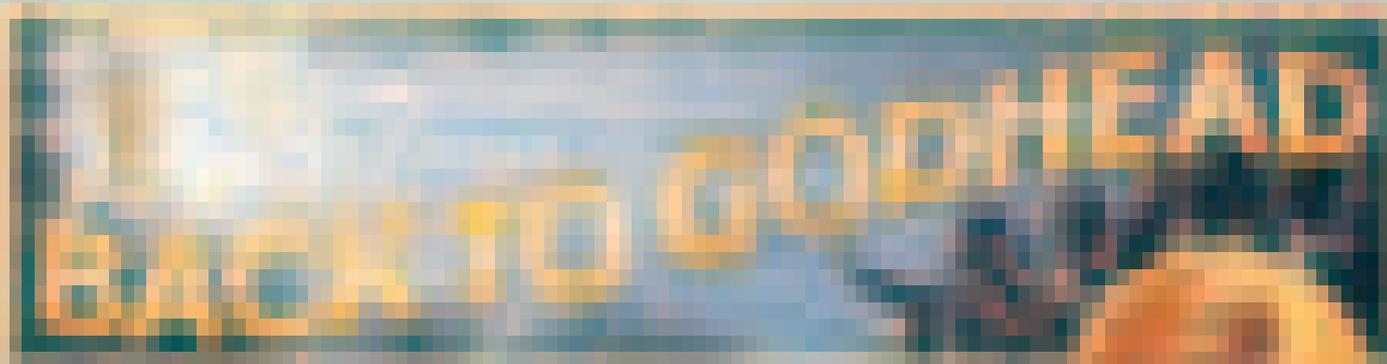


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



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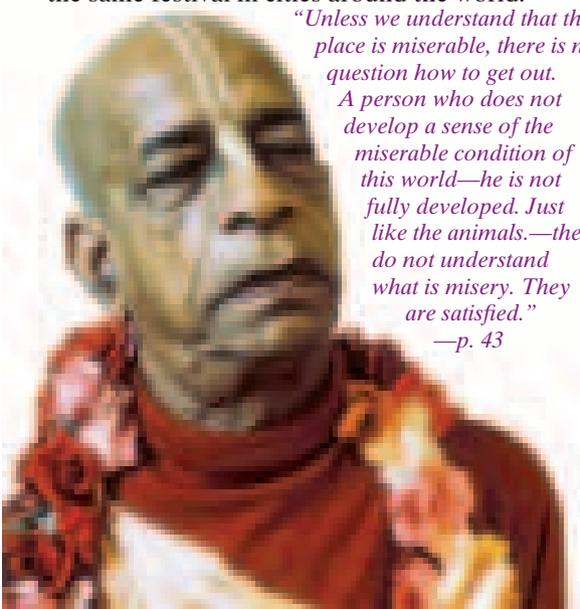
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COVER The deities Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava preside over the ISKCON complex on the bank of the Ganges in Śrīdhām Māyāpur, West Bengal, India, where Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared only five hundred years ago as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Please see the article beginning on page 16. (Montage by Yamarāja Dāsa.)

the same festival in cities around the world.

“Unless we understand that this place is miserable, there is no question how to get out. A person who does not develop a sense of the miserable condition of this world—he is not fully developed. Just like the animals.—they do not understand what is misery. They are satisfied.”

—p. 43



WELCOME



IN OUR COVER STORY

in this issue, Braja Sevakī Devī Dāsī, a new contributor to *Back to Godhead*, writes of the joy of living in ISKCON’s community in Māyāpur, West Bengal, just

down the road from the birthplace of Lord Caitanya. Because Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in this age as Lord Caitanya, Māyāpur is the most important holy place for our time. Persons with pure vision see that Māyāpur is identical to the spiritual world, and their compassion moves them to invite everyone there for spiritual nourishment.

In recent times, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder/*ācārya* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, spread the glories of Māyāpur and the teachings of Lord Caitanya around the world. In “Recognition for Śrīla Prabhupāda,” Satyarāja Dāsa shows that scholars accepted Prabhupāda as a prominent modern religious leader.

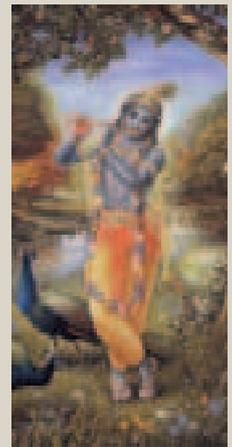
In Māyāpur, life centers on Kṛṣṇa and service to Him. This is true human culture, as Prabhupāda points out in his lecture opening this issue.

Lord Caitanya Himself carried the culture of Māyāpur throughout India, visiting many temples as He spread the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names. Adbhuta Hari Dāsa takes us to one of those temples with his article “Mangalagiri: Where Faith Grows.”

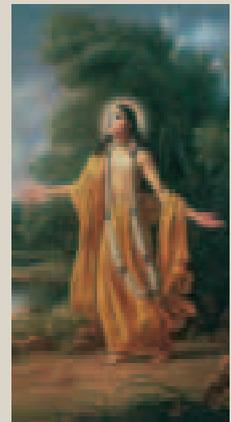
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

OUR PURPOSES

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



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



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



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

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Letters

Realism and Transcendence

“Simple living, high thinking.” Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us all we need in that one sentence, and to have a magazine reflect and support us in pursuit of that goal is the ultimate. When I glance through the copy each month, I am totally amazed at the beauty and bounty of pictures and graphics. The editorial content is very articulate, and tuned in and timely, in a mood of complete dedication and responsiveness. Your travel documentaries allow the reader to dive into the nectar and actually feel the splash of realism and of transcendence.

The devotees are so inspiring and uplifting in their scope of vision and practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You can tell they truly are sincere to fulfill the wishes of Śrīla Prabhupāda to “build a house in which the whole world can live.”

I particularly relish articles about devotees, profiling their experiences, lives, and how they make a difference.

Thank you so much for my subscription. I pray that all obstacles be removed for you and your staff.

Yogarūpiṇī Devī Dāsī
Tullahoma, Tennessee

Why Pilgrimages?

In the July/August 2003 issue you ran an ad for Krishna.com/travels. Also in a recent issue you published an article about a devotee’s trip to Vṛndāvana, and this was also an ISKCON-sponsored event.

I feel it is wrong to encourage devotees to waste their money on pilgrimages. Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura says in *Śrī Prema Bhakti-candrikā* (2.5), “Traveling to the holy places is a waste of energy and born from illusion.” In *Skanda Purāṇa* it says, “For one who continually chants the Lord’s holy name there is no extra spiritual benefit by visiting even such holy places as Kurukshetra, Kashi, Pushkara, etc.” And in *Vāmana*

Purāṇa: “The spiritual value of Hari *kīrtana* [glorification of the Lord] is far superior to even circumambulating many thousands of holy sites.”

I feel it is a deceit to advertise these pious activities. The money would be much better spent on the distribution of books or *prasādam*.

God bless us, everyone.

Subala Dāsa
Perry, Florida

OUR REPLY: Lord Caitanya Himself approved of visiting, and indeed did visit, holy places like Vṛndāvana and Jagannatha Puri, and our predecessor spiritual master Rūpa Gosvāmī talks of how our transcendental sentiments are awakened in such places as Mathura. He includes such visits in his list of favorable devotional activities. Śrīla Prabhupāda considered it rejuvenating for preachers to go to Vṛndāvana and Māyāpura to become purified so they could go back and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness with vigor in the West. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote that pure devotees of Lord Caitanya are eager to visit all the places He went to even briefly. So the condemnation of holy pilgrimages is just one side of the story.

Of course, Hari *kīrtana* is meant also to be done at the holy places, and its influence is certainly enhanced many times there, according to Śrīla Prabhupāda. For example, one who does devotional service to Dāmodara (Kṛṣṇa) in Vṛndāvana in the month of Kārttika is blessed with pure devotion otherwise difficult to obtain.

For these reasons, it is not deceitful to promote the visiting of holy places, especially those like Vṛndāvana, Mathura, Māyāpura, Dwaraka, and Jagannatha Puri, which are identical to the spiritual world. Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda approved of it. In these most pure of settings, glorification of Kṛṣṇa should not be neglected but rather increased.

Of course, to spend money on

spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness with books or *prasādam* is better than just spending money on one's own purification, but if by visiting the holy places one becomes purified, one's natural desire to spread Krishna's glories can awaken, and one's preaching will naturally increase.

Visiting holy places instead of Hari *kīrtana* or instead of preaching would be inauspicious. Nonetheless, pilgrimage can be an inspiring part of a balanced devotional life pleasing to our previous spiritual masters and to Kṛṣṇa, and so to share it with others who may benefit by it is a good thing.

An Angel of ISKCON

I was incredulous and overwhelmed to see the article "The 3-Year-Old Preacher I'll Never Forget" [March/April], because although she left this world about twenty years ago, I also have not forgotten this three-year-old preacher warrior, Rādhā-Govinda Dāsī. She was my daughter's friend.

I cried to see Lord Kṛṣṇa's glorification of this obscure angel of ISKCON. Kṛṣṇa is, after all, *bhaktavatsala*—very dear to His devotees—and the devotees are very dear to Him. He has not forgotten about that sweet devotee girl with her dark curls like a miniature *gopī* [cowherd girl], and now she can be remembered by devotees worldwide thanks to the wonderful article and transcendental memories of Campa-kalātā Devī Dāsī. All glories to Rādhā-Govinda Dāsī!

Candraśekhara Dāsa
ISKCON Prison Ministry
Toledo, Ohio

Liberation and Rasa

What are the five types of liberation? Can you please give examples of the five types of devotees in Vṛndāvana? Where can this information be found?

Sherlyn
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: The five kinds of liberation are:

- (1) to merge into the existence of the Lord (*sāyujya*)
- (2) to have the same opulence as the Lord (*sārṣṭi*)
- (3) to reside on the same planet as the Lord (*sālokya*)
- (4) to have a form similar to that of the Lord (*sārūpya*)
- (5) to have the intimate association of the Lord (*sāmīpya*)

The first one is never accepted by Vaiṣṇavas, or devotees of God, because it impedes devotional service to God. The others may be accepted if they assist in the Lord's service.

The "five types of devotees" in the spiritual world refers to the five *rasas*, or relationships with Kṛṣṇa:

- (1) neutrality or passive adoration (*śānta*)
- (2) servitude (*dāsyā*)
- (3) friendship (*sakhya*)
- (4) parental (*vātsalya*)
- (5) conjugal (*mādhurya*)

The grass and cows are examples of devotees in *śānta rasa*. The cowherd boys who act as Kṛṣṇa's personal servants, like Raktaka, are in *dāsyā rasa*. The cowherd boys who are friends of Kṛṣṇa, like Subala, are in *sakhya rasa*. Nanda, Yaśodā, and the older cowherd men and women are in *vātsalya rasa*. Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs* are in *mādhurya rasa*.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has discussed this topic elaborately in *The Nectar of Devotion*, a summary study of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

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THE HIGHEST HUMAN CULTURE

*The goal of human civilization should not be material progress,
but the awakening of people's lost spiritual consciousness.*

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

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānānjana-salākayā
cakṣur-unmīlitaṁ yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.”

A *jñāna* means ignorance, and *timira* means darkness. So *ajñāna-timirāndhasya* means one who is in ignorance and darkness. Every one of us is in that position. The material advancement of civilization is not knowledge. People may not agree with us, but actually this is the fact. This material advancement is ignorance.

For example, I have come here to your city, and I have some business to attend to. But if I forget my business and I become busy with my apartment, is that very sound knowledge? I have come here to execute some business. I have got my temple here. There are devotees. They want to see me. I want to see them. They want to take spiritual knowledge from me, and my



duty is to impart it. That is the business I'm here for. But if I simply become engaged in decorating my apartment and forget my business, am I very intelligent? No.

Therefore that is called ignorance. I forget my real business; I become engaged in some very temporary business. I am here for two days. I shall live in an apartment. It may be very nice or not very nice—that is not a very important thing. For two days I can live anywhere, even underneath a tree.

That does not hamper my business. But I must be very serious about my business. That is intelligence.

I saw an advertisement while coming here: “Comfortable living begins here.” So we are contemplating to live in this material world very comfortably. That has become our business. That is very much manifest in your Western countries. People are always busy trying to live comfortably in this world. But they forget that one day—however secure and comfortable we may make our country or home—we will be kicked out: “Please get out immediately.”

You cannot say, “I have not finished decorating

Left: Modern society can advance by understanding the guiding principle of traditional Vedic culture: Human progress means putting God in the center of one's life.

***The Māyāvādī philosophers take it
that we are as good as God in full strength.
No. That is not the fact.***



my apartment. Let me stay here for some days.”

No. Death is so cruel that one day, all of a sudden, it will come and say, “Please get out immediately.”

If I could not finish my business and I am kicked out, then just imagine how much loss I suffer and what kind of fool I am. Modern civilization does not know this. People think, “This body has come out all of a sudden by accident”—the body means the senses—“and let us enjoy the senses to the best capacity. That is the perfection of life.”

The whole world, especially the Western countries, accepts the ideology, the philosophy, of hedonism. “Enjoy this life very comfortably, as nicely as possible.” But that is a great defect and a great mistake.

BHOGĪ, ROGĪ, AND YOGI

For those who are on the platform of gross sense enjoyment, the truth is very difficult to understand. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.44) it is said,

*bhogaishvarya-prasaktānām
tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ
samādhau na vidhiyate*

“In the minds of those who are too attached to sense enjoyment and material opulence, and who are bewildered by such things, the resolute determination for devotional service to the Supreme Lord does not take place.” *Bhoga* means material sense enjoyment. And *roga* means that which puts impediments to sense enjoyment, or a diseased condition. You cannot enjoy life in a diseased condition. *Bhoga*, *roga*—and there is another word, *yoga*. These are Sanskrit words. *Bhoga* means enjoying sense gratification. *Roga* means a diseased condition, when we cannot enjoy. And *yoga* means to

get out of this *bhoga* and *roga* and go back to home, back to Godhead. That is called *yoga*.

Bhogī, *rogī*, and *yogī*. *Bhogī* means those who are interested in sense gratification, and *rogī* means those who are suffering. Every one of us is suffering more or less, because this is a place where suffering is the condition of life. But we forget. That is called *ajñāna*. We living entities, being part and parcel of God, are as good as God. We may be a little “God,” but our position is qualitatively is as good as God’s. The Māyāvādī philosophers take it that we are as good as God in full strength. No. That is not the fact. A little particle of gold is gold. That’s a fact. But it is not as valuable as the lump of gold. The lump of gold is more valuable. A particle of gold is gold, but not equal to the gold mine. The Absolute Truth, God, is just like the gold mine, and we, every one of us—everything—is a part and parcel of that gold mine. We are also gold.

THE PROPENSITY TO ENJOY

The quality being the same, the propensities should also be the same. Kṛṣṇa enjoys with *gopīs*, cowherd girls, and because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, we also want to enjoy life with young girls. This propensity to enjoy life with young girls or young boys is natural. A young girl and a young boy have a natural tendency to mix, to love. That is not unnatural. Why? Because that propensity is there in the Supreme, as you can see in pictures of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Govinda, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has expanded His *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa* energy, His pleasure energy for enjoying pastimes. That *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa* energy has expanded as so many *gopīs*, cowherd boys, cows, calves. They’re giving—all combined together—*ānanda*, transcen-

dental bliss, to Kṛṣṇa.

It is not very difficult to understand. For example, someone keeps a batch of dogs to love. The dogs love the master, and the master loves the dogs. So why can’t Kṛṣṇa love cows and calves and they also love Kṛṣṇa? What is the difficulty to understand? Try to understand this tendency.

The *Vedānta-sūtra* says, *athāto brahma jijñāsā*: “Inquire now into the Absolute Truth.” What is the Absolute Truth? That is the question in the *Vedānta-sūtra*. The answer is *janmādy asya yataḥ*: “The Absolute Truth is that from which everything emanates.” And what is the nature of the Absolute Truth? *Ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt*: “By nature He is blissful.”

Now try to understand. If the Absolute Truth, God, is blissful, full of enjoyment—without enjoyment there is no bliss—then we must be blissful. We must enjoy life very nicely. But that is not possible here, because here we are in a diseased condition. The proof of our diseased condition is that there is birth, death, old age, and disease. These are very nicely explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. We make every effort here to surpass our distressed condition and reach the platform of happiness. Our whole struggle is about this. Why are people running by motorcar this way and that way? To be happy. But they are planning: “I shall be happy in this way. I shall be happy in that way.” The advertisements are there: “Come on.” There are some pictures of naked girls. They are inviting, “Come here. You will be happy.”

We are planning for happiness. Why? Why are we searching after happiness? Because constitutionally we are happy. For example, when we fall diseased we go to the doctor, the physician, to cure the disease. Why? Because constitutionally we are healthy. To remain healthy is our

normal life, and to fall diseased is not normal; that is abnormal. Therefore we go to the physician, ask for treatment, and take medicine. We ask, "How shall I be cured?"

Similarly, we are searching after happiness. Why? Because our constitutional position is that we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, who is *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*: He is by nature full of bliss. But our blissfulness has been disturbed. Now we have to find out why our happiness has been disturbed and life after life we are searching after happiness but are becoming frustrated. That inquiry is our business, not trying to make the temporary place very comfortable.

For example, when you go to your office, you may find that the bus is too crowded and you are not happy. With difficulty, you have to stand. You don't like that. But because you have to go to the office, you tolerate. "First my business is to go to office on time. What can be done? Let me suffer this."

Similarly, if you are serious about your real business, that business can be understood in the human form of life. The animals cannot understand. For example, animals are taken to the slaughterhouse, and if one animal enters, all the others will enter. They do not know better. Even if they know, "We are going to be slaughtered," they have no means to protest or to go out. But if a human being is slaughtered in the street, then his relatives file suit and have the killer arrested.

ANIMALS AS NATIONALS

So many facilities are there for a human being. But an animal has no facility. A cow is born in America, and a gentleman is born in America, but the state takes care of the gentleman and not the cow. The state uses the terms *national* and *nationality*, but why is nationality refused to the animals? It was only a few years ago in your country that nationality was awarded to the black man. Why should one section of humanity be denied nationality? *National* means the living entity born in that land. That is natural. If a child, even of an Indian, is born in your country, he gets immediate citizenship. That is the law.

The conclusion is that anyone born

in this land gets nationality. But why should we refuse nationality to the poor animals? That is called ignorance. We have concocted the idea that the animal has no soul. Why does it have no soul? What is the difference between you and the animal? You eat; the animal eats. You sleep; the animal sleeps. You have sex life; the animal has sex life. You try to defend yourself, and the animal tries to defend himself.

Eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—these four principles, bodily demands, are there for both the animal and the man. So why should the animals be denied nationality? It is not that because they are less intelligent they should be denied nationality. No. If a father has four boys and not every one is of the same intelligence, does the father give less protection to the less intelligent son? No. The protection, the family protection, is equal for each child.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE

This is the conception in the *bhāgavata*, or godly, community—equal rights for everyone, even the animals. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means to be learned. One who is Kṛṣṇa conscious is fully learned, a *pañḍita*. What is the symptom of a *pañḍita*, a learned man? That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.18):

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca
pañḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

"The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmāṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater [outcaste]." In our country a *brāhmaṇa* is supposed to be very learned; therefore he is addressed as *pañḍita*. *Pañḍita* means very learned. Nowadays he may be a fool number one, but he is called *pañḍita*, even though he is not actually a *pañḍita*. But actually a *pañḍita*, or a *brāhmaṇa*, is someone very, very learned in Vedic literature. *Veda-pathād bhaved vipraḥ*: one who has studied the *Vedas* very nicely is a *vipra*, or a *brāhmaṇa*. And one who

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 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 **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

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

***So unless we go back to Kṛṣṇa
we cannot be happy. There is no possibility
of our becoming happy otherwise.***



is actually a *paṇḍita* will see a learned *brāhmaṇa*, a hog, a dog, a *caṇḍāla* [outcaste], an elephant—all living entities—on an equal level because he sees the soul, not to the body.

For example, we are meeting here, and we are seeing each other. We have not come here to see the dress; we have come to see or to learn some knowledge. Similarly, human life is especially meant for grasping the knowledge we are missing. The missing knowledge is that we have forgotten that we are spirit soul, part and parcel of God, Kṛṣṇa. That is the missing point.

**REVIVING
OUR CONSCIOUSNESS**

Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant for reviving that lost consciousness. We have lost the consciousness that “I am part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme blissful enjoyer, but somehow or other, being complicated within this matter, I am suffering. I am trying to become happy with this material atmosphere, which is not possible.”

If you are put into the water, even if you are a very nice swimmer you cannot be happy there because the water is not your place. You are a living

entity of the land. Similarly, if you take a fish out of the water and give it velvet bedding—“My dear fish, lie down here on the velvet”—he’ll die, because the condition is different from what he requires. Similarly, we are spirit soul, Kṛṣṇa’s part and parcel. So unless we go back to Kṛṣṇa—just like the *gopīs* or the cowherd boys—we cannot be happy. There is no possibility of our becoming happy otherwise.

This is the ideal picture—that you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, go back home, back to Kṛṣṇa, and be happy. That is our program. It is a very nice program. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not an ordinary, bluffing movement. It is a solid, authorized movement, and we are opening branches as far as possible in all parts of the world to give facility to the people, to the civilized men, to understand the value of life and how to be happy. That is our business. We have no business to cheat you. It is not that I give you some mantra, and you give me some money, and then I go away. No. We have come to serve you, so take advantage. Don’t misunderstand us—“It is a religious sect.” No. We are not a religious sect. We are a cultural sect. We are giving the highest culture to human society, to awaken people’s lost

consciousness.

I am very happy to see you all, American and Indians. This is wanted. We want to unite the whole world under this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. And actually that is happening. In our society we have devotees from all sections—Christians, Jews, Hindus, Mohammedans, black, white. It doesn’t matter, because we are seeing according to *Bhagavad-gītā*, *paṇḍitāḥ samadarsinaḥ*: A learned man sees every living entity on an equal level. We are trying to see in that light, and we are trying to teach others how to accept that light, how to enjoy that light.

It is a very serious movement. Every one of you can take advantage of it. It is not very difficult to practice, because our process is very simple. Come and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa with us. Anyone can pronounce the words *Hare Kṛṣṇa*. We are seeing all over the world that there is no difficulty in chanting this mantra. It is open. There is no secrecy. We don’t say, “I shall give a particular mantra for you.” No. This mantra is one, and it is equally applicable to everyone—to the learned, to the ignorant, to the white, to the black, to the old, to the youth. Everyone can chant. And actually it is happening.

It is very easy. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. There are no hard and fast rules. Begin chanting from whatever condition you are in and see the results. As for examples, we have our temples and our devotees. Try to see how they are living, how their characters are being formed, how they are becoming purified, how their faces are becoming brighter. It is practical.

So this is our request: Please come regularly to this temple and take advantage of it.

Thank you very much.

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Glossary

Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

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

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

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

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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

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

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

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

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see “Godhead”).

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

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

nature and forgetting God.

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

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 and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacāris* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

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

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

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

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

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see





Through The Vedic Lens

*A drama enacted in the natural world
inspires higher thoughts.*

by Ben Saikin

RECENTLY A DEVOTEE said to me, “Just try to see through the Vedic lens.” At the time I remember thinking how nice it would be to see the world in that way, but I knew I couldn’t force such a vision. I thought that if I wanted to understand what he meant by “Vedic lens,” I had better keep chanting.

A few days later, I was seated typing at my computer. It was dusk, and the soft evening light fell gently into the room. I turned toward the window as the last rays of daylight faded, and the tiny silhouette of a moth caught my eye. He was trapped between the window and the screen.

About a week ago, some children were playing with a ball outside my first-floor apartment. Their ball struck my window, knocking the screen to the ground. When I tried to replace it, I ran into some difficulty. The old clip that holds the screen in place no longer allowed the screen to fit snugly against the window. As best as I could manage, I secured the screen so that three of its corners fit within the grooves, allowing only a tiny opening at the bottom where the screen was not properly fastened.

It seemed that this moth had flown in through the small opening and was now trapped. In the upper left-hand corner, also between the window and the screen, was a thick, sticky web—and a fearsome-looking spider. Silhouetted in the darkness were the discarded remains of the unfortunate

creatures that had floundered into the web.

Not more than an inch separated the window and the screen, and in this tiny space the moth buzzed around, searching for a way out. He made his way to each side of the sealed screen, his antennae probing here and there for an exit. Oblivious, the moth wandered treacherously close to the web, arousing the spider, who bounded gracefully across his silken fortress. The moth, suddenly aware of the danger, buzzed frantically, just beyond the spider’s reach.

I felt the slight twinge of disappointment, deprived of the firsthand experience of nature’s wrath, but it was soon replaced by a piercing shame, and an even greater embarrassment.

The moth continued his burning search for liberation. He made three laps around the top half of the screen, groping for some escape. Each time he wandered, he came precariously close to the spider’s web, and each time he avoided death by a hair’s breadth.

Finally, in a frantic attempt to force his way to freedom, the moth began to beat his wings and hurl himself into the screen. He was so desperate. All he had to do was search near the bottom. There, the screen was not fastened snugly to the window...but this never occurred to him.

Then, unbelievably, as I watched the moth throw himself madly at the screen, I saw through the Vedic lens. A tiny sliver of Prabhupāda’s transcen-

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dental vision refined my sight, acting like a lens put in front of a patient's eyes during an eye examination. No longer was I merely looking at a moth struggling behind a window; I was seeing the helpless plight of the living entity in the material world.

Allured by some promise, the soul has flown into this world, and now he is trapped. Frenzied, he searches in all directions, recklessly trying to be happy, but it is all in vain because he is caught within the stringent laws of material nature. All around him, his endeavors meet with frustration, and above him, death personified waits patiently. If only he would turn toward Kṛṣṇa. But, bewildered by illusion, he never considers the possibility.

Now it was only a matter of time until the helpless moth stumbled into the spider's web, to be entangled, in this life, for the final time. Still, the moth thrashed about, wildly launching himself into the wire screen, again and again. Finally, an even more profound and fundamental realization arose in the forefront of my consciousness: the moth could not free himself.

Determined, I hurried outside. At the window, I found the moth still buzzing furiously and the spider silently striding his web. Slowly, I lifted the screen several inches from the window, and like a child released from school, the moth burst from his cage. He danced jubilantly around me for a moment, and then soared away into the night.

As I stood there trying to replace the screen, my thoughts drifted to Prabhupāda. Previously I could not begin to appreciate the position of the spiritual master, or the precious gift he gives to the helpless conditioned soul. But now I understood. We are all moths caught in a screen, and despite our feverish endeavors, we can never free ourselves. This rare experience allowed me to see, if only for a few moments, how merciful Kṛṣṇa is. He sends saints like Śrīla Prabhupāda to deliver the entire world from the clutches of cruel illusion. ❀

Ben Saikin is a film student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He met Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees on campus two years ago.

“You Do Not Know What Is Happiness”

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a student took place at Śrīla Prabhupāda’s first temple, a storefront on New York City’s Second Avenue, on November 20, 1966, following a class on the Bhagavad-gītā.

Śrīla Prabhupāda (summing up the class): So there is no rule, no hard-and-fast rule, for chanting. You just take to it as recommended by Kṛṣṇa here: *sarveṣu kāleṣu*—always, twenty-four hours. You’ll be completely safe, even in this dangerous position.

You should always know that this material world is always a dangerous position. For instance, you started the peace movement. Why? You were thinking, “Danger is coming. Danger is coming.” Yes, at any moment, there may be danger of war declaration, and all these innocent youths may be called to fight. So however much you may think, “We are an independent nation,” and this and that, you should always remember that this material world is full of danger. It is a dangerous spot.

Therefore, those who are Kṛṣṇa conscious, who are devotees of Kṛṣṇa—for them, this dangerous place is not suitable.

Paḍaṁ paḍaṁ yad vipadāṁ na teṣāṁ. Paḍaṁ paḍaṁ: in every step there is danger. This place is not suitable for the devotees of the Lord.

*(please turn to
page 42)*

COME TO MĀYĀPUR

*With some reluctance, a resident invites all
to come to the sacred land of Lord Caitanya.*

by Braja Sevakī Devī Dāsī
photo by Yamarāja Dāsa

THIS IS POSSIBLY the hardest thing I've had to write. The editors of BTG asked me to write some articles about Māyāpur. "From the perspective of someone who lives there," they said. "To bring Māyāpur more to the attention of the public," they said. Right there, that was the hard part—bringing Māyāpur to the attention of the world. I hesitate to share Māyāpur because I love it so much just the way it is.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted Māyāpur brought to the attention of the world. He called it the most important place in the universe. He wanted a temple of unparalleled size, majesty, and beauty built in Māyāpur. He once said, "I have named this temple Sri Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, 'the Rising

Moon of Māyāpur.’ Now make it rise, bigger and bigger until it becomes the full moon. And this moonshine will be spread all over the world. All over India they will come to see. From all over the world they will come...”

In the present age of Kali-yuga, Māyāpur is the place from which all spirituality emanates. In the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya (lineage) to which ISKCON belongs, Māyāpur has long been a most sacred place. It is the birthplace of Lord Caitanya, the golden avatar of Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago. Lord Caitanya taught the method of spirituality the Vedic scriptures prescribe for this age—the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. And that’s what Hare Kṛṣṇas do. We chant. We worship

Lord Caitanya. So Māyāpur is important—not only to us, but, the scriptures tell us, to the entire world.

THE MISSION OF OUR PREDECESSORS

In the Vaiṣṇava tradition, a long line of great devotees accepted the mission to bring Māyāpur to the attention of the world. In recent history, perhaps the most prominent was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. By the 1800s, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism had declined to a condition that was alarming to Bhaktivinoda. Deviant sects claiming to be followers of Lord Caitanya had obscured the essence of His teachings to such a degree that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism had almost disappeared. Through his prolific

writings, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura reestablished the legacy of Lord Caitanya.

Bhaktivinoda maintained that the Vaiṣṇava philosophy was nonsectarian and meant not only for Indians but for the entire world. In 1885 he wrote, “Lord Caitanya did not advent Himself to liberate only a few men in India. Rather, His main objective was to emancipate all living entities of all countries throughout the entire universe and preach the Eternal Religion.... There is no doubt that this unquestionable order will come to pass. ... Very soon the unparalleled path of *hari-nāma saṅkīrtana* [the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord] will be propagated all over the world.”

Okay, so that’s good. It’s important

A memorial to Śrīla Prabhupāda dominates the skyline of ISKCON’s community along the Ganges in Māyāpur, West Bengal.



fresh-smelling, picturesque, tranquil. Birds are singing, and that's the only noise besides the gentle whirring of the fan and an occasional distant train horn from across the Jalangi River.

As the rain drips softly onto the balcony, again I wonder why I would possibly want to contribute to attracting world attention to this pocket of the universe that's so blissful it's easy to believe one is in the spiritual world. And green—I never imagined a green so lush, so rich, so intense. And so many shades of green. I can't believe anyone who comes here would not walk away with a stunningly beautiful impression forever embedded in the mind, in the heart.

That leads me back to the initial goal here: bringing Māyāpur to world attention. When I write about Māyāpur, I can capture only a tiny portion of its beauty, its lushness, its tranquility—its personality. It's impossible to describe Māyāpur fully. To truly appreciate its beauty, one has to be here.

Then again, there are so many beautiful places in the world. This morning I was looking through a magazine from Thailand. There's one beautiful country. Or Indonesia—similarly appealing. I'm from Australia, where white sandy beaches and turquoise water is the norm, especially in the northwest corner of the country, where the Indian Ocean rolls gently into remote, still-untouched coastal towns. When I lived in one of those towns, I would send photos home to my family, and I'm sure they thought the pictures were touched-up, because the colors were so unbelievable. So many places on this planet capture the mind, enchant the senses, bury themselves in the heart.

But Māyāpur attracts the soul. Think about that. How many places can claim that? Māyāpur is no ordinary tourist destination. It's not even an extraordinary tourist destination. It's the spiritual world. The scriptures say that it's "nondifferent" from the spiritual world. That's no tourist brochure by-

line...that's some kind of important! The *most* important. How many places can claim that?

Māyāpur is not only a feast for the senses; it satisfies the soul. The spiritual energy of Māyāpur is undeniable. Along the main road—the only road—there are some forty temples, all with the same purpose: to propagate the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. That is the key to Māyāpur's special-ness. No other destination can offer that.

THE ESSENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

The state of the world at the moment is another factor contributing to Māyāpur's attractiveness. The world, in general, is struggling. It's hell out there. I haven't always lived in a village. London, Sydney, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sweden—I've seen it all. I've certainly seen enough, at least. None of them have the answers. They may be cool places; they may even temporarily satisfy. But they don't exactly exist for the eternal benefit of mankind.

The message of Lord Caitanya, and the preaching mission of His envoy Śrīla Prabhupāda, exists to reinforce the genuine identity of the soul amid a world intent on borders, boundaries, and bodily designations. Prabhupāda's International Society for Krishna Consciousness crosses those boundaries, fuelled by the most crucial element of Lord Caitanya's character: His compassion for the fallen souls of Kali-yuga, all of whom are searching for peace—within themselves and their environment. As a stone tossed into a pool creates concentric circles, so a global community with its attention focused on the center can create an international environment of harmony. That center is the essence of spirituality. That essence is Śrī Māyāpur Dhāma.

So that's the fix I'm in. This most stunning place that I call home is something I want to cherish, to keep as it is, to protect. I love Māyāpur as I have never loved a place before. And it returns that love. Really. So why would I want to bring people here and "ruin" what is, to me, perfection?

Because it's the spiritual world. And in the spiritual world, nothing is ruined

that people know something of Māyāpur's history. It's an important place, after all. But to bring world focus here? I'm somewhat reluctant. Māyāpur is so incredibly beautiful it's hard to consciously take a step toward changing that. It's peaceful in Māyāpur. It's a beautiful, lush, green, peaceful village on the Ganges, in West Bengal. It's amazing. There are basically no cars in Māyāpur. There are cars that come and visit, but past the ISKCON property the road leads, a half mile or so, to the river, where boats cross over to Navadvīp. In other words, the road's a dead-end street. A cul de sac. A close. There are a few dozen rickshas, hundreds of bicycles, and lots of villagers on foot. But no cars. An occasional bus delivers passengers to the river, turns around, and comes back.

At the moment in Māyāpur it's monsoon season. As I write, the rain is falling softly, and a cool breeze is lifting the curtains. It's so incredible:

by being shared with thousands, or millions. Sharing Māyāpur doesn't diminish or deteriorate it, doesn't detract from its beauty. Māyāpur will expand, on and on, for thousands of years, into a place that the entire universe will know and love. Just as I do.

And I can't stop that expansion, as much as I even wish I could sometimes. In a way, I don't want to stop it, of course. I want everyone to see Māyāpur, to feel Māyāpur, to love Māyāpur

the way I do. When something's that good, you want to keep it to yourself, but after a while you know that to really enjoy it as much as possible, you're going to have to tell someone about it.

So that's why I want to tell you: Māyāpur is the ultimate destination. Get a ticket, whatever way you can, but just come here. And bring a really good suitcase, because you're going to have to *drag* your heart home...it won't want to leave. ☸

Braja Sevaki Devī Dāsī is a disciple of His Holiness Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami. She is the author of three books, and her poetry has been published in Australia and Britain. She lives in Māyāpur with her husband, Jahnū Dvīpa Dāsa.

ONLINE EXTRA

For more information and photos about Māyāpur, go to Krishna.com/mayapur.

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Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION: ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with "drama")

Photos: Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa



Recognition for Śrīla Prabhupāda

*Scholars list Prabhupāda among the
great spiritual personalities of our time.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

EVERYONE LIKES to see a person get what's coming to him—good or bad. For example, in film or drama, when the bad guy gets his due, everyone cheers. More to the point, when a hero emerges victorious, we feel good because we see rhyme and reason in the universe. In other words, our sense of justice is inborn—it's as natural as breathing.

It's no wonder, then, that devotees rejoice when Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is recognized for his manifold accomplishments. For example, as far back as 1976, *The Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year* said that Prabhupāda “astonished academic and literary communities worldwide by writing and publishing fifty-two books on the ancient Vedic culture . . . in the period from October 1968 to November 1975.”

More recently, in 1992, an authoritative book was released entitled *Who's Who of World Religions* (John R. Hinnells, editor, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992). The book went on to be used in university courses around the world and soon became an important reference in academic libraries as well. Set up like an encyclopedia, the book alphabetically lists significant people in the world of religion. Page 329 contains a complimentary entry on Śrīla Prabhupāda. While most other entries are only half a column, Prabhupāda's is a page and a half. It lists a good deal of historical data, most of it accurate, and it highlights other Kṛṣṇa conscious entities with entries in the book: Ananda Tirtha (Madhva), Bhaktisiddhanta Thakur,

Chaitanya, Gaudiya, Hare Krishna, ISKCON, Jayadeva, Krishnadas Kaviraj, Ramanuja, Rupa Goswami, and Vallabha.

To cite another example, an extremely popular book was released only last year: *Spiritual Innovators: Seventy-Five Extraordinary People Who Changed the World in the Past Century* (Ira Rifkin, editor, Woodstock, Vermont: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2002). This work was a best-seller and won accolades from religious scholars and intelligentsia around the world—and, again, it mentions Śrīla Prabhupāda as a significant personality.

The book is divided into sections, such as “They Made Intellect a Spiritual Force,” “They Brought the Traditions Together,” and “They Spoke From the Power of Silence.” Prabhupāda is listed under “They Shook Things Up.” The entry on Prabhupāda is again largely accurate, and it quotes him, lists his books, and even mentions ISKCON's headquarters and web site, so that interested readers can get more information.

Of course, even laudable books such as these don't recognize Prabhupāda's true place in the history of religion. His accomplishments are comparable to the greatest spiritual victories known to man. Lord Buddha, it is said, vanquished the demon Mara; Jesus Christ was victorious over Satan; Allah defeated Iblis; Kṛṣṇa destroyed the enemies of the righteous—Pūtanā, Keśī, Aghāsura, Bakāsura, Kāmsa. Prabhupāda's achievement was similar—he took illusion personified and forced her to leave the precincts of many human hearts. His teachings and example have changed the lives of millions.

It takes thoroughgoing study—and some humility—to recognize Prabhupāda as the foremost modern ambassador of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism that he is, to see him as history’s first worldwide teacher of *sanātana-dharma* (eternal function of the soul), or as the twentieth century’s chief herald of the nonsectarian truth found at the core of all religion.

It is unlikely that modern historians or scholars of comparative religion would recognize Prabhupāda’s unique position as the most recent emissary of the Absolute. How could they? Understanding Prabhupāda’s position comes from the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, from chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and associating with devotees in a spirit of faithfulness. Otherwise, Śrīla Prabhupāda remains an enigma—a significant religious personality, perhaps, but clearly only one among many.

While I applaud the religious scholars who saw fit to include Prabhupāda’s name and mission in their respective books, I beseech them—and their readers—to look deeper, to read Prabhupāda’s books carefully, and to try the spiritual process he brought from India, which is chiefly embodied in the chanting: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

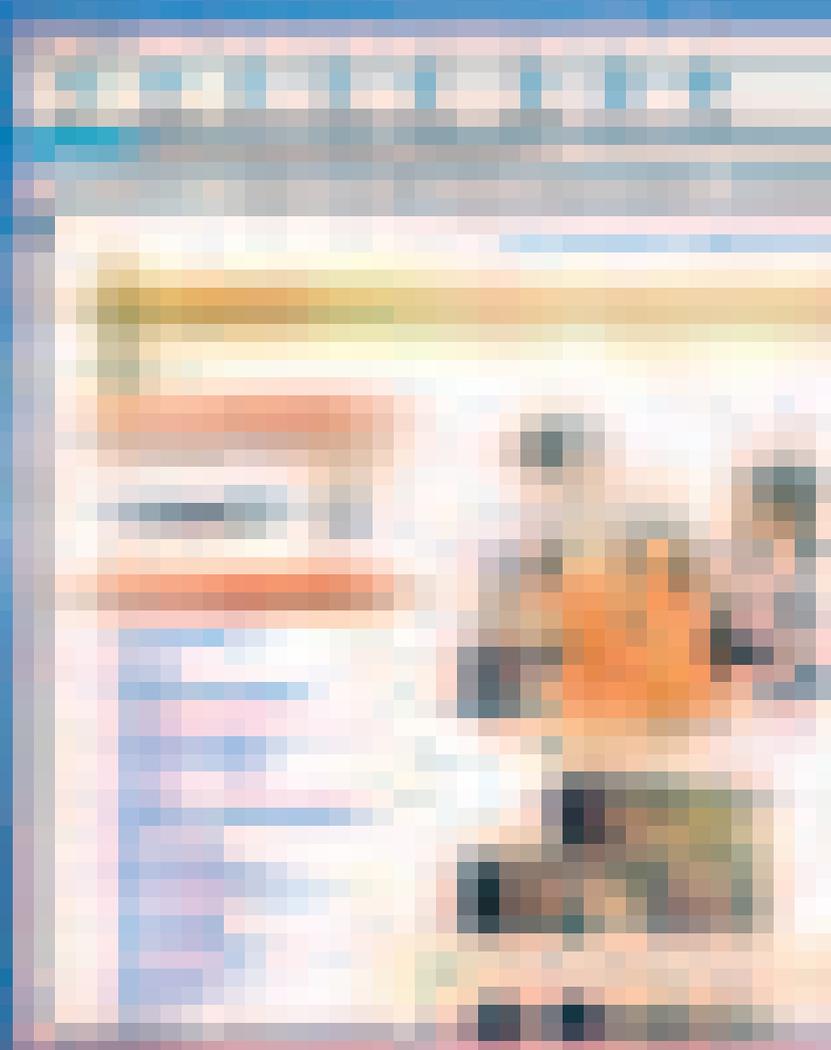
To really understand Prabhupāda’s life and work is no academic exercise—it is the culmination of the spiritual quest. While Prabhupāda can be seen as a particular saint and scholar from twentieth-century India, recognition of his true status as savior of the modern world leads also to recognition of one’s own true essence, the soul, the real self within. And beyond that, recognition of Prabhupāda leads to recognition of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which allows one entrance into the spiritual world.



Satyarāja Dāsa is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a regular contributor to BTG. He has written twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and is the editor of the recently published Holy War: Violence and the Bhagavad Gita. He lives with his wife and daughter near New York City.

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STRONG ROPES OF AFFECTION

The all-powerful Supreme Lord shows that He can be conquered by the power of His devotees' pure love.

by Rādhā Govinda Goswami

The Vedic scriptures describe how Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, enjoys eternal pastimes with His devotees, both in the spiritual world and in this world when He periodically descends. Because Kṛṣṇa wants the deepest loving exchanges, in the intimacy of love for Him some of His purest devotees forget that He is God and relate to Him as superiors. During the Vedic month of Kārtika (October–November), we especially honor an episode from Kṛṣṇa's life that exemplifies this principle. In one of His most endearing pastimes, He is chased and then bound by His mother, Yaśodā, for stealing butter and yogurt. The information in this article (adapted by Tattvavit Dāsa from a lecture) comes from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto Ten, Chapter 9, and from commentaries by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmi, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and other Vaiṣṇava ācāryas.

WHEN MOTHER YAŚODĀ started getting many complaints from the *gopīs* (cowherd women) about Kṛṣṇa stealing their butter and breaking their butter pots, she wondered why her son was stealing from the houses of others.

Yaśodā thought, “Maybe Kṛṣṇa doesn't like the butter in my house. Maybe the yogurt that we start with is not good, or the butter is not coming out perfectly. Why else would Kṛṣṇa go to other houses for what is readily available at home? Today, I'll make the butter myself.”

Yaśodā did not realize that Kṛṣṇa went to other homes because of the love the other *gopīs* had for Him.

So mother Yaśodā churned the yogurt herself, although, being a queen, it was inappropriate work for her. Still, Yaśodā churned, and she gave her maidservants other house-

Left: Yaśodā Devī prepares to bind her mischievous son, Kṛṣṇa, to a mortar. (Painting by Devakī Devī Dāsī, one of her 77 paintings in the new deluxe edition of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, available from the Krishna.com Store, page 63).

hold duties. The maidservants actually made tasty butter, but she took it upon herself to make the butter—to stop Kṛṣṇa from stealing and to keep Him happy at home.

While churning the yogurt, Yaśodā sang the glories of Kṛṣṇa’s childhood pastimes. She sang about whatever Kṛṣṇa had done. From this we can learn a lesson: If we cannot find much time to sing the glories of the Lord, then at least we can sing and chant while doing physical work.

As Yaśodā pulled the churning ropes, her gold bangles shook and made a melodious sound: *jghan jghan jghan jghan*. They were joined by the sounds of her earrings, ankles bells, and gold belt. The sound of her ornaments resembled the sound of expert cymbal players. As she churned, the rod in the yogurt pot went *gharad gharad gharad gharad*, sounding just like a drum. Thus mother Yaśodā had full musical accompaniment as she sang Kṛṣṇa’s glories.

In the transcendental world, even the ornaments and household utensils are conscious, so they sounded out of joy, to congratulate Yaśodā as she

performed this service. Our hands do not become beautiful simply by being adorned with gold jewelry; they are beautiful only if we engage them in the service of the Supreme. Yaśodā’s earrings thought that they were fortunate to be on ears engaged in hearing the glories of Kṛṣṇa. Being a devotee does not mean sitting back; it means working and sweating for Kṛṣṇa. *Bhakti* is defined as engaging the senses in the service of the giver of all our senses. Kṛṣṇa has given us these senses, and their best engagement is His service.

Mother Yaśodā was fully prepared to perform this service, with no sign of laziness. It was very early in the morning. The sun had not yet risen when Yaśodā began working hard.

She was thinking, “Before Kṛṣṇa wakes up, let me extract butter from the yogurt, so that I can feed Him when He gets up.”

She became so engrossed that her forehead perspired, which made her look even more beautiful.

In this way, as she churned the yogurt, her tongue recited the glorious pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, her ears heard them, her mind meditated on how she would

make the butter to feed Kṛṣṇa, and her hands and body produced the butter. This is the state of a perfect devotee: Mind, body, and intelligence fully engaged in devotional service for Kṛṣṇa.

KṚṢṂA WAKES UP

Hearing Yaśodā’s melodious singing and the rhythmic sounds of the churning, Kṛṣṇa woke up earlier than usual. When He woke, He wanted to drink her breast milk.

He looked for his mother and wondered, “Why is she not with Me in bed today? She’s not worried about Me at all. Why has she left Me?”

Children are good at getting attention, and when they don’t get it, they become mischievous. Kṛṣṇa started falsely crying and walked to the room where His mother was singing. He got close to her and looked at her intently, but Yaśodā did not notice him. There is a lesson here for us. When will Kṛṣṇa come to us? He will come when we are so absorbed in devotional service that we will not notice if He comes. Kṛṣṇa will not come to us if we are just sitting around waiting.

Kṛṣṇa caught hold of the churning rod to get His mother’s attention, and He held it firmly with both hands, as if applying brakes on a moving bicycle. He was telling his mother: “Stop! I need attention. Feed me *now*.”

Vaiṣṇava commentators have given another reason why Kṛṣṇa stopped the churning: After fully “churning” the scriptures, one gets Kṛṣṇa, because He is the conclusion of everything. But Yaśodā already had Kṛṣṇa, so what was the need for her to keep churning?

Yaśodā looked at Kṛṣṇa and waited to see what He would do next. Kṛṣṇa grabbed her arm with both hands, put one foot on the rim of the yogurt pot, pulled Himself into her lap, and started drinking her milk. Yaśodā proudly and pleasurably fed her son.

Kṛṣṇa also became proud, thinking, “How smart I am. I stopped Mother from her work and claimed My right.”

Thinking this, He smiled cheekily. As He drank the milk, a competition between Yaśodā’s milk and Kṛṣṇa began. Kṛṣṇa would not become satisfied, and Mother Yaśodā’s milk would not stop flowing because of her intense af-

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Even yogis cannot catch Kṛṣṇa, but mother Yaśodā was running after Him with a stick in her hand.



fection. She kept feeding him for quite some time.

Then something happened to distract Yaśodā's attention. Some milk she had placed on the nearby stove was boiling over. Yaśodā put Kṛṣṇa down and ran to save the milk. This milk was from the special Padmagandha cows, especially for Kṛṣṇa.

This transcendental milk was thinking, "Why am I tolerating this heat if Kṛṣṇa is going to become fully satisfied by drinking mother Yaśodā's breast milk; it is better for me to commit suicide by jumping into the fire."

Thinking this, the milk boiled over. Mother Yaśodā took the milk off the fire, but in the mean time, what happened to Kṛṣṇa?

ANGRY KṚṢṂA

Little Kṛṣṇa became angry.

"How dare she put me down while I'm still drinking, just to save a little milk! I'm still hungry."

He who is the purest of pure, untainted by any of the modes of material nature, became angry. His lips swelled and became red as He bit them with His teeth.

"Who does she think she is? I'll show her. She'll be sorry. I'll break something in the house."

He looked around and saw a small stone used for grinding spices. With this stone He hit the churning pot in a strategic spot—at the bottom—so that there would be no sound to alarm Yaśodā. Yogurt was everywhere. Kṛṣṇa started for another room. As he went out, He walked all over the spilled yogurt—*chub, chub, chub*—but quietly, so that His mother would not hear Him. In the form of Vāmanadeva, Kṛṣṇa had covered the whole universe with just three of His steps, and now He was walking through the yogurt. Kṛṣṇa did not think, "Perhaps I should

go around the yogurt." He just walked through it, leaving pretty footprints showing exactly where He has going.

Kṛṣṇa went to another room and turned over a wooden grinding mortar. He climbed on it and then took a pot of butter from the rafters. He fed the butter to monkeys who appeared there. The monkeys ate with great pleasure.

After rescuing the milk from the stove, Yaśodā returned and saw the broken pot. If Kṛṣṇa had stayed there, then she might have thought that the pot had broken accidentally, but because Kṛṣṇa was not there, she knew He was guilty and had run away to hide.

Yaśodā was not angry about the broken pot.

She smiled and thought, "How clever my Kṛṣṇa is! He broke this pot in such a way that I didn't hear a sound."

But she decided that she had to punish Him to teach Him a lesson. So she followed His footprints. Hiding behind a wall, she looked around a corner at Him.

KṚṢṂA FEARS HIS MOTHER

Kṛṣṇa was looking all around, expecting to get caught at any minute. His eyes were fearful. He knew that Yaśodā would come after Him to punish Him. She approached very slowly from behind, sneaking up on Him. But Kṛṣṇa saw her coming. Seeing the look on her face and the stick in her hand, He quickly got down from the grinding mortar and fled.

He thought, "If I'm quick, she won't catch me, and I'll be spared a beating."

Yaśodā didn't let Him run away. She was determined to catch Him. She chased Him with the stick in her hand.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī says, "Even yogis whose minds have become purified by austerities cannot catch

Kṛṣṇa through meditation, but on this day mother Yaśodā was running after that same Kṛṣṇa with a stick in her hand."

At first Kṛṣṇa ran from room to room. Then He left the house and ran into the streets of Gokula.

Mother Yaśodā thought, "Today He is not going to get away from me. Where can He go? I'll catch Him."

She followed Him everywhere. All the Vrajavāsīs (local residents) looked in amazement at the scene.

"What has happened today? Normally there is so much affection between Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā."

Yaśodā was not used to running and became covered with perspiration. Finally, she caught Kṛṣṇa by His right hand. With His left hand He wiped tears from His eyes.

Yaśodā addressed Kṛṣṇa: "Are the monkeys Your relatives? Is that why You feed them so freely? You broke the yogurt pot. Till this day I didn't believe the other *gopīs*, but now I've caught You red-handed. Today I'll punish You. I'll beat You."

Waving the stick at Him, Yaśodā made Kṛṣṇa shake in fear. He wiped away tears, and the black ointment on His eyes smeared all over His face, making Him look more beautiful.

Kṛṣṇa said, "Ma, please let me go. I promise never to do this again."

Mother Yaśodā saw Kṛṣṇa's fear and threw her stick away. Kṛṣṇa sighed with relief.

He thought, "At least she won't beat Me with a stick. Maybe she'll give Me a little slap in the face and then let Me go."

Among all of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes as an avatar, this was the first time that He stood as the guilty party, awaiting His sentence and punishment. Kṛṣṇa's fate was totally in the hands of mother Yaśodā. This is the parental mood of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode.

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KṚṢṆA GETS TIED UP

Yaśodā decided to tie Him up. She reasoned that He was angry and if He were to run away to the bank of the Yamuna River or elsewhere, He might hurt Himself.

"Let me tie Him up for a little while," she thought. "I can churn some more, and in a little while I can appease Him."

So she started to bind Him. How did she tie Him? Without knowledge of His position as the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead. Mother Yaśodā simply thought of Kṛṣṇa as her son, so she wanted to tie Him up. But the Personality of Godhead has no beginning, no end, no inside, no outside. He is all-pervading. How can someone with this nature be tied? It is impossible.

Kṛṣṇa is not under the influence of time. For Him, there is no difference between past, present, and future. He is in His transcendental form at all times. Being absolute, beyond relativity, He is free from the distinctions between cause and effect, though He is the cause and effect of everything. That person, beyond the perception of the senses, had appeared as a humanlike child, and mother Yaśodā, considering Him her ordinary son, began binding Him to the wooden mortar with a rope.

At first she used the string from her hair. When that was too short, she sent for ropes from her house. Amazingly, whenever she tried to tie Kṛṣṇa's waist, the ropes were always two fingers short, even when joined together. All of Kṛṣṇa's energies had united and come to His defense: "We won't let Kṛṣṇa be tied." Yaśodā became perplexed, unable to understand this. But still she was determined.

Kṛṣṇa was testing Yaśodā's determination—will she give up or keep trying? Because her effort was incomplete, Kṛṣṇa's mercy was also incomplete. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11), *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante*: "As one surrenders unto Me, I reward him accordingly." Kṛṣṇa waits for us to give our all before giving us His mercy.

After using all the ropes from her house, Yaśodā sent for more rope from the other *gopīs*' houses. Meanwhile the

gopīs who had gathered asked Yaśodā to let Kṛṣṇa go.

"He is not destined to be tied," they said. "Why are you being so stubborn?"

But Yaśodā refused to give up. The *gopīs* and Yaśodā were laughing, because she could not understand what was happening.

When Kṛṣṇa grew up and later went to Duryodhana's court as a messenger, Duryodhana wanted to tie up Kṛṣṇa and jail Him, so that He would not be able to assist the Pāṇḍavas in the great battle about to take place. Duryodhana ordered his guards to bind Kṛṣṇa. But at that time Kṛṣṇa showed His immense universal form, as if to say, "OK, tie me up. Do you have a rope long enough? Where will you start?" Seeing this amazing form, the guards were dumbfounded and fainted. So Duryodhana was unable to bind Kṛṣṇa, but mother Yaśodā was determined to succeed. Why? Because she believed Him to be her son.

In the end, seeing His mother's relentless determination and total exhaustion, Kṛṣṇa showed her His mercy and agreed to be tied. Kṛṣṇa had to accept defeat.

Can Kṛṣṇa really be tied up in this way?

Śukadeva Gosvāmī says, "Yes, Kṛṣṇa can be bound by His devotee, out of His mercy. Kṛṣṇa's mercy prevailed and subdued all of His other energies."

In this way Kṛṣṇa demonstrates that He is obliged to His devotees.

"The whole universe, including Brahmā and Śiva are under My control, but I can be controlled by My devotee."

This is Kṛṣṇa's eternal nature. ☸

His Holiness Rādhā Govinda Goswami met Śrīla Prabhupāda in Varanasi, India, in 1971. He at once accepted Śrīla Prabhupāda as his spiritual master, and was initiated by him in 1975. Since 1974 he has been based at the Krishna Balarām Mandir in Vṛndāvana. On the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. He is well-known in ISKCON for his scholarly, devotional discourses on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

“THANKS FOR BEING SUCH A PAIN!”

“Later I’ll be able to understand that Sam is Kṛṣṇa’s instrument to test my spiritual ideals, but now Sam is really upsetting me.”

by Karṇāmṛta Dāsa



Yamarāja Dāsa

AS I DRIVE THE forklift to pick up more freight to load onto the truck, my co-worker Sam watches me with a disdain obvious from his body language—scowling, arms folded, rigid like a statue.

His demeanor confirmed my inkling of the mood he might be in today when I smelled alcohol on his breath and heard his out-of-character kidding around. From experience, my other co-workers and I looked knowingly at each other, sensing he might be even more

difficult than usual to work with.

On a “good day”—when everything goes the way he thinks it should—he’s tolerable. Unfortunately for him, and potentially for me, this day is not going well. According to him, Friday is supposed to be an easy day, but this one isn’t—and it’s my fault. Since I’m doing my job right and getting the oldest freight first, we have a huge shipment with many small packages and odd-shaped pieces. This makes loading the truck difficult and time-consuming.

The more we identify with the demands of the body and the material ego, the more we risk friction in our dealings with others.



Though today he is obviously more unhappy and angry than usual, he says nothing about his feelings. This creates a tension between us that feels like a thick fog. His current behavior shows why no one wants to work with him.

Later I'll be able to understand that Sam is Kṛṣṇa's instrument to test my spiritual ideals, but now Sam is really upsetting me. Anger wells up inside me. Provoked by his negativity and unspoken criticism, I make the mistake of confronting his lousy attitude. I say something about his poor work ethic, and he bristles defensively, his face flushing.

Telling me how hard he has worked in his life, for so many more years than I, he asks me, "Who do you think you are?" peppered with some unprintable curse words.

Fortunately, before I can answer he says that he doesn't want to argue and walks away in a huff. That saves the situation from getting ugly.

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ANGER

According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, anger is one of the three gates leading to hell. If it's not resolved or purified, one's knowledge becomes clouded. This may cause one to act impulsively, violently, and without intelligence.

Our heated exchange leaves me shaken, and I retreat into the office. I sit quietly and breathe deeply. I pray that Kṛṣṇa helps me let go of anger and come to a more mode-of-goodness, peaceful state, so I can gain insight. Why did I become so angry, and what does my reaction tell me about myself? In any conflict where I lose my composure, I have to understand that the issue is really about me and not the other person. I can't do much to change someone else, but I can change myself and how I respond.

After some time, by the Lord's mercy I feel some clarity and calmness by intensely and prayerfully chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I think about the energy of anger. Anger isn't always bad. It has its rare application in devotional service, as when for the Lord's purpose the devotee/warriors Arjuna or Hanu-mān used their righteous anger against aggressors. Anger can sometimes motivate us to take necessary action we might not otherwise take.

The important things to consider when questioning the appropriateness of our anger are what provoked it and the result of its application. Arjuna became angry against unrighteous persons acting against the Lord's desire, and the result of his anger was to reestablish dharma. My anger arose from my material consciousness and caused me to further forget Kṛṣṇa, and thus myself. But the outcome was positive: I became introspective and realized that I had instigated our heated exchange by my defensiveness and lack of self-control.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Although I know the value of techniques of psychology and anger management to lessen negative reactions to conflict, they must be combined with self-realization (working to understand our soul beyond the body) to be most effective. Praying, reading scripture, and chanting the holy names are recommended to help purify our material tendencies and awaken our true spiritual nature. We should also find, serve, and hear from a competent guide or guru we can trust, one who exemplifies the teachings of the scriptures and can give us relevant spiritual perspectives. Hearing from the guru about our conditioned state in the modes of material nature and about the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can help us

meet the challenges in life. By assimilating such instructions, we can learn to think and act differently. Then we can gradually be more caring and empathetic, gain understanding, and thus be less reactive.

The more we identify with the demands of the body and the material ego, the more we risk friction in our dealings with others. In our eternal identity, we understand the oneness and equality of all souls in relationship to Kṛṣṇa. We naturally desire everyone's welfare, seeing their suffering and happiness as our own. Being a devotee means to practice working in this spirit even in our materially conditioned state.

How can we work for the betterment of others? The ideal way is to share spiritual insight according to each person's receptivity. Giving kindness and respect is always important and can be practiced in any circumstance, if not externally then at least internally.

Although we may know we should do this, we may not want to when we feel offended, angered, or abused by someone. Even though sometimes we can't condone someone's behavior, we can pray that our heart may become favorably disposed toward that person and that we may understand his or her perspective. On our own this may seem impossible, yet we can rest assured that with Kṛṣṇa's help all obstacles can be removed and anything is possible. When we make the endeavor to sincerely serve Him, the Lord carries what we lack and preserves what we have (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.22).

Reflecting on Sam's personality and beliefs, I know our problem working together comes not only from his unhappy, critical, and negative personality, but also from his being openly critical of religion (and of life and almost anyone at times). He says that he is mad at God for killing his

brother, who was murdered. Since I'm a religious person, he directs his anger toward me, mocking my chanting and speaking ill of my taking time to pray. He doesn't do these things to my face but to others, from whom I hear about them. This fact added to my negative reaction to him.

BEYOND THE BLAME GAME

His tendency, which we all have at times, is to blame life and others for his problems and suffering. Thinking of his nature, and my apparent suffering from our interaction, I remember the many discussions in the *Bhāgavatam* that describe the real cause of our suffering. The narrations in the scripture are meant to stimulate deep thought and convince us of our real spiritual identity beyond the body. The soul is unaffected by material conditions and suffering. Taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees brings us real peace and happiness and eventually restores us to our eternal blissful nature.

In light of today's events, "The Song of the Avanti Brāhmaṇa," spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava, seems particularly poignant. Kṛṣṇa spoke this section of the *Bhāgavatam* in response to Uddhava's question as to how it is possible to be unaffected by provocation from others' criticism, harsh speech, or activities that harm one's body or means of livelihood.

Long ago, a *brāhmaṇa* became wealthy from agriculture and commerce but hoarded his money for no one's benefit. His miserly actions and mentality offended both his family and the demigods, the agents of the Lord. As a result he gradually lost everything and was rejected by his family.

THE BLESSINGS OF LIFE'S REVERSES

Feeling great pain and lamentation at his misfortune, the *brāhmaṇa* reflected on his life. By his previous piety he could see the turn of events in his life in a spiritual way, and a powerful feeling of renunciation awoke within him. In this state he could understand that no external agent causes one suffering, but only one's materially conditioned mind.

The *brāhmaṇa*'s realizations transferred into his practical life, and he gave up all material pursuits and dedicated his life to the service of God. He prayed with determination, "I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa." He no longer blamed anyone for what he had experienced in life.

Although our material difficulties

and good fortune are the result of our impious and pious acts, ultimately God is in control. So this devotee *brāhmaṇa* now saw God in every situation, and in all his dealings with others. Such a vision helped him remember and depend on Kṛṣṇa and thus advance
(please turn to page 58)

God Wonders

by Guru Dāsa

Will you think of Me

When

days are filled with sun and the nights are always fun?

When

excitement buzzes all around,

And the treasures of love seem safe and sound?

When

success lies in your grasp and your car runs fast?

When

flowers fill your home,

And poverty and despair are words unknown?

OR

When

darkness descends and you have no friends,

When

your crops freeze before their season,

And your child dies for some unknown reason,

When

tears hit the ground and no one ventures a sound,

When

the curtains are drawn

And the night may not make it to dawn,

When life's last breath departs,

And that final beat leaves the heart,

Will you think of Me?

Guru Dāsa joined ISKCON in Denver, Colorado, in 1979.



The Tragedy of Self-Destruction

A spiritual solution that gets to the root of the problem is the only sure protection against the lure of self-destructive behavior.

by Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa

THE TROUT is caught by the fisherman's lure, the mouse by cheese. An irony of the struggle for existence is that living beings are often destroyed by what they desire. But at least the fish and the mouse have excuses: the bait and the cheese look like sustenance. And the fish and the mouse don't know they'll be trapped. Human beings seldom have either of these excuses. The tempta-

tions that wreck their lives are quite often pure indulgences known to be dangerous. For example, no one has to smoke for survival, and any half-awake person knows that smoking is dangerous.

Consider the following statistics from the World Health Organization:

- Tobacco kills nearly 10,000 people worldwide every day.



Photos: Yamarāja Dāsa



- It is predicted that by 2020 tobacco use will cause over 12% of all deaths globally. This is more deaths worldwide than from suicide, homicide, HIV, tuberculosis, maternal mortality, and motor vehicle accidents combined.
- Half of those who start smoking in adolescence will die in middle age, losing around 22 years of normal life expectancy.

Add the facts that an average cigarette contains 401 poisons and 43 cancer-causing chemicals, and that there are around 1.1 billion smokers in the world (about one-third of the global population aged 15 and over), and we have quite a sobering picture of the world around us. The statistics about other self-destructive behaviors—alcoholism, substance abuse, suicide—are equally, if not more, alarming. And even among so-called normal people, practically everyone is victimized by some form of self-destructive behavior—unwarranted expressions of anger that turn out to be disastrous, unintentional use of caustic words that break hearts and ruin lives, and so on.

A question naturally arises: How does an intelligent human being embark on such a destructive course? Most people know that when they start, say, smoking, they are treading into a danger zone. But the media, friends, and peddlers persuade them to experiment just once. Seeking a break from the humdrum daily life with its inane pleasures, they acquiesce. The impression of instant pleasure gets embedded in their mind, and whenever they face a reversal, they tend to seek immediate relief through smoking. Every successive experience of smoking reinforces the earlier impressions, strength-

When our quest for sensual pleasure ends in frustration, we turn to intoxication and other self-destructive acts. But we can free ourselves from craving degraded pleasure by finding spiritual happiness in chanting the holy names of the Lord.

The essential need of the soul is to love and be loved and to experience unbounded happiness through loving exchange.



ens the tendency to seek momentary relief, and weakens the voice of intelligence and conscience. Smoking becomes an irresistible demand, a compulsion, an addiction. Smokers turn into helpless victims, driven again and again to the irresistible.

CURRENT SOLUTIONS

Here are some methods now in use for breaking addictions:

1. *Knowledge*: It would seem that if people knew about the dangers, that would deter them from indulgence. Sometimes. But not generally. Knowledge can have the opposite effect. For example, after governmental regulations made it mandatory to display “Cigarette smoking is injurious to health” on every cigarette ad and pack, cigarette sales increased; the warning seemed to evoke a dare-devil spirit in young people.

2. *Emotional Support*: People often turn to addictions when emotionally let down or betrayed by loved ones. Emotionally neglected adolescents are especially susceptible to addictions. Providing emotional support through personal counseling is a potential solution. But professional counseling often leads to chronic dependence on the counselor. And for many, professional guidance costs too much. Friends can help, but in our fast-paced modern life few people can invest the time and energy needed to consistently provide intensive emotional support.

3. *Sublimation*: Sublimation involves replacing a gross physical drive with a more refined substitute. For example, an alcoholic might seek refuge in music instead of alcohol. But this can work only if he has a strong liking for music and if his addiction to alcohol is not overpowering. Another problem is that the mental impressions of indulgence in alcohol make it seem

far more attractive than its substitute.

4. *Willpower*: Seeing the physical and emotional pain he is inflicting upon himself and his loved ones, an addict may sometimes by sheer determination decide to give up his perverted habit. Unfortunately few people are able to muster the necessary willpower. Even if successful, they face the grim prospect of an entire lifetime of constant inner struggle, with the fear of succumbing at any moment. And failure often brings with it intolerable feelings of guilt, making living itself an agony.

5. *Religion*: Statistical surveys have shown that the religiously committed are less likely to succumb to seeking perverted pleasures. Adopting religious principles rigorously also sometimes helps addicts to free themselves. Dr. Patrick Glynn writes in his book *God: The Evidence*, “It is difficult to find a more consistent correlative of mental health, or a better insurance against self-destructive behaviors, than a strong religious faith.”

6. *Substitution*: Addicts often try to switch their addiction to a less harmful substitute—smokers try a nicotine patch or nicotine gum, heroin addicts try methadone, and so on. While this may make the addiction less debilitating, the addict is still not free of emotional craving and mental dependence on external substances. And the substitute drug continues to take its toll on the health and the wealth of the addict. Thus substitution leads at best to lessening of the evil and at worst to its perpetuation, rarely to its elimination.

While each of these methods has had some small degree of success, the real solution to self-destructive behavior lies in understanding its roots. Let’s consider the problem from the Vedic perspective.

THE VEDIC PARADIGM

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.36), Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa, “By what is one impelled to sinful acts, even unwillingly, as if engaged by force?”

Lord Kṛṣṇa replies (3.37), “It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the mode of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world.”

The background of this dialogue is the fundamental teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*: The source of life, the actual self, is a non-material particle of spirit, known as the *ātmā* or the soul. The essential need of the soul is to love and be loved and to experience unbounded happiness through loving exchange. Being spiritual by constitution, the soul belongs to a higher dimensional milieu, the spiritual world. There the loving propensity of the soul finds complete fulfillment in the supremely lovable all-attractive person, who reciprocates with the soul’s love.

The Vedic texts state, *eko bahu syām*: the Supreme has expanded into infinite subordinates for loving reciprocation. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1) explains, *raso vai saḥ*: the Supreme is the reservoir of all divine loving emotions. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* confirms that the Supreme Person is all-attractive and is therefore best known by the name “Kṛṣṇa,” which means all-attractive in Sanskrit. In the spiritual world Kṛṣṇa is the pivot of all relationships, and there the soul continually relishes ever-intensifying and ever-expanding ecstasies of love in relationship with Him.

Love necessitates freedom; only when the object of love freely chooses to reciprocate one’s love does the experience of love become truly satisfying and fulfilling. The soul is therefore

(please turn to page 41)

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

SATI'S FEMININE

Desiring to enjoy a social life, Satī tries to persuade her detached husband, Lord Śiva, to accompany her to her father's house.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 3

PURPORT (continued from Text 9): Lord Śiva, however, is different; therefore his name is Śiva. He is not at all attracted by material enjoyment, although his wife, Satī, was the daughter of a very great leader and was given to him by the request of Brahmā. Lord Śiva was reluctant, but Satī, as a woman, the daughter of a king, wanted enjoyment. She wanted to go to her father's house, just as her other sisters might have done, and meet them and enjoy social life. Here, she specifically indicated that she would decorate herself with the ornaments given by her father. She did not say that she would decorate herself with the ornaments given by her husband because her husband was callous about all such matters. He did not know how to decorate his wife and take part in social life because he was always in ecstasy with thoughts of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

According to the Vedic system, a daughter is given a sufficient dowry at the time of her marriage, and therefore Satī was also given a dowry by her father, and ornaments were included. It is also the custom that the husband gives

some ornaments, but here it is particularly mentioned that her husband, being materially almost nothing, could not do so; therefore she wanted to decorate herself with the ornaments given by her father. It was fortunate for Satī that Lord Śiva did not take the ornaments from his wife and spend them for *gāñjā*, because those who imitate Lord Śiva in smoking *gāñjā* exploit everything from household affairs; they take all of their wives' property and spend on smoking, intoxication and similar other activities.

10 तत्र स्वसृमे ननु भर्तृसम्मिता
मातृष्वसृः क्लिन्नधियं च मातरम्

(1) Why did Satī say that she would decorated herself with ornaments given by her father, rather than by her

द्रक्ष्ये चिरोत्कण्ठमना महर्षिभि-
रुन्नीयमानं च मुडाध्वरध्वजम्

*tatra svasṛr me nanu bhartṛ-sammitā
mātr-śvasṛḥ klinna-dhiyaṁ ca mātaram
drakṣye cirotkanṭha-manā maharṣibhir
unnīyamānaṁ ca mṛḍādhwara-dhvajam*

tatra—there; *svasṛḥ*—own sisters; *me*—my; *nanu*—surely; *bhartṛ-sammitāḥ*—along with their husbands; *mātr-śvasṛḥ*—the sisters of my mother; *klinna-dhiyaṁ*—affectionate; *ca*—and; *mātaram*—mother; *drakṣye*—I shall see; *cira-utkanṭha-manāḥ*—being very anxious for a long time; *mahā-ṛṣibhiḥ*—by great sages; *unnīyamānaṁ*—being raised; *ca*—and; *mṛḍa*—O Śiva; *adhvara*—sacrifice; *dhvajam*—flags.

My sisters, my mother's sisters and their husbands, and other affectionate relatives must be assembled there, so if I go I shall be able to see them, and I shall be able to see the flapping flags and the performance of the sacrifice by the great sages. For these reasons, my dear husband, I am very much anxious to go.

PURPORT: As stated before, the tension between the father-in-law and son-in-law persisted for a considerable time. Satī, therefore, had not gone to her father's house for a long while. Thus she was very anxious to go to her father's house, particularly because on that occasion her sisters and their husbands and her mother's sisters would be there. As is natural for a woman, she wanted to dress equally to her other sisters and also be accompanied by her husband. She did not, of course, want to go alone.

11 त्वय्येतदाश्चर्यमजात्ममायया
विनिर्मितं भाति गुणत्रयात्मकम्
तथाप्यहं योषिदत्त्वविच्च ते
दीना दिदृक्षे भव मे भवक्षितिम्

*tvayy etad āścaryam ajātma-māyayā
vinīmitaṁ bhāti guṇa-trayātmakam
tathāpy ahaṁ yoṣid atattva-vic ca te
dīnā didṛkṣe bhava me bhava-kṣitim*

tvayi—in you; *etat*—this; *āścaryam*—wonderful; *aja*—O Lord Śiva; *ātma-māyayā*—by the external energy of the Supreme Lord; *vinīmitaṁ*—created; *bhāti*—appears; *guṇa-traya-ātmakam*—being an interaction of the three modes of material nature; *tathā api*—even so; *ahaṁ*—I; *yoṣit*—woman; *atattva-vit*—not conversant with the truth; *ca*—and; *te*—your;

(2) Why did Satī address her husband as aja?

dīnā—poor; *didṛkṣe*—I wish to see; *bhava*—O Lord Śiva; *me*—my; *bhava-kṣitim*—place of birth.

This manifested cosmos is a wonderful creation of the interaction of the three material modes, or the external energy of the Supreme Lord. This truth is fully known to you. Yet I am but a poor woman, and, as you know, I am not conversant with the truth. Therefore I wish to see my birthplace once more.

PURPORT: Dākṣāyaṇī, Satī, knew very well that her husband, Lord Śiva, was not very much interested in the glaring manifestation of the material world, which is caused by the interaction of the three modes of nature. Therefore she addressed her husband as *aja*, which refers to one who has transcended the bondage of birth and death, or one who has realized his eternal position.

She stated, “The illusion of accepting the perverted reflection, the material or cosmic manifestation, to be real is not present in you, because you are self-realized. For you the attraction of social life and the consideration that someone is father, someone is mother, and someone is sister, which are illusory relationships, is already over; but because I am a poor woman, I am not so advanced in transcendental realization. Therefore naturally these appear to me as real.”

Only less intelligent persons accept this perverted reflection of the spiritual world to be real. Those who are under the spell of the external energy accept this manifestation to be fact, whereas those who are advanced in spiritual realization know that it is illusion. Actual reality is elsewhere, in the spiritual world.

“But as far as I am concerned,” Satī said, “I do not have much knowledge about self-realization. I am poor because I do not know the actual facts. I am attracted by my birthplace, and I want to see it.”

One who has attraction for his birthplace, for his body, and for other such items mentioned in the *Bhāgavatam* is considered to be like an ass or a cow. Satī might have heard all this many times from her husband, Lord Śiva, but because she was a woman, *yoṣit*, she still hankered after the same material objects of affection. The word *yoṣit* means “one who is enjoyed.” Therefore woman is called *yoṣit*. In spiritual advancement, association with *yoṣit* is always restricted because if one is like a play doll in the hands of *yoṣit*, then all his spiritual advancement is at once stopped. It is said, “Those who are just like playthings in the hands of a woman (*yoṣit-kṛīḍā-mṛgeṣu*) cannot make any advancement in spiritual realization.”

पश्य प्रयान्तीरभवान्ययोषितो

12 ऽप्यलङ्कृताः कान्तसखा वरूथशः
यासां ब्रजद्विः शितिकण्ठ मण्डितं

नभो विमानैः कलहंसपाण्डुभिः

paśya prayāntīr abhavānya-yoṣito
'py alaṅkṛtāḥ kānta-sakhā varūthaśaḥ
yāsām vrajadbhiḥ śīti-kaṇṭha maṇḍitam
nabho vimānaiḥ kala-haṁsa-pāṇḍubhiḥ

paśya—just see; *prayāntīḥ*—going; *abhava*—O never-born; *anya-yoṣitaḥ*—other women; *api*—certainly; *alaṅkṛtāḥ*—ornamented; *kānta-sakhāḥ*—with their husbands and friends; *varūthaśaḥ*—in large numbers; *yāsām*—of them; *vrajadbhiḥ*—flying; *śīti-kaṇṭha*—O blue-throated one; *maṇḍitam*—decorated; *nabhaḥ*—the sky; *vimānaiḥ*—with airplanes; *kala-haṁsa*—swans; *pāṇḍubhiḥ*—white.

O never-born, O blue-throated one, not only my relatives but also other women, dressed in nice clothes and decorated with ornaments, are going there with their husbands and friends. Just see how their flocks of white airplanes have made the entire sky very beautiful.

PURPORT: Here Lord Śiva is addressed as *abhava*, which means “one who is never born,” although generally he is known as *bhava*, “one who is born.” Rudra, Lord Śiva, is actually born from between the eyes of Brahmā, who is called Svayambhū because he is not born of any human being or material creature but is born directly from the lotus flower which grows from the abdomen of Viṣṇu. When Lord Śiva is addressed here as *abhava*, this may be taken to mean “one who has never felt material miseries.”

Satī wanted to impress upon her husband that even those who were not related to her father were also going, to say nothing of herself, who was intimately related with him. Lord Śiva is addressed here as blue throated. Lord Śiva drank an ocean of poison and kept it in his throat, not swallowing it or allowing it to go down to his stomach, and thus his throat became blue. Since then he has been known as *nilakaṇṭha*, or blue throated.

The reason that Lord Śiva drank an ocean of poison was for others' benefit. When the ocean was churned by the demigods and the demons, the churning at first produced poison, so because the poisonous ocean might have affected others who were not so advanced, Lord Śiva drank all the ocean water. In other words, he could drink such a great amount of poison for others' benefit, and now, since his wife was personally requesting him to go to her father's house, even if he did not wish to give that permission, he should do so out of his great kindness.

13 कथं सुतायाः पितृगेहकौतुकं
निशम्य देहः सुरवर्य नेङ्गते
अनाहुता अप्यभियन्ति सौहृदं

भर्तुर्गुरोर्देहकृतश्च केतनम्

katham sutāyāḥ pitṛ-geha-kautukam
niśamya dehaḥ sura-varya neṅgate
anāhutā apy abhiyanti sauhṛdam
bhartur guror deha-kṛtaś ca ketanam

katham—how; *sutāyāḥ*—of a daughter; *pitṛ-geha-kautukam*—the festival in the house of her father; *niśamya*—hearing; *dehaḥ*—the body; *sura-varya*—O best of the demigods; *na*—not; *iṅgate*—disturbed; *anāhutāḥ*—without being called; *api*—even; *abhiyanti*—goes; *sauhṛdam*—a friend; *bhartuḥ*—of the husband; *guroḥ*—of the spiritual master; *deha-kṛtaḥ*—of the father; *ca*—and; *ketanam*—the house.

O best of the demigods, how can the body of a daughter remain undisturbed when she hears that some festive event is taking place in her father's house? Even though you may be considering that I have not been invited, there is no harm if one goes to the house of one's friend, husband, spiritual master, or father without invitation.

तन्मे प्रसीदेदममर्त्यं वाञ्छितं

14 कर्तुं भवान्कारुणिको बतार्हति
त्वयात्मनोऽर्धेऽहमदभ्रचक्षुषा
निरूपिता मानुगृहाण याचितः

tan me prasidedam amartya vāñchitam
kartum bhavān kāruṇiko batārhati
tvayātmano 'rdhe 'ham adabhra-cakṣuṣā
nirūpitā mānugṛhāṇa yācitaḥ

tat—therefore; *me*—unto me; *prasīda*—please be kind; *idam*—this; *amartya*—O immortal lord; *vāñchitam*—desire; *kartum*—to do; *bhavān*—Your Honor; *kāruṇikaḥ*—kind; *bata*—O lord; *arhati*—is able; *tvayā*—by you; *ātmanah*—of your own body; *ardhe*—in the half; *aham*—I; *adabhra-cakṣuṣā*—having all knowledge; *nirūpitā*—am situated; *mā*—to me; *anugṛhāṇa*—please show kindness; *yācitaḥ*—requested.

O immortal Śiva, please be kind towards me and fulfill my desire. You have accepted me as half of your body; therefore please show kindness towards me and accept my request.

ऋषिरुवाच

(3) Why is Lord Brahmā called Svayambhū?
(4) Why does Lord Śiva have a blue throat?

एवं गिरित्रः प्रिययाभिभाषितः

15 प्रत्यभ्यधत्त प्रहसन् सुहृत्प्रियः
संस्मारितो मर्मभिदः कुवागिषून्
यानाह को विश्वसृजां समक्षतः

ṛṣiḥ uvāca

*evam giritraḥ priyayābhibhāṣitaḥ
pratyabhyadhata prahasanaḥ suhṛt-priyaḥ
saṁsmārīto marma-bhidaḥ kuvāg-iṣūn
yān āha ko viśva-sṛjām samakṣataḥ*

ṛṣiḥ uvāca—the great sage Maitreya said; *evam*—thus; *giri-traḥ*—Lord Śiva; *priyayā*—by his dear wife; *abhibhāṣitaḥ*—being spoken to; *pratyabhyadhata*—replied; *prahasanaḥ*—while smiling; *suhṛt-priyaḥ*—dear to the relatives; *saṁ-smārītaḥ*—remembering; *marma-bhidaḥ*—heart piercing; *kuvāk-iṣūn*—malicious words; *yān*—which (words); *āha*—said; *kaḥ*—who (Dakṣa); *viśva-sṛjām*—of the creators of the universal manifestation; *samakṣataḥ*—in the presence.

The great sage Maitreya said: Lord Śiva, the deliverer of the hill Kailāsa, having thus been addressed by his dear wife, replied smilingly, although at the same time he remembered the malicious, heart-piercing speeches delivered by Dakṣa before the guardians of the universal affairs.

PURPORT: When Lord Śiva heard from his wife about Dakṣa, the psychological effect was that he immediately remembered the strong words spoken against him in the assembly of the guardians of the universe, and, remembering those words, he was sorry at heart, although to please his wife he smiled. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that a liberated person is always in mental equilibrium in both the distress

- (5) What was the psychological effect of Lord Śiva's hearing Satī request that they go to her father's house?
(6) How does Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explain why Lord Śiva, though self-realized, was unhappy at hearing Dakṣa's unkind words?
(7) What is the difference between the pleasure and pain of the material world and those of the spiritual world?
(8) What is the real nature of Kṛṣṇa's activities that cause apparent distress for the gopīs?

and the happiness of this material world. Therefore the question may now be raised why a liberated personality like Lord Śiva was so unhappy because of the words of Dakṣa.

The answer is given by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Lord Śiva is *ātmārāma*, or situated in complete self-realization, but because he is the incarnation in charge of the material mode of ignorance, *tamo-guṇa*, he is sometimes affected by the pleasure and pain of the material world.

The difference between the pleasure and pain of this material world and that of the spiritual world is that in the spiritual world the effect is qualitatively absolute. Therefore one may feel sorry in the absolute world, but the manifestation of so-called pain is always full of bliss. For instance, once Lord Kṛṣṇa, in His childhood, was chastised by His mother, Yaśodā, and Lord Kṛṣṇa cried. But although He shed tears from His eyes, this is not to be considered a reaction of the mode of ignorance, for the incident was full of transcendental pleasure. When Kṛṣṇa was playing in so many ways, sometimes it appeared that He caused distress to the *gopīs*, but actually such dealings were full of transcendental bliss.

That is the difference between the material and spiritual worlds. The spiritual world, where everything is pure, is pervertedly reflected in this material world. Since everything in the spiritual world is absolute, in the spiritual varieties of apparent pleasure and pain there is no perception other than eternal bliss, whereas in the material world, because everything is contaminated by the modes of material nature, there are feelings of pleasure and pain. Therefore because Lord Śiva, although a fully self-realized person, was in charge of the material mode of ignorance, he felt sorrow.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्वयोदितं शोभनमेव शोभने
अनाहुता अप्यभियन्ति बन्धुषु
16 ते यद्यनुत्पादितदोषदृष्टयो
बलीयसानात्म्यमदेन मन्युना

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*tvayoditaṁ śobhanam eva śobhane
anāhutā apy abhiyanti bandhuṣu
te yady anutpādita-doṣa-dṛṣṭayo
baliyasānātmya-madena manyunā*

(continued in the next issue)

Journey with An Unseen Guide

“A faint voice began to suggest that I was near the end of a long journey—a journey I hadn’t even realized I was on.”

by Yogīnātha Dāsa

I’M FIFTY-ONE years old, and I live at the Sarana-gati Hare Kṛṣṇa community in British Columbia, Canada. I love life here. I love the snow. I love long summer evenings. I love having devotees for neighbors. I love fresh muffins cooked in a wood stove. I love big gardens. And I love the fragrant yellow aspen leaves when they dance against the blue September sky.

As a bearded student living in Seattle in the ’70s, I did not envision my present life. Yet looking back, I can now see that Kṛṣṇa was always preparing the way, step by step, so that I could eventually find the shelter of His lotus feet.

My “how I became a devotee” story begins at a smoke-filled college party. A biofeedback psychology student was boasting of his upcoming trek. He and a few others were going to spend Christmas break in South America. They were going to ceremoniously honor the arrival of the comet Kohoutek. “The greatest sky show ever” was



supposedly the harbinger of the new age of enlightenment. I was surprised by the confidence of the braggart, and I was intrigued by the notion of a new age. A voice within persuaded me to make my own journey to South

America. I too wanted to witness a cosmic spectacle, to be part of something great.

I bought a round-trip bus ticket from Seattle to Miami and a plane ticket from Miami to Bogotá, Colombia. In Colombia I took a taxi to the highest mountain in sight and camped out near the feet of a gigantic white Jesus statue. During my seven days in Colombia I saw nothing. I encountered estranged young Americans strung out on cocaine living in cheap hotels in Bogotá, I ate what must have been dog meat, but I did not see the comet, not even a glimmer. Hungry and disappointed, I began the long journey home.

THE “CURSE NAW” BOOK

During the four-day return bus ride from Miami to Seattle, my neck became rubbery and I neither slept nor stayed awake. In St. Louis on Christmas day, in this altered state of bus-induced trance, we

Bert quickly found a girlfriend and moved out of the A-frame, leaving me there alone with two Back to Godhead magazines.



passengers were given a thirty-minute lunch break. I meandered to the nearby Jefferson Memorial. While I stood shivering, a friendly fellow my age introduced himself. He talked fast and kept shaking my hand while I looked at his ragged stocking cap. He convinced me to give him \$5 for an oversized silvery book called *Kṛṣṇa* (which I thought was pronounced “Curse Naw”). Back on the bus I read a few lines in the book and closed it forever.

My spiritual quest might have ended in St. Louis were it not for a spring-time event at our college gymnasium. Baba Ram Das spoke and chanted to a packed audience. After I excitedly bought his book, my inner voice convinced me to spend the summer in Boulder, Colorado. Baba Ram Dasa and other prominent spiritual personalities of the day were offering a full schedule of enlightenment courses at Boulder’s Naropa Institute.

My first personal real-life encounter with Baba Ram Das occurred when he physically brushed me, a sincere seeker and admirer, aside while two attractive young women affectionately escorted him to pick up his mail. I became disillusioned not only with Baba Ram Das but in some way or other with every spiritual teacher there. The best of them seemed to be the Buddhist Rimpoche, who wasn’t rude or conceited but who was painfully boring. I dropped out of the institute and finished the summer washing dishes at a country club restaurant.

During the following year’s winter break, my friend Bert and I were hired to do every manner of menial task at a ski resort near Seattle. In exchange we received free lodging in an old A-frame ski chalet, free food, and some wages. Bert quickly found a girlfriend and moved out of the A-frame, leaving me there alone with two *Back to Godhead* magazines. On the evening before leaving for the ski resort job, I had gone out

on a stroll on University Avenue. “The Ave” was dark, cold, and eerily empty except for a group of chanters draped in robes of different muted colors. On a busy day I would have crossed the street to avoid them, but this time I had merely walked by, pretending to be absorbed in my own thoughts.

A young man with round features and an earnest voice had abruptly put the two magazines into my hand. When he had asked for a donation, I tried to give the magazines back, but he refused to accept them.

“Will you read them?” he’d asked.

I considered for a moment and told him I probably would. They were mine.

Now on my one day off during a three-week work shift, with no Bert, isolated and bored, I looked through the magazines with no particular interest. Out of curiosity I tried saying the recommended chant. Nothing happened. I said it a few more times. Still nothing. I was looking forward to getting back to school.

KHLIL GIBRAN REINCARNATED?

Shortly after winter break my inner voice urged me to enroll in some evening hatha yoga classes. My yoga instructor, Bob Smith, was gentle, kind, and helpful. Under his tutelage I became not only agile but also less inclined to eat meat. I became attached to him as a spiritual mentor. One evening, however, Bob suddenly announced that in meditation he had discovered his previous life’s identity: He had formerly been the well-know esoteric writer Kahlil Gibran. Now he would cancel all future yoga courses to better understand the significance of that revelation. I felt spiritually abandoned, and although I liked Kahlil Gibran’s books, I had some doubts about Bob’s insights.

About this same time, my old high school friend Ron inherited his de-

ceased grandmother’s house in Seattle’s university district. Ron wanted to have roomers, and I needed a cheap place to live. The room Ron offered me was empty and bare except for one small dresser. The dresser itself was also empty and bare except that one drawer contained a brand new *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Ron had given \$5 to a persuasive guy at the airport in exchange for a book he didn’t want. One evening I opened the book and stared at a page, reading the same words over and over again. I felt enveloped by peace and light while the world outside zoomed in circles. The book was bright and clear. I felt I’d attained the nirvana mentioned by Bob in the yoga classes. After that I regularly visited the book to experience the mystical purity. I don’t recall the meaning of the words, but I began to crave the spiritual sensation.

Shortly after my first brush with enlightenment, I had an experience that convinced me to give up all forms of intoxication forever. Ron and I and another friend decided to make a day trek to the remote and wild stretches of the Skykomish River. High in the Cascade Mountains, the river pounds and splashes its way through steep forests. Our plan was to take some LSD and spend the day with nature. Soon after we took it, my two friends were giggling and walking around. I, on the other hand, became horror struck. My mind’s eye filled with the visage of two horrible and ugly creatures. They seemed to be taunting me, waiting for me to fall to my death in the gushing river. I was not prepared for the shocking event. Panic and fear consumed me. In desperation, with wide eyes and complete earnestness, I pleaded and bargained with God. If He saved me, I would never take drugs again. I survived.

Life was different without drugs. Aimless walking became my preoc-

cupation. I would regularly walk from one end of Seattle to the other—three or four hours, sometimes six or more including breaks. It was on one of these epic foot voyages that I met a girl standing in front of a grocery store. She was bundled against the cold and huddled over a glass gallon jar. She said something, and I put a quarter in her jug. From under her shawl she pulled out a card, handed it to me, and invited me to a “love feast.” As I held the card, I realized that she was connected with the people who had given me the two magazines, the same people who had sold me the “Curse Naw” book and had sold Ron the *Bhagavad-gītā* that I had since claimed as my own. A faint voice began to suggest that I was near the end of a long journey—a journey I hadn’t even realized I was on.

The walk from Ron’s to the love

feast was less than two hours. For the first time in my life, I overate. More than Thanksgiving or Christmas. Even after walking all the way home, I was so happily stuffed with food that at night I had recurring dreams of *halava*.

I knew something was happening, but I couldn’t piece it together until I was riding a city bus home from school. I had brought a small version of the *Kṛṣṇa* book with me to pass time during the commute. It was a gift from the love feast. While reading the book, I suddenly became dumbstruck. “Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” I kept repeating the phrase over and over and over again. “That’s it! That’s it! Now I get it! Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I get it! I believe it!”

When I got off the bus, I felt so

uncontrollably elated that I danced in the street.

Without explaining much to people I knew wouldn’t understand, I sold my record collection to the used-book store, gave my Chevy II station wagon to Ron in exchange for the rent I never paid, and walked across town to the temple. I was finally home.

Even on the first night as a temple resident, while sleeping on the warm and fragrant wooden floor I knew I would never leave.

Twenty-eight years later, listening to the leaves, seeing the garden, feeling the breeze, surrounded by good neighbors, I am humbled. God has been good to me. Life as Kṛṣṇa’s servant is as wonderful as I had expected, and I sense that the future is probably even better. ❀

SELF-DESTRUCTION

(continued from page 34)

endowed with a minute free will to enable him to feel the joy of loving the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa. But when the soul misuses his free will and becomes unwilling to love Kṛṣṇa, he has to find a substitute in whom to repose his love. Of course, there can be no substitute for the Supreme, and by constitution the soul cannot find happiness in loving anyone other than the Supreme. But for those souls who insist on making that attempt, the world of matter (where all of us currently reside) provides the necessary arrangement for experimentation and rectification.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

As soon as the soul comes to the material world, his love for Kṛṣṇa becomes perverted into lust. Lust is a formidable illusory force that offers the soul various surrogate objects of love to experiment with. Lust creates and perpetuates the misidentification of the soul with the material body he is given. Lust causes within all living beings the overpowering drive for gross sexual enjoyment in specific, and all forms of material enjoyment in general.

Modern civilization with its media, culture, social environment, and overall values aggravates lust. The celluloid promises of unending sexual bliss es-

pecially provoke wild erotic fantasies. But sexual enjoyment is heartbreakingly brief; dreams cherished for years vanish within moments. Even though what people experience is so pathetically little compared to the hype, the media blitz goads them on.

Sexual enjoyment, especially illicit, is a complicated matter, involving time, money, intense emotions, relationship dynamics, risk for prestige, and so on. And the attempt for such enjoyment, even if somehow successful, leaves one feeling disappointed and cheated—and craving for more. If unsuccessful, it creates great anger. Either way the victims are soon so enslaved by lust that the more they try, the more they get frustrated—and yet the more they become impelled to keep trying. Eventually

the accumulated enormous frustration makes instant relief a desperate necessity. Frustrated people easily fall prey to the lure of quick pleasure offered by intoxicants.

Lust is thus the internal enemy at the root of all self-destructive behavior. The *Gītā* (18.38) describes vividly the nature of all perverted pleasures: they appear at first to be like nectar but in the end are poison. Elsewhere Prabhupāda comments, “While one enjoys sense gratification, it may be that there is some feeling of happiness, but actually that so-called feeling of happiness is the ultimate enemy of the sense enjoyer.” Why? Because it reinforces the illusion that true happiness can be found in this world.

Lust is present in everyone in vary-

MOVING?

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ing degrees. That is why everyone, no matter how materially successful he may be, has some tendencies toward self-destructive behavior. People generally become concerned about such tendencies only when they exceed socially acceptable limits. But actually lust throttles the ability of everyone to make meaningful contributions to society and even their own future; the difference is only in degree. From the spiritual point of view, lust is inherently self-destructive; it strips the soul of the unlimited spiritual happiness that is his birthright and forces him to labor for paltry material sensations of pleasure that can never satisfy his immortal longing.

THE ONLY WAY TO CONQUER LUST

Lust, being a perversion of our original, essential nature, cannot possibly be annihilated, suppressed, repressed, or even sublimated. But it reverts to its original nature if we direct our loving propensity back to Kṛṣṇa through the scientific process of devotional service. Action on the spiritual platform is what Lord Kṛṣṇa recommends to Arjuna as the key to overcoming lust: “Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind, and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence [Kṛṣṇa consciousness] and thus—by spiritual strength—conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.43)

The channeling of consciousness from matter back to Kṛṣṇa is most

easily and effectively executed through the medium of divine sound. The Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa, being omnipotent, is fully present in His holy names. Chanting the holy names therefore connects one immediately with Kṛṣṇa, the supreme pleasure principle. Regular meditation on the holy names enables one to taste happiness streaming down from the spiritual dimension. This spiritual pleasure is so satisfying that it soon frees one from the craving for perverted mundane pleasure like drugs and alcohol.

Millions of people all over the world have discovered the purifying potency of the holy names of God. During the period of the counterculture in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s, Śrīla Prabhupāda spread the congregational chanting of the holy names and saved thousands of young people from a condemned life of drug addiction. All over the globe ISKCON devotees who practice mantra meditation everyday for about two hours—chanting the *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—are easily able to eschew all forms of intoxication, gambling, meat-eating, and illicit sex, the main self-destructive activities impelled by lust. The ability to give up these four activities is not necessary to begin chanting, but because they greatly obscure the original consciousness of the soul, abstaining from them helps accelerate the purifying effect of the chanting. While many people today are so captivated and enslaved by lust that they consider life

without these activities an impossibility, devotees lead lives that are natural, peaceful, satisfying, meaningful, and constructive, protected as they are by their mantra meditation.

The benefits of chanting do not stop with freedom from addiction, nor is chanting meant only for those victimized by self-destructive behavior. Chanting the holy names of God is a universal, time-tested, nonsectarian method of bringing about the blossoming of consciousness to its highest bloom of pure love for God and all living beings. Chanting frees one from selfish desires, which throttle the flow of the fullness of life. It enables one to find continuous happiness, independent of the state of the body and the external world. Chanting thus heralds the advent of a life of selfless spiritual service to God and all His children. Only this selflessness within individuals can form the basis of lasting world peace and harmony. Śrīla Prabhupāda summarizes: “Without the awakening of divine consciousness within the individual, there is no use of crying for world peace.”



Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa, 26, is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. He holds a degree in electronics and telecommunications engineering and serves full-time at ISKCON Pune. He runs a free cyber magazine, The Spiritual Scientist, which gives a scientific presentation of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy. To receive new issues as they come out, write to iyfpune@vsnl.com.

YOU DO NOT KNOW

(continued from page 15)

Paḍaṁ paḍaṁ yad vipadāṁ na teṣāṁ. They are not meant for remaining in this miserable, dangerous place. Yes.

So we have got this nice body—this human form of life, with an advanced consciousness. Just merge it into Kṛṣṇa consciousness and be happy. This is the sum and substance of this movement. Take advantage of it and be happy. Thank you very much.

Student: What is the function of the chanting?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Chanting—the chanting process is just to cleanse your

mind. You have got so many misunderstandings about yourself, about this world, about God, and about the interrelationship between these things. We have got so many misgivings. We are in the position of complete ignorance. This chanting will help you to cleanse your mind. Then you’ll understand that this chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is not different from Kṛṣṇa.

Yes. So in the beginning we have to chant. We may be in whatever position we are; that doesn’t matter. If we begin chanting, then the first benefit will be *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*: the mind will be clear of all dirty things.

Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam.

And then the next stage will be *bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāṇam*. The next stage will be that the sufferings, the miseries of this material world, will subside. So we’ll have to make progress, stage after stage. But at any stage you can adopt this means—at any stage. There is no necessity of some preliminary qualification, that “You have to come to this stage and then chant.” From any stage you can chant. Yes.

Student: Well, secondly, I don’t quite understand what the material world is.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The material world is full of suffering and miseries. Don’t

you understand it? Are you happy?

Student: Sometimes I'm happy and sometimes I'm not.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. You are not happy. That "sometimes" is your imagination. Just like a diseased man says, "Oh, yes, I am well." What is that "well"? He's going to die—and he's well?

Student: I don't claim any ultimate happiness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. You do not know what is happiness.

Student: Admittedly, the feeling is greater or lesser.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. You do not know what is happiness.

Student 2: Well, of course, that sorrow or that suffering might add the spice. You might want some suffering to go in between the happiness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. The thing is that there are different kinds of miseries. That we should understand. But due to our ignorance, we don't care about it—just like a man who has been suffering for a very long time. He has forgotten what is happiness. He has forgotten what is real happiness.

Similarly, even though you may not care about it, the sufferings are there already. Now, take, for example: You are now a young man. Now, would you like to become an old man?

Student: I will become an old man in the process of...

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now, you will become an old man. You'll be forced to become an old man. But you don't like to become an old man.

Student: I'm not going to be forced to become old man.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes. Forced. You'll be forced.

Student: I don't see why.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Even if you don't like to become an old man, you'll be forced to become an old man.

Student: It's one of the conditions of—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. That condition is miserable.

Student: I find it not miserable.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: [Chuckles.] No. You don't find it miserable because you are a young man. But ask any old man how he's suffering. You see. A diseased man—do you want to be diseased?

Student: I wouldn't search it out.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. Just answer me. Do you like to be diseased?

Student: What is disease?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh? You have never suffered from disease?

Student: I've had the mumps and the measles and whooping cough... [laughter]... which is what everyone has, and you get over it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Everyone has." Everyone is now suffering from this winter season, but that does not mean that this is not suffering. So we have to admit that we are always in suffering.

Student: If I've never known happiness, I feel sure I've never known suffering either.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is due to your ignorance. We are in suffering. We don't want to die. The death is there. We don't want to be diseased. The disease is there. We don't want to become old. The old age is there. So many things we don't want, but they are forced upon us. And any sane man will admit that these are sufferings. But if you are accustomed to these sufferings, you say, "It is all right." That is a different thing. But naturally, any sane man, he won't like to be diseased. He won't like to be old. He won't like to die. You see. Why this peace movement?

Because if there is war, there will be death. So people are afraid. They're making agitation: "There should be no war." So do you think that death is a very pleasurable thing?

Student: I have never experienced it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You have experienced. But you have forgotten. Several times you have died—you have experienced—but you have forgotten. Forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is no excuse. Suppose a child has forgotten some suffering. That does not mean that he did not suffer.

Student: No, I agree. I agree.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. So suffering's there. You have to take the verdict of realized souls, of authorities. For instance, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*: "This place is full of miseries." So one has to realize it. Unless we understand that this place is miserable, there is no question how to get out of it. Similarly, a person who does not develop a sense of the miserable condition of this world—he is not fully developed. Just like the animals. Animals—they do not understand what is misery. They do not understand. They are satisfied. ❁



You're Invited!

The Sunday Feast

Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday—for regulars as well as newcomers. 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," pages 59–61.)

MANGALAGIRI

Where Faith Grows

Every pilgrim to this South Indian temple witnesses a miraculous exchange between the Lord and His worshiper.

Text and photos by Adbhuta Hari Dāsa

FAITH IS NOT just one step, but a growing, continuous principle in our spiritual lives. We build it by applying spiritual knowledge and by seeing the qualities and activities of senior Vaiṣṇavas. For most of us, it does not come from some direct, personal realization of the Supreme Lord or His pastimes. But in a unique place called Mangalagiri (“Auspicious Hill”), the Lord in His deity form personally and immediately reciprocates with His devotees by drinking half of any amount of sugar water they offer Him.

Invited by Ānanda Caitanya Dāsa of ISKCON Hyderabad in the beginning of January this year, Śrīdhara Swami (my spiritual master) and I, along with two devotees from Slovenia and one from Denmark, visited Mangalagiri, home of the temple of Pānākal Narasimha, a deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s half-man, half-lion incarnation.

We started our journey from Hyderabad, and after spending two days in Ahovalam, the appearance place of



Lord Narasimha, went on to Mangalagiri. We left Ahovalam at 3:00 A.M. We wanted to be sure we’d arrive at Mangalagiri before noon, because the temple of Pānākal Narasimha there is closed in the afternoon, when it is believed the *devas* (demigods) worship the deity. After several hours on the road, I finally recognize elephant-

With His gaping mouth, Lord Pānākal Narasimha (above) drinks half of the sugar-water offerings of His devotees. At right, His temple (and cave within) on the side of Mangala Hill.





shaped Mangalagiri in the distance.

The *Sthala Purāna*, or local history, of Mangalagiri relates the story behind its shape. Once, a boy named Hṛṣyaśṛṅgi was born with many physical deformities. Hṛṣyaśṛṅgi always knew that his father, Pariyātrā, was displeased with him because of appearance, so he left home. He secretly went on a pilgrimage. Reaching the southern bank of the river Krishna, he stayed at Pradīta Ashram. When he understood that his father was coming for him, he prayed to the Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa deities there to assume the form of Lord Lakṣmī-Narasimha and stay on the hill that

he would become. Being pleased with Hṛṣyaśṛṅgi's worship and penance, the deities accepted his prayers and fulfilled his desire. Because the Lord manifested here pursuant to the prayers (*stotras*) of Hṛṣyaśṛṅgi, the hill (*adri*) also came to be known as Stotradri.

At 11:30 we parked and, passing by the lower Lakṣmī-Narasimha temple, rushed up the six hundred steps to the Pānākal Narasimha temple. After catching our breath, we bought a ticket for the drink that is offered to the Lord. It is made of water, *jaggery* (raw cane-sugar), camphor, cardamom, and black pepper. There were only ten to

fifteen people there, so we didn't have to wait long in the line to be part of the Lord's unique daily pastime, which He enjoys with anyone who comes to worship Him.

After exchanging our ticket for a jar of *jaggery* water, the seven of us gathered in a small sanctum in front of the Lord. We saw a brass sheet (about one and a half feet square) depicting Lord Narasimha seated in a two-handed form, with a wide-open mouth. Behind this mask is the wall of a cave and a four inch by six inch hole—the self-manifested mouth of the Lord.

A priest took our jar and poured the

jaggery water into the Lord's mouth. We could hear a gurgling sound—*klo, klo*—as someone makes while drinking. Then, when the Lord's mouth was full, the priest stopped pouring and showed us the jar—it was half full.

The priest explained why the Lord takes only half of the offering. The story, found in the *Sthala Purāṇa*, relates how Kaśyapa Prajāpati had a son named Namuci who was a cruel demon. Desiring great power, Namuci undertook severe penance. Unable to tolerate the flames Namuci produced by his penance, Indra and other *devas* rushed to Brahmā, seeking relief. Brahmā appeared before Namuci, ready to grant him any boon he wished.

Namuci prayed that he would not be killed by anything wet or dry. Armed with the power of the boon, the demon began to harass Indra and other *devas*. They approached Lord Viṣṇu, who assured them that at the appropriate time He would kill Namuci.

Later, on a battlefield, Lord Viṣṇu dipped His Sudarśaṇa disk in the foam of water, which is neither wet nor dry. He then gave it to Indra, who released it. Namuci fled and hid himself in a secret cave on Mangalagiri. But the Su-

darśaṇa disk pursued him there and killed him. The blood that flowed from Namuci became a river, which, being red (*rakta*), came to be called Raktakalya. Even to this day the area surrounding the temple has only red dirt.

During this episode, Lord Viṣṇu had assumed the fierce form of Lord Narasiṃha, creating fear in all the *devas*. When they prayed to Him and offered Him celestial nectar to drink, He drank half of it. The Lord then said that in Satya-yuga He would drink half of the nectar offered to Him, in Tretā-yuga half of the ghee, in Dvāpara-yuga half of the milk obtained from a Kāmadhenu cow, and in Kali-yuga half of the *jaggery* water.

After the priest finished relating the story, on our request he removed the metal mask covering the self-manifested stone deity. With light from a ghee-lamp, he showed us the big hole that is the Lord's mouth. On the right side of the mouth is an etched figure of a conch shell, and on the left a disk. These markings appeared along with the mouth. The priest told us that even though so much *jaggery* water is offered here, there are no ants, and no one has been able to figure out exactly



Lord Caitanya's Visit To Mangalagiri

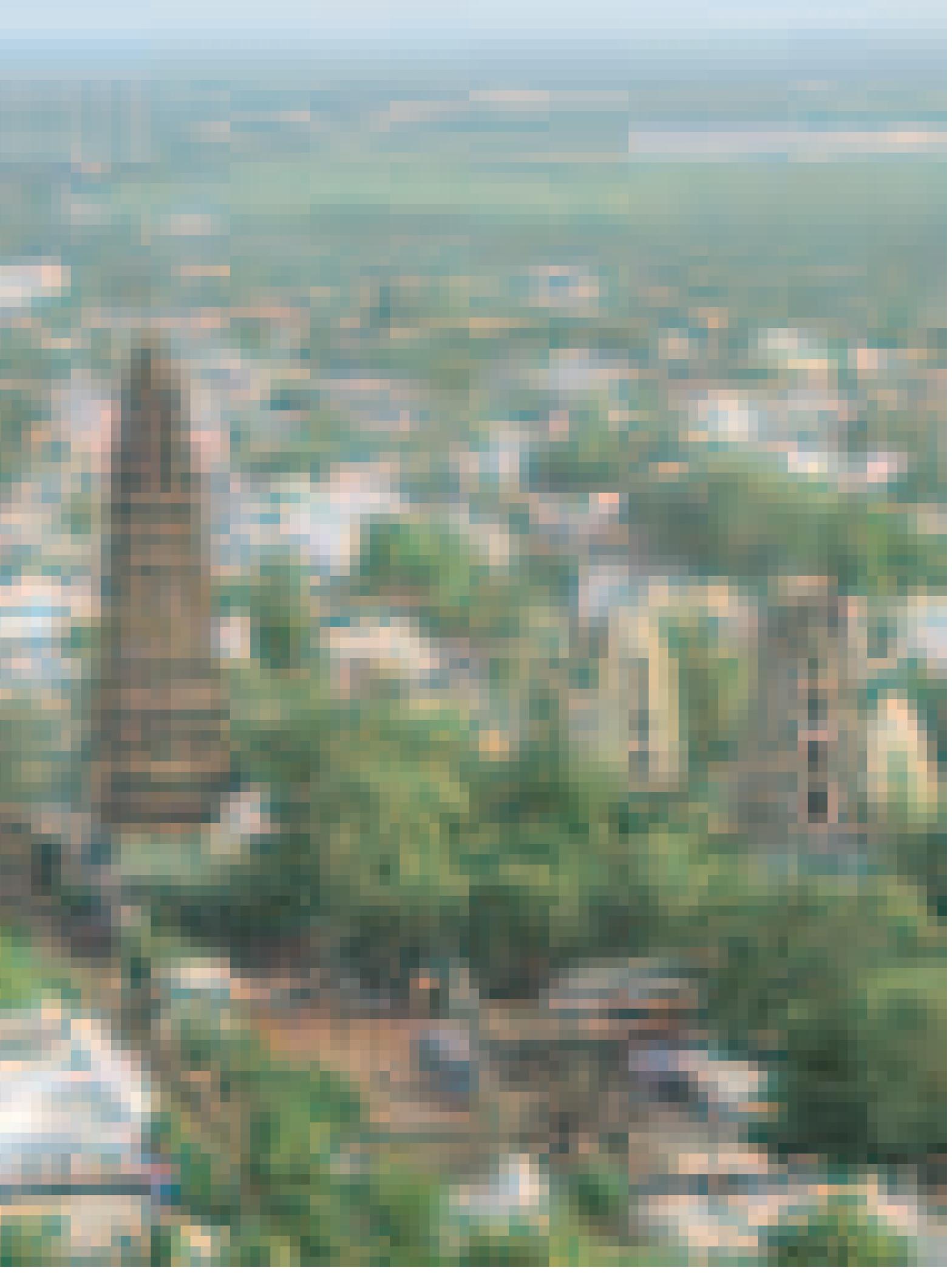
(From *Śrī Caitanya-cariṭāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 9.66, translation and purport by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda)

TRANSLATION: Everywhere Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu went, His influence astonished everyone. He next arrived at the temple of Pānā-nṛsiṃha. The Lord is so merciful.

PURPORT: Pānā-nṛsiṃha, or Pānākal-narasimha, is located in the district of Krishna, in the hills known as Mangalagiri, about seven miles from a city known as Vijayawada. One must climb six hundred steps to reach the temple. It is said that when the Lord is offered food with syrup here, He does not take more than half. Within this temple is a conch shell presented by the late king of Tanjore, and it is said that this shell was used by Lord



Temple priest D. S. Srinivas (opposite page, second from right) related the history of Mangalagiri to the visitors from ISKCON (from left: Vedānta Caitanya Dāsa, Śrīdhara Swami, Maheśa Dāsa). Above, a priest serves pilgrims the sugar water left in the pot by Lord Pānākal Narasiṃha.



where the water goes.

We prayed to the Lord and then, to the great relief of the few pilgrims waiting behind us, went to the front hall, where we offered our obeisances. We shared the *jaggery* left in our jar, relishing the taste of the Lord's *mahā-prasādam* to our full satisfaction.



TEMPLE HISTORY

As the priests were getting ready to close the temple, lighting the ghee-lamp that burns the rest of the day and all night, Śrīdhara Swami asked one of them, D. S. Srinivas, to kindly tell us more about the history of the temple. He said that the temple is mentioned in the *Skanda Purāṇa* and the *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* and is one of the eight holy places—Srirangam, Srimushnam, Naimisharanya, Pushkar, Shalagram, Badrinath, Venkatadri, and Mangalagiri—where the *devas*

come to worship the Lord at specific times. He said that many times the priests who open the temple in the morning have found evidence of the *devas'* worship, such as flowers and fragrant oils.

At this place, D. S. Srinivas continued, two devotees, named Haridāsa and Viṣṇudāsa, prayed to become door-keepers in Vaikuṅṭha. Haridāsa, a *kṣatriya*, would worship the Lord by offering Him precious stones, while Viṣṇudas, a *brāhmaṇa*, worshiped the Lord by offering Him fresh *tulasī* leaves. One day Lord Nārāyaṇa visited them, assuming the form of an old *brāhmaṇa*. Haridāsa asked Him whether it

From Lord Pānākal Narasimha's temple on Mangalagiri, one looks down upon the eleven-story entrance gate (gopuram) and the lower Lakṣmī-Narasimha temple. Inset: Śrī Śrī Lakṣmī-Narasimha.



Visiting Mangalagiri

How to Get There

Mangalagiri is seven miles south of Vijayawada, in Andhra Pradesh. Vijayawada has an airport and is easy to reach by train. It is on the main Chennai-Delhi and Chennai-Calcutta railway lines.

Take a taxi or a bus from Vijayawada to Mangalagiri.

Where to Stay

Vijayawada has many hotels. Here are some suggestions in three price ranges. Low: Hotel Swapna Lodge (phone: 65386), Shree Laksmi Vilas Modern Cafe (62525, hotel and vegetarian restaurant); medium: Hotel Manorama (77220), Hotel Raj Towers (61311); high: Hotel Kandhari International (471311).

Where to Eat

Vegetarian restaurants in Vijayawada: Sri Durga Bhavan, Hotel Nandini, and Tilotthama Hotel.

For more information, consult *Holy Places and Temples of India*, by Jaḍa

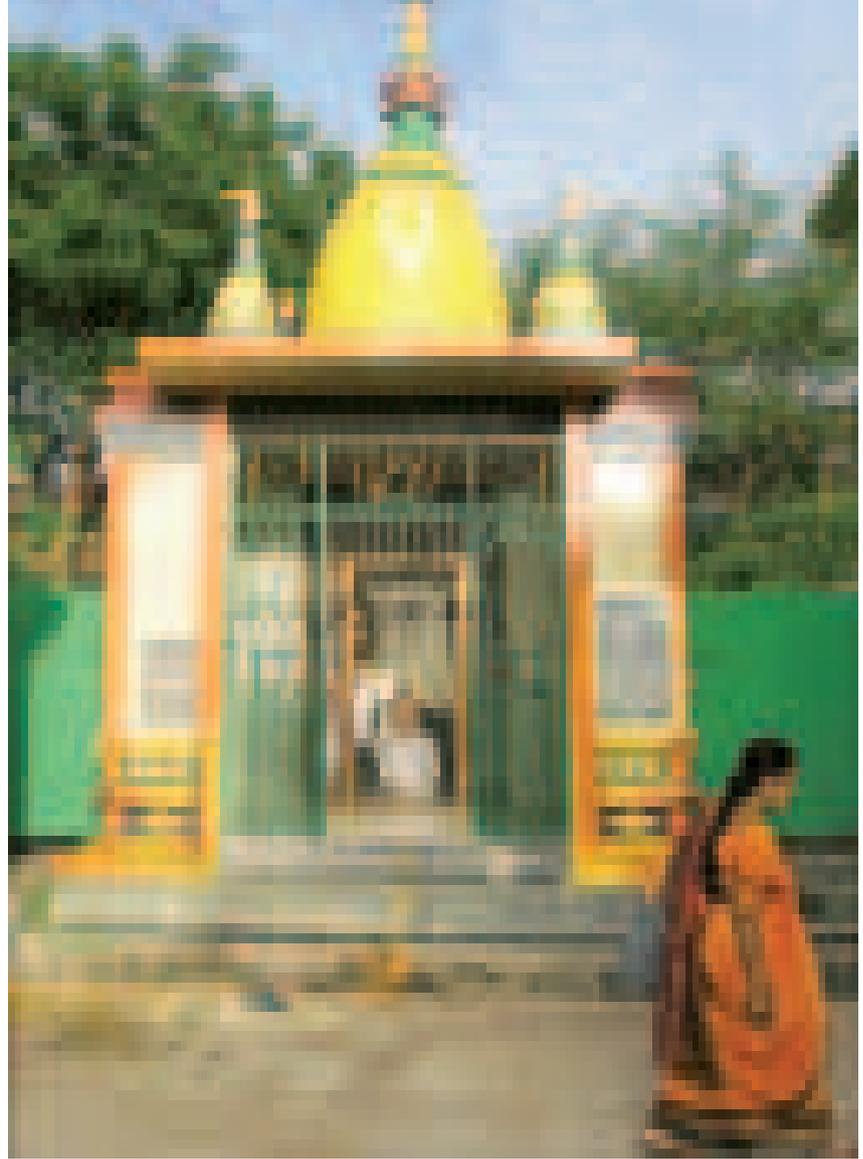
was of greater value to worship their deity, Bindhu Mādhava, using precious stones or only *tulasī* leaves.

Instead of answering the question directly, the Lord asked what they were trying to achieve. In a single voice they exclaimed that they wished to be doorkeepers for Lord Viṣṇu in Vaikuṅṭha. Lord Nārāyaṇa advised them to go to Mangalagiri, where the Lord gives blessings immediately. They did so, and in the next life they became doorkeepers in the spiritual world. Haridāsa became Jaya, and Viṣṇudāsa became Vijaya.

As we stood in front of the temple, D. S. Srinivas pointed to the caves of Laksmīdevī and Veṅkateśvara above the temple, and the shrine of Anjaneya (Hanumān), the maintainer of this place. He said that Lord Rāmacandra asked Hanumān to stay here and worship Lord Narasiṃha. In each of the four directions around the temple, deities of Anjaneya have been installed.

To ensure that the intense gaze of Lord Pānākal Narasiṃha does not fall on the local village, which couldn't bear the intensity, a hall in honor of Hanumān has been built in front of the Lord, and it's always closed.

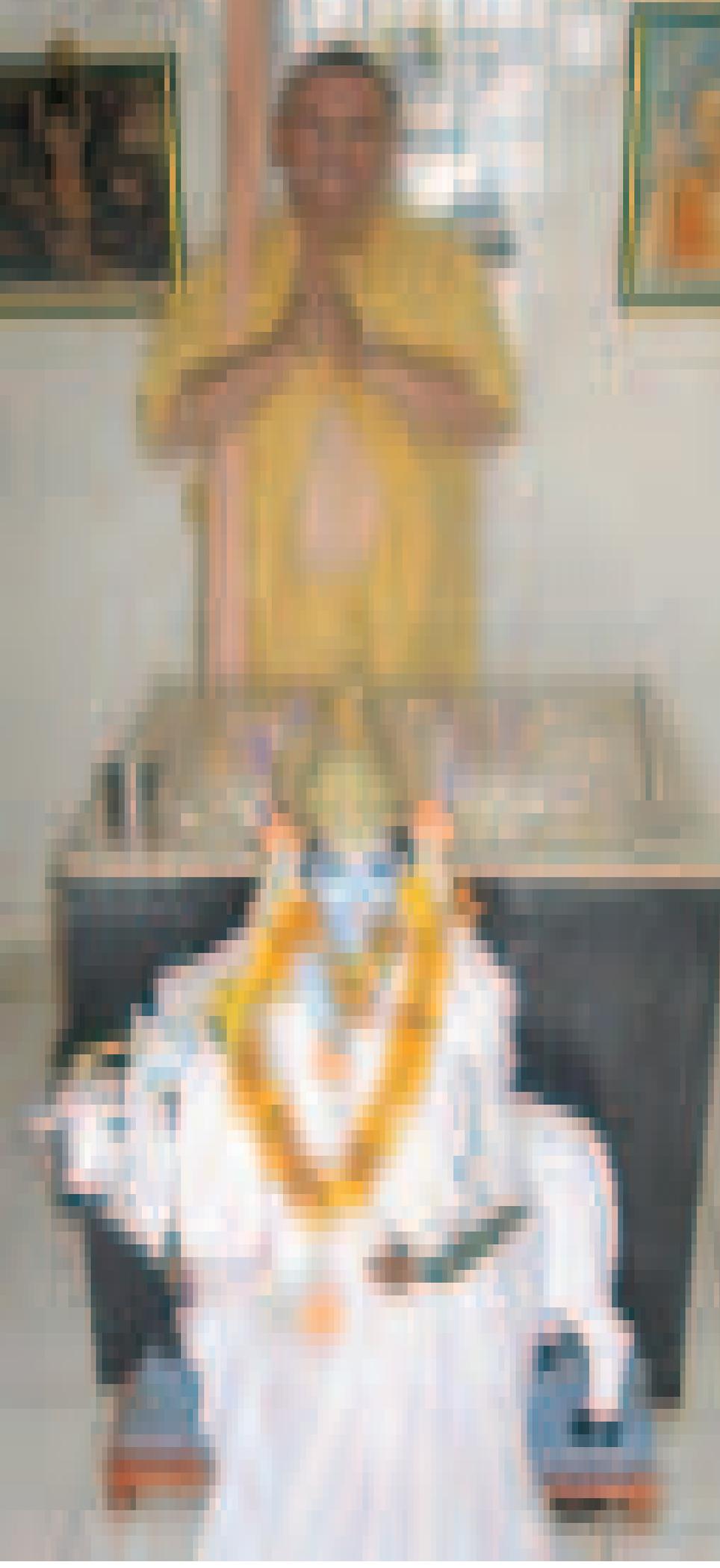
Around the temple are many sacred ponds, one of which is said to have been built by the *devas*. They brought water



Jagamātha Dāsa



A shrine (above) honoring Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's visit to Mangalagiri contains the impressions of His divine feet (right). At left, Lord Narasiṃha—in a stunning bas relief—looks out from above the entrance to the lower Lakṣmī-Narasiṃha temple.



from all the holy rivers so that Mahā-Lakṣmī, after coming out from the churning of the milk ocean, could bathe here and offer herself to the Lord.

THE LOWER TEMPLE

Exiting the temple and coming down the stairs, we get a beautiful, panoramic view of the village and the lower Lakṣmī-Narasimha temple, our next destination. Halfway to the lower temple, we stopped at the small shrine where imprints of Lord Caitanya's lotus feet are installed. Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited here in 1512. We offered our obeisances and some flowers.

To enter the compound of the lower Lakṣmī-Narasimha temple, we had to pass through the highest *gopuram* (gate) in Andhra Pradesh—eleven stories high. The priest of this temple told us that Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira installed the deity during the time of the Pāṇḍavas' exile. Below the main deities is a small deity of Lord Narasimha, accompanied by two Lakṣmīs, one on each side. Within the temple is a conch shell presented by the late king of Tanjore. According to tradition, the shell was used by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Since photography is not allowed inside, outside the temple we bought photos of the deities and then left for the ISKCON temple in Vijayawada, on the southern side of the Krishna River.

Our trip to Ahovalam and Mangalagiri was intense and exhausting, especially for Śrīdhara Swami, who ended up in the Bhaktivedanta Hospital in Mumbai with typhoid fever. Seeing Pānākāla Narasimha helped us increase our faith—especially when Lord Narasimha answered our prayers and Śrīdhara Swami recovered in less than a week. (The normal recovery time is at least fifteen days).

Śrīdhara Swami jokingly remarked, "When Lord Narasimha saw the great demon Hiranyakaśipu, He gave him a liver transplant and wore his intestines as a garland around His neck. When He saw the little demon Śrīdhara Swami, He just gave him an intestinal fever." ❁

Adbhuta Hari Dāsa joined ISKCON in 1994 in Croatia. He serves as personal assistant to his spiritual master, Śrīdhara Swami.

CALENDAR

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

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

Month of Dāmodara

(October 11–November 9)

NOVEMBER

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

4—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

5—Utthānā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

Month of Keśava

(November 10–December 8)

20—Utpannā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

DECEMBER

4—Mokṣadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Also, the

anniversary of the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Month of Nārāyaṇa

(December 9–January 7)

13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

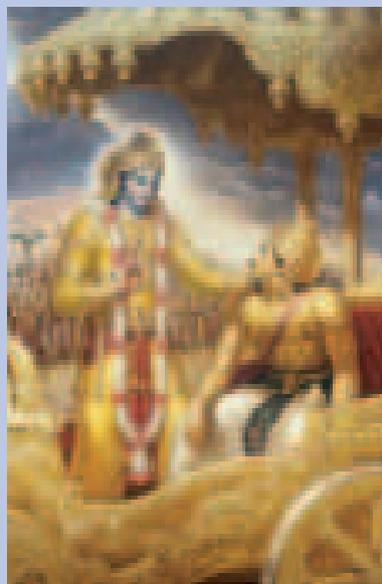
20—Saphalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

24—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

25—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

JANUARY

3—Putradā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.



Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks Bhagavad-gītā to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra (December 4).

Month of Mādhava

(January 8–February 6)

12—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, a great spiritual master and author of *Gīta-govinda*.

14—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great spiritual master whose Bengali devotional songs perpetuate the simple Kṛṣṇa conscious method of self-realization.

18—Ṣaṭ-tilā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

26—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master and author who appeared in the seventeenth century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇu-priyā Devī, the consort of Lord Caitanya.

28—Appearance anniversary of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu and a close associate of Lord Caitanya. Fasting till noon.

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

31—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, an eleventh-century philosopher and spiritual master.

DYING A GOOD DEATH

Spiritual Care for the Terminally Ill

*A Kṛṣṇa conscious nurse helps the dying
with their material and spiritual needs.*

by Saṅgītā Devī Dāsī

I AM A Registered Nurse who specializes in hospice care for the terminally ill. The medical professionals I work with fully understand that their patients will never recover so they must relieve their patient's pain and make them as comfortable as possible. Because of this, they embrace the tenets of the hospice philosophy, which includes the understanding that every terminally ill person deserves to be treated with respect; that each patient must be allowed to decide the care he or she will accept or refuse; that every terminally ill person has the right to be cared for by sensitive, knowledgeable people who will attempt to understand their needs and will gain satisfaction in helping them face death; and that all patients should be allowed to die with dignity in the environment they choose.

Because facing one's imminent death or that of a loved one requires a tremendous amount of inner strength, spiritual support by the hospice staff is offered to those who wish to accept it. No matter what religion patients and family members



adhere to, a hospice professional or trained volunteer will encourage them to seek shelter of their beliefs and traditions.

Most hospice patients I have cared for have expressed the importance of a strong spiritual faith. When someone is told that he or she has six months or less to live, spiritual issues have a way of surfacing and moving to the forefront. Many people I have cared for felt a sense of urgency to become more religious or spiritually enlightened before death. For each one, this

meant something different, but I encouraged each of them to become more introspective and to pray to the "Supreme Powerful Lord" at a crucial time in their lives when they were realizing just how powerless they really were.

Encouraging my patients to speak about their spiritual beliefs has helped many of them to recognize inner strengths they never realized they had, and to confront their fears and spiritual pain, which can be intensely private. Often, a person does not wish to speak about such personal things. A patient may even vacillate between feeling spiritually strong

Hospice Care for Lord Kṛṣṇa's Ser-

VAISNAVAS C.A.R.E. (Counseling, Assistance, Resource, and Education for the Terminally Ill and Their Family) was founded in 2002 as a non-profit organization that offers support to devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, as well as to others in a hospice situation who feel they can benefit from the assistance.

Vaisnavas C.A.R.E. is a worldwide network of volunteers, both healthcare professionals and laypersons, prepared to assist within their own communities the terminally ill and their loved ones when the need arises.

These compassionate volunteers span the globe from the United States to Australia to India and to Europe.

For more information on this project and how you can help, visit www.vaisnavascare.com. For a comprehensive guide to learning the art of hospice care, *The Final Journey—Complete Hospice Care for Departing Vaisnavas* (available from the Krishna.com Store) teaches, step-by-step, how to assist others in “dying a good death” as they make their journey back home, back to Godhead.

next. But when my patients have trusted me enough to confide in me about their fear of dying and their spiritual uncertainties, I have appreciated their honesty, and our relationship has deepened.

SPIRITUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

My being a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa has often opened the door to conversations with my patients about reincarnation, the laws of karma, and the spiritual world. Yet I have never been adamant that they believe in something different from what has given them solace throughout their lives. I have simply encouraged them to use what precious time they have left to come closer to the Lord, the same Lord who resides within the heart of each of us. In this way, we developed a mutual respect for each other's values and faith.

Many times I have been asked to kneel at their bedside and pray with them—and for them. Occasionally, family members have asked me to join them as they read aloud from their family Bible. An elderly Jewish couple invited me to come to their home when their Rabbi would be present so we could all hold hands and pray together.

In each situation, I have explained to the families that just as expectant

parents prepare for a good birth in anticipation of the arrival of their baby, there is such a thing as “dying a good death.” One who is pain free physically, emotionally, and mentally, and is rightly situated spiritually, will have an auspicious, most glorious passing away.

ONE ATHEIST

Out of hundreds of patients I have cared for, only one admitted to being an atheist. This man refused visits from the hospice Pastor and proclaimed that there was “nothing after death.”

“You're born, you live, and you die,” he stated. “That's all there is to it.”

Unfortunately, in spite of the attempts made by the hospice staff to comfort him, he lived out his final days angry, lonely, and depressed.

Sadly, this patient exemplified how living one's life bereft of spirituality will cause one increased pain and suffering. Similarly, facing one's death without a spiritual belief system will increase one's fear and deny one the hope of an eternal, joyous afterlife with the Lord.

Regarding this, Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.6), “Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail.” In his purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

The process of changing one's nature at the critical moment of death is here explained. . . . How can one die in the proper state of mind? . . . One's thoughts during the course of one's life accumulate to influence one's thoughts at the moment of death, so this life creates one's next life. . . . If one is transcendently absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's service, then his next body will be transcendental (spiritual), not material. Therefore, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the best process for successfully changing one's state of being at the end of one's life.

The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is the recommended means for self-realization in this present age, as taught by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in His form as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This mantra is the essence of all Vedic wisdom and is the most sublime means of understanding your true self and your relationship with God. Chanting this mantra throughout one's life will help one remember the Lord at the time of death, assuring one's promotion to the spiritual world, the personal abode of the Lord.

Like the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the hospice philosophy teaches that death is inevitable, that spiritual questions challenge those facing imminent death, and that spiritual support for the dying is laudable. Once again we turn to the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.27) for guidance. Lord Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna, “One who has taken his birth is sure to die, and after death one is sure to take birth again.” Who among us will not be in need of spiritual support and care at the end of our life? ❀

Sanḡitā Devī Dāsī (Susan Pattinson, RN, Certified Hospice Educator), a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, has years of experience caring for the terminally ill. She is the author of The Final Journey—Complete Hospice Care for Departing Vaisnavas and is a voting member of the Hospice and Palliative Nurse's Association. She is the president of Vaisnavas C.A.R.E. Inc. and lives in Philadelphia.

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“In this way you have to understand, by studying carefully the philosophy. We have got so many books now, and I want all of my disciples to read them carefully. Soon we shall be instituting Bhakti-sastri examinations and all *brahmanas* will have to pass. So utilize whatever time you find to make a thorough study of my books.” (Letter from Prabhupāda, July 7, 1976)

Regardless of who a person appears to be on the outside, everyone is a pure soul within, part of Kṛṣṇa.



“PAIN!” (continued from page 31) spiritually. When we are on the path of surrender to God, Kṛṣṇa takes an active part in our life.

Being Kṛṣṇa conscious, the *brāhmaṇa* could tolerate others’ insults and harsh behavior, seeing these as external to his soul. The fortunate *brāhmaṇa* realized that the purpose of life was self-realization and that the material world only seems to have problems because of our attachments to selfish enjoyments and material outcomes.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

For scriptural stories to have their intended effect, we must do more than just read them a few times. We must also think deeply about their meaning, discuss them with other devotees, and apply them in our lives. To receive the most benefit, our hearts must be purified by dedicating our life to the service of Kṛṣṇa and remembering Him in all circumstances. Without purification of the heart, spiritual understanding will escape us, and we will feel victimized by life.

Trying to apply such instructions, I reflect on my own nature. Though in general I’m calm, tolerant, and even-tempered, today’s events showed me that I’m far from being totally free from material vision. On the positive side, years of spiritual practice have made a huge difference in enabling me to better relate to even difficult people. I try to act on the knowledge that regardless of who a person appears to be on the outside, everyone is a pure soul within, part of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore worthy of respect and kindness.

The old adage “practice makes perfect” is so true. But because practice means to often fall short, patience is required. To be successful in any undertaking, we must keep trying with determination in the face of setbacks and depend on Kṛṣṇa to help us.

With the right attitude, every person can be our teacher, showing us how or how not to act, and every situation or relationship is an opportunity to practice spiritual ideals. Spiritual life is meant to be practiced “24/7”—not only in our place of worship.

We can observe our tendencies when we deal with others. Do we criticize or condemn, or do we appreciate and look for the good? Are we able to respond by choice, or do we automatically react harshly to behavior or words that upset us?

If we’re always alone or have no dealings with others, we’ll be unable to answer these questions. We could very well be deluded about our level of spiritual advancement if we live only in our mental understanding of ideal character. But in the association of others, our character is revealed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAD ASSOCIATION

Though the scriptures extol the virtue and importance of *sādhū saṅga*, or saintly association, it is in the company of people who exhibit less than ideal behavior—who “push our emotional buttons”—that we are tested to apply the instructions of saints and the scriptures. Such people can be some of our best teachers.

For me, Sam is in that category. He unknowingly gave me valuable feedback on how I needed to change. I was unable to give him spiritual instructions or resolve our differences, yet our dealings improved because my attitude toward him softened with more compassion and love through understanding. I have been able to be less reactive in the possible areas of friction between us.

A common tendency is to assign the blame for a conflict to the other side. When someone upsets us or disagrees with us, it’s easy to call that person names. But such a superficial ego-based vision will not solve the problem, re-

duce our suffering, help our spiritual advancement, or benefit the object of our unkind label. Although experiencing difficulty with a person may be labeled as only as a testimony of the miseries of material existence, the greater lesson is to understand how our angle of vision has created our perception of misery. If we fail to see this, we have missed a real opportunity for spiritual growth.

How we view people is really a choice, and it doesn’t have to be dictated by whether we like them or not. This realization comes by applying a spiritual outlook in our dealings with others and seeing how this lessens our suffering in adversity. For a practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* the universe is friendly, because behind every situation or person is the loving hand of God (Kṛṣṇa), working to help us spiritually advance. By accepting and developing this perspective, our whole life will change.

From the spiritual view we are in each other’s lives to help each other. There are no accidents or chance meetings. God’s universe is purposeful, and nothing is wasted. Every encounter with another person presents an opportunity to apply spiritual principles and reveals, to those willing to learn, the aspects of our character that need to be reformed.

When we are illuminated from our spiritual practice, we can separate ourselves from our conditioned reaction or only external vision. Then we can find value in people who especially irk us, whether they are friends, family, or strangers, and can sincerely say, “Thanks for being such a pain.”



Karṇāmṛta Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda since 1970, lives with his wife, Arcana-siddhī Devī Dāsī (a frequent contributor to BTG), in Baltimore, Maryland. He works for a logistics company and, along with his wife, conducts therapy and workshops for couples.

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- ◆ **Kansas City, Missouri** — Rupanuga Vedic College (Men's Seminary), 5201 The Paseo, 64110/ Tel. (800) 340-5286/ Fax: (816) 361-0509/ E-mail: info@rvc.edu
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- ◆ **Long Island, New York** — 197 S. Ocean Avenue, Freeport, 11520/ Tel. (516) 223-4909/ E-mail: garuda@optonline.net
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- ◆ **Miami, Florida** — 3220 Virginia St., 33133 (mail: P.O. Box 337, Coconut Grove, FL 33233)/ Tel. (305) 442-7218/ Fax: (305) 444-7145
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- ◆ **Washington, D.C.** — 1009 Noyes Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20910/ Tel. (301) 562-9662 or 765-8155/ Fax: (301) 765-8157
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- ◆ **Alachua, Florida (New Raman Reti)** — 17306 N.W. 112th Blvd., 32615 (mail: P.O. Box 819, 32616)/

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- ◆ **Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan)** — 31492 Anner Road, 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/ Fax: (601) 799-2924/ E-mail: talavan@mypicayune.com

- ◆ **Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill)** — Carr. 181, Km. 16.3, Bo. Santa Rita, Gurabo (mail: HC-01, Box 8440, Gurabo, PR 00778)/ (Office) Tel. & fax: (787) 737-4265/ (Temple) Tel. (787) 712-0358/ E-mail: iskconpr@hotmail.com

- ◆ **Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka)** — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/ Tel. (919) 732-6492/ Fax: (919) 732-8033/ E-mail: bkgoswami@compuserve.com

- ◆ **Moundsville, West Virginia (New Vrindaban)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 319, Hare Krishna Ridge, 26041/ Tel. (304) 843-1600; Guest House, (304) 845-5905/ Fax: (304) 854-0023/ E-mail: newvrindaban@yahoo.com

- ◆ **Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka)** — Rt. No. 1, Box 146-A, 37359/ Tel. (615) 759-6888/ Fax: (615) 759-5785

- ◆ **Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 839, 17082/ Tel. & fax: (717) 527-4101/ E-mail: vrajajila@acsworld.net

- ◆ **Sandy Ridge, North Carolina** — 1264 Prabhupada Rd., 27046/ Tel. (336) 593-9888

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- ◆ **Gainesville, Florida** — Radha's Vegetarian Cafe, 125 NW 23rd Ave., Ste. 17, 32609/ Tel. (352) 378-2955
- ◆ **San Juan, Puerto Rico** — Gopal, 201B Calle Tetuan, Viejo San Juan, 00901/ Tel. (787) 724-0229

- ★ **Seattle, Washington** — My Sweet Lord, 5521 University Way, 98105/ Tel. (425) 643-4664
- ◆ **Tallahassee, Florida** — Higher Taste, 411 St. Francis St., 32301/ Tel. (850) 894-4296

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- ◆ **London, England** — (contact Bhaktivedanta Manor) (Krishna conscious programs are held regularly in more than forty other cities in the U.K. For information, contact ISKCON Reader Services, P.O. Box 730, Watford WD25 8EZ, UK; www.iskcon.org.uk)

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- ◆ **Swansea** — Govinda's, 8 Craddock St., SA1 3EN/ Tel. +44 (01792) 468469/ E-mail: govind_das@hotmail.com

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- ◆ **Swansea** — Govinda's, 8 Craddock St., SA1 3EN/ Tel. +44 (01792) 468469/ E-mail: govind_das@hotmail.com

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- ◆ **Brisbane** — 95 Bank Rd., Graceville (mail: P.O. Box 83, Induripilly), QLD 4068/ Tel. +61 (07) 3379-5455/ Fax: +61 (07) 3379-5880

- ◆ **Canberra** — 1 Quick St., Ainslie, ACT 2602 (mail: P.O. Box 1411, Canberra, ACT 2601)/ Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6262-6208/ E-mail: adi@actweb.net
- ◆ **Melbourne** — 197 Danks St. (mail: P.O. Box 125), Albert Park, VIC 3206/ Tel. +61 (03) 9699-5122/ Fax: +61 (03) 9690-4093/ E-mail: iskcon@bigpond.net.au

- ◆ **Newcastle** — 28, Bull St., Mayfield, NSW 2304/ Tel. +61 (02) 4967-7000/ E-mail: iskcon_newcastle@yahoo.com.au

- ◆ **Perth** — 144 Railway Parade (corner of The Strand) [mail: P.O. Box 102], Bayswater, WA 6053/ Tel. +61 (08) 9370-1552/ Fax: +61 (08) 9272-6636/ E-mail: perth@pamho.net

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- ◆ **Bambra (New Nandagram)** — 50 Seaches Outlet, off 1265 Winchelsea Deans Marsh Rd., Bambra VIC 3241/ Tel. +61 (03) 5288-7383/ E-mail: iskcon@bigpond.net.au

- ◆ **Cessnock, NSW** — New Gokula Farm, Lewis Lane (off Mount View Rd., Millfield, near Cessnock [mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock]), NSW 2325/ Tel. +61 (02) 4998-800/ Fax: (Sydney temple)

- ◆ **Murwillumbah (New Govardhana)** — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 685), NSW 2484/ Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (02) 6672-5498

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Brisbane — Govinda's, 99 Elizabeth St., 1st floor, QLD 4000/ Tel. +61 (07) 3210-0255
Brisbane — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 190 Brunswick St., Fortitude Valley, QLD/ Tel. +61 (07) 3854-1016/ E-mail: brisbane@pamho.net
Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-2939
Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-1578
New Castle — Krishna's Vegetarian Cafe, 110 King Street, corner of King & Wolf Streets, NSW 2300 Tel. +61 (02) 4929-6900
Perth — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 200 William St., Northbridge, WA 6003/ Tel. +61 (08) 9227-1684/ E-mail: perth@pamho.net
Sydney — Govinda's Upstairs, 112 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst NSW 2010/ Tel. +61 (02) 9380-5155
Sydney — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 529B King St., Newtown, NSW 2042/ Tel. +61 (02) 9550-6524

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Suva, Fiji — Joyce Place, Off Pilling Rd., Nasinu 7½ miles (mail: P.O. Box 2183, Govt. Bldgs./ Tel. +679 393 599/ Fax: +679 314 583/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj
Wellington, NZ — 105 Newlands Rd., Newlands (mail: P.O. Box 2753)/ Tel. +64 (04) 478-1414

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Labasa, Fiji — Hare Krishna Restaurant, Naseakula Road/ Tel. +679 811364
Lautoka, Fiji — Gopal's, Corner of Yasawa St. and Naviti St./ Tel. +679 662990
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Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Opposite University of the South Pacific, Laucala Bay Rd./ Tel. +679 311683/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj
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The Roots of My Conviction

A FRIEND OF MINE recently asked me to explain in one sentence why I'm a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee.

"To me," I replied, "the description of reality contained in the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness makes more sense than any other I've heard."

Although I can't claim to have studied in detail every philosophy in the world, I can see how they all fall within certain categories, and that narrows the competition. One way to divide philosophies is between the theistic and the atheistic, and I find the theistic arguments more persuasive.

Just before I came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I was more or less an agnostic. Although I had been raised in a religious family, I had become swayed by atheistic arguments—not far enough to become an atheist myself, but enough to fill me with doubts. When I began reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, those doubts started to disappear. For example, I quickly discovered the holes in the theory of evolution, the only widely accepted alternative to the theistic explanation of creation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke of God with deep conviction. He used arguments I was familiar with from the Christian tradition, but expanded and strengthened them with Vedic wisdom, especially from his own Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Early in my study of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, I became convinced that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism—founded on the teachings of Caitanya Mahāprabhu—provides the deepest and most comprehensive theology available anywhere. So among philosophies, I was drawn to the theistic ones, and among those, I saw the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava presentation rising above all others.

Although elements of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology are found elsewhere, nowhere else is God presented in such detail, and nowhere else is our

relationship with Him explained so clearly.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness teaches that the goal of life is to awaken our original, pure love for God. While we may find that same goal presented elsewhere, here it's the focus. Other traditions may contain strains of *bhakti*, or pure devotion to God, but Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism puts it forward as the only desirable goal of life.

And Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism clearly explains what pure devotion is. It means, to begin with, not asking God for anything. It rejects the notion of God as an order-supplier, ready to fulfill our requests for things to make our lives here a little easier. Beyond that, it rejects even requests for liberation or elevation to heavenly worlds. A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness knows that prayers should be for one thing only: Kṛṣṇa's service.

Despite my natural bias in favor of the tradition I'm following, I feel safe to say that the best relationship with God is selfless devotion to Him—the essential message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To develop that devotion, it helps to know as much about God as possible. And the quantity and quality of information on God found in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature is unequalled.

Of course, a well-rounded tradition must include more than just knowledge; there must be practice as well. There, too, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition excels. We need only inspect the lives of any of the saints of the tradition to find the deepest levels of ecstatic love for God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes summarize Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this way: God exists, we're subordinate to Him, and our perfection lies in serving Him in pure love.

I can't argue with that. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

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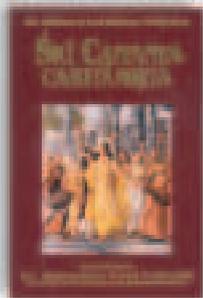
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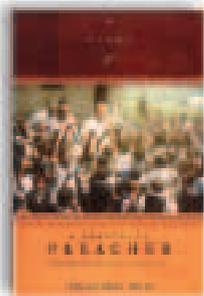


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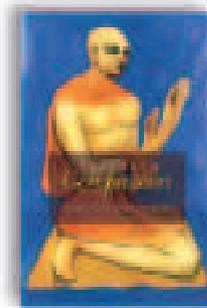
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Vedic Thoughts

Instead of worshiping Lord Viṣṇu, people have been educated to worship matter. According to the direction of modern society, men think they can advance in civilization by manipulating matter to build skyscrapers, big roads, automobiles, and so on. Such a civilization must certainly be called materialistic because its people do not know the goal of life.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.1.14, Purport

In the teachings of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu, there are two principal instructions: developing a taste for the chanting of the Lord's holy names and displaying compassion for the fallen souls. The greatness of a Vaiṣṇava depends on the extent to which he possesses these qualities. . . . All good qualities of a Vaiṣṇava automatically manifest in a Vaiṣṇava who endeavors for these two qualities.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Śrī Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta 1.7

And whoever, at the end of his life,
quits his body remembering
Me alone at once attains My nature.
Of this there is no doubt.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.5

One who sees that the living entities
and the Supreme Lord are always
distinct is very dear to the Lord.

Padma Purāṇa
(quoted by Śrīla Madhvācārya)

In Vaikuṅṭha [the spiritual world] nothing exists but devotional service, rendered through *saṅkīrtana* [collective glorification of the Lord] and in many other forms. It goes on incessantly, with great enthusiasm, spreading the ecstasy of pure love.

Lord Śiva
Śrī Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta 3.50

In Vaiṣṇava philosophy there is no spirit of material enjoyment and there is no concept that material objects are enjoyable; rather than the attitude of enjoyment, the attitude of service is prominent.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, *Madhya* 19.195,
Commentary

A person who is not bewildered by the inevitable miseries of material existence, and who remains aloof from them by remembering the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is to be considered a *bhāgavata-pradhāna*, the foremost devotee of the Lord.

Śrī Havi Ṛṣi
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.49

For a person who is suffering in the fire of countless miseries and who desires to cross the insurmountable ocean of material existence, there is no suitable boat except that of cultivating devotion to the transcendental taste for the narrations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's pastimes.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmi
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.4.40

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