

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



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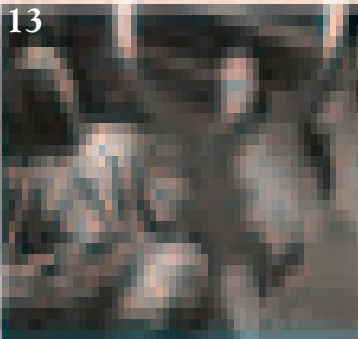
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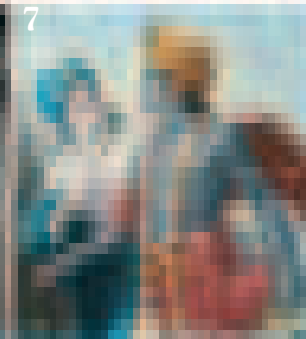
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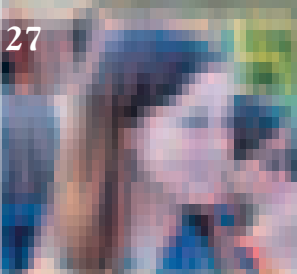
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COVER Last summer, a busload of young people raised in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement toured North America to see the sights and help out with the Festival of India’s summer schedule. Please see the article beginning on page 45. (Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa.)



“The modern setup of civilization is that few people are engaged in producing food, and others are eating. The industrialists are artificially getting money. And they are offering paper: “Here is one hundred dollars.” What is this hundred dollars? It is paper. So some people are cheating, and some are being cheated. This is the society.”—p. 34

WELCOME



THE YEAR 2004 marks the sixtieth anniversary of *Back to Godhead*. When His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda launched the magazine in India, it was his first major

effort toward fulfilling the mission he’d received from his guru: to spread the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa to the English-speaking world. Working alone, Prabhupāda could publish only intermittently in India, but after 1966, the magazine came out regularly, thanks to the help of his disciples.

The pages of *Back to Godhead* have naturally reflected the growth of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement over the last thirty-eight years. The cover story for this issue, for example, wouldn’t have been possible thirty years ago. Back then, most of Prabhupāda’s disciples were unmarried, and they themselves were traveling across America—even to other parts of the world—to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now, it’s their children (or grandchildren) who are doing so.

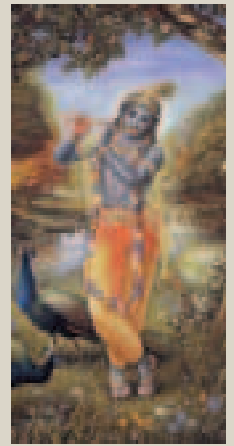
And thirty years ago, who would have guessed that today possibly the most successful presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others would be taking place in Poland? (See “Post-Woodstock Bliss.”)

Still, while some things have changed, the essentials never change, as Prabhupāda reminds us in “The Real Thing Is Bhakti.”

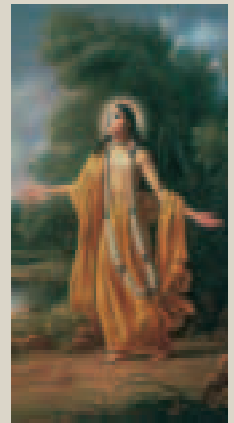
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

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



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Letters

Innocent Killers?

I was reading the book on self-realization by Śrīla Prabhupāda. In one chapter, when he talks about *bhāgya* [fortune] he says that our every material success, failure, and achievement is predetermined. Is death also predetermined? If yes, then if a person is destined to die by murder, or if a chicken is destined to be killed by a butcher, then why do we say that the killers have committed a crime or a sin? If we eat the chicken that was destined to die by killing, then what's wrong in that? Why do we consider it a crime, when it was destined to happen?

Gautam Seth
Via the Internet

OUR RELY: Our time of death depends on our destiny, but our activities in this life can change our destiny and thus our duration of life. *Bhakti-yoga* can remove or reduce one's karma and thus change one's duration of life, and offenses to saints and innocent beings are described as reducing the duration of one's life.

Someone who kills a person or an animal destined to die is responsible because he or she desired to kill. Had he or she not wanted to do it, Kṛṣṇa would have arranged for someone else to do it, and that person would have been held accountable. Kṛṣṇa arranges that people who deserve to die are killed by people who want to kill, and so the killers are responsible for their desire to kill their victims and have to suffer the result. The same is true in the case of the chicken.

People could use your reasoning to kill others and deny responsibility. That, of course, would create chaos in society, and cannot be Kṛṣṇa's idea.

Vaiṣṇava View On Resurrection

I am a Christian who has an interest in Eastern religions. I recently

purchased a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* along with a couple of other books by your guru Śrīla Prabhupāda. One question I have that I have not been able to get an answer to is in regards to 1 Corinthians 15. In this chapter the Apostle Paul expounds on the doctrine of the resurrection. I have read a number of articles by devotees referring to Matthew 16 and John 9 to show references to reincarnation but nothing dealing with the resurrection. Paul points out that there is a difference between a natural body and a spiritual body; however, he also points out that the resurrection is a specific event in time (1 Thes. 4:13-17). If possible, I would like to know the Vaiṣṇava understanding of the resurrection "event."

Kel McMahon
Via the Internet

OUR RELY: Śrīla Prabhupāda considered Lord Jesus Christ to have a spiritual body that was not under the laws of material nature and could not be killed. In a conversation with a disciple he said, "It is not possible to kill him. Such a great personality—representative of God—he is not killed. That is not possible. . . . He made a show that 'I am killed.' That is resurrection."

Śrīla Prabhupāda often stated that God and His representatives have spiritual bodies that cannot be destroyed. The Vedic scriptures say specifically that Lord Kṛṣṇa and the devotees Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna attained the spiritual world in the same bodies that were visible on earth, and so Śrīla Prabhupāda did not consider resurrection to be unique to Jesus Christ.

A Swami Misses the Mark

Thank you for Śrīla Prabhupāda's detailed lecture "God Beyond the Void" in the September/October issue. It was most appropriate, as I had recently accompanied my father to a recital of the *Bhagavad-gītā* by a famous Indian swami.

I was intrigued by the swami, who had a full audience who listened to him

laugh, cry, tell jokes, and so on. He was, on the whole, a good orator.

I sat amongst them, but with Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* open before me. As I listened to the speaker's sweet words, I checked them against Śrīla Prabhupāda's. The exercise became fun. I didn't mean to search for any shortfall, but sadly it soon became apparent.

Though the swami was handsome, had a great singing voice, and spoke poetic Gujarati, there was little substance. Though he declared that to love God was perfection, he failed to describe a process for awakening that love. Though he glorified *Bhagavad-gītā*, he discredited Kṛṣṇa by saying that the Lord did not speak it Himself. He spoke of a great Hindu culture, but presented no concept of surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda explained in his lecture, if we have no positive destination, simply abandoning our present condition is of no value. This became apparent as I followed the speaker, comparing his words with those of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. With each word that jumped off the open book like a firecracker, Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed enormous—detailing a science and a process to love the Supreme Personality of Godhead, while with his every sweet word the swami paled in comparison.

A little amazed, I felt sorry for the other listeners. They were being cheated. I am so thankful to Śrīla Prabhupāda and the disciplic succession, and I wish that the same mercy could be spread to those who are being misled by the cheaters.

Nima Suchak
London, England

Right Response to Criticism

Please accept my belated “thank you” for publishing Arcana-siddhī Devī Dāsī's touching article “Why Do We Criticize Others?—A look at the causes and cures for faultfinding, a major obstacle to spiritual progress.”

(May/June 2003).

The emotional disturbance caused by faultfinding generally affects two parties: the person doing the criticizing and the recipient of the criticism. The article mentions the incident where Rāmacandra Purī invented fault in Lord Caitanya's spotless character. When he saw ants where the Lord was living, he criticized the Lord for eating sweets—a sign to Rāmacandra Purī that the Lord was not acting as a proper renunciant.

Arcana-siddhī Devī Dāsī writes, “Because Rāmacandra Purī was the Godbrother of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master, the Lord respectfully abstained from responding to his offense.” Very few of us can maintain our composure in such circumstances. Even if we abstain from responding, we will likely feel some bitterness or hostility inside us.

What should we, the recipient of faulty criticism, do in such instances? We can chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. That will pacify our agitated mind and purify our heart. We can also take the shelter of the most important *Purāṇa*, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. “These people are not the cause of my happiness and distress. Neither are the demigods, my own body, the planets, my past work, or time. Rather, it is the mind alone that causes happiness and distress.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.23.42)

“A sober person, even when harassed by other living beings, should understand that his aggressors are acting helplessly under the control of God, and thus he should never be distracted from progress on his own path.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.7.37)

These realizations will soothe the emotional turmoil inside us caused by unjustified criticism.

Suk Shah
Woodbury, Minnesota

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THE REAL THING

*Lord Kṛṣṇa tells us how He reveals Himself to us
in many ways just to draw out our love for Him.*

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*punyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca
tejaś cāsmi vibhāvasau
jīvanam sarva-bhūteṣu
tapaś cāsmi tapasviṣu*

“I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the heat in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penances of all ascetics.”—*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.9

KRṢIA IS describing in detail how He is spread everywhere. Before this verse, He has mentioned so many ways. We can see Kṛṣṇa at every step and every moment. If we practice seeing Kṛṣṇa, that is not difficult.

Whenever there is a fragrance—from a rose, for example—you can immediately remember Kṛṣṇa: “Here is Kṛṣṇa.” You simply have to practice.

As soon as you remember Kṛṣṇa or you say or utter the word “Kṛṣṇa,” Kṛṣṇa contacts you. You are in



contact with Kṛṣṇa immediately. And if you remain constantly in contact with Kṛṣṇa by studying all the details He mentions here, then where is the lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? And if you remain always in that way, Kṛṣṇa conscious, then you are the topmost yogi. *Yoginām api sarveṣām* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.47]. Very easy. It is not at all difficult. You simply have to practice.

In another place it is said that the blooming flower is the smiling of Kṛṣṇa. So you can see Kṛṣṇa smiling as soon as you see a flower.

I do not know why people say, “Can you show me Kṛṣṇa?” Kṛṣṇa is showing Himself in so many ways. They will not accept that. It is not at all difficult to see Kṛṣṇa every moment, at every step, if we study what Kṛṣṇa says: “I am,” “This is.”

Punyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca: “I am the original fragrance of the earth.” Now, within the earth, every stock is there. The flavor of the rose is there, and

Left: With devotion and humility, residents welcome Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma into the city of Mathura.

Kṛṣṇa's omnipotence means that so many things are being manifested by His energies, but Kṛṣṇa is not lost.



the flavor of some other flower is also there, but you cannot take it out by your so-called scientific chemical process. Take some lump of earth and extract from it the flavor of a rose. It is there. That is a fact. You sow the seed of a rose, and it will exact the rose flavor from the earth. That's a fact. Who can deny it? Otherwise, where is the flavor coming from?

Here Kṛṣṇa says, *jīvanam sarva-bhūteṣu*: He's life. In the next verse He'll say, *bijaṁ mām sarva-bhūtānām*: "I am the original seed of all existences." *Bija*: the seed. The seed is so nicely made by Kṛṣṇa's brain that as soon as you put the seed within the earth and add some water, it will fructify and gradually grow and exact the flavor, the color, everything. This is a fact. Everybody knows it. Not only that, but Kṛṣṇa is within the small seed of the gigantic banyan tree. Otherwise how can this wonderful thing happen? How can a huge tree come from a small seed? And not only one tree—there are many millions of fruits on the tree, and in each fruit there are many millions of trees. This is the power of Kṛṣṇa's brain. You cannot do that. The so-called manufacturers can manufacture a very complicated watch, but from that watch many watches will not come. No, that is not possible.

But Kṛṣṇa is so powerful—omnipotent—that He has manufactured such a thing, because He is there in the seed. *Bijaṁ mām sarva-bhūtānām* [Bg. 7.10]. Wherever He is, He can play in wonderful ways.

THE CAUSE OF ALL CAUSES

This is the study of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Where is the difficulty? Now, this electric lamp, it is brilliant and it has some heat. Where is it coming from?

It is coming from Kṛṣṇa. That's a fact. He's the cause of all causes.

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa, and He has a body of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He has no beginning, for He is the beginning of everything. He is the cause of all causes." [Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1]

But we should not, like the Māyāvādī philosophers, make mistake of thinking that because the electric light is being caused by Kṛṣṇa, the electric light is Kṛṣṇa. No, not that. Kṛṣṇa is always separate from the electric light. The Māyāvādī says, "Because Kṛṣṇa is there in the electric lamp, or in the tree, or in the seed, or in the color, or in the flavor, Kṛṣṇa is finished. There is no more Kṛṣṇa. Because Kṛṣṇa has spread Himself in so many ways, Kṛṣṇa is finished." This consideration is material, not spiritual. If you take a piece of paper, tear it into small pieces, and throw it, then the original paper is lost. This is material.

But Kṛṣṇa is not like that. Kṛṣṇa is a person, and from His energies so many varieties of productions are coming out. But still, He is existing.

Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam eva avaśiṣyate [Īśopaniṣad Invocation]. He's *pūrṇa*, complete. Not that because so many things have been taken from Kṛṣṇa, He is finished. This misconception is part of material life. The Māyāvādīs cannot conceive of the omnipotence of God. They accept that God is omnipotent, but they cannot understand His omnipotence.

Kṛṣṇa's omnipotence means that so many things are being manifested

by His energies, but Kṛṣṇa is not lost. Kṛṣṇa is there. We haven't got to worship so many things—pantheism. "Kṛṣṇa, or the Absolute Truth, has become divided in so many ways; therefore everything combined together is the Absolute Truth." This is the theory of pantheism. But ours is the Vedic proposition: Kṛṣṇa is the cause of everything. Varieties of material and spiritual things are there, but Kṛṣṇa in His original identity is present in Vṛndāvana.

Kṛṣṇa is this electric lamp, and still, He's not the electric lamp. Kṛṣṇa is this pillow, but He's not the pillow.

NOT EVERYTHING IS KRṢIA

In one big mission, the leaders say, "We accept anything as God." No. We do not say like that, nor does Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa speaks of worshiping, He does not say that you should worship the electric light or something else. *Mām ekam*: "Me alone." That is the instruction. Not that "Kṛṣṇa has become everything; therefore everything has to be worshiped." No. That is wrong.

Our philosophy is *acintya-bheda-abheda*: simultaneous oneness and difference. We have to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa personally, not the varieties. *Mām ekam śaraṇam vraja*: "Surrender unto Me alone." You have to understand that varieties are dependent on Kṛṣṇa. Not that "Because there are varieties, Kṛṣṇa is finished." No, that is not the philosophy.

Here it is said, *tapaś cāsmi tapasviṣu*: "I am the penances of all ascetics." *Tapasvī* means those who seek eternal happiness. *Karmīs*, yogis—there are many *tapasvīs*. But the real *tapasvī* is interested in *tapaḥ divyam*. *Divyam* means transcendental. Just perform *tapasya* for realizing Kṛṣṇa.

The demon Hiraṇyakaśipu also performed *tapasya*. What was that *tapasya*? He performed severe *tapasya*, so much so that the whole universe became perturbed and Brahmājī came to see him.

“What do you want?” Brahmā asked Hiraṇyakaśipu.

“I am performing *tapasya* to become immortal. So if you make me immortal, it will be very kind of you.”

Brahmā replied, “I am myself not immortal. How can I make you immortal? That is not possible.”

So Hiraṇyakaśipu also performed *tapasya*, but that *tapasya* was for material gain. That is not real *tapasya*. *Tapasya* means to undergo voluntarily some bodily inconveniences. We are accustomed to enjoy bodily senses, so *tapasya* means voluntarily to give up the idea of sense gratification. That is *tapasya*.

Ekādaśī—one day of fasting each fortnight—is also *tapasya*. Or fasting on some other auspicious day. That *tapasya* is good, even for health, and what to speak of advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So we should accept this *tapasya*. There are many prescribed days for fasting. We should observe them. And the preliminary *tapasya* is no illicit sex, no gambling, no intoxication, no meat-eating. There may be some inconvenience for those of us who were accustomed to these practices, but we’ll have to accept this *tapasya* if we want to purify our existence.

At the present moment our existence is not purified; it is impure. Therefore we are suffering. When one’s physiological condition becomes infected, he suffers from fever and other symptoms of disease. Similarly, we are suffering in this material world on account of this material body. If we want real happiness, then we must accept *tapasya*. *Tapasya* is required. If you think, “Without *tapasya*, I can get spiritual advancement simply by imagination,” then you become a *sahajiyā*, one who take things very cheaply. No. *Tapasya* is required.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa says *tapas̄ cāsmi tapasviṣu*. *Tapasya* is itself Kṛṣṇa. You associate with Kṛṣṇa. When you voluntarily give up meat-eating or intoxication, this giving-up process is Kṛṣṇa.

Tapasya means to accept voluntarily something as enjoined in the *śāstra*, the scripture. Whatever Kṛṣṇa says is *śāstra*. What is *Veda*? *Veda* means what Kṛṣṇa says. There is no other *Veda*. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said, *tene brahma hṛdā*. *Brahma* means *Veda*. Kṛṣṇa imparted the *Vedas* to Lord Brahmā through the heart. Kṛṣṇa is situated in everyone’s heart. Lord Brahmā had no other spiritual master, but Kṛṣṇa is there within his heart. Kṛṣṇa’s name is Caitya-guru, “The Guru in the Heart.” Kṛṣṇa is so kind. He is the guru within, and when we are serious, He manifests Himself as a spiritual master. That is described in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

The guru helps from inside and outside. Kṛṣṇa is so kind; He manifests Himself as the spiritual master. Therefore Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstraiḥ* . . . : A pure devotee is empowered by Kṛṣṇa to act as the spiritual master. Therefore the spiritual master should be accepted as Kṛṣṇa’s representative. *Tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ*: Those who are learned scholars, actual devotees—they accept the spiritual master as such.

But that does not mean that the guru is Kṛṣṇa. “Accept” means that you honor the spiritual master as being as good as Kṛṣṇa, because he’s Kṛṣṇa’s representative. That’s not the same as the Māyāvāda philosophy, which says that the guru and Kṛṣṇa are the same. In fact, they are simultaneously one and different.

Kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya: The guru is as good as Kṛṣṇa because he is very dear to Kṛṣṇa. Why is he dear? Because he’s preaching on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. What Kṛṣṇa wants, he’s doing that. Therefore he’s very dear.

Kṛṣṇa wants everyone to surrender unto Him. A guru’s business is to teach that. A guru does take the position of Kṛṣṇa. He simply teaches people, “Accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Surrender unto Him. Always think of Him. Always offer your obeisances. Become a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.”

That is the guru’s business. It is not very difficult. Anyone who is sincerely following Kṛṣṇa’s instruction and in-

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on 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**, **hedg-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

structing others to do that is an *ācārya*. Behave exactly as stated in the *śāstra*, as ordered by Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as ordered by Kṛṣṇa. And teach all your disciples the same thing.

So *ācārya*, guru, representative—it is not difficult. One simply has to become very, very sincere. One must undergo the simple *tapasyas* as prescribed in the *śāstras*. By personal example, Lord Caitanya's associate Haridāsa Ṭhākura was preaching the glories of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa; therefore he is accepted as a guru. In our line, all the Vaiṣṇavas, all the Gosvāmīs acted accordingly and preached. Therefore they are *ācāryas*.

REMEMBERING KṚṢṂA

In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we teach that one should always remember Kṛṣṇa. Now, because we are materially attached, we cannot think of Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day. Remembering Kṛṣṇa is very pleasing, but because we are materially attached, we cannot do it. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is prescribing, "See the varieties of this material world and try to remember Me." These are the varieties: *puṇyo*

gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca tejaś cāsmi vibhāvasau. "Study nature and see these important points. And there I am."

It is very scientific. You study nature and pick up some point and Kṛṣṇa says, "I am this." Where is the difficulty? This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You drink water—you remember Kṛṣṇa. You see the light—remember Kṛṣṇa. You smell the aroma of a nice flower—immediately remember Kṛṣṇa. Practice this. It is not difficult.

Actually, we have to think of Kṛṣṇa always. Therefore we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. That is the way to always think of Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa is present before us in His form as the deity in the temple. Therefore we have to worship the deity. If we constantly worship the deity, then Kṛṣṇa's form is always impressed upon our minds. We will be able to see Kṛṣṇa any time. If I close my eyes, I will see Kṛṣṇa, how Kṛṣṇa is nicely dressed. I will see how Kṛṣṇa is very pleasingly eating what I have prepared with devotion, *bhaktiyā*.

The real thing is *bhaktiyā*, not simply official worship. Kṛṣṇa does not accept anything if it is not offered

with *bhakti* and by the *bhakta*, the devotee. Why should He accept it? Is He hungry like me? No. He simply wants to see how you have learned to love Kṛṣṇa, how you are eager to serve Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise He does not require your service. He's always being served by hundreds and thousands of goddesses of fortune.

People pray to the goddess of fortune, "My mother, Goddess of Fortune, give me some fortune." But the goddess of fortune is afraid that Kṛṣṇa may reject *her*. For example, when Kṛṣṇa was joking with His wife Rukmiṇī, she thought, "Maybe Kṛṣṇa is going to leave me." Immediately she fainted.

The goddesses of fortune are humbly, fearfully engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service. What service can we give Kṛṣṇa in comparison? What are we compared to the goddesses of fortune? We are nothing. Insignificant. So why does Kṛṣṇa accept our service? Why does He come as the deity to accept our service? Just to induce us to serve Him with *bhakti*. That is wanted.

Therefore He says, "Give Me even a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water. It doesn't matter. But give Me with *bhakti*."

That is our real business. If you have no *bhakti*, if you offer something only officially, Kṛṣṇa does not touch it. Kṛṣṇa is not so poor.

Whatever you do, you should always be humble: "Kṛṣṇa, I am quite unfit. So whatever I could collect with my capacity, kindly accept it."

This is our only plea to Kṛṣṇa. Don't proudly think, "I am doing so much for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will be obliged to accept it."

The process is very easy, very sublime, but we have to learn it. And that is not very difficult. Here in this verse Kṛṣṇa is showing how to see Him in a variety of ways. Always think of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa will give you intelligence.

You cannot cheat Kṛṣṇa. That is not possible. Kṛṣṇa is within your heart. He sees everything—your intention, your purpose, your activities, everything. *Upadraṣṭā*: He is the witness. You cannot cheat Kṛṣṇa. Be sincere, and try to serve Him. He'll accept your service. And He will give you intelligence. Your life will be successful.

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. Bhaktivedanta 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.

Māyāvādi—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”).

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa’s consort and pleasure potency.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upaniśads—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).

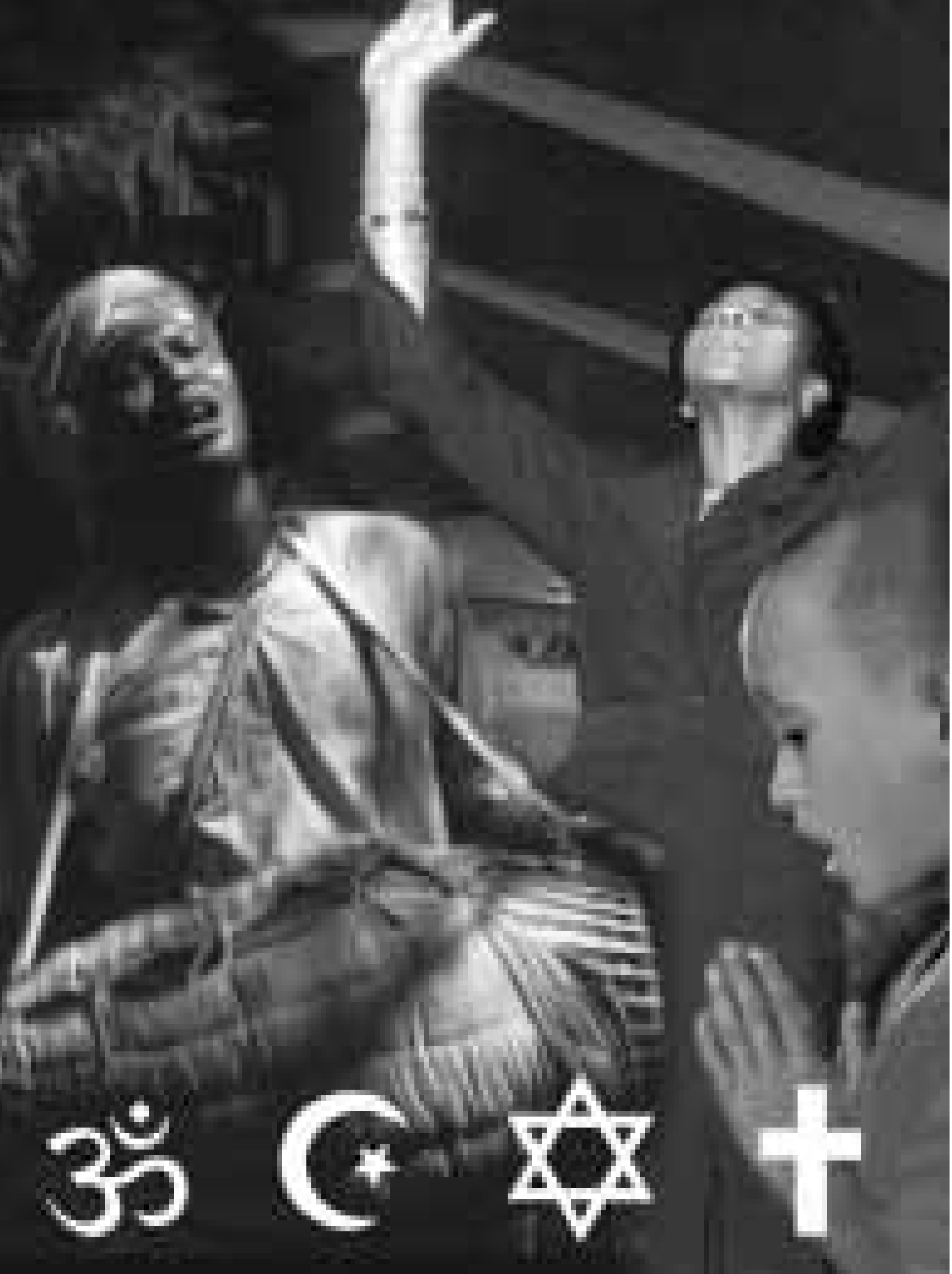
Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

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



FROM EAR TO ETERNITY

The Spiritual Dimensions of Sound

*The Vedic literature reveals the sounds
that can truly awaken the soul.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

WHAT?" asks my eighty-three-year-old mother.

This has become something of a personal mantra for her. Her hearing has been going for some time now, and "What?" is her frequent response to nearly every sound she hears. Or doesn't hear.

My sister and I have been urging her to get a hearing aid for almost a decade.

"The ear is an important organ," I tell her. "If it's not working right, it affects more than your ability to hear. It can also affect your equilibrium, your sense of balance."

"So I'll sit," she says.

On a more serious note, she wanted me to ask her doctor about her loss of hearing, and what, if anything, should be done about it. So I did. The doctor explained to me that the ear is made of three parts: the outer ear, the middle ear, and the inner ear. The fluid in the ear canals and the hairlike nerve cells at the end of each allow us to hear and to keep our balance when we stand, run, walk, ride a bicycle, and even when we sit.

The doctor said my mom's inner ear was worn down and that this happens to a good number of people over time.

As his barrage of technical words entered my own ears, my mind wandered to another kind of sound vibration, and another use of

the auditory sense altogether. The inner ear is an entirely physical phenomenon. But I was more interested in an inner meaning to the inner ear—one I've learned from Śrīla Prabhupāda and the texts of ancient India.

THE UNHEARD WORLD OF SOUND

Human beings can't perceive portions of the known vibratory spectrum. While extremely sensitive to sound waves of about 1,000 to 4,000 cycles per second (cps), man is all but deaf beyond 20,000 cps. Dogs and cats, on the other hand, can hear up to 60,000 cps, while mice, bats, whales, and dolphins can emit and receive sounds well over 100,000 cps.

In other words, there are definitely things we just don't hear. And India's ancient Vedic texts tell us that if this is true in the material sphere, it is even more true of sounds that exist beyond the material world. Such spiritual sounds, these texts tell us, can be vibrated and received only by people who qualify themselves through spiritual practice. Only then can these sounds be truly heard.

Despite our inability to hear certain frequencies, whether material or spiritual, we tend to hear better than we see. Psychologist

Photos from *World Religions in America: An Introduction*, Westminster John Knox Press, and *Eternal Wisdom: The Philosophies and Wisdom of the East*, Marlowe and Company. Montage by Yamarāja Dāsa.

Katharine Le Mee writes in her book *Chant*:

The sense of hearing . . . connects experientially with the heart, and music and sound touch us most directly. We do not resonate so deeply with the visual as with the auditory. This may be explained by the fact that our visual apparatus has a frequency range of slightly less than one octave, from infrared to ultraviolet, whereas our auditory system has a range of about eight octaves, approximately 60 to 16,000 hertz, or number of vibrations per second. We are sensitive to sound frequency as pitch and to light frequency as color. The frequencies of the visual field are much higher than those of the auditory field (by an order of 10^{10}), and, as is well known, the higher the frequencies, the lesser the penetration of a given material. For instance, a piece of cardboard shields us easily from the light, but it takes a thick wall to block out sound, and the lower the pitch the deeper the penetration. We are very sensitive to

sound, not just through the ear but through our whole skin, and all our organs are affected by it.

Thus, science has shown that our human senses are imperfect and limited and that there is a world of sensual experience beyond human perception. Vaiṣṇava scriptures confirm these limitations in man's seeing and hearing and elucidate untold categories of spiritual sound.

SPIRITUAL SOUND IN THE VEDIC LITERATURE

Portions of the Vedic literature are almost like textbooks on sound, informing us about an ancient art in which sound was used as a spiritual tool. The same concept is echoed in other cultures. Chronicles from lands as diverse as Egypt and Ireland tell us of a time when vibrations lying at the foundation of our universe were harnessed by spiritual adepts for the

benefit of mankind. Like the Bible, which states, "In the beginning was the Word (John 1.1)," Vaiṣṇava scriptures affirm that the entire cosmic creation began with sound: "By His utterance came the universe." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.4) The *Vedas* add that ultimate liberation comes from sound (*anavṛttiḥ śabdāt*).

Primal sound is referred to as *śabda brahman*, God as word. Closely related to this is the concept of *nāda brahman*, God as sound. *Nāda*, a Sanskrit word meaning "sound," is related to the term *nadi*, denoting the stream of consciousness—a concept that goes back to the *R̥g Veda*, the most ancient of the *Vedas*. Thus, the relationship between sound and consciousness has long been recorded in India's ancient Vedic texts, which, again, describe sound as the preeminent means for attaining higher, spiritual consciousness.

Mantras, or sacred sounds, are used
(please turn to page 39)

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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-sāstrī 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)

“Education for Eating, Sleeping, Mating, and Defending Will Not Satisfy”

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and the mother of one of his students, along with a Jesuit priest, took place in the garden at Bhaktivedanta Manor, near London, England, on July 25, 1973.

Śrīla Prabhupāda (with an airliner roaring overhead): The airplane botheration was not in Switzerland. They do not fly so low, for fear of the mountain peaks. That was the only place in the world where there was no such sound. Otherwise, everywhere. In America we have got so many temples. Even in West Virginia, quite a hilly tract, there is also the sound of airplanes, although less loud. Anyway, here it is near London, so there must be this sound. Yes. Formerly, people were satisfied to remain in their village. That is the defect of the modern civilization.

Mother: In India, you mean. You’re talking of India now.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Everywhere.

Mother: Everywhere.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Everywhere.

Mother: What about India? I mean, do they believe in this Vedic culture—the villagers?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In India, actually, they do so.

Mother: Yes.

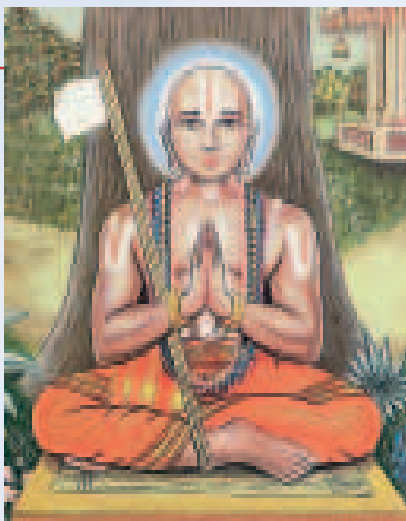
Śrīla Prabhupāda: The villagers have cows and land. That is sufficient for their economic problem. But the industrialists are alluring them: “To get more money, come here.”

So the villagers are going to the cities. And the food production in the village is neglected. And therefore the grain price is rising. Actually,

SPIRITUAL PL

MELUKOTE

Dear to Ramanuja's Heart



This South Indian hill temple served as a refuge for many Vaiṣṇavas during the Mogul era, including one of the greatest saints of Indian history.

by Adbhuta Hari Dāsa

MELUKOTE SITS on a hill about thirty miles north of Mysore, in the South Indian state of Karnataka. It is one of the four most important holy sites for Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, the followers of the great spiritual master and reformer Śrī Rāmānuja (A.D. 1017–1137). Rāmānuja spent at least twelve years in Melukote (*may-lu-ko-tay*), setting up strict standards of deity worship still followed today.

The main temple in Melukote is that of Tiru Nārāyaṇa. (“Tiru” is the

Two ISKCON members from China stand in the courtyard of the Yoga Narasimha temple above the town of Melukote. At top: Śrī Rāmānuja.



Reprinted from *Melukote Through the Ages*

Tamil equivalent of “Śrī,” an honorific meaning “opulent.”). Resting prominently on a hill above the town is the temple of Yoga Narasimha, the Lord’s half-man, half-lion incarnation seated in a yoga posture.

I visited Melukote with my spiritual master, His Holiness Śrīdhara Swami, accompanied by three other ISKCON members, including two from China.

In many South Indian temples, pilgrims who sponsor special worship of the deity are granted an exclusive viewing of the ceremony. Taking advantage of this custom, Rohiṇi Tanāi Dāsa, a member of our group, arranged for Śrīdhara Swami to sponsor a bathing ceremony for Yoga Narasimha. We arrived at the base of the hill at 11:00 A.M. and conquered countless steps to reach the entrance tower. After passing through several halls and corridors, we were greeted in the main temple hall by the chief priest, Narayan Bhatta. He had everything ready for the ceremony and began bathing the deity with water, milk, yogurt, honey, and sugarwater. Priests chant-

ed prayers for purification from the *Pavamāna-sūkta* and prayers for glorification of the Lord from the *Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* and the *Viṣṇu-sūktas*.

After the bathing, the doors to the deity’s chamber were closed for five minutes. When they reopened, the deity in the dark room looked fearsome—He was covered with turmeric powder. A priest ended the ceremony by offering the deity some camphor, a ghee lamp, betel leaves, betel nuts, and a banana and then giving them to Śrīdhara Swami. This indicated that all the blessings were transferred to the person who sponsored the bathing of the deity.

At that point a priest allowed other people to have a glimpse of the Lord while we stayed in the inner sanctum of the deity room. Then the priest again closed the altar, humbly asking us to wait for some time until they finished dressing the Lord. They offered us *caraṇāmṛta* (water that had bathed the Lord) mixed with banana, *jaggery* (unrefined sugar), honey, coconut, and

tulasī leaves.

While waiting for the deity to be dressed, we went to the roof of the temple, from where we could see Melukote spread out below. The most prominent places we noticed were the Tiru Nārāyaṇa temple, Kalyani (“Auspicious”) Pond, the large entrance gate of a time-ravaged fort (Melukote means “upper fort”), and the Academy of Sanskrit Research, where computer scientists are working on, among other things, a program that can perform natural language processing with Sanskrit grammar. The Academy also has a well-stocked library of old manuscripts, a garden of purely Vedic plants, and livestock carefully bred to recapture the characteristics of early Vedic herds.

All the surrounding area was clearly visible from the hill. One of the priests told me that at night one can see the lights of Mysore.

PRAHLĀDA’S CAVE

The priest also told me that according to the *Nārādiya Purāṇa*, Prahlāda



Dhruva Dasa

According to the Nāradiya Purāṇa, the deity of the Lord known as Yoga Narasimha (above) was first worshiped by the saint Prahlāda Mahārāja thousands of years ago. The Yoga Narasimha temple (above, left) sits on a hill at one end of town, and the Tiru Nārāyaṇa temple is at the other end. Below: On the request of his disciples, Śrī Rāmānuja approved the molding of this form of himself during his time in Melukote.



Reprinted from Melukote Through the Ages

INDIA

KARNATAKA

Visiting Melu-

How to Get There
Melukote is about thirty miles north of Mysore. Take a bus or taxi from Mysore to Melukote. The closest airport to Mysore is in Bangalore, ninety miles away.

Several trains run between Mysore and Bangalore each day, the trip taking 2–3 hours. The trip by bus takes 3–4 hours.

Where to Stay
Melukote is a village, with no lodging. Mysore, a popular tourist destination, has many hotels. Here are some suggestions in three price ranges:

LOW—Hotel Sangeeth (phone: 24693), Gayatri Bhavan (21224), Hotel Aashraya Mysore (27088). MEDIUM—Hotel Mayura Hoysala (25349), Mysore Hotel Complex (26217), Hotel Shreekrishna Continental (37042). HIGH—Kings Kourt Hotel (25250), Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel (26316), Southern Star Mysore (27217).

Where to Eat
Vegetarian restaurants in Mysore: Akshaya Restaurant in the Dasaprakash Hotel, Hotel Siddhartha, Sujata, Modern Hindu Hotel, Indra

A History in Names

Melukote has been known by different names in the course of time. These are the most prominent ones:

Nārāyaṇādri—Narayana Hill.

Vedādri—Veda Hill. The avatar Dattātreyā instructed His disciples in the *Vedas* here.

Yādavādri—Yadu Hill. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, of the Yadu dynasty, worshiped the Lord here in Dvāpara-yuga.

Tirunārāyaṇapura—The abode of Śrī Nārāyaṇa.

Bhūlokavaikuṇṭha—The abode of Lord Viṣṇu on earth.

Vaikuṇṭhavardhana Kṣetra—The place that increases the population of Lord Viṣṇu's abode.

Jñānamanṭapa—The pavilion of knowledge.

Dakṣiṇa Badarikāśrama—The southern Badrinath (a holy place in the Himalayas).

Dodḍagaruḍanahalli—The abode of elite warriors.

Dodḍagurugalahalli—The abode of the great teacher

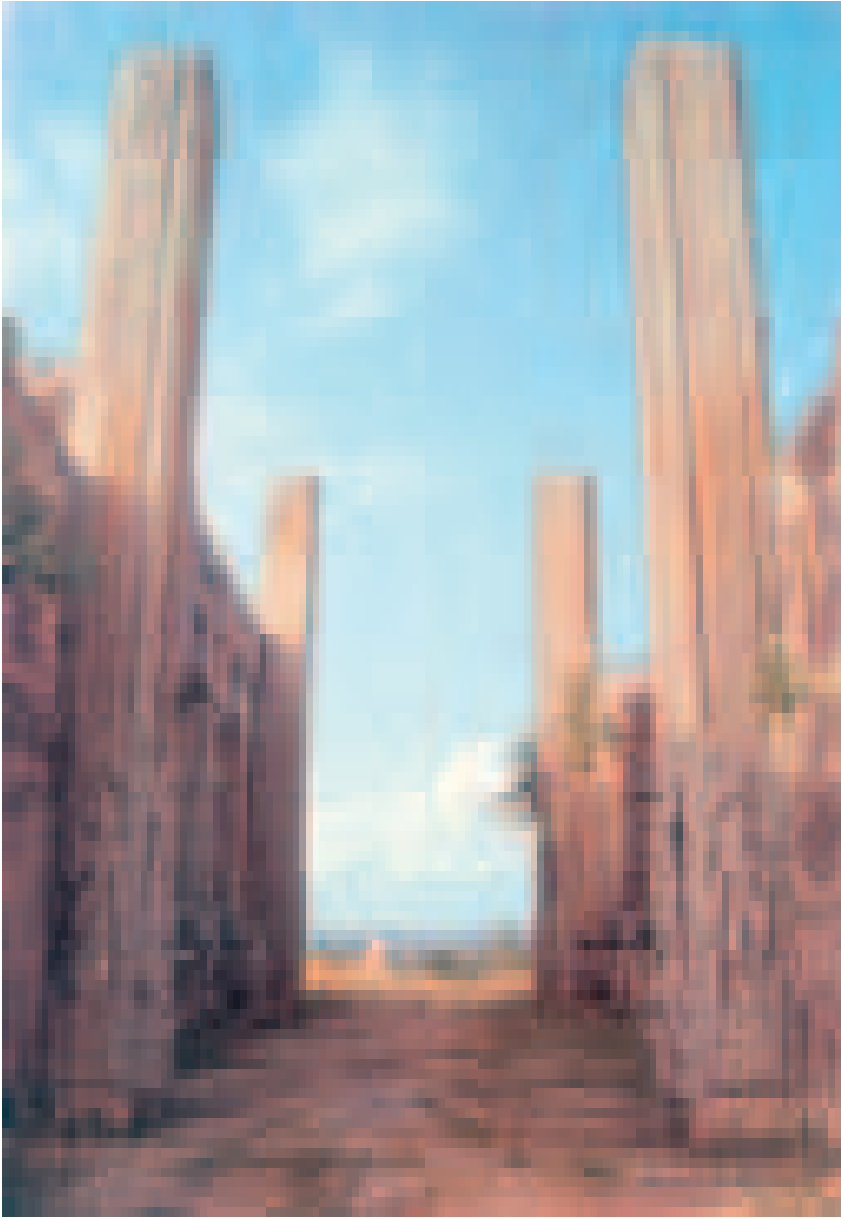
Tradition holds that Prahlāda Mahārāja meditated in a cave (below) beneath the Yoga Narasiṃha temple. Kalyani Pond (bottom), the largest pond (kuṇḍa) in Melukote, lies at the base of the hill upon which the Yoga Narasiṃha temple sits. At right, remains of the fort at Melukote, whose name means “upper fort.”



Avadhūta Dāsa



Avadhūta Hari Dāsa



Mahārāja installed the deity of Yoga Narasimha thousands of years ago while visiting Viṣṇucitta, a celibate performing penance here. The priest invited us to see the cave under the temple where it's said that Prahlāda Mahārāja meditated. Some of us happily accepted the proposal and went down from the northern, back side of the temple. The entrance had narrow steps, and then we had to bend our heads and even crawl. The point where Prahlāda Mahārāja meditated is just below the deity. From there we crawled some more and then came out under the lower part of the temple.

By then the deity was dressed, so we went to see Him. One priest of-

ferred Him 108 *tulasī* leaves while others chanted 108 names of Lord Narasimha.

The temple was now open to all pilgrims, and they flooded in to see the Lord sitting in the yoga posture, dressed in red-and-white cloth, and wearing garlands of flowers and *tulasī*. On His head rested a beautiful crown, and He wore metal gloves. Two of His hands rested on His folded knees, and the other two held a disc and a conch shell.

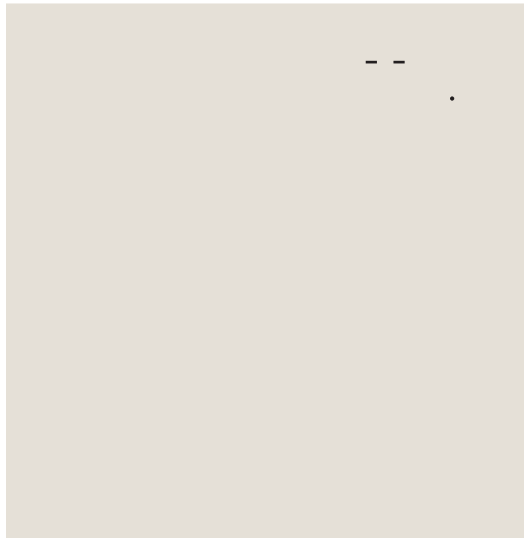
KALYANI POND

From the Yoga Narasimha temple we came down the hill to meet a resident priest, Sudarshan Acharya. On the way to his house, we offered our respects to Kalyani Pond, the chief of several sacred ponds in Melukote, by sprinkling some of its water on our heads. According to the *Īśvara-saṁhitā*, when Lord Kṛṣṇa in His incarnation as Lord Varāha lifted the earth from the universal ocean, some drops of water clinging to His body fell on the hill at Melukote, creating Kalyani Pond. The *Padma Purāṇa* mentions Kalyani Pond, and according to the *Matsya Purāṇa*, Garuḍa, Lord Viṣṇu's eagle-carrier, brought white clay here from Sveta-dvīpa, Lord Viṣṇu's planet within this universe.

After passing through the main street, we arrived at the house of Sudarshan Acharya, where we stayed for two hours. He told us that the following great personalities had all visited

Melukote: Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Balarāma, Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Dattātreya, the Pāṇḍavas, Nārada Muni, Sanat-kumāra, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, Parāśara Muni, and Śrī Rāmānujācārya.

Sudarshan Acharya showed us his deities of Sudarśana (the Lord's disc) and Lakṣmi-Narasimha, given to his ancestors by Rāmānujācārya, who had also authorized his ancestors to give mantras of Lord Narasimha and Sudarśana



for health and for protection in spiritual life.

After lunch at Sudarshan Acharya's home, we left for the daily 4:00-P.M. opening of the Tiru Nārāyaṇa temple.

HISTORY

It is said that Lord Nārāyaṇa came to Melukote hill in response to a penance performed by Lord Brahma by which he assumed the form of a divine temple. Today the Tiru Nārāyaṇa temple is not architecturally identical to the original one described in the *Pañca-rātrāgama*, but it is still honored as a self-manifested sacred place.

As we entered the temple, the deity Tiru Nārāyaṇa was directly in front of us. He is five to six feet tall. Priests chanted 1,008 names of the Lord, who gave blessings with one hand and held a club, a disc, and a conch shell in His other three hands. Rāmānujācārya discovered the deity in an ant hill after the Lord directed him to the spot in a dream.

On the right side of the entrance, in a separate shrine, is a small Nārāyaṇa deity, the processional deity, known as Cheluva Nārāyaṇa, Cheluva Pillai, Sampad-kumāra, and Rāma-priyā—"one who is dear to Lord Rāma." [See sidebar "The Devotion of a Princess."] Lord Rāma worshiped this deity with great love. In the *Nārādiya Purāṇa*, sages ask Nārada Muni how Lord Nārāyaṇa came to this place. He tells them that the deity was first presented to Brahmā to worship, and Brahmā gave the deity to Sanat-kumāra, one of his sons. Lord Viṣṇu then ordered Ananta Śeṣa, the lord of the serpents, to assume the form of a mountain at Melukote and wait for His arrival. Sanat-kumāra transported the deity with His entire temple complex to Melukote. Later he presented the deity to Lord Rāma. Rāma's son Kuśa gave the deity as a dowry for his daughter, who married a prince of the Yadu dynasty.

Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in the Yadu dynasty and worshiped the deity. During that time, the diamond crown of the Lord Aniruddha (Viṣṇu), residing in the milk ocean, was stolen by Virocana, the son of Prahlāda. Garuḍa killed Virocana and retrieved the crown.

The Devotion of a Princess



Adbhuta Hari Dāsa

During a festival, Tiru Cheluva Nārāyaṇa is made to appear to be riding on the shoulders of a servant.

TEMPLES WITH a large stone deity on the altar generally have a smaller deity called the *utsava-mūrti* ("festival form"), who leaves the temple for processions and festivals. The *utsava-mūrti* in Melkote is called Tiru Cheluva Nārāyaṇa (or Cheluva Pillai), and the temple is also referred to as the Tiru Cheluva Nārāyaṇa temple.

The Lord once informed Rāmānujācārya in a dream that the *utsava-mūrti*, which had been stolen by invading Moguls, was in Delhi. Rāmānujācārya went there with his disciples, met the sultan who had plundered temples in South India, and requested him to return the deity. The sultan showed him several deities, but Rāmānuja did not approve any of them. He said that his deity was in the harem of the princess. The sultan told Rāmānuja that if he wanted his deity, he would have to ask the deity to come to him.

Rāmānuja sang a sweet song and called out, "Please come, my dear child." ("Cheluva" means "dear child.") The deity came as

a beautiful boy and sat on his lap. Rāmānuja embraced the divine child with great affection, calling him Sampad-kumāra ("Youthful Lord"), and brought Him to Melukote.

The princess, unable to bear separation from the deity, followed Rāmānuja. The sultan then sent his army to accompany the princess, but when they couldn't enter a rival's kingdom, the princess continued on alone. When she came to Melukote, she was not allowed to enter the temple, being a Muslim, so she decided to spend her life in penance. Hearing that she was not allowed to see the deity, Rāmānuja ordered his disciples to allow her to enter the temple. She walked in and merged with the Lord.

Rāmānuja installed a deity of the princess, Bibi Nacciyar, at the feet of Tiru Cheluva Nārāyaṇa. Since then every offering made in the temple is done through her.



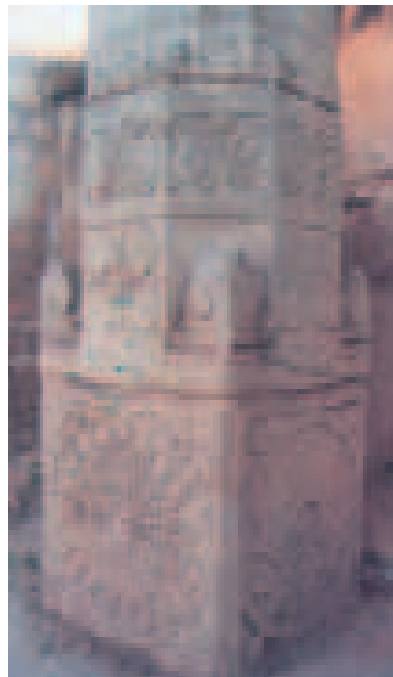
The deity Tiru Nārāyaṇa (above) resides in Melukote’s main temple, which was renovated by Śrī Rāmānuja in the twelfth century. Below, columns throughout the Tiru Nārāyaṇa temple compound display exquisite craftsmanship.

But on the way back he found Kṛṣṇa playing in Vṛndāvana with His friends and cows. So Garuḍa gave the crown, known as Vajramukti, to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa offered it to the deity Rāmapriyā. (Today, Vairamudi—“The Festival of the Diamond Crown”—is one of the temple’s main festivals.)

When Lord Balarāma returned to Dwarka after one of His pilgrimages, He told Lord Kṛṣṇa that the deity in Melukote (discovered by Rāmānuj-ācārya) was identical to their deity. So they took Rāmapriyā to Melukote and placed Him before Tiru Nārāyaṇa. They found no difference between them. Rāmapriyā stayed in Melukote, and thereafter the Yadus frequently visited there to worship the Lord, who became their family deity.

HALL OF PILLARS

We offered prayers to the deity Rāmapriyā and then walked around the



SPOTLIGHT ON KRISH

temple, stopping at the small shrines of Hanumān, Śrī Lakṣmī, and the twelve Ālvārs, saints of the South Indian tradition. Śrī Lakṣmī, the consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa, is known here as Yadugiri Nachiyar. Her grace is considered even more important than the Lord's. In front of her shrine is a hall of pillars carved with great dexterity. Each one is unique, filled with ornaments, dancing figures, and scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

While examining the pillars, we arrived in front of the deity of Rāmānuj-ācārya, which was made during his lifetime and approved by him. When he had decided to leave Melukote, his disciples asked his permission to make the deity. Overwhelmed by their love and devotion, he consented.

During Rāmānuja's twelve years in Melukote, a tyrant named Kullotunga Chola ruled southern India. He could not tolerate any worship of Lord Viṣṇu. Many Vaiṣṇavas fled to Melukote, where they were given refuge by the local people. Moved by the benevolence of the people of Melukote, Rāmānujā called them Tirukulattar, "the kind people."

At that time in Karnataka, a Jain named Bittideva was ruler of Belur. He became a disciple of Rāmānuja and received the Vaiṣṇava name Vishnuvardhana. As a service to his guru, he renovated the temple of Tiru Nārāyaṇa.

In the late evening we left for Bangalore. I was inspired by the spirit of service to Vaiṣṇavas shown in Melukote, and by the residents' surrender in devotion to the Lord, the same principles accepted and emphasized by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.



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

For more information, consult *Holy Places and Temples of India*, by Jaḍa Bharata Dāsa, available from the Krishna.com Store.

ONLINE EXTRA

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POST- WOODSTOCK BLISS

Twelve city festivals keep spirits high for the team of devotees who presented Kṛṣṇa consciousness to hundreds of thousands at the Polish Woodstock.

by Indradyumna Swami

IT TOOK FIFTY devotees three full days to break down our festival at the Polish Woodstock. By the time we left, not a soul could be seen on the huge field. As we drove away, I thought back on the success of our festival. Most of the 500,000 people who had come to Woodstock had passed through our site at some point and experienced the blissful world of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We rounded the last turn onto the main road, and I looked back. I felt empty inside. I would have to wait a full year to experience such a great festival again.

As we headed north, my attention turned to the final two weeks of our summer festivals along the Baltic coast. If anything could come close to the taste of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness at Woodstock, it would be the twelve festivals that lay ahead. Well-to-do families take their vacations along the coast, providing a golden opportunity for reaching the higher echelons of Polish society.

After we arrived at our base near the sea, the devotees took a much-deserved three-day break while I waited impatiently for the festivals to begin. One day, several of my disciples returned from a swim at the beach near Pobierowo.

“Śrīla Gurudeva!” they said excitedly, all talking at once. “As soon as we walked onto the beach, people began crowding around us. They were asking us when the festival in Pobierowo would be. They want to know if there will be a new theater this year and how many Indian dancers will be performing.”

I couldn’t help picking up their enthusiasm. “What did you tell them?” I asked.

“We told them the Pobierowo festival would be in two weeks. It would be the final one. One family said they would extend their vacation an extra week just to come.”

Four days later, we chanted on the beaches of Ustronie Morskie, where we would hold the first festival. All of Europe was in the midst of a sweltering heat wave. The beach at Us-

Adapted from *Diary of a Traveling Preacher, Volume 5, Chapter 8* (August 17–September 1, 2003).

To receive chapters by e-mail as they come out regularly, write to admin@festivalofindia.org.pl.

tronie Morskies was so crowded that with our *kīrtana* party of eighty devotees, we could hardly make our way onto the sand.

I was happy to be chanting in public again, and I felt like a thirsty man who had finally found water. I wanted to have an exchange with the people, so I told a devotee to ask the first couple we met if they would come to our festival.

“Of course we will come,” the man said. “We’ve been waiting for you.”

His wife smiled.

“We plan our vacation each year around your festivals,” she said. “Summer wouldn’t be the same without you.”

Three days later, a crowd of thousands came to the festival. It was easy to see the difference between those who had come before and those who were coming for the first time. The newcomers were a little reserved at first, but the veterans came to the festival with an enthusiasm much like what I had felt while chanting on the beach again. They headed right for their favorite spots—the restaurant, the gift shop, the book tent, a front row seat on the benches in front of the stage. I saw their eagerness as an initial but real stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I started walking around and wandered into the book tent. Our Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities, Śrī Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī, stood there on a beautiful carved wooden altar, placed between tables displaying Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. The deities are over two hundred years old, and with their beautiful clothes and ornaments, they captured the attention of anyone who walked into the tent. I was surprised to see a family down on their knees in front of the deities, crossing themselves, as Catholics do in church. After saying a few prayers, they stood up and walked out.

I turned to Madhuvatī Dāsī, who serves the deities.

“That was unusual,” I said.

“Not at all, Śrīla Gurudeva,” she replied. “People often kneel down before the deities and pray when they come into the tent. I’ve seen guests stand there reverentially for fifteen or twenty minutes. I’ve even seen people speak to Them.”

The pleasant weather kept up over

the next two weeks, and for once I didn’t worry about rain and wind, the natural enemies of our festival tours. We had record crowds in every town.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

One evening, as I was speaking from the stage in Mrzezyno, a man dressed in shorts and a T-shirt caught my eye. He was standing in the crowd, listening attentively, nodding in agreement as I explained Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Suddenly I recognized him. He was one of the security guards we had hired during the spring tour. After my talk, he came to thank me and said that he had just come to the coast.

“When I first started working with you last spring,” he said, “I had almost no interest in spiritual life. I just did my job, looking out for troublemakers, but while I was there, I was hearing you sing, listening to your lectures, and watching how you people act. Something changed inside me.”

“When I went home after your spring tour, I couldn’t stop thinking about all of you. As soon as my summer vacation came, I drove up here with my wife and kids. We plan to attend every festival.”

“Every festival?” I asked.

“It may sound strange,” he said, “but I never get tired of these festivals. There’s something magical about them.”

WAITING FOR THE CHARIOTS

Lord Caitanya was quickly soothing my feelings of separation from Woodstock, and at the year’s last festival, in Pobierowo, He satisfied my heart.

The devotees had mixed feelings on that day. We all knew it was the last festival of the year, but we had little time to lament. We were busy with the biggest crowd of the year.

We chanted on the beach that morning, but around noon it began raining, bringing an end to the longest period

of good weather on the coast in living memory. Everyone on the beach had to find shelter, but even though the skies cleared in the late afternoon, no one went back there. They all came to the Festival of India.

Every tourist in town must have come. I was sure of that because, as on the beach, it was difficult to walk through the festival grounds. People were everywhere—the restaurant, the shops, the booths, crowded in front of the stage. Of particular interest was our towering Rathayātrā cart, which we had put near the stage. Towards evening we put a light inside the canopy, making the cart look like a gigantic lantern. It was a real crowd-pleaser. People lined up to take photos in front of it.

At one point, I noticed a man standing in front of the cart, looking at it and shaking his head as if in disbelief. I was wondering what he might be thinking, so I went up to him, along with Rāma Acyuta Dāsa as my translator.

“Is there some problem, sir?” I asked.

He kept his eyes fixed on the huge cart.

“I can’t believe it,” he said. “It’s the real thing. It’s a Rathayātrā cart.”

I was surprised that he even knew the right name.

“How do you know what a Rathayātrā cart is?” I asked.

He turned to me for a moment, then looked at the cart again.

“Nine years ago I worked in a coal mine in the south,” he said. “It was a dismal job, and dangerous too. One

time, some of my colleagues were killed when a mineshaft caved in. I didn't go back into that black hole again. I quit my job and stayed home, praying to God to deliver me from this horrible world.

"One day I decided to go to the town library and look for books about spiritual life. As I searched through the shelves, I found the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, translated by Bhaktivedanta Swami. There were eight volumes. I glanced through the first one, but I couldn't understand a thing. I decided to check it out anyway and take it home. When I went to the desk, the librarian smiled. She said the book had been there for years and I was the first person to take it out.

"I was desperate for spiritual knowledge, and I read the book over and over. Gradually, I began to understand it. Two weeks later, I went back for the second volume, and the week after, for the third. I didn't do anything but read day and night. After several months I had read all eight volumes at least twice.

"I learned a lot. I was amazed by Caitanya, an incarnation of God. And there was the explanation of the five ways to love God. I had never imagined that spiritual life could be so profound, so deep.

"My favorite part was the Rathayātrā festival, where Caitanya sang and danced with His people. I lamented that I had been born too late to take part in those historic times.

"Sometimes Swami mentioned a movement that was spreading all over the world, a movement whose followers sang Hare Kṛṣṇa, like Caitanya. I wrote to the addresses in the books, but never received a reply. I prayed to God to help me find the movement, but to no avail.

"Then this morning, as I lay on the beach after a swim, I suddenly heard people singing Hare Kṛṣṇa. I sat up with a start. I couldn't believe my eyes. There must have been a hundred people, many with drums and cymbals. It was as if the books I'd read about Caitanya were coming to life.

"But one thing confused me: there was no Rathayātrā cart. For this to be real, there had to be a Rathayātrā cart. At first I thought you people were do-

ing a theatrical performance, but then I thought, 'Maybe this is the movement that Swami wrote about. Is God finally answering my prayers?'

"I took an invitation, and when it started to rain I went back to my hotel. I was waiting anxiously for the festival to begin. When the time came, I walked quickly from my hotel. When I came near the festival site and heard the singing, I started to run, and I soon found myself at the entrance. But there was such a crowd! I couldn't see anything. I pushed my way through the people and made it onto the field.

"I was stunned by it all: the colorful tents, the big stage, the singing. But was it real? Was it Caitanya's movement? Then suddenly, to my amazement, I saw the Rathayātrā cart. I walked over here and touched it. The Lord has answered my prayers. I have found Caitanya's movement."

Some devotees had gathered to listen, and when he finished we were all speechless. I was overwhelmed by his story and the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

He was still looking at the cart.

"Excuse me if I seem a little emo-

tional," he said. "I hope you understand."

"I do understand," I said.

He turned to me with tears in his eyes.

"What do I do now?" he said slowly.

I took his hand.

"You weren't born too late," I said.

"You've come at the perfect time. You can help us spread this movement. The saints say that Lord Caitanya is present wherever His devotees are serving Him."



His Holiness Indradyumna Swami travels around the world teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Poland each summer he oversees dozens of festivals. Since 1990 these festivals have introduced Kṛṣṇa to hundreds of thousands of people.

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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 Nārāyaṇa

(December 9–January 7)

JANUARY

3—Putradā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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 Vṛndā-

vana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master and author who appeared in the seventeenth century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā 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, Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the 13th century.

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

FEBRUARY

2—Bhaimī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Fasting till noon for the appearance of Lord Varāha.

3—Appearance anniversary of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation. (No fasting.)

4—Appearance anniversary of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, a close associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon.

6—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a spiritual master in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who composed many devotional songs in Bengali.

Month of Govinda

(February 7–March 6)

11—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Ṭhākura, spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, then feasting. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Gour Govinda Swami, an ISKCON guru.

16—Vijayā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

17—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

19—Śrī Śiva Rātri, a day in honor of Lord Śiva.

21—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, the great devotee in disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Caitanya's birthplace.

MARCH

2—Amalākī-vrata Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

Month of Viṣṇu

(March 7–April 5)

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

How My Cancer Became a Blessing

“I resolved to spend the rest of my life cultivating devotional remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

by Surapriyā Devī Dāsī

ON AUGUST 18, 2002, my life took a fateful turn. A persistent leg-pain was diagnosed as being caused by malignant terminal breast cancer that had spread all over my body.

Till then my life had been more or less similar to that of most Indian Hindu housewives. I was born and brought up in Maharashtra, a province in Western India, in a cultured and pious family and had married a respectable school teacher, Bhagavan Malwadkar, who went on to become the principal of his school. Our three sons became well-educated young men, with bright careers in front of them.

Then Lord Kṛṣṇa entered my life. Two of my sons—Siddhanath and Santosh—met devotees of the ISKCON Youth Forum, Pune, in the middle of 1997. Being inspired by the devotees’ association, they took to the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness enthusiastically. I was somewhat taken aback by their sudden transformation, but after I met Gaurasundara Dāsa, the devotee who was teaching them about Kṛṣṇa, I too was attracted by his disarming simplicity and profound wisdom. My husband and I invited him to start a weekly *Bhagavad-gītā* program at our house in Kothrud, one of the main suburbs of Pune, and he agreed. As the weeks passed by, I was drawn more and more toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In the middle of 2000, my devotee sons decided to renounce their promising careers to join ISKCON full-time to become *brahmacārīs* (celibate students). I was aghast; all the dreams of their glorious future I had cherished since their birth lay shattered. But I continued my devotional practices and gradually came to accept this as the inconceivable sweet will of the Lord.



Meanwhile I suffered periods of poor health, but nothing seemed seriously wrong—till the day of that devastating diagnosis.

Within days of the diagnosis I underwent surgery, but it was a lost cause. The cancer was so widespread, doctors told my family members, that treatment could at best delay the inevitable by a few months. Not only was the disease itself very painful, but the treatment brought its own pains, with little chance of success.

As the horrifying reality of my plight sank in, I sensed that the pain, already excruciating, would worsen till death took its final toll. I felt it would be far easier to end my life myself right away than

to try to endure the pain in an agonizing wait for an uncertain yet imminent death.

SPIRITUAL SOLACE

My sons, who had by now become initiated (Siddhnath had become Saṅkīrtanānanda Dāsa, and Santosh had become Sundaravara Dāsa), were alarmed when I revealed my thoughts to them. In gentle yet firm words, they told me that suicide would not solve my problems; rather it would aggravate them. They explained how all suffering comes from our past deeds and cannot be avoided by artificial means. They cautioned me that my trying to escape my destined suffering through suicide would only postpone the suffering to my next life.

Besides that, the reaction to the sinful act of destroying one’s own body by suicide only adds to future suffering. It was better, they told me, to take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa through devotional service, tolerate the suffering, seeing it as His mercy, become purified, and return back home, back to Godhead, never to take birth

***My breath stopped for several minutes.
During those traumatic minutes, I realized
my identity to be distinct from my body.***



again in this world of suffering. They reassured me that prayerful remembrance of the Lord would provide me relief from pain even in this life.

I was stunned to hear such profound philosophy from the sons I had nourished with my own breast milk. But soon the truth and wisdom in their words entered my heart, and I became filled with new hope. I resolved to spend the rest of my life cultivating devotional remembrance of Kṛṣṇa.

The doctors told me I had around seven months left. I started thinking of King Parīkṣit, who had only seven days to prepare for his death. He had gone to the banks of the Ganges, heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* continuously for those seven days, and perfected his life. I decided to follow in his footsteps. I told my husband that I wanted to spend the last days of my life at the ISKCON temple in Pune. The temple president, Rādheshyāma Dāsa, whom I had always revered as a compassionate saintly person, promptly agreed to provide us a room. I was moved by his kindness, as I knew there was an acute space shortage at the temple—forty-three *brahmacāris* lived in three rooms.

We quickly moved into the temple. As I started visiting the deities daily, hearing the classes and *kīrtanas*, and reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, I discovered something amazing: fixing my consciousness on Kṛṣṇa protected me from the unbearable pain my body was inflicting upon me.

For a short time, my health seemed to improve, and my husband and I returned home, freeing up some space at the temple. But as soon as I left the temple, my pain became so excruciating that I felt like I was being pierced from within at a thousand places. No amount of painkillers helped, but whenever I returned to the temple, my pain subsided.

I realized again that it was Lord Kṛṣṇa who was protecting me from

my pain, not the medicines. I begged Rādheshyāma Dāsa to please allow me to spend the brief remainder of my life at the temple, and he graciously consented, despite the inconveniences it would invariably cause him and the other devotees there.

Since childhood I had heard about Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*, and I knew that devotion was incomplete without initiation from a bona fide spiritual master. I started praying intensely, "Dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, please give me the shelter of a guru before I leave this body."

MY OBE

On January 23, 2003, I underwent a major surgery. During the operation, my breath stopped for several minutes. During those traumatic minutes, I realized my identity to be distinct from my body; I could see, from a vantage point above the operation theater, my frail body lying lifeless on the operation table. I saw the doctors and nurses running around, trying frantically to revive me. I don't know what happened after that, but I woke up to find myself inside my body again.

After that out-of-body experience (OBE) I felt intuitively that Kṛṣṇa had given me a fresh lease on life just so I could get the shelter of a guru. And, sure enough, on April 4, 2003, His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami, the spiritual master of my devotee sons, accepted me as his disciple.

When I look back at my life and the great spiritual transformation that has taken place over the last few months, I feel strongly that cancer has proved to be a blessing for me. Had it not been for this deadly disease, I would never have risen from ritualistic piety to heartfelt devotion; I would simply have grown old, got diseased, died, and continued on aimlessly in the cycle of birth and death. I would never have got the great fortune of living in the

Lord's temple, and I would probably never have sought or received initiation. And certainly I would never have experienced the sweetness of helpless remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I feel therefore that the Lord has blessed me by giving me cancer and by simultaneously giving me shelter through His devotees and mission.

Generally when a young son renounces the world to serve God, his parents in particular and people in general are shocked at what they consider to be irresponsibility and escapism. I was no exception to such sentiments. My anguish was, in fact, much greater, because not one, but two, of my sons decided to forsake everything for the Lord's service. But now on the verge of death, when the futility of all material achievements stands exposed before me and the inestimable value of devotional service is dawning upon me, I realize how wise my sons were in dedicating their life to the service of the Lord in the prime of their youth.

During my sickness, my two devotee sons carefully attended to my needs, arranging for me to come and stay in the temple with them, cooking for me, accompanying me to the hospital, and taking turns in serving me. Whenever I was in pain or distress, they were always there by my side to support and encourage me. They did all a faithful son can be expected to do for his mother.

But over and above caring for my body, they cared for the real me—the soul. They provided me with spiritual knowledge and devotional practices, which saved me from unbearable bodily pain and brought me indescribable inner happiness. I therefore feel that what they have done for me is far more than what an ordinary son can ever do for his mother.

I feel proud that they were so intelligent that they took to devotional service even before I did. It is sometimes

said that the child is the father of the man. In my case, the sons have become the spiritual guides of their mother.

Lastly I feel profound gratitude to Śrīla Prabhupāda, his followers, and his mission, ISKCON, for having provided me with the shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet in my last days, when I so desperately needed it. It is only by their grace that for me cancer has been transformed from a curse into a blessing.

* * *

Surapriyā Devī Dāsī passed away on June 13, 2003, at 3:15 A.M. within the premises of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kuñjabihārī temple, ISKCON, Pune. At that time, a CD player was playing a recording of Śrīla Prabhupāda singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and her youngest son, Sundaravara Dāsa, was chanting on his beads next to her. Before losing consciousness the previous night, she repeatedly chanted the name of Śrīla Prabhupāda and said that she very distinctly felt his presence in the room, something she had felt dimly on several occasions earlier. A few hours before her departure, her husband told her that his presence next to her would distract her from thinking of Lord Kṛṣṇa at the time of death and that he would therefore go to a nearby relative's house for the night. She readily agreed.

During her last days, her relatives said that they saw no fear of death in her; rather they felt a divine peace pervade her being progressively. Even the doctors treating her commented that they had never seen a bone cancer patient so peaceful amid so much pain. (Cancer spread through the bones is known to be extremely painful.) She also requested of her husband that, after her death, he take to the *vānaprastha* (retired) order of life and dedicate his life to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa in ISKCON.

At the time of her initiation, Surapriyā Devī Dāsī wrote on her initiation form that she would like to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Devotees were skeptical that she could possibly preach, being in such a precarious physical condition. But she would fervently request every relative who came to see her to start chanting at least one

round on beads of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Most of her relatives, being moved by her earnest concern for their spiritual well-being despite being herself on her deathbed, started chanting at once.

Moreover Lord Kṛṣṇa fulfilled His devotee's pure desire in a very special way. June 13 and 14 happened to be the dates of a spiritual camp at the Pune temple for over 150 young people from all over India. By arranging for her death on the first day of this camp, Kṛṣṇa gave all these young people a timely reminder of the harsh reality of death, a reality that modern society tries to hide and ignore. Through her shining example, they also realized

the necessity of accepting the saving grace of devotional service. Surapriyā Devī Dāsī thus preached the glory of devotional service through the way she accepted death. Kṛṣṇa also glorified Surapriyā Devī Dāsī for her sincere devotion by arranging to have many devotees chanting to create an auspicious atmosphere at the time of her departure from her body. ☸

Surapriyā Devī Dāsī spoke the gist of this article to her husband in Marathi, her mother tongue. Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa translated the information and compiled the article.

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“The whole civilization is a plan for cheating others. That’s all. And they’re all sinful.”

• • • •

EDUCATION FOR SLEEPING

(continued from page 15)

everyone should be engaged to produce food, but the modern setup of civilization is that few people are engaged in producing food, and others are eating.

The industrialists are artificially getting money. And they are offering paper: “Here is one hundred dollars.” Although it is simply a piece of paper—cheating. The ordinary people are captivated by cheating. They are thinking, “I have got now one hundred dollars.” What is this hundred dollars? It is paper. So some people are cheating, and some people are being cheated. This is the society.

Mother: But I think one has to be clever enough not to let people cheat you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Clever” means that the person must stay on his own land. He should not be cheated by the paper and go to the city.

Mother: But we have to teach our young to be able to define between those who cheat and those who...be able to tell people who...

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The whole civilization is a plan for cheating others. That’s all. And they’re all sinful. According to our Vedic understanding, there are four things sinful, four pillars of sinful life: illicit sex, unnecessary killing of animals, intoxication, and gambling.

Mother: But you can lead a very happy life, still.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Our students are trained in that way.

Mother: There are a lot of very good people in the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Just see. You can see from your son. These devotees can sit down anywhere. They can lie down. There is no artificial living. They are satisfied with nice foodstuffs made from vegetables and milk. And chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, the holy name of God.

Mother: I see my son Michael is happy. But, you know, he came from a very happy home. So he should be happy, shouldn’t he?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mother: Very happy home. Brothers and sisters. And we’ve all been very happy. And I hope he will remain happy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now he’s even happier.

Mother: Yes, I can see.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He was happy; now he’s happier. That is the difference.

Mother: Yes. Oh, I don’t think he’s happier. [*Laughter as she glances at her son, who is nodding in the affirmative.*] You are? I didn’t think it was possible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda (playfully): *You* are not happier.

Mother: I didn’t think it was possible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because your son has come here, you may not be happier. But he’s happier.

Mother: Oh, you’re saying this. I’m not saying this. I’m very disappointed that he is not continuing with his education. I’m not sorry that he’s happy. I’m happy for his happiness, wherever he is.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But what is the purpose of education?

Mother: You’re a cultured man. You’re educated.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mother: Did you not learn? Who gave you the talent to translate your Vedic scriptures?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mother: Who gave you the talent, Father?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. I’m asking. What is the best part of education? So far as my schooling or college education is concerned, that is not being perused here.

Mother: Oh, but you’re cultured. You in your old age are getting tremendous comfort from being able to read and to understand what the world is doing—the goodness of your books—and you’re able to understand the spiritual way of life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mother: If you couldn’t, if you hadn’t been educated, Father, well, how would

you be able to have achieved all these things?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, education is required.

Mother: Now, I am so happy that my son is happy, truthfully. But I am very distressed. [*To devotees on hand:*] And, little boys, don’t laugh, because this is serious. Um. I am very distressed that none of these boys continue their education. [*In fact, Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged his academically inclined students to complete their university training. Ed. Note.*] What is going to happen to them when they are like you, when they’re older, but they have no talents?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But your educational system—in the Western countries, you have got big universities. Why are the students becoming hippies?

Mother: Oh, well, there are always a certain amount becoming hippies, in America, anywhere. But we must develop the good ones that have talent. We must develop them. You have the power to give these boys...

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I mean to say that in India for the most part there are no such big, big universities, such big facilities, but in your Western countries you have got nice universities, a nice teaching system. Why is the result hippies?

Mother: Oh, but we’re talking of you. You have got the power. People follow you because they believe in you. So you have the power to educate them. And you and your people are not hippies, are you?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: My point is that this education simply for eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—this sort of education will not satisfy.

Mother: Well, you’re educated, you see.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, I am educated.

Mother: Yes, but how many of these are?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But I am not educated only on this platform—eating, sleeping, sex life, and defense. I am educated on a different platform. 🌀

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.

LORD ŚIVA'S ADVICE TO SATĪ

Lord Śiva explains to his wife, Satī, why she shouldn't go to see her father and attend his sacrifice.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच

16 त्वयोदितं शोभनमेव शोभने
अनाहुता अप्यभियन्ति बन्धुषु
ते यद्यनुत्पादितदोषदृष्टयो
बलीयसानात्म्यमदेन मन्युना

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tvayoditam śobhanam eva śobhane
anāhutā apy abhiyanti bandhuṣu
te yady anutpādita-doṣa-dṛṣṭayo
baliyasānātmya-madena manyunā

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the great lord replied; *tvayā*—by you; *uditam*—said; *śobhanam*—is true; *eva*—certainly; *śobhane*—my dear beautiful wife; *anāhutāḥ*—without being invited; *api*—even; *abhiyanti*—go; *bandhuṣu*—among friends; *te*—those (friends); *yadi*—if; *anutpādita-doṣa-dṛṣṭayaḥ*—not finding fault; *baliyasā*—more important; *anātmya-madena*—by pride caused by identification with the body; *manyunā*—by anger.

The great lord replied: My dear beautiful wife, you have said that one may go to a friend's house without being invited, and this is true, provided such a friend does not

find fault with the guest because of bodily identification and thereby become angry towards him.

PURPORT: ● Lord Śiva could foresee that as soon as Satī reached her father's house, her father, Dakṣa, being too puffed up because of bodily identification, would be angry at her presence, and although she was innocent and faultless, he would be mercilessly angry towards her. Lord Śiva warned that since her father was too puffed up by his material possessions, he would be angry, and this would be intolerable for her. Therefore it was better that she not go. This fact was already experienced by Lord Śiva because although Lord Śiva was faultless, Dakṣa had cursed him in so many harsh words.

17 विद्यातपोवित्तवपुर्वयःकुलैः
सतां गुणैः षड्विरसत्तमेतरैः
स्मृतौ हतायां भूतमानदुर्दृशः
स्तब्धा न पश्यन्ति हि धाम भूयसाम्

vidyā-tapo-vitta-vapur-vayaḥ-kulaiḥ

(1) What did Lord Śiva foresee about Satī's arrival at her father's house?

*satām guṇaiḥ ṣaḍbhir asattametaraiḥ
smṛtau hatāyām bhṛta-māna-durdṛśaḥ
stabdhā na paśyanti hi dhāma bhūyasām*

vidyā—education; *tapah*—austerity; *vitta*—wealth; *vapuḥ*—beauty of body, etc.; *vayah*—youth; *kulaiḥ*—with heritage; *satām*—of the pious; *guṇaiḥ*—by such qualities; *ṣaḍbhiḥ*—six; *asattama-itaraiḥ*—having the opposite result to those who are not great souls; *smṛtau*—good sense; *hatāyām*—being lost; *bhṛta-māna-durdṛśaḥ*—blind due to pride; *stabdhāḥ*—being proud; *na*—not; *paśyanti*—see; *hi*—for; *dhāma*—the glories; *bhūyasām*—of the great souls.

Although the six qualities education, austerity, wealth, beauty, youth, and heritage are for the highly elevated, one who is proud of possessing them becomes blind, and thus he loses his good sense and cannot appreciate the glories of great personalities.

PURPORT: It may be argued that since Dakṣa was very learned, wealthy, and austere and had descended from a very exalted heritage, how could he be unnecessarily angry towards another? The answer is that when the qualities of good education, good parentage, beauty, and sufficient wealth are misplaced in a person who is puffed up by all these possessions, they produce a very bad result. Milk is a very nice food, but when milk is touched by an envious serpent it becomes poisonous. Similarly, material assets such as education, wealth, beauty, and good parentage are undoubtedly nice, but when they decorate persons of a malicious nature, then they act adversely.

Another example, given by Cāṇakya Paṇḍita, is that a serpent that has a jewel on its head is still fearful because it is a serpent. A serpent, by nature, is envious of other living entities, even though they be faultless. When a serpent bites another creature, it is not necessarily because the other creature is at fault; it is the habit of the serpent to bite innocent creatures.

Similarly, although Dakṣa was qualified by many material assets, because he was proud of his possessions and because he was envious, all those qualities were polluted. It is sometimes, therefore, detrimental for a person advancing

in spiritual consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to possess such material assets. Kuntidevī, while offering prayers to Kṛṣṇa, addressed Him as *akiñcana-gocara*, one who is easily approached by those who are bereft of all material acquisitions. Material exhaustion is an advantage for advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, although if one is conscious of his eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one can utilize one's material assets, such as great learning and beauty and exalted ancestry, for the service of the Lord; then such assets become glorious.

In other words, unless one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, all his material possessions are zero, but when this zero is by the side of the Supreme One, it at once increases in value to ten. Unless situated by the side of the Supreme One, zero is always zero; one may add one hundred zeros, but the value will still remain zero. Unless one's material assets are used in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they may play havoc and degrade the possessor.

18 नैतादृशानां स्वजनव्यपेक्षया
गृहान् प्रतीयादनवस्थितात्मनाम्
येऽभ्यागतान् वक्रधियाभिचक्षते
आरोपितभ्रूमिर्मर्षणाक्षिभिः

*naitādrśānām sva-jana-vyapekṣayā
grhān pratīyād anavasthitātmanām
ye 'bhyāgatān vakra-dhiyābhicakṣate
āropita-bhrūbhīr amarṣaṇākṣibhiḥ*

na—not; *etādrśānām*—like this; *sva-jana*—kinsmen; *vyapekṣayā*—depending on that; *grhān*—in the house of; *pratīyāt*—one should go; *anavasthita*—disturbed; *ātmanām*—mind; *ye*—those; *abhyāgatān*—guests; *vakra-dhiyā*—with a cold reception; *abhicakṣate*—looking at; *āropita-bhrūbhīḥ*—with raised eyebrows; *amarṣaṇa*—angry; *akṣibhiḥ*—with the eyes.

One should not go to anyone's house, even on the consideration of his being a relative or a friend, when the man is disturbed in his mind and looks upon the guest with raised eyebrows and angry eyes.

PURPORT: However low a person may be, he is never unkind to his children, wife, and nearest kin; even a tiger is kind to its cubs, for within the animal kingdom the cubs are treated very nicely. Since Satī was the daughter of Dakṣa, however cruel and contaminated he might be, naturally it was expected that he would receive her very nicely. But here it is indicated by the word *anavasthita* that such a person cannot be trusted. Tigers are very kind to their cubs, but it is also known that sometimes they eat them. Malicious persons should not be trusted, because they are always unsteady. Thus Satī was advised not to go to her father's house because to accept such a father as a relative and to go to his house without

- (2) What happens when material assets decorate a malicious person?
- (3) Why were Dakṣa's good qualities considered polluted?
- (4) What does it mean that Lord Kṛṣṇa is *akiñcana-gocara*?
- (5) How do we give value to material possessions, which are considered "zero"?

being properly invited was not suitable.

19 तथारिभिर्न व्यथते शिलीमुखैः
शेतेऽर्दिताङ्गो हृदयेन द्यूता
स्वानां यथा वक्रधियां दुरुक्तिभि-
र्दिवानिशं तप्यति मर्मताडितः

*tathāribhir na vyathate śilimukhaiḥ
śete 'rditāṅgo hṛdayena dūyatā
svānām yathā vakra-dhiyām duruktibhir
divā-niśam tapyati marma-tāḍitaḥ*

tathā—so; aribhiḥ—enemy; na—not; vyathate—is hurt; śilimukhaiḥ—by the arrows; śete—rests; arditā—aggrieved; aṅgaḥ—a part; hṛdayena—by the heart; dūyatā—grieving; svānām—of relatives; yathā—as; vakra-dhiyām—deceitful; duruktibhiḥ—by harsh words; divā-niśam—day and night; tapyati—suffers; marma-tāḍitaḥ—one whose feelings are hurt.

Lord Śiva continued: If one is hurt by the arrows of an enemy, one is not as aggrieved as when cut by the unkind words of a relative, for such grief continues to rend one's heart day and night.

PURPORT: Satī might have concluded that she would take the risk of going to her father's house, and even if her father spoke unkindly against her she would be tolerant, as a son sometimes tolerates the reproaches of his parents. But Lord Śiva reminded her that she would not be able to tolerate such unkind words because natural psychology dictates that although one can suffer harm from an enemy and not mind so much because pain inflicted by an enemy is natural, when one is hurt by the strong words of a relative, one suffers the effects continually, day and night, and sometimes the injury becomes so intolerable that one commits suicide.

20 व्यक्तं त्वमुत्कृष्टगतेः प्रजापतेः
प्रियात्मजानामसि सुभ्रु मे मता
तथापि मानं न पितुः प्रपत्स्यसे
मदाश्रयात्कः परितप्यते यतः

*vyaktam tvam utkṛṣṭa-gateḥ prajāpateḥ
priyātmajānām asi subhru me matā
tathāpi mānaṁ na pituḥ prapatsyase
mad-āśrayāt kaḥ paritapyate yataḥ*

vyaktam—it is clear; tvam—you; utkṛṣṭa-gateḥ—having the best behavior; prajāpateḥ—of Prajāpati Dakṣa; priyā—the pet; ātmajānām—of the daughters; asi—you are; subhru—O you with the beautiful eyebrows; me—my;

matā—considered; tathā api—yet; mānam—honor; na—not; pituḥ—from your father; prapatsyase—you will meet with; mat-āśrayāt—from connection with me; kaḥ—Dakṣa; paritapyate—is feeling pain; yataḥ—from whom.

My dear white-complexioned wife, it is clear that of the many daughters of Dakṣa you are the pet, yet you will not be honored at his house because of your being my wife. Rather, you will be sorry that you are connected with me.

PURPORT: Lord Śiva put forward the argument that even if Satī proposed to go alone, without her husband, still she would not be received well because she was his wife. There was every chance of a catastrophe, even if she wanted to go alone. Therefore Lord Śiva indirectly requested her not to go to her father's house.

21 पापच्यमानेन हृदातुरेन्द्रियः
समृद्धिभिः पूरुषबुद्धिसाक्षिणाम्
अकल्प एषामधिरोढुमञ्जसा
परं पदं द्वेष्टि यथासुरा हरिम्

*pāpacyamānena hṛdātūrendriyaḥ
samṛddhibhiḥ pūruṣa-buddhi-sākṣiṇām
akalpa eṣām adhiroḍhum añjasā
param padam dveṣṭi yathāsura harim*

pāpacyamānena—burning; hṛdā—with a heart; ātura-indriyaḥ—who is distressed; samṛddhibhiḥ—by the pious reputation, etc.; pūruṣa-buddhi-sākṣiṇām—of those who are always absorbed in thought of the Supreme Lord; akalpaḥ—being unable; eṣām—of those persons; adhiroḍhum—to rise; añjasā—quickly; param—merely; padam—to the standard; dveṣṭi—envy; yathā—as much as; asurāḥ—the demons; harim—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

One who is conducted by false ego and thus always distressed, both mentally and sensually, cannot tolerate the opulence of self-realized persons. Being unable to rise to the standard of self-realization, he envies such persons as much as demons envy the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT: The real reason for the enmity between Lord Śiva and Dakṣa is explained here. Dakṣa was envious of Lord Śiva because of Śiva's high position as an incarnation of a quality of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and

(6) Why would Satī be unable to tolerate her father's unkind words?

(7) What was the real reason for the enmity between Lord Śiva and Dakṣa?

because Śiva was directly in contact with the Supersoul and was therefore honored and given a better sitting place than he. There were many other reasons also. Dakṣa, being materially puffed up, could not tolerate the high position of Lord Śiva, so his anger at Lord Śiva's not standing up in his presence was only the final manifestation of his envy.

Lord Śiva is always in meditation and always perceives the Supersoul, as expressed here by the words *puruṣa-buddhi-sākṣiṇām*. The position of one whose intelligence is always absorbed in meditation upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very great and cannot be imitated by anyone, especially an ordinary person. When Dakṣa entered the arena of *yajña*, Lord Śiva was in meditation and might not have seen Dakṣa enter, but Dakṣa took the opportunity to curse him because Dakṣa had maintained an envious attitude towards Lord Śiva for a long time. Those who are actually self-realized see every individual body as a temple of the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His Paramātmā feature, is residing in everyone's body.

When one offers respect to the body, it is not to the material body but to the presence of the Supreme Lord. Thus one who is always in meditation upon the Supreme Lord is always offering Him obeisances. But since Dakṣa was not very elevated, he thought that obeisances were offered to the material body, and because Lord Śiva did not offer respect to his material body, Dakṣa became envious. Such persons, being unable to rise to the standard of self-realized souls like Lord Śiva, are always envious.

The example given here is very suitable. *Asuras*, demons or atheists, are always envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; they simply want to kill Him. Even in this age we find some so-called scholars commenting on *Bhagavad-gītā* who are envious of Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa says, *man-manā bhava mad-bhaktaḥ* (Bg. 18.65)—“Always think of Me, become My devotee, and surrender unto Me”—the so-called scholars comment that it is not to Kṛṣṇa that we have to surrender. That is envy. The *asuras* or atheists, the demons, without reason or cause, are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Similarly, instead of offering respect to self-realized persons, foolish men who cannot approach the highest standard of self-realization are always envious, although there is no reason.

(8) Why might Lord Śiva not have seen Dakṣa entering the arena?

(9) What do Gītā commentators reveal about themselves when they say that it is not Kṛṣṇa to whom we should surrender?

(10) Why does a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master return the obeisances of his disciple?

प्रत्युद्गमप्रश्रयणाभिवादनं

22 विधीयते साधु मिथः सुमध्यमे

प्राज्ञैः परस्मै पुरुषाय चेतसा

गुहाशयायैव न देहमानिने

pratyudgama-praśrayaṇābhivādanam
vidhīyate sādhu mithaḥ sumadhyame
prāññaiḥ parasmai puruṣāya cetasā
guhā-śayāyaiva na deha-mānīne

pratyudgama—standing up from one's seat; *praśrayaṇa*—welcoming; *abhivādanam*—obeisances; *vidhīyate*—are intended; *sādhu*—proper; *mithaḥ*—mutually; *su-madhyame*—my dear young wife; *prāññaiḥ*—by the wise; *parasmai*—unto the Supreme; *puruṣāya*—unto the Supersoul; *chetasā*—with the intelligence; *guhā-śayāya*—sitting within the body; *eva*—certainly; *na*—not; *deha-mānīne*—to the person identifying with the body.

My dear young wife, certainly friends and relatives offer mutual greetings by standing up, welcoming one another, and offering obeisances. But those who are elevated to the transcendental platform, being intelligent, offer such respects to the Supersoul, who is sitting within the body, not to the person who identifies with the body.

PURPORT: It may be argued that since Dakṣa was the father-in-law of Lord Śiva, it was certainly the duty of Lord Śiva to offer him respect. In answer to that argument it is explained here that when a learned person stands up or offers obeisances in welcome, he offers respect to the Supersoul, who is sitting within everyone's heart. It is seen, therefore, among Vaiṣṇavas, that even when a disciple offers obeisances to his spiritual master, the spiritual master immediately returns the obeisances because they are mutually offered not to the body but to the Supersoul. Therefore the spiritual master also offers respect to the Supersoul situated in the body of the disciple.

The Lord says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that offering respect to His devotee is more valuable than offering respect to Him. Devotees do not identify with the body, so offering respect to a Vaiṣṇava means offering respect to Viṣṇu. It is stated also that as a matter of etiquette as soon as one sees a Vaiṣṇava one must immediately offer him respect, indicating the Supersoul sitting within. A Vaiṣṇava sees the body as a temple of Viṣṇu. Since Lord Śiva had already offered respect to the Supersoul in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, offering respect to Dakṣa, who identified with his body, was already performed. There was no need to offer respect to his body, for that is not directed by any Vedic injunction.

[continued in the next issue]

FROM EAR TO ETERNITY

(continued from page 14)

to pierce through sensual, mental, and intellectual levels of existence—all lower strata of consciousness—for purification and spiritual enlightenment. The sounds of different letters, particularly Sanskrit letters, have been shown to affect the mind, intellect, and auditory nerves of those who chant and hear them. The seven energy centers (*cakras*) of the spinal column, as well as the *iḍā*, *piṅgalā*, and *susūmṇā nadīs*, or the three prāṇic channels of the subtle body, all respond to mantras, bringing practitioners to elevated levels of awareness.

THE POWER OF GOD'S NAMES

Vedic texts tell us that in much the same way that sound can awaken someone, calling out the name of God can awaken the soul from conditioned, materialistic slumber. In fact, the world's major religious traditions concur that it is by chanting the name of God that one attains enlightenment and freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

Mohammed counseled, "Glorify the name of your Lord, the most high." (Koran 87.2) Saint Paul said, "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10.13) Buddha declared, "All who sincerely call upon my name will come to me after death, and I will take them to paradise." (Vows of Amida Buddha 18) King David preached, "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised." (Psalms 113.3) And the Vaiṣṇava scriptures assert, "Chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name of the Lord. In this age of quarrel there is no other way, no other way, no other way to attain spiritual enlightenment." (*Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa* 38.126).

Praise of the holy name of God is found throughout

the Vaiṣṇava scriptures. Here are two examples:

Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting Your holy name! Even if originally low-born dog-eaters, they are to be considered worshipable. To have reached the point of chanting the Lord's name, they must have executed various austerities and Vedic sacrifices and achieved all the good qualities of true Aryans. If they are chanting Your holy name, they must have bathed in all holy rivers, studied the *Vedas*, and fulfilled all prescribed duties. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.7)

The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the spiritually blissful giver of all benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of pleasure. Kṛṣṇa's name is complete in itself and is the essential form of all spiritual relationships. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. This name is not tinged by any aspect of material

nature, because it is identical with Kṛṣṇa. (*Padma Purāṇa* 3.21)

And, finally, Kṛṣṇa says, "I do not live in Vaikuṅṭha, in the hearts of the yogis, or inside the sun. Rather, My dear Nārada, I am present wherever My devotees sing about Me." (*Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa* 92.21–22)

Because chanting the name of God is so much emphasized in Vaiṣṇava texts, we focus on chanting as a central devotional practice. Thus, deep meditation and great emotion accompany *japa* (soft chanting) and *kīrtana*, or *saṅkīrtana* (congregational chanting). When perfected, the chanting leads to awareness of God's absolute nature, i.e., that there is no difference between *nāmī* ("the named one") and *nāma* ("the name"). Elucidation on the absolute nature of Kṛṣṇa and His name is the heart of Vaiṣṇava practice, leading to love of God.

Norvin Hein, Professor Emeritus at Yale University, has witnessed enthusiastic Vaiṣṇava *kīrtana*. In his essay



The Touchstone of the Holy Name

*harināma cintāmaṇi akhilāmṛta khāni
kṛṣṇa-kṛpā bale ye pāila
kṛtārtha se mahāśaya sadā pūrṇānanda-maya
rāga-bhāve śrī-kṛṣṇa bhajila*

“This touchstone of the holy name is a limitless mine of luscious gems. The fortunate soul who discovers it by Kṛṣṇa’s grace is inevitably fulfilled by it. Such a person always experiences ever-increasing joy, for it leads him to worship Kṛṣṇa in the mood of spontaneity.

“Chaitanya’s Ecstasies and the Theology of the Name,” he captures its most emotional components:

In the singing of verses like these, each line, separately, is incanted by the leader first, and the whole assembly repeats each line after him, one by one. As the verse is gone through again and again, the leader steps up the tempo. When the speed of utterance approaches the utmost possible, the whole group, in unison, begins to shout the lines, at the same time beating out the rhythm with sharply-timed clapping of hands. The singers begin to sway and let themselves go in ungoverned gestures. Faces flush. From the line of instrumental accompanists the bell-like peal of small brass cymbals swells up with the rising shouting and pierces through it. The whole process approaches a crashing, breathtaking crescendo. The point of explosion is reached: eyes flash, mouths drop open, a tremor runs through the entire assembly. The Power, the Presence, has been felt!

CHANTING HARE KṚṢṂA

Scripture asserts that the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, or “the great chant for deliverance,” is the most powerful of incantations, for it includes the potency of all other mantras. Thus, for the current age the Vedic literature recommends the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Statements to this

effect can be found in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad*, and other Vedic texts.

In this sacred mantra, the word *Hare* refers to Lord Hari, a name for Kṛṣṇa that indicates His ability to remove obstacles from His devotees’ path. In a more esoteric sense, *Hare* is a vocative form of *Harā*, which refers to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the divine feminine energy—Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eternal consort and transcendental counterpart.

Kṛṣṇa means “the all-attractive one,” God in His original form. Etymologically, the word *kṛṣ* indicates the attractive feature of the Lord’s existence, and *na* means spiritual pleasure. When the verb *kṛṣ* is added to the affix *na*, it becomes *Kṛṣṇa*, which means “the absolute person, who gives spiritual pleasure through His all-attractive qualities.” According to Sanskrit semantic derivation (*nirukti*), it is also understood that *na* refers to the Lord’s ability to stop the repetition of birth and death. And *kṛṣ* is a synonym for *sat-tārtha*, or “existential totality.” Another way of understanding the word *Kṛṣṇa*, then, is “that Lord who embodies all of existence and who can help the living entities overcome the repeated suffering of birth and death.”

Rāma refers to both Balarāma (Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother) and Lord Rāmacandra, a prominent incarnation of the Lord who is the subject of the epic known as the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is also said, however, that *Rāma* refers to Rādhārāmaṇa, another name for Kṛṣṇa, meaning “one who brings pleasure to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”

Thus the *mahā-mantra*, composed solely of the Lord’s most confidential names, embodies the essence of the divine. As a prayer, the mantra is translated in the following way: “O Lord! O divine energy of the Lord! Please engage me in Your service.” The selflessness of this mantra—asking to serve God rather than asking God to do something for us—situates it in a unique category, even among the best of prayers and the most powerful of incantations. But its pure form can only be heard by the pure devotee—in his “inner ear,” which is in his heart of hearts.

THE RIGHT HEARING AID

When I returned to my mom’s home to tell her about my meeting with her ear doctor, she had already made up her mind: “I’m not getting a hearing aid.”

She just didn’t want to be bothered. Truth is, her doctor said that a hearing aid would just add to her discomfort and probably wouldn’t help her much anyway. I told her how, as I spoke to her doctor, my mind had wandered to Vedic mantras and spiritual sound vibrations. But she couldn’t hear what I was saying, literally or figuratively.

She asked me if I would get a hearing aid if I were her.

“Probably not,” I said.

“What?”

I spoke up: “No, I wouldn’t get one.”

After some time, I added that I had already accepted a hearing aid many years ago. She knew what I meant, and let out a loud guffaw.

“You mean your Swami Prabhupāda, right?” She smiled. “Your hearing was definitely in trouble, but Prabhupāda taught you to hear things in a way that serves you well.”

She thought for a second, and added, “I should have such an effective hearing aid.”



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.

Climbing from the Street Back to Kṛṣṇa's Lotus Feet

*The mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa salvaged a life
of degradation born of childhood abuse.*

by Yogīnātha Dāsa



WHEN TOṬA GOPĪNĀTHA Dāsa arrives at the Chilliwack Community Services building driving a shiny black Harley Davidson motorcycle, the loud rumbling pouring out of the polished silver tailpipes turns every head in the parking lot. At first sight, the long hair tied back into a ponytail and the big belt buckle might suggest that another biker from the halfway house has arrived for an appointment with his parole officer. But when he walks in and takes his seat behind the supervisor's desk, you notice something different

about this biker. His clothes are clean, there's a warm glister in his eyes, and he wears neck beads and *tilaka*. He may indeed be an angel, but he's clearly not one of hell's.

Toṭa Gopīnātha is a well known, easily recognizable, and highly valued social worker in this town of fifty thousand people in British Columbia, Canada. When he gives motivational lectures to high school audiences and other groups, people listen. His total honesty in confronting human despair and his complete faith in the power of

With a helmet in one hand and a bead bag in the other, he'll tell you he owes everything to his guru and Kṛṣṇa.



people to heal themselves through prayer has saved and inspired hundreds, if not thousands.

AGAINST THE ODDS

Although Toṭa is regarded as confident, happy, well-adjusted, and deeply religious, the road he traveled was filled with violence, addiction, and sexual abuse.

After hearing Toṭa tell his story to a packed courtroom audience, a highly seated provincial judge said, "In my experience, anyone who has gone through what you have is either dead or serving a life sentence in our federal prisons."

By the time Toṭa Gopinātha moved into the Vancouver temple at age seventeen, in 1976, he had already been living alone on the streets for seven years. He had escaped the clutches of a violent alcoholic father, who was later tried and convicted for his attempts to murder Toṭa.

On the streets, Toṭa was periodically picked up and placed into different missions and foster homes, where sexual abuse was common. He recalls being brought into a steam-bath house where a number of sweaty men lined up to impose sexual favors on the boy.

"I had 'victim' written all over my face," Toṭa explains.

MERCY TO LAST MORE THAN A LIFETIME

Somehow he ended up on Kṛṣṇa's doorstep and spent eight years chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and following the regulative principles of devotional life. It was during this initial encounter with Kṛṣṇa consciousness that Toṭa feels he received the mercy that would later save him. One episode stands out. Toṭa recalls once spending eighteen straight hours distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books—640 in one day. He was later told that when an ailing Śrīla Prabhupāda had seen the book-sales report, he

had touched Toṭa's name at the top of the list and commented that seeing his disciples taking up this work with such great enthusiasm gave him life. Close to thirty years later, Toṭa remembers that event with great satisfaction. He feels certain that for at least a moment he received the mercy of his spiritual master, and that's more than enough to guarantee his ultimate spiritual success.

That moment of glory unfortunately was followed by a decade of degradation. Ten long years of drug and alcohol abuse, financed by stealing and cheating, ended in a jail term at British Columbia's Ocala prison.

As Toṭa now laughingly puts it, "I still had a few issues to work out."

The emotional trauma of a wickedly cruel, almost inhuman, childhood filled with sexual abuse had yet to be reconciled.

In 1990 Toṭa hit rock bottom. It was on the front lawn of a wild bikers' party. Inside, behind darkened windows, his friends were engulfed in hysterical revelry fueled by cocaine and alcohol. Outside, a weeping Toṭa was on his knees begging Lord Kṛṣṇa for help. As he did so, a familiar voice in his heart reassured him. From that moment he turned his back on addiction and never returned.

That was the beginning of his road to recovery. It was followed by endless hours of counseling and prayer. Gallons of tears from his heart poured out over the weeks, months, and years that followed.

Toṭa's childhood trauma was eventually brought to closure when a highly publicized court case sentenced his father to prison for the wrongs he had inflicted upon his son over a quarter of a century earlier. After a three-day hearing, regularly interrupted by a tearful court reporter who found it difficult to record the history of Toṭa's tormented childhood, Toṭa was awarded a court settlement from the province of Ontario. He invested it in real

estate, and the one-time penniless, skid-row drug addict and ex-con now expects to retire by age sixty.

USING LIFE'S LESSONS

It was during the years of rehabilitation that Toṭa began an in-depth study of the psychology of addiction and sexual abuse. Nearly every waking hour has found him enrolled in one course or another. His certificates now fill a fat binder and cover the better part of a wall.

His early training in the philosophy and principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, coupled with his own real life lessons and the same passionate enthusiasm that once made him a top book-salesman, synthesized into a dynamo of a self-made social worker infused with the power to heal. His deep understanding of human suffering and his overpowering belief in the ability of prayer to salvage damaged lives have made him popular with local law enforcement agencies, regional educators, government ministries in the top echelons of the social services field, and especially with his clients.

When asked to summarize effective methods for overcoming addiction and the trauma caused by sexual abuse, the big, gruff biker with a helmet in one hand and a bead bag in the other will tell you he owes everything to his guru and Kṛṣṇa.

"I never gave up on Kṛṣṇa, and He never gave up on me. But I never take His blessings for granted. I begin every day on my knees praying, and I end it the same way. If I do that, everything in between seems to work out fine." ❀

Yoginātha Dāsa lives in ISKCON's Saranagati Dhama community in British Columbia, Canada. His "How I Came to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness" appeared in our November/December 2003 issue.

A group of people, including men and women, are gathered around a large, ornate pot of water. They are dressed in traditional Indian clothing, with men in white and orange dhotis and women in colorful saris. The scene is set outdoors, and the background is a warm, reddish-brown color. The people appear to be engaged in a religious or cultural activity, possibly a ritual involving the water in the pot.

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”)



Yamartja Dasa

On Interstate 75 north of Gainesville, Florida, the Hare Kṛṣṇa youth bus heads down the home stretch, completing a 13,600-mile journey across North America. Traveling long distances on the bus (above) affords plenty of time for enjoyable chanting sessions. At right: In two months, tour members visited eighteen ISKCON temples and set up nine Rathayātrā festivals.



Hare Kṛṣṇa Youth

On Tour

In the spirit of Prabhupāda's young disciples in the '70s, a new generation hits the roads of America with Kṛṣṇa's names and message.

by Manu Dāsa and Jaya Rādhe Devī Dāsī

“Life is a daring adventure or nothing at all.”—Helen Keller

THOSE WORDS could be our motto as we zoom down a deserted Arizona highway at 2:45 A.M. aboard Garuda II, our big yellow Hare Krishna Youth Ministry tour bus. We've just completed the first of two

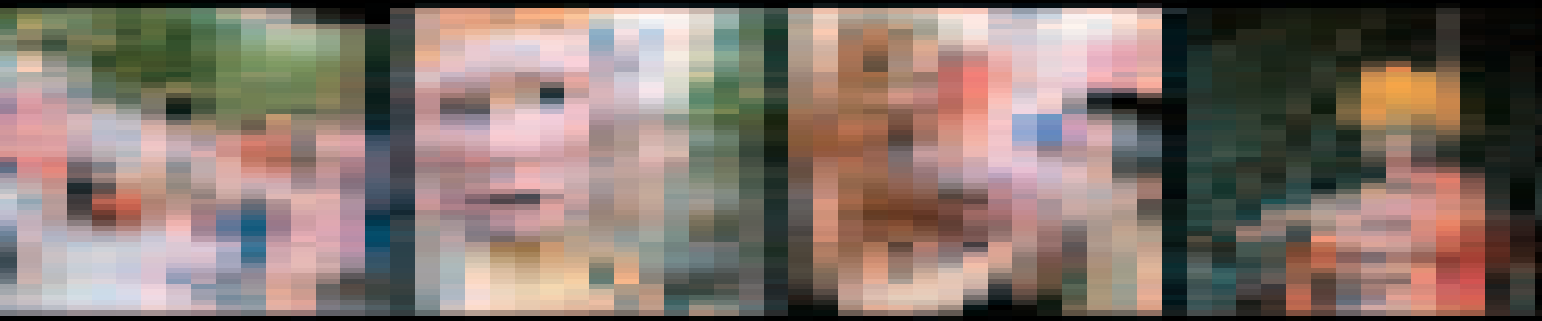
months of our Festival of India tour across America and are on a mission to reach Los Angeles before sunrise. Janaka Ṛṣi's at the wheel. Jaya, Citra, and Dakṣiṇā are keeping him awake by rehearsing lines for our play at the upcoming Venice Beach Rathayātrā.

“Isn't this, like, totally surreal?” Dakṣiṇā interjects. “Just a few hours

ago we were eating watermelon at the edge of the Grand Canyon, and now we're in the middle of the Arizona desert. By sunrise we'll be in Los Angeles, setting up another Rathayātrā. And we still have San Diego, Laguna Beach, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, San Francisco, Van-couver, and Denver to go!”

“I know,” Citra adds. “I've lived in North Carolina all my life and have never done anything like this before. This is just awesome!”

Tucked away on bunk beds behind the driver's cabin, the rest of our crew—forty-one devotee youth and their chaperones—are all sound asleep.



Balarama Boshch



Balarama Boshch

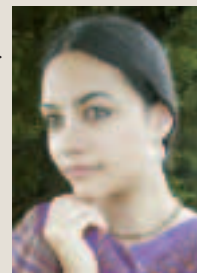
When we reach LA, they'll rise to the occasion, as they have five times this summer, to help set up the festival, perform "The Advent of Lord Jagannātha," sing and dance to *kīrtanas* on stage, and serve the free feast to thou-

sands of people. And at the end of the festival, we'll take down the tents and exhibits, load them into the Festival of India trailer, and drive through the night to our next destination. Nine Rathayātrās, dozens of temples across the

USA and Canada, camping, hiking and swimming at national parks, exuberant *kīrtanas*, whitewater rafting—the summer adventure of a lifetime.

"We just crossed into California. That's 8,628 miles for the fuel log,"

"The whole point of the tour was to present a way of having fun that is literally "out of this world." There is nothing like having fun in Kṛṣṇa consciousness with our devotee family. So many of us realized this as we were spiritually recharged during each Rathayātrā, each *Bhāgavatam* discussion, each rockin' *kīrtana*.



"About halfway through the tour, one girl told me that she had done many things in life that she had thought would make her happy. "Sure," she said, "I thought I was happy for a little bit, but there was always misery after that." Then she told me that, for the first time, she was happy doing devotional service on the bus tour, without any misery or regrets afterwards. She said she had never been so happy in her life. Although I had heard many times before how one is truly happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I really stopped to think about it after my talk with that girl. I came to the conclusion that it was indeed true, because I was experiencing the same happiness."

—Śaraṅgātī Devī Dāsī, age 18

Janaka R̥ṣi reminds the night-shift volunteers. “I think I’ll pull over at the welcome center and let Draviṇākṣa drive for a bit. We’re carrying the most precious cargo in the universe.”

TRANSCENDENTAL ROAD SHOW: THEN AND NOW

The year is 1973. Viṣṇujana Swami, Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, and several other disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, all in their late teens and early twenties, take an old Greyhound bus and put on festivals in city parks across North America.

Since June of 1973, we have taken the Supreme Lord Himself (in His Deity form called Rādhā-Dāmodara) all

over the United States. Along with ten other devotees, we bring the Lord to colleges, fairs, any large festive gathering. There we set up tents and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by ancient instruments, distributing *prasāda*, preaching individually to interested people, and distributing books by our spiritual master.

—Viṣṇujana Swami, BTG Issue #67.

Today, thirty years later, we have come full circle. The next generation of Hare Kṛṣṇa youth are taking to the road with a renewed spirit of adventure, to spread Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s message all over North America.

Draviṇākṣa Dāsa was a bus driver for the original Rādhā-Damodara Traveling Sankīrtana Party. Today, he relives his teenage years, driving our

modern MCI 102-DL3 Greyhound “Garuda II.” He recalls: “We would buy these old GMC buses for cheap. They must have been twenty years old even back then—they looked like buses from the 1950s. And we’d drive them into the ground, until the engine stopped running. We didn’t have the money to rebuild transmissions in those days. This bus is a blessing in comparison. When people see this bus—clean, bright, shiny yellow, with ‘Hare Krishna Youth Ministry’ written on the sides—they go, ‘Wow! Cool! I’m so glad to see that you Hare Kṛṣṇas have such a nice program for your youth.’ That’s what one gas station attendant told me.”

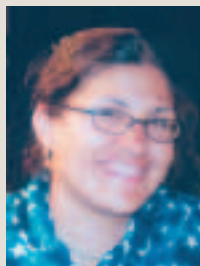
Another one of our bus drivers, Jaya Dāsa, was talking with a friend about the trip: “We pulled into a small town

The play “Advent of Lord Jagannātha” (top strip) enchanted audiences across the country. A day at Lake Erie (both photos at left) included sun-drenched kīrtanas and Prabhupāda’s books for the inquisitive. At right: Evening chanting at the home of Mayeśvara Dāsa in Ojai, California.



Balarāma Bosch

“The bus tour was more wonderful than I could have ever dreamt possible. I got so much inspiration from being more Kṛṣṇa conscious, realizing it is not something I have to do but want to do. My parents have always been prodding me to be more Kṛṣṇa conscious. So in my rebellion, I felt for so long that I couldn’t be as Kṛṣṇa conscious as I would like, because my parents would be thinking they’d won. I don’t like to think my relationship to Kṛṣṇa should be something for them to win. Nevertheless, I came to realize I *can* do it the way I like. I don’t quite know when or where this thought came to me on the tour, but it is there, and I say thank you!



“I could fill a whole page with one thank you after the other, and it would be a more accurate picture of how truly thankful I am that somehow the universe intervened and sent me from Sweden over the Atlantic and into the presence of so many people that I now share a bond with, and that I hope will last a lifetime.”

Jaya Rache Higgins

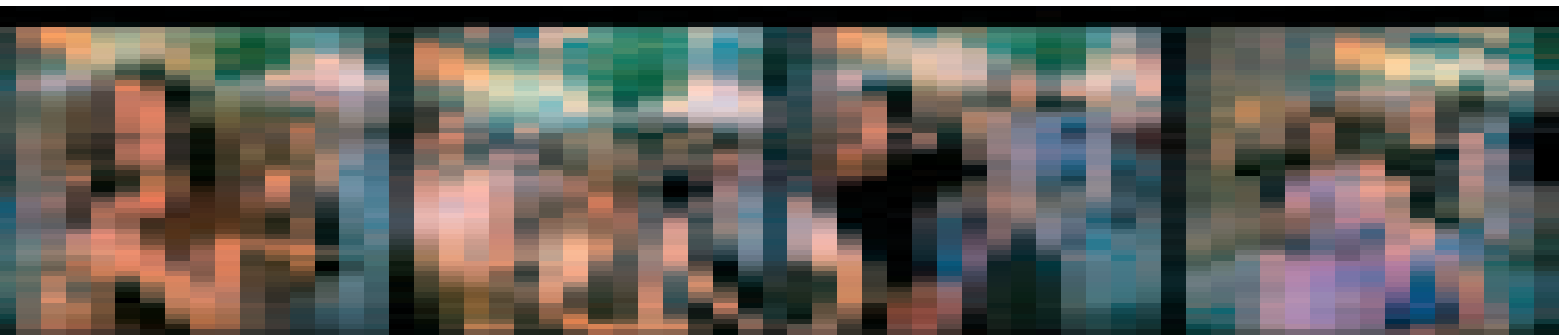


in the middle of nowhere, in upstate New York. There was a raging *kirtana* going on inside the bus. We stopped at this small supermarket to shop for lunch. As everyone got off the bus, you should have seen this place! Within minutes, a dozen local youth were

gathered around us, asking us who we were, where we were headed, and if they could come and join us. They were totally mesmerized.”

After a full day of whitewater rafting on the Thompson River near ISKCON’s Saranagati community in

Canada, Shane, our Native American rafting guide, had to ask, “Where do you guys come from? I’ve never met so many bright and happy young people in one place before. You even *smell* good. Hare Kṛṣṇas, eh? You guys are amazing!”



Strip: Rasacarya Dasa



The magnificent view of the Saranagati valley from Mt. Govardhan (far left), at the ISKCON Saranagati community in British Columbia, Canada, is well worth the climb. The trip to British Columbia includes a day of whitewater rafting (left) down the Thompson River in the Rocky Mountains. Bottom Strip: Chanting in downtown Montreal,

“Now there’s a name I haven’t heard in years: Hare Kṛṣṇa,” a ranger commented as she gave us a huge smile and a large discount on the park entrance fees. “Enjoy your stay at Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks.”

TEMPLE ON WHEELS

In many ways our big yellow bus, affectionately called ISKCON Garuda, is like a temple on wheels. For two months, the bus tour participants are members of this youth temple,

associating with other devotee youth during morning and evening *kirtana* programs for our traveling deities and having discussions with Swamis and older devotees who join us for a few days on the tour. We visit temples, put on festivals, and stop for inspiration at places of pilgrimage. The experience is ever fresh, and there’s something unexpected around every turn, with every new day.

The day before the Toronto Rathayātrā, we caught up with Bhakti Mārga Swami on his second walk across Cana-

da. We walked with him for a few hours through magnificent Elora Gorge, two hours west of Toronto. At one point we all sat down in a circle at a bluff overhanging the river gorge below and listened intently as he told of his many adventures along the cross-Canada walk. Hearing of the many pairs of shoes he had worn out, and the austerities he had to endure from traffic, heat, cold, insects, rain, and snow, made any inconveniences we had to undergo on our bus tour seem trivial.

At the Fourth of July Rathayātrā

in Washington, D.C., we set a new record for the fastest take-down of the Festival of India. In only one hour and twenty minutes our boys and girls disassembled the exhibits and tents, rolled everything up, and tucked it all away in the Festival of India trailer.

In New York City, we went on a sight-seeing tour to 26 Second Ave., the “Matchless Gifts” storefront temple in lower Manhattan where Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the West over thirty-seven years ago. Jayādvaīta Swami, who had joined ISK-

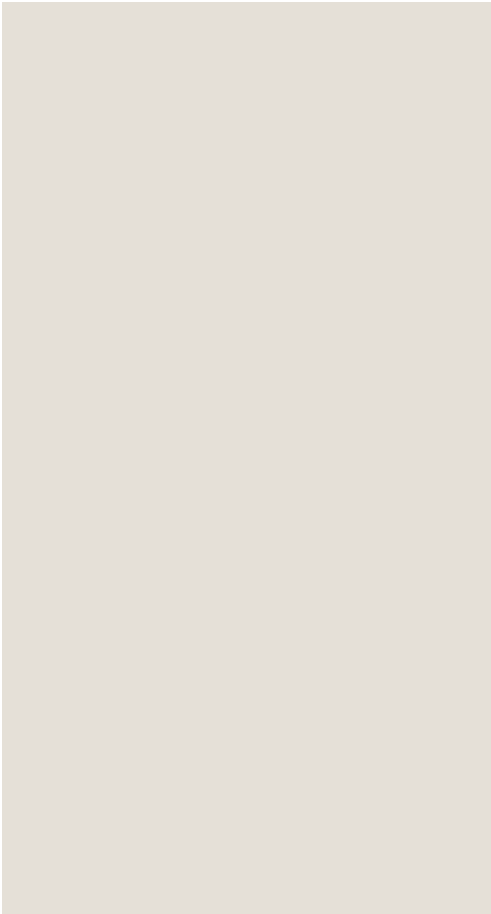
CON here, served as our tour guide, giving us background information about the neighborhood and what it was like in the mid-sixties.

We walked to Tompkins Square Park, hugged the tree Śrīla Prabhupāda had sat un-

der, chanted, and honored *prasādam*. Then we took the subway to Ground Zero, the site of the World Trade Center bombings, and were reminded of how death can come at any moment. Just being there brought tears to our eyes.

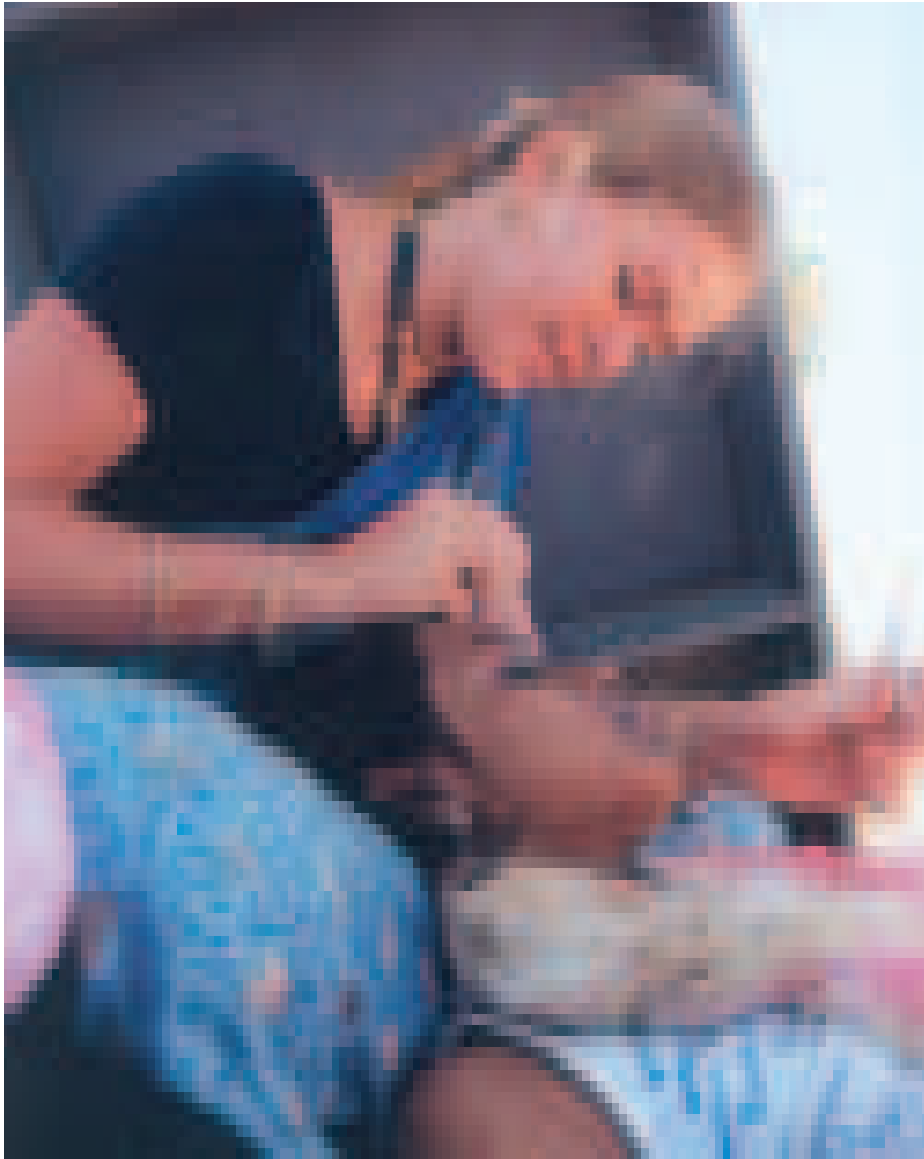
In Boston we visited Commonwealth Pier #5, where Śrīla Prabhupāda landed in the U.S.A. in 1965, aboard the steamship *Jaladuta*. Here again, Jayādvaīta Swami brought the place to life with vivid descriptions of what it was like when Śrīla Prabhupāda was there.

Later, we performed our play to an



On Independence Day in Washington, D.C. (top strip), the Rathayātrā festival on the National Mall attracts large crowds. During the Toronto Rathayātrā parade (right), tour girls Karuṇa and Pārijāta take turns leading the singing. Chitra (far right) decorates Pārijāta’s face with festive “gopī dots.”





Balarāma Bosch

intimate audience in the small Boston temple.

“I was very moved by the play,” Rādhānātha Swami related, “practically crying. The youth acted with such devotion. In India, actors performing spiritual plays are respected and

worshiped because they represent demigods and deities. It is said that when the actors are sincere, the saintly personalities depicted actually manifest during the performance.”

His words inspired the youth to continue performing the play at all of

the eighteen temples and Rathayātrās we visited.

KĪRTANA BLISS

On Sunday after Chicago Rathayātrā, someone informed us of a large festival downtown. So after an uneventful morning at a cold lakefront beach, we decided to have some fun; we changed into devotional clothes, grabbed our instruments, and headed for a Chicago train bound for the “Taste of Chicago” festival.

We were chanting on the platform when the train arrived, so we all piled into one car together and continued, completely entranced and practically oblivious of the world around us. At every station, more and more people piled onto the train, and we watched their stunned expressions as they left mundane Chicago behind and entered a spiritual realm of blissful, sweet, melodious *kīrtana* led by dozens of bright, young, exotically dressed boys and girls. Some passengers just assumed we were part of a performing arts troupe headed for the “Taste of Chicago” festival.

At the entrance of the festival, we found a small park with an open lawn, the perfect spot for chanting. Tens of thousands of people streamed in and out of the entrance gates. We chanted. We danced in circles. We had fun. We drew some stares and a lot of attention. A group of Irish tourists stood at the edge of our circle and watched us for about ten minutes. When we stopped the *kīrtana* to change leaders, they came over and introduced themselves. They wondered if our circle dance was in any way related to some of their Irish folk dances. They gave us a demonstration of their Irish jigs, and



Jaya Radhe Higgins

asked if we would mind if they joined in the fun.

Montreal, Canada. Friday night before Rathayātrā we boarded our bus and drove into downtown Montreal. There were people everywhere, walking about from one club to the other, or sitting at sidewalk cafes and restaurants. We danced with abandon as slightly inebriated Montrealers danced and cheered us on. We handed out hundreds of invitations to the festival. As we drove back to the temple, we were high on the holy names, shouting out of the windows at passers-by in broken

French—“Bonjour! Au revoir! Merci!”—over the top of a raging *kīrtana*.

Seeing the kids totally happy chanting the holy names is what we live for on the bus tour. When they realize that they can have a great time engaging in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, that chanting on the streets of a big city can be a lot of fun, that putting on devotional festivals such as Rathayātrā is cool, and that people are curious and appreciate the Vaiṣṇava arts and culture—those realizations are precious and irreplaceable.

Kansas City, 7:15 A.M. On the sec-

ond to last day of our tour, we pull into one of hundreds of Flying-J truck stops along the highway. The scene is familiar. We’ve slept all night on the bus while traveling and are eager to refresh ourselves. Forty sleepy-faced youth in their pajamas exit the bus looking for a bathroom. Balarāma stumbles along in his sarong.

The gas station attendant asks him innocently, “Are you people Hare Kṛṣṇas?”

Next thing he knows, Balarāma is absorbed in a lively half-hour discussion about the meaning of life. He



Strip: Rasācārya Dāsa

“One of the most amazing experiences for me as an organizer of the tour is to see the spark of Kṛṣṇa conscious enthusiasm catch and light up



the faces of young people who at the beginning of the tour may have shown little interest in devotional activities. At one point on the tour, during another soul-stirring *kīrtana*, one boy finally decided to pick up a drum, started playing like I didn't know he could play, started chanting like I didn't know he had it in him, out of his own volition—that's when tears welled up in my eyes and I told myself it's all worth the effort and austerity. It's for real. The process of *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service, works. I was reminded of a verse from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.107): “Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. . . . When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, this love naturally awakens.”

equips the curious attendant with a copy of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Chant And Be Happy* and a phone number to the nearest temple.

Everywhere we hold our sacred Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals, people become convinced of the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life. They become inspired to join us in this divine mission of traveling and preaching, and so in only a few months we have started the same program with a second bus. And soon, by Kṛṣṇa's desire, we hope to see hundreds of buses bringing these blissful festivals to every town and village.

—Viṣṇujana Swami, BTG #67, 1974

husband and wife, grew up in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and are part of the ISKCON community in Alachua, Florida. They have organized youth programs and festival tours with ISKCON Youth Ministry since 1994. Manu is the graphic designer for *Krishna.com*, and Jaya Rādhe teaches third and fourth grades at the Alachua Learning Center elementary school.

ONLINE EXTRA

and testimonials about the bus tours, hundreds of color photos, and bus tour video clips at www.krishna.com/bustour.

Manu Dāsa and Jaya Rādhe Devi Dāsī,

Balarāma Bosch



Śaraṅāgati and Rādhā Priyā (above, left) hug the elm tree in Tompkins Square Park, New York City, under which Śrīla Prabhupāda sat and chanted when he started the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the West. Madhusūdana (right), who traveled from Germany to join the bus tour, helps take down a Festival of India tent. Bottom Strip: Breaking down the Festival of India in Chicago.



Is Kṛṣṇa Our Mast

*Because Kṛṣṇa's name
has immense spiritual
power, we must be
careful how we use it.*

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

This is the third in a series of articles of offenses to be avoided by anyone trying to progress spiritually by chanting the names of the Lord. This article discusses the offense of sinning while relying on the power of the holy names to protect one from the reactions to the sin.

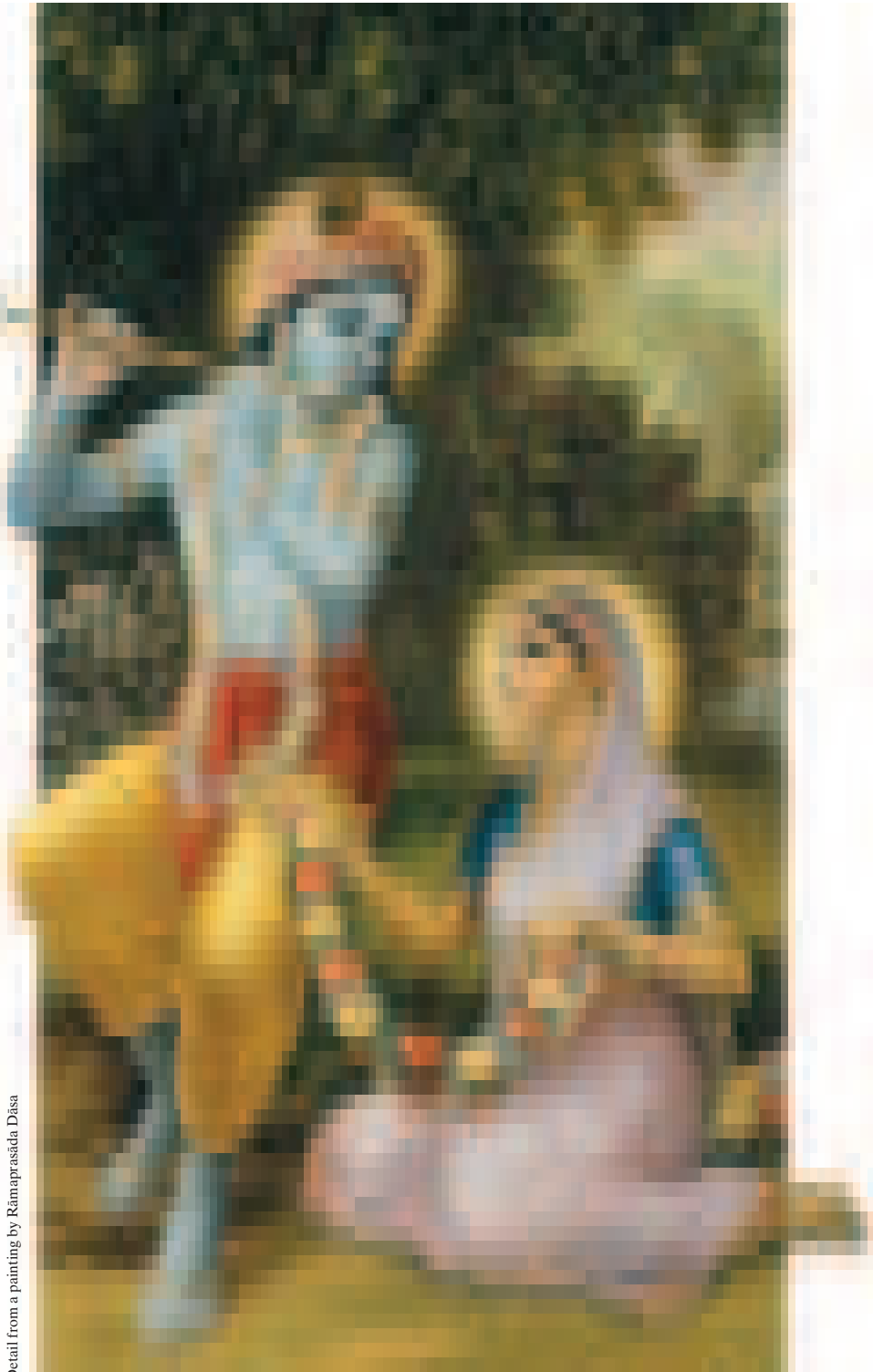
THE STUDENTS of my Government class and I sat hushed, without even rustling papers, listening to the amazing story in the courtroom. At least I was amazed these fifteen- and sixteen-year-old students whose lives never touched those of drug addicts and criminals.

"You've broken your probation three times," the stern judge said. He leaned forward on the desk and glared at the man in shackles and bright orange prison clothes. "You've had to go to a drug rehabilitation program. Each time you start the program, but then you leave. Do you know the penalty for breaking probation?"

The young accused—with muscular arms and a nearly shaved head—stood straight like a soldier and said nothing. He almost succeeded in appearing repentant. At least the judge might have thought so.

"Fifteen years," the words came heavily and slowly. "Fifteen years. Back in prison for fifteen years." There was a long pause. "Do you want to go back to prison for fifteen years?"

"No, your honor. I just hated the treatment program I was sentenced to. I'd like a chance at another kind of program. Please. One last chance. If it's the program I'm asking for, I'll definitely stick with it and kick this cocaine for



Detail from a painting by Rāmaprasāda Dāsa

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the greatest devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, finds Her happiness only in Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction, and Kṛṣṇa naturally responds to Her love.

er or Our Ser-

good.”

The court reporter held her fingers above the keys. No one moved.

“Okay,” the judge said, still leaning forward with his full weight on his arms.

We all realized we hadn’t breathed for a minute or so. Now a cough, now a shuffle.

“But this is your last chance!” the judge almost spat out, and we either slightly jumped or suddenly leaned forward. “You cannot keep breaking probation and asking for another chance. This is it. Make it good.”

He broke eye contact and turned to the papers on his desk.

“Next case.”

And the prisoner left to complete the procedures.

KṚṢṬĀ, THE MERCIFUL JUDGE

Was this criminal ready for reformation? Or was he just using the judge’s mercy to try to cheat the system? We didn’t follow up on the case, but we doubted the young man’s motives.

Like the judge, Kṛṣṇa and saintly persons, including the guru who takes responsibility to bring us to Kṛṣṇa, are happy to forgive our mistakes, even grievous sins. But what if we deliberately use the Lord, His servants, or any aspect of His service—especially the chanting of His name—to get relief from sins? Then Kṛṣṇa will cease His leniency and block our realization of Him, because we’re trying to engage Him as our servant.

In 1992, Charles H. Keating, Jr., was found guilty of stealing over a quarter of a billion dollars through fraud. He gave at least a million dollars of this, much taken from others’ life savings, to Mother Teresa to help the poor of Calcutta. The District Attorney who prosecuted Mr. Keating wrote to Mother Teresa asking her to give the donation back to the crime victims.

“It is not uncommon for ‘con’ men to be generous with family, friends

The mentality of using religion or spiritual practice to avoid punishment is often called the worst offense to the Lord; it blocks our spiritual progress.

and charities,” the District Attorney wrote. “Perhaps they believe that their generosity will purchase love, respect or forgiveness. However, the time when the purchase of ‘indulgences’ as an acceptable method of seeking forgiveness died with the Reformation. No church, no charity, no organization should allow itself to be used as salve for the conscience of the criminal.”

The District Attorney was referring to the Protestant Reformation, which was largely fueled by objection to “indulgences,” where in exchange for donations the Church would promise remission of punishment for sin.

The mentality of using religion or spiritual practice to avoid punishment is often called the worst offense to the Lord; it blocks our spiritual progress. Śrīla Prabhupāda termed this offense, when applied to the chanting of the Lord’s holy name, “sinning on the strength of chanting.” There is no remedy if a person schemes to defraud the Lord in this way. One who thinks “I’ll do this bad thing and then chant Hare Kṛṣṇa to be excused” will find that Kṛṣṇa will put obstacles on his or her path, especially if the sin or crime was done against the Lord’s devotee.

Generally, if a person is constantly

servicing Kṛṣṇa and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, the very process of chanting and performing other service to Kṛṣṇa will gradually render offenses and sins ineffective. But if one takes advantage of the protection offered by chanting, one’s chanting will remain just alphabet sounds—Kṛṣṇa will not manifest Himself there.

DEFINING “SIN”

What, exactly, do we mean by “sin,” and is there a difference between deliberate and accidental sin?

Some definitions Śrīla Prabhupāda gives us are “breaking the laws of nature,” “deepening involvement in the complexities of material nature,” and doing something that “leads us away from the Supreme Lord.” Once we understand that our most essential nature is loving service to Kṛṣṇa, anything other than that, or anything opposed to it, is sin. Sin isn’t exactly something bad that God doesn’t want you to do because He’s a cruel rule-enforcer, but it’s something that causes misery because it’s against one’s very self.

For example, the nature of the human body is to digest organic material, especially fruits, grains, vegetables, and so forth. If we choose to eat Styrofoam, we do something against the nature or “law” of the body and will therefore suffer. Similarly, anything we think, say, or do that doesn’t nourish our love for Kṛṣṇa is spiritually indigestible and brings the pain of material involvement, which is disease for the soul.

A person whose consciousness is in disharmony with Kṛṣṇa may not know, however, what is and is not in accordance with spiritual reality. Therefore bona fide scripture lists condemned acts that require atonement. These acts—of the body, mind, or speech—are sins.

Certainly one who hasn’t attained the pinnacle of purity is living in an

A remedy for all obstacles is the regular, close companionship of pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa.



interim state between sin and a pure life. While striving for purity, we retain mental impressions of sin and a strong tendency to use the body, mind, and words in ways that take us away from Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in *Mādhurya Kadambini*, “Seeing that material enjoyment is forcibly carrying him away and impairing his steadiness in serving Kṛṣṇa, the devotee resolves to renounce his addictions and take shelter of the holy name. But many times the attempt at renunciation ends in enjoying what he is trying to renounce.”

STRIVING TO IMPROVE

This struggle with our persistent tendency to turn away from Kṛṣṇa is not a block if we continually take up the challenge to improve. Kṛṣṇa explains: “Having awakened faith in topics about Me, My devotee is disgusted with all material activities, knowing that sense gratification leads to misery. Still, though he tries he is unable to give up his material desires and sometimes engages in the same sense enjoyment that brings only misery. But, repenting such activities, he should worship Me with love, faith, and firm conviction.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.27–28)

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: “An ordinary man with firm faith in the eternal injunctions of the Lord, even though unable to execute such orders, becomes liberated from the bondage of the law of karma. In the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may not fully discharge the injunctions of the Lord, but because one is not resentful of this principle and works sincerely without consideration of defeat and hopelessness, he will surely be promoted to the stage of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 3.31, Purport)

Minor sins that we commit as we struggle to advance are considered accidental. By repentance we should burn the reaction to those sins. But if we sin thinking that either ordinary religious

penance or transcendental activities such as chanting will deliver us from the reaction, the reaction will increase rather than decrease.

If a person externally takes on the appearance of a religious or saintly person while still secretly doing materialistic activities for sense pleasure, such behavior is also sinning on the strength of chanting. There are more subtle aspects as well. For example, we may think, “I’m a devotee of Kṛṣṇa and please Him in so many ways. If I just do this little thing wrong, surely He’ll overlook it.”

For our chanting to have full effect, therefore, we must throw out the cheating tendency if it even sticks its toenail into the doorway of our mind. If we find ourselves planning to use Kṛṣṇa and His name to cover our devious purposes, we should strongly call to Kṛṣṇa for protection. Our gurus—both the one who has initiated us into the chanting and those who give us relevant spiritual instruction—are our guardians and will also chase away the thieves of sin and cheating if we loudly and strongly beg for their help.

A remedy for all obstacles is the regular, close companionship of pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa. Their examples and teachings help us recognize our difficulties and desire to be free of them.

Of course, we want not only to be free of the desire to use chanting to cheat our way out of suffering for sin, but to give up our sinful tendency completely. Only a pure life fully in harmony with the truth of our spiritual nature will give us the satisfaction we are always seeking. And only a pure life will prepare the ground for the garden that will grow the flowers and fruits of love of God.

We will never sin if we have contempt for the illusion of material enjoyment. Part of that contempt will arise naturally if we have the superior pleasure of serving Kṛṣṇa. At the same time, we should study the true nature of

material life from scriptures and saintly persons. The root of sin is ignorance, or ignoring the obvious truths of what it really means to turn away from Kṛṣṇa. The results of sin are birth, death, old age, and disease. One will never be satisfied with the pleasures of the body and mind separated from Kṛṣṇa, and even things that apparently satisfy for a time will quickly fade, being temporary by nature. Why delight in what is temporary and superficial? Such delight is the true nature of sin.

KṚṢṂA’S PROTECTION

Kṛṣṇa as Rāma promises, “It is My vow that if one only once seriously surrenders unto Me, saying ‘My dear Lord, from this day I am Yours,’ and prays to Me for courage, I shall immediately award courage to that person, and he will always remain safe from that time on.” (*Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha-khaṇḍa* 18.33) From what is one safe? Kṛṣṇa says, “Just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66) Those sinful reactions include the very desire—even potential desire—to sin.

And how do we surrender? We accept whatever will help us in spiritual life and reject what will be harmful. We learn from scriptures, gurus, and saintly persons what will be favorable or unfavorable. We see that ultimately only Kṛṣṇa is our protector and maintainer, and we are happily willing to put His interest as our interest. And no matter what our qualifications and achievements, we give Kṛṣṇa the credit, remaining humble.

This mood of surrender will quickly vanquish our tendency to sin and to misuse the holy name to cheat. It will allow the power and beauty of the name to blossom in our hearts.

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī and her family run a school in North Carolina. She is a frequent contributor to BTG and the major author and compiler of Vai-kunṭha Children, a guide to Kṛṣṇa conscious education for children.

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Chennai, TN — Hare Krishna Land, Bhaktivedanta Road, Injambakkam, Off ECR Road, Chennai 600 041/ Tel. (044) 501-9303 or 501-9147/ E-mail: iskonchennai@eth.net

Coimbatore, TN — Sri Jagannath Mandir, 100 ft. New Scheme Road, Hare Krishna Land, Aerodrome P.O., Coimbatore 641 011/ Tel. (0422) 262-6509 or 262-6508/ E-mail: iskoncbe@yahoo.com

Dwarka, Gujarat — Bharatiya Bhavan, Devi Bhavan Rd., 361 335/ Tel. (02892) 34606/ Fax: (02892) 34319

Guntur, AP — Opp. Sivalayam, Peda Kakani 522 509

Guwahati, Assam — Ulubari Chariali, South Sarania, 781 007/ Tel. (0361) 254-5963

Hanumkonda, AP — Neeladri Rd., Kapuwada, 506 011/ Tel. (08712) 77399

Haridaspur, West Bengal — P.O. Chhaygharia, Bangaon, 24 Parganas, West Bengal 743 704/ Tel. (03215) 57856

Haridwar, Uttaranchal — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, G. House, Nai Basti, Mahadev Nagar, Bhiimgoda, 249 401/ Tel. (01334) 261116

Hyderabad, AP — Hare Krishna Land, Nampally Station Rd., 500 001/ Tel. (040) 2474-4969 or 2460-7089/ E-mail: vedantacaitanya@pamho.net

Imphal, Manipur — Hare Krishna Land, Airport Rd., 795 001/ Tel. (0385) 221587

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Jammu, J&K — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, c/o Shankar Charitable Trust, Shakti Nagar, Near AG Office/ Tel. (0191) 2582306

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◆ **Mumbai, Maharashtra (Bombay)** — Hare Krishna Land, Juhu 400 049/ Tel. (022) 2620-6860/ Fax: (022) 2620-5214/ E-mail: iskon.juhu@pamho.net; guest.house.bombay@pamho.net

Mumbai, Maharashtra — 7 K. M. Munshi Marg, Opposite Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Near Babulnath Temple, Chowpatty, 400 007/ Tel. (022) 2369-7228/ Fax: (022) 2367-7941/ E-mail: radha-krishna.rns@pamho.net

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Nagpur, Maharashtra — Sri Sri Radha Gopinath Mandir, 8 Shastri Layout, Ring Road, Khamla, 400 015/ Tel. (0712) 2273987 or 2273988/ E-mail: bhaktagaurav@hotmail.com

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Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Hare Krishna Ashram (across Chandrabhaga River), Dist. Sholapur, 413 304/ Tel. (02186) 267241 or 267242/ E-mail: iskonpdp@rediff.com

Patna, Bihar — Arya Kumar Rd., Rajendra Nagar, 800 016/ Tel. (0612) 687637 or 685081/ Fax: (0612) 687635/ E-mail: krishna.kripa.jps@pamho.net

Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapur Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (020) 633-2328 or 636-1855/ E-mail: lyfpune@vsnl.com

Puri, Orissa — Bhakti Kuti, Swargadwar, 752 001/ Tel. (06752) 231440

Raipur, Chhattisgarh — Hare Krishna Land, Aloi Nagar, Opposite Maharshi Vidyalaya, Tatibandh, Raipur 492 001/ Tel. (0771) 5037555/ E-mail: iskonraipur@yahoo.com

Ranaghat, West Bengal — Gourdam, Habibpur, Ranaghat, Dist. Nadia 741 403/ Tel. (03473) 281150 or 281226/ E-mail: shyamrup@pamho.net

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Surat, Gujarat — Rander Rd., Jahangirpura, 395 005/ Tel. (0261) 765891, 765516, or 773386/ E-mail: surat@pamho.net

Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum), Kerala — T.C. 224/1485, WC Hospital Rd., Thycaud, 695 014/ Tel. (0471) 328197/ E-mail: sarvaisvarya.jps@pamho.net

Tirupati, AP — K.T. Rd., Vinayaka Nagar, 517 507/ Tel. (0877) 2230114 or 2230009/ E-mail: revati.raman.jps@pamho.net

Udhampur, J&K — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, Srila Prabhupada Marg, Srila Prabhupada Nagar/ Tel. (01992) 270298, 276146

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Varanasi, UP — ISKCON, B 27/80 Durgakund Rd., Near Durgakund Police Station, Varanasi 221 010/ Tel. (0542) 276422 or 222617

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Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (08712) 426182

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Assam — Karnamadhu, Dist. Karimganj

Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78 Krishnanagar Dham, Dist. Gadchiroli, 442 603/ Tel. (0218) 623473

Hyderabad, AP (New Naimisaranya Farm) — P. O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Tq., R.R. Dist., 501 401/ Tel. (040) 4742018

Indore, MP (Krishna-Balarama Mandir) — Hare Krishna Vihar, Nipania Village/ Tel. (731) 572794

Karnataka (Bhaktivedanta Eco-Village) — Nagodi P.O., Vollur Valley, Hosanagar Taluq, Shivmoga District, 577 425 (mail: Garuda Guha, Kollur, D.K. District, 576 220)

Mayapur, WB — (contact ISKCON Mayapur)

Puri, Orissa — ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Ashram, Sipasirubuli, 752 001/ Tel. (06752) 230494

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Vrindavan, UP — Vrinda Kund, Nandagaon, Dist. Mathura, U.P./ E-mail: vrinda@aol.com

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- Cebu, Philippines** — Hare Krishna Paradise, 231 Pagsabungan Road, Basak, Mandaua City/
Tel. +63 (032) 345-3590
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Tel. +88 (031) 610822
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- Jessore, Bangladesh** — Nitai Gaur Mandir, Kathakhali Bazaar P. O., Panjia
- Jessore, Bangladesh** — Sri Rup-Sananat Smriti Tirtha Mandir, Ramshara, Magurahat P. O.,
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- Mandalay, Myanmar** — ISKCON Sri Krishna Temple, Corner of 19th Thukha Street, Nanshe,
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- Sylhet, Bangladesh** — Sri Sri Radha-Madhava Mandir, Yugalatila, Kazal Sah Rd.
- Taipei, Taiwan** — Ding-zhou Lou 192, Sec. 3, Taipei 100/ Tel. +886 (02) 2365-8641/
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9147 or (090) 6544-9284/ Fax: +81 (03) 5343-3812/ E-mail: damodara@krishna.jp
- Yogyakarta, Indonesia** — P.O. Box 25, Babarsari YK, DIY

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Fax: +880 (08624) 88035
- Bangladesh (Comilla)** — Jagannathpur, Comilla
- Bangladesh (Sri Pundarika Dhama)** — Mekhla, Hathazari, Dist. Chittagong/ Tel. (031) 610822
- Indonesia (Govinda Kunja)** — (contact ISKCON Jakarta)
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- Malaysia** — (contact ISKCON Kuala Lumpur)

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- Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka)** — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/ Tel. (919) 732-6492/
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or (07887) 560 260/ E-mail: gauranga@gauranga.org
- Liverpool, England** — 114 Bold St., L1 4HY/ Tel. +44 (01555) 894-790

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- Locarno, Switzerland** — Govinda Rama, Via Borghese 12, 6600/ Tel. +41 (091) 752-3851/ Fax: (091) 752-3852
- Oslo, Norway** — Krishna's Cuisine, Kirkeveien 59B, 0364/ Tel. +47 (022) 606-250
- Prague, Czech Republic** — Govinda's, Soukenicka 27, 110 00 Prague-1/ Tel. +420 (02) 2481-6631 or 2481-6016/ E-mail: info@harekrnsna.cz

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La Paz — Restaurant Imperial, Calle Sagarnaga No. 213

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The King of Books

BACK TO GODHEAD has inevitably undergone changes over its sixty-year history. When Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples took up the service of producing the magazine, he gave them general guidelines and left most of the details up to them. Occasionally he would give specific instructions. One of those, which BTG editors have held sacrosanct ever since, was that each issue should contain an excerpt from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Once, when some disciples expressed concern that the spiritual content of BTG seemed to be declining, Prabhupāda said, in effect, “At least the *Bhāgavatam* is there.”

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was at the heart of Prabhupāda’s mission. In a poem he wrote on arriving in America, he expressed his deep faith that the message of the *Bhāgavatam*, which he had come to deliver, could rescue the people of the West from their debilitated spiritual condition.

I was in the U.S. Air Force when I came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and started reading the *Bhāgavatam*. Because I wanted to live at the temple and serve there full time, I submitted my resignation from the Air Force. During the six-month wait for the resignation to be approved, I was excused from reporting for duty but had to spend my normal work hours in my room on the base. That proved to be a blessing: I had nothing else to do but read Prabhupāda’s books. I dove in. I especially loved reading the *Bhāgavatam* and felt that my concentration on its words was a perfect meditation.

The *Bhāgavatam* is known among Vaiṣṇavas as *grantha-rāja*: “the king of books.” Although listed as one of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, or Vedic histories, it is called “the spotless *Purāṇa*.” It stands above all other works because of its exclusive focus on

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“*Bhāgavatam*” means “in relation to God.” Anyone interested in learning about God—as every human being should be—need look no further than the *Bhāgavatam*, which Prabhupāda called the post-graduate study of spiritual knowledge. It is a guide book to the summit of human aspiration.

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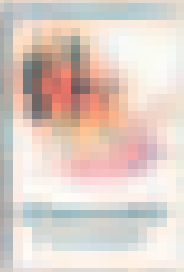
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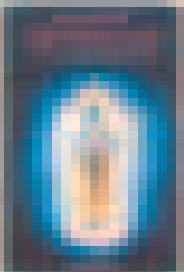
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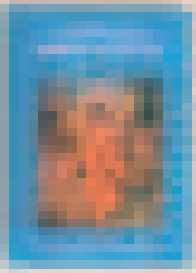
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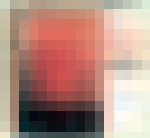
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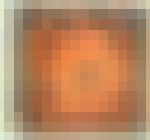
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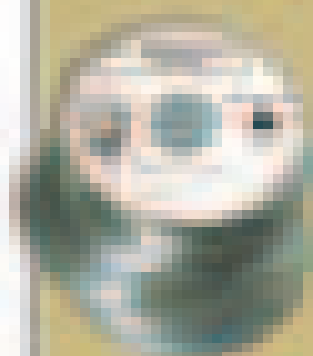
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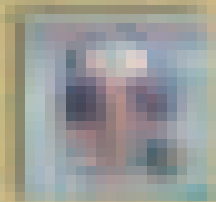
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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.20.4, Purport

And I declare that one who studies this sacred conversation of ours worships Me by his intelligence.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *Bhagavad-gītā* 18. 70

The Supreme Lord, who is greater than the greatest, becomes submissive to even a very insignificant devotee because of his devotional service. It is the beautiful and exalted nature of devotional service that the infinite Lord becomes submissive to the infinitesimal living entity because of it. In reciprocal devotional activities with the Lord, the devotee actually enjoys the transcendental mellow of devotional service.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.145

As oil stays in sesame seeds, as fire stays in wood, as butter stays in milk, and as fragrance stays in flowers, so I, the Supersoul, stay in the hearts of all living creatures.

Lord Viṣṇu, *Vāsudeva Upaniṣad*

Devotional service alone is the eternal supreme occupational duty.

It is applicable to and beneficial for everyone. Nondevotional activities, such as karma, *jñāna*, yoga, austerity, and vows are known as inferior religious principles because they are temporary. Sectarianism and narrow-mindedness are the two trademarks of these inferior religious systems. The Supreme Lord is the only object of worship; therefore He delivers everyone by manifesting His various pastimes.

This is His unique quality.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.78,
Commentary

Let the transcendental pastimes of the blackish personality Kṛṣṇa and the golden cowherd girl Rādhā, who are constantly overwhelmed with ecstatic love for each other, who always reside in Vṛndāvana, whose beauty attracts the minds of everyone, and who are the reservoir of wonderful loving pastimes, become constantly manifested in my heart.

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī
Śrī Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta 17.4

One who actually satisfies the Supreme Personality of Godhead during one's lifetime becomes liberated from the gross and subtle material conditions. Thus being freed from all material modes of nature, he achieves unlimited spiritual bliss.

Svāyambhuva Manu
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.11.14

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