbook, using different ingredients and cookware. Study the effects that heat, cookware, and cooking time have on the result. If possible, try to ferret out farm-fresh or unhomogenized milk, and compare it with store-bought. Instead of refined white sugar, use some of the unrefined sweeteners available where you live. In the United States I've tried date sugar, maple sugar, maple syrup, turbinado sugar, organic sucanat, and Florida Crystals (unrefined cane sugar), to name a few. Besides sweetening, these sweeteners will add unique flavors. If you opt for honey, add it after the *kheer* has finished cooking. Swirl in the honey—off the stove—until melted. According to the *Āyurveda*, honey when boiled becomes toxic.

Yamuna Devi is the author of the award-winning cookbooks Lord Krishna's Cuisine: The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking and Yamuna's Table. She is a regular contributor to The Washington Post and Vegetarian Times.

CRACKED WHEAT KHEER (DALIA KHEER)

A traditional favorite in cool weather, this *kheer* is warming, substantial, and fairly quick to make.

Serves 6
(depending on appetites)

2 teaspoons ghee or unsalted butter
 ½ to ¾ cup cracked wheat
 8 cups milk
 ½ to ¾ cup sweetener
 ½ teaspoon crushed cardamom seeds
 ¼ cup raisins or currants, if desired

Melt the ghee or butter in a 1-gallon or larger heavy-bottomed pot over moderate heat. Add the cracked wheat, and, while stirring, toast the wheat until the grains darken a shade or two. Add the milk, sweetener, cardamom, and perhaps raisins.

Increase the heat to high. While stirring, bring the mixture to a rolling boil. Stirring frequently, boil until the grains are swollen and the thickened milk puts a thick coating on the stirring spoon (up to 25 minutes). As the *kheer* cools, it will continue to thicken.

Offer to Kṛṣṇa and serve warm.

Preparing Your Child for Gurukula

by Naṭaka Candrikā Devī Dāsī



PARENTS OFTEN ASK what they can do to help prepare their child for entering *gurukula*, a Kṛṣṇa conscious school. Some parents first ask this question when the child is about four years old, but many parents begin preparing their child from the earliest years.

Fortunate is that child who has been exposed to a Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life from birth, and even more fortunate is one who has also attended a Kṛṣṇa conscious nursery or preschool. A natural, gradual training over an extended period of time works best. The parent and teacher should work together to lay the best possible foundation for the child's entrance into school.

Some years ago the teachers at a New York *gurukula* prepared a list of prerequisites for children entering *gurukula*. The list included items that

would also apply to children entering a secular school, such as being respectful and knowing how to dress themselves. But here's the list boiled down to suggestions for preparing children specifically for a Kṛṣṇa conscious school:

1. Bring children regularly to the temple for morning services, or perform the same services in your own home.
2. Teach children the proper behavior for the temple. A child should know how to offer obeisances, offer respect to the Deity, chant prayers to the spiritual master, sit quietly during the *Bhāgavatam* class, and so on.
3. Regulate children's eating and sleeping habits. Feed them a standard devotee diet of *dāl*, rice, *capātīs*, and vegetables. Avoid foods, especially

grains, cooked by nondevotees. Teach children to sit while taking *prasādam*, and teach them the *prasādam* prayer.

4. If there is a Kṛṣṇa conscious preschool program in your area, enroll your child in it. It will give your child a chance to develop social skills and learn many things.
5. Read often to your child, especially about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes.
6. Avoid exposing your child to nondevotional TV, videos, and toys. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "To artificially impose sense gratification on a young child is the greatest violence."

Naṭaka Candrikā Devī Dāsī has been teaching in ISKCON preschools and elementary schools for the last twenty-two years. She lives in Alachua, Florida, USA, with her husband, Rādhā-Dāmodara Dāsa, and their three children.



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



Irresistible Attraction

compiled by Navīna Nīrada Dāsa

HERE ARE SOME letters of appreciation from recipients of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books:

Ignited with the Fire Of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

I want to thank you for being a critical part in my life. Without the distribution of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's books, I would never have been ignited with the fire of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. My first contact with Kṛṣṇa was at my friend's house. I saw the book *The Science of Self Realization* lying on the floor, and at that moment I felt an overwhelming, irresistible attraction to borrow the book. I read a few pages and knew I had finally found the truth. I've now read about half of your books but had little association with devotees. My goal right now is to join an ISKCON farm community. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Jimi

Vashon Island, Washington, USA

"Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!"

I am writing to express my deepest and profound gratitude for your kindness in sending me the book *Your Ever Well-Wisher*. I am in turn humbled, brought to tears, dipped in melancholy, and then finally I find myself saying, "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" This book is one of the dearest and most valuable gifts I have ever received. I am chanting every morning and reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books every day. Thank you again for this wonderful kindness.

Scott

Pemaquid, Maine, USA

Standing Her Ground

Recently, I had the pleasure to

meet some of your nice people while I was vacationing in the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee. I was so pleased to come in contact with them, because I have always been interested in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. I was so grateful when your people handed me a book—*The Path of Yoga*—and your address was in it. At the time I was intimidated because the people with me did not approve of the Hare Kṛṣṇas, but I stood my ground and bought the book. And I'm glad I did. The others poked fun at me and said I'd been taken. I simply told them I wanted the book because I like the Hare Kṛṣṇas and enjoy reading their books. My friends became quiet after that. The book is great, and it has helped me a lot. Thanks!

Vivian

Kentucky, USA

A Dusty Gem

It has to be the most fortunate thing that could happen to anyone—a person's whole life changed. It happened one afternoon while I was going to the shop. I saw a book lying on the side of the road. I walked past it, spoke to some friends, bought whatever I needed, and was on my way back when I again noticed the book. I stopped and picked it up, although I normally wouldn't pick up something from the road as bad-looking as this. It was dirty, torn, and old.

I was a sinful person at that time, and a great meat-eater.

I went out in the evening with friends. When I returned home, I sat and read a few magazines and then picked up the book I had found. I dusted it off and read the title: *Coming Back*. I began to read—and I read

and read and read.

I had never read anything as clear, pure, easy, and truthful as this book. I was amazed and shocked. I began to think how sinful I was. I completed the book the next day and decided to change my life by becoming spiritually conscious.

The next month I gave up eating meat, went to the temple, and started learning more about Śrīla Prabhupāda and the all-glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa. I have now been a devotee for three years, and I enjoy every minute of it. All this happened because I decided to take a walk to the shop one day. That is the power of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Govindasamy

Durban, South Africa

Freedom from the Misery of Materialism

I had just arrived at Denver International Airport when a young man handed me a book called *Bhagavad-gītā*. I gave him a donation and took the book. I read from its pages and couldn't stop reading. I agree with all I have read, and I see the need and the joy in becoming free from material addiction. I have thought about this a lot and know that I'm ready to embrace this truth. I would give all I have to be free from the misery of materialism. What you teach is true, and I genuinely would like to thank you.

Jonathan

Daytona Beach, Florida, USA

Navīna Nīrada Dāsa, a disciple of Harikeśa Swami, has been a leading book distributor for many years. He heads ISKCON's book distribution ministry and travels worldwide to train and inspire book distributors.

Glossary

Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukṣetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendent form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal or void.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purānas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival"; a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purānas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas*.

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—in general, any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); in particular, the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Spotlight on Indi

Delhi's new Hare Kṛṣṇa complex combines the ancient and the modern to pro

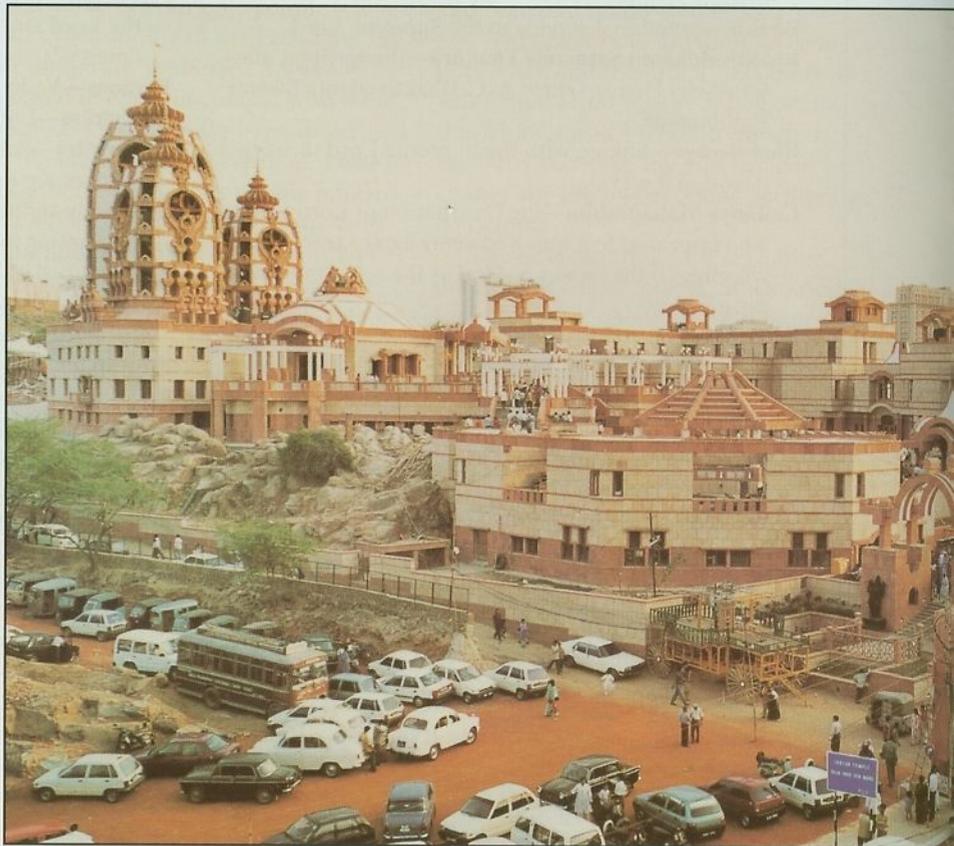
by Yudhiṣṭhira Dāsa

photos by Rājaśekhara Dāsa

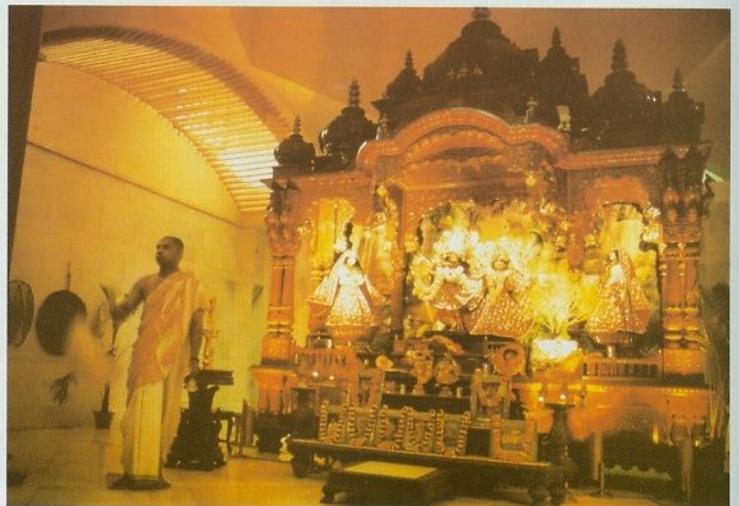
On April 5, the auspicious day of Śrī Rāma Navamī (the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra), New Delhi saw the opening of a magnificent new temple, inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Here is a report about the temple and the day's proceedings.

A COOL MORNING breeze swept across my face as I hurriedly climbed a small flight of stairs to reach the temple in time for the *maṅgala-ārati*, the first worship ceremony of the day, at 4:30 A.M. I crossed the red sandstone arched gateway, quickly asking permission to enter from Jaya and Vijaya—gatekeepers of Vaikuṅṭha (the spiritual world), guarding here in their carved forms. Just yesterday their life-size black stone forms had been installed at the temple entrance and outside the doorways of the main temple complex. A huge fire sacrifice had been performed to invoke their presence, along with that of Garuḍa, the bird-carrier of Lord Viṣṇu. Vedic mantras had been recited amid great pomp, the *gurukula* boys and devotees singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra throughout.

I quickly entered the old temple, which seemed dwarfed by the new structure in which the Lord would reside from this day onwards. The old temple, soon to be converted into the Govinda Restaurant, was for now filled with devotees from around the globe, many of whom had come just for the temple opening. As the curtains drew to reveal the beautiful form of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathi, soft prayers gave

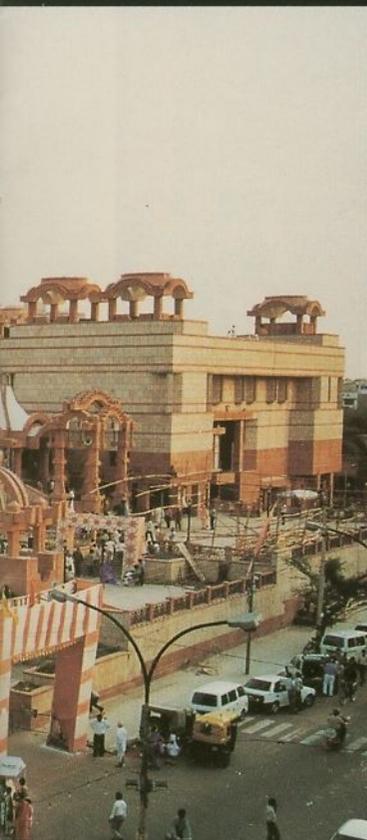


At right, a priest worships the Deities during the temple-opening ceremonies.



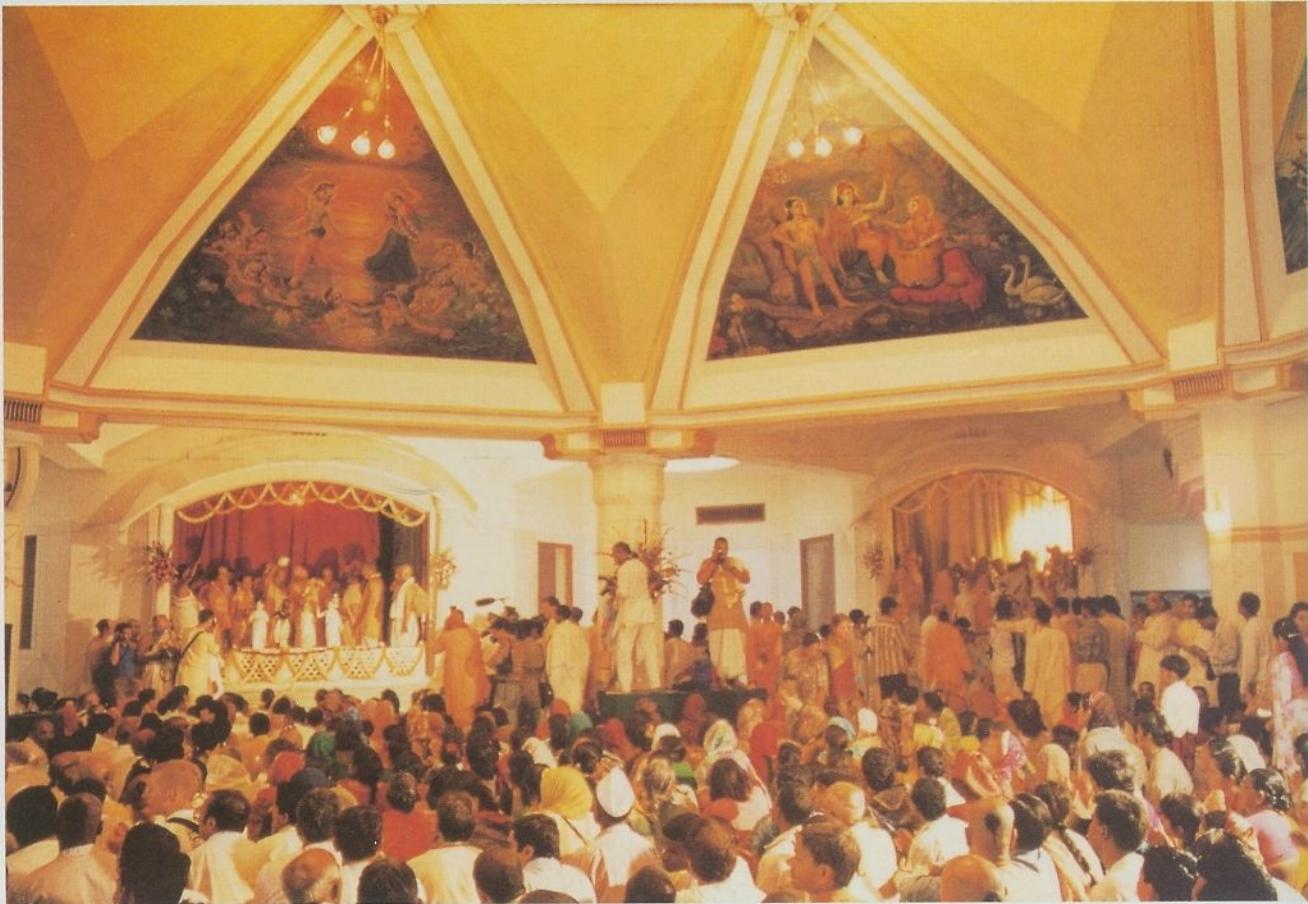
a's True Glory

claim Lord Kṛṣṇa's message.



At night, the spires of the new temple on Hare Krishna Hill (below) can be seen for miles around. The main structures of the complex, at left, include the temple (far left), the museum (far right), and the building that will house Govinda's Restaurant (foreground).





way to an ecstatic *kīrtana*. Their Lordships would now be taking up residence in the gorgeous new temple on Hare Krishna Hill.

Up the flight of nearly one hundred steps, the procession began, led by ISKCON gurus and *sannyāsīs*, their faces full of care and affection for the Deities. Sounds of conch shells, cymbals, *mṛdaṅgas*, and an uproarious *kīrtana* filled the morning sky.

As I followed the Deities, the first rays of the sun shone upon the three *śikharas* (domes) standing majestically above the temple, and on the red sandstone auditorium and guest house. From either side of the temple doorway, the stairways on both sides extended downwards like outstretched arms, wrapping around the groves, pools, fountains, waterfalls, and landscaped gardens. A perfect tranquil setting for spiritual endeavors.

Thirty years ago, Śrīla Prabhupāda had expressed to Gopāl Krishna Goswami his desire to build a big project in Delhi. In the capital of India, the temple should be appropriately

A painting of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes graces each panel of the octagonal ceiling of the temple (above), filled with devotees observing the Deities' ceremonial bath (right).



large. National leaders, the people of Delhi, visitors from India and abroad—all could come to learn of Kṛṣṇa's message and have the audience of the Lord.

While reflecting upon this, I was looking at the carved form of Śrīla Prabhupāda sitting on his new *vyāsāna* (the seat of the guru) while the priests chanted mantras. The first worship of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the

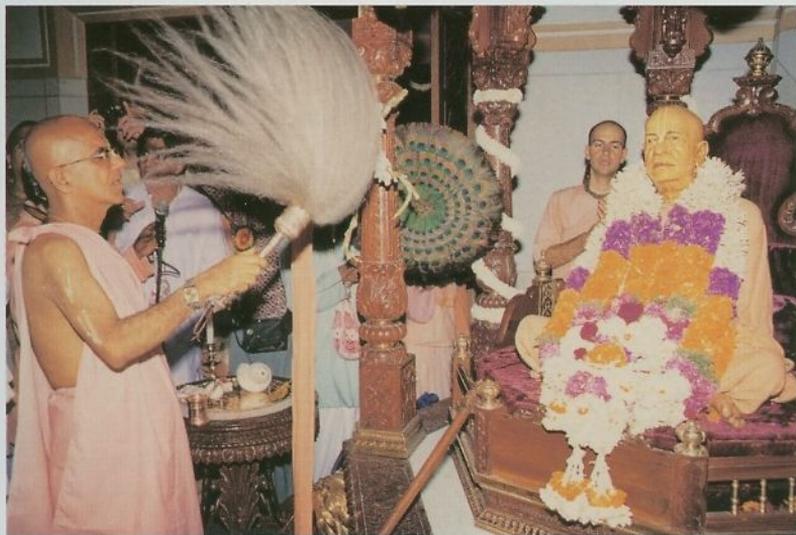
new temple was being performed by Gopāl Krishna Goswami, who had made Śrīla Prabhupāda's dream come true.

The *kīrtana* became intense as the traditional installation of the Deity began. Two hours slipped by rapidly while devotees relished the *kīrtana* and the sight of the beautiful ceremony.

Soon we all made our way into a *pāṇḍāl* (open-sided tent) near the

Vedic Culture Is the Real Glory of India

*The inaugural address of His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami,
ISKCON Governing Body Commissioner.*



Gopāl Krishna Goswami offers the first worship of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the new temple.

RESPECTED Prime Minister, respected Lieutenant Governor, Ms. Claire Ward, and all devotees present:

We are very happy that our Prime Minister has come on this auspicious occasion. On behalf of all the devotees of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, I express my gratitude to the Prime Minister. All of you, please accept the good wishes of Lord Śrī Rāmacandra.

This center is named "The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Center." The glory of India can spread light throughout the world. As a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord, Śrīla Prabhupāda desired that the glory of India reach every corner of the world. Wherever Śrīla Prabhupāda would go, he would preach to the Indians and foreigners, "You may take advantage of the benefits of technology, but do not forget your real culture."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual

master had ordered him to take the culture of India to the world. For nearly twenty-five years, Śrīla Prabhupāda tried a lot in India, but could not get much success. So he went to America, with forty rupees, in those days about seven or eight dollars. At the age of seventy, without a single contact, he reached America, and there he had to struggle a lot. But because he had faith in the words of his spiritual master, faith in the teachings of the Lord, he went on preaching. And now you can see an ISKCON center in virtually every corner of the world.

What are the activities of these centers? They are centers that enhance the glory of India. Today people in various parts of the world are learning the Sanskrit language. They are speaking Hindi and Bengali. They are dressing in *dhotī*, *kurtā*, and *sārī*. You can see that a member of parliament from Britain, Ms. Claire Ward, sitting on the dais, is dressed in a *sārī*. In

every corner of the world people are coming in contact with Indian culture because of the preaching of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He has translated nearly one hundred books into English, and these in turn have been translated into all the popular languages of the world. Thousands of universities are using these books as reference. Whether you go to Cambridge, Oxford, or Harvard, you will find these books making a deep impact.

Śrīla Prabhupāda spent a lot of time in the city of Delhi. He often mentioned that Delhi, earlier known as Indraprastha, used to be the capital of the world. It was Prabhupāda's desire that in this most ancient city of Delhi a center should be made where people can learn about Vedic culture and its glory. And Prabhupāda had desired that the culture of India be presented through the medium of technology.

I am very much obliged to all the devotees, because it is due to their cooperation that this work was possible. Without your support it would not have been possible to fulfill Prabhupāda's desire. I am grateful to all of you.

I am happy that in our country there is a leader who respects the culture of our country and who understands the importance of our culture. I pray to the Supreme Lord for His good wishes and pray that Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji can guide this country so as to increase its glory. The impact of our culture should increase, and the people of the entire world should look towards us, towards this culture, to find solutions to their problems.

Eternal Philosophy in a Modern Package

An interview with His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami, governing body commissioner for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in Delhi. He provided leadership, guidance, and inspiration to people from all walks of life to take part in the marathon effort of building the new temple and cultural center.

BTG: When you first asked the Delhi civic authorities for land, what did you plan to do with it?

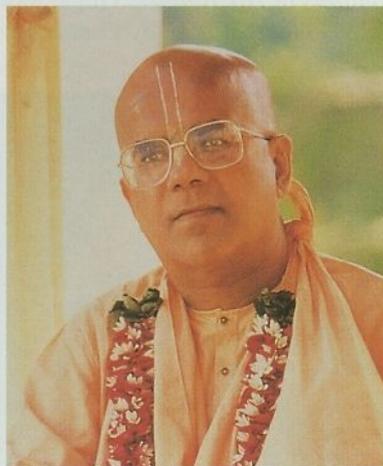
Gopāl Krishna Goswami: From the beginning, we had a broad vision of the ISKCON Delhi project. We wanted to create a place that would inspire people to dedicate their lives to the teachings of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But we knew that if we just constructed another temple in Delhi, it would not be significant. Hence we developed the concept of having a cultural center. Over the years many devotees came forth to contribute, and Jñānagāmya Dāsa put together all the ideas for developing the themes for the cultural center, using multimedia and animatronics. We have a great heritage, and an important spiritual message to give, so we decided to present this eternal philosophy in a very modern package.

BTG: Who was your source of inspiration?

GKG: Back in 1969 when I was working in Montreal, Śrīlā Prabhupāda wrote me a letter in which he said, "In the capital city of Delhi, so many big buildings have been constructed since Independence, but not one major temple. So when you return to India, you should construct temples throughout the country."

BTG: How much did this temple cost?

GKG: So far we've spent over 20 crore rupees [\$5 million] on



this project. When we first started, in 1982, we had a 1.25-crore [\$312,000] budget. In 1992 the project was expected to cost 6 to 8 crores [\$1.5 million to \$2 million]. And at that time we were in anxiety: How would this be raised? But Prabhupāda had always told us, "Depend on Kṛṣṇa and make an effort." So with that in mind we started to execute this project. At one time we didn't have enough money to pay for the land. It was with great difficulty that we managed to pay for the land. The cost continued to increase because the vision for the project expanded. Somehow or other Kṛṣṇa provided sufficient funds so that construction never stopped.

The Hinduja family was very helpful and gave us encouragement and financial support. Ashok Hinduja, a gifted architect, helped actively and was involved in the planning and construction effort. Most of the funds came from friends and devotees from Delhi and abroad. Our temple devotees preached nicely, and donors and life members came forward to help.

BTG: What are some of the features of the museum?

GKG: The animatronics show features computerized, full-

movement, lifelike robots of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, and Śrīlā Prabhupāda speaking *Bhagavad-gītā*. This is the only show of its kind in India. Thousands of people will enjoy this show and increase their appreciation for *Bhagavad-gītā*.

We also have a 380-seat theater in which we're going to present the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy with videos and multimedia shows.

The museum will also present the philosophy of the Vedic scriptures through the medium of dioramas. The sculptures and paintings in the museum will bring to life the ancient teachings of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*.

We have twelve back-lit color panels telling about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. At the inaugural program, the chief minister, after seeing those panels, mentioned a statement from Śrīlā Prabhupāda included there: "Purity is the force." This shows the impact of these exhibits.

BTG: Besides teaching Vedic culture and philosophy, will the project do anything more?

GKG: The ISKCON Glory of India temple will help Indians and Western visitors appreciate the ancient culture of India and understand the important teachings of the *Vedas*. We hope the high-tech exhibits and shows will impress and inspire people to follow spiritual principles and thereby experience peace, harmony, and perfection in their lives. People will appreciate ISKCON's contribution to improve the world. They will especially develop a deep sense of gratitude for the selfless and magnanimous work done by ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who will be honored as one of the greatest spiritual leaders to grace the earth in the last century.

temple. Life members* and donors had come to grace the occasion and hear the spiritual discourses and the *kīrtanas*. Said Mahendra K. Jajodia, a prominent life member and donor, "ISKCON's new temple in Delhi is

another jewel by which people can enrich their lives. Indebted to ISKCON, I feel I have no better way than to submit my resources for use in the temple. This temple will surely provide peace and solace for the disturbed

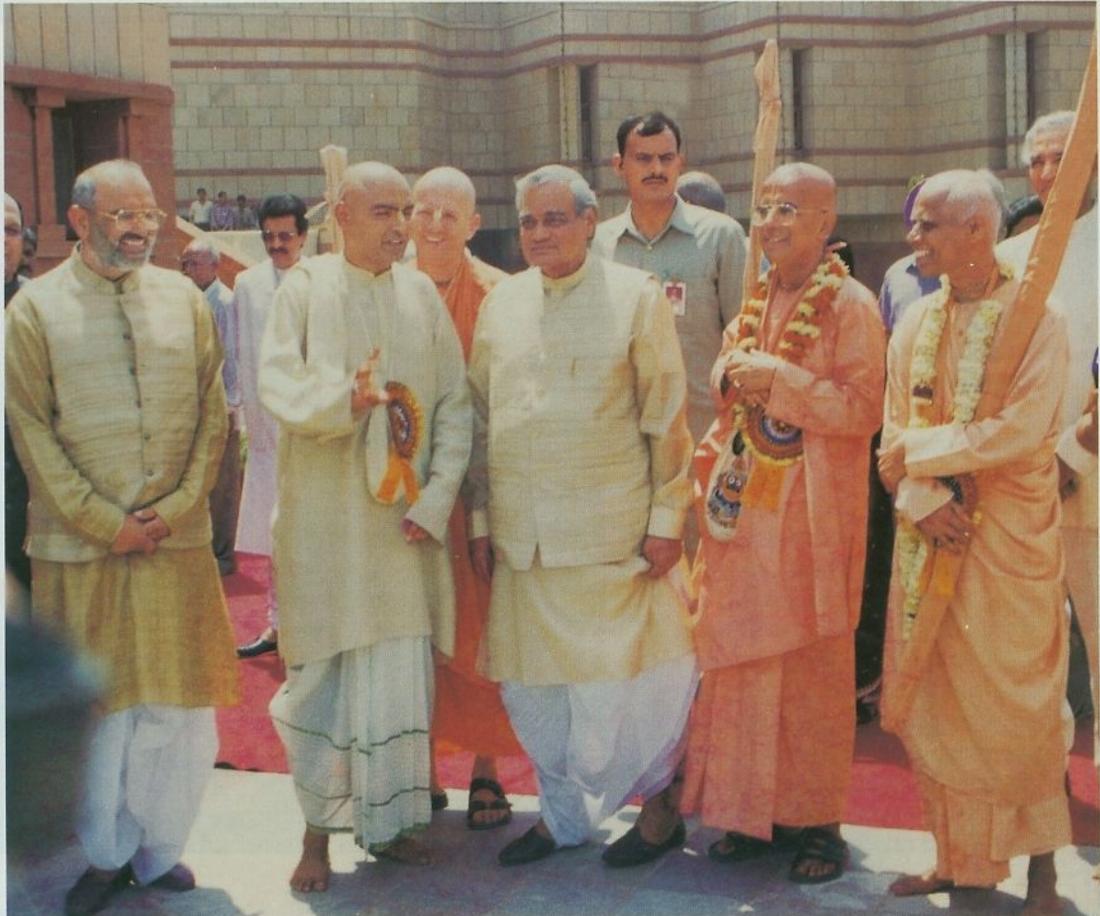
minds of this jet age."

After a sweeping security check, the Prime Minister, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, arrived to inaugurate the temple. And with him: Tejendra Khanna, the lieutenant governor of New Delhi; Sahib Singh Verma, the New Delhi chief minister; Ms. Sushma Swaraj, union minister for information and broadcasting; T. R. Kakkar, the Delhi police commissioner; and K. Padmanabhiah, the former home secretary.

After visiting the temple and offering respects to the Deities, and after a preview of the museum, with its multimedia and animatronics shows, the guests assembled in the auditorium. In attendance were leading industrialists and donors from India and abroad. Among the foreign dignitaries and diplomats was the youngest minister
(please turn to page 25)



*A life member is a patron enrolled in ISKCON's Life Membership Program, which encourages those who support ISKCON's activities and provides them certain benefits.



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathī (above) preside over the ISKCON New Delhi project. At right, at the temple opening (from left): Sri Sahib Singh Verma (the chief minister of New Delhi), Mahā-mantra Dāsa, Śrīdhara Swami, Prime Minister Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Gopāl Krishna Goswami, and Lokanāth Swami.

Art, Architecture, and Ambiance

JUST ABOVE THE doorway of the main temple rests a beautiful high-relief sculpture of Lord Viṣṇu's face. About twenty such huge sculptures, cast in fiberglass by an American devotee, Bhaktisiddhānta Dāsa, grace the temple complex.

"It took me about two years to do these castings, using local material and innovative methods," Bhaktisiddhānta says. "Normally this work would have taken about five to six years, but Kṛṣṇa really blessed me."

Employing more than twenty skilled people throughout, his studio created a stunning array of sculptures depicting stories from the *Mahābhārata*. Some of the stories, like that of Ghaṭotkaca, are not so commonly known.

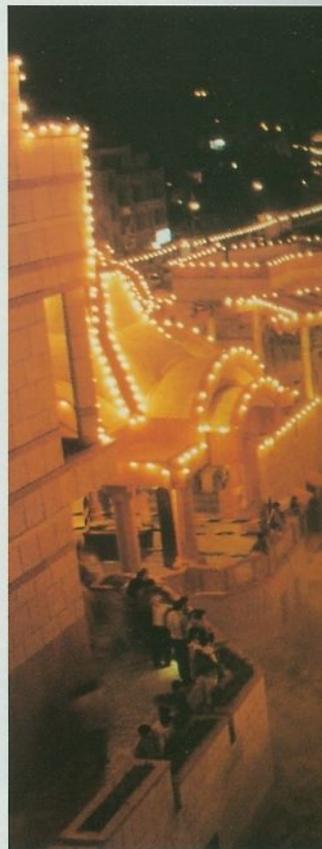
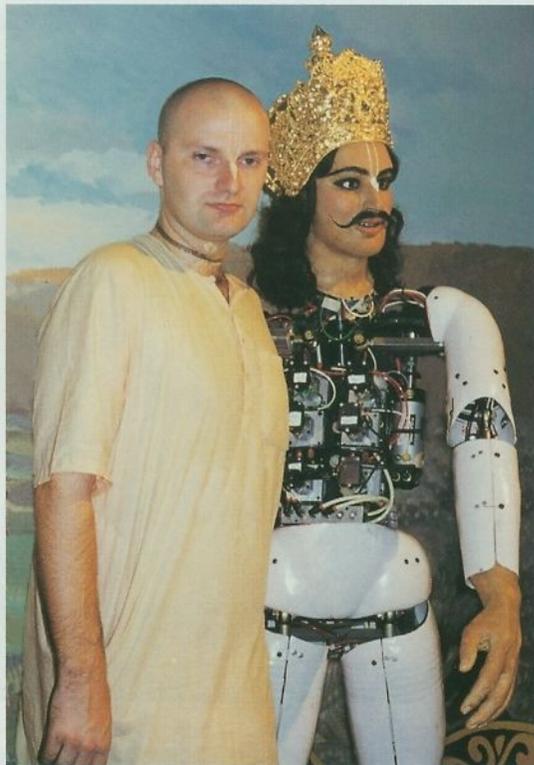
On the octagonal temple ceiling, huge triangular paintings, again from Bhaktisiddhānta's studio, depict prominent episodes from the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

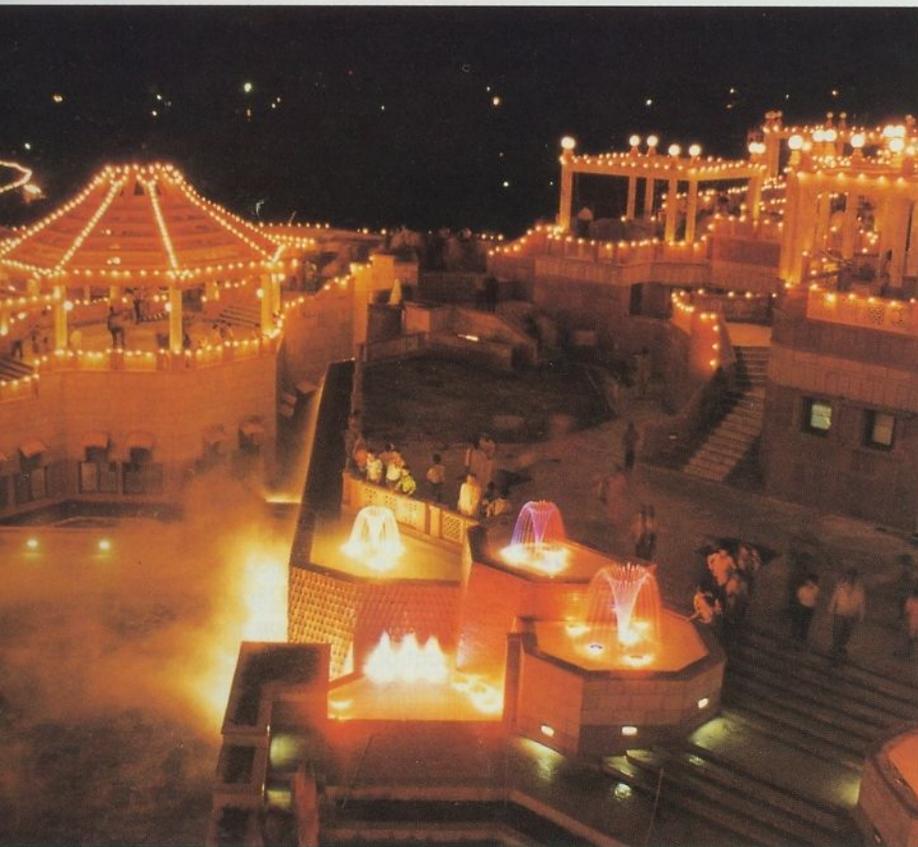
"These eight paintings are the work of devotee artists from Russia," says Jñānagamyā Dāsa, a professional designer who has been with ISKCON since 1972.

Just three years ago Jñānagamyā took the position of director for the Glory of India Experience, the museum side of the project. Next he intends to use his skills for a still more ambitious ISKCON project, at Māyāpur, West Bengal.

Veda Tech: Robots Preach Reality

"My eyes are blinded by this fearful form. O Kṛṣṇa, please show me Your original and most pleasing form as Govinda." The display of the fearful universal form stops, Arjuna bows down, and Kṛṣṇa raises His hands to





Sculpture and bas-reliefs by Bhaktisiddhanta Dāsa



Some of the art, architecture, and technology of the temple complex (clockwise from top left): Chief designer Dīna Nātha Dāsa shows the complex circuitry in one of his robot creations; lights, mist, fountains, and waterfalls create a celestial ambiance; bas-reliefs depict stories from the Mahābhārata; a high relief of Lord Viṣṇu graces the museum; computerized robots present the teachings of Bhagavad-gītā.

bless the relieved Arjuna. These are not drama artists, but robots performing in a specially housed animatronics theater.

At the press of a remote button, the robots start moving—their arms, their necks, and even their eyes and lips. Sophisticated robots have been programmed to impart the most valuable teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The technical director for this animatronics experience is a Croatian *brahmacārī*, Dīna Nātha Dāsa. His is the human hand behind the subtle mechanical movements of the robots.

“Every day we have priests reciting verses from the holy books,” Dīna Nātha says. “Now, this is a new way to reach out to modern minds.”

The Heavenly Environment

Rolling hills, misty fog, the sound of water cascading down a mountain face, temple bells clanging at a distance, birds chirping back to their homes upon the fall of dusk. Such is the atmosphere created in the temple precincts. Terraces and sunken courtyards arrayed between the buildings create dynamic spatial relationships, with a focal point in a spectacular waterfall—brilliantly lit up at night, flowing over prismatic red granite blocks. As the shimmering water cascades into pools, it disappears into a rising fog, creating an ethereal effect. The fog, sprayed up from the pools by microfine sapphire nozzles, spreads gently throughout the gardens, cooling the air.

This is the artistry of Ravindra Bhan, architect and landscape designer. By working with, not against, a challenging rocky and hilly site, he has brought forth a landscape that is a source of delight and wonder.

On the ISKCON Team

*Dedicated ISKCON devotees worked together to build the Glory of India Center.
Here are some of the leading devotees among them.*

Lokanāth Swami

Lokanāth Swami has been one of the spiritual leaders for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Delhi for about 20 years; originally from Maharashtra, he joined ISKCON in 1971. Lokanāth Mahārāja particularly played a large part in helping find and acquire the land for the project. He says, "Having spent the prime of my youth in Delhi, I have certainly developed some attachment for preaching in this city. I also have great attachment to the people of Delhi. But most of all I have the greatest attachment for the Deities, Their Divine Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Pārthasārathi."

Trikārajña Dāsa

A devotee with a civil engineering degree, Trikārajña Dāsa moved back home to Delhi from London in 1991 to serve as the president of the temple while it was under construction, up until November 1997.

Trikārajña Dāsa says, "The inspiration behind this project was simply to please Śrīla Prabhupāda. This project is no doubt unique. Being instrumental in

helping to build it was a transcendental experience that doesn't come easily."

Kratu Dāsa

Temple president since November 1997, Kratu Dāsa is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a mature administrator and preacher. He says, "Our biggest challenge lies ahead, to use the facilities for making people Kṛṣṇa conscious." Another of his interests is to invite students from schools and colleges.

Mahā-mantra Dāsa

A former lawyer and member of ISKCON since the early eighties, Mahā-mantra Dāsa became ISKCON Delhi's vice president and communications director in 1993. He contributed considerably by raising funds and gaining governmental support. His request to the Prime Minister: "Rename the area surrounding the temple as Sant Prabhupāda Nagar instead of Sant Nagar."

Life Membership Team

A team of qualified and dedicated devotees worked hard to enlist support from many

ISKCON life members and donors to help in the project. Rādhā Dāmodar Dāsa, an Ayurvedic doctor, with ISKCON since 1982, is the ISKCON Delhi's vice president and life membership director. Rām Nām Dāsa, a mechanical engineer, also doubles as the computer expert. Sāmba Dāsa is an excellent cook and preacher. Kṛṣṇa Priya Dāsa is a medical doctor and ardent supporter of the project. Vrajendra-nandana Dāsa is an erstwhile media person and president of the Punjabi Bagh temple in New Delhi. Braja Bhakti Vilāsa Dāsa, a professional designer, says, "I wish to maintain the Deity altar and design clothes for Them." Rocana Dāsa is a former student of psychology and a leading preacher. Balabhadra Dāsa is the director of Delhi's Hare Krishna Food for Life program. Varāha Dāsa is a classical Bengali *bhajana* singer. Mohana Rūpa Dāsa is the director of the Youth Forum. Yadukuleśvara Dāsa is a preacher. These are just a few among the many other members of the ISKCON team.



Sri Srichand Hinduja



Sri Ashok Hinduja

A Word of Thanks

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness would like to sincerely thank Sri Srichand Hinduja and Sri Ashok Hinduja, who through the Hinduja Foundation generously supported the New Delhi temple project. The Foundation gave a large financial contribution, and Sri Ashok Hinduja played a significant role in planning the architecture of the project. We pray that Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathi will shower blessings upon them and their families.

(continued from page 21)

of parliament from the U.K., Ms. Claire Ward; former U.S. congressman Steven Solarz; and the ambassador of Russia. Adding a dash of glitter were movie stars Hema Malini and Sunil Dutt. The Prime Minister then addressed the gathering, glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda, ISKCON, and the devotees, in his bilingual speech.

Throughout the day, thousands of people thronged to see Śrī Śrī Rādhā

Pārthasārathi. All were served sumptuous *prasādam* in the halls above the gardens.

In the evening: devotional dramas and songs, a procession by *gurukula* boys riding on three elephants, dances performed by devotees from Manipur, and a display of fireworks above the colored fountains in the gardens.

I walked back toward the guest rooms reflecting on the glorious day, my spirits enlivened by one of the

finest moments for ISKCON, with the leaders of the nation glorifying the *Bhagavad-gītā* and recognizing the contribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who had spread the message of the *Bhagavad-gītā* throughout the world. Spiritual seekers from throughout the world can now come to find authentic knowledge at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā Pārthasārathi Temple and ISKCON Hinduja Glory of India Vedic Cultural Center. ❁

Designed with Devotion

A TEAM OF TOP Indian professionals worked together to give the Glory of India Vedic Cultural Center its architecture and design. Mr. A. P. Kanvinde served as the chief architect. One of India's foremost architects and recipient of the prestigious Padma Sri award, Mr. Kanvinde had never before designed a temple. But impressed by the devotional spirit of project director Mr. C. J. Dave (Cāturmāsya Dāsa), and after having met Gopāl Krishna Goswami, he took up the project, offering his services without charge.

Cāturmāsya Dāsa was ably assisted by Mr. G. L. Nagar, a retired aircraft maintenance engineer, and Mr. A. S. Rana. Mr. Ravindra Bhan, a professor of architecture at an American university, designed the landscape. Mr. Sumit Ghosh, a professional architect, designed the interiors. Mr. S. V. Damle was the structural engineer.

Mr. Kanvinde took advantage of the hilly site in the design.

"The whole setting—which climbs up on top of the rocks—is unique," he says. "It contributes to the spiritual experience." He adds, "In the old city survey maps, this hill is known as Govardhana Hill."

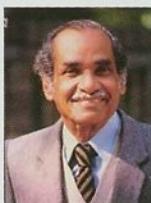
Surely the most striking aspect of the design is the *śikharas* (domes).

"The hollow *śikhara* is an

important symbolic element of openness," Mr. Kanvinde explains. "Historically there was stone over stone, completely solid. So I opened it as a source of space. We have also created lighting effects from inside the *śikhara* at night. It

will be seen from many miles."

In summary, he says, "I feel that the Glory of India Project is a fusion of the past and the present: India's ancient culture of the past, presented for the people of the present."



The project's designers (clockwise from top left): A. P. Kanvinde, Sumit Ghosh, G. L. Nagar, Ravindra Bhan, C. J. Dave, S. V. Damle. Below, the temple glows in the night sky.



Jarāsandha Challenged

*Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma, and Arjuna, disguised as brāhmaṇas,
beg charity from the wicked but charitable king.*

Translated from Sanskrit
by Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

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The sage Vaiśampāyana is telling the history of the Pāṇḍavas to their great-grandson, King Janamejaya. As the narration continues, Lord Kṛṣṇa has been discussing with King Yudhiṣṭhira the need to defeat King Jarāsandha, who is holding many kings hostage. Jarāsandha's defeat will entitle Yudhiṣṭhira to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice and become world emperor. Now Kṛṣṇa reveals His plan to kill Jarāsandha. [Abridged from the original translation.]

LORD KRṢṂA said, “The precise moment for Jarāsandha’s destruction has now come. He cannot be conquered in battle, even by all the gods and demons, but We perceive that he can be conquered in a personal duel. Strategy lies with Me, strength with Bhīma, and Arjuna will guard both of us. Like three fires, we shall take care of him, O king.

“When the three of us privately challenge that monarch, he will surely step forward to fight one of us. He has so belittled the world, and he is so emboldened by his vast power, that he will surely come forward to fight Bhīmasena. With great arms and great power, Bhīmasena can destroy him, just as death is able to destroy the agitated world. If

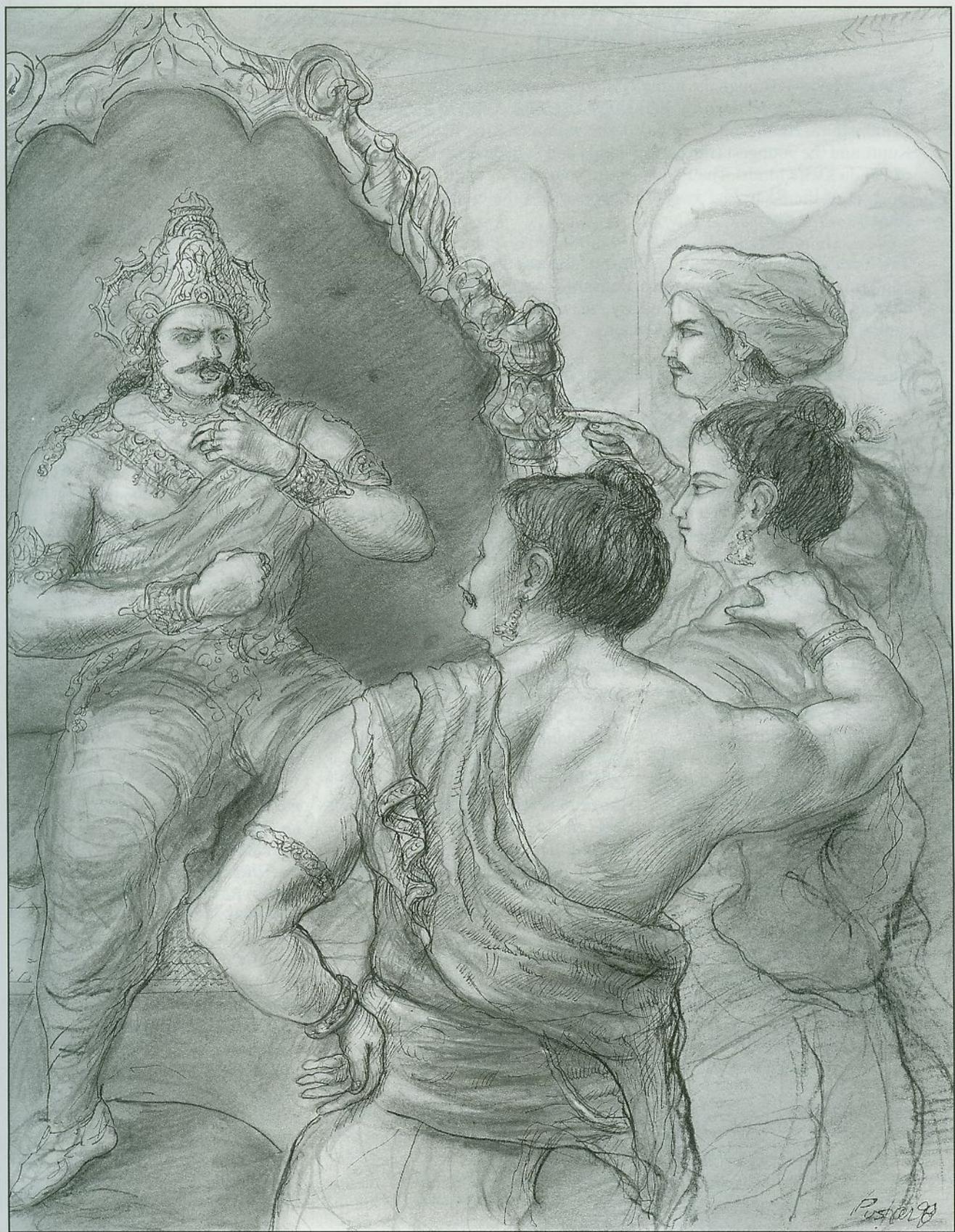
your heart knows Me, and if you are convinced about Me, assign Bhīmasena and Arjuna to this task at once. Entrust them to Me.”

Thus addressed by the Lord, Yudhiṣṭhira replied, while gazing upon Bhīma and Arjuna, who stood with jubilant faces.

“Acyuta! O infallible one! Never, never speak like that [as if I did not fully trust You], O punisher of the hostile. We exist under Your shelter, for You are the Lord and protector of the Pāṇḍavas. However You speak, it is most proper. Certainly You do not lead those upon whom the goddess of fortune has turned her back. Jarāsandha is already slain, and the kings are freed, and I have achieved the Rājasūya, for I abide by Your command. O swift doer, who are beyond all men, act in such a way that this task, which is my duty and a duty for the sake of the entire world, will be rightly accomplished.

“Without you three I have no strength to live, just as a man suffering ill health and thereby bereft of his wealth, pleasure, and religion cannot bear to live. Arjuna will not be without Kṛṣṇa, nor Kṛṣṇa without Arjuna. In this world there is no one these two cannot conquer. That is my opinion. And this

Illustration by Puṣkara Dāsa



King Jarāsandha hears the challenge of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma, and Arjuna.

The Main Characters

The Pāṇḍavas—Though the name *Pāṇḍava* means “son of Pāṇḍu,” the five Pāṇḍavas were sired by demigods—the three eldest Pāṇḍavas (Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, and Arjuna) in the womb of King Pāṇḍu’s wife Kuntī, and the youngest (the twins, Nakula and Sahadeva) in the womb of Pāṇḍu’s wife Mādri. The Pāṇḍavas are sometimes called “Bhārata” or “best of the Bhāratas,” because they come in the dynasty of King Bharata.

The Kurus—The sons of both Pāṇḍu and Dhṛtarāṣṭra (the uncle of the Pāṇḍavas who because of blindness could not become the king) descended from King Kuru, but the name *Kurus* usually refers to Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s sons, the eldest of whom is Duryodhana.

Bhīṣma—A respected elder of the Kuru dynasty, he is the uncle of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu, and Vidura.

handsome Bhīma is the best of the strong. What can this illustrious hero not do when he stands with you two!

“Massive strength, well guided, accomplishes the greatest task. The wise with their clear vision must guide power, which is blind and dumb. Those rich in intelligence lead water to the low ground, where there is least resistance, and to assure victory, they lead power to a weak and open point. Therefore, we shall strive for success in this task by taking shelter of You, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who are celebrated throughout the world as the Supreme Person, for You know how to plan and execute policy in the most logical way. Thus, dear Kṛṣṇa, to accomplish one’s aim in all objectives, one must place strength, wisdom, and leadership at the forefront, joined by the means of action.

“To achieve our aim, certainly Arjuna, son of Pṛthā, must follow Kṛṣṇa, the best of the Yadus, and Bhīma must follow Arjuna. In them are strength, leadership, and victory, and there will be success in this endeavor.”

ENTERING JARĀSANDHA’S KINGDOM

Thus addressed, those brothers of vast might—Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma, and Arjuna—encouraged by the moving statements of their loving friends, departed forthwith toward the King of Magadha, concealing themselves in the garments

of brilliant *brāhmaṇa* students just graduated from their studies. Burning with rage over the injuries and insults to their relatives in the royal line, those three seemed like the sun, the moon, and fire. Their appearance was at once handsome and terrible.

Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja watched as Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna—inspired and fixed on a single task, invincible in battle—departed, with awesome Bhīma leading the way. Seeing them, Yudhiṣṭhira knew Jarāsandha to be a dead man. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna had the power to control, to execute all duties, to accomplish all the tasks of religion, business, and pleasure, and to overthrow and destroy the wicked.

The three infallible heroes, heading east, crossed over the Ganges and the Śoṇa and arrived at the kingdom of Magadha, whose sesame trees covered the land like a verdant breastplate. Reaching Mount Goratha, which was always filled with a wealth of cows, abundant water, and beautiful woods, they gazed upon the capital city of Magadha.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, “This is the beautiful capital of Magadha—a great and charming land always free from troubles, filled with herds and abundant water, and rich with fine mansions. My friend, these five shining mountains with magnificent peaks are the wide Vaihāra, Vṛṣabha, Varāha, Āṣi-giri, and Caityaka. These moun-

tains, with their refreshing forests, join together as if to protect the capital, which is thus known as Girivraja, ‘the city enclosed by mountains.’

“Jarāsandha is confident that he will inevitably achieve his goals, but we shall now approach him and cut down his pride.”

When Lord Kṛṣṇa had spoken thus, the brothers with their vast power—Kṛṣṇa of the Vṛṣṇis and the two sons of Pāṇḍu—advanced toward the city of the Magadhas. They approached the impregnable Girivraja, a prosperous city of lavish festivals that was filled with satisfied, healthy people living by the fourfold division of society.

Instead of approaching the main gate, the three, eager to kill Jarāsandha, ran along attractive Caityaka Mountain, at the end of the mountain range protecting the city. Then, as if to smash the head of their enemy, they struck with their wide arms the fixed wide summit of the mountain, so very great and ancient. Simply with their arms the heroes threw down that immovable peak, which was well established and worshiped with garlands.

Then they caught sight of the city of the Magadhas and made their entrance. At that very moment the priests were carrying a fire around Jarāsandha as he sat on an elephant, in this way fully worshipping the king.

O Bhārata, dressed like devout religious students whose only weapons are their bare arms, and hankering to do battle with Jarāsandha, the three warriors made their entrance. They observed the extraordinary opulence of the prosperous food and flower markets, richly stocked with all the finest products and all desirable luxuries.

Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma, and Arjuna, those best of men, went along the king’s highway. Seeing the wealth of the shopping district, they forcibly took flower garlands from a florist with their mighty arms. Thus dressed with detachment yet adorned with garlands and polished earrings, they proceeded to the abode of the clever Jarāsandha, gazing upon it as Himalayan lions gaze upon a cow pen.

Those three were known for the strength of their arms, and now those arms, adorned with sandalwood and

Jarāsandha, a monarch fixed in honesty, condemned his three mighty guests for having come in disguise.

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aloe, were as handsome and splendid as magnificent pillars of stone. The people of Magadha were filled with wonder as they looked upon those three, who had deep, wide chests. The three heroes moved like lordly elephants and stood tall like hard *sāla* trees.

RECEIVING THE “BRĀHMAṆAS”

Passing through three chambers crowded with people, those very powerful bulls among men proudly approached the king. Jarāsandha rose to meet them and attended them with proper rites and reception, for they were worthy of a foot bath, the respectful offering of milk and honey, and all the honor due the saintly.

That commanding king then said to them, “Welcome!”

The king was well known for his vow: Whenever he heard of the arrival of religious students—*brāhmaṇas*—that conquering king would rise to receive them, O Bhārata, even if it were midnight. But when he saw the unique raiment of those three heroes, Jarāsandha was amazed, O best of kings, even as he attended on them.

And those three leaders of men, each a slayer of his foes, said upon seeing King Jarāsandha, “Our best wishes, O king. May you be well!”

Each of the three heroes was determined to carry out the mission, O tiger of a king, as they studied the monarch and looked at one another.

To Kṛṣṇa and the two Pāṇḍavas, who were all disguised as *brāhmaṇas*, Jarāsandha then said, “Be seated.”

Thereupon the three mighty personalities took their seats and blazed forth with charisma like the three fires that blaze at a great sacrifice. Jarāsandha, a monarch fixed in honesty, then condemned his guests for having come in disguise, O Kauravya.

“People do not become genuine *snātaka* students just by wearing garlands and sandal paste on their bodies. In this world of men, everything is known to me. You people wear flowery wreaths, but your arms bear the scars of the bowstring. You claim to be of the *brāhmaṇa* community, but you wield the power of warriors. Thus outwardly you dress with detachment, yet you wear garlands and sandal paste. Speak the truth! Who are you? Honesty is appealing among those of the royal order. Why in the world did you tear down the peak of Caityaka Mountain? Why didn’t you just enter our city through the gate? Why do you have no fear of offending a king? These are the actions of inscrutable men. What is your plan now? Speak, men, for prowess in speech is the mark of a *brāhmaṇa*.

“Now that you have come to me, why not accept the honor we have properly arranged? Take it! What do you want from us in coming here?”

Thus addressed, the very wise and eloquent Kṛṣṇa replied with words that were both profound and polished.

“*Brāhmaṇas*, warriors, and merchants may all take the vow of a *snātaka*, O king. Some of them follow special rules, and others do not. A warrior who always observes his special religious rule attains success. Success is sure for those who wear flowers, and hence we wear them.

“A warrior’s speech is known to be innocent of arrogance, O son of Bṛhad-ratha, for his power lies in his arms, not his speech. The creator has invested His own power in the arms of the *kṣatriya* warriors. If you wish to see that, O king, then without doubt you will see it today.”

“Cultured people do not enter an enemy’s house through the front gate, but they always enter the house of a sincere friend through the front. Thus we have shunned your city’s gate. We

do not accept honor from an enemy, having come to his house on a mission. Know that to be our eternal vow!”

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Jarāsandha said, “I don’t remember that we ever had a feud with you people, and on reflection I fail to see any hostile act I may have committed against you. When there is no hostility between us, how can you think of me as your enemy, when I have committed no offense? Explain it, learned ones, for that is the custom of the saintly. It pains the mind, actually, to see such a violation of justice. Though a warrior be of royal blood, his mind will burn with pain if he starts a fight with an innocent person, thus violating the sacred law.

“One who knows the principles of justice and takes great vows, but who acts otherwise, comes to a disastrous end and ruins all the good in his life. In all the three worlds, I am the best of those who follow the warrior code of honor, for I am sinless. Yet even knowing this, you three prattle on, as if you were all mad.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said, “There is one particular man, Mahārāja, who bears a responsibility toward his dynasty, and by his order we three have set forth on our mission. You, king, have invented the wicked practice of abducting and corraling ruling warriors, men who were living with their people and protecting the innocent, and now you seek to kill them in a sacrificial rite. Having invented this cruel atrocity, how can you consider yourself sinless? O exalted monarch, how can a king so injure saintly rulers? Having arrested those kings, you wish to offer them to Lord Śiva.

“O son of Bṛhad-ratha, your evil deed would be on our hands, for we
(please turn to page 60)

THE VEDIC

Transcendental Commentaries

Ted's Big Gift

by Pañca Tattva Dāsa

TEDTURNER, founder of the Cable News Network (CNN) and vice chairman of Time Warner, pledged a donation of \$1 billion last year to the United Nations. At the time, his net worth had risen in nine months by over \$1 billion. (To earn \$1 billion, an average American family with a \$40,000 annual income would need to work for 27,000 years.) Mr. Turner has long been critical of wealthy people who give little or nothing to charity. He says America's super-rich are too preoccupied with their competitive rankings in *Forbes* magazine to be concerned with the plight of others.

A billion dollars is an enormous sum, the equivalent of the annual operating budget of the United Nations. Ted Turner is going to give it in \$100 million portions over a ten-year period. The money is not to be used for administrative costs. Instead, it will be going directly to projects such as inoculations for children and removal of land mines.

When asked why he would give away so much money, Ted replied that it makes him feel good. He takes inspiration from the Charles Dickens classic novel *A Christmas Carol* and from the happiness Ebenezer Scrooge felt when he became kindhearted toward Bob Cratchit and his family.

Sacrificing one's hard-earned money for a worthwhile cause is no doubt commendable. But we should determine which cause is most truly worthwhile. So many questions arise when considering how to benefit others.

Should I give indiscriminately to the poor? Should I give to a hospital to fund cancer research? What about the International Red Cross or the United Nations—they do humanitarian work all over the world, don't they?

The real need of humanity, whether rich or poor, young or old, healthy or diseased, is for advancement in the spiritual realization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If a person acts for someone else's welfare without addressing the needs of the soul, the result will be limited and temporary. Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the eloquent example of saving a drowning man's coat instead of the man himself. If we lessen someone's distress with money but the person goes on in ignorance, piling up sinful reactions and falling further into the ruin of repeated birth and death, how have we really helped him?

Seeing to the material needs of the human society has its place, but it must take secondary consideration to the spiritual needs. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has a variety of programs to meet spiritual needs: daily worship of Kṛṣṇa in the temple, education in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, distribution of books of transcendental knowledge, worldwide distribution of *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa) to nurture body and soul, and congregational chanting of the holy names of God. These efforts will save the drowning man.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that one should be fully absorbed in loving thought of Him, the Supreme Lord. If unable to do this, one should carefully take to the rules and regulations of devotional yoga to gradually come to the platform of spontaneous love for God. If this proves

too difficult, one should simply try to work for God, and in this way come to the next platform. If one is unable to work for God, Kṛṣṇa explains, then one should try to give up all the results of one's work and try to be self-situated. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that one can sacrifice some wealth or energy for a good cause. He writes, "In that respect, social service, community service, national service, sacrifice for one's country, etc., may be accepted so that some day one may come to the stage of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord."

So Lord Kṛṣṇa recommends mundane philanthropy, but only if the giver can do no better, owing to lack of knowledge or other circumstances. A person fortunate enough to receive the mercy of the Lord and His devotees may get a chance to help spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That will do great and lasting good for him and all mankind.

Titanic Disasters

by Girirāja Swami

ASIWAIT AT the dentist's office, my eyes fall on the cover of an issue of *Life* magazine. A huge ship, half submerged, heads down into a vast, dark ocean. People gather frantically around the railings of her upward-poised stern. In the foreground, other people sit stunned in a lifeboat, watching. Lights from the ship reflect dimly on the water and the small lifeboat as its passengers row away from the destiny awaiting those left on board. Superimposed on the night sky, an eye stares, captivated by the ghastly spectacle.

A haunting picture with a title to

OBSERVER

ry on the Issues of the Day

match: “Titanic Fever—Why we can’t look away from disasters.”

The article describes various disasters in history: the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, which buried Pompeii and its 20,000 citizens under 20 feet of volcanic ash; the Great Chicago Fire of 1906, which ravaged 2,000 acres of the city and killed 250 people; the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, in which 60,000 died; the great Boston Molasses Flood, in which a fountain of molasses burst out of a distillery’s cast-iron tank and oozed through the streets, suffocating 21 people; the 1986 explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, telecast live before millions; and almost 50 years before that, the crash of the zeppelin Hindenberg, broadcast live over the radio to millions of listeners. No dearth of disasters in world history.

The article focuses on people’s fascination with the Titanic. “Titanimania” has given rise to dozens of books, a CD-ROM, a television movie, a Broadway musical, a blockbuster Hollywood film, a multimillion-dollar exhibition of Titanic artifacts, and even a cookbook: *Last Dinner on the Titanic*.

Although advertised as a ship that could never sink, the Titanic sank on her maiden voyage after just four days at sea. Built as the largest, most luxurious ocean liner of that time, her construction cost \$7.5 million and engaged thousands of workers. She boasted a crew of 892—two for every three passengers—and, remarkable for 1912, amenities such as a gymnasium, a swimming pool, and Turkish baths. The passengers would have everything they needed and would dine on delicacies.

Everything seemed set for a comfort-

able and pleasurable voyage. Among the elite on board were millionaire realtor John Jacob Astor, millionaire retailer Isidor Straus, millionaire industrialist George Widener, and English artist Francis Millet. Passengers’ spirits were high as the Titanic left Southampton port. One thing was sure in their minds: the journey would be safe.

After two days at sea, the captain began to receive warnings of ice and bad weather ahead. Two days later, on Sunday, April 13, 1912, there was not much sign of weather change, so the captain retired early, leaving the ship in the hands of other crew members. He told them to rouse him if the situation became “at all doubtful.”

Crewmen posted in the crow’s nest had no binoculars, and the ship’s wireless operator, overburdened by demands from passengers, failed to respond to repeated bad-weather warnings. While life on the great luxury liner carried on with abandon, she was moving into treacherous waters. The crew of the 46,329 tons of Titanic, plowing through the Atlantic waves at 21 knots, spotted the iceberg too late to divert the ship from inevitable disaster.

At first none of the passengers took the collision seriously. But as water gushed into five of her front compartments, and her nose started to dip, reality took hold: the Titanic was sinking.

More than 1,500 people would go down with the Titanic that night. Those who got away in lifeboats lived to tell the tale. The rest held on till the last minute, before plunging into the icy North Atlantic waters as the ocean swallowed the great ship.

Reading the article, I recalled Prah-

lāda Maharaja’s prayer to Nṛṣimhadeva (Lord Kṛṣṇa’s half-man, half-lion incarnation) in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.19):

*bālasya neha śaraṇaṁ pitarau nṛṣimha
nārtasya cāgadam udanvati majjato
nauḥ
taptasya tat-pratīvidhir ya ihāñjaseṣṭas
tāvad vibho tanu-bhṛtāṁ tvad-
upekṣitānām*

“My Lord Nṛṣimhadeva, O Supreme, because of a bodily conception of life, embodied souls neglected and not cared for by You cannot do anything for their betterment. Whatever remedies they accept, although perhaps temporarily beneficial, are certainly impermanent. For example, a father and mother cannot protect their child, a physician and medicine cannot relieve a suffering patient, and a boat on the ocean cannot protect a drowning man.”

In the purport Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Through parental care, through remedies for different kinds of disease, and through means of protection on the water, in the air, and on land, there is always an endeavor for relief from various kinds of suffering in the material world, but none of them are guaranteed measures for protection. . . . Ultimately the shelter is the Lord, and one who takes shelter of the Lord is protected. This is guaranteed. . . .

“In the history of the world, no one has been successful in conquering the miseries imposed by material nature. . . . Our humble attempt to propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world is the only remedy that can bring about a peaceful and happy way of life.”

Although everyone in the material

world is trying to deflect the attacks of material nature, the efforts have never succeeded. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the creator Himself certifies the material world as a place of misery (*duḥkhālayam aśāsvatam*). Only surrender to the Lord can save us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "The material world is full of dangers (*padam padam yad vipadam*). For example, if one is on the ocean one may have a

very strong ship, but that ship can never be safe; because one is at sea there may be dangers at any time. The Titanic was safe, but on its first voyage it sank, and many important men lost their lives. So danger must be there, because we are in a dangerous position. The material world itself is dangerous. Therefore our business now should be to cross over this sea of danger as soon as possible." (*Teachings of Queen Kuntī*)

Instead of being disturbed by the waves in the material ocean, which perpetually come and go, we should tolerate the waves and try to cross the ocean to safety, to the shore of the spiritual world. How? By the boat of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet:

*samāśrītā ye pada-pallava-plavānī
mahat-padam puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ
bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padam paraṁ padam
padam padam yad vipadam na teśām*

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"For those who have accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Murāri, the enemy of the Mura demon, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf's hoofprint. Their goal is *paraṁ padam*, Vaikuṅṭha, the place where there are no material miseries, not the place where there is danger at every step." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.58)

Shall we make no practical effort to protect ourselves? We should take normal precautions. Yet, as Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "although as a matter of routine duty one must of course accept other remedial measures, no one can protect one who is neglected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

If Kṛṣṇa wants to save someone, no one can kill him, and if Kṛṣṇa wants to kill someone, no one can save him (*rākhe kṛṣṇa māre ke māre kṛṣṇa rākhe ke*). "Unless one is protected by the mercy of the Lord," Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "no remedial measure can act effectively. One should consequently depend fully on the causeless mercy of the Lord."

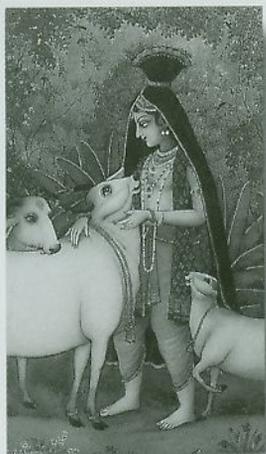
A person completely surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa is confident of Kṛṣṇa's protection in all circumstances. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa is ultimately the well-wishing protector of His devoted servant, the devotee accepts any situation as the Lord's mercy. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that we should not think, "Because I have become a devotee, there will be no danger or suffering." Devotees like Prahāda Mahārāja, the Pāṇḍavas, Vasudeva and Devakī, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura apparently suffered greatly. But they never gave up faith in Kṛṣṇa. Rather, when a devotee faces
(please turn to page 56)

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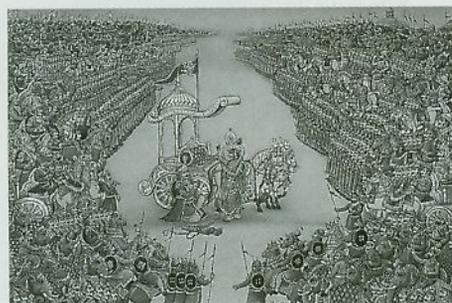
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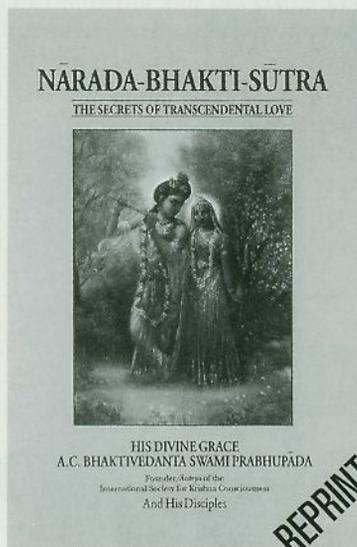


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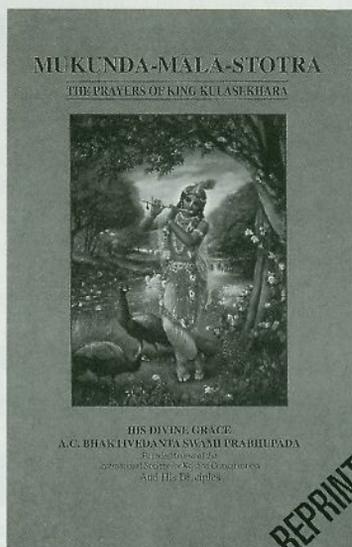


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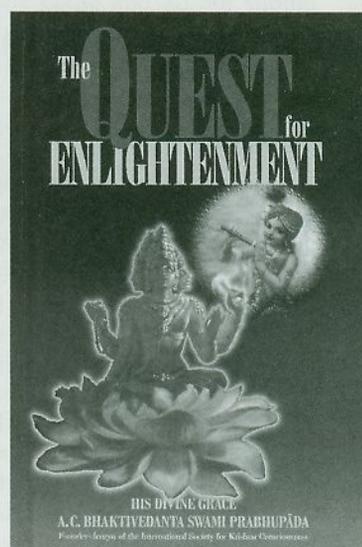
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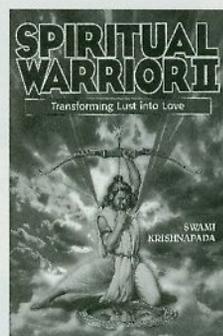
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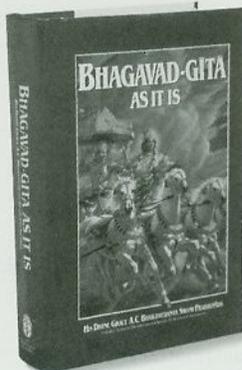
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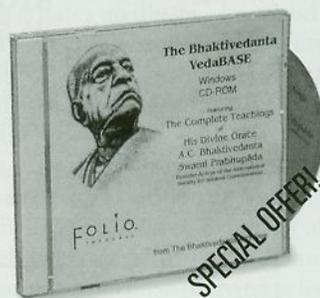
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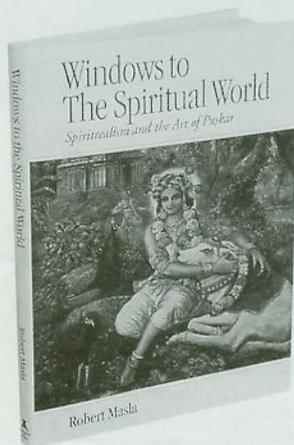
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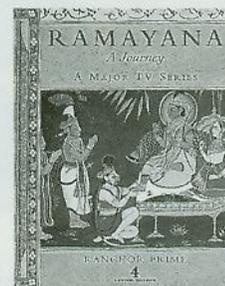
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Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is teaching His mother, Devahūti, about Sāṅkhya, the analytical study of all existence. As the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam continues, Lord Kapila points out the spiritual danger of illusory family love in the material world.

THIRD CANTO / CHAPTER 30

8 आक्षिप्तात्मेन्द्रियः स्त्रीणामसतीनां च मायया ।
रहोरचितयालापैः शिशूनां कलभाषिणाम् ॥ ८ ॥

*ākṣiptātmendriyaḥ strīṇām
asatīnām ca māyayā
raho racitayālāpaiḥ
śīśūnām kala-bhāṣiṇām*

ākṣipta—charmed; *ātma*—heart; *indriyaḥ*—his senses; *strīṇām*—of women; *asatīnām*—false; *ca*—and; *māyayā*—by māyā; *rahaḥ*—in a solitary place; *racitayā*—displayed; *ālāpaiḥ*—by the talking; *śīśūnām*—of the children; *kala-bhāṣiṇām*—with sweet words.

He gives heart and senses to a woman, who falsely charms him with māyā. He enjoys solitary embraces and talking with her, and he is enchanted by the sweet words of the small children.

PURPORT: Family life within the kingdom of illusory energy, māyā, is just like a prison for the eternal living entity. In prison a prisoner is shackled by iron chains and iron bars. Similarly, a conditioned soul is shackled by the charming

beauty of a woman, by her solitary embraces and talks of so-called love, and by the sweet words of his small children. Thus he forgets his real identity.

In this verse the words *strīṇām asatīnām* indicate that womanly love is just to agitate the mind of man. Actually, in the material world there is no love. Both the woman and the man are interested in their sense gratification. For sense gratification a woman creates an illusory love, and the man becomes enchanted by such false love and forgets his real duty. When there are children as the result of such a combination, the next attraction is to the sweet words of the children. The love of the woman at home and the talk of the children make one a secure prisoner, and thus he cannot leave his home. Such a person is termed, in Vedic language, a *ghamedhī*, which means “one whose center of attraction is home.” *Ghastha* refers to one who lives with family, wife, and children, but whose real purpose of living is to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One is therefore advised to become a *ghastha* and not a *ghamedhī*. The *ghastha*'s concern is to get out of the family life created by illusion and enter into real family life with Kṛṣṇa, whereas the *ghamedhī*'s business is to repeatedly chain himself to so-called family life, in one life after another, and perpetually remain in the darkness of māyā.

9 गृहेषु कूटधर्मेषु दुःखतन्त्रेष्वतन्द्रितः ।
कुर्वन्दुःखप्रतीकारं सुखवन्मन्यते गृही ॥ ९ ॥

*grheṣu kūṭa-dharmeṣu
duḥkha-tantreṣv atandritaḥ
kurvan duḥkha-pratikāraṁ
sukhavan manyate grhī*

grheṣu—in family life; *kūṭa-dharmeṣu*—involving the practice of falsehood; *duḥkha-tantreṣu*—spreading miseries; *atandritaḥ*—attentive; *kurvan*—doing; *duḥkha-pratikāram*—counteraction of miseries; *sukha-vat*—as happiness; *manyate*—thinks; *grhī*—the householder.

The attached householder remains in his family life, which is full of diplomacy and politics. Always spreading miseries and controlled by acts of sense gratification, he acts just to counteract the reactions of all his miseries, and if he can successfully counteract such miseries, he thinks that he is happy.

PURPORT: In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Personality of Godhead Himself certifies the material world as an impermanent place that is full of miseries. There is no question of happiness in this material world, either individually or in terms of family, society, or country. If something is going on in the name of happiness, that is also illusion. Here in this material world, happiness means successful counteraction to the effects of distress. The material world is so made that unless one becomes a clever diplomat, his life will be a failure. Not to speak of human society, even the society of lower animals, the birds and bees, cleverly manages its bodily demands of eating, sleeping, and mating. Human society competes nationally or individually, and in the attempt to be successful the entire human society becomes full of diplomacy. We should always remember that in spite of all diplomacy and all intelligence in the struggle for our existence, everything will end in a second by the supreme will. Therefore, all our attempts to become happy in this material world are simply a delusion offered by māyā.

10 अर्थैरापादितैर्गुर्व्या हिंसयेतस्ततश्च तान् ।
पुष्पाति येषां पोषेण शेषभुग्यात्यघः स्वयम् ॥१०॥

*arthair āpāditair gurvyā
himsayetas-tataś ca tān
puṣṇāti yeṣāṃ poṣeṇa
śeṣa-bhug yāty adhaḥ svayam*

arthaiḥ—by wealth; *āpāditaiḥ*—secured; *gurvyā*—great; *himsayā*—by violence; *itaḥ-tataḥ*—here and there; *ca*—and; *tān*—them (family members); *puṣṇāti*—he maintains; *yeṣāṃ*—of whom; *poṣeṇa*—because of the maintenance; *śeṣa*—remnants; *bhuk*—eating; *yāti*—he goes; *adhaḥ*—downwards; *svayam*—himself.

He secures money by committing violence here and there, and although he employs it in the service of his family, he himself eats only a little portion of the food thus purchased, and he goes to hell for those for whom he earned the money in such an irregular way.

PURPORT: There is a Bengali proverb, “The person for whom I have stolen accuses me of being a thief.” The family members, for whom an attached person acts in so many

criminal ways, are never satisfied. In illusion an attached person serves such family members, and by serving them he is destined to enter into a hellish condition of life. For example, a thief steals something to maintain his family, and he is caught and imprisoned. This is the sum and substance of material existence and attachment to material society, friendship, and love. Although an attached family man is always engaged in getting money by hook or by crook for the maintenance of his family, he cannot enjoy more than what he could consume even without such criminal activities. A man who eats eight ounces of foodstuffs may have to maintain a big family and earn money by any means to support that family, but he himself is not offered more than what he can eat, and sometimes he eats the remnants that are left after his family members are fed. Even by earning money by unfair means, he cannot enjoy life for himself. That is called the covering illusion of māyā.

The process of illusory service to society, country, and community is exactly the same everywhere; the same principle is applicable even to big national leaders. A national leader who is very great in serving his country is sometimes killed by his countrymen because of irregular service. In other words, one cannot satisfy his dependents by this illusory service, although one cannot get out of the service because servant is his constitutional position. A living entity is constitutionally part and parcel of the Supreme Being, but he forgets that he has to render service to the Supreme Being and diverts his attention to serving others; this is called māyā. By serving others he falsely thinks that he is master. The head of a family thinks of himself as the master of the family, or the leader of a nation thinks of himself as the master of the nation, whereas actually he is serving, and by serving māyā he is gradually going to hell. Therefore, a sane man should come to the point of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and engage in the service of the Supreme Lord, applying his whole life, all of his wealth, his entire intelligence, and his full power of speaking.

11 वार्तायां लुप्यमानायामारब्धायां पुनः पुनः ।
लोमामिभूतो निःसत्त्वः परार्थे कुरुते स्पृहाम् ॥११॥

*vārtāyām lupyamānāyām
ārabdhāyām punaḥ punaḥ
lobhābhībhūto niḥsattvaḥ
parārthe kurute sphām*

vārtāyām—when his occupation; *lupyamānāyām*—is hampered; *ārabdhāyām*—undertaken; *punaḥ punaḥ*—again and again; *lobha*—by greed; *abhibhūtaḥ*—overwhelmed; *niḥsattvaḥ*—ruined; *para-arthe*—for the wealth of others; *kurute sphām*—he longs.

When he suffers reverses in his occupation, he tries again and again to improve himself, but when he is baffled in all attempts and is ruined, he accepts money from others because of excessive greed.

12 कुटुम्बभरणाकल्पो मन्दमाग्यो वृथोद्यमः ।
श्रिया विहीनः कृपणो ध्यायञ्छ्रुसिति मूढधीः ॥१२॥

kuṭumba-bharaṇākhalpo
manda-bhāgyo vṛthodyamaḥ
śriyā vihīnaḥ kṛpaṇo
dhyāyañ chvasiti mūḍha-dhīḥ

kuṭumba—his family; bharaṇa—in maintaining; akalpaḥ—unable; manda-bhāgyaḥ—the unfortunate man; vṛthā—in vain; udyamaḥ—whose effort; śriyā—beauty, wealth; vihīnaḥ—bereft of; kṛpaṇaḥ—wretched; dhyāyan—grieving; śvasiti—he sighs; mūḍha—bewildered; dhīḥ—his intelligence.

Thus the unfortunate man, unsuccessful in maintaining his family members, is bereft of all beauty. He always thinks of his failure, grieving very deeply.

13 एवं स्वभरणाकल्पं तत्कलत्रादयस्तथा ।
नाद्रियन्ते यथापूर्वं कीनाशा इव गोजरम् ॥१३॥

evam sva-bharaṇākhalpaṁ
tat-kalatrādayas tathā
nādriryante yathā pūrvam
kināśā iva go-jaram

evam—thus; sva-bharaṇa—to maintain them; akalpaḥ—unable; tat—his; kalatra—wife; ādayaḥ—and so on; tathā—so; na—not; ādriryante—do respect; yathā—as; pūrvam—before; kināśāḥ—farmers; iva—like; go-jaram—an old ox.

Seeing him unable to support them, his wife and others do not treat him with the same respect as before, even as miserly farmers do not accord the same treatment to their old and worn-out oxen.

PURPORT: Not only in the present age but from time immemorial, no one has liked an old man who is unable to earn in the family. Even in the modern age, in some communities or states, the old men are given poison so that they will die as soon as possible. In some cannibalistic communities, the old grandfather is sportingly killed, and a feast is held in which his body is eaten. The example is given that a farmer does not like an old bull who has ceased to work. Similarly, when an attached person in family life becomes old and is unable to earn, he is no longer liked by his wife, sons, daughters, and other kinsmen, and he is consequently neglected, what to speak of not being given respect. It is judicious, therefore, to give up family attachment before one attains old age and take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

14 तत्राप्यज्ञातनिर्वेदो श्रियमाणः स्वयम्भृतेः ।
जरयोपात्तवैरूप्यो मरणामिमुखो गृहे ॥१४॥

tatrāpy ajāta-nirvedo
bhriyamānaḥ svayam bhṛtaiḥ
jarayopātta-vairūpyo
maraṇābhimukho grhe

tatra—there; api—although; ajāta—not arisen; nirvedaḥ—aversion; bhriyamānaḥ—being maintained; svayam—by himself; bhṛtaiḥ—by those who were maintained; jarayā—by old age; upātta—obtained; vairūpyaḥ—deformation; maraṇa—death; abhimukhaḥ—approaching; grhe—at home.

The foolish family man does not become averse to family life although he is maintained by those whom he once maintained. Deformed by the influence of old age, he prepares himself to meet ultimate death.

PURPORT: Family attraction is so strong that even if one is neglected by family members in his old age, he cannot give up family affection, and he remains at home just like a dog. In the Vedic way of life one has to give up family life when he is strong enough. It is advised that before getting too weak and being baffled in material activities, and before becoming diseased, one should give up family life and engage oneself completely in the service of the Lord for the remaining days of his life. It is enjoined, therefore, in the Vedic scriptures, that as soon as one passes fifty years of age, he must give up family life and live alone in the forest. After preparing himself fully, he should become a *sannyāsī* to distribute spiritual knowledge to each and every home.

15 आस्तेष्वमत्योपन्यस्तं गृहपाल इवाहरन् ।
आमयाव्यप्रदीप्ताग्निरल्पाहारोऽल्पचेष्टितः ॥१५॥

āste 'vamatyopanyastam
grha-pāla ivāharan
āmayāvī apradiptāgnir
alpāhāro 'lpa-ceṣṭitaḥ

āste—he remains; avamatyā—negligently; upanyastam—what is placed; grha-pālaḥ—a dog; iva—like; āharan—eating; āmayāvī—diseased; apradipta-agnih—having dyspepsia; alpa—little; āhāraḥ—eating; alpa—little; ceṣṭitaḥ—his activity.

Thus he remains at home just like a pet dog and eats whatever is so negligently given to him. Afflicted with many illnesses, such as dyspepsia and loss of appetite, he eats only very small morsels of food, and he becomes an invalid, who cannot work any more.

PURPORT: Before meeting death one is sure to become a diseased invalid, and when he is neglected by his family members, his life becomes less than a dog's because he is put into so many miserable conditions. Vedic literatures enjoin, therefore, that before the arrival of such miserable conditions, one should leave home and die without the knowledge

of his family members. If a man leaves home and dies without his family's knowing, that is considered to be a glorious death. But an attached family man wants his family members to carry him in a great procession even after his death, and although he will not be able to see how the procession goes, he still desires that his body be taken gorgeously in procession. Thus he is happy without even knowing where he has to go when he leaves his body for the next life.

16 वायुनोत्क्रमतोत्तारः कफसंरुद्धनाडिकः ।
कासश्वासकृतायासः कण्ठे घुरघुरायते ॥१६॥

vāyunotkramatottārah
kapha-saṁruddha-nāḍikah
kāsa-śvāsa-kṛtāyāsaḥ
kaṅṭhe ghura-ghurāyate

vāyunā—by air; *utkramatā*—bulging out; *uttārah*—his eyes; *kapha*—with mucus; *saṁruddha*—congested; *nāḍikah*—his windpipe; *kāsa*—coughing; *śvāsa*—breathing; *kṛta*—done; *āyāsaḥ*—difficulty; *kaṅṭhe*—in the throat; *ghura-ghurāyate*—he produces a sound like *ghura-ghura*.

In that diseased condition, one's eyes bulge due to the pressure of air from within, and his glands become congested with mucus. He has difficulty breathing, and upon exhaling and inhaling he produces a sound like *ghura-ghura*, a rattling within the throat.

17 शयानः परिशोचद्भिः परिवीतः स्वबन्धुभिः ।
वाच्यमानोऽपि न ब्रूते कालपाशवशं गतः ॥१७॥

śayānaḥ pariśocadbhiḥ
parivītaḥ sva-bandhubhiḥ
vācyamāno 'pi na brūte
kāla-pāśa-vaśaṁ gataḥ

śayānaḥ—lying down; *pariśocadbhiḥ*—lamenting; *parivītaḥ*—surrounded; *sva-bandhubhiḥ*—by his relatives and friends; *vācyamānaḥ*—being urged to speak; *api*—although; *na*—not; *brūte*—he speaks; *kāla*—of time; *pāśa*—the noose; *vaśaṁ*—under the control of; *gataḥ*—gone.

In this way he comes under the clutches of death and lies down, surrounded by lamenting friends and relatives, and although he wants to speak with them, he no longer can because he is under the control of time.

PURPORT: For formality's sake, when a man is lying on his deathbed, his relatives come to him, and sometimes they cry very loudly, addressing the dying man: "Oh, my father!" "Oh, my friend!" or "Oh, my husband!" In that pitiable condition

the dying man wants to speak with them and instruct them of his desires, but because he is fully under the control of the time factor, death, he cannot express himself, and that causes him inconceivable pain. He is already in a painful condition because of disease, and his glands and throat are choked up with mucus. He is already in a very difficult position, and when he is addressed by his relatives in that way, his grief increases.

18 एवं कुटुम्बभरणे व्यापृतात्मजितेन्द्रियः ।
म्रियते रुदतां खानामुरुवेदनयास्तधीः ॥१८॥

evaṁ kuṭumba-bharaṇe
vyāpṛtātmajitendriyaḥ
mriyate rudatāṁ svānām
uru-vedanayāsta-dhīḥ

evaṁ—thus; *kuṭumba-bharaṇe*—in maintaining a family; *vyāpṛta*—engrossed; *ātmā*—his mind; *ajīta*—uncontrolled; *indriyaḥ*—his senses; *mriyate*—he dies; *rudatāṁ*—while crying; *svānām*—his relatives; *uru*—great; *vedanayā*—with pain; *asta*—bereft of; *dhīḥ*—consciousness.

Thus the man, who engaged with uncontrolled senses in maintaining a family, dies in great grief, seeing his relatives crying. He dies most pathetically, in great pain and without consciousness.

PURPORT: In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that at the time of death one will be absorbed in the thoughts which he cultivated during his lifetime. A person who had no other idea than to properly maintain his family members must have family affairs in his last thoughts. That is the natural sequence for a common man. The common man does not know the destiny of his life; he is simply busy in his flash of life, maintaining his family. At the last stage, no one is satisfied with how he has improved the family economic condition; everyone thinks that he could not provide sufficiently. Because of his deep family affection, he forgets his main duty of controlling the senses and improving his spiritual consciousness. Sometimes a dying man entrusts the family affairs to either his son or some relative, saying, "I am going. Please look after the family." He does not know where he is going, but even at the time of death he is anxious about how his family will be maintained. Sometimes it is seen that a dying man requests the physician to increase his life at least for a few years so that the family maintenance plan which he has begun can be completed. These are the material diseases of the conditioned soul. He completely forgets his real engagement—to become Kṛṣṇa conscious—and is always serious about planning to maintain his family, although he changes families one after another.

(continued in the next issue)



EVERY TOWN & VILLAGE

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

WORLD NEWS

India The ISKCON centers in Calcutta and Śrīdhām Mayāpur, West Bengal, hosted interreligious conferences, one each, in March and April. Representatives of Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Christianity attended.

The Sheriff of Mumbai inaugurated ISKCON's annual Rathayātrā last March by sweeping the road in front of the festival chariot of Lord Jagannātha (Kṛṣṇa). The Rathayātrā procession ended at Lokandwala Grounds, where devotees held a four-day festival. The ceremonial sweeping is the traditional way in which the chief guest for the occasion shows his subservience to the Lord.



Mumbai sheriff K. Kohli inaugurates Rathayātrā.

North America The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has completed transferring all available film footage of Śrīla Prabhupāda into a digital video format. The footage, along with other historical film from the early days of ISKCON, comes to forty-six hours. Much of the film, faded by the years, has been restored to its original color. In the digital format, the film is safe from color deterioration, and copies can be made without loss of quality.

The work was done by Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciple, Yaduvara Dāsa. Copies of the digital video footage have been stored in several places, including the vaults of National Underground Storage, relied upon by many large corporations. Coincidentally, the vaults are located near Butler, Pennsylvania, where Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed, virtually unknown, when he first came to America.

The devotees of ISKCON Montreal recently finished paying the mortgage on their temple, a 75-year-old church purchased in 1974. They have also rebuilt the roof, restored the altar, restored the original brickwork on the temple exterior, repainted the temple's high, majestic ceiling, and renovated the heating and air conditioning system. ISKCON Montreal was the second temple started by Śrīla Prabhupāda, in 1967.



ISKCON Montreal temple

Devotees in Miami installed a Deity of Lord Nṛsiṃha-deva on the Lord's appearance day in May. The bronze Deity was sculptured by ISKCON artist and sculptor Bhaktisiddhānta Dāsa in Vṛndāvana, India.

ISKCON devotees chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, distributed books, and gave out two thousand plates of *prasādam* last April at the twice-annual Westheimer Street Festival in Houston.

ISKCON Detroit held its annual Rathayātrā on August 12.

A parijat tree is now growing in the courtyard of the ISKCON Miami temple. The tree was donated by Dr. David Lee, professor of botany at Florida International University, who got the seed from India and grew the rare tree in a greenhouse at F.I.U. The parijat tree has beautiful and highly fragrant flowers. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Lord Kṛṣṇa originally brought the parijat to earth from the heavenly planets to satisfy His wife Satyabhāmā.



Hari Buddhi Dasa

ISKCON Miami's parijat tree.

Europe The wife of the president of Slovenia visited the ISKCON book booth at last

April's "Week of the Book" festival in Ljubljana, the capital. Devotees at the festival distributed thousands of books, magazines, and pamphlets. On the last day, hundreds of people enjoyed hearing devotional songs performed by devotees on the main stage.

Devotees recently opened a Govinda's restaurant in Dublin.

350,000 people saw ISKCON's Rathayātrā in Dublin last March, as part of the city's St. Patrick's Day Parade. The Hare Kṛṣṇa procession included devotees costumed as a forty-foot snake, representing the demon Aghāsura from Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. At each stadium along the four-mile route, the snake would swallow twenty children dressed as cowherd boys. The snake's body would then break apart, and Lord Kṛṣṇa would jump out, followed by His cowherd friends.

New Zealand Devotees from the Christchurch temple chanted onstage before a crowd of hundreds in Christchurch's city square as part of the tenth anniversary of Plains FM Community Radio. Hanumān Dāsa, ISKCON Christchurch temple president, has hosted a weekly Hare Kṛṣṇa show on the station for the past seven years.

Africa Devotees in Kampala, Uganda, are building a temple on their eight-acre farm four miles outside the city. The farm, started two years ago, recently

opened a school for orphans. The Sunday feast program attracts about four hundred people, and eight of the local people have fully taken up the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Mauritius Devotees in Mauritius held a ten-day Padayātrā in the south of the island last April. Their venerable bull Sri Gopal Das pulled an oxcart carrying Deities of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. Eighteen devotees walked every day, and two hundred more joined on the weekends. In the evenings, the devotees put on festivals in village reception centers, invariably drawing large crowds.

Departures

Kuntī Devi Dāsi, a disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, passed away last June. Kuntī Dāsi had joined ISKCON in 1971 and had spent most of her life since then at the Hare Kṛṣṇa community in New Vrindavan, West Virginia. She was loved and respected by devotees there and at other temples in the U.S. where she had lived. She had great attachment to serving the Deities and reading and distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. She passed away in New Vrindavan in the presence of devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhāvati Devi Dāsi, a disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, passed away last April in Mumbai. She had constantly chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa and had influenced her family toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness. She is survived by her husband, Pandit Pratap Narayan (elder brother of the musician Pandit Jasraj), and seven children.

Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Girirāja Swami, passed away last February in Mauritius, at the age of ninety. Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa was loved by all the devotees in Mauritius, and he always respected and appreciated them. Though elderly, Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa had daily followed a strict schedule, beginning at 2:30 A.M., of chanting, worship, and reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Up to the last moment, he had been chanting the Lord's names in the association of devotees.

Nitāi Karuṇa Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Ṛādhvaja Swami, passed away last May at ISKCON's New Raman Reti Farm in Alachua, Florida. Nitāi Karuṇa had been associated with ISKCON since the 1970s. Suffering from brain cancer, he had moved onto the ISKCON farm to leave this world in the presence of devotees. Lord Kṛṣṇa fulfilled his desire.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out

“You Are Beyond This Body”

This exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in Fiji on May 1, 1976.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The Lord says, *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*. Find this verse.

Disciple: All right, Śrīla Prabhupāda. That’s in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Fifteenth Chapter, text seven. “The living entities in this conditional world,” Kṛṣṇa says, “are My eternal, fragmental parts.” And then He adds, *manaḥ-śaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati*: “Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So the soul uses his mind and intelligence—his subtle senses, his subtle instruments—to manipulate his gross machine, his material body. In this way, he is just like an airplane pilot who uses his subtle electronic instruments to manipulate his gross machine, causing it to fly this way or that. Where is the difficulty in understanding this? This material body in which we are now living is simply a machine.

And *bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni*: “All living beings in this material world are simply wandering.” *Bhrāmayan*—“wandering.” Just as the pilot uses his airplane to wander here or there, so the soul uses his material body to wander here or there. This is going on. *Ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthā . . . adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ*: Sometimes the soul goes up; sometimes, down. Just as the pilot uses his airplane’s wings and other features for going up or down, so the soul uses his body’s arms and other features for going up or down. Find this verse.

Disciple: That’s in the fourteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Text eighteen.

*ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthā
madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā
adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ*

“Those situated in the mode of goodness gradually go upward to the higher planets; those in the mode of passion live on the earthly planets; and those in the abominable mode of ignorance go down to the hellish worlds.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So whether we look at the soul in the body or the pilot in the plane, we see the same thing. If the pilot is not expert, then at an untimely moment he goes down to the lowest place. Finished. *Adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ*. If the pilot is third class, then instead of flying high, he plummets from the sky, and everything is spoiled.

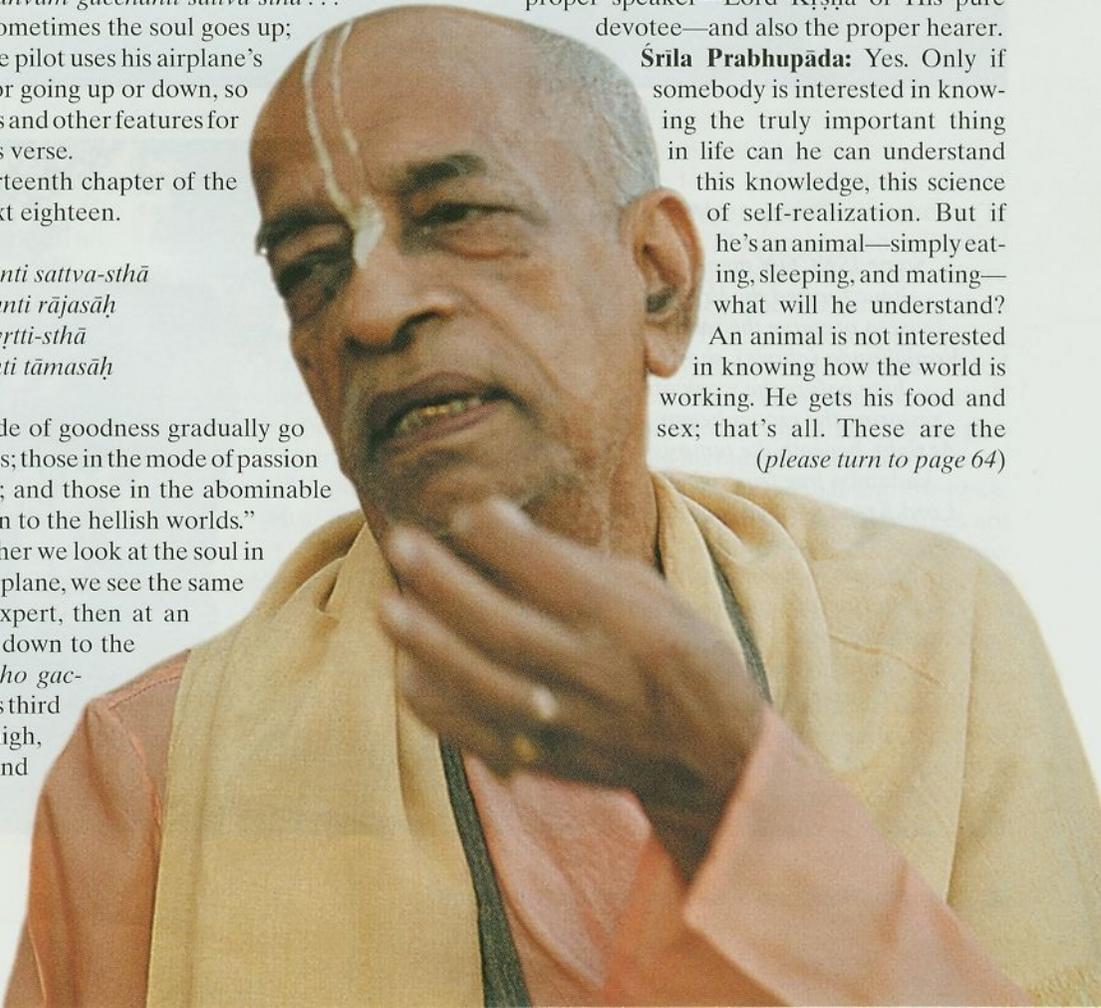
Therefore, everything depends on the pilot. The machine is not so important. The machine can go up if the pilot knows how to do it. And the machine can go down. Actually, this is happening. If the pilot cannot handle his machine very nicely, immediately it will be smashed. That is due to the mismanagement of the pilot. At times I have seen that as soon as the flight is over, the other passengers and the crew applaud. [*Laughter as Śrīla Prabhupāda claps.*] “The danger is over.”

Anyway, *ūrdhvam* and *adhaḥ*: Depending on how you use this bodily machine, you can go up, and likewise, you can go down. And *madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ*: If you become passionately attached to these middle planets, then for still another lifetime you can stay here.

So in this way, we must present this subject matter of self-realization. The living entity, the soul, is the important thing within this body. And just see how he’s struggling. Due to ignorance of his real identity apart from the body, he’s struggling. *Manaḥ śaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati*: “On account of being entangled in this material world, the soul is struggling very hard with the six senses of the material body, which include the mind.” This is his position.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, often you say that transmission of this knowledge of self-realization requires both the proper speaker—Lord Kṛṣṇa or His pure devotee—and also the proper hearer.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Only if somebody is interested in knowing the truly important thing in life can he understand this knowledge, this science of self-realization. But if he’s an animal—simply eating, sleeping, and mating—what will he understand? An animal is not interested in knowing how the world is working. He gets his food and sex; that’s all. These are the
(please turn to page 64)





Some ISKCON members have formed the Vrinda Trust to preserve the sacred Vrindākuṇḍa (above), shown here before the work of restoring the groves began. At right, beneath the famous kadamba tree from which Lord Kṛṣṇa jumped into the Yamunā River to subdue the serpent Kāliya, Ranchor Dāsa (far left) stands with some of those who helped start WWF's Vrindavan Conservation Project.



tables, and land clearance for farming. Worst of all is the loss of the age-old traditions of forest conservation that had been practiced for so long in India's villages. Along with the woodland have disappeared the stocks of groundwater that the trees kept beneath their roots. The woods have shrunk to a hundredth of their original extent. Now only small scattered groves, most an acre or two, dot the parched landscape of Vraja. These remaining islands of vegetation are now oases of shade, sustenance, and water for birds, animals, and humans.

SACRED PROTECTION

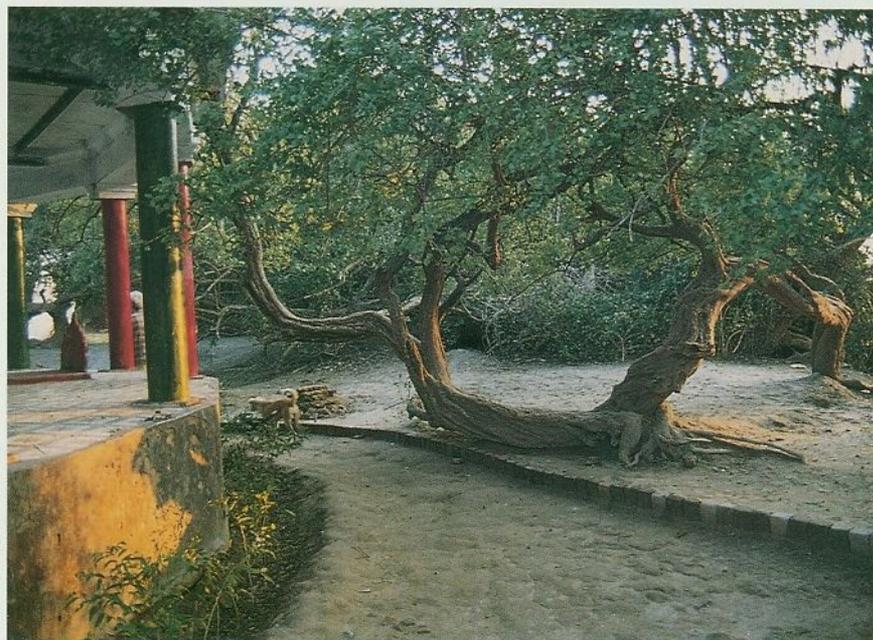
These groves have survived because of local religious traditions. For example, a few miles from Varṣāṇā, the birthplace of Rādhārāṇī, is a grove of ancient *kadam* trees called Kadambkandī. Next to this grove is the small village of Navena. Local tradition has it that when the tyrant Kaṁsa sent demons to Varṣāṇā to persecute the villagers, Rādhā, the childhood sweetheart of Kṛṣṇa, sought shelter in this grove. As a result it has remained a sacred spot, and here the *kadam* trees have stood, protected by the people of Navena, for thousands of years. The trees shelter a magnificent lake, broad and deep, which provides water for the villagers, shelter for many species of waterfowl, and a cooling dip

for cattle and buffalo. This grove has survived—where many others have vanished—because of its link with Rādhā. That link has been a powerful charm of protection.

Many such groves are scattered across Vraja. Not far away, near the village of Nandagrām, or Nandgaon, where Kṛṣṇa lived as a boy, is a grove called Kadamter. The grove shelters two ponds and a small temple dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, who came here as a small child to herd cows. When Kṛṣṇa was very young He wanted to go out with the calves and His friends, but His mother, Yaśodā, feared for His safety. So she let Him go only as far as she was still able to hear His flute. As long as she could hear His sweet flute-song, she knew He was safe. Kadamter is as far as He went. What a wonderful place to be! And no wonder this grove has survived for thousands of years, because it has been loved by the locals just as Kṛṣṇa has.

Nearby is another grove, called Vṛndākuṇḍa. Here two small ponds sit

A woodland shrine rests beneath a banyan tree in Baelvan (right), where Lakṣmī Devī performed penance to enter Vṛndāvana. Below, ancient pilu trees, like this one at Manasarovar—a lake formed by Rādhā's tears—are among the trees being protected by the Vrindavan Conservation Project.



within a grove whose old trees have vanished, save one magnificent *imli* tree, under which nestles a small shrine to Vṛndā, the goddess of Vṛndāvana. Vṛndā has special significance to Vraja, because she presides over the forest pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, communicating with the animals and plants through her parrot messengers. Vṛndā is the choreographer of Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes. Vṛndākuṇḍa was for years looked after by Mādhav Bābā, a local renunciant who lived there as caretaker. But sadly, in the last years of his life when he was suffering from ill health, Mādhav



Bābā was unable to prevent many of the trees being lost. Before he died he asked devotees of ISKCON to continue to protect the grove. This they have done, forming the Vrinda Trust for that purpose.

DIMINISHING TREES

Although these and many other groves have survived thus far, their continued survival is under constant threat. With diminishing annual rainfall and falling water tables, the trees are not replenishing themselves as they

used to. Farmers are becoming more bold, and the groves are no longer protected from encroachment and the ravages of grazing animals—especially the numerous flocks of goats that annually pass through the region on their way to markets in Delhi. Property developers and land disputes are a major threat. Every year groves are being lost forever. Once a grove with its ancient trees is gone, it is impossible to bring back.

These surviving groves must be protected, and with them the wildlife and culture they nourish. Each year large

numbers of pilgrims traverse Vraja, visiting many of the groves. Each year they find fewer trees. One day people will wake up to this disaster and wonder how it could have been allowed to happen. To re-create such sanctuaries would be almost impossible, but to save the ones already there, and to ensure their regeneration, requires only water and enclosures, and encouragement and support to the local communities.

A series of simple projects to protect the groves is starting. The essence of the projects is to form alliances with the village people and support them in



preserving their own long-term interests. The villagers need no convincing, only support and encouragement.

PROJECTS

Some of the projects are under the banner of the WWF Vrindavan Conservation Project, and others are supported by Friends of Vrindavan (FoV). Devotees of Kṛṣṇa started FoV in 1992 to raise support for the groves of Vraja and campaign for their protection. At present FoV receives most of its funds from volunteers in England and the U.S.A., through its annual sponsored cycle ride, the Yamuna Cycle Expedi-

Join the Yamuna Cycle Expedition

IN THE MAY/JUNE issue of BTG Ranchor Dāsa wrote about his experiences on the Yamuna Cycle Expedition. The 1998 expedition will take place October 9–25, to help raise funds for Friends of Vrindavan projects. It is a superb opportunity for an adventure holiday among the Himalayas and in sacred Vṛndāvana in the company of devotees and like-minded souls, while at the same time benefiting the environment of Vṛndāvana. Anyone interested in taking part is invited to contact Ranchor Prime, Trustee, Friends of Vṛndāvana, 10 Grafton Mews, London W1P 5LF, UK. Phone: +44 (0171) 380 749; fax: +44 (0171) 380 0749. E-mail: ranchor@easynet.co.uk. Or write to Friends of Vrindavan (India), Jaya Singh Ghera, Vrindavan 281 121, U.P., India.



At Kadamkandi (left), where Rādhārāṇī was hidden from the tyrant Kaṁsa, the lake attracts cows, buffaloes, and waterfowl. Below, the village well is fed with water from the Kadamkandi lake.



tion. Riders pay to come to India and cycle from the Himalayas down to Vṛndāvana, following the course of the sacred Yamunā River. They raise sponsorship from friends and workmates, and this sponsorship is donated to FoV. In the longer term, FoV also plans to raise support in India.

FoV has started a pioneer project at Manasarovar, in partnership with WWF-India. Manasarovar is a beautiful wetland grove and bird sanctuary a few miles from the town of Vṛndāvana, on the opposite bank of the Yamunā River. Here the lake was drying up and overrun by water hyacinth and pollution, and the trees were disappearing.

Now a team of volunteers, backed by trained helpers and local village councils, are reversing the trend and ensuring the survival of Manasarovar. According to local tradition this *sarovar*, or lake, was formed of the tears of Śrī Rādhā, while in an intensely emotional state of “wounded love” (*mān*). Pilgrims come here to worship the image of Rādhā, who stands alone in the small temple.

WWF and Friends of Vrindavan have sacred grove projects underway in places in Vraja such as Ral, Baelvan, Basanti, Naradkund, and Manasarovar. Many more are planned. In addition, the WWF Vṛndāvana Conservation Project runs a Trees For Life program in Vraja. The program helps local farmers set up nurseries specializing in fruit trees, for the benefit of their village and local farms. The nurseries include many

indigenous species. For a very modest outlay, about 10,000 rupees (\$250) per site, plus backup assistance from trained staff, the nurseries not only provide meaningful employment and boost local economy, but also make available trees that could not otherwise be obtained.

In the town of Vṛndāvana, WWF-India runs the Vrindavan Conservation Project, which includes several nurseries, numerous community projects, and a comprehensive education program in the town’s thirty-five schools. Friends of Vrindavan runs a rapidly expanding street-cleaning program, which employs thirty cleaners

who patrol several quarters of the town, and is developing recycling programs. Lately the Vṛndāvana ISKCON temple has joined with Friends of Vrindavan in cleaning up the neighborhood around the temple and helping solve the serious sanitation problems ISKCON’s success has helped generate.

Apart from helping run Friends of Vrindavan, ISKCON devotees have set up the Vrinda Trust for the protection of Vrinda Kunj, a sacred grove, and now run a well-stocked nursery of indigenous trees and plants in Vṛndāvana. But the real work to save Vṛndāvana’s environment has hardly begun.

Pilgrims to Vraja do not need to encounter a land ravaged by drought and deforestation; their pilgrimage can be an opportunity to witness nature protected as an integral part of Kṛṣṇa devotion. Kṛṣṇa cared for the forest—He swallowed fire to protect it. We also must be prepared to swallow pollution and abuse of nature to save from destruction His groves and the whole ecology of Vraja. ☸

Ranchor Dāsa (Ranchor Prime) studied architecture and art before becoming a student and then a teacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in 1970. He now works as a freelance writer and broadcaster, and as adviser on religion and conservation to WWF and to the Alliance on Religions and Conservation, in Britain and India. He has contributed to several books on religion and the environment, most recently Sacred Britain (Piatkus 1997), and is the author of Hinduism and Ecology (Cassell 1992), Wealth of Faiths (WWF 1994), and Ramayana (Collins & Brown 1997). He is co-founder and director of Friends of Vrindavan. He was born in England in 1950 and lives in London with his wife and two children.

The Vrindavan Conservation Project is described in depth in *Hinduism and Ecology*, by Ranchor Prime, published in the U.K. by Cassell and in India by Motilal Banarsidas in association with WWF.



CHANNELING: EXTRASENSORY DECEPTION?

"If the guides were not guides after all, who were they?"

—*Hungry Ghosts*, by Joe Fisher, p. 202

by Suhotra Swami

SETH, RAMTHA, Lazaris, Mashiyach, Ashtar,—the vaguely biblical-sounding names have the ring of “prophet” to them. Indeed, for millions the world over, these and other garrulous “channeled entities” are prophets who enjoy a command of mass-media access that would have left the sandal-shod Old Testament visionaries tongue-tied with astonishment. Alexander Blair-Ewart, publisher and editor of the Toronto esoteric magazine *Dimensions*, notes a bit ruefully that “in sensationalist fashion, journalists and cameramen zoomed in on crystals, channeling, and a confused and over-excited Hollywood actress” as the burgeoning New Age movement’s instant celebrities.

Channeling is defined by Arthur Hastings of the California Institute of Transpersonal Psychology as “the process in which a person transmits messages from a presumed disincarnate source external to his or her consciousness.” The most widely researched kind of channeling phenomena is communication with the dead, which, as eerie as it may sound,

seems to be on the increase. The University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Council recently found that forty-two percent of American adults believe they have made contact with the spirit of a departed person. Of these, seventy-eight percent said they saw, fifty percent heard, and eighteen percent talked with the deceased. Thirty percent of Americans who say they don’t even believe in life after death still claim to have had contact with someone who has died. It is the surfeit, not the rarity, of channeling that puzzles investigators.

Acolytes of the New Age hail channeled entities to be “highly evolved beings,” “spirit guides for all mankind,” “angels,” “*devas*,” or even “God.” There are precious few suggestions that they might be demonic. Since cameras and microphones won’t penetrate the veil of oblivion that separates us from them, all we get to see are the subjects through whom the entities speak: housewives, schoolteachers, insurance salesmen, and similarly quite ordinary people.

Channeling is somewhat different from

Left: Channeled spirits may not be as noble as the image they portray.

Illustration by Puṣkara Dāsa

It's clear that the entities have an agenda and, uncorporeal though they may be, the means to fulfill it. But who are they?



mediumship. Mediums are experienced clairvoyants who “fish” for discarnate entities. Channelers are initially psychic greenhorns who, unwittingly or even unwillingly, are taken over by the entities. The first contact can be most disconcerting. In 1963, thirty-four-year-old Jane Roberts of Elmira, New York, was suddenly overwhelmed by what she called a “fantastic avalanche of radical new ideas burnt into my head with tremendous force, as if my skull were some sort of receiving station turned up to unbearable volume.” The entity in this case was Seth, who turned out to be a prime catalyst of the emerging New Age. From the early 1970s until her death in 1984, Mrs. Roberts channeled a series of bestselling “Seth Books” that blazed the way to public acceptance of what in an earlier period would have been condemned as necromancy.

Even more shivery-quivery is the Australian channeler Shirley Bray’s description of how a group of entities called “the Nine” contacted her: “I felt as if thin wires, like acupuncture needles, were being inserted into the base of my skull. It was uncomfortable so I stirred, moving my head from side to side. A voice firmly but gently said, ‘be still, it will not be long.’”

But once the channeler overcomes the shock of such close encounters of the first kind, the relationship may prove to be profitable beyond his or her wildest dreams. Jach Pursel, who admits that he was frightened to tears the first time he channeled Lazaris, now runs a highly successful corporation called Concept: Synergy that markets Lazaris audio- and videotapes to five hundred metaphysical bookstores worldwide. The erstwhile ordinary housewife J. Z. Knight takes in more than \$200,000 per weekend for a channeling seminar featuring her guide

Ramtha; she says he’s earned her millions of dollars.

A glance at the teachings of the discarnate entities reveals an intriguing pattern. Here’s a sample from Mashiyach (pronounced Moor-shark), channeled by Shirley Bray: “He who would find power must know that he extends from balance in Me, that I am he. He and thee and Me are ONE in light. . . . Create ye a world within the knowing of Me within you. Look upon your creation and know it is the sum total of your thinking. Thinking is creating. Man has created his world.” From a Kṛṣṇa conscious standpoint, this is called Māyāvāda philosophy. Māyāvāda means “doctrine of illusion”—indeed, there’s a chapter in Ms. Bray’s book (*A Guide for the Spiritual Traveller*) that’s entitled, “Life Is Just an Illusion.”

When psychology professor Jon Klimo recounts the themes commonly expounded by channeled entities, he’s giving us nothing more than a breakdown of the main tenets of Māyāvāda philosophy, to wit: we all have a higher self, which is ultimately One Self (called “All-That-Is” or “The Universal Mind”); this One Self is an impersonal, absolute God, perceivable only as light and achieved only through silent contemplation; the material world is an illusion, merely the dream of this God, and until we realize we are God, we are subject to that dream of our separate individual existences in the cycle of birth and death.

REUNITED LOVERS?

We’ll return to these philosophical issues a little later on. It’s clear that the entities have an agenda and, uncorporeal though they may be, the means to fulfill it. But who are they? That’s what a British-born investigative journalist named Joe Fisher wanted to find

out—because, while gathering material in Toronto for a book on channeling, he fell in love with a channeled entity named Filipa.

Fisher, who’s written two bestselling books (*The Case for Reincarnation* and *Life Between Life*), met Filipa in Toronto in the summer of 1984 through a channeler he calls Aviva in his book *Hungry Ghosts*. Aviva, an avowed Marxist, was forced to suspend her unbelief in the supernatural after she was taken over by an entity calling himself Russell Parnick, while being treated by hypnotherapy for myelocytic leukemia. The more she allowed Russell to use her body as a channel, the more her disease gradually subsided. As word got around Toronto’s esoteric scene, Aviva’s regular seances attracted followers, among them Joe Fisher.

There was no doubt in the minds of those in attendance that something very extraordinary happened to Aviva each time she was put into trance by her hypnotist. As Fisher describes it, “Her voice was barely recognizable. Gone was the high-pitched jocularity. . . . Her enunciation was now unequivocally masculine; the English accent was unmistakable. This was an entirely different Aviva, strangely assertive and uncompromising. This was a voice which claimed to belong to Aviva’s guide [Russell], a discarnate individual who had lived as a sheep farmer in Yorkshire during the last century.” Russell in turn introduced other entities: Hanni, Willian, Mi-Lao, Sebotwan, Ernest, Sonji, Tuktu, Kinggalaa—and Filipa Gavrilos. They became the guides for the regulars attending the seances.

Through Aviva, Filipa spoke to Fisher with “Greek inflection lending charm to broken English. Her delivery was subdued, pensive and poignantly

tender. . . . Whatever the quality of her speech, Filipa always spoke to me like a lover for whom the fire still smouldered."

Filipa told Joe that they'd indeed been lovers in the 1700s, when they lived in Theros, a Greek village "five day's walk from the Black Sea." He had been Andreas Cherniak, a militiaman born of a Greek mother and a Slavic father. She was a small, fair-skinned, black-haired Mediterranean beauty. But their affair ended tragically when the village elders disapproved. Andreas/Joe was judged by the priest and banished from Theros. After her death at age fifty-three, Filipa's astral self withdrew into the nonphysical plane of existence (called *bardo* by the Tibetans; *bar*—"in between lives"; *do*—"island"). Joe was now in his fourth life cycle since Andreas.

Joe found Filipa's chronicle appealingly plausible. "Sitting on the floor of Aviva's living room, I found myself breathing the air of a bygone era, roaming parched valleys and ancient crypts. I imagined Filipa's dark eyes and long black tresses." Ten years before, he'd written his first novel on the Greek island of Siphnos and had been quickly captivated by the land and its culture. He had a natural fondness for small, dark-haired women. As a boy, he'd felt a strange fascination for the name Philippa. Now he knew why.

Joe longed to establish "guide contact" (direct mind-to-mind communication) with Filipa. To this end he took up daily meditation, never completely linking up to Filipa, but coming tantalizingly close. Once he had the insight of a dusty pathway winding to a stand of tall, spindly trees in the distance. Through Aviva, Filipa excitedly proclaimed that this was where they used to meet as lovers. Sometimes he'd get a loud buzzing in his ears. He'd then feel Filipa's presence strongly, and "a strange sense of contentment and reconciliation and a suspension of worldly anxiety" would settle around him for as long as the buzzing lasted. In March 1985, he had the fleeting vision of a young woman walking towards him wearing a long white garment. He knew this to be Filipa and wept out of joy and sadness, loss, and anguish. "My terrestrial love life was doomed," Fisher

writes. "No woman of flesh and blood could hope to emulate Filipa's love and concern."

Joe became obsessed by his impossible love. "If Filipa could have assumed a physical body, I'm sure I would have married her. But she was only a voice, a voice that resonated with more love, compassion, and perspicacity than I

had ever known. Within the space of a few months, she had demonstrated an acute awareness of my feelings and foibles, she knew the people in my life and their effect upon me, and she was even able to relate specific circumstances in which I had found myself, situations unknown to Aviva or anyone who attended [the seances]. I can

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Deity Worship—Bhaktividyā Pūrṇa Swami

To be announced—Dānavīr Goswami

Congregational Development—Jayapatāka Swami

Vedānta Philosophy—Puruṣatrāya Swami

Philosophy of Religion—Airāvata Dāsa

Vedic Cosmology—Airāvata Dāsa

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu—Dayārāma Dāsa

Practical Aspects of Deity Worship—Jananivāsa Dāsa

Bhagavad-gītā (Chapters 1–6)—Mādhavendra Purī Dāsa

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THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

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As with any ordinary human, the preta's mind is agitated by the urges of lust, but he lacks physical senses with which to satisfy his desires.



see energies,' is how she explained her ability to know me inside out. 'I can see in your mind. If you make in your mind, I can see.' "

The more Joe Fisher loved Filipa, the more he hungered for tangible proof of her existence. Proof that Filipa was really who she said she was would further lend force to the book he was preparing to write. And proof would require a journey to Theros, the mountain village in the parched mountains of northeastern Greece, to find evidence of her earthly sojourn.

Not only did Fisher set out to unearth Filipa's past life, he wanted to verify the last incarnations of Englishmen Russell Parnick, William "Harry" Maddox, and William Alfred "Ernest" Scott. Two, Harry and Ernest, said that they'd died in this century, Harry in WW I and Ernest in WW II. These claims could be easily crosschecked by a look at British military records. Russell, Aviva's guide, had given ample dates and place names from his life in the Yorkshire dales for Joe to trace.

But as Joe Fisher would find out after two trips to Europe, from the start the four entities had been clearly and deliberately lying, though they'd managed to string him along by clever use of half-truths, ambiguity, and obfuscation. Filipa's lies turned out to be the most blatant and most crushing for Joe personally. She'd repeatedly claimed to have journeyed by foot from Theros to Alexandroupoli. But Alexandroupoli, which Fisher presumed to be an ancient site of Alexander the Great, turned out to have been founded only in 1920. It got its name from King Alexandros, who visited it in 1919. For a seventy-year period before that, it had been known as Dedeagats and been a settlement of Turkish merchants; prior to 1850, the place had no history

at all. Thus Filipa, deceased in 1771, remembered a city that was not then built. She called it by a name she could not have known and told of ships in a harbor she could not have seen. A professor of Greek language found many other discrepancies in her memories of life in eighteenth-century Greece. There was no trace of a town called Theros. And no Greek could understand Filipa's tape-recorded utterances of her putative native tongue.

"Their knowledge is impressive, their insight remarkable, their charismatic hold on their followers undeniable," writes Fisher of these four and other channeled entities he investigated. Moreover, the voices' ostensible link to a higher and greater state of being seems to place them above suspicion in the minds of those who prize their counsel. Yet surely it is important—essential, even—to establish, if possible, the nature of the beast that is shuffling through the pipeline created by the trance state. Who are these entities really?

"The answer to that question is as unwelcome as it is unavoidable . . . the evidence left me in little doubt that earthbound spirits or 'hungry ghosts' have wormed their way into that juicy apple of spiritual regeneration known as The New Age."

But is it logical to suspect all channeled entities because of the mischief of a few? Can't we hope that there are some genuine guides out in the ether somewhere?

Joe Fisher tried to keep this hope alive even after being cheated by Filipa. He visited renowned channeler George Chapman at his home in the Welsh village of Tre'ddol. Chapman's special distinction is that his guide, Dr. William Lang, has been authenticated beyond reasonable doubt as the spirit of a distinguished Middlesex

ophthalmologist who died in 1937. Despite their initial disbelief, surviving members of the good doctor's family have testified that the entity speaking through the entranced George Chapman can be none other than Dr. Lang himself. Medical professionals have confirmed the entity's thorough familiarity with the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases—even as they watched, Lang through Chapman has healed hundreds of patients.

But Fisher came away unsatisfied from his session with Dr. Lang. "I felt much the same in the company of the charming and deferential Dr. Lang as I did while conversing with the spirits whose claims remained unsubstantiated. I couldn't put my finger on it, but something was wrong. While seeming to cooperate fully, Dr. Lang was fudging. He told me nothing new, nothing incisive. And when I raised the question of charlatan spirits who crave physical sensation, the discarnate surgeon avoided the topic completely. . . . Comparing him with other, blatantly suspect entities, I was haunted by one of Lt. Col. Arthur Powell's observations in *The Astral Body*. He wrote that it was impossible to distinguish truth from falsehood in communications from the next world 'since the resources of the astral plane can be used to delude persons on the physical plane to such an extent that no reliance can be placed even on what seems the most convincing proof.' "

HUNGRY GHOSTS

"Hungry ghost," the term Fisher uses for the entities who speak through channelers, is a translation of the Sanskrit word *preta*. According to the *Preta Khaṇḍa* section of the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, an ancient book of Vedic wisdom, a *preta* is a human being deprived of a

gross physical body because of sinfulness. His soul is trapped, earthbound, within the subtle body (composed of mind, intelligence and *ahañkāra*, or false sense of identity). As with any ordinary human, the *preta's* mind is agitated by the urges of lust, but he lacks physical senses with which to satisfy his desires.

Milton, in *Comus*, captures the pathos of “shadows” (ghosts) clinging to this world even past the point of death.

Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
 Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres,
 Lingerin', and sitting by a new-made grave
 As loath to leave the body it lov'd,
 And linked itself by carnal sensuality
 To a degenerate and degraded state.

Having no bodies of their own, *pretas* hunger for vicarious pleasures through the bodies of humans, much like decrepit lechers who seek gratification through pornographic movies. Hungry ghosts seem benign because they are genuinely attentive to the physical health of their subjects—witness Aviva's remarkable turnaround in her fight with cancer when Russell arrived. But as Joe Fisher states, “Their eagerness to communicate, their concern for the medium's health and strength, their preoccupation with life after death and reincarnation and the occasional admission that they missed the pleasures of incarnate life, all suggested humans who no longer had physical bodies yet longed to live and breathe once more.” Seth, who called himself an “energy essence personality,” sometimes requested his host Jane Roberts to drink beer or wine for his gratification. Joe Fisher tells of two entities who seemed to want sex through their subjects. He recalls the mental exhaustion, emotional turmoil, and muddled thinking that plagued him during his time with Filipa—symptoms hinting of psychic vampirism.

The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* states that in cases of *preta*-possession (*preta-doṣa*), “mysterious events do often occur . . . many are the signs of ghosts.” Dr. John

Neivius, who studied possession extensively in China during the last century, wrote, “The most striking characteristic . . . is that the subject evidences another personality, and the normal personality for the time being is partially or wholly dormant. The new personality presents traits of character utterly different from those which really belong to the subject in his normal state. . . . Many persons while ‘demon-possessed’ give evidence of knowledge which cannot be accounted for in ordinary ways. . . . They sometimes converse in foreign languages of which in their normal states they are entirely ignorant.” And Emanuel Swedenborg, the famous eighteenth-century clairvoyant, warned, “When spirits begin to speak with man, he must beware lest he be-

lieve in anything; for they say almost anything; things are fabricated of them, and they lie. . . .”

Pretas hover in homes where Vedic principles are not observed and haunt people who are unclean and unregulated. By these standards, practically the whole population of the Western world is open to *preta-doṣa*, New Agers included. And what better way is there for a hungry ghost to seduce starry-eyed New Agers than with pap “we're all one” philosophy? Joe Fisher takes point-blank aim at the whole fraud. “When all is said and done, there is no shortcut to Nirvana. But in this narcissistic age of instant gratification and swift solution, the great deception of channeling is that we may glide effortlessly back to the Godhead. All we

CALENDAR CLOSE-UP

Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī

Disappearance Day: October 3

Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, was born in A.D. 1505. He was the son of Śrī Tapana Miśra, with whom Lord Caitanya stayed during a visit to Benares. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, then a child, served Lord Caitanya and became extremely attached to Him. When the Lord was about to leave for Jagannātha Purī, Raghunātha cried in ecstasy.

To console Raghunātha, Lord Caitanya told him, “You must serve your father and mother for now. Later you can come to see Me in Purī.”

Raghunātha became expert in Sanskrit grammar, rhetoric, and poetry and highly learned in the Vedic scriptures. When his parents became elderly, they sent him to Purī to see Lord Caitanya. Raghunātha spent eight months serving the Lord at Purī. Before Raghunātha left, the Lord gave him a *tulasī* garland from His own neck and *prasādam* from Lord Jagannātha. Lord Caitanya told Raghunātha to never marry and to carefully study the revealed scriptures.

Raghunātha returned to Benares and served his parents until their passing. He then went to Purī, where he stayed for eight months before Lord Caitanya ordered him to go to Vṛndāvana.

In Vṛndāvana, Raghunātha took shelter of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. He was always absorbed in the ecstasy of love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and was famous for his beautiful recitation of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He would never hear or speak of anything material, and refused to hear criticism of any devotee of the Lord.

Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa is one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, leaders in Lord Caitanya's movement. In Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa is the *gopi*, or cowherd girl, Śrī Rāga Mañjarī. In A.D. 1579, he departed for the spiritual world.

(Full calendar on page 65.)

have to do is pay our money, take our seats and dream on as loving discarnates lead us to enlightenment. Why, the Big E. is just around the corner and anyway—didn't you know?—we are God."

Many bogus gurus have succeeded in the West the same way. In fact, in the late 1970s a world-famous Māyāvāda yoga society was almost shaken apart when a Sanskrit-quoting *preta* who claimed to be the group's deceased founder began speaking through a senior staff member. Though at last exposed, the spook held sway over fifty people who deserted the organization rather than give up their belief that the great yogī had returned to them.

CHEATERS AND CHEATED

The way back to Godhead is not the way of *preta-doṣa*. Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā*: "Those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings." By the chanting of the holy name

of Kṛṣṇa, the evil influence of ghosts and sinful life is destroyed at once (*bhūtebhyo' mīhobhya eva ca sarvāṅy etāni bhagavan-nama-rūpānukīrtanāt prayāntu saṅkṣayam sadyo*, from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.8.27-28). But as Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say, "This world is a place of cheaters and cheated." People's spiritual aspirations are channeled by their stubborn resistance to the holy name of Kṛṣṇa into the most inauspicious realms of consciousness. Their welcoming of hungry ghosts as spiritual guides is indicative of their desperate devotion to lowly habits and fallacious ideas.

The desire to understand the real self beyond the body and to link our consciousness with the Supreme is an exalted aspiration, indeed the only goal of human existence. But successful completion of this goal requires that we be purified of lust, which impels us to the sinful activities of meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling—activities that according to

the *Garuḍa Purāna* are very attractive to ghosts. Purification need not be troublesome, however. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Pure, our dearest friend and indwelling guide, and He has made Himself available to the fallen souls of this dark age, Kali-yuga, by the simple process of chanting *hari-nāma*, His holy name. We should obtain the holy name only from those devotees whose attentive hearing and chanting of transcendental sound has carried them beyond the grip of material desire.

For all their seductive cant, the hungry ghosts and bogus gurus are dead wrong. We are not God, and our individual existence is not a figment of cosmic imagination. Life is not an illusion. There is a purpose to everything, and it is realized when we recover our eternal link to the Supreme Person and His pure devotees. ☀

Suhotra Swami is ISKCON's governing body commissioner for several European countries.

TITANIC DISASTER

(continued from page 32)

difficulty, he humbly thinks he deserves worse but Kṛṣṇa is just giving him a token reaction so he can learn from his past mistakes and come closer to Kṛṣṇa:

*tat te 'nukampāṁ su-samikṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtāṁ vipākaṁ
hrd-vāg-vapurbhīr vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk*

"My dear Lord, any person who is constantly awaiting Your causeless mercy to be bestowed upon him, and who goes on suffering the resultant actions of his past misdeeds, offering You respectful obeisances from the core of his heart, is surely eligible to become liberated, for it has become his rightful claim." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8)

The Lord explains in the *Bhāgavatam* (10.88.8) that sometimes to show special mercy to His devotee He takes away material things to which the devotee is attached. Kṛṣṇa thereby induces the devotee to take full shelter of Him and thus achieve the highest happiness and perfection.

The material world is fraught with danger; the only shelter is Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The *Life* article points out that man has always been fascinated by disasters. Why? I'd say it's because we know that a disaster may strike any of us at any moment. Although in recent years a whole field of risk management has developed to counteract risks and dangers, still the only shelter is the Lord's lotus feet. And to take shelter of the

lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa in the present age, one need only chant His holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and follow His instructions in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The alternative is disaster—titanic disaster. ☀

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Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday—for regulars as well as newcomers. You're invited to join in the festival of music, dance, and spiritual discourse and then sharing hearty plates of savories, sweets, nectar drinks, and vegetable extravaganzas. Come by and relish the taste of the world's oldest cultural tradition. Call your nearest center to find out the schedule for the Sunday Feast. (See "Centers," opposite page.)

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

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JARĀSANDHA

(continued from page 29)

have the power to enforce the religious principles and we practice those principles. Indeed, seizing human beings for sacrifice is never seen in this world. How can you seek to worship Lord Śaṅkara, the benefactor of all, with human offerings? Who else but you, Jarāsandha, could have such a perverted mind that he would offer his fellow kings as animals in sacrifice?

“We shall always come to save the oppressed, and since you would destroy our own kin, we have come here to stop you so that our brother kings may flourish. You think there is no other real man among the warriors, O king, but this is at once the great confusion and the utter ruin of your reason.

“What ruler, O king, understanding his noble lineage, would not strive for heaven at the end of his earthly battles, when that celestial abode is undying and beyond compare? O monarch of the Magadhas, know for a fact that warriors who worship the higher worlds are initiated into the rite of war, and thus they undertake their march to heaven. Victory takes one to heaven, O king; great and true fame takes one to heaven; heaven is for those who make sacrifice in battle. That is the unswerving sinless path.

“Even for Indra, it is ever established that such character brings victory, and it was thus that Indra of the hundred rites overcame the demons and now rules the universe. Those who stand on the path to heaven—whom could they fight with who is equal to you, with your vast Magadha armies, so proud of their numbers and prowess?

“Do not belittle your foes, O king, as if courage were in no other man and fiery might rests exclusively in you, O lord of men, there is certainly a power equal to yours, and you will be

considered unique only as long as that power is not aroused and clearly perceived. We are a match for your prowess, O king, and therefore I say to you, Māgadha, give up your arrogance and conceit, for you are among your equals. Do not go with your sons, army, and ministers to the abode of Death. Dambhodbhava, Kārtavīrya, and a former Bṛhadratha all belittled better men in this world, and so all those kings perished with their armies.

“We who desire to free the kings from your grasp do not claim to be *brāhmaṇas*. I am Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva. These two are the Pāṇḍavas, heroes of mankind. We call you out, O king! Be firm and fight, Māgadha, or release all the kings. We urge you: don't go to the abode of Death!”

Jarāsandha said, “I certainly didn't seize any undefeated kings. What defeated king will stand to oppose me? And who in this world has not been defeated by me? They say, Kṛṣṇa, that this is the fair way for a warrior to maintain his life: showing his valor and gaining control, he may then do what he desires. Having prepared the kings for sacrifice to the deity, and remembering well, Kṛṣṇa, the warrior vow, how shall I now release them out of fear?

“With army assembled against army, I shall fight—or one against one, or with two or three of you, or with all of you at once.” ☸

Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami, who holds a Ph.D. in Indology from Harvard University, is Professor of Vaiṣṇava Theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

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A Lesson from Prema

by Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

THERE'S NOTHING worse than a new convert," admonished my grandmother. "They know just enough about their religion that they're completely gung-ho about it, and not enough to have a balanced perspective on its teachings. They're fanatics. That's what you're going to be—a fanatic."

Oh no, I'm not, I thought. I know what I'm doing.

Too bad I didn't remember Grandma's warning a few years later when I sent my daughter to *gurukula* (a Kṛṣṇa conscious boarding school). "Fanatic," unfortunately, was the right word for me. There was too much "sense gratification" in the *gurukula* to suit me. Why so much emphasis on pretty dresses, special hairdos, and prizes—pretty barrettes and bangles—for chanting? Why so much hugging, so many treats? Wouldn't all these things just reinforce the girls' material identity?

Since the *gurukula* was on the Hare Kṛṣṇa farm where I lived, the girls came home every weekend. At least then I could encourage my daughter to be sober. Maybe some formal hugs, but none of the silliness the āśrama teacher let the kids indulge in. After all, I didn't want to develop a material attachment to my daughter or reinforce her bodily identity. I knew these were dangerous problems on the path of spiritual development. I knew everything, or so I thought. But, luckily, a cow named Prema came along.

After my daughter had been in *gurukula* for a year or so, I started working in the barn, taking care of the cows. Working with the cows gradually changed me. First of all

there was discipline. I had to be punctual with the milkings so the cows wouldn't get sick. And I had to keep them and the milk house very clean. More discipline. I could understand that. But there was another part: love. I had to talk to the cows, brush them, pet them, and hug them. The most affectionate cow was Prema Vivhala. She was everyone's favorite. For Prema to give you milk, explained my cowherd mentor, she has to have affection for you, just as she would for her calf.

Every day when I picked up the bucket, heavy with frothy white milk, I realized with humility the great service Prema was doing: offering her milk to Kṛṣṇa. When I heard that a witch named Pūtanā had attained liberation by offering baby Kṛṣṇa her breast milk, even though she was trying to poison Him, I knew that Kṛṣṇa would give Prema Vivhala an even greater benediction. She was performing an elevated devotional service. Her spiritual progress was certainly assured.

After a while I realized that to enable Prema to perform devotional service I too had to do my duty. I had to make her love me. And to do that I had to love her in terms she could understand. She couldn't understand philosophy, but she understood a reassuring tone of voice telling her what a good girl she was for giving so much milk. She understood being brushed and stroked under the neck. She had to feel that I loved her. And it couldn't be a trick—I had to actually love her. That was my devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. And it was pleasurable. And even though it was love, it wasn't material, because

it was for our service to Kṛṣṇa.

In time it dawned on me that I needed to take a similar approach to help my daughter progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I had to love her in terms she could understand. I had to let her know I loved her. If she could feel my affection, that would be an important motivation for her advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thanks to Prema Vivhala I was finally figuring out what the āśrama teacher already knew: Love inspires people to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, especially children. When our affections are used in the wrong way, they lead us away from spiritual life. But that doesn't mean they should be suppressed, as I had mistakenly guessed. Rather, they must be used in a constructive way.

My daughter, now in college, still has great affection for her *gurukula* āśrama teacher and visits her fairly often. Recently I saw a note by the teacher, saying how important it is for children to feel unconditional love from their parents so the children can develop as healthy Kṛṣṇa conscious adults.

I relayed the information to my daughter and asked, "Did you feel we gave you unconditional love?"

"Oh, yes!" she replied.

I should have told her that she owed a lot of her happiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to Prema Vivhala. Grandma would have been right about me if it hadn't been for the lesson I learned from Prema.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī, an ISKCON devotee since 1978, is co-editor of the newsletter Hare Kṛṣṇa Rural Life.



India at Fifty-One

by Tattvavit Dāsa

THE COVER STORY, “India Turning Fifty,” in *National Geographic* (May 1997) quoted Nehru, India’s first prime minister, as having said that, after independence from Britain, India would rediscover herself. To Nehru, this rediscovery meant that India needed to manage—virtually without industry in 1947—a poor, growing population living in the grip of a caste system. Now, the article showed, middle managers of industries in Bangalore live in new classy housing developments while a homeless woman in Calcutta cooks on a sidewalk, cows are still “revered enough by Hindus to roam the streets,” and Indians still perform rituals in the holy Ganges. Naturally, to some observers, India’s problems and divisions seem to leave her devotions unfulfilled. Thus people doubt that India’s spiritual heritage—as old as time—can cure human woes.

Yet a week after I saw the article last spring, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India’s prime minister, commended ISKCON for globalizing the appeal of *Bhagavad-gītā*. ISKCON’s message, he said, is founded on the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*, which “answers all the moral concerns and needs of the world.” How could he make that claim for the *Gītā*? To find out, let’s relate the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* to some of the moral issues raised in the *National Geographic* article.

National Geographic reported, “An ancient Hindu verse says that one who kills, eats, or permits the slaughter of a cow will ‘rot in hell for as many years as there are hairs on the body of the cow so slain.’” Although not specifically from the *Gītā*, this is a Vedic answer to one moral concern: the treatment of animals.

People can eat lower animals or cows that die naturally. People should never kill cows, which are revered as the mothers of humanity because they supply milk. Cows and bulls are the most useful animals, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* says that farmers should fully protect them.

Horribly, people twist the idea of protecting animals. Recently, when an investigator claimed that unlawful, inhumane practices are routine in the six thousand slaughterhouses in America, a spokeswoman for the American Meat Institute responded, “Animals are our raw materials. We have no incentive to hurt them.”

From the state of Punjab, *National Geographic* reported that “the Golden Temple in Amritsar serves as the spiritual center for the world’s twenty million Sikhs. ‘From Hindus and Muslims have I broken free,’ said Arjan Deva Ji, the fifth Sikh guru, in the 1590s. The faith holds all people equal in the eyes of God.”

Bhagavad-gītā teaches that designations like Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, Indian or American, and even human being are false, or temporary, like the bodies they designate. You are not your body but a spirit soul, *Bhagavad-gītā* says; so forget designations—and purify your consciousness by using your senses and mind in the service of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ISKCON devotees are Hindus, Christians, Americans, Indians—everything—but they give up the bodily conception. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned about his first followers, “If they had thought, ‘I am an American,’ then why would they have sought out me, a poor Indian man?”

Indians are known outside India as poor, and it’s a fact, Śrīla Prabhu-

pāda said in 1977. *National Geographic* put today’s poverty rate in India at thirty-six percent. Poverty is another moral concern addressed in *Bhagavad-gītā*: The Supreme Being lines up your suffering and enjoyment according to karma, the reactions to what you did in a past life. Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, uplifted the poor to Kṛṣṇa consciousness by giving them the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and Kṛṣṇa-*prasādam*, food that relieves karmic reactions.

In 1977, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda told the editor of a Bombay newspaper that Indians are actually not poor: “If we cultivate our own standard of knowledge, *Bhagavad-gītā*, then we are the richest, and we can give the whole world the gift. That is India’s prerogative. The whole world is in the darkness of ignorance, so India was expected after independence to give the real knowledge. Instead, she became victimized by the glimmer of material civilization. So I wanted that such a magnificent gift from the side of India be contributed to the world.”

It’s five decades after independence, but as Śrīla Prabhupāda had wished, India may still give the world real knowledge. After lauding Prabhupāda’s contribution of globalizing *Bhagavad-gītā*’s message, the prime minister advocated applying on a national scale the ethic of the *Gītā* (2.50), *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*: yoga is the art of all work. “This will create a new work culture,” Mr. Vajpayee said, “and a new work culture will create a new India.”

Tattvavit Dāsa recently edited “Surrender Unto Me”—An Overview of the Bhagavad-gītā, by Bhūrijana Dāsa.

Vedic Thoughts

The liberated soul who merges into the existence of the Lord is no better than the trees. Trees also stand in the Lord's existence, because material energy and the Lord's energy are the same. Similarly, the Brahman effulgence is also the energy of the Supreme Lord. It is the same whether one remains in the Brahman effulgence or in the material energy, because in either there is no spiritual activity.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.257, Purport

For one who constantly meditates upon My presence within all persons, the bad tendencies of rivalry, envy, and abusiveness, along with false ego, are very quickly destroyed.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.29.15

Who can be worthy of the name of the Supreme Lord but the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Brahmājī collected the water emanating from the nails of His feet in order to award it to Lord Śiva as a worshipful welcome. This very water [the Ganges] is purifying the whole universe, including Lord Śiva.

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.18.21

Marriage with a view to peaceful and virtuous life and with a view to procreate servants of the Lord is a good institution for a Vaiṣṇava. Spiritual cultivation is the main object of life. Do everything that helps it and abstain from everything that thwarts the cultivation of the spirit.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura
Shree Caitanya Mahaprabhu: His Life and Precepts

Logic and arguments are insufficient to understand the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva
Brahma-sūtra 2.1.11

Birth and other transformations are undergone by the body but never by the self, just as change occurs for the moon's phases but never for the moon, though the new-moon day may be called the moon's "death."

Lord Balarāma
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.54.47

When the Vedic literature describes the Personality of Godhead as being without any qualities (*nirguṇa*), this means that the Lord does not possess any material qualities.

It does not mean that He has no spiritual qualities.

Padma Purāṇa (Uttara-khaṇḍa 255.39.40)

Send your favorite quotations to: *Vedic Thoughts, Back to Godhead, P.O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA.*
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SPEAKS OUT

(continued from page 43)

animal's propensities.

But when the soul receives a human body, he must come to the human platform—inquisitive. Like Sanātana Gosvāmī, he must ask, 'ke āmi,' 'kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya': "Who am I? Why must I endure all these miseries, culminating in death?" Of course, the modern animalistic human is not interested in these essential questions. Instead he inquires, "How shall I develop my economic position?" But Sanātana Gosvāmī already had a very high-grade economic position and left it behind. He was not interested in such temporary affairs. He was interested in knowing, 'ke āmi,' 'kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya': "Who, actually, am I? And what is my position? Why I am suffering in this material atmosphere?" That is human life.

Disciple: Returning to *Bhagavad-gītā*,

Śrīla Prabhupāda, isn't it also true that Arjuna asks these questions?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. *Kārpanya-doṣopahata. Kārpanya-doṣa*. "Due to miserly weakness, my dear Kṛṣṇa, I have neglected my real duty, which is to understand my actual, spiritual self and then serve You. Rather, I have been thinking about the bodily welfare of my nonsensical relatives and teachers, even though they are waging a war to usurp my kingdom. What is this foolishness? I know that.

"After all, no matter how tender my sentiments, what benefit will these rascals get? It may be that they are going to die in this war. But sooner or later, this way or that, they are going to die. What can I do? So therefore, why am I perplexed about their bodily fate? I know that this is my defect. I cannot cause these living entities' deaths or births, nor can I prolong their lives. All this is beyond my tiny

jurisdiction. Still, I am anxious: If I kill them, then what will happen? What will happen?"

"You may kill them or not kill them, Arjuna," says Kṛṣṇa. "But rest assured, they'll be killed, today or tomorrow. *Gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca nānuśocanti pañḍitāḥ*: A learned man knows that this material body will be finished, today or tomorrow—so why be concerned about this body?"

Concern should be for the person within the body—whether he's going to heaven or hell, up or down, *ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti* or *tamo gacchanti*. This is the issue of real concern. The material body will be finished, today or tomorrow or after a hundred years. Who can protect it? But one should be concerned about the body's owner: where he is going—what will be his next position. And in *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly delineates this issue. *Ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthā, madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ, . . . adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ*: According to the modes of nature in which you are living your present life, you are deciding whether, in your next life, you will go up or down or remain in the same status. Three outcomes are possible: up, down, or the same status.

Disciple: Today, though, Śrīla Prabhupāda, people may say, "I have a soul," but they live pretty degradedly, as if "Really, I am this material body—that's all there is." They live as if they'll have no next life. Or they think in the next life they're automatically going upward, because, they say, they've accepted God or Jesus or Muhammad into their heart. Meanwhile, they go on breaking God's laws all over the place and just generally catering to their bodily whims. Just living a low-grade life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore, they're rascals. And for the rascals, *Bhagavad-gītā's* teaching is there. *Learn*. People are giving far too much emphasis on the material body: "When this current body is finished, everything is finished." They do not know anything beyond the body. But real knowledge begins when we learn, "No—you are beyond this body." This is real knowledge. This is the beginning of knowledge. Any other knowledge except this—that is ignorance. People are accepting ignorance as knowledge. 🌸

Awakened Intelligence

by Draviḍa Dāsa

*kāmādinām kati na katidhā pālītā dūrnideśās
teṣām jātā mayi na karuṇā na trapā nopasāntiḥ
utsrjyaitān atha yadu-pate sāmpratam labdha-buddhis
tvām āyātaḥ śaraṇam abhayaṁ mām niyuṅkṣvātma-dāsyē*

In how many ways have I sought to obey

The seductive demands of my wicked desires?

They've shown me no mercy, yet on I've gone, shamelessly

Trying to quench lust's unquenchable fires.

But now I'm rejecting those hellish desires, for my

Higher intelligence now has awoken;

O Kṛṣṇa, O shelter of fearlessness, please let me

Serve You with faith that will never be broken.

(A poetic translation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Madhya-līlā 22.16)

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Calendar

This calendar is calculated for Śrīdhām Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. Dates may vary by one day for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa

(August 9–September 6)

SEPTEMBER

2 — Parśvā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Fasting till noon for the appearance of Lord Vāmanadeva (tomorrow).



Lord Vāmanadeva

3 — Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmanadeva. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

4 — Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master) and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English.

5 — Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost

teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

6 — Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

Month of Padmanābha

(September 7–October 5)

12 — Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States.

16 — Indirā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

OCTOBER

1 — Rāmacandra Vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

2 — Pāśāṅkuśā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

3 — Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

5 — Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaradīyā Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya. Beginning of Dāmodara-vrata. Offering lamps for one month. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *ūrad dāl*).

Month of Dāmodara

(October 6–November 4)

10 — Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

16 — Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

20 — Diwali, the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

21 — Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

24 — Disappearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*acārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees observe this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

28 — Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a great follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

31 — Utthānā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, the disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakīśora Dāsa Bābājī, spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

NOVEMBER

4 — Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsa-yātrā. Last day of Dāmodara-vrata and Cāturmāsya.

Month of Keśava

(November 5–December 3)

14 — Utpannā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

30 — Mokṣadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, Gītā Jayantī, the anniversary of the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Have a Blast, O Tiger Among Men!

ONE OF OUR BTG staff members suggested that I comment here on the nuclear blasts detonated, amidst considerable publicity, by India and her arch-rival Pakistan. I'm not much inclined to do it.

For me it's boring. I'm getting tired of the material world. OK—India and Pakistan are now better equipped to blow each other up, and maybe they will. That means death, and lots of it.

But what do you expect? That's the material world: everyone has to die.

Taking a materialistic point of view: Life is nothing but chemicals racing around. So even if the entire human race gets ended early, so what? It means nothing.

And taking a spiritual point of view: The real self, the soul, is eternal. It is never born and never dies. It can never be killed, even by the most powerful weapon. The body may be destroyed, but the spark of consciousness within it, never. That spiritual spark moves onward from one body to the next, cycling and recycling from one lifetime to another, untouched by death.

Well, almost untouched. As long as we identify with the material body, confounding the body with the self, we are shafted by the miseries that come upon the body, like birth, death, disease, old age. But as soon as we distance ourselves from the body, knowing that we are not the bodily machine but a spiritual spark of Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, we become free from all material burdens.

Why then should we waste our time getting worked up about the nukes of India and Pakistan? We've got better things to do. Human life is meant for spiritual realization. So better to get on with it, and on with it seriously.

By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, keeping company with devotees of Kṛṣṇa, living in a Kṛṣṇa conscious atmosphere, serving Kṛṣṇa, and reading books like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that bring us in touch with Kṛṣṇa, we can easily and joyfully progress.

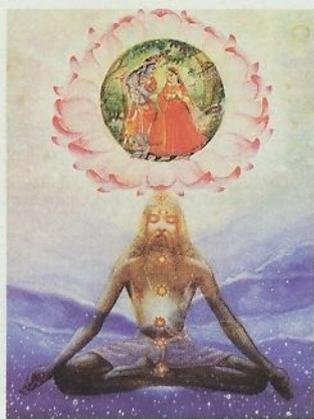
But will people do that? A few. The rest prefer to live like cats and dogs, busy busy busy in eating, sleeping, fighting, and sex.

Hence the wild popularity of the new drug Viagra, every old man's dream, designed to give power to the impotent, renewed vitality to old male organs, new hope for super sex well into your decrepitude.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* we find the word *puruṣa-vyāghra* (yes, pronounced nearly the same way)—“O tiger among men!” Indeed. Take this pill, old man, and become a tiger, a chemically recharged tiger, senses roaring. Become a fool, stalking once again the jungle of material existence, pouncing upon illusory happiness, slaving over tired meat, sinking your fangs into stupidity. Indeed, show your stripes.

And forget about spiritual realization. Just live live live for nothing, till death nukes you. Again and again and again.

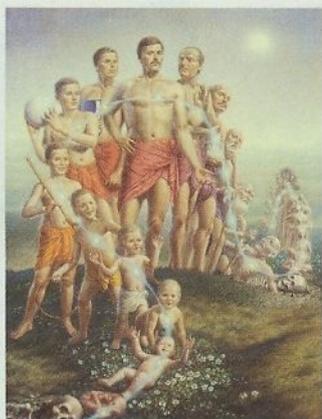
—Jayādvaita Swami



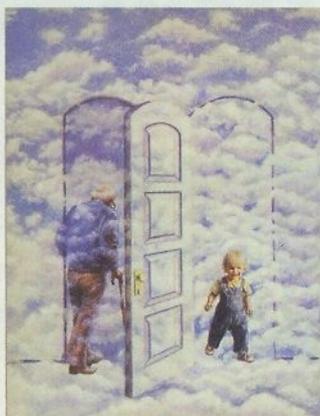
Do you aspire
for higher consciousness?



Would you say there's
more to a person
than just the biological
machinery of the body?



Would you like
to have a deeper
understanding of karma
and reincarnation?



Do you ever wonder
what happens to a person
after death?



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wonder who you
really are?

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