

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

BACK TO GODHEAD



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Nov/Dec 2004 • \$4.00/£2.50

Nashik

Lord Rama's Home in Exile

Symptoms Of the Liberated

How to tell if a person
is truly in transcendence

Śrīla Prabhupāda In Venezuela

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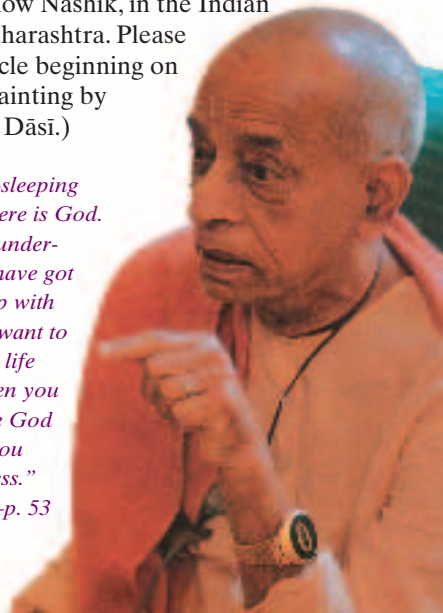
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COVER Lord Rāma and Sītā Devī enjoy forest life during Their exile, part of which took place in what is now Nashik, in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Please see the article beginning on page 16. (Painting by Dhṛti Devī Dāsī.)

“This eating-sleeping is not all. There is God. You should understand—you have got a relationship with Him. If you want to have a better life next time, then you must become God conscious. You must be sinless.”

—p. 53



WELCOME



IN THIS ISSUE we visit Nashik, a holy site whose history traces to the remote past. In a previous age, Lord Kapila performed austerities there. Much later, Lord Rāma chose it as the site

for His ashram. Still later, the sage Gautama established a temple to Lord Śiva there. The story of the origin of that temple shows the prominent role that reverence for the cow played when Vedic culture prevailed in India. Today, mistreatment of the cow in India is a sad symptom of the decline of that culture, as Braja Sevakī Devī Dāsī tells us in *Culture? What Culture?*

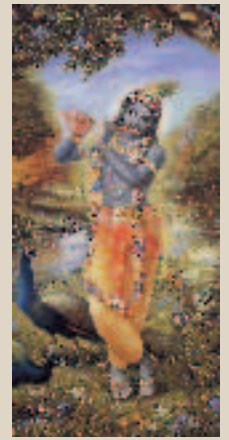
At the root of Vedic culture is acknowledgment of a supreme controller behind the forces of nature. Like the rest of the world, people in India today often fall prey to exaggerated promises of what science can do for us. In this issue’s Vedic Observer, Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa writes of the false hopes engendered by cloud seeding in India, an example of trying to force nature into submission rather than cooperating with her and her controller.

Śrīla Prabhupāda worked tirelessly to revive Vedic culture, in India and around the world. *Punk and Kṛṣṇa in a Teabag* tells the story of one of millions of souls who heeded his call.

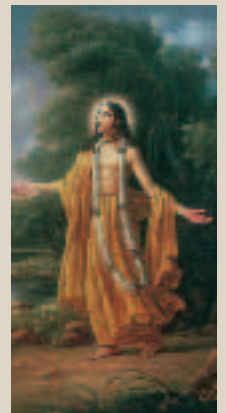
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

OUR PURPOSES

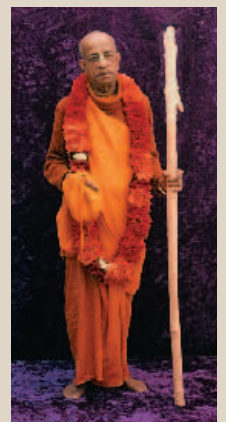
- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God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



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



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



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

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Hare Krishna Movement



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Letters

Bangladesh Pioneers

Congratulations on another excellent issue of BTG [Sept/Oct]. I especially liked the article about my dear friend Śrīdhara Swami, and the article on Bangladesh by Indradyumna Swami was quite enjoyable as well. If I may, I'd like to mention some of the courageous ISKCON devotees who first carried Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement to Bangladesh.

In 1978, the year after Prabhupāda's departure, Prabhaviṣṇu Swami and Jayapatāka Swami asked Vaiyāsaki Dāsa to go to Bangladesh with ISKCON's distinct message of love for Kṛṣṇa. Vaiyāsaki and Cāṇūri Dāsa, a French devotee, courageously journeyed to that primarily Muslim land and brought the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. The early days there were rough. Rasika Dāsa and Niṣṭhula Dāsa soon came with assistance. These devotees all risked their lives in a country where there was much animosity toward anyone or anything non-Muslim.

Satyaarāja Dāsa
Nyack, New York

Four Stages of Life

Are the four stages of one's life—*brahmacārī*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, *sannyāsī*—recommended in the present age?

Ameeta Gangadeen
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: In general these four *āśramas* are always recommended in any age because they are created by Kṛṣṇa along with the four *varṇas*: *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13). In the present age, however, everyone is a *śūdra* by default, and the *śūdras* generally accept only the *gṛhastha āśrama* (married life). Generally the *vaiśyas* and *kṣatriyas* accept the *brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, and *vānaprastha āśramas*, and the

brāhmanas accept all four *āśramas*. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is especially training *brāhmaṇas*, and it expected that they will accept the four *āśramas*. Of course, some *brāhmaṇas* skip the *gṛhastha* and *vānaprastha āśramas* and go straight to *sannyāsa*, but that is a minority. There is a verse forbidding the acceptance of *sannyāsa* in the age of Kali, but that is because most people are not qualified for *sannyāsa*. Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, all of whom are perfect teachers of Vedic knowledge, accepted the *sannyāsa āśrama*, and Śrīla Prabhupāda gave *sannyāsa* initiation to many disciples.

Improving Chanting

Could you give me some guidance on improving my chanting?

Ajay Maheshwaram
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Chanting is very simple, but the mind has the tendency to wander. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.26) Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions the flicking nature of the mind, so we should not be at all surprised to encounter it. Arjuna complained to Lord Kṛṣṇa that it was more difficult to control the mind than the wind (Bg. 6.34). Kṛṣṇa, however, considered that it is possible to control the mind by suitable practice and by detachment (Bg. 6.35). Our practice is to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and our detachment is to give up the four sinful acts. So we should not conclude that it is impossible, although it may sometimes seem that way.

During *japa* we can always try to bring the mind back to the holy sound of the *mahā-mantra*, soberly considering that at the moment of death we must fix the mind on Kṛṣṇa and death can come at any time. We can also consider the greatness of the holy name—it is Kṛṣṇa Himself—and how Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that there is

nothing of value in the entire material world but the holy name of the Lord.

The holy name can free us from all material distress and submerge us in an ocean of transcendental happiness. The holy name is well worth paying attention to. *Japa* is the practice of fixing the mind on Kṛṣṇa's name whenever it runs off. You will get better gradually simply by practicing every day with awareness of its great importance, just as we improve at anything we practice. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa is always inclined to help His devotees, so there is great hope for success.

Practice hearing and chanting the spiritual sound with enthusiasm, and you'll ultimately become absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You can also try tricks like chanting louder (so it is easier to hear) or faster (so there is no time to think about anything else). But ultimately we have to drag the mind back. When we start a new round on our beads, we can practice attentiveness with renewed determination and try chant with perfect attention as long as possible.

You can find more advice in books like *The Nectarean Ocean of the Holy Name*, by Śācinandana Swami, and *Art of Chanting*, by Mahānidhi Swami.

Avatāras for Each Age

I read all the main topics on Krishna.com, and that was very helpful. I am very thankful to the team that developed the site.

Could you please explain the different *yugas* and what form of the Lord appears in each?

Mankala Satheesh
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: There are four *yugas*, or ages: Satya, Tretā, Dvārapa, and Kali. Kali lasts 432,000 years. Dvārūpa is twice as long as Kali, Tretā is three times as long as Kali, and Satya is four times as long as Kali.

The eleventh canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, chapter 5, identifies the *yuga-avatāras* by color: (1) *śukla* (white) in the Satya-yuga (*Bhāg.* 11.5.21); (2) *rakta* (red) in the Tretā-yuga (*Bhāg.* 11.5.24); (3) *śyāma* (dark blue) in the Dvāpara-yuga (*Bhag.* 11.5.27); and (4) generally *kṛṣṇa* (black), but in special cases *pīta* (yellow)—as Caitanya Mahāprabhu—in the Kali-yuga (*Bhāg.* 11.5.32 and 10.8.13).

Guidance for Deity Worship

Would you be able to guide me in deity worship? What are the offenses to be avoided? What must we think about and what prayers should we say in front of the deities, when bowing down, in *kīrtana*, on leaving the temple, and so on? Can we really talk to the deities?


Nagan
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: We are to think that the deity of Kṛṣṇa is identical to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, and thus we should cultivate awe and reverence for the deity. We should bow down before the deity upon coming into and leaving His presence. Prayers of great devotees of the past may be offered. Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda summarized in *The Nectar of Devotion*, tells all the offenses to be avoided as well as positive devotional activities to be performed, so it would be good for you to get that book.

Yes, we can talk to the deities by offering prayers, but we must be very spiritually elevated for the deity to speak to us. 🌸

CORRECTION

The cover artist for the Sept/Oct issue was incorrectly identified. The artist was Mādhava-priyā Devī Dāsī. We apologize for the mistake.



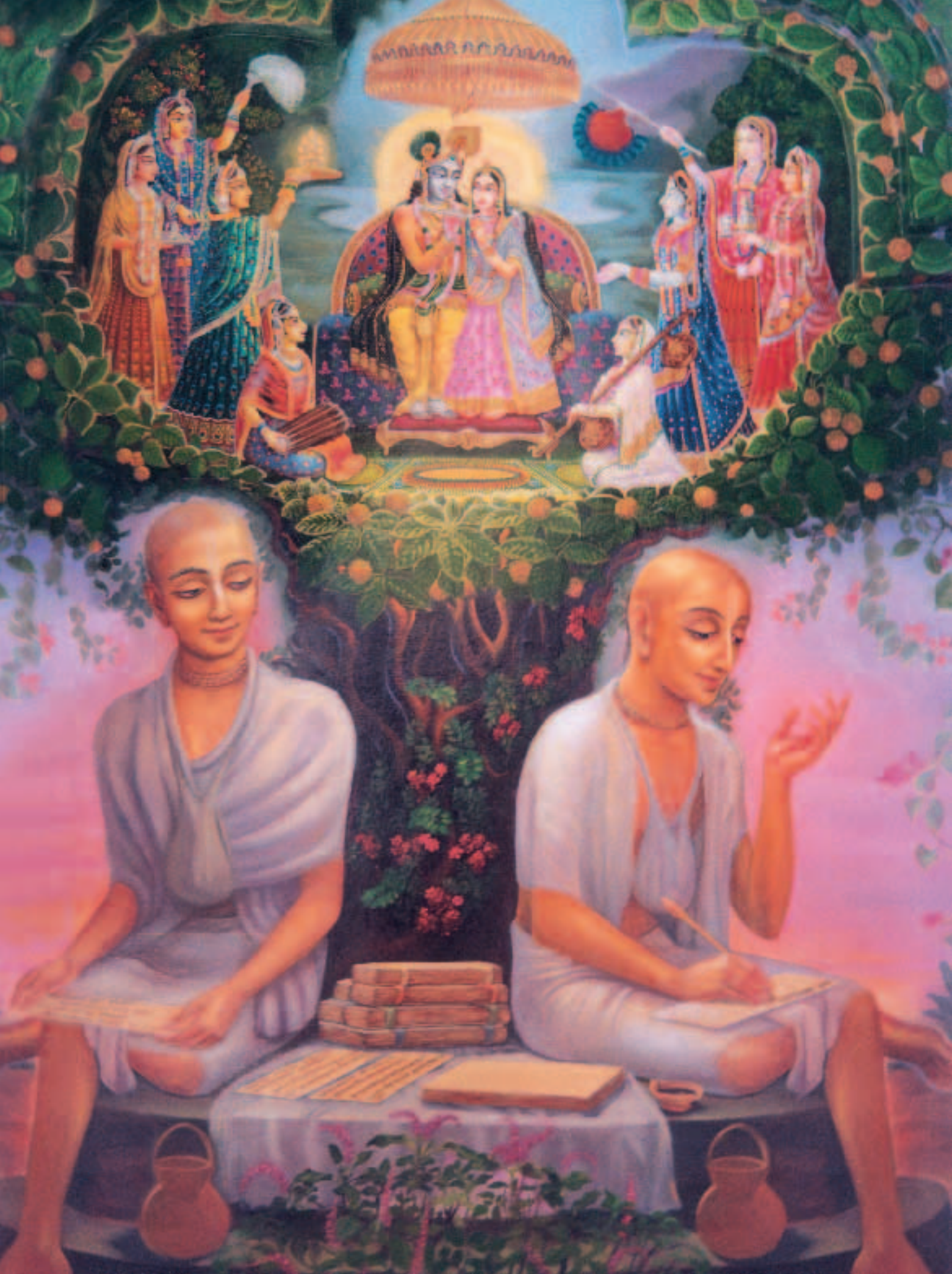
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SYMPTOMS OF THE LIBERATED

*How we can recognize a person truly free
from the influence of material nature.*

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

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*prāyeṇa munayo rājan
nivṛttā vidhi-śedhataḥ
nairguṇya-sthā ramante sma
guṇānukathane hareḥ*

“O King Parīkṣit, mainly the topmost transcendentalists who are above the regulative principles and restrictions take pleasure in describing the glories of the Lord.”

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.7



ramante sma guṇānukathane hareḥ—when one's only business is to glorify Kṛṣṇa. A *paramahansa* does not think, “I have become a *paramahansa*. Let me eat and sleep.” No. The symptom is that one cannot waste a moment without glorifying Kṛṣṇa. That is a *paramahansa*. When you cannot remain even for a single moment without describing Kṛṣṇa, then you can know that you are on the *paramahansa* stage. No attachment for anything material; simply attachment for Kṛṣṇa.

Then you can give up the regulative principles. Not before that. Don't imitate. You must first come to that positive stage.

DESIRELESSNESS IMPOSSIBLE

The *paramahansa* stage is not simply negative. You must stand on a positive platform. Those who are *sūnyavādī* [voidists] are simply concerned with

There is a stage called the *paramahansa* stage. At that time, one does not very strictly follow the regulative principles. Or, rather, it is not that the *paramahansas* are not following, but they're above all regulative principles. We should not imitate that position: “Now we have become *paramahansas*, and we can neglect all regulative principles.” No. You must prove that you are a *paramahansa*.

What is the *paramahansa* stage? *Nairguṇya-sthā*

Left: By being constantly engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service, Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī exemplified the transcendental position of devotees of the Lord.

If you simply engage yourself only in hearing about Kṛṣṇa, then you are nistraiguṇya, above the modes.

• • •

the negative. The other day a Zen Buddhist came. He said that the goal is “to become desireless.” These people do not know that it is impossible to become desireless. Therefore they are disturbed always. It is not possible to become desireless. That is a negative post, *nirvāṇa*.

That is Buddha philosophy, *nirvāṇa*. “Stop these material nonsense activities.” But unless one has positive activities, how he can give up this nonsense? *Paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.59]. You must give someone good engagement. Otherwise, he’ll go on committing all nonsense. Just like you. You have been given good engagement—deity worship and so many other things. You are engaged. Therefore you have no time to divert your attention for nonsense things.

To try to stop nonsense artificially will not work. The U.S. government tried to stop intoxication—LSD—by spending millions of dollars. Not a single man was stopped. And here in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as soon as they come, immediately they stop. Why? *Paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate*. When one understands that he is getting better “intoxication,” then he thinks, “Why shall I go to LSD?” That is required.

Here it is said, *nivṛttā vidhi-ṣed-hataḥ*. There are two things—*vidhi* and *niṣedha*, or do’s and don’ts. We say, “Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra,” and “No illicit sex.” Positive and negative. *Vidhi* means do’s, and *niṣedha* do not’s.

These do’s and don’ts are the beginning of life. Don’t try to become a *paramahansa* from the very beginning. Then you’ll fall flat. *Nairguṇya* means above material nature. Material nature is called *traiguṇya*. *Traiguṇya* means the three modes of material nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance. When you rise above these three *guṇas*, or

modes, then there is the possibility of becoming a *paramahansa*.

Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna, *traiguṇya-viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.45]. The *Vedas* deal with the three *guṇas*, giving directions according to each one. For persons in *sattva-guṇa*, or the mode of goodness, there are six *Purāṇas*. There are eighteen *Purāṇas* in all. Some of them are for persons situated in the mode of goodness, some of them are for persons in *rajo-guṇa* (passion), and some of them are for persons in *tamo-guṇa* (ignorance).

In the *Vedas* there is a recommendation to worship goddess Kālī. That is for the *tamo-guṇa*, not for the *sattva-guṇa*. The *Purāṇas* for *sattva-guṇa* include the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Knowledge has to be given to everyone, but according to each person’s capacity. If one is in *tamo-guṇa*, you cannot raise him immediately to the *sattva-guṇa*. *Tamo-guṇa* is meat-eating, drinking. These are in *tamo-guṇa*—in darkness. The *Vedas* give everyone a chance: “All right, you want to eat meat? All right, eat meat. But offer it to the goddess Kālī.” That means that there is a restriction. Meat-eating is not required, but a rascal will not want to hear this immediately. Therefore give him some concession: “All right, you can eat meat by offering a sacrifice. Not the cow, but a lower animal, like goats.”

But regulated meat-eating is not meant for *sattva-guṇa*. For persons in *sattva-guṇa* the prescription is different. And for *rajo-guṇa* the prescription is different.

RISE ABOVE THE MODES

On the whole, we are always mixed up with the *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa*,

and *tamo-guṇa*. That is our material position. Therefore sometimes we come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness when we are in *sattva-guṇa*, and when *tamo-guṇa* or *rajo-guṇa* attacks, we sometimes fall down. So we have to rise above these *guṇas*. *Traiguṇya-viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna*. Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna, “Rise above these three *guṇas*.”

How it can be done? Simply by hearing about Kṛṣṇa. This is *nairguṇya-sthā ramante sma guṇānukathane hareḥ*. If you simply engage yourself only in hearing about Kṛṣṇa, then you are *nistraiguṇya*, above the modes. That is the process. Simple. No other business than hearing about Kṛṣṇa.

We have given you so many books. Don’t sleep. Don’t waste a single moment. Of course, you have to sleep, but reduce it as much as possible. Eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—reduce them.

That is the example shown by the six Gosvāmīs. *Nidrāhāra-vihārakādivijitau*: they conquered eating, sleeping, and sex. That is the spiritual platform. No more sleeping, no more eating, no more sex life. That is perfection. And one who can conquer these three things—eating, sleeping, and sex—is fearless, automatically. There is no requirement of defense because such a person can meet any situation.

That is the *paramahansa stage*, where there is no regulation. Don’t imitate. Some of our students have exhibited that their thought is “There is no need of regulations. We are all *paramahansas*.” Not *paramahansa*—rascal number one! Here is the test of the *paramahansa*: one who is not influenced by the material qualities—*rajo-guṇa*, *sattva-guṇa*, and *tamo-guṇa*. And the test of that is that one has conquered eating, sleeping, and sense enjoyment.

Rise above the modes by hearing

about Kṛṣṇa. The Gosvāmīs were always writing books about Kṛṣṇa. Following their example, we are simply describing the different activities and attributes of Kṛṣṇa. In today's verse it is said, *guṇānukatha*: "describing the glories of the Lord." *Anu* means not whimsically, but by following the superior authorities. You cannot write anything not approved by the superior authorities. Therefore, we have to give examples, with quotations from the *sāstra*, the scripture. What I am speaking, it is supported by the *sāstras*. Not that I have inventive power—"I can write anything I like." That is nonsense. *Anukathane* means you must hear from the authority perfectly. Then try to write. Not that you write whimsically, whatever you like. That is not allowed. And that will not be accepted.

Therefore, in the beginning of this chapter [2.1.1] we learned,

*variyān eṣa te praśnaḥ
kṛto loka-hītaṁ nṛpa
ātmavit-sammataḥ puṁsām
śrotavyādiṣu yaḥ paraḥ*

"My dear King, your question is glorious because it is very beneficial to all kinds of people. The answer to this question is the prime subject matter for hearing, and it is approved by all transcendentalists." *Ātmavit-sammataḥ*: "It is approved by the realized souls." Not that whimsically I do something or you question something. No. The question must be approved by *ātmavit*, a self-realized person, and the answer should be given by the self-realized person. That is wanted.

NO INDEPENDENCE

We have no independence, either materially or spiritually. But we're falsely thinking to become independent. That is called illusion, *māyā*. The rascals do not know that there is no independence at all, either materially or spiritually. Just like the outlaws—they have no independence, either criminally or civilly. When a person is a good citizen there is no independence, and when he's a criminal there is no independence. So why is he thinking, "I shall act criminally

and become independent"? That is not possible. And because he cannot understand it, he is a rascal. His independence is illusion.

Where is your independence? Illusion. *Māyā*. When you are under the strict rules and regulations of material nature, how are you independent? *Daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.14]. People think that to surrender to Kṛṣṇa is a slave mentality. "I shall remain free." But where is your freedom, sir? That is illusion.

As long as one is a rascal, falsely thinking that he's independent, he must observe the regulative principles, *vidhi-niṣedha*. When he's actually situated on the transcendental platform, that is called *nairguṇya-sthāḥ*. *Stha* means "situated," "not flickering," "permanent." So *nairguṇya* means devotional service. That is *nairguṇya*.

That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

"One who engages in full devotional service, unflinching in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman." [14.26]

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

"One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me." [18.54]

Everything is there in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Nairguṇya means one who is twenty-four hours engaged in devotional service. He's on the *nairguṇya* platform and is no longer influenced by the material qualities. *Mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa*. *Avyabhicāreṇa* means without any flaw, without any fault.

What Is the HareKṛṣṇaMovement?

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**, **hedgehog**, 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 name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

As soon as you are actually engaged in devotional service, there will be no more punishment by the material nature.

• • •

When one is strictly following and engaged in devotional service according to the restriction, or instruction, of the *śāstra* and spiritual master, one can conquer or surpass the three modes of material nature. And that stage is *brahma-bhūtaḥ*.

SYMPTOMS OF THE SPIRITUAL PLATFORM

Now, everyone can say, “I am now in the *brahma-bhūtaḥ*.” But the symptom of one on that platform is given, so you cannot cheat. What is that symptom? *Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*. If you are actually on the *brahma-bhūtaḥ* platform, then the symptom will be *prasannātmā*: jolly, always. There will be no more moroseness. Always jolly. That is the first symptom. “Oh, I am now free from the material clutches.”

As soon as you are actually engaged in devotional service, there will be no more punishment by the material nature. Therefore you will always be jubilant, *prasannātmā*. What is the meaning of *prasannātmā*? *Prasannātmā* means *na śocati na kāṅkṣati*: not desiring anything, and not lamenting for anything. That is the *brahma-bhūtaḥ* stage. If something is lost, “Never mind. Kṛṣṇa desired the loss. That’s all right.” And if there is a gain, one does not jump like a monkey—“Oh, I have gained this! I have gained this!” [Laughter.]

No. Everything is Kṛṣṇa’s. I am engaged in Kṛṣṇa’s service. If there is some loss, it is Kṛṣṇa’s desire. And if there is some profit, it is Kṛṣṇa’s money. I don’t possess anything. Why shall I jump? Of course, we can jump. “Oh, we have gained so many things for Kṛṣṇa!” That is different.

Another symptom of the *brahma-bhūta* stage is *samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu*: equal to everyone. One who under-

stands that everyone is a spirit soul, some way or other entangled in a material body, is fit for transcendental service to the Lord.

After being liberated from the three material modes, one has to be situated in *nistraiguṇya*. Here it is stated “*nairguṇya*.” *Nairguṇya* and *nistraiguṇya* have the same meaning. *Nairguṇya-sthā ramante*: one enjoys life. As soon as you come to the platform of *nairguṇya*, free from the infection of the three material qualities, then *ramante*: everything is pleasure.

Therefore those who are yogis—who are *bhaktas*, *bhakti-yogīs*—also enjoy life. It is not that we restrict: “Don’t enjoy the senses.” Sense “enjoyment” is not enjoyment; it is bondage. Suppose I am enjoying either illicit or legal sex. I am under bondage. Even it is legal sex life, I get children, and then I have a duty to the children. So either in goodness or in ignorance, there is bondage.

Therefore one has to rise above the three modes, and then one enjoys. What is that enjoyment? *Ramante yogino ’nante*. That is not limited enjoyment, for few minutes. No. *Anante*, eternal enjoyment. And that is *satyānande*, that is real *ānanda*. That is real bliss. When your *ānanda* does not stop, that is real *ānanda*. And the *ānanda*, or the pleasure, which is for a few seconds or a few minutes, that is not *ānanda*. That is illusion. Real *ānanda* will continue. It will never stop. It will never end.

Therefore it is said,

*ramante yogino ’nante
satyānande cid-ātmani
iti rāma-padenāsau
paraṁ brahmābhidhiyate*

“The Supreme Absolute Truth is called Rāma because the transcendentalists take pleasure in the unlimited true

pleasure of spiritual existence.” [Padma Purāṇa] When we enter the platform of continuous blissfulness, *ānanda*, that is the connection with, and that is the meaning of, Rāma. That means that when one is situated in the service of the Param Brahma, the Supreme Truth, his life is successful.

FIX THE MIND ON KṚṢṆA

Here it is said, *nairguṇya-sthā ramante sma guṇānukathane hareḥ*: when not a single moment is wasted without talking about Kṛṣṇa. So practice this. First of all, fix your mind on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. If your mind is fixed, then the other senses will act, because the other senses act under the leadership of the mind. Your mind is your enemy or your friend. The mind engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is your friend. And the mind engaged in other consciousness is your enemy.

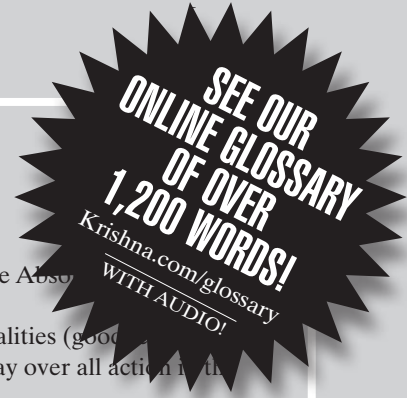
You can create your mind as friend or enemy—according to your desire. Deity worship means to fix your mind on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, always worshipping Kṛṣṇa. If you fix your mind on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, immediately you are *nairguṇya-sthā*—situated in the *nairguṇya*, the transcendental platform.

In another place, it is said,

*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadraṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are
(please turn to page 37)

Glossary



Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.
Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa’s first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother.
Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.
Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.
Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.
Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.
Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.
Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one’s eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).
Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.
Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally “the place of the guru”).
Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.
ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.
Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.
Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.
Kirtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).
Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see “Godhead”).
Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.
Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

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”).
Purānas—Vedic histories.
Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa’s consort and pleasure potency.
Rathayātrā—“chariot festival”: a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, “the Lord of the universe”).
Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.
Śrī—an honorific meaning “opulent” (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).
Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purānas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.
Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.
Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas*.
Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).
Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.
Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).
Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.
Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.
Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see “Godhead”); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Visit to Venezuela

*For seven days in 1975, devotees in Caracas basked
in the presence of the ambassador of the spiritual world.*





Prabhupāda arrives at the Caracas airport (left and far left), where he is met by disciples. (Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami, far right in photo at left, was then ISKCON's GBC for Venezuela.) Background: outside the Caracas temple in Bello Monte, overlooking the city.

by Jagat Cakṣur Dāsa

In the '70s, Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples traveled all over the globe spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. But even in places where neither Prabhupāda nor his disciples had yet visited, Kṛṣṇa consciousness took root simply by the strength of his books. One such country was Venezuela, South America.

Ilan Chester was a young Venezuelan musician looking for answers to the purpose of life. While visiting Tel Aviv, Israel, in 1972, he met Kṛṣṇa devotees for the first time. He carried books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness back to Venezuela and distributed them among his friends. Soon there was a small group of people chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and regularly reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Ilan wrote a letter to the Mexico City temple request-

ing help to open a center in Caracas. Around that time a group of devotees headed by Hanumān Goswami were touring Latin America and the Caribbean. By the end of 1972 they arrived in Caracas from Trinidad. Along with the small group of local devotees, they opened the first ISKCON center in South America.

Citsukhānanda Dāsa, who had opened the first temple in Mexico and served as temple president there



for some time, also wanted to join the Venezuelan devotees and help establish the movement there. He wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda asking for his permission and blessings. Prabhupāda replied on December 11, 1972:

So I think because Hanuman is always sending me successful reports of preaching meetings, so many newspaper articles and photos, that this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will be very famous there and you will find many interested persons to become devotees, just like at Mexico. . . . If there is good possibility to arrange nice programs, and if you have got a very nice place by then, why shall I not stop there in Caracas while returning to your country sometime next year?

At the beginning of 1973 Citsukhānanda became the first temple president in Caracas. In December 1973,

one year after the Caracas temple was established, the first Venezuelan devotees traveled with Citsukhānanda to Los Angeles to receive initiation from Śrīla Prabhupāda. Among them was Ilan, who received the name Havi Dāsa. The other devotees to take initiation were Viraha Dāsa, Vīrabāhu Dāsa, Tamoha Dāsa, Pramāṇa Dāsa, Kartā Dāsī, and Vara Dāsī. During a morning walk in Cheviot Hills Park, Prabhupāda promised the Venezuelan devotees he would visit their country in the near future.

The devotees in Venezuela were inspired by Prabhupāda's appeal to broadcast Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the benefit of all living entities. The movement expanded quickly in Venezuela, and many people were becoming attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as predicted by Śrīla Prabhupāda in his letter to Citsukhānanda. But the devotees were not without opposition.

EARLY STRUGGLES

Once, at the beginning of 1973, Hanumān was speaking to a group of students at the Central University of Venezuela. They were communists and became disturbed at Hanumān's criticism of atheism. A heated exchange ensued, and by the end the enraged students chased Hanumān, shouting, "Catch him! Hang him!" Somehow they thought Hanumān belonged to the CIA and wanted to lynch him. A lawyer named Bolivar was passing by in his car. Seeing Hanuman being chased, he stopped and motioned for him to jump in, thus saving his life.

Around that time there were many new religious groups in Venezuela. Some of them were dubious and attracted complaints from the public. So the government decided to investigate all the new religious groups in
(please turn to page 33)



Devotees fill the small temple as Prabhupāda leads the chanting (top and top left). At left: a morning walk in Caracas's Parque del Este (East Park).

Nashik

Lord Rāma's Home in Exile

When Lord Rāma asked the sage Agastya to suggest an area where He could build a hermitage, Agastya directed Him to this place.

Text and photos by Adbhuta Hari Dāsa



A sculpture of Sītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa (above) overlooks Tapovan, where Lord Kapila performed austerities long before the time of Lord Rāma. Nearby is the spot where Lakṣmaṇa cut off Śūrpanakhā's nose, the incident depicted here in bas relief (left) and diorama (right).





As described in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, at the time of Lord Rāmacandra the Nashik area was a peaceful and attractive forest that abundantly supplied all the needs of its inhabitants. Lord Rāma, along with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, spent time here during His exile from Ayodhya. Today Nashik is abundant with pilgrims and is attractive because of many beautiful temples, which are a testimony to its rich, eventful history.

The name Nashik derives from the word *nāsika*, Sanskrit for "nose." It was here that Lakṣmaṇa cut off the nose of the demoness Śūrpanakhā, Rāvaṇa's younger sister.

On the first day of my stay in Nashik, my guide, Yogesh, suggested we visit the Triambakeshwar Temple, located in a small village twenty-eight kilometers from Nashik. The temple is dedicated to Lord Śiva. (*Tri* means "three," *ambaka* "eye," and *īśvara* "controller.") This marvelous temple made of intricately carved black stone is famous because this is one of the twelve places where Lord Siva is self-manifested in a phallic form (*jyotirlinga*). He appeared here because he was pleased by the austerities of the sage Gautama. [See the sidebar "The Origin of Triambakeshwar."] The extraordinary feature of this *jyotirlinga* is that it has three faces:



Delhi •
Ayodhya •
Kolkata •
Mumbai • **Nashik** •
Chennai •

INDIA
MAHARASHTRA

Visiting Nashik

Nashik is about 190 km northeast of Mumbai.

How to Get There

Air: The nearest airport is in Mumbai.

Rail: Trains between Mumbai and Nashik run twelve times a day. The trip takes about five hours. Trains leave from the main station in Mumbai, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus. Some Mumbai–Delhi trains stop in Nashik.

Bus: Private and government buses leave regularly from Dadar Station.

Car: It's about a four-hour drive up the Eastern Express Highway, NH3.

Where to Stay

Most of the hotels in Nashik are in the middle price range (Rs 200–600). Here are some suggestions:

Raj Mahal Lodge (572-880), Padma (576-837), Hotel Holiday Plaza (573-521), Hotel Panchavati Ratri (571-273), Hotel Siddharth (573-288).

Where to Eat

Some good vegetarian restaurants: Woodlands Restaurant (across the street from Hotel Siddharth), Centre Point Restaurant (near Hotel Panchavati), Hotel Holiday Plaza Restaurant.

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



Deities of Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma, and Sītā (left) are worshiped in the Kala Rama Temple. The Triambakeshwar Temple (above) is located about twenty-eight kilometers from Nashik.





Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.

After seeing the deity of Lord Śiva, we walked for about one kilometer and arrived at Kushavarta, a pond built by the sage Gautama. The pond is so named because it was formerly surrounded by *kusha* grass, used for worship. Today a pillared hall and a few temples surround it. The pond is at the foothills of Brahmagiri Mountain, the source of the Godavari River. On Brahmagiri, pilgrims visit a temple

of Gaṅgā Devī (the Ganges), a cave where sage Gautama performed austerities, and Rama-Lakshman Pond, where it is believed that Lord Rāma stopped for a few days to performed ceremonies on behalf of his departed father, King Daśaratha.

The next day, in Nashik, we bathed in the sacred Ramkund, where people offer oblations to their forefathers, as Lord Rāma did. Beside Ramkund is a small temple of the Godavari River.

It is opened only every twelfth year, during the Nashik Kumbha-mela, a great festival.

After bathing, we went to Tapovan (“forest of penance”), situated on the bank of the Godavari and Kapila rivers some six kilometers south of Ramkund. On the spot where the Kapila meets the Godavari is Kapila Tirtha, where Lord Kapila performed austerities. Under a large banyan tree sits a small shrine where a deity of Lord



Pilgrims bathe in the sacred Godavari River in Nashik (above). At right, small pools in stone mark the spot where it is said that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva witnessed the kidnapping of Sītā.





The Origin of Triambakeshwar

From *Śiva Purāṇa*

Once the sage Gautama performed great penance to invoke rain. When the *deva* Varuṇa, who is in charge of water, appeared before him, Gautama requested him to cause it to rain. Varuṇa replied that if Gautama pleased Lord Śiva, his desire would be fulfilled.

Later, Varuṇa told Gautama to dig a pit, which Varuṇa then filled with water. Varuṇa blessed Gautama by saying that this pond would never dry up. The sages who had abandoned that place because of the drought then returned there.

One day, sage Gautama instructed his disciples to fetch some water from the pond. When the disciples reached there, they came upon the wives of numerous sages, who would not allow them to take water and instead rebuked them. The disciples returned to the hermitage and told Gautama what had happened.

Ahalyā, Gautama's wife, pacified the angry disciples and went to the pond to fetch water. This became her daily routine. One day Ahalyā met the wives of the sages at the pond, and they tried to prevent her from fetching water. When they returned to their hermitages and told their husbands what had happened, the sages became angry that Ahalyā was trying to use the pond.

The sages worshiped Gaṇeśa to please him. When Gaṇeśa appeared, they requested him to drive Gautama from that place. At first Gaṇeśa was reluctant to comply, but when they persisted he agreed at last.

Disguised as a cow, Gaṇeśa

entered Gautama's barley field and started grazing. Gautama tried to drive out the cow by hitting her on the back with a bundle of grass. The artificial cow died instantly. Gautama was very sorry for his act. But when all the sages from the surrounding area arrived there, they forced Gautama to abandon that place at once.

Gautama left and made his hermitage at a little distance from there. One day he came to the sages and asked them how he could atone for his sin of killing a cow. The sages told him that he would have to walk around the earth three times, all the while saying, "I have killed a cow." They also told him that after that he would have to perform austerities for one month.

As an alternative, the sages said that Gautama could help Gaṅgā manifest herself and take bath in her water. Or he could worship thirty million Śiva *liṅgas*.

Gautama made the Śiva *liṅgas* and started worshiping them. Lord Śiva, pleased by his devotion, appeared before him. Gautama requested Lord Śiva to free him from the sin of killing a cow. He also requested Lord Śiva to manifest the river Ganges there.

Lord Śiva tried his best to make Gautama understand that he was innocent and that the real culprits were the wicked sages. But Gautama was unconvinced. At last Śiva instructed Gaṅgā to appear in the form of a woman. Gautama eulogized Gaṅgā, and by the blessings of Lord Śiva, Gautama was freed from the sin of killing a cow.

When Gaṅgā asked to leave, Lord Śiva asked her to stay on the earth. Gaṅgā consented on the condition that Lord Śiva and Goddess Pārvatī would also stay on earth. So Lord Śiva established himself as Triambakeshwar *jyotirlinga*, and Gaṅgā became famous as Gautamī Gaṅgā.

Lakṣmaṇa is worshiped. Next to it is a small room containing a sculpture of Lakṣmaṇa cutting off the nose of Śūrpaṅakhā. Local people believe this to be the spot where this incident took place.

The most interesting temples in Nashik are the Sundara Narayana Temple, the Kapaleswar Temple, the Naroshankar Temple, and the Kala Rama Temple, all built from black stone in eighteenth century. They are situated in the Panchavati area, close to the Godavari River. Panchavati is where Lord Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā lived. [See the sidebar "At Home in Panchavati."] The name means "the place of five banyan trees," and even today there are five banyan trees here. Next to them is a wooden house in which there is a small cave called Sita Gumpha. Deities of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā are installed inside.

At Home in Panchavati

From *Ramayana*,
by Kamala Subramaniam
(Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Bombay, 1988).

They had arrived at Panchavati. Rama looked around and said: “Lakshmana, this is the place which was indicated by the sage Agastya. Look at those trees laden with flowers and the river which is so near! This must be Panchavati. Look around, Lakshmana. You know only too well the kind of place I would like. Look for a place where there is enough water for us to perform our daily worship of the gods. Sita should be happy and we should have peace. Trees should be around and Samith [firewood], darbha grass and flowers should be within reach. Build for us an ashrama in such a place.”

Lakshmana said: “I am but your servant, Rama. I will build the ashrama but the choice of the location should be yours. I will not presume to know where it should be.” Rama smiled at the words of Lakshmana and together they looked around for a suitable site. After some rambling around they found the ideal place. Rama took Lakshmana’s hand in his and said:



Painting by Dhriti Devi Dasi

*Lord Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa
enjoying forest life.*

“Look, this place seems to me to be best suited for our purpose. The ground is level and it is surrounded by trees in abundance. Build an ashrama here for us. Close by is a small stream, and the perfume of lotuses floating on its surface reaches us here. And just across, some distance from here, is the river Godavari which the rishi told us about. There are mountains, and herds of deer are roaming on the slopes. Peacocks are dancing everywhere and the mountains have several minerals that glow red, white and yellow. The green of the trees together with these colours present the appearance of a painted picture. The elephants stand out against this colourful background as though

they are etched in space. I like this picturesque Panchavati. Let us live here.”

Lakshmana built an ashrama there on the site indicated by Rama. He brought lotuses from the river Godavari after bathing in it. He made an offering of flowers to the gods that guarded the forest and spoke words prescribed for averting evil. He went to Rama and Sita. He told them that the ashrama was ready for them.

Rama saw how well-planned it was and how sturdily built. He was enchanted with it. He embraced Lakshmana warmly and said: “I am very pleased with you. You have done me a very good service and the only way I can thank you for it is to embrace you. You are wise, you are righteous, and, even without being told about it, you know what my wishes are. My father, I think, is not dead but is here, before me in the form of my brother.” Rama was shedding tears of joy and Lakshmana stood with an embarrassed smile on his face.

They lived happily in that ashrama for a long while without any disturbance. Sita enjoyed collecting flowers and stringing them, making friends with the birds, the deer and the peacocks. Rama was like Indra in Amaravati. He was happy.

It is believed that Sītā took shelter in this cave when an army attacked Lord Rāma. Rāvaṇa kidnapped Sītā in Panchavati, so that event, as well Lord Rāma’s killing of Marīca in the form of a deer, are exhibited in the room across from Sītā’s cave.

Spending several days in Nashik, Yogesh and I found great inspiration visiting the holy places. But we were disappointed to see that pilgrims are more interested in performing rituals for material rewards than in learning about the activities of Lord Rāma here. The renounced sages who live here were unable to answer our questions

about the real spiritual significance of the place. Even in a holy place like Nashik, spiritual knowledge about our relationship with the Supreme Person seems to be lost under the influence of this age. Fortunately, we have found spiritual direction by hearing from previous spiritual masters in our line and from Śrīla Prabhupāda and his faithful followers. ❁

Adbhuta Hari Dāsa, from Croatia, is based at the ISKCON temple in Baroda, Gujarat, India. He travels with a group of devotees distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books.





Kushavarta Pond (above) was built by the sage Gautama (left). Far left: Lord Nṛsimha at Kushavarta Pond. At right, a priest reads prayers before a deity at the Naroshankar Temple, near the Godavari River in the Panchavati area.



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CULTURE? WHAT CULTURE?

*The mistreatment of cows rips the fabric
of India's esteemed heritage.*

by Braja Sevakī Devī Dāsī

The I-5 freeway that runs between Los Angeles and San Francisco is a long, straight stretch of road. The landscape is bordered to the west by barren mountains whose brown, smooth folds, like loose skin, belie a rugged terrain.

For almost half the length of this 400-odd mile road, as far as the eye can see to the east are constant green splashes of farming—miles of orange trees and other crops planted by optimistic farmers on irrigated, otherwise barren, desert soil.

Somewhere around the middle of this journey, the landscape begins to resemble an alien nation. Coming over a rise of land, one sees brown soil covered by thousands of cows. At first sight, the mass of seething bodies is hard to identify, or perhaps the mind just hesitates to accept it. When recognition dawns, the effect is powerful and, for a cow lover, emotional. The smell in the air—even through the air conditioning vents of the car—is thick, earthy, pungent. A truck circles the vast expanse of cow-

hood, spraying water to temper the dust and (perhaps) cool the cows that stand in morose clusters with no water, food, or shade.

This is not a cattle farm. It is a waiting room for a slaughterhouse. These cows are on death row.

NOW ON TO INDIA

This is, of course, an American vista, not a scene one would imagine encountering in India. But in the holy land of the sacred cow, a controversy rages about the prevention—or legalization—of cow slaughter. One Hindu (lapsed, no doubt) even wrote an editorial in one of the country's leading newspapers, speaking of his "freedom of choice" when it came to killing cows to eat them. No such consideration for the cow, though . . . alarming sentiments from a person whose whole history, both cultural and spiritual, is one of protecting the cow.

In a Western country this issue wouldn't attract even a paragraph of media attention.

In a country where most religions accept the principle of reincarnation, it seems to be conveniently forgotten when it comes to cow slaughter.

• • •

Slaughterhouses dot landscapes across the world. Sanitized, packaged, and colored to perfection, meat is sold in air-conditioned stores with piped music, surroundings designed to lull the senses into a peaceful shopping ambience. Nowhere do you hear the screaming of cows or see the blood-soaked tunics of slaughterers; nowhere can you smell the stench of death or see the filth and putrefaction of dead flesh as it is torn from bones and sinew, the skins “tanned” in the most vile-smelling process imaginable.

But in India? Surely it’s not possible that the most venerated of God’s creatures should be subjected to this kind of treatment in India. As unreal as it may seem, state boundaries and religious leaders can do nothing at present to stop the slaughter. Whatever restrictions apply are easily avoided by running herds of cows across state borders so they can be legally slaughtered in a state that has no respect for the ancient laws of God or the more recent ones of godly men. Yet history shows that this is hardly a current issue. In the 1800s, violence erupted between Muslim and Hindu groups over the slaughter of cows. Even as far back as the sixteenth century, rulers like Aurangzeb and Akbar decreed bans on cow slaughter out of respect for the brahminical and Jain communities.

The current call for a nationwide ban on cow slaughter parallels a demand for its legalization. The concern of both groups, apparently, is the treatment and condition of cows who are the victims of illegal cattle-running scams. Cow slaughter is legal in only two Indian states: West Bengal in the east and Kerala in the south. For a country that supports a \$4 billion worldwide leather trade, this raises suspicions of how such an

enormous amount of money can be generated from just these two states. The fact is, illegal traders run border lines and bribe authorities to turn a blind eye and allow their trucks through. Even the government-operated train lines are used in the illegal transportation of cattle between state borders.

A CULTURAL PROBLEM

And so we see an ancient culture rise to the test of maintaining its standards and setting an example to the world. The nation is divided over an issue which, if dealt with in the light of scripture and culture, wouldn’t be an issue at all. But in the desperation to keep up with the West, Indians have succumbed to the ideas of multi-nationals who think it’s okay to destroy a football-field-sized portion of forest every few minutes or so to graze cattle being fattened up for the kill.

Alarming, one article suggests that, in defense of the suffering cows, their slaughter be legalized to “prevent them suffering any further”—that is, eliminate the black market cattle runners by legalizing cow slaughter:

“Villagers can’t afford to keep unproductive cows. They’re not saints,” says Bangalore animal-welfare worker Suparna Baksi-Ganguly. “Slaughter has to be made more accessible—suppressing it causes greater misery to the animals.”

A nice, healthy, rounded approach to the slaughter of India’s sacred image? I think the cows would disagree. But it’s an interesting angle to use in support of a thick-steak-per-night habit, and it’s a subtle attempt to show that religion, not the animal slaughterers, undermines the safety of cows. Because someone can’t main-

tain or respect religious standards, best legalize the barbaric slaughter of these holy creatures so that they are not put in “greater misery.”

Perhaps this “animal-welfare worker” is ignorant of India’s ancient culture and scriptures and therefore doesn’t understand that killing a cow is akin to killing one’s own mother. One website states that banning cow slaughter contradicts “the secular vision of the Constitution.” Would we be so concerned with contradicting the Constitution if our mothers and sisters were being killed?

Perhaps the most alarming point of all is the lack of consideration of karma. In a country where most religions accept the principle of reincarnation, it seems to be conveniently forgotten when it comes to cow slaughter. But the reactions for killing are guaranteed, and selective memory won’t help us at the time of death.

WORLDWIDE REACTIONS

In a conversation recorded in Chicago in 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out the results of cow slaughter on an international scale:

Disciple: So the wars and the crime are a direct result of the cow slaughter.

Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. It is a wholesale reaction. All these crises are taking place . . . Nature will take action. *Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.27]. You are not independent. So if you work independently, then you will have to suffer. The law of nature is there. You cannot avoid it. If you infect some disease, you must suffer from the disease. You cannot avoid it. This is the law of nature.”

(please turn to page 58)

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.

SATĪ REBUKES HER FATHER

*Angry that her father disrespected her husband,
Satī burns up her body in a fire produced by meditation.*

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 4

21 मा वः पदव्यः पितरस्मदास्थिता
या यज्ञशालासु न धूमवर्त्मभिः
तदन्नतृप्तैरसुभृद्भिरीडिता
अव्यक्तलिङ्गा अवधूतसेविताः

*mā vaḥ padavyaḥ pitar asmad-āsthitā
yā yajña-śālāsu na dhūma-vartmabhiḥ
tat-anna-trptair asu-bhṛdbhir īditā
avyakta-liṅgā avadhūta-sevitāḥ*

mā—are not; *vaḥ*—yours; *padavyaḥ*—opulences; *pitaḥ*—O father; *asmat-āsthitāḥ*—possessed by us; *yāḥ*—which (opulences); *yajña-śālāsu*—in the sacrificial fire; *na*—not; *dhūma-vartmabhiḥ*—by the path of sacrifices; *tat-anna-trptaiḥ*—satisfied by the foodstuff of the sacrifice; *asu-bhṛdbhiḥ*—satisfying bodily necessities; *īditāḥ*—praised; *avyakta-liṅgāḥ*—whose cause is unmanifested; *avadhūta-sevitāḥ*—achieved by the self-realized souls.

My dear father, the opulence we possess is impossible for either you or your flatterers to imagine, for persons who

engage in fruitive activities by performing great sacrifices are concerned with satisfying their bodily necessities by eating foodstuff offered as a sacrifice. We can exhibit our opulences simply by desiring to do so. This can be achieved only by great personalities who are renounced, self-realized souls.

PURPORT: Satī’s father was under the impression that he was exalted in both prestige and opulence and that he had offered his daughter to a person who was not only poor but devoid of all culture. Her father might have been thinking that although she was a chaste woman, greatly adherent to her husband, her husband was in a deplorable condition.

To counteract such thoughts, Satī said that the opulence possessed by her husband could not be understood by materialistic persons like Dakṣa and his followers, who were flatterers and were engaged in fruitive activities. Her husband’s position was different. He possessed all opulences, but he did not like to exhibit them. Therefore such opulences are called *avyakta*, or unmanifested. But if required, simply by willing, Lord Śiva can show his wonderful opulences, and such an event is predicted here, for it would soon occur.

The opulence Lord Śiva possesses is enjoyable in renunciation and love of God, not in material exhibition of sense gratificatory methods. Such opulences are possessed

by personalities like the Kumāras, Nārada, and Lord Śiva, not by others.

In this verse the performers of the Vedic rituals are condemned. They have been described here as *dhūma-vartmabhiḥ*, those who maintain themselves on the remnants of sacrificial foodstuff. ❶ There are two kinds of foodstuff offered in sacrifice. One kind is food offered in fruitive ritualistic sacrifices, and the other, the best, is food offered to Viṣṇu. Although in all cases Viṣṇu is the chief deity on the sacrificial altar, the performers of fruitive rituals aim to satisfy various demigods to achieve in return some material prosperity. Real sacrifice, however, is to satisfy Lord Viṣṇu, and the remnants of such sacrifices are beneficial for advancement in devotional service.

The process of elevation by performing sacrifices other than those aimed at Viṣṇu is very slow, and therefore it has been condemned in this verse. Viśvanātha Cakravartī has described the ritualistic performers to be like crows because crows delight in eating the remnants of food which has been thrown into the dustbin. All the *brāhmaṇas* who were present for the sacrifice were also condemned by Satī.

Whether or not King Dakṣa and his flatterers could understand the position of Lord Śiva, Satī wanted to impress upon her father that he should not think her husband to be without opulence. Satī, being the devoted wife of Lord Śiva, offers all kinds of material opulences to the worshipers of Lord Śiva. This fact is explained in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in the Tenth Canto. ❷ Lord Śiva's worshipers sometimes appear more opulent than the worshipers of Lord Viṣṇu because Durgā, or Satī, being the superintendent in charge of material affairs, can offer all material opulences to the worshipers of Lord Śiva in order to glorify her husband, whereas the worshipers of Viṣṇu are meant for spiritual elevation, and therefore their material opulence is sometimes found to decrease. These points are very nicely discussed in the Tenth Canto.

22 नैतेन देहेन हरे कृतागसो
देहोद्धवेनालमलं कुजन्मना
व्रीडा ममाभूत्कुजनप्रसङ्गत-
स्तञ्जन्म धिग् यो महतामवद्यकृत्

- (1) What are the two kinds of food offered in Vedic sacrifice?
(2) Why do Lord Śiva's worshipers sometimes appear more opulent than the worshipers of Lord Viṣṇu?

*naitena dehena hare kṛtāgaso
dehodbhavenālam alam kujanmanā
vṛīḍā mamābhūt kujana-prasaṅgataḥ
taj janma dhig yo mahatām avadya-kṛt*

na—not; *etena*—by this; *dehena*—by the body; *hare*—to Lord Śiva; *kṛta-āgasaḥ*—having committed offenses; *dehauddhavana*—produced from your body; *alam alam*—enough, enough; *ku-janmanā*—with a contemptible birth; *vṛīḍā*—shame; *mama*—my; *abhūt*—was; *ku-jana-prasaṅgataḥ*—from a relationship with a bad person; *taj janma*—that birth; *dhik*—shameful; *yaḥ*—who; *mahatām*—of the great personalities; *avadya-kṛt*—an offender.

You are an offender at the lotus feet of Lord Śiva, and unfortunately I have a body produced from yours. I am very much ashamed of our bodily relationship, and I condemn myself because my body is contaminated by a relationship with a person who is an offender at the lotus feet of the greatest personality.

PURPORT: Lord Śiva is the greatest of all devotees of Lord Viṣṇu. It is stated, *vaiṣṇavānām yathā sambhuḥ. Sambhu*, Lord Śiva, is the greatest of all devotees of Lord Viṣṇu. In the previous verses, Satī has described that Lord Śiva is always in a transcendental position because he is situated in pure *vasudeva*. *Vasudeva* is that state from which Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, is born, so Lord Śiva is the greatest devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Satī's behavior is exemplary because no one should tolerate blasphemy against Lord Viṣṇu or His devotee. Satī is aggrieved not for her personal association with Lord Śiva but because her body is related with that of Dakṣa, who is an offender at Lord Śiva's lotus feet. She feels herself to be condemned because of the body given by her father, Dakṣa.

23 गोत्रं त्वदीयं भगवान् वृषध्वजो
दाक्षायणीत्याह यदा सुदुर्मनाः
व्यपेतनर्मस्मितमाशु तदाऽहं
व्युत्स्रक्ष्य एतत्कुणपं त्वदङ्गजम्

*gotraṁ tvādiyaṁ bhagavān vṛṣadhvajō
dākṣāyaṇītyāha yadā sudurmanāḥ
vyapeta-narma-smitam āśu tadā 'haṁ
vyutsrakṣya etat kuṇapaṁ tvad-aṅgajam*

gotram—family relationship; *tvādiyam*—your; *bhagavān*—the possessor of all opulences; *vṛṣadhvajah*—Lord Śiva; *dākṣāyaṇī*—Dākṣāyaṇī (the daughter of Dakṣa); *iti*—thus; *āha*—calls; *yadā*—when; *sudurmanāḥ*—very morose; *vyapeta*—disappear; *narma-smitam*—my jolliness and smile; *āśu*—immediately; *tadā*—then; *aham*—I; *vyutsrakṣye*—I

shall give up; *etat*—this (body); *kuṇapam*—dead body; *tvat-aṅga-jam*—produced from your body.

Because of our family relationship, when Lord Śiva addresses me as Dākṣāyaṇī I at once become morose, and my jolliness and my smile at once disappear. I feel very much sorry that my body, which is just like a bag, has been produced by you. I shall therefore give it up.

PURPORT: The word *dākṣāyaṇī* means “the daughter of King Dakṣa.” Sometimes, when there was relaxed conversation between husband and wife, Lord Śiva used to call Satī “the daughter of King Dakṣa,” and because this very word reminded her about her family relationship with King Dakṣa, she at once became ashamed because Dakṣa was an incarnation of all offenses. Dakṣa was the embodiment of envy, for he unnecessarily blasphemed a great personality, Lord Śiva. ❸ Simply upon hearing the word *dākṣāyaṇī*, she felt afflicted because of reference to the context because her body was the symbol of all the offensiveness with which Dakṣa was endowed. Since her body was constantly a source of unhappiness, she decided to give it up.

मैत्रेय उवाच

24 इत्यध्वरे दक्षमनूद्य शत्रुहन्
क्षितावुदीचीं निषसाद शान्तवाक्
स्पृष्ट्वा जलं पीतदुकूलसंवृता
निमील्य दृग्योगपथं समाविशत्

maitreya uvāca
ity adhware dakṣam anūdyā śatru-han
kṣitāv udīcīṃ niṣasāda śānta-vāk
sprṣṭvā jalam pīta-dukūla-saṁvṛtā
nīmīlya dṛg yoga-patham samāviśat

maitreyaḥ uvāca—Maitreya said; *iti*—thus; *adhware*—in the arena of sacrifice; *dakṣam*—to Dakṣa; *anūdyā*—speaking; *śatru-han*—O annihilator of enemies; *kṣitau*—on the ground; *udīcīm*—facing north; *niṣasāda*—sat down; *śānta-vāk*—in silence; *sprṣṭvā*—after touching; *jalam*—water; *pīta-dukūla-saṁvṛtā*—dressed in yellow garments; *nīmīlya*—closing; *dṛk*—the vision; *yoga-patham*—the mystic yoga process; *samāviśat*—became absorbed.

Maitreya the sage told Vidura: O annihilator of enemies, while thus speaking to her father in the arena of sacrifice, Satī sat down on the ground and faced north. Dressed in saffron garments, she sanctified herself with water and closed her eyes to absorb herself in the process of mystic yoga.

PURPORT: It is said that when a man desires to quit his body he dresses in saffron garments. Therefore it appears that Satī changed her dress, indicating that she was going to quit the body given her by Dakṣa. ❹ Dakṣa was Satī’s father, so instead of killing Dakṣa she decided that it would be better to destroy the part of his body which was hers. Thus she decided to give up the body of Dakṣa by the yogic process.

Satī was the wife of Lord Śiva, who is known as Yogeśvara, the best among all yogis, because he knows all the mystic processes of yoga, so it appeared that Satī also knew them. Either she learned yoga from her husband or she was enlightened because she was the daughter of such a great king as Dakṣa.

The perfection of yoga is that one can give up one’s body or release oneself from the embodiment of material elements according to one’s desire. Yogis who have attained perfection are not subject to death by natural laws; such perfect yogis can leave the body whenever they desire. Generally the yogi first of all becomes mature in controlling the air passing within the body, thus bringing the soul to the top of the brain. Then when the body bursts into flames, the yogi can go anywhere he likes. This yoga system recognizes the soul, and thus it is distinct from the so-called yoga process for controlling the cells of the body, which has been discovered in the modern age. The real yoga process accepts the transmigration of the soul from one planet to another or one body to another; and it appears from this incident that Satī wanted to transfer her soul to another body or sphere.

25 कृत्वा समानावनिलौ जितासना
सोदानमुत्थाप्य च नाभिचक्रतः
शनैर्हृदि स्थाप्य धियोरसि स्थितं
कण्ठाद् भ्रुवोर्मध्यमनिन्दितानयत्

kṛtvā samānāv anilau jītāsanā
sodānam utthāpya ca nābhi-cakrataḥ
śanair hṛdi sthāpya dhiyorasi sthitam
kaṅṭhād bhruvor madhyam aninditānayat

kṛtvā—after placing; *samānau*—in equilibrium; *anilau*—the *prāṇa* and *apāna* airs; *jīta-āsanā*—having controlled the

(3) Why did Satī dislike being called Dākṣāyaṇī?

(4) How did Satī reason that killing herself would be like killing her father?

sitting posture; *sā*—Satī; *udānam*—the life air; *utthāpya*—raising; *ca*—and; *nābhi-cakrataḥ*—at the circle in the navel; *śanaiḥ*—gradually; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *sthāpya*—placing; *dhiyā*—with the intelligence; *urasi*—towards the pulmonary passage; *sthitam*—having been placed; *kañṭhāt*—through the throat; *bhruvoḥ*—of the eyebrows; *madhyam*—to the middle; *aninditā*—the blameless (Satī); *ānayat*—raised.

First of all she sat in the required sitting posture, and then she carried the life air upwards and placed it in the position of equilibrium near the navel. Then she raised her life air, mixed with intelligence, to the heart and then gradually towards the pulmonary passage and from there to between her eyebrows.

PURPORT: The yogic process is to control the air passing within the body in different places called *ṣaṭ-cakra*, the six circles of air circulation. ⑤ The air is raised from the abdomen to the navel, from the navel to the heart, from the heart to the throat, from the throat to between the eyebrows and from between the eyebrows to the top of the cerebrum. That is the sum and substance of practicing yoga. Before practicing the real yoga system, one has to practice the sitting postures because this helps in the breathing exercises which control the airs going upwards and downwards. This is a great technique which one has to practice to attain the highest perfectional stage of yoga, but such practice is not meant for this age.

No one in this age can attain the perfectional stage of such yoga, but people indulge in practicing sitting postures, which is more or less a gymnastic process. By such bodily gymnastics one may develop good circulation and may therefore keep one's body fit, but if one simply restricts oneself to that gymnastic process one cannot attain the highest perfectional stage.

The yoga process, as described in the *Keśava-śruti*, prescribes how one can control his living force according

- (5) What are the six cakras within the body?
- (6) Why does any transcendental process of spiritual realization help keep the body fit?
- (7) What is the real perfection of yoga?
- (8) Why is bhakti-yoga the greatest of all yoga systems?

to his desire and transmigrate from one body to another or from one place to another. In other words, yoga practice is not meant to keep the body fit. ⑥ Any transcendental process of spiritual realization automatically helps one to keep the body fit, for it is the spirit soul that keeps the body always fresh. As soon as the spirit soul is out of the body, the material body immediately begins to decompose. Any spiritual process keeps the body fit without separate endeavor, but if one takes it that the ultimate aim of yoga is to maintain the body, then he is mistaken.

⑦ The real perfection of yoga is elevation of the soul to a higher position or the liberation of the soul from material entanglement. Some yogis try to elevate the soul to higher planetary systems, where the standard of life is different from that of this planet and where the material comforts, life-span and other facilities for self-realization are greater, and some yogis endeavor to elevate the soul to the spiritual world, the spiritual Vaikuṅṭha planets.

⑧ The *bhakti-yoga* process directly elevates the soul to the spiritual planets, where life is eternally blissful and full of knowledge; therefore *bhakti-yoga* is considered to be the greatest of all yoga systems.

26 एवं स्वदेहं महतां महीयसा
मुहुः समारोपितमङ्गमादरात्
जिहासती दक्षरुषा मनस्विनी
दधार गात्रेष्वनिलाग्निधारणाम्

*evam sva-deham mahatām mahīyasā
muhuh samāropitam aṅkam ādarāt
jihāsati dakṣa-ruṣā manasvinī
dadhāra gātreṣv anilāgni-dhāraṇām*

evam—thus; *sva-deham*—her own body; *mahatām*—of the great saints; *mahīyasā*—most worshipful; *muhuh*—again and again; *samāropitam*—seated; *aṅkam*—on the lap; *ādarāt*—respectfully; *jihāsati*—wishing to give up; *dakṣa-ruṣā*—due to anger towards Dakṣa; *manasvinī*—voluntarily; *dadhāra*—placed; *gātreṣu*—on the limbs of the body; *anila-agni-dhāraṇām*—meditation on the fire and air.

Thus, in order to give up her body, which had been so respectfully and affectionately seated on the lap of Lord Śiva, who is worshiped by great sages and saints, Satī, due to anger towards her father, began to meditate on the fiery air within the body.

[continued in the next issue]

IN VENEZUELA

(continued from page 14)

the country. Without notice, the police would arrive at each center and search the premises. Their discoveries were then broadcast in the newspapers the next day.

One day the police arrived at the Caracas temple and barged in with their shoes and guns. The devotees were helpless. The police failed to find anything abnormal but still decided to take all the devotees present to jail. Viraha, the temple president, asked if they could give the devotees some time to finish the morning program. They agreed to wait for half an hour only. Viraha asked one devotee to read something. Virabāhu Dāsa randomly opened the book *Kṛṣṇa* and started to read. Aptly, the chapter was entitled “Kāṁsa Begins His Persecutions.”

At noon some other devotees came to the jail with *prasādam*. They were allowed to distribute the food to the jailed devotees and even gave some to the policemen. The police were apologetic, saying they were sorry because they felt the devotees were good people but they had to obey their authorities. The devotees were released from jail the same day without charges, but the next day the incident was reported in the newspapers in a sensational way. A lawyer who read the article and felt that an injustice had been done to the devotees came to the temple and offered his services for free. He was Bolivar, the same lawyer who had saved Hanumān at the university a year before. Bolivar became the temple legal advisor, and his service was of a great help at that difficult time.

KṚṢṆA’S AMBASSADOR

Despite these obstacles, Kṛṣṇa consciousness continued to expand successfully in Venezuela. Every Sunday the temple was full of happy guests who enjoyed the transcendental festive atmosphere created by the devotees’ enthusiasm and sincerity. The devotees were distributing thousands of books and magazines all over Venezuela. The good news soon reached Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was very pleased. In October 1974, Prabhupāda sent

a letter to Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami, who had recently become ISKCON’s governing body commissioner for Venezuela:

Actually these books are the foundation stone of our movement. Whatever we are is resting on these books, so far reading them and distributing them. This should be our only motto. Your invitation to visit Mexico and Caracas sounds very nice, and I shall be very pleased to come there. I shall be going to Hawaii sometime in December, and then I can come wherever you like.

But Prabhupāda was unable to visit Venezuela until February 18, 1975. A month before his visit, with his approval the Caracas devotees held an installation ceremony for Gaura-Nitāi deities. By now Kṛṣṇa consciousness had spread to several other countries in Latin America, and Prabhupāda’s visit to Venezuela became a focal point for devotees all over the region. Devotees from Brazil, Argentina, Trinidad, Santo Domingo, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and even from as far as Canada and the U.S. flocked to Caracas for Prabhupāda’s visit.

On the evening of Prabhupāda’s arrival, the devotees performed *kīrtana* at the temple with great vigor and enthusiasm. When Prabhupāda arrived and got out of the car, we all immediately offered respectful obeisances. For most of us it was the first time we were seeing our spiritual master. There was excitement and happiness on everyone’s face, and due to

the transcendental atmosphere created by Prabhupāda’s presence it seemed like the temple was floating in the air. The *kīrtana* went on unabated. Suddenly Prabhupāda looked at me. I had never seen anybody with such a transparent and pure look. It seemed like the spiritual world was manifesting itself before us. An ambassador from Kṛṣṇa’s land, Vṛndāvana, was among us, and with a merciful glance he was approving our humble effort to welcome him.

After the welcoming ceremony, Prabhupāda looked at the deities and said, “It is very nice that these two Prabhus [Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi] are here with us tonight. They came here from their home in Navadvīpa, which is very far away from this land . . . There is a beautiful song. Can you follow me?”

While feelingly staring at the beautiful golden deities, Prabhupāda started to sing *Parama Karuṇā*. Just by uttering the first two words of the song, Prabhupāda’s voice choked up and tears of love came out of his closed eyes.

Having been so fortunate to witness Prabhupāda’s genuine spiritual emotion, and noting my own material conditioning, I felt humbled. As a result, this verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.23) has come to mean very much to me: “If one’s hairs do not stand on end, how can the heart melt? And if the heart does not melt, how can tears of love flow from the eyes? If one does not cry in spiritual happiness, how can one render loving service to the Lord? And without

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Prabhupāda pointed his finger at me and said, “You cannot hide from the eyes of God!”

• • •

such service, how can the consciousness be purified?”

After a few minutes Prabhupāda came back to external consciousness, eyes shining with spiritual emotions. He said, “*Parama karuṇā*. . . Lord Caitanya is so merciful. If He had come to kill the demons like Kṛṣṇa did, then practically speaking almost nobody would be left in Kali-yuga. In this age the divine and the demoniac spirit are in the same body, and Lord Caitanya came to kill the demoniac spirit with the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. You are very fortunate because you received Lord Caitanya’s mercy. Now, you have to make others fortunate too.”

Since that day our deities came to be known as Parama Karuṇā Gaurā-Nitāi.

Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed for seven days in Caracas, and during his visit he had interviews with professors, psychiatrists, the Metaphysics Society, and a yoga group. Every day he would go to a park for his morning walk. Bolivar the lawyer accompanied Prabhupāda every morning and asked questions, which Prabhupāda enjoyed answering.

ANCIENT VEDIC CULTURE IN SOUTH AMERICA?

One morning at the park Śrīla Prabhupāda told the devotees that Lord Rāmacandra was once taken through a tunnel from Sri Lanka to Brazil, where Rāvaṇa’s brother Mahirāvaṇa had his headquarters. When the demons told the Lord to bow down in front of goddess Kālī to sacrifice Him before her, Lord Rāmacandra asked them to show Him how to do it. When they bowed down, the Lord took a sword and chopped off their heads. Interestingly, near the ISKCON farm in

the Amazon in Brazil is an ancient town called Hanuman. Also in the Amazon in Venezuela is a mountain called Meru.

On one morning walk, Prabhupāda stopped to watch some alligators swimming in a lake. One of them stopped to look and opened his mouth to show his big teeth.

Prabhupāda jokingly told him, “You have good arguments to catch, but no opportunity to catch.”

The alligator closed his mouth and opened it back again.

Prabhupāda smiled and said, “No food. He is inviting us!”

On February 22, 1975, there was an initiation ceremony, and many devotees from Venezuela and other countries in Latin America were initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

When I was called to receive initiation, Prabhupāda told me: “Your name is Jagat Cakṣur Dāsa. Jagat Cakṣur means ‘the eye of the world.’ In whatever situation or place we may be, we should always feel God’s sight on us. He is the witness of everything that we do. We should always remember that.”

Prabhupāda pointed his finger at me and said, “You cannot hide from the eyes of God!”

I felt that Prabhupāda was reading my mind, because sometimes I used to go to the kitchen, steal a sweet, and hide somewhere to eat it, thinking nobody was watching me. Now I felt that Prabhupāda had caught me in front of everyone.

This incident made me more Kṛṣṇa conscious, and I appreciated Prabhupāda’s words very much. In Prabhupāda’s company everything was surcharged with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and I felt secure and protected from the illusion of *māyā*. Prabhupāda spoke from the transcendental platform, and his nectarean words penetrated the

dense darkness of my heart, enlightening my being with the clear understanding that I am the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.

CONTINUE THE ENTHUSIASM

Inevitably the morning of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure arrived. In front of the deities, Prabhupāda said that he felt happy in the Caracas temple and petitioned everyone to faithfully continue performing devotional service so that in this same lifetime they would be able to see Kṛṣṇa face to face.

Quoting Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Nectar of Instruction*, Prabhupāda said: “*Utsāhāt*. The first thing is enthusiasm—that ‘I must see Kṛṣṇa.’ You are seeing Kṛṣṇa. The deity of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa are not different. But even personally we can see. Simply we have to continue the enthusiasm. Enthusiasm means to take things very seriously—*utsāhāt*. *Dhairyaāt*—and patiently. Although we are determined to go back to home, back to Godhead, we should patiently follow the rules and regulations.”

At the airport Hridayānanda Goswami presented Śrīla Prabhupāda the First Canto of the Spanish *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which had just arrived at the airport from Los Angeles. Prabhupāda left Venezuela with the book in his hand.

Prabhupāda’s visit created a very spiritual, harmonious atmosphere in the temple. The devotees felt that his visit had passed too quickly, and keenly felt separation from him, not knowing when they would again have a chance to see him. But by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy more than thirty devotees from the Caracas temple were able to see Prabhupāda again at the first New York Rathayātrā, in July 1976.

In a letter, Prabhupāda wrote, “I am always thinking of the Caracas temple. Although I went there once, it has given me some impression.”

Although Prabhupāda has disappeared from our mundane vision, he stays forever in the heart of all his sincere followers, guiding them through

their sojourn in this material world, and always calling them back home, back to Godhead. ☸

Jagat Cakṣur Dāsa, born in Syria, emigrated at an early age to Venezuela, where he was later initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. He has served in Cen-

tral and Latin America as well as Spain and Portugal. This article was excerpted from a Spanish book he wrote entitled Śrīla Prabhupāda en Venezuela. He translated the excerpt into English, and it was then edited by Karuṇā Dhārīnī Devī Dāsi and Ānanda Tirtha Dāsa.

CALENDAR

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

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

Month of Dāmodara (October 29–November 26)

NOVEMBER

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

5—Appearance of Radha Kunda.

8—Ramā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

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

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

22—Utthānā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābāji, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

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

Month of Keśava (November 27–December 26)

DECEMBER

8—Uṭpannā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

Month of Nārāyaṇa (December 27–January 25)

30—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Fasting till noon.

JANUARY

7—Saphalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

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

13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

21—Vyañjulī Mahādvādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans for Putradā Ekādaśī.

Month of Mādhava (January 26–February 24)

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

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

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2004–2005 MIHE SCHEDULE

- November 8:** VTE Bhakti-śāstrī Online Registration Deadline
November 16: Śrīla Prabhupāda's Disappearance Day
November 22–February 27: VTE Bhakti-śāstrī Course
February 1: MIHE Semester Online Registration Deadline
February 7–11: First Module of MIHE Semester
February 13–18: Second Module of MIHE Semester
February 15: Śrī Advaita Ācārya's Appearance Day (No Classes)
February 21: Lord Nityānanda's Appearance Day
February 22–26: Third Module of MIHE Semester
February 27–March 8: GBC Meetings
March 2–6: Fourth Module of MIHE Semester
March 9–12: Fifth Module of MIHE Semester / Festival Seminars
March 13: Pañca-tattva Abhiṣeka (No Classes)
March 14–20: Navadvīpa Dhāma Parikramā / Sixth Module of MIHE Semester
March 21–24: Seventh Module of MIHE Semester
March 25: Gaura Purnima
April 22–July 29: VTE Bhaktivaibhava Course (1st and 2nd Cantos)

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(Students may register for one course or several courses, and may enroll for 1–6 weeks of classes.)
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2004–2005 VTE Bhakti-śāstrī Course Facilitators

The Nectar of Instruction, Jayādvaita Swami; *The Nectar of Devotion*, Kadamba Kānana Swami; *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, BVV Narasimha Swami; *Bhagavad-gītā*, Atul Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and Vidvān Gaurāṅga Dāsa

2005 VTE Bhaktivaibhava Course Facilitators (1st & 2nd Cantos)

BVV Narasimha Swami, Hari Śauri Dāsa, Atul Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

SYMPTOMS

(continued from page 10)

in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.17]

Kṛṣṇa is situated within your heart. He’s your best friend. *Suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām*. He’s always considering how your perfect welfare can be done. Kṛṣṇa is so nice a friend. When I take the body of a hog, Kṛṣṇa is there advising me. And when I am in the body of a human being, there also Kṛṣṇa is advising me. Kṛṣṇa is so kind. Therefore *suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām*. He’s the friend not only of human beings, but even of the hogs, dogs, cats—everyone. *Suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām*.

This is the science one has to know. People are trying to become leaders of society to act for others’ welfare, but that is impossible. If a person is a rascal, how he can become the friend of the citizens? One’s business should be to make friendship with Kṛṣṇa and advise others to make friendship with Kṛṣṇa. That is real leadership. But the rascals do not know what is their own benefit, and they have become leaders.

Sanātana Gosvāmī said to Lord Caitanya, *āpanāra hitāhita kichui nā jāni*. . . . “Sir, I was a government minister. People used to say that I was a very learned scholar, and I accepted that. But when I came into contact with you, I thought, ‘What kind of leader am I? I do not know what is beneficial for me. I am such a leader. I am such a fool. I do not know my own benefit, and I want to become a leader to lead others for benefit in life.’”

Andhā yathāndhair upaniyamānāḥ. How can a blind man lead other blind men? That is cheating. All these leaders are blind themselves. They do not know the aim of life, and they’re becoming leaders. So the blind leader and the blind followers are all going to hell. That is the position of the world.

Therefore we should be careful that we don’t imitate—“I have now become a *paramahansa*. I do not require to follow the rules and regulations. Let me do whatever I like.” Don’t do that. The test is there: *guṇānukathane hareḥ*. When you are a *paramahansa*, you have no other business than simply to hear about Kṛṣṇa and chant about Kṛṣṇa. ❁



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CELEBRATIONS

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀ

BHŪRIDĀ: The Most Munificent

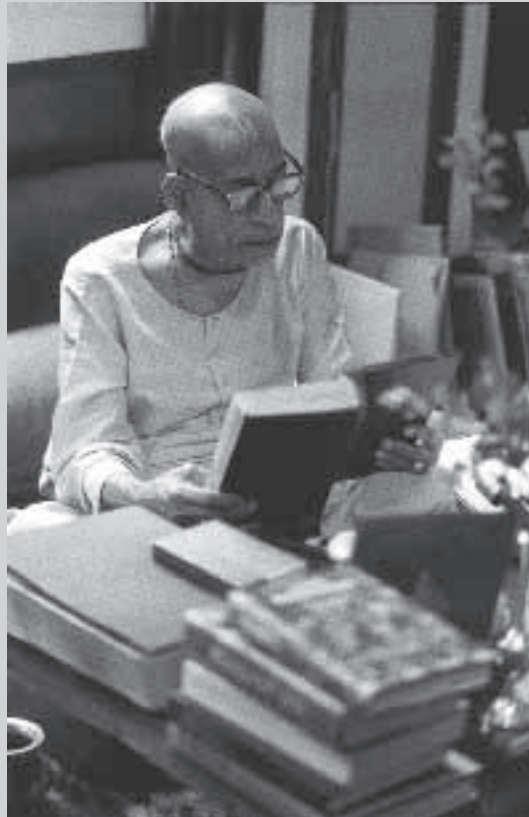
by Lokanāth Swami

While devotees from far and wide offered *prasādam* to Lord Jagannātha during the Rathayātrā festival, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stopped His dancing and went to a nearby garden. There, immersed in a great ecstatic emotion, He fell flat upon a raised platform. Fragrant, cool breezes refreshed His transcendental form, covered with perspiration due to the hard labor of dancing. The devotees who had performed *sañkīrtana* also came there and took rest under every tree.

King Pratāparudra entered the garden in the dress of a Vaiṣṇava. With folded hands he humbly took permission from the devotees and, summoning all his courage, fell down and touched Lord Caitanya's feet.

The king began expertly massaging the Lord's legs while reciting the *Gopī-gītā* from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu lay there with His eyes closed in a mood of ecstatic love, He became pleased beyond limits and said repeatedly, "Go on reciting! Go on reciting!"

Upon hearing the verse beginning with *tava kathāmṛtam*, the Lord rose up and embraced King Pratāparudra, saying, "You have given me invaluable gems, but I have nothing to give you in return. Therefore I am simply embracing you."



The Lord then recited that verse again and again as both he and the king trembled, tears flowing from their eyes.

The Lord told King Pratāparudra, "You are *bhūridā* [the most munificent]." Then He bestowed upon that fortunate king His great and powerful mercy, making his life successful.

This is the verse—spoken by the *gopīs* to Lord Kṛṣṇa—that so increased Lord Caitanya's ecstatic mood:

*tava kathāmṛtam tapta-
jīvanam
kavibhir iḍitam kal
maṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad
ātataṁ
bhuvī gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā
janāḥ*

"The nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one's sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.31.9)

Prabhupāda's Munificence

One can easily imagine Lord Caitanya embracing Śrīla Prabhupāda and speaking these same words—"You are *bhūridā*." Śrīla Prabhupāda's whole life was dedicated to bringing the message of Godhead to everyone on the planet. He helped fulfill Lord Caitanya's prophecy that in every village His holy names would be chanted. He made available

MAY HIS FAME SPR

DA 108 CELEBRATION

the transcendental narrations of ancient sages through more than sixty volumes of sacred literature, painstakingly filled with his Bhaktivedanta purports. His conversations alone fill almost forty books. He gave hundreds of lectures on *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Bhāgavatam*. He inspired Rathayātrā festivals worldwide, taught us deity worship, and in the midst of all his preaching had time to write eight thousand letters to guide and uplift his followers.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Even a little of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy serves as a great asset for spiritual advancement. Therefore the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must be spread through the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The Lord’s special mission is the deliverance of all fallen souls in Kali-yuga.”

Because Śrīla Prabhupāda was fully dedicated to Lord Caitanya’s mission, he was a complete embodiment of His mercy.

Becoming Bhūridā Ourselves

Every December, ISKCON undertakes a marathon to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. By taking part, we can all become *bhūridā*. December also corresponds with Gita Jayanti, the month in which Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*. And this December is especially significant because this is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s 108th anniversary year.

We encourage everyone—temple devotees, life members, congregation members, and friends—to take advantage of this time of year to distribute as many of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books as possible. If we help Śrīla Prabhupāda serve Lord Caitanya’s mission, we will receive

the unlimited mercy of his bountiful and loving blessings upon us. Then surely Lord Caitanya’s golden arms will open wide to embrace

each of us. What a glorious opportunity to receive benedictions from the ocean of mercy and make our lives successful!

INFORMATION

FEATURED 108 EVENTS

October 28–November 26:

Vṛndāvana Kārtika Festival

—Join the tour of Kṛṣṇa’s holy places in Vṛndāvana, India, during a month of festivals.

November 14–16: Vṛndāvana

Prabhupāda’s Disappearance

Day Festival—Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure from this world is celebrated in all ISKCON temples worldwide with remembrances, offerings, *ārati*, and a feast.

December 18–19: World Enlightenment Weekend

—Devotees take time to join in the spirit of distributing books. This weekend gives us all an opportunity to go out armed with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and shower them into the laps of faithful conditioned souls. Prabhupāda ordered us, “Distribute books, distribute books, distribute books.” Contact vijay.hdg@pamho.net for details.

December 22: Gita Jayanti Day

—(Contact your local temple for dates.) Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* on this day. Huge quantities of the book are distributed in commemoration.

December 1–31: Prabhupāda

Book Distribution Marathon—

Devotees worldwide commit to distributing large quantities of Prabhupāda’s books throughout the month. Contact vijay.hdg@pamho.net for details.

PUBLICATION

- 108 Ways You Can Get Involved (download from website)

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

2005

January: Mumbai Re-enactment of Original Pandal Program

March 9–25: Māyāpur Festival

March 9–13: Grand Śrīla Prabhupāda Family Reunion (See www.mayapur.info for details.)

March 14–20: Navadvīpa Maṇḍala Parikramā

March 21–24: Mayapur Seminars

June 6–11: Padayātrā Week

June 12: World Holy Name Day

August 28: Kolkata Mahā-Abhiṣeka Vyāsa Pūjā (See www.mayapur.info for details.)

CONTACT

E-mail: sp108@prabhupada108.net

Website: www.prabhupada108.net

E A D E V E R Y W H E R E !

THE VEDIC OBSE

ARTIFICIAL RAINS: IMAGINARY GAINS AND REAL PAINS

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

Artificial rains soothe Maharashtra.” Headlines like these have been a frequent sight in recent newspapers in India. Accompanying the headlines are mind-grabbing images of a political leader and a scientist flying in an airplane, shooting a chemical spray into the clouds, and bringing down the rains. For people tormented by prolonged water scarcity, artificial rainfall seems to be a graphic demonstration of the power of technology to counter human suffering caused by the vagaries of nature.

If we look more closely, though, we’ll see a picture quite different from the hype. To begin with, the name “artificial rains” is misleading; all that is done is that scientists stimulate rainfall from naturally formed clouds. Contrary to the hype, cloud seeding, as it’s called, can therefore offer no relief to drought-affected areas, where there are generally no clouds anyway. Also, ordinary cumulus clouds—the kind of clouds most often found in the sky—are too small to produce any worthwhile rains by seeding. Further, because of unpredictable wind motions, no one can control where cloud seeding will cause rains. American meteorologist Chuck Doswell explains that the rain at the ground from a seeder’s typical target cloud—a fairly large cloud ten km tall and ten km in diameter—would be on the order of $\frac{1}{100}$ of an inch. Not much of a result—just about enough to wet

the sidewalk.

Hence it needs to be seriously examined whether the Rs 5.6 crore (US\$1.24 million) that the Maharashtra government has spent on Project Varsha leads to commensurate returns. Moreover, no exhaustive studies have been done about the likely side-effects of cloud seeding, which, American scientists like Johnny Micou say, include flooding, tornadoes, rain suppression, and silver iodide toxicity.

Cloud seeding has dubious benefits and may be harmful. Using it in public areas is like testing an unproven drug on humans—and making them pay for both for the drug and its side-effects. Unconscionable, isn’t it?

OUR DEPENDENCE ON NATURE

While the desire to reduce the sufferings of the drought-afflicted is not wrong, the method of forcible extortion of the rains from the clouds is questionable. Science has long believed that if we understand nature, we can control it. But we’re discovering that we’d be better off cooperating with nature. Our tinkering with nature disturbs its balance and often leads to calamity.

The sheer magnitude of the natural forces is awesome, as is our dependence on them. In the science magazine *Nature* (May 15, 1997), researchers from the University of Maryland presented the world with a “bill to nature” for \$16 trillion to \$54 trillion dollars per year for the natural resources and raw materials we take from nature: food, water, air, lumber, rocks, metals, jewels, oil, and so forth. Our cosmic bill to the sun is no less. American scientist Dr. Edwin Kessler has calculated that if we had to pay five cents per kilowatt-hour (a relatively cheap price) for the energy provided by the sun every day over the state of

Oklahoma, the cost would be around \$60 billion per day.

CONSCIOUSNESS CONTROLS NATURE

Science would have us believe that cosmic change governs the forces of nature. The Vedic texts consider this understanding naïve and uninformed. Vedic science posits the existence in the cosmos not only of physical elements and forces, but also of conscious elements, especially a supreme conscious intelligence behind everything.

The idea of a conscious intelligence orchestrating nature is becoming much more scientifically acceptable. Many scientists doubt that nature can be explained only in mechanistic terms. The more scientists study nature, the more they are stunned by its astounding order, awesome energy, incredible intricacy, and masterly harmony.

“Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science,” wrote Albert Einstein, “becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe—a spirit vastly superior to that of man.”

DEVA GARDENING

Mounting empiric evidence is confirming this conclusion. “Consciousness controls nature” is the working principle of New Age gardeners who seek communion with their plants and crops as a means for higher yields. A vivid example is the Findhorn farm community in Scotland, which grows amazing flowers and vegetation on barren, sandy soil. Dorothy Maclean, a member of the original family that started farming in Findhorn in the 1960s, explains their gardening secret: she communicates telepathically with the nature spirits and “*devas*” in charge of the garden, and all the gardening is done exactly according to their instruc-

RIVER

Transcendental Commentary On the Issues of the Day

tions. Many people are likely to be skeptical about such a claim, but the miraculous abundance is well documented and is there for everyone to see—and it defies traditional scientific notions. The idea is catching on: These days any trendy urban bookshop can supply at least a few devagardening manuals.

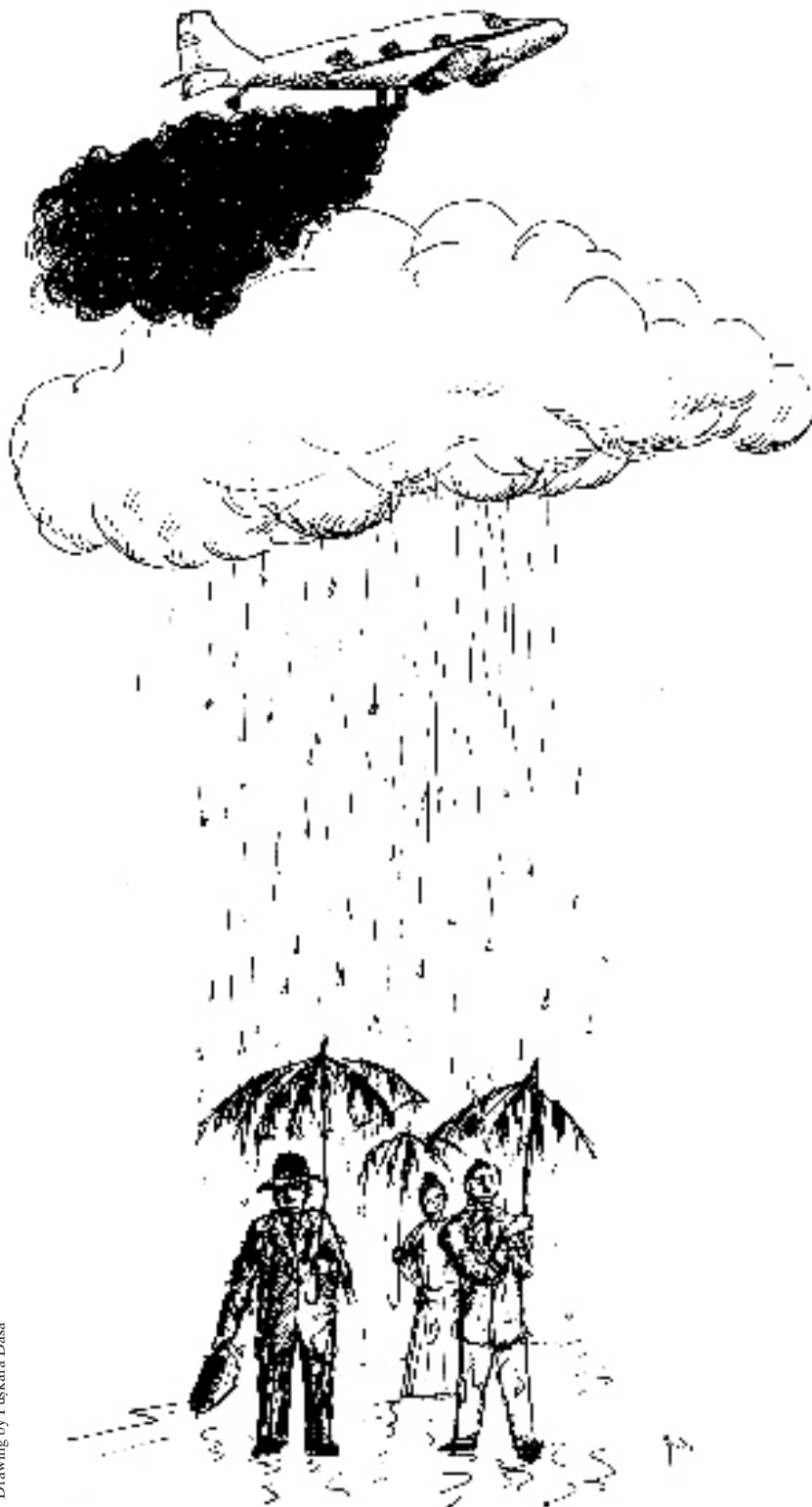
VEDIC INSIGHTS

The Vedic texts not only assert that a supreme conscious being, God, controls all the natural phenomena, but they also stress the need for harmonizing with Him. As citizens of the universe, we're expected to obey the cosmic government headed by God and pay cosmic taxes for the universal utilities of light, heat, air, and water. The traditional Vedic method of remitting cosmic taxes is through elaborate fire-sacrifices (*yajñas*) accompanied by the precise chanting of specific mantras.

On superficial examination, *yajñas* may seem a colossal waste of resources: ghee, silk, and grains are put into fire. But Vedic followers offer oblations into the sacred fire to appease the cosmic controller and receive profusely all the gifts of nature in return. The proof of the authenticity of the *yajñas* is the resulting prosperity. The prosperity of ancient India is described both in the Vedic literature and by many scholars and historians. India's prosperity, derived from acting in harmony with the cosmos, continued till even a few centuries ago. Experts in Vedic science explain that the neglect and rejection of the Vedic principles by modern Indians has caused the present downfall of India.

SPIRITUAL SOLUTION

Vedic science thus reveals the real cause of the present water-crisis: non-cooperation with the cosmic govern-



Drawing by Puṣkara Dāsa

ment. Trying to extort water from the clouds is hi-tech robbery. Like a common thief, we might get something out of it, but we'll suffer in the end. We've seen this in other areas. For example, we increased crop yields with fertilizers but ended up with barren soil; we fed animals artificial food to fatten them, and ended up with mad cow disease. Trying to avoid paying our universal bills just doesn't work.

For modern times, the Vedic texts recommend a method of cosmic bill-paying more practical than fire *yajñas*. In the present age of Kali, the recommended Vedic sacrifice is the sonic glorification of the Supreme Lord, as confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.25), where Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

yajñānām japa-yajño 'smi: "Of sacrifices, I am the chanting of the holy names." Sonic control of matter should not be difficult for us to relate to; most of us have probably heard of fans that turn on and off by the clapping of hands. From the Vedic perspective, this sort of sonic technology is crude and rudimentary. The sonic technology, or, more accurately, the mantra technology, that the Vedic texts talk about is of a level of sophistication that modern science is yet to fathom. Mantras are powerful sounds attuned with various phenomena in nature and with the predominating deities controlling them. Hence the chanting of the Vedic mantras can harmonize modern society with the cosmic

state and thus bring about sustainable prosperity. The mantra most pleasing to the Supreme Lord, and thus able to satisfy all obligations, is the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

IS IT BLIND FAITH?

The idea of chanting mantras for rain may be difficult to digest. But it becomes much less difficult once we see the wisdom of the idea that God controls nature. And if we look at nature closely, that idea is hard to avoid.

For example, let's look at nature's water-supply system. Millions of gallons of water move through the airways in clouds. The design of these water tanks is so astounding that an airplane can pass right through them and they won't leak. Further, variations in pressure and temperature turn water vapor into cloud droplets, which come together to form rains drops. But raindrops tend to grow only to a certain size. If raindrops grew to huge sizes, rain would destroy life rather than sustain it. But raindrops usually come down in the right size, and gently, seldom hurting even a blade of grass.

It takes blind faith to believe that this wondrous and benevolent arrangement is happening by itself, by chance. No wonder then that the renowned physicist Kelvin said, "If you think deeply enough you will be forced by science to believe in God."

Once we have scaled the intellectual hurdle in understanding that God controls nature, we can more easily comprehend the effect of mantras on natural phenomena. Just as we need to know medical science before we can understand how medicine put into the mouth can heal a pain in the foot, so we need to know higher-dimensional science before we can understand how mantra technology can activate rain-fall.

We should cooperate with nature through the gentle science of mantra, instead of bludgeoning her into submission through science. John Milton has therefore wisely said in his *Paradise Lost*, "Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part; do thou but thine." ❀

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PUNK AND KRṢṂA IN A TEABAG

“The Hare Kṛṣṇas shaved their heads like us,
so they couldn’t be that bad.”

by Manohārini Devī Dāsī



The author during her Punk Rock days, and receiving initiation from His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami.



The following is dedicated to His Holiness Śrīdhara Swami, who asked me to write about this experience, my steppingstone into Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He said it would purify me to write it and purify others to read it. Possibly some would relate it to a similar background.—MDD

I was born in the darkness of ignorance, and my spiritual masters opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto them.

I grew up in a regular Western household in eastern Canada. My mother stayed home to raise me, and my father worked as a wildlife biologist. When I was eleven years old, my parents, like so many today, decided to separate. My mother and grandmother moved to British Columbia. I went to school and worked part-time while my single mother worked hard at her job and tried to make ends meet. She was now mother and father.

Like any teenager, I listened to a variety of music. Searching to find

something to relate to, I stumbled across a fast beat with aggressive, blunt lyrics. The messages were anti-war, anti-racism, anti-hypocrisy—the list went on. It was the Punk Rock movement.

I had found something that blurred out the problems of the material world. No more generic love songs to band-aid the truth. Anarchy was much better than following lying, cheating political leaders, and we were going to tell the world what they needed to know.

The Punk Rock movement was

**“No thanks!” I said sharply.
“I don’t take pamphlets from strange men
who wear bed sheets!”**



similar to the hippie movement of the '60s and '70s. Yet the children of the next generation saw the need for a more radical and aggressive movement to take birth among the wilted daisies.

Soon I was going to see Vancouver Punk bands that played at various lower-eastside warehouses and bars. After shaving most of my head, I was coloring what was left of my hair and dressing as defiantly as possible. The music was angry but felt true in all its blunt, hardcore glory.

The gigs (concerts) were wild. Hurling my body off the stage into the “slam pit” (the slam-dancing crowd) was exhilarating and set my mind and pent-up frustration free, at least temporarily. We went to peace rallies and walks, some attended by Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. We went to anti-racism demonstrations, disregarded the police, and separated ourselves from the mainstream society as much as possible.

I had found a lifestyle with truth, rebellion, and spunk, yet somehow the frustrating material world, along with a headache, still appeared with the dawn each day.

CHING, CHING, CHING

One day, as I was walking through downtown Vancouver, I heard a *ching, ching, ching* from across the street. As I approached the corner, a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee emerged from a chanting party and handed me an invitation card to a Sunday Feast.

“No thanks!” I said sharply. “I don’t take pamphlets from strange men who wear bed sheets!”

With that, I smugly walked off, snickering with my friends.

A year later, I was once again walking through downtown Vancouver with my friends when I noticed a strange-looking storefront. In the window was

a small diorama of the cycle of birth and death along with some books.

“Look!” I said. “It’s that Hare Kṛṣṇa cult place.”

On a self-dare, I ran in, peeked through the beaded doorway, and rushed out. Just as my foot left the doorway, a devotee stopped us in our tracks with a “*Haribol!* Are you hungry?” And, “Come on in. We have a free feast every Sunday.”

We loved the freaky look and the wonderful exotic smells and decided to go in. Besides, they shaved their heads like us, so they couldn’t be that bad.

After that first time, I would visit a couple of times a month with different friends each time. I recall getting a flower garland or a stick of incense once in a while. I always left feeling elated.

Off and on over the years I would see devotees, running into them here and there. I’d sometimes invite them to my apartment, which was in the middle of downtown. The devotees would bring pizza and *halava prasādam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, and *kīrtana*. I always looked forward to going to the Rathayātrā every year or two. It just felt right.

DOMESTIC DEAD-END

Years later I moved into the country with a boyfriend. As I uselessly pursued the domestic life, there came a day when I woke up with a powerful feeling: “Is this all there is to life?” I had been in the relationship for six years, had no future plans, was working in a dead-end home business, and, worse yet, had been eating fish and chicken after being a vegetarian for eight years. I felt I was on the wrong path.

In the mornings, I enjoyed playing my *karatālas* to one or two *kīrtana* tapes. If I played them in the car, there

would almost always be a volume war between the boyfriend and me. I had contact with one devotee family who had never given up on me. That was Yamala Arjuna Dāsa and his great wife, Lilāmṛta Dāsi. They would always keep contact via the mail, and I treasured opening the mailbox and finding a big letter with pictures of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa plastered all over the envelope. It seemed to glow in the dark mailbox. These were the same devotees who had given me my first taste of *prasādam*.

One day I got up and made my usual cup of morning herbal tea. Each teabag came with a little message attached to the teabag string. That morning it read, “Those who don’t remember the past are forced to repeat it.” It hit me hard and motivated me. It reminded me of karma, and karma reminded me of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It was time for me to make some major changes.

My mind took off. I thought for weeks about the feeling welling up inside of me that something was missing and that the material world is a jungle of dead ends, boredom, and temporary existence. I thought about the blissful feeling I had after listening to a *kīrtana* tape or smelling the fragrance of flowers and incense permeating the air at the devotees’ downtown center and at the temple.

I remembered the peaceful feeling deep in my soul as I walked through the Rathayātrā parades. There was the mist of scented rosewater sprayed on the crowd of beautiful devotees to cool them down in *kīrtana*. There was the deep resonating beat of the *mṛdaṅga* drum pounding through my stone heart. I remembered seeing Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadṛā on their cart and the devotees pulling them along the beachfront road. The deities seemed to be playing a transcendental game of peek-a-boo to increase

the devotees' love for them. The billowing clouds of frankincense would dance in front of the Lord and then be cleared away by the strong winds from the ocean. There were stacks of flowers and fruit at the Lord's lotus feet. I thought that anyone who had missed this experience had to be out of his or her mind. What could compare to this? I remembered how beautiful and happy the devotees looked. I remembered the smell of *tilaka* and the first time I had put some on. Could I put this on every day? Could I really become a Hare Kṛṣṇa? Was this what I'd been missing all my life?

I had come to the realization that my redundant cravings for the Punk Rock lifestyle would never give me a solution to the frustrating and twisted way of material life. I was sick of the

record skipping in the same groove of life, and I craved the reality of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in all its beauty and purity.

A QUICK EXIT

When I had made my decision, I couldn't move fast enough to leave the relationship and the home we had bought together. I went to a trade school and was a nail technician for a short time while doing some service in the garden of the Vancouver temple, New Gokula Dham. Before I knew it, I was working at Govinda's Restaurant and had moved a few blocks from the temple. I felt at home at last.

I've had many spiritual masters on this long journey. In 1996, I met His Holiness Bhaktimārga Swami, and by

his mercy I received first initiation in 2000 and brahminical initiation in 2002. I feel extremely grateful to be able to personally serve Lord Jagannātha, the Lord of the universe, as His *pūjāri*, after seeing Him from afar for so long. Kṛṣṇa has allowed me to serve many wonderful devotees. Kṛṣṇa has also allowed me to marry a wonderful devotee, and we have three sons. We feel truly blessed.

Had Śrīla Prabhupāda not fulfilled the order of his spiritual master and brought the glorious gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the West, there would be many more frustrated souls searching in a desert of darkness, hypocrisy, and repetition. Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us Kṛṣṇa consciousness in all its glory. It's the greatest gift the material world will ever receive. 🌸



Prague,
Czech
Republic,
Summer
2003.

Prīyākrīti Dāsa

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



Navina Kṛṣṇa Dāsa (left), one of the founders of Pandava Sena, reads a statement at a protest (right) in support of Bhaktivedanta Manor.

YOUTH ON A MISSION

From saving Kṛṣṇa's temple, to spreading Kṛṣṇa's message to other youth, Pandava Sena celebrates its tenth anniversary.

by Nima Suchak



Pandava Sena is the student arm of ISKCON UK, and one of Britain's most dynamic youth groups. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the PS, as it is fondly known, formed initially as a protest body to save ISKCON's UK head-

quarters, the Bhaktivedanta Manor outside London.

Ten years on, PS aims to create a spiritual revolution. With members aged from fifteen to twenty-five, the group innovatively educates and engages youth in the Kṛṣṇa conscious



life through dynamic events and activities.

Though Pandava Sena has a majority British Asian membership, it also has many members from other backgrounds. Nine thousand people identify with Pandava Sena and attend its events around the world—festivals, vacations, home programs, *sādhana* groups, university events—coordinated by about one hundred of its members.

DAWN OF A NEW ERA

“Get this ban pushed aside, build our road big and wide . . . Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa . . .”

The slogan was chanted throughout the streets of London. It was January 1994, and over ten years had passed in the battle to save Bhaktivedanta Manor from shutting down. With only ten weeks left before the prospective closure, the youth rallied together to make a statement.

Romapāda Dāsa, one of the group’s

inspirers, recalls the day Pandava Sena was established.

“I and two other young devotees—Pradyumna Dāsa and Navīna Kṛṣṇa Dāsa—outlined the goals, agendas, and structure of a youth group to specifically serve the campaign.”

It was decided that the group would take the cause to the streets, the media, and the government.

Romapāda adds: “Akhaṇḍadhī Dāsa, the temple president at the time, approved the idea. And there it was. Our name: The Pandava Sena—‘The Pandavas’ Army.’ Our symbol: the Hanumān flag.”

The youth group’s presence gave the whole campaign momentum and forced concerned people to realize the severity of the issue: If they didn’t act, Bhaktivedanta Manor would close.

Pandava Sena’s first rally was a candlelit vigil outside the London temple, followed by two protest marches before the Houses of Parliament. The first march attracted over 36,000 people. During the second march, as Big

Ben struck 3:00 P.M. on May 12, 1994, Pandava Sena members and others led 5,000 people to throw themselves onto the streets before the Houses of Parliament, bringing central London to a standstill.

Śivarāma Swami remembers: “I recall the exuberance of the Pandava Sena members as they returned to their buses after the event. Intoxicated with Lord Caitanya’s mercy, they were chanting and dancing as they went along the road. I was thinking that it was for such service that Indians are scattered all over the world. Their duty is not academic or economic pursuits. They’re meant to serve Lord Caitanya’s mission. And when they follow this calling—engage in their true dharma—they taste real bliss. I hope Pandava Sena always engages in the Lord’s service in that mood, and with such results.”

The results? The government finally approved the right of public worship at Bhaktivedanta Manor, admitting its undeniable need and value.



Pandava Sena members celebrate the success of the Save the Manor campaign (top, left) and chant along Ealing Road in London (top). At left, PS members portray Kṛṣṇa and His associates during a London honor-students march.

FROM CAMPAIGNERS TO PRACTITIONERS

Created specifically to save the temple, the group had fulfilled its purpose. The question now was, Where do we go from here?

Navina Kṛṣṇa, the chairman at the time, noticed the youths' natural attraction to chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, and Pandava Sena transformed from a campaign group into a Kṛṣṇa conscious youth group. Following a retreat in Ireland, "Jammin'" was established—a weekly *kīrtana* program. Then Pandava Sena spelled out its goals in the context of five projects:

Project Yudhiṣṭhira

To educate members in the philosophy and culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Project Bhīma

To safeguard Vedic values and give a spiritual perspective on modern issues.

Project Arjuna

To revolutionize university campuses with Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Project Nakula

To replicate the activities of Pandava Sena all over the world.

Project Sahadeva

To publish relevant and youthful material for the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

KṚṢṆA AT THE UNIVERSITY

Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasized that student life, a time when attachments and responsibilities are minimal, is the best time to cultivate spiritual knowledge and principles as a way of life. Pandava Sena's university activities began in 1996, and by 1998 "Vedic and Spiritual Arts Societies" were set up in London and Bir-

mingham (later to be called "Krishna Consciousness Societies"). The Societies held discussions and intercollegiate festivals, with ISKCON leaders as guest speakers.

The beginnings were sweet; the vibrant youthful energy brought positive results. Eventually Pandava Sena put together a team of graduates dedicated to university programs. There are now programs at eighteen universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. The weekly programs involve discussions, yoga classes, lunchtime *prasādam*

distribution, and trips to the temple. This year, for the first time, students attended a long-weekend retreat at Radhadesh, Belgium, that included seminars and workshops. Many British students now chant, read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, follow the regulative principles, and help run the Krishna Consciousness Societies.

Whether as diners at Govinda's Restaurant or as volunteer cooks and distributors for Food for Life, university students are engaging in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonīśvara,





Members of the Krishna Consciousness Society (left) at Queen Mary's University in London. Below, Rāvaṇa's life ends in fireworks, thanks to the work of PS members. Below, left, members work together to Kṛṣṇa-ize a wall at ISKCON's New Vraja Mandala community in Spain.



the deities of the ISKCON temple in London. Wednesday evenings the temple hosts "Oasis in the City," a Pandava Sena program of discussion, *kīrtana*, and *prasādam* for university students.

PS demonstrates that for a young person there is always time for Kṛṣṇa. Members join with other devotees every Saturday night to chant in central London. Some perform dedicated service at the temple. From London, Pandava Sena has expanded steadily to major cities in England, and to the USA, Kazakhstan, Slovenia, and The Netherlands.

FESTIVALS

Loud and lively festivals buzzing with energy are a Pandava Sena specialty, and blowing things up seems

Start a Group

For information on starting a youth group in your area, contact Pandava Sena.

E-mail—

Yuvaraj Rana, Chairman
uv@psena.com

Websites—

UK: www.pandavasena.com
Amsterdam: www.pandavasena.nl
New Jersey: www.pandavasena.us

University Societies—

www.Krishna.com

to be inbred. Dusshera, the festival honoring Lord Rāma's slaying of the wicked Rāvaṇa, includes the burning of a huge effigy of the demon, along with music, drama, and fireworks. Holi, the dye-throwing festival of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, is re-enacted with an enormous bonfire and, this year, the throwing of a quarter ton of dyed powder.

Bhaktivedanta Manor stages the largest Janmāṣṭami (Kṛṣṇa's appearance) festival outside India, and PS hosts thousands of young pilgrims by staging dramas, multimedia presentations, and lots of *kīrtana*.

EVERY TOWN AND VILLAGE

Members joined Tribhūvanātha Dāsa (who passed away in 2001) on the UK and Africa Hare Kṛṣṇa festival tours, and continue to do so under Giridhārī Dāsa. Birmingham Rathayātrā is also a youth festival. There's always a sleepless fun run up to the event, organizing everything from the chariots, stage show, and decorations, to funding, publicity, and media. Pandava Sena has been celebrating New Year's Eve ever since the first program in 1996, honoring the Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial. A PS Christmas day means gift-giving, comedy Christmas pantomimes, *kīrtana*, and Christmas dinner. Pandava Sena also takes part in government-

endorsed festivals supported by the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

"Whatever position we're in," Tribhūvanātha Dāsa told PS members some years ago, "we should use it to benefit others spiritually. So what that means in terms of Pandava Sena is that you have to sacrifice as much as you can, especially in your youth, to try to please Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda."

There is a drive in Pandava Sena to become serious devotees. Many members chant sixteen rounds on their beads and follow the four regulative principles. Nitāi Kīrtana Dāsa, a disciple of Jayapatāka Swami, was the first Pandava Sena member to be initiated, and many more have followed suit.

Pandava Sena has been fortunate to receive direct instruction and care from many ISKCON leaders, especially Bhakti Cāru Swami, Śivarama Swami, and Rādhānātha Swami, as well as Tribhūvanātha Dāsa. This summer, Ūrmilā Devī Dāsi spent ten days training Pandava Sena girls.

VAIṢṆAVA TRAINING

"Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that there are really only two activities, a devotee should do," says Śacinandana Swami. "Become Kṛṣṇa conscious and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I have always seen that the Pandava Sena group focuses on these two aspects by having spiritual programs and by making innovative and creative plans to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

A mentorship program has been set up to ensure that more experienced Pandava Sena members care for those who want to (please turn to page 57)



Navina Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, formerly Nitesh Gor, receives initiation from His Holiness Bhakti Cāru Swami. Many PS members have taken initiation from various ISKCON gurus.

“There Must Be Four Classes In Society”

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

Mother: Well, I’m a nurse, and so that is why I would like to see some of your people trained as medical men.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But there must be division of labor. When there is the necessity of brainwork, you take help from the brain. And when there is the need of walking, you take help from the leg. It is cooperation. Not that everyone has to learn everything.

Mother: I myself did training. I became a nurse.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You are asking us, “Why are you not taking medical education?” Why should we take it?

Mother: Because if everybody—

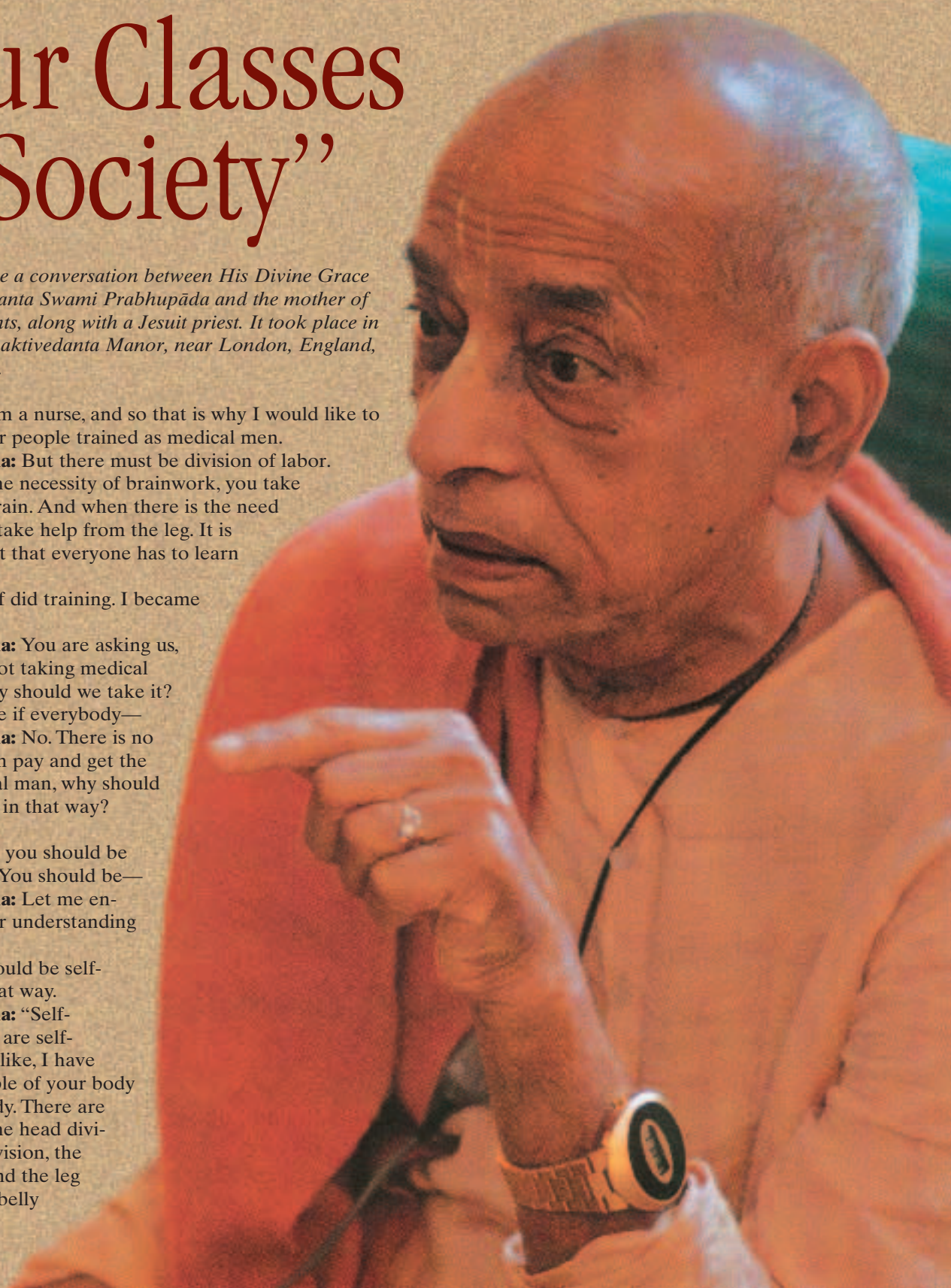
Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. There is no necessity. If I can pay and get the help of a medical man, why should I waste my time in that way? Let me—

Mother: Ah, but you should be self-supporting. You should be—

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Let me engage my time for understanding God.

Mother: You should be self-supporting in that way.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Self-supporting.” We are self-supporting. Just like, I have given the example of your body or the social body. There are four divisions: the head division, the arm division, the belly division, and the leg division. So the belly



***You may take some students and train them
as medical men. But I am training these students
to become spiritual teachers.***

• • •

is doing the work of the belly or stomach. The leg is walking. The hand is defending, and the head or the brain is giving instruction to everyone. This is cooperation. So that is the Vedic system of civilization: *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras*—teachers and advisors, administrators and protectors, merchants and farmers, laborers and craftsmen. There must be divisions of work. Not that everyone has to learn everything.

Mother: No. I don't mean that. You're misunderstanding me.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's all right. Then your question is answered. When I need the help of a medical man, I go to the medical man.

Mother: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So what is the wrong there?

Mother: Well, what I'm saying to you is that . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. What is the wrong? Find something.

Mother: . . . you can love God and be near God and train to be a medical man. Why don't you let some of your boys be trained to be medical men? Why do you say no?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But again you are putting the same question. We are training them for acting as society's brain, and you are asking me, "Why don't you train them for acting as the leg?" That is your question.

Mother: But they can still love God. They can still work for God at the same time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. Why are you asking this brain to learn how to walk? Why are you asking this odd question?

Mother: Well, my brain works. And I also—if there was a war tomorrow—I could go and be a nurse and look after the sick . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's all right.

That's all right.

Mother: . . . and still be with God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That question I have already explained. In the social body there are four divisions. So each division can take the help of the other divisions. That is another thing.

But you are asking, "You are simply interested in the brain. Why not in the leg?" But we *are* interested. Simply not in that way—that we train ourselves for becoming the leg. When we can see that we can pay the medical man and we can get the help, then why shall we waste our time by becoming a medical man?

Mother: I think it's so sad to see a lot of very good . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no. Just try to understand this point.

Mother: . . . young men becoming cabbages.

Śrīla Prabhupāda (looking to his disciples): They're misunderstanding. [*Returning to his disciple's mother and the Jesuit priest:*] Yes. Just like here is Father. He's trained up in how to preach. He's not a medical man—and he doesn't require to learn the medical science.

Mother: No, but I didn't ask *you* to be a doctor. I said some of your boys.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why? Why are you asking? My boys are the same.

Disciple: Which ones? Which ones of us should become doctors here?

Mother: Well, all . . . all . . . all . . .

Disciple: Supposing they all want to be spiritual teachers. Do you go to your Catholic seminaries and take some boys from the various classes to become doctors?

Mother: Yes—well, if you had an epidemic of smallpox . . .

Disciple: No, no, no.

Mother: . . . or typhoid . . . you . . . you know what smallpox is like in India.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You are presuppos-

ing. There must be social divisions.

Disciple: Again, do you go to your Catholic seminary and take boys out to become doctors?

Mother: It'd be no good at all being a priest if you had smallpox—would it?

Disciple: So, therefore, you should just go to your Catholic seminary and take some boys to become doctors. By force. "Now, you all come and be doctors." Even though they all want to be spiritual teachers.

Mother: You've got to have balance. Balance, somehow. Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Balance." This is balance. You may take some students and train them as medical men. But I am training these students to become spiritual teachers. Why are you interfering with my business? You do your own business.

Mother: Well, my son *is* my business.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Your son is not dependent on you. He's independent.

Mother: Yes, but he was . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You want him to have independence. He's already independent of you.

Mother: He was snatched out of the university by your people going 'round the universities. He was in the university.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's all right if some of our students go to the university. There are many students there who are interested in this Vedic spiritual science.

Disciple (to the mother): Now, wait a minute. We didn't snatch Michael.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We don't object to their inquiring from us.

Disciple: Michael came to our center in London, sat down, and didn't want to go away.

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YOUTH ON A MISSION

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become more serious about spiritual life.

Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa, the boys' mentorship secretary, says, "Guidance and training are formalized to ensure progressive advancement in spiritual life and loving relationships."

Last September, twelve members joined a training program hosted by Bhaktivedanta Manor.

Rina Daya, one of the students, says, "The six-month program is to train young devotees to become strong preachers and develop a solid basis of devotional practice. It involves pilgrimages to Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana, training at the Chowpatty temple in Mumbai, and study and training in the UK."

A ground-level course was started in 2003.

"The course gives Pandava Sena members a thorough understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings and solidifies their practices," says Dīna Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, the course leader.

The weekly course consists of three manuals: Theology & Philosophy, Devotional Practices, and Vaiṣṇava Culture.

Small Sādhana Groups also take place fortnightly across England for those wishing to undertake systematic study of the scriptures in an intimate local environment.

Kṛṣṇa, exotic grounds in foreign lands, interactive seminars with brilliant speakers, *kīrtana*, lots of *prasādam*, massive chanting sessions in ma-

jor cities, and adrenalin-pumping activities for over 130 students are what constitute Pandava Sena annual retreats. Mixing fun with spirituality, they offer an experience of the temple environment and a summer vacation bubbling with energy.

"A high point in my life came when I was invited to give lectures at Pandava Sena retreats in Ireland," says Śācinandana Swami. "When I dance with Pandava Sena devotees in *kīrtana*, I feel thirty years younger."

The first Pandava Sena retreat was in 1995, with Tribhūvanātha Dāsa. The retreats have become bigger and better, with international destinations each year under the direction of former chairman Sandīpan Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and Sonal Gathani.

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, a BTG editor and ISKCON educator, joined the Pandava Sena's 2003 retreat to Prabhupada Desh, Italy.

"All of us speakers encouraged the group to improve their spiritual life and avoid imitating Western youth," she says. "What I found really interesting was Bhakti Tīrtha Swami's comments. He said that Prabhupāda wanted to combine the best of the East (spiritual knowledge) with the best of the West (material advancement). This group—Indian by heritage and to a large degree by culture, but raised in the West and living in the West—exemplified Prabhupāda's mission and were, he explained, the best hope for the future. I'd frankly never thought of Western-raised Indian youth in that light and felt very enlivened."

The first Pandava Sena retreat to the USA took place this summer. Pandava Sena UK joined members from New Jersey, New York, and Philadelphia in New Vrindavan, West Virginia, for a week of seminars, *kīrtana*, sports, and lots of fun. The fifty-strong group was joined by Jayādvaita Swami, Bhakti Tīrtha Swami, and Rādhānātha Swami. In New York, Pandava Sena replicated Jammin'-style programs with American youth and visited places associated with Śrīla Prabhupāda and the founding of ISKCON.

THE FUTURE IS HERE

Bhakti Cāru Swami explained that spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness will occur through the youth. As world history shows, it only takes a few friends to begin a revolution. Pandava Sena projects like Jammin' and Krishna Consciousness Societies can be replicated in any town or village. We urge youth all over the world to use their ambition, courage, and intelligence to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We are the future, but will we make it on our own? 🌸

Nima Suchak is a freelance journalist, an early member of Pandava Sena, and part of the Bhaktivedanta Manor congregation.

Contributors to this article: Sandīpan Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, Raṅgadevī Devī Dāsī, Anupma Parihar, Dimpy Patel, and Yuvaraj Rana (Pandava Sena Chairman).

WHAT CULTURE?

(continued from page 28)

The knowledge available in the Vedic scriptures translated by Śrīla Prabhupāda is more than the religious portion of a vague, irrelevant culture. The Vedic culture is a scientific formula for human behavior, a guide to living in any age. Unfortunately in this age, Kali-yuga, only remnants of the culture remain. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Lord Caitanya says, “In this Age of Kali most people are bereft of Vedic culture, and therefore they are called *yavanas*. They are concerned only with killing cows and brahminical culture. In this way they all engage in sinful acts.”

One would expect something different from the nation that is the source of such an ancient and powerful culture. Instead we see Westerners adopting the spiritual practices and religion of the *Vedas*. Thousands have taken to the Vedic philosophy and have given up their habits of Western life. Westerners in India often promote the Vedic culture, even to the extent of trying to turn Indians back to vegetarianism. Within the supposedly sacred borders of India, Westerners who have chosen India as their home constantly see environments that resemble the

West that they so longed to escape. “Mother India” is fast becoming a spiritually barren wasteland in comparison to her former glory.

In one Calcutta newspaper recently, I read an article about the “growth phenomena” of vegetarian restaurants. At first glance it would appear that India is turning away from the influence of the West and back to the culture that was the valuable foundation of the nation. Yet on further inspection it seems that instead, it’s simply a case of dancing to the tune of America, where vegetarianism is a trend and vegetarian restaurants are common.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out, the Indian culture is a shadow of its former glory, and not much evidence of it remains:

Disciple: At least here [India] there is Indian culture.

Prabhupāda: What Indian culture? They are killing cows. What is Indian culture? Their Indian culture is that some of them speak Hindi, that’s all. This is their Indian culture.

ELEPHANTINE VALUE

Yet the Vedic culture has its roots here, and as Śrīla Prabhupāda also said,

modern-day Indian civilization could be compared to a dead elephant. An elephant is such a valuable creature that even when dead, because of its tusks and hide it remains almost as valuable as when alive and working. Similarly, although the Indian culture is practically dead, India still has great potential. That potential is the Vedic culture, the true spiritual culture.

And not only for Indians. Westerners have one thing in their favor that will move them to adopt fine elements of this culture: their dominance in the advancement of modern society and their trendsetting tendencies. This consumer strength is a powerful one, and can be used in a positive direction. All it takes is for someone to realize the strength, beauty, and power of the Vedic culture, and to take it up as a viable alternative to the madness that passes for modern civilization. In turn, the Indians will see how “Vedic” is done Western style in the twenty-first century. ❁

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

“FOUR CLASSES”

(continued from page 54)

Mother: He’d been taking LSD, and he was very sick. And somebody took him in.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So, when he was taking LSD, what did you do for him?

Disciple: And why was he taking LSD? He had such a wonderful education, such a happy home, and so many other things.

Mother: Well, he was experimenting. Now, this is it.

Disciple: But LSD is known to be a dangerous thing to experiment with.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Did you like that? Did you like that?

Mother: Well, he had a false . . . this was not . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: When he was taking LSD, did you like that?

Mother: I didn’t know, did I?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then?

Mother: Until afterwards, and we found him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mother: And this is it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So we must train these various divisions for the upkeep of the society. That is missing. At the present moment, there are no divisions being systematically trained.

Mother: But he had a false religious experience, due to the LSD.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, I am talking generally, not of him—that there must be these divisions. Just like naturally in our body we have got divisions. The whole object is to keep the body fit, but there are divisions: the head division, the arm division, the stomach division, and the leg division. So similarly, there must be four classes of men in society: the intelligent class of men, the administrator class of men, the productive class of men, and the

laborer class of men.

Everything is required, but not that the intelligent class of men have to learn the business of the laborer class of men. That is not required. Just try to understand. The laborer class of men—they are required. But one who is intelligent class—he cannot be trained up as an ordinary laborer in the factory. That is a mistake.

The intelligent person must work according to his capacity. If he’s intelligent, he must be trained to be a spiritual teacher. He must be God conscious. He can then educate people that “This eating-sleeping is not all. There is God. You should understand—you have got a relationship with Him. If you want to have a better life next time, then you must become God conscious. You must be sinless.” These things are required in society. ❁

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Catagories of Truth

A POPULAR HINDU magazine recently ran a two-page color spread on ISKCON's installation of the Pañca-tattva deities in Māyāpur. I was happy to see that the magazine's subscribers are being blessed by the sight of Lord Caitanya and His associates. Predictably, though, the magazine's editors couldn't adequately describe the significance of the event or correctly explain the identities of Lord Caitanya and the other members of the Pañca-tattva.

As Satyarāja Dāsa pointed out in our special issue on the Pañca-tattva installation, the members of the Pañca-tattva represent five aspects of the Absolute Truth. *Tattva* is a philosophical concept that means "a true principle." In Vaiṣṇava theology, it is used to refer to absolute categories of reality. Most people today, including Hindus and editors of Hindu magazines, have little understanding of *tattva*. Therefore, when they talk about prominent personalities within Vedic culture—*devas*, *ṛṣis*, avatars, gurus—they can't clearly distinguish their relative status. And, influenced by the philosophy of monism, they often imply, intentionally or not, that everything and everyone is God.

Vaiṣṇava theologians tell us that there are many *tattvas* and it is important to know who fits where. Four main *tattvas*, of which there may be subdivisions, are *viṣṇu-tattva*, *jīva-tattva*, *śiva-tattva*, and *śakti-tattva*.

The two most important to differentiate are *viṣṇu-tattva* and *jīva-tattva*. In the category of *viṣṇu-tattva* are God and the expansions of God equal to Him in power. Kṛṣṇa is the origin of all *viṣṇu-tattva* expansions, who include such personalities as Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Nṛsimha, and Lord Nārāyaṇa. The *Upaniṣads*

explain that it is the nature of God that even though He is unlimited, He can reproduce Himself unlimitedly without diminishing Himself. Therefore, even though God is one—Kṛṣṇa—He has an endless number of expansions equal (except for some unique qualities) to Him.

In the category of *jīva-tattva* are all the minute souls who expand from Kṛṣṇa's marginal energy. As Kṛṣṇa is infinite, they are infinitesimal, and their power is limited. The *jīvas* in the material world inhabit all kinds of bodies—plants, animals, human beings, even *devas*, whom Prabhupāda refers to as demigods. Hindus today generally do not differentiate between God (*viṣṇu-tattva*) and the *devas* (*jīva-tattva*). The Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* teach that the *jīvas* are always subordinate to the one God, or Supreme Personality of Godhead. Even the *devas* must submit to Kṛṣṇa's control, whether directly or through His material energy.

The most prominent *deva* is Lord Śiva, or Śaṅkara. His position is unique because he is neither *viṣṇu-tattva* nor *jīva-tattva*. He has his own category, called *śiva-tattva*. Lord Brahmā explains in his *Brahma-saṁhitā* that Śiva is simultaneously Viṣṇu and not Viṣṇu in the same way that yogurt is both milk and not milk. Lord Viṣṇu never directly touches the material energy. The expansion of Viṣṇu who consorts with the material energy (Māyā) is Lord Śiva.

Finally, the *śakti-tattva* category includes the ever-liberated associates of the Lord in the spiritual world. Expansions of God's internal energy, they never rebel like we *jīvas* wandering in the material world. By following their example of oneness in purpose with Kṛṣṇa, we can one day join them in the spiritual world.

—Nāgarāja Dāsa



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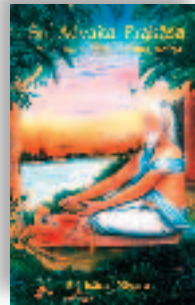
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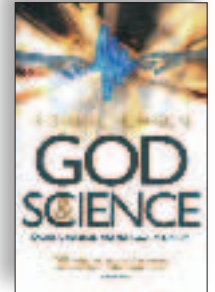
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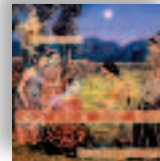
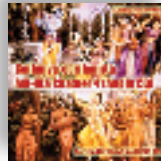
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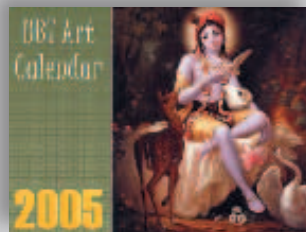
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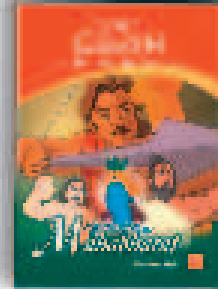
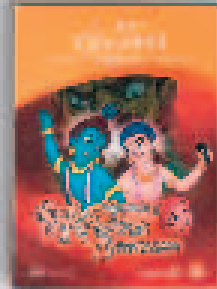
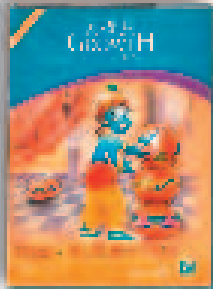
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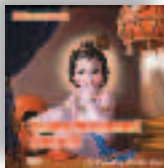
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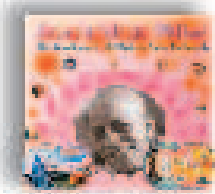
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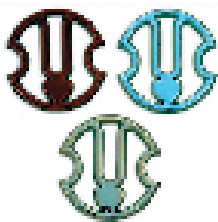
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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.16, Purport

The Supreme Lord, who incarnates out of His causeless mercy, regularly manifests His various pastimes in order to award supreme eternal benefit to the averse living entities of this world. All of His pastimes are performed with a desire to deliver the living entities.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa 13.107

Among sacrifices I am the study of the *Vedas*, and I am nonviolence among vows. Among all things that purify I am the wind, fire, the sun, water, and speech.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.16.23

The word *Brahman* indicates the complete Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That is the verdict of all Vedic literature.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 6.147

For receiving the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, I surrender unto His energy [Rādhā], and for receiving the mercy of His energy I surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. By worshiping Them, a practitioner becomes freed from all sinful reactions and, being fully satisfied, he goes to the eternal abode of the Lord.

Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad 8.13

By knowledge of the Absolute Truth, the sober practitioners realize that blissful, immortal, all-pervading Supreme Lord.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.7

The Vedic mantras explain that the all-powerful Absolute Truth possesses a spiritual form and although He remains in the spiritual sky, He is simultaneously present everywhere. He personally appears within the heart of the perfect devotees who constantly meditate upon Him.

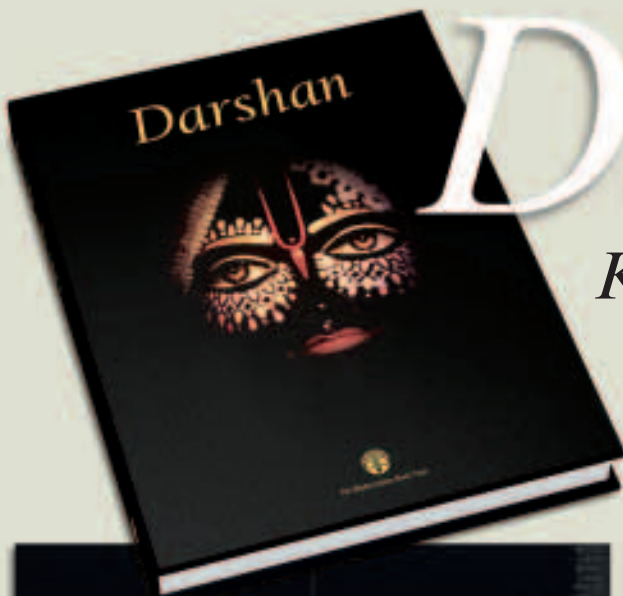
Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa
Prameya Ratnāvalī 1.13

O my tongue, since my mouth has become like a lotus by dint of the presence there of these eloquent, ornamental, delightful syllables, you are like the swan that plays there. As your foremost pleasure, always articulate the names Govinda, Dāmodara, and Mādhava.

Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura
Govinda-dāmodara-stotram 9

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