

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



# UNTIL THE COWSCOME HOME

Saving Kṛṣṇa's  
Favorite Animal  
In Vṛndāvana

The Magazine of the  
Hare Krishna Movement

July/August 2006  
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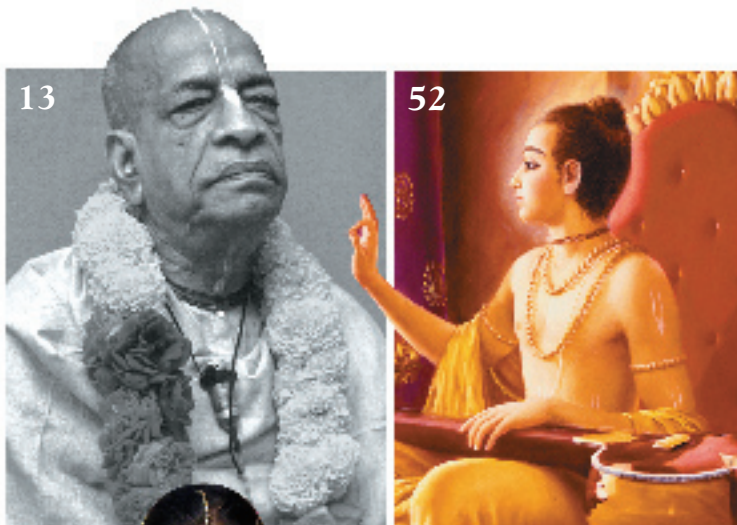
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# Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 40, No. 4 • July / August 2006



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# ead

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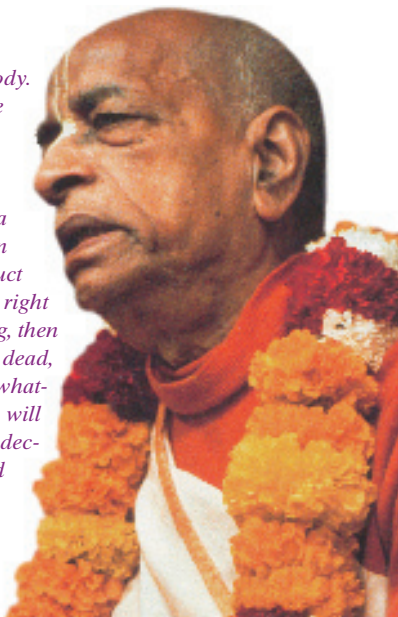
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**COVER** A young woman from a village near Vṛndāvana, India, shows natural affection for a calf. Unfortunately, with pasturing grounds disappearing, many of Vṛndāvana's cows are being abandoned to a dangerous life on the streets. Please see the article beginning on page 16. (Photo by Rūpa Raghunātha Dāsa.)

*"A body with no brain is a dead body. You may decorate a dead body to your full satisfaction, but what is the use? Without a brain-class of men in society to instruct the others what is right and what is wrong, then the social body is dead, or headless. And whatever work you do will simply be useless decoration for a dead body."—p. 56*



## WELCOME



**IN THIS ISSUE** we learn about the plight of homeless cows in Vṛndāvana, the holy city connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa, and efforts by a group of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees to res-

cue and shelter them. Though people in the West scoff at the idea of venerating cows and bulls, devotees of Kṛṣṇa know of the special place these peaceful creatures hold both in the traditionally agrarian culture of India and in Lord Kṛṣṇa's heart.

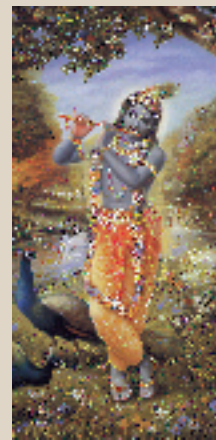
Compassion for the cow is a natural emotion for godly souls and one of the many attractive qualities that Lord Kṛṣṇa lists as pleasing to Him and essential for human culture. In this issue, Amala-bhakta Dāsa completes his three-part series on Kṛṣṇa's list of "Godly Qualities for God Realization." In "The Government's Duty: To Teach Kṛṣṇa Consciousness," Candrasēkhara Ācārya Dāsa, publishing his first article in this magazine, explains that God realization should be the quest of every citizen, nurtured by a God-conscious government.

During the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, around five hundred years ago, God consciousness (Kṛṣṇa consciousness) flourished in Bengal, and Parama Sevā Dāsa, also appearing in these pages for the first time, guides us on a tour of a unique holy site on the bank of the Ganges.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

## OUR PURPOSES

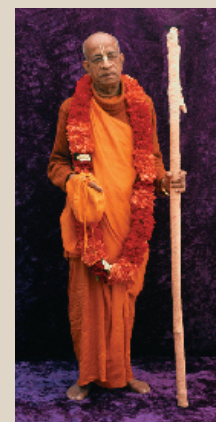
- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God 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*



# BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the  
Hare Krishna Movement



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# Letters

## What Happened to Fulabhai?

The March/April '06 BTG ranks (for me) as one of the most provocative BTG issues ever. However, one question remains about the article on ISKCON Vallabh Vidyanagar, and the answer would have made a fitting denouement to that article: Whatever happened to Fulabhai? He made a great sacrifice; after all, the article states that the boarding house was his only source of income, so it was an act of great faith on his part to donate the building to ISKCON. Did Fulabhai join the temple? Was he forced to become a beggar?

Ānandamāyā Dāsa  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* Gaurendu Dāsa, the author of the article, has informed us, “Fulabhai, who was elderly and whose daughters were married, was living alone taking care of the building himself. He requested the devotees to let him stay there in a room until his death. The devotees were more than happy to have the old man with them. He practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness, had *prasādam* every day, and passed away peacefully after some time. Devotees performed his funeral ceremonies. In short, you can say that Fulabhai perfected his death.”

## Making Sense

Just wanted to thank the editors for doing such a great job with BTG. I especially appreciated the editorial, “The Examined Life,” in the May/June issue. It explains exactly why I joined the movement thirty-five years ago. I had a *Back to Godhead* magazine that I read about twenty times because it just made more sense to me than anything else I had read. That and the fact that the philosophy soundly trounced every other philosophy out there made me move into the

closest temple I could find just to experience more.

So please keep up the wonderful service, because just one *Back to Godhead* magazine can totally change someone's life.

Ameyātma Dāsa  
Alachua, Florida

## Explaining Hare Kṛṣṇa

I am an inmate in the Florida Prison System, and I recently received a copy of the March/April 2006 issue. I read and appreciated the situation you discussed in your editorial, “Looking for a Good One-liner,” as I often encounter that same situation in my current environment. Many inmates know I'm a Hare Kṛṣṇa and ask me, “What is Hare Kṛṣṇa?” I put a great deal of thought and prayer into what would be the best way to respond.

One night, while poring over the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and specifically thinking about how to respond in these situations, Kṛṣṇa answered my prayers: *sambandha*, *abhideya*, *prayojana*.

Lord Caitanya has made the philosophy so simple by defining it with these three terms. If I could find some way to convey these three teachings in a short, understandable statement, I felt it would be an excellent way to respond to their enquiry. After more prayer, meditation, and several written attempts, I finally came up with an answer that I have found to be extremely effective: “Hare Kṛṣṇa is an ancient philosophy based on three main principles. First, that everyone has an eternal relationship with God. Second, that the purpose of one's life is to develop this relationship by serving God with love. Finally, that the goal of life is to love the Lord with all your heart, all your mind, and all your soul.”

Carl Sheppard  
Monticello, Florida



## BTG in Solitary

In 1975 I was working as a correctional officer in Tennessee at the main prison. Being a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa and a servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I would daily share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with whomever I met during my shift. One man was extremely envious of Kṛṣṇa and would try to discourage other inmates from listening to the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One day he just disappeared, and needless to say I didn't miss him.

Thirty days later, as I was walking across the exercise yard heading for my post, suddenly an inmate ran up to me and fell at my feet, offering obeisances. He kept repeating over and over, "Thank you for saving my life." I had no idea what he was talking about, but as he rose to his feet I recognized him as the inmate who was very envious of Kṛṣṇa and had disappeared for thirty days.

After hugging me, he described what had transpired. He had been sent to solitary confinement for thirty days due to a violation and was about to go mad and was contemplating suicide when one day after returning to his cell he noticed a BTG lying on his bed. He read it from front to back daily, and after thirty days he was purified enough to surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa and become a servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and said that he would spread the glories of the holy name to other inmates in the prison. I met him later in the free world after he left prison, and he was chanting sixteen rounds daily on his beads and was filled with bliss.

I will never forget this experience, because it has encouraged me in hard times. But questions linger in my mind: How did the BTG get into solitary confinement, where no books are allowed? Who placed the BTG on the inmate's bed? And

why was this inmate given such special mercy by Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa? I guess Kṛṣṇa's teachings go where they want to go. All glories to BTG!

Rādhākānta Dāsa  
Nashville, Tennessee

## Kṛṣṇa a Myth?

Was Kṛṣṇa just a mythical being? If not, what evidence do we have to prove that He did exist? The world doesn't accept that He existed. They say this is all mythology.

Sriman  
Via the Internet

*Our Reply:* There is a line of spiritual teachers going back to Kṛṣṇa who confirm His identity as the Supreme Lord. Many scriptures, *Bhagavad-gītā* being the most famous, describe His divinity. Millions of people worship Kṛṣṇa in India because they experience His reciprocation. Many spiritual teachers follow the path He taught and have come to directly perceive His divinity. You too can follow them and experience His divinity. You can read in our books about how to do this, including online books on our Web site ([www.Krishna.com](http://www.Krishna.com)).

## Natural Motherhood

I enjoyed the article in the Jan/Feb 2006 issue entitled "The Trend-and-Befriend Hormone." It is true that women are natural mothers and wives. It is illusion to think otherwise. I wish I had read that years ago when I was struggling with that subject myself.

I use the Book Section of BTG as part of my spiritual study. I find it very nice. Thank you.

Jennifer Robinson  
Draper, Utah

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# LiveWebcast



Log on to the Internet, tune in to the webcast, and taste the bliss—daily live webcasts from the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Alachua, Florida.

- Two live webcams
- Live audio
- Lecture podcast

ALSO: Links to other live temple webcasts, including Los Angeles, Bergamo (Italy), Salt Lake City, Dallas, New Jersey, Mumbai.



## Krishna.com/webcast







# GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT LIBERATION

*We live in an unfortunate time because we're being misdirected from the pursuit of ultimate freedom, the true purpose of life.*

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

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān  
hītvā bhūta-patīn atha  
nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā  
bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ*

“Those who are serious about liberation are certainly nonenvious, and they respect all. Yet they reject the horrible and ghastly forms of the demigods and worship only the all-blissful forms and plenary portions of Lord Viṣṇu.”

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.26

THE FIRST WORD here, *mumukṣavaḥ*, means “desiring to be liberated.” It is very difficult to find this class of men, the *mumukṣavaḥ*. People do not know what is meant by *mumukṣavaḥ*. They do not know what liberation is. Even the so-called scientists and philosophers of the modern age do not know what is meant by liberation, *mokṣa*. And still they are the public leaders and heads of education.



They do not know the objective of life, what human life is meant for.

Sometime in the year 1950 or '51 I went to Jhansi, and the friend in whose house I was staying was a leader. There was a meeting for Gandhi's disappearance day. So I was asked to speak. At that time I was not a *sannyāsī*. I was asked to speak on nonviolence. So I explained that if you have got some right and if somebody by force stops you from using your right, that is violence. I have got some right to take

something or enter into some room, and if somebody checks me by force—“You cannot enter”—that is violence, and it is criminal.

Our homeland is Bhāratavarṣa [India]. To take birth in Bhāratavarṣa is not an ordinary thing. Just see, practically, how many men are automatically circumambulating this temple out of respect. Even a common man will do so. If you study you'll find

*Devotees discuss the significance of the holy places they're visiting while on pilgrimage to sites connected with the life of Lord Caitanya and His associates.*

# *These blind leaders do not know how to lead people, how to make them happy, how to make them successful in the human form of life.*

• • •

that by nature people in Bhāratavarṣa are God conscious. Even a very poor man is satisfied in God consciousness. He doesn't care that he is poor. He's satisfied: "Kṛṣṇa has placed me in this position." He doesn't care to know or ask, "Why am I poverty-stricken?" He thinks, "Now I am getting some food by the grace of Kṛṣṇa."

Not very long ago, say about two hundred or three hundred years ago, in Krishnanagara there was a big zamindar named Raja Krishnachandra. He went to a learned scholar, a *brāhmaṇa paṇḍita*, who had voluntarily accepted poverty and asked him, "Panditji, can I help you in some way?"

The *paṇḍita* replied, "I don't require any help from you."

"But I see that you are poverty-stricken."

"No, I am not poverty-stricken. My students get some rice for me, and my wife cooks it. I get some tamarind leaves. So it is very nice. I don't require any help."

This is India's heritage. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita was the greatest scholar and politician. He was the prime minister of Mahārāja Emperor Candragupta. Chanakya Puri in New Delhi is named after Cāṇakya Paṇḍita. He was living in a cottage, not accepting any salary. And as soon as Mahārāja Candragupta wanted some explanation for an instruction Cāṇakya had given him, Cāṇakya resigned. Such detachment is the standard of persons born in India. Take Vyāsadeva, for example. Who can be a greater scholar than Vyāsadeva? His last contribution is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and each word, if you study for hundreds of years, still you will have more to understand. Each word. Such a scholar, and he was living in a cottage.

This is actually India's culture. So I explained in that meeting in Krishnanagar, "After many, many births, one is given the opportunity to take birth

in this holy land of Bhāratavarṣa. Unfortunately, you leaders are by force making the people materialists. They had the opportunity to take advantage of the contribution of great sages, *ṛṣis*, to study and to become successful human beings, but you are by force dragging them from that attitude to this materialistic way of life. This is violence. What are you speaking of non-violence? This is violence."

About twenty years ago I was thinking like that. Actually, people are being killed not only in India but outside also by these blind leaders. They do not know how to lead people, how to make them happy, how to make them successful in the human form of life.

## **Understand Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa**

Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has sung,

*hari hari biphale janama goṅāinu  
manuṣya janama pāiyā  
rādhā-kṛṣṇa nā bhajiyā  
jāniyā śuniyā biṣa khāinu*

"My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, I have simply wasted my time." Without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we are simply wasting time. We have great opportunity in the human form of life, but our attention is diverted simply for eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. And our real business is spoiled. That is summarized by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. *Hari hari biphale janama goṅāinu*: "I have simply spoiled my life."

The human form of life is especially meant for understanding Kṛṣṇa, or Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. If not Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, at least Kṛṣṇa, or the Battle of Kurukshetra. Mr. M. C. Chatterji was a nice friend of mine. He said, "Swamiji, I want Kṛṣṇa of the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, not of Vṛndāvana." That's all right. At least take Kṛṣṇa on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra. But take

to Kṛṣṇa. If you are not so fortunate as to understand Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, at least try to understand Arjuna-Kṛṣṇa.

The whole world is being spoiled. I am especially drawing the attention of thoughtful men. People are being killed without Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They got this opportunity, the human form of life, and they should have been educated to understand Kṛṣṇa. By understanding Kṛṣṇa, they can become liberated. As it is stated here: *mumukṣavaḥ*. *Mumukṣavaḥ* means those who desire liberation. But the leaders do not know what liberation is, what transmigration of the soul is, what the soul is—nothing. Simply rascals, and they are leading the whole population. They do not know what liberation is. Darwin's theory, the bodily concept of life, anthropology—that is going on in the university. A false theory, without any idea.

Here it is said, *mumukṣavaḥ*, "desiring liberation." But the people do not know what liberation is. They are thinking of liberation in terms of politics. We Indians have become liberated from British rule. What sort of liberation have we achieved? During British rule, people were free to move, free to spend their money. Now you are so liberated that you cannot move, you cannot spend your money. This is the kind of liberation we now have. Formerly there was no restriction for going outside the country. But as a *sannyāsī*, I had so much difficulty obtaining the permission of the government to go out.

Oh, with what great difficulty I got out of this country! And because I—some way or other, by Kṛṣṇa's grace—got out of this country, I could spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world. Otherwise, it was not possible. I wanted to start this movement in India, but I was not at all encouraged.

I approached so many friends:



“You have four sons. Kindly give me one of your sons. I want to make him a *brāhmaṇa*.”

“Oh, Swamiji, what will he do, becoming a *brāhmaṇa*? We have to earn our livelihood.”

You see? People have forgotten what is the purpose of life. Caitanya Mahāprabhu said,

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya-  
janma yāra  
janma sārthaka kari’ kara para-  
upakāra*

“Everyone who has taken birth in the land of Bhāratavarṣa must make his life successful.” [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līla* 9.41] Because here we actually have the opportunity for liberation. We have information about liberation. No other country. Their so-called liberation means political liberation. Fighting with one another—that is not liberation. Liberation means to get out of the cycle of repeated birth and death. That is liberation. But people have no idea what liberation is, or where to go after liberation. All this knowledge is practically blocked.

Therefore it is very difficult for people to understand the statements of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, like this verse: *mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān hitvā bhūta-patīn atha*. People do not understand. They are so misguided, ill-educated, that they do not understand it.

But the land of Bhāratavarṣa is meant for liberation. In other lands, people take birth and have no information about liberation. Here, in this land, Bhāratavarṣa, there is the idea of liberation, *mukti*. We should be interested in liberation. Our condition within this material bondage is that we are transmigrating from one body to another, always trying to improve our material condition. Sometimes we are going up to higher planets, and sometimes we are coming down.

### The Dark Material World

This is going on. But the human form of life is meant for getting out of the darkness of the material world. *Tamasi mā jyotir gama*. This is the Vedic information: “Don’t remain in this

darkness.” This material world is dark, as we experience at night, before the sun rises. And it is also dark because of ignorance. We do not know the aim of life. Therefore, the whole world is darkness. And the Vedic information is “Do not remain in the darkness. Come to the light.” But that education—how to get out of the darkness of ignorance and the darkness of this material world—is lacking.

Here it is mentioned: *nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ sāntā bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ*. *Asūya* means envious. When we present Kṛṣṇa, especially in India, people are sometimes envious of Him. But outside India, people have reacted differently. I have placed before them that “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are searching after God. Here is God. Here is God’s name, here is God’s address, here are God’s activities. Try to understand God. Why are you speculating?” And they have accepted. They are not *asūyava*. They are not envious.

Here, if I present Kṛṣṇa, one may say, “Why not Kālī? Oh, Kālī is very active. She has a long tongue. She has a sword in her hand, cutting heads. It is very nice. And we shall be able to eat goats.” You see? Actually Kālī-pūjā is for the meat-eaters. Now this is the Kālī-pūjā season. Kālī-pūjā is there because the Vedic *sāstras*, scriptures, are so made that everyone, from the lowest rascal to the highest intelligent man, should be elevated. That is the purpose. All classes of men are there. Some are influenced by the mode of goodness; some are influenced by the mode of passion; some are influenced by the mode of ignorance. And the *Vedas* are meant for all human beings.

There are different types of human beings; therefore there are different types of *sāstras* to attract all classes of men, including the meat-eaters. The living entity comes to the material world to enjoy, to satisfy the material senses. That especially means eating meat, drinking wine, and having sex. So the *Vedas* regulate the so-called enjoyment. “You want to eat meat? All right, then sacrifice a goat before Goddess Kālī and worship her on the *āmāvāsya*, the dark-moon night.” There are so many reg-

## What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

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

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

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

## Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pike**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **c** 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.”

ulations involved. The real purpose is to impose a restriction. But if it is directly said, “Don’t eat meat,” meat-eaters will revolt.

Therefore the Vedic literature has so many prescriptions for worshipping different demigods. Otherwise, there is no necessity for worshipping them. That is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.20). *Kāmais tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyante ’nya-devatāḥ*: Those who are worshipping demigods have become blind; they have lost their senses. *Hr̥ta-jñāna*: Real knowledge is lost. Therefore they’re after so many demigods. I have not manufactured this point. Kṛṣṇa Himself says, *kāmais tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyante ’nya-devatāḥ*: There is no need to worship any demigods.

This is the lesson of the festival of Govardhana-pūjā. Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa’s father, was arranging for the worship of Indra. Kṛṣṇa stopped it, and He engaged His father in worshipping Govardhana, which is a representation of Kṛṣṇa. That is the meaning of Govardhana-pūjā.

We can get different types of sense pleasure in different bodies. But that is not very good. Sometimes I become a demigod, and sometimes I become a eucalyptus tree, standing for three hundred years. Why should we waste our time in that way? Asking that question is intelligence. But people do not know that “This time I am a very nice American. I have got

my skyscraper and automobile and very good bank balance. I am very happy.” They don’t care. But the person does not know that next life he may become a cat or a dog. That he does not know. There is that risk.

### A Scientific Movement

This science is not taught in any university. People are such fools and rascals. It is a great science—transmigration of the soul, immortality of the soul, how to elevate the soul to the highest perfection. The rascals do not know. Nor are they being taught. It is such an unfortunate time.

Therefore there is great necessity to spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to actually educate the human being to the highest perfection of life. That is required. It is not a religious system, competing with some other religion. We are criticized for turning Christians into Hindus. This is nonsense. We are not concerned with Hindus, Muslims, or Christians. These are educated boys; they have no business becoming Hindus. Many people before me, many swamis, went to the West to turn Christians into Hindus. But the Western people kicked on their faces. These swamis did not become successful, because they talked nonsense. Why should a Christian become a Hindu, or a Hindu become a Christian? People should know what God is and what their relationship

with God is. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not for turning Hindus into Muslims or Muslims into Hindus or Christians into Hindus. This is not such a movement. These Western boys and girls clearly understand this. Therefore they are following. They are accepting. If I would have preached that Hinduism is better than Christianity, they would have kicked me out long ago. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a science; it is a philosophy.

There is a great necessity to educate people in the aim of life. That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission. He was appealing to the human beings, those who are actually human beings, not to the cats and dogs. He said, “Study the contribution of the great sages and make your life successful. Then go out and preach this mission.” That is going on under the name of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. It is not a sentimental movement. It is a scientific movement.

We therefore restrict our students from worshipping any demigods. When I started this mission, many friends advised me, “Why don’t you call it [The International Society for] ‘God’ consciousness?” But I insisted that it be “Kṛṣṇa” consciousness. Otherwise, people would include so many gods. “Here is another god, here is another god, here is another god, here is another incarnation, here is another avatar.” All nonsense. I wanted to stress the one who is actually God. *Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. [Sṛīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.28]. Or in today’s verse: *nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntāḥ*. One should worship only Kṛṣṇa and His full expansions.

Try to understand our mission. Here it is said that we have to accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa also says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: “Surrender unto Me only. Then you’ll be saved.” [Bhagavad-gītā 18.66].

We don’t advise, “Worship Kālī or Śiva or . . . it is all the same. *Yata mata tata patha*.” We don’t speak all this nonsense. We simply say, “Come to Kṛṣṇa. Then you’ll be saved.”

Thank you very much.

*A new department is coming soon to BTG!*

## “IN YOUR OWN WORDS”

Each issue, we’ll ask you a unique question. And each issue, we’ll publish the most interesting, inspiring, or entertaining replies.

Here’s the first question:

*What did you think the first time you saw Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees?*

Go to [Krishna.com/inyourownwords](http://Krishna.com/inyourownwords) and let us know.  
(Please keep your answer to under one hundred words.)





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



*Śrīla Prabhupāda displayed all the qualities of a great devotee of the Lord, including gravity (above) and youthful energy even in old age (right).*







# Godly Qualities for God Realization (PART 3)

*Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals what qualities please Him and make us fit for His company.*

by Amala Bhakta Dāsa

*In both the Bhagavad-gītā and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Lord Kṛṣṇa lists qualities that please Him, decorate His devotees, and are essential for those who wish to win His favor and make progress in spiritual life. In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.75), Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, “A Vaiṣṇava is one who has developed all good transcendental qualities. All the good qualities of Kṛṣṇa gradually develop in Kṛṣṇa’s devotee.” He then lists twenty-six qualities, often cited by Śrīla Prabhupāda.*

*In this three-part series, the author discusses twenty-eight godly qualities listed by Lord Kṛṣṇa when instructing His devotee Uddhava in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.29–32).*

## *Grave*

TO BE GRAVE or serious does not mean to be cheerless or gloomy. Rather, it means to be earnest or solemn. As devotees of God, we realize that our every moment is important, a rare opportunity to try to perfect ourselves. Thus we should try to not waste our time in superficial talk and frivolous activities. These only reinforce our illusions about the world and keep us bound up to it. Unable to transcend the modes of material nature, we continue suffering under their merciless influence.

Therefore, we should try to see and feel God in everything, everywhere. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable *om* in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in

## *The worst expression of māyā is to think we are our physical body, and that when our body dies, we die.*



ether and ability in man.” This is the preliminary or impersonal stage of God realization. But as we become more advanced, we will see the more personal form of the Lord—first as the deity in the temple, and then as the Supersoul in our heart and throughout creation. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “A true yogi observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized person sees Me, the Lord, everywhere.” Unless we are grave—very serious and earnest in our intentions—we can hardly expect to reach such a state.

### *Forbearing*

This specifically refers to controlling the urges of our tongue and genitals. Among our senses, the tongue is considered the most formidable. When we overeat, we place a great strain on our digestive organs. They press down on the nerves connected to our genitals and thereby stimulate sensual feelings that often lead to erotic thoughts. If these feelings and thoughts become too strong, we become their slaves and helplessly desire sexual gratification. And should we submit to it, we not only become more attached to the act, but we lose valuable energy that should be used for spiritual growth. Therefore, as far as possible, we should forbear overeating.

### *A Conqueror of the Six Material Disturbances*

These disturbances are hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age, and death.

Hunger and thirst: When we are unable to eat or drink at our usual time, many of us become disturbed. We can condition ourselves against such distress, however, by occasionally and deliberately fasting from a meal or two (especially on Ekādaśī days). Should we be disinclined to

do this, our bodily urges will continue to influence and determine our mental state. This means that instead of remaining peaceful and joyful when we are hungry or thirsty, we will most likely be impatient and irritable. And such feelings cannot help us progress spiritually.

Lamentation: We generally lament when we lose someone or something valuable—especially when someone dies or something is lost or stolen. When we become fully convinced that God is the true owner of everything and that all our pleasures have come from His arrangements, we will lose our attachment to mundane people and things. Although it is proper to grieve for a while over the departure of great devotees of God, it is pointless to mourn the loss of greedy materialists. For what was their credit except increasing our worldly attachments and keeping us in material bondage? Thus, we should accept such losses as being in our best interest.

Illusion: To be in illusion means to think that something untrue is true, and this is often referred to as *māyā*. The worst expression of it is to think we are our physical body, and that when our body dies, we die. To harbor such an illusion means that whenever our body is threatened with physical, emotional, or verbal distress, we take it personally and respond with anger, hatred, envy, duplicity, or pride. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa makes it very clear that such negative feelings only debase us and divert us from achieving pure love of God. Consequently, we must often remind ourselves that we are the eternal soul and not our temporary physical body.

Old age: The more God conscious we become, the more youthful and energetic we’ll feel in old age, even though our body may be feeble. This is the result of an infusion of spiritu-

al energy from God, which enlivens and uplifts our consciousness and enables us to transcend the frailties and infirmities of old age.

Death: Nor is the advanced devotee afraid of death, because for God’s devotee death does not exist. Death actually means to leave one material body, be re-born in another body, and totally forget our previous life’s activities. But devotees are not compelled to reincarnate in another material body. Rather, pure devotees depart in their spiritual body for the eternal kingdom to resume their loving devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu or Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally.

### *Without Desire for False Prestige*

As the Lord’s devotees, we are ideally situated when, as Lord Caitanya stated, we are in a humble state of mind. That means to think of ourselves as lower than the straw in the street, to be more tolerant than a tree, and to be devoid of any sense of false prestige. If in the course of our duties we receive prestige, we should outwardly accept it but inwardly reject it, as if it were deadly poison. If we become enamored of it, thinking we are superior to others, we will become painfully disillusioned in the future.

To prevent this, we should mentally give away our prestige to the Lord, for He alone is responsible for it. True, we may have endeavored to attain it, but without His mercy we could never have succeeded. Therefore, offering all credit to Him, we should remain unaffected, balanced, and unassuming. In this way we can continue to progress spiritually and experience real happiness from within.

### *Respectful to Everyone*

When we know that everyone is part of God, we realize that all of us are related. Thus our sense of family  
(please turn to page 41)



# Decoration for a Dead Body

*The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and Raymonde van den Heuvel, of the International Labor Organization, took place in Geneva during the summer of 1974.*

**Van den Heuvel:** I work for the International Labor Organization, which is a part of the United Nations family. We're concerned with the protection and welfare of all laborers in practically all nations in the world.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The Vedic literature describes four social classes—intelligent, administrative, mercantile, laborer. The laborers act as the legs of the social body, but legs must be guided by a head. That “head” of the social body is the intelligent class. The United Nations is taking care of the social body’s legs, but what are they doing for the brain—the intelligent class?

**Van den Heuvel:** We want to see that the laborers have their proper share in society’s economic rewards.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But my point was that if you neglect the head of society, then in spite of your attention to the legs, things will not go very nicely—because the brain will not be in order.

**Van den Heuvel:** But this is also an important aspect of society, don't you think? We aim to improve the lot of the workers of the world.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** In America the laborer class is very highly paid, but because they are not directed by a brain, by an intelli-

gent class, they simply spend their money on drinking.  
**Van den Heuvel:** The fact that a good thing is abused doesn't make it bad.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** The point is that everyone should be guided by the brain. That is the only way to organize society. What is the value in working hard like an ass, without any intelligence?

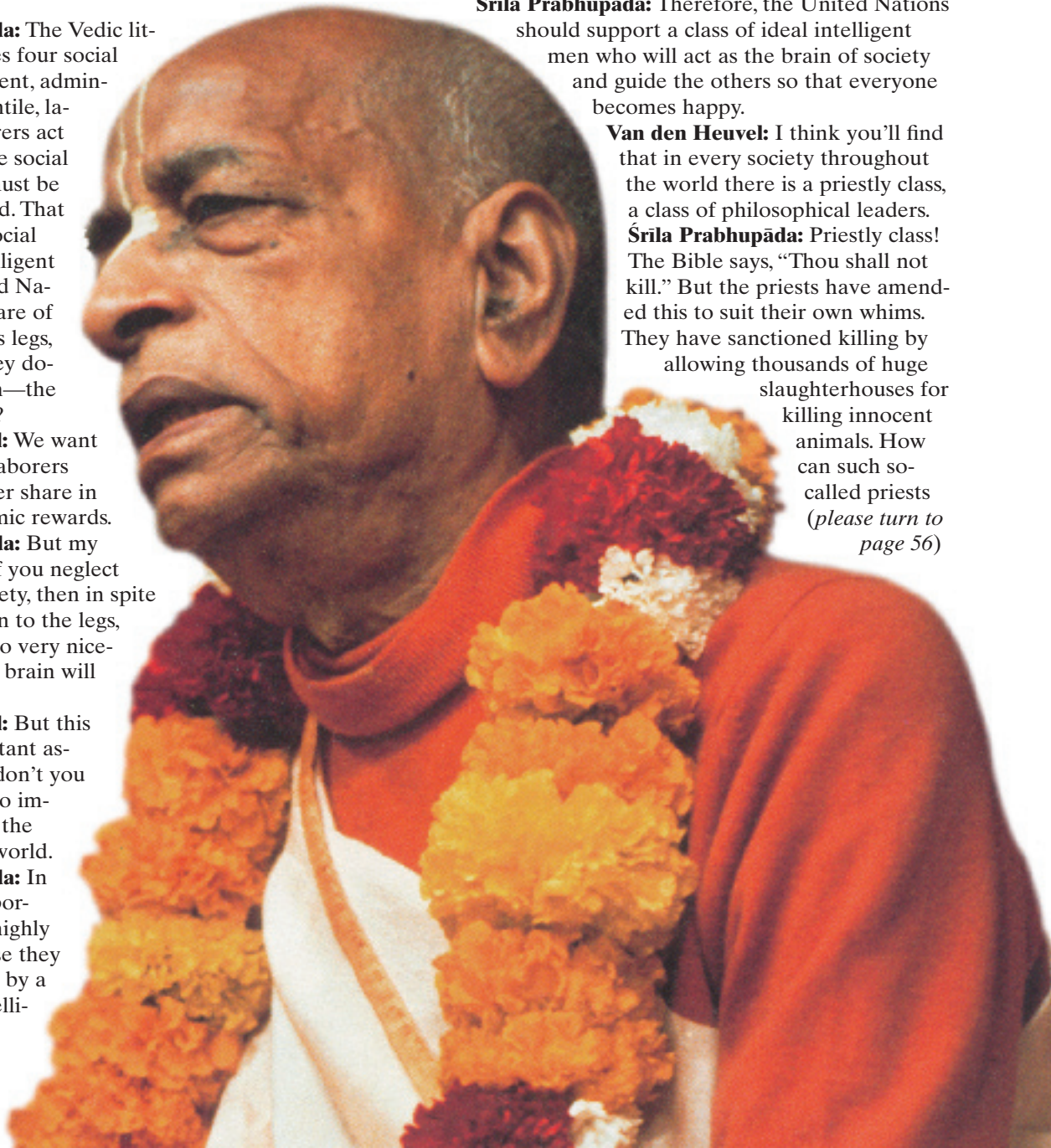
**Van den Heuvel:** You can't force a man to use his brain.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Therefore, the United Nations should support a class of ideal intelligent men who will act as the brain of society and guide the others so that everyone becomes happy.

**Van den Heuvel:** I think you'll find that in every society throughout the world there is a priestly class, a class of philosophical leaders.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Priestly class! The Bible says, “Thou shall not kill.” But the priests have amended this to suit their own whims. They have sanctioned killing by allowing thousands of huge

slaughterhouses for killing innocent animals. How can such so-called priests  
(please turn to page 56)



# UNTIL THE COWS COME HOME

*Vṛndāvana's cows feel the pinch as their  
pasturing grounds disappear.*

by Braja Sevakī Devī Dāsī

*IT WAS THE day before Janmāṣṭamī. Crowds of pilgrims were pouring into Vṛndāvana. The streets were hectic with traffic from Delhi and the surrounding areas. I was being pushed constantly in the press of human and animal traffic, feeling somewhat battered, longing for a solitary place. Suddenly a large bull knocked into me, pushing me into the oncoming traffic. I was hit by a car, breaking both my legs and various other bones on the left side of my body. I lay there in shock, trying to recover my senses. As the reality of what happened sunk in, so did the pain—I couldn't move, and was bleeding profusely. But the worst was yet to come. The driver of the car got out and asked some bystanders to help him drag me to the side of the road. Then he took a can of motor oil from his trunk and poured it on my wounds. He told horrified bystanders that this would keep infection away from my wounds and that I would be okay in a few days. Then he drove off to have the sacred audience of the predominating deities in Vṛndāvana. I wonder if Lord Kṛṣṇa gave that driver any blessings? Somehow I doubt it . . .*

Unfortunately, this really happened. Not to me but, worse, to a three-month-old calf named Kamala ("lotus" in



Sanskrit). If she could talk, that's what her story would have sounded like. Instead her tale was told to me by those who had witnessed it. The worst part is, Kamala's story isn't unique, rare, or even surprising anymore: it's a common occurrence.

There are three to four hundred abandoned cows in Vṛndāvana, roaming the streets looking for food and shelter. I had always been under the impression—one I learned is shared by so many visitors to Vṛndāvana—that the cows were owned, and that they wandered during the day and returned to their owners at night. While

*A young calf gets  
a shoulder ride  
(above). At right,  
Balarama and his  
mother.*

this is true in some cases, most of the cows have been dumped by careless owners. Starving, diseased, and unprotected, they are at danger from the increasing traffic in Vṛndāvana, and even more from the cattle rustlers who abduct them and sell them to slaughterhouses.

It's hard to believe that this goes on







in Kṛṣṇa's village of Vṛndāvana. Even harder to believe is that several of the *gośālās* (cow sanctuaries) in town have reported break-ins from these same cattle rustlers trying to steal their protected cows. It seems that Kali-yuga has reached Vṛndāvana, and the cows especially are feeling it . . .

But there's change ahoof.

### Won Over by a Chocolate-Colored Calf

On a cold December morning, while a thin fog clung to the air with spidery fingers, I pulled my wrap closer around me and burrowed into its warmth as I walked the dusty track out of town. I was in Vṛndāvana for

a week-long retreat. I had been looking forward to the opportunity, and had no intention of going anywhere: no day trips, no social outings, nothing. I was here to spend time with friends I hadn't seen for many years, and maybe sit at a holy site and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. It was going to be a well-earned break, a peaceful, solitary week



on my own—or so I thought. I had no idea what was about to happen: My life would change, and the catalyst would be one nameless, tiny, broken, chocolate-colored calf.

My old friend Śyāma Gaurī Dāsī welcomed me at the tall iron gates. I stepped in and took in the scene: a peaceful, clean yard, divided down the middle by a brick wall covered with a mix of cow dung and mud; haysheds, cowsheds, and fenced yards at the back, all washed with the same mixture, which gave a finish that was both pleasing to the eye and purifying to the atmosphere. It was the home of Care For Cows, and Śyāma Gaurī had invited me to this place where she spent a few days each week tending to Vṛndāvana's abandoned and in-

jured cows, calves, and bulls.

It felt good in that yard: The smell was country-fresh, a smell of cows, hay, cow dung, and all things good and clean. Over the brick wall, an empty yard that later in the day would house around ninety full-grown cows and bulls was at present the roaming ground of a solitary huge gray bull named Baba. In the distance, through the hayshed, I could see a fenced area at whose gate stood about twenty young cows and bulls, all under a year old, all too little to mingle with the grown ups. I would later refer to this area as “the playpen,” but for now it was just the cow yard, and its inhabitants were curious about my arrival.

It was then that I saw that little chocolate-brown calf I mentioned.



Lying against the brick wall, propped up by pillows and bags of hay, she lay soaking in the warm morning sun. Her eyes were closed, and they barely moved as we approached.

“This little one came in two days ago,” Śyāma Gaurī told me. “She was found by devotees who were on their way to the Dauji temple in Gokul. Her leg is broken and her hip is dislocated. She has these open wounds on her side, and we don’t know how seriously hurt she is internally. She was lying there for a week. No one did anything to help her. The devotees picked her up, put her in their car, and returned to town. They brought her straight here. We’re not sure if she’ll make it.”

### Proud to Be a Cow-Lover

Well, it’s right about here that the story becomes a heart-wrencher. It’s hard to hear things like this about





*tivates all the cows. (Stava Mālā, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī)*

These simple lines are valid, essential knowledge. But I can't say I've full realized it. Most of us are a long way from appreciating Kṛṣṇa with the same sentiments that the *gopīs* do, or with the understanding that great personalities such as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī possess about the intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in His abode of Goloka Vṛndāvana. Yet this brief journey into the world of abandoned and abused cows in Vṛndāvana was starting to have an effect on me. It is bound to give one a lot to think about in terms of one's eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and His relationship with His dearly beloved cows.

*Kṛṣṇa is worshiped as namo brahmaṇya-devāya. His first business is to give protection to the cows and the brāhmaṇas." (Śrīla Prabhupāda letter, June 16, 1974)*

Most of us might very likely go through life without having to give a second thought to the cows of Vṛndāvana. In some ways that wouldn't be so bad, because it's hard to see their state, painful to watch them brought in to the Care For Cows clinic with horrific injuries. It's heartbreaking to watch them cringe when a hand is

*Dr. Lavania treats Pushpa (left), who is so comfortable that she has fallen asleep. Above, the author sits with Pushpa one week after her rescue. At right, Vṛndā Devī pets a contented cow named Gopi.*

God's tiny creatures. It's harder to see it in person. You might wonder if I'm just some bleeding-heart cow-lover who's trying to "campaign" for some mistreated cows. Well, sure I'm a cow-lover—any devotee would have to be, almost by default. The Vedic scriptures are full of references to these most exalted animals who are the favorite of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*Kṛṣṇa is the very life and soul of the damsels of Braja. His entire body is covered with the fine dust raised by the hooves of calves, and He carries a flute tucked into the dhotī tied around His waist. His mellifluous voice cap-*





raised because they've been so poorly treated, or run away in fear when they hear a loud voice. But in truth it's a good thing to be given an opportunity to give time, service, and love to a tiny Vṛndāvana cow who can't stand, can't move, and has no energy to even raise her head to feed. There's a chance of coming closer to Kṛṣṇa in caring for these cows, understanding their specialness, and knowing for a brief moment why it is that Kṛṣṇa prefers their company every single day. Or why the planet where He resides is called Goloka Vṛndāvana, which means "planet of the cows." It's no accident—He is the Lord of all creation, yet he chooses to spend His days with cows. That's definitely some kind of wonderful.

*Just like Brahmā is offering a prayer, surabhīr abhipālayantam. "Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, You are so fond of Your surabhī cows that You are always engaged in taking them to the forest and enjoy with Your cowherd boys." The Māyāvādī will think, "What is this? God has become a cowherd boy? How is that? He must be very exalted. How is it that He is a cowherd boy?" But he does not know the nature of the Lord. He's free. He loves everyone. He loves His great devotee, He loves the cows, He loves the calves, He loves the trees, fruits, flowers, water, everything, because everything is a manifestation of His energy. (Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.8.44, Los Angeles, May 6, 1973)*

And there I was, standing in a cow yard, knowing that despite the fact that the most holy of holy sites, Sri Radha-kund, was a few miles away, or that a proliferation of temples of Kṛṣṇa surrounded me, or that the most worshipable Govardhan Hill was close by, still I was standing in the right place, the best place, the only place I wanted to be: right amongst Kṛṣṇa's cows.

Vṛndāvana is within the sacred area known as Braja, which means "pasturing grounds" in Sanskrit. Scriptures such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Caitanya-caritāmṛta repeatedly mention how significant it is that the most holy place of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is within pasturing grounds. Unfortunately, due to the development of the

## Scriptural Praise for Cows

EVERY MORNING at approximately 6:30 A.M., Śrī Gopāla Kṛṣṇa enters Nanda Mahārāja's cowshed to milk the transcendental cows. As Kṛṣṇa calls each cow, they respond by mooing and immediately surround Kṛṣṇa. Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa bends down, holding a golden milk pail between His knees, and milks some cows.

Kṛṣṇa directs the cowherd boys to milk other cows, and He lovingly caresses the cows in between milking. Govinda also ensures that each calf drinks milk to its full satisfaction.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa  
Kavirāja Gosvāmī  
Govinda-līlāmṛta

One should gently scratch the body of a cow, offer her a mouthful of green grass, and reverentially circumambulate her. If cows are maintained nicely and comfortably, Lord Gopāla will be pleased.

*Gautamīya-tantra*

Seeing a calf with its mouth pierced by a sharp straw, Śrī Rādhā felt unhappy. With tears in Her eyes, Rādhā immediately dressed the calf's wound with red *kumkum*.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī  
Ujjvala Nīlamanī

These Surabhī cows are just like *cintāmaṇi* jewels that fulfill all desires. Their happy calves are

like pleasant summers. Their mooing is the most beautiful poetry. They lift their ears to hear the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute."

Śrīla Viśvanātha  
Cakravartī Ṭhākura  
Vraja-riti-cintāmaṇi

All glories to Lord Kṛṣṇa's pet bull Padmagandha, whose handsome horns are covered with gold and studded with pearls, whose hooves are splendidly decorated with sapphires, and whose splendid neck is decorated with a swinging garland of reddish flowers.

Śrīla Raghunātha  
Dāsa Gosvāmī  
Vraja-vilāsa-stava

The cows of Vṛndāvana are called *kāmadhenus* because they fulfill all desires like *cintāmaṇi* gems. As the summer season is ornamented with blooming *kuṭaja* flowers, the cows are decorated with happy calves. All the cows of Vṛndāvana are expansions from Goloka.

Śrīla Kavi-karṇapura  
Ānanda Vṛndāvana  
Campū

I can be worshiped within the cows by offerings of grass and other suitable grains and paraphernalia for the pleasure and health of the cows.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam  
11.11.43

town of Vṛndāvana and the hold that greedy land-owners have on it, there are no pasturing grounds left for the cows, and they are forced to forage amongst rubbish piles and along the streets for food. Just like little Kāmala, whose story opened this article—she was pushed into traffic by a large, hungry bull.

However, her story has a happy ending:

*A kind lady reported the accident to Care For Cows, and within fifteen minutes I was loaded onto their ricksha and taken to their clinic. My wounds were cleaned of the motor oil, and my legs were set in casts. I was then given a private room and a diet of fresh grass, hay, and barley flour. After a few days I could stand for about fifteen minutes at a time. A cowherd looked after me, giving me fresh*





*Tender loving care at the Care For Cows cow-wash (top). At left and above, samples of cow-dung art on the compound walls.*

*water, massages, and encouragement. After a month my casts were removed, and thanks to Care For Cows, I can walk normally again.*

Care For Cows exists because of the

efforts of Kūrma Rūpa Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a long-time resident of Vṛndāvana. Because of his selfless service, cows like Kamala and my chocolate-colored friend—who

is now named Pushpa (“flower”)—have found a home. Care For Cows doesn’t just heal patients like Kamala and Pushpa—it gives them a home for life. They’re not returned to the streets once they’re well to suffer the same fate. When they grow, they spend their days on a few acres of borrowed land not far from the Care For Cows yard. In the afternoons, they return to the yard that Baba occupies alone in the mornings—he was also a victim of a broken leg in his youth, and is retired



*The photos at right and below are a graphic example of the success of Care For Cows. This is the same cow, Yashoda, before and after her rescue, treatment, and nurturing by the Care For Cows workers. On the opposite page, the whole herd gets special treats—fist-sized sweet-balls (laddus).*



everything should be taken care of. Therefore we say cow protection, cow protection.”

Cow protection is not a temporary campaign; to ignore the plight of cows is a very real threat against our human existence and the hope of attaining spirituality. In 1915, Nobel Prize winner Romain Rolland wrote:

To a man whose mind is free there is something even more intolerable in the sufferings of animals than in the sufferings of man. For with the latter it is at least admitted that suffering is evil and that the man who causes it is a criminal. But thousands of animals are uselessly butchered every day without a shadow of remorse. If any man were to refer to it, he would be thought ridiculous. And that is the unpardonable crime.

It’s an “unpardonable crime” that Kṛṣṇa’s cows are suffering. But it is a mere reflection of the state of the earth and the consciousness of its inhabitants.

While the world suffers the effects of cow slaughter internationally, we can at least maintain our own

to the yard. There they are fed well, brushed, and housed at night, warm together in the cold winter nights, secure in the knowledge that they don’t have to risk traffic, disease, and cattle rustlers to get their next feed.

Yes, I’m a cow-lover. But it’s okay

to be a cow-lover: it’s a substantial thing. Śrīla Prabhupāda said during a lecture: “So our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not a sentimental movement. It takes care of all-round social organization. It is not something like religious sentiment. Ev-



“backyard,” that place from which our spiritual lives emanate, Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, and its most glorified inhabitants: Kṛṣṇa’s cows.

*Anyone who meditates on Lord Kṛṣṇa’s birth, His protecting the cows, His singing charming songs with the gopas, and His other pastimes, will*

*find himself overcome with bliss and love. (Gopāla-campū 1.97, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī).*

*Braja Sevakī 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, Jānu-dvipa Dāsa. ❁*

*To help Care For Cows in Vṛndāvana, contact Kūrma Rūpa Dāsa (kurma.rupa.acbsp@pamho.net) or visit [www.careforcows.org](http://www.careforcows.org).*





# BLIND VISIONARIES

*The lives of two blind poets,  
both of whom were great devotees  
of Kṛṣṇa, are often merged  
in popular depictions.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

OKAY, I'LL ADMIT IT. For years now I've assumed that this popular Indian poster depicts Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, the blind thirteenth-century poet-saint who wrote the *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, a classic text on love for Kṛṣṇa. But I just found out that it's someone else in the picture. I happened to be in an Indian grocery store with a friend of mine who is now considered one of the world's leading authorities on Sūrdāsa, the blind sixteenth-century bard whose life in many ways parallels that of Bilvamaṅgala.

"No," he said. "This is a blind Kṛṣṇa poet, all right. But it's not Bilvamaṅgala."

He claimed it was the poet who is now his field of expertise.

Not really satisfied (who likes to be mistaken for so many years?), I quickly visited an old friend, an early disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He'll know for sure, I thought.

As I brought the picture before my Godbrother, he laughed.

"Yes, I asked Prabhupāda about that print," he said.

"What did he say?" I asked, hardly able to contain myself.

"He said that it was a picture of Sūrdāsa and Kṛṣṇa, but when I pressed him, mentioning Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, he said, 'Why not? Blind poet—it can be either one. Their pastimes are like twins.'"

Hmm. Pastimes are like twins? I decided I had to look into their lives to see what Prabhupāda was referring to.

## Bilvamaṅgala and Sūrdāsa

Most ISKCON devotees do not focus in on Sūrdāsa, and neither will most of this article. Bilvamaṅgala was one of the few poets Lord Caitanya enjoyed listening to when He was in heightened states of spiritual ecstasy. This exceptional composer of verse went by other names, too, such as Līlāśuka. *Śuka* means "parrot," and the name was given to him by his guru Somagiri because of the mellifluous way in which he described the loving *līlā*, or pastimes, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the





# The Twin Lives of Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura and Sūrdāsa





Supreme Personality of Godhead.

According to traditional biographies, he is said to have lived centuries before the scholarly determined thirteenth, but tradition also holds that he lived for seven hundred years, which makes dating his time on earth difficult. He was among the chief disciples of Viṣṇusvāmī, one of the great teachers of the Rudra *sampradāya*, a traditional Vaiṣṇava lineage.

From his writings it is clear that he was initially given to the impersonalistic understanding of Ādi Śaṅkara (circa eighth century C.E.). In oth-

er words, he viewed God as formless and the goal of life as merging into God's essential being. Under the patronage of King Kulaśekhara of Kerala, however, Vaiṣṇavism, or the personalistic view of the Supreme, was gaining in popularity, and the original Vedic version—that God is the Supreme Being and we exist to serve Him, not to merge into Him—was again rising to the fore. Bilvamaṅgala caught on to this conception and became one of its most outstanding representatives.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī

(sixteenth century), the author of the *Caitanya-caritāmāta*, by way of explaining the first verse of Bilvamaṅgala's most famous work, indeed tells us that the author was first given to worldly attachments; then he cultivated *kevala-jñāna*, or contemplation of the impersonal Brahman; finally, he became a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Born in a *brāhmaṇa* family in South India, he lived on the eastern bank of the holy river Krishna-Venna. His learning was vast, but in his previous life, though he had made

tremendous spiritual advancement, he was unduly attached to sex. This tendency carried over into his current incarnation. Accordingly, as Bilvamaṅgala he reached a certain point in his spiritual evolution and then had an illicit sexual liaison with a well-to-do musician and harlot named Cintāmaṇi.

### Passionate Determination

Cintāmaṇi lived on the opposite bank of the river, and so, with great determination, he used to visit her every night. He was so devoted to this prostitute that even when he was performing his father's death ceremony (*śrāddha*), he told the priests, "Make haste! Make haste! I have to go."

On that particular night, in fact, he had to undergo especially severe austerities to get to her home. It was a terribly stormy night, and to get across the river would be even more difficult than usual. But this wouldn't sway him. He came to the bank of the Krishna-Venna, as was his custom, and finding no boat, risked his life to cross the terrible river. With waves crashing down all around him, he began swimming across the raging current.



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## *So inspiring were Cintāmaṇi's words that Bilvamaṅgala immediately resolved to change the course of his life, moving headlong into spiritual concerns.*

• • •

In the meantime, the prostitute Cintāmaṇi was thinking, “It is so late, and raining so hard. Surely Bilvamaṅgala won’t come in such conditions, even to see me.”

She bolted the door and retired to her bedroom.

As she snuggled up in her warm bed, poor Bilvamaṅgala was drowning in the middle of the fierce river. He desperately grabbed onto what he thought was a log. When he finally reached the shore, he discovered that it was actually a corpse. Unconcerned in the least, he quickly proceeded to the door of his beloved’s house. But, much to his disappointment, he found the gate bolted from within. He shouted her name with all his might, but it was to no avail. His cries were drowned out by the deafening thunder, boisterous winds, and torrential rains beating down on the windows and walls. What could be done? In his passion to see his lover, nothing could dissuade him.

The walls were too high for him to scale. Still, he tried. Having nothing else to hold on to, he seized a snake clinging to the wall. He succeeded in leaping over but fell heavily to the ground on the other side. The loud thump brought Cintāmaṇi to the spot, where she saw the pitiable Bilvamaṅgala in a wretched condition.

Cintāmaṇi carried him into the room and there nursed him tenderly as he balanced between life and death. Observing his mad love for her, she was reminded of a truth she had heard in her youth, that such love is actually meant for God.

Inspired, she looked at him and shouted, “What a great fool you are! Shame on your learning! I am always conscious of my own wicked life and profession, but you are completely

in the dark about who you actually are. Had you been attached to God in the way you are to me, you would have been a saint.”

### **The Clarion Call of Truth**

Cintāmaṇi’s words rang true for young Bilvamaṅgala. She had unwittingly become his *vartma-pradarśaka-guru*, or the guru who initially shows one the way to the highest truth. So inspiring were her words that he immediately resolved to change the course of his life, moving headlong into spiritual concerns. She too renounced the world, giving up all her ill-acquired fortunes.

The very next day Bilvamaṅgala started for Vṛndāvana, the land of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But on the way he saw another beautiful woman, the wife of a *brāhmaṇa*, and became enamored by her. Losing sight of his newfound spiritual determination, he began following this lovely *brāhmaṇī*, hoping to attract her attention. Intelligently, she led him to her respectable family, and Bilvamaṅgala came into their house.

The woman immediately went to her husband, saying, “This man is following me. Please discern his intentions.”

The *brāhmaṇa* addressed Bilvamaṅgala, “My dear sir, you appear to be a very nice gentleman—a renunciant. From your appearance I can understand that you come from an aristocratic family as well. But why are you following my wife?”

“Because I want to embrace her,” Bilvamaṅgala replied.

“Come then, I will arrange for you to attain your goal,” the *brāhmaṇa* announced.

Then, with a plan in mind, he told

his wife, “Here is a guest, and he wants to embrace and kiss you. Decorate yourself nicely so that he might enjoy your beauty.”

The wife did as her husband asked, and when Bilvamaṅgala came before her, seeing how accommodating both she and her gentle husband were he again realized what a fool he was.

He resolved to make a permanent solution to his problem and asked the *brāhmaṇa* lady, “My dear mother [a term of deep respect], will you kindly give me a pin from your hair?”

Although bewildered by his request, she took a pin from her beautiful locks and handed it to him.

He then took the pin and pierced his own eyes, saying, “These eyes are my enemies! May they now only look upon Kṛṣṇa.”

While the tradition does not encourage ordinary people to adopt such drastic measures, the story is meant to show the intensity of this saint’s determination and his particular remedy for his relentless affliction.

### **Seeing Kṛṣṇa**

Bilvamaṅgala then continued towards Vṛndāvana. As he neared its holy precincts, a young boy, seeing the difficulty that the now blind Bilvamaṅgala was enduring, took His hand and began leading him the rest of the way. The blind bard soon realized that it was Kṛṣṇa Himself. As they moved ever closer to Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa pulled away from His hand.

“I have to go now. My mother is calling Me. If I don’t go now and take My lunch, she’ll be very angry.”

“No, you can’t go,” Bilvamaṅgala said. “I won’t let you.”

But Kṛṣṇa got away.

# *Bilvamaṅgala told Kṛṣṇa, “You can pull Your hand from mine, but You cannot take Yourself from my heart. I have imprisoned You there.”*

• • •

He somehow managed to pull His hand out of Bilvamaṅgala’s, who then called out, “You can pull Your hand from mine, but You cannot take Yourself from my heart. I have imprisoned You there.”

Bilvamaṅgala then made a place for himself at Brahma-kund, a holy site in Vṛndāvana, to perform austerities for the rest of his life. One day, however, Kṛṣṇa again came to Bilvamaṅgala.

“My dear sir,” He addressed the blind renunciant, “why are you living so humbly, practicing such severe austerities? Why don’t you take some milk?”

“Who are You, my dear boy?” Bilvamaṅgala inquired.

“I am a cowherd boy,” Kṛṣṇa replied. “If you like, I can supply you with milk every day.”

Bilvamaṅgala agreed, and from then on Kṛṣṇa daily brought him a small supply of milk.

It is said that Bilvamaṅgala remained at Brahma-kund for seven hundred years and performed *tapasya*, or penance. When he would sing his sweet songs about Kṛṣṇa, that singing would quickly drag Kṛṣṇa to the spot. Kṛṣṇa would be unable to concentrate on what He was doing, and He would leave everything and go to where Bilvamaṅgala was singing His glories. Kṛṣṇa would come and sit in front of him and listen, as depicted in the painting.

## Twins of a Fashion

Sūrdāsa’s story is not as colorful as Bilvamaṅgala’s, and as already mentioned, it’s of less interest to the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement—Bilvamaṅgala is our Sūrdāsa.

There are other distinctions between the two poets: Sūrdāsa’s poet-

ry was in the proto-Hindi language of Brij Bhasha, while Bilvamaṅgala wrote in Sanskrit. Sūrdāsa was congenitally blind, unlike Bilvamaṅgala, whose attraction to women and his determination to defeat that attraction is what caused his blindness. While Sūr’s magnum opus is the *Sūr Sagara* (“Ocean of Sūr”), Bilvamaṅgala is known for the *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, though both works share much in common. They both speak of overcoming all obstacles to surrender to Kṛṣṇa and explain that the sweetest love is found at His lotus feet.

The confluence of these poetic traditions has made many historians wonder about the overlap—just who is borrowing from whom? After all, Bilvamaṅgala’s extraordinarily long life would allow the borrowing to go either way. Or are there really two stories here? Should they be conflated into one? In fact, the two have flowed into each other in numerous devotional biographies of the seventeenth century, and they even merge triumphantly in film and comic book adaptations. People can’t seem to get it straight. Sometimes Sūr’s story is told with a little extra spice: There is a woman involved, as in the Bilvamaṅgala version, and his blindness comes as a result of his lust. Other times Bilvamaṅgala is born blind, like Sūr, and verses from the *Sūr Sagara* are attributed to him.

## Stories to Inspire Us

Interestingly, *Sūr* (*sūra*) means “sun,” the intense light of which has caused much blindness in India. And because Sūr the poet was known by that name, it has come to refer colloquially to blind people in general, especially those who happen to be some-

what saintly. This could also account for the occasional conflation of the two poets. Perhaps this is also why Prabhupāda seemed unconcerned about their distinct identities.

The basic thing to remember, it seems, is that there’s a certain *bhāva*, or emotion, to these stories—and to the poetry—and that’s that love of Kṛṣṇa is the goal of life. Both Bilvamaṅgala and Sūr sing of a beautiful Lord with large lotus eyes and a dark blue complexion; raven black hair that curls about His ears, sometimes falling into His face; a bewitching smile; and a collection of flutes that conspire to make beautiful music.

There is something else to learn from their stories, too. They are meant to provoke thought, to inspire in us a particular question: What exactly does it mean to be blind? When we look at Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the evil king mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, we are confronted with true blindness.

Indeed, as Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us, “Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind from birth. Unfortunately, he was also bereft of spiritual vision.”

Here is the distinction between this particular king and the two poets in question. Prabhupāda would never think of these three as triplets, since Bilvamaṅgala and Sūrdāsa were great devotees and Dhṛtarāṣṭra knew a different blindness altogether. This, it must be said, is why Prabhupāda viewed Bilvamaṅgala and Sūr as twins—and as visionaries who pave the way for all aspiring devotees.

*Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor. He has written over twenty books. He lives with his wife and daughter near New York City.*



# 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. For the exact dates for your area, go to [www.krishna.com/calendar](http://www.krishna.com/calendar).

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 Vāmana

(June 12–July 11)

### JULY

7—Śayanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

11—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

## Month of Śrīdhara

(July 12–August 9)

15—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

18—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

19—Anniversary of incorporation of ISKCON, in New York City, 1966.

21—Kāmikā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.



Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

### AUGUST

5—Pavitropanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Jhulana Yātrā (swing festival) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda begins.

6—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

9—Jhulana Yātrā ends. Appearance anniversary of Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting. Second month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from yogurt).

## Month of Hṛṣīkeśa

(August 10–September 7)

10—Anniversary of the departure of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to the United States in 1965.

16—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī prasādam (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for a schedule of events.

17—Appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

19—Annadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

29—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sitā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

### SEPTEMBER

1—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

4—Parśvā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today for Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī tomorrow.)

5—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

6—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

7—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *san-nyāsa*, the renounced order of life. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).





# PANIHATI

## Inspiration on the Ganges

*At this important Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava holy place just north of Calcutta, a great festival is held each year to commemorate a life-changing event.*

Text and photos by Parama Sevā Dāsa

EMERGING FROM the Calcutta Metro station is always a bit of a shock. The Metro, or subway as this native New Yorker never fails to call it, is a source of great pride for Calcuttans. Clean and orderly even

by Western standards, its marble and granite stations are remarkably well kept. The German-made train cars offer a comfortable, although by no means luxurious, ride. No polluting, graffiti, or spitting is tolerated in ei-



*Clay deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (left), probably installed for a particular festival, stand beneath a massive banyan tree under which Lord Nityānanda once stood. Above, a priest offers a burning ghee-wick lamp to deities in the Panihati temple.*

ther the stations or the cars. Unfortunately, the protected environment of the Metro quickly dissipates as soon as one reaches street level.

Surfacing from our subterranean haven, my travel companions and I are quickly caught up in the incessant motion of the crowd. There is no choice but to catch the wave and ride with it. Threatened to be caught in its under-toe, we pick up the pace and start forward.

Today we're visiting an important Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava place of pilgrimage, Sri Panihati Dhama. The Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Atlanta, where I have lived for the last thirteen years, is named New Panihati Dhama after this holy site. My traveling partners today are Amitejas Dāsa and Amṛta Jīvanī Dāsī, who also reside in Atlanta but are originally from Calcutta.

Although we have all visited Panihati many times, this is our first experience traveling exclusively by public transportation. After a short bicycle-rickshaw ride to a Metro station, it took only thirty-five minutes to reach the northernmost station, Dum Dum—named after the famous hollow-tipped bullets the British produced here.

An Eastern Railway station adjoins the Metro, and we buy tickets to ride the local train for three stations to Sodapur. Outside the Sodapur station we are directed to the nearby auto-rickshaw stand. A three-and-half rupee ride drops us off right near the Ganges at Panihati.

### Lord Nityānanda's Tree

At the heart of Panihati is a ghat, a series of large concrete steps leading into the river. Today, some have come to pay respects to the holy Ganges, while others are here to do their laundry, have a bath, or just to sit with friends and chat. Nearby is a dock where a ferry can be boarded. Seeing it, I'm reminded that Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to implement speed boat service from Calcutta to Māyāpur, with a stop at Panihati.

Just next to the ghat is a large banyan tree associated with a pastime of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu's. It is said







to be over seven hundred years old. Once, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, one of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's principal followers, came to Panihati to get the audience of Nityānanda Prabhu. When Raghunātha Dāsa arrived, he saw Nityānanda Prabhu sitting beneath this very tree with His devotees, like the effulgent sun surrounded by so many planets in orbit. The account of what transpired that day constitutes one of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism's most famous stories.

The only son of a wealthy landowner, Raghunātha Dāsa had wanted to leave his opulent home and become a *sannyāsī*, a renunciant. He was completely dedicated to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and neither his family's great wealth and influence nor a beautiful young wife could stop him from trying to leave home. His father even hired bodyguards to check his son from stealing away in the middle of the night.

After having been instructed by Caitanya Mahāprabhu to remain as a responsible married man, Raghunātha Dāsa was unsatisfied. Knowing well that the best way to obtain the favor of Lord Caitanya would be through Lord Nityānanda, Raghunātha Dāsa understood that he should humbly submit himself to Nityānanda Prabhu.

It was at this very spot that Nityānanda Prabhu gave Raghunātha Dāsa His mercy. Placing His divine foot on Raghunātha Dāsa's head, the Lord instructed him to arrange a picnic of *cīra-dahi* (yogurt and chipped-rice) for all the devotees.

Raghunātha Dāsa immediately sent for the necessary ingredients: yogurt, chipped-rice, sweets, bananas, and sugar. Soon the feast was under way. When devotees heard of the festival, they came from all over, and before long there were so many that no one could count them all. It became so crowded that some even had to go into the Ganges to eat. While enjoying the *cīra-dahi*, Nityānanda Prabhu instruct-

*A deity of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī sits on the altar in his memorial tomb, accompanied by photos of previous spiritual masters connected with the temple.*





*Sri Panihati  
Dhama sits on the  
bank of the Ganges  
(left). At right,  
pilgrims perform a  
ceremony in honor  
of a deceased  
family member.*



ed everyone to chant “Hari, Hari,” and they all felt great ecstasy.

Situated directly on the Ganges, only ten miles north of Calcutta, Panihati has historically been known as a trading center for rice. Indeed, the name Panihati denotes a marketplace on the water. As the festival took place at the height of summer, just as the monsoons would be beginning, the *cira-dahi* preparations would be perfect as a cooling meal for all of Nityānanda Prabhu’s associates. Every summer this festival still takes place, attended by 100,000 devotees.

The tree under which Nityānanda Prabhu sat is impressive. It is clearly very old. It is elevated off the ground by several feet, and is surrounded by a circular concrete retaining wall.

Today we are lucky to find clay deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa beneath the tree, perhaps left there after a recent festival. Smaller banyan trees surround the central trunk, forming a large canopy blocking out the sun like a huge umbrella. Beneath the tree is a small structure where devotees come to sing hymns and perform religious ceremo-

nies. Some use it to have a picnic, or just relax in the shade. It is nothing more than a concrete roof, floor, and pillars, but it is enough. Today two sisters are availing themselves of it to perform a *śrāddha* ceremony in honor of their deceased father.

### Temple Ārati

Knowing that the local temple will close its doors just after noon, we start walking towards it, only somewhat certain that we can remember where it is. A few minutes later, we spot its gate and hope that we will be in time to see the deities. Inside the gate, a group of women are sitting in the shade chatting good-naturedly. By their conch-shell bangles, cotton printed saris, and the vermilion decorating their foreheads, it is apparent that they are all local housewives.

This temple has great historical significance. At the very site where the temple is located was the residence of Rāghava Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya’s closest associates. Indeed, it was here that Nityānanda

***It is impressive to see how so many local people have come to the temple for āratī and are actively participating by holding kīrtana for the deities.***

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Prabhu often came to dance and feast with His followers. Rāghava Paṇḍita and his sister Damayantī Devī were always absorbed in serving Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. They were best known for the food they offered to Them with great devotion. It was commonly said that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself cooked in Damayantī's kitchen.

Before the altar doors are opened, we make our way to the small museum adjacent to the temple hall. Inside is a display containing examples of the dishes that Damayantī would cook for Mahāprabhu. She would cook enough to last one year and was so expert that she could even make delicious sweets from the mud of the Ganga. These would be labeled, dated with a shelf-life, and packed carefully in bags to be brought by Rāghava Paṇḍita to Lord Caitanya in Jagannatha Puri. It was a custom that the devotees from Bengal would visit Jagannatha Puri every year for the Rathayātrā celebration there. During this time, Rāghava Paṇḍita and his associates would carry the bags full of *prasādam* to Lord Caitanya.

Within the museum there is also a *mūrti* (statue) of Śrīmatī Damayantī holding her bead bag, along with photos of past gurus connected to the temple. I take a few photographs and then proceed outside just as the *āratī* ceremony in the temple is beginning. The elderly priest lays some cymbals and a gong out for the congregation to play and then opens the altar doors, leaving the metal gates locked.

The altar room itself is elevated from the rest of the temple by a raised platform. There are three sets of doors, and once they are opened we are able to have the audience of Gaura-Nitāi, ancient Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities, and many *sālagrāma-silās*. The deities are situ-

ated quite inside the altar room and are obscured by closed gates, so They are difficult to view.

A middle-aged woman picks up the largest pair of cymbals and leads the singing. Although she chants many mantras, she continually returns to the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Meanwhile, a young girl with a freshly pierced nose grabs hold of the gong and begins playing it enthusiastically, swinging the hammer in a wide arc. Unfortunately her sense of timing does not match her enthusiasm. An elderly woman rings the heavy brass temple bell by pulling on the long rope that dangles from the ceiling, where the bell is securely mounted.

It is impressive to see how so many local people have to come to the temple for *āratī*. Not only have they come, but they are actively participating by holding *kīrtana* for the deities. Indeed, what service could be more pleasing to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi than the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa?

### **Meeting a Devotee Of Prabhupāda**

After the *āratī*, the congregation sits patiently while the priest places a few drops of sanctified water on everyone's head. After bringing out a large tray of *prasādam*, he spoons a bit into everyone's hand before leaving.

Behind the temple is a narrow path where we and a few others are invited to sit for lunch. Afterwards, a man notices the fifty-year-old camera around my neck and strikes up a conversation. He tells me that he works for a Calcutta newspaper and that photography is his hobby. Today he and his family have arrived from Kardaha, another important site associated with Nityānanda Prabhu's pastimes. He is very friendly and gives me some ba-

sic directions to Kardaha as well as his email address.

"Are you from ISKCON?" eventually he asks me. He then adds, "I am not a member of ISKCON, but I am actually a devotee of Śrīla Prabhupāda."

In the courtyard of the temple is the *samādhi* (memorial tomb) of Rāghava Paṇḍita. On top of it is a large creeper that forms a huge canopy overhead, blocking out almost all of the sunlight.

After circumambulating the *samādhi* while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, we make our way back to the ghat. Under Nityānanda Prabhu's tree, Amṛta Jivanī meets an elderly woman who lives at Panihati. A poor widow, she has no home and sleeps under the banyan tree. Sometime ago, she heard about the annual festival here and came to get something to eat. Since then, she has remained here and gets some small donations from the pilgrims who visit. While I feel bad for her precarious material situation, I know that she is spiritually very fortunate. Not everyone has the opportunity to take full shelter of a holy place of Nityānanda Prabhu's pastimes. As we bid her goodbye, Amṛta Jivanī gives her some rupees, which she gratefully accepts.

This year's visit has been a very inspiring one, and we feel sad leaving such a special place. There is comfort, however, knowing that we will enjoy the *cira-dahi* festival this summer back home at New Panihati Dhama. ❀

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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.

# ŚIVA RESPONDS TO BRAHMĀ'S REQUESTS

*Lord Brahmā concludes his petition to Lord Śiva to restore the demigods' injured bodies, and Lord Śiva replies.*

## CANTO 4: CHAPTER 6

51 जीवताद्यजमानोऽयं प्रपद्येताक्षिणी भगः

भृगोः श्मश्रूणि रोहन्तु पूष्णो दन्ताश्च पूर्ववत्

*jīvatād yajamāno 'yam  
prapadyetākṣiṇī bhagaḥ  
bhṛgoḥ śmaśrūṇi rohantu  
pūṣṇo dantāś ca pūrvavat*

*jīvatāt*—let him be alive; *yajamānaḥ*—the performer of the sacrifice (Dakṣa); *ayam*—this; *prapadyeta*—let him get back; *akṣiṇī*—by the eyes; *bhagaḥ*—Bhagadeva; *bhṛgoḥ*—of the sage Bhṛgu; *śmaśrūṇi*—mustache; *rohantu*—may grow again; *pūṣṇaḥ*—of Pūṣādeva; *dantāḥ*—the chain of teeth; *ca*—and; *pūrva-vat*—like before.

**My dear lord, by your mercy the performer of the sacrifice (King Dakṣa) may get back his life, Bhaga may get back his eyes, Bhṛgu his mustache, and Pūṣā his teeth.**

52 देवानां भग्नगात्राणामृत्विजां चायुधाश्मभिः

भवतानुगृहीतानामाशु मन्योऽस्त्वनानुरम्

*devānām bhagna-gātrāṇām  
ṛvijām cāyudhāśmabhiḥ  
bhavatānugṛhītānām  
āśu manyo 'stv anāturam*

*devānām*—of the demigods; *bhagna-gātrāṇām*—whose limbs are badly broken; *ṛvijām*—of the priests; *ca*—and; *āyudha-aśmabhiḥ*—by weapons and by stones; *bhavatā*—by you; *anugṛhītānām*—being favored; *āśu*—at once; *manyo*—O Lord Śiva (in an angry mood); *astu*—let there be; *anāturam*—recovery from injuries.

**O Lord Śiva, may the demigods and the priests whose limbs have been broken by your soldiers recover from the injuries by your grace.**

53 एष ते रुद्र भागोऽस्तु यदुच्छिष्टोऽध्वरस्य वै  
यज्ञस्ते रुद्रभागेन कल्पतामद्य यज्ञहन्

*eṣa te rudra bhāgo 'stu  
yad-ucchiṣṭo 'dhvarasya vai  
yajñas te rudra bhāgena  
kalpatām adya yajña-han*

*eṣaḥ*—this; *te*—your; *rudra*—O Lord Śiva; *bhāgaḥ*—portion; *astu*—let it be; *yat*—whatever; *ucchiṣṭaḥ*—is the re-

mainder; *adhvarasya*—of the sacrifice; *vai*—indeed; *yajñāḥ*—the sacrifice; *te*—your; *rudra*—O Rudra; *bhāgena*—by the portion; *kalpatām*—may be completed; *adya*—today; *yajña-han*—O destroyer of the sacrifice.

**O destroyer of the sacrifice, please take your portion of the sacrifice and let the sacrifice be completed by your grace.**

PURPORT: A sacrifice is a ceremony performed to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Second Chapter, it is stated that everyone should try to understand whether the Supreme Personality of Godhead is satisfied by his activity. ❶ In other words, the aim of our activities should be to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just as in an office it is the duty of the worker to see that the proprietor or the master is satisfied, so everyone's duty is to see whether the Supreme Personality of Godhead is satisfied by one's activity. ❷ Activities to satisfy the Supreme Godhead are prescribed in the Vedic literature, and execution of such activities is called *yajña*. In other words, acting on behalf of the Supreme Lord is called *yajña*. ❸ One should know very well that any activity besides *yajña* is the cause of material bondage. That is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.9): *yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ*. ❹ *Karma-bandhanaḥ* means that if we do not work for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, then the reaction of our work will bind us. One should not work for his own sense gratification. Everyone should work for the satisfaction of God. That is called *yajña*.

❺ After the *yajña* was performed by Dakṣa, all the demigods expected *prasāda*, the remnants of foodstuffs offered to Viṣṇu. Lord Śiva is one of the demigods, so naturally he also expected his share of the *prasāda* from the *yajña*. But Dakṣa, out of his envy of Lord Śiva, neither invited Śiva to participate in the *yajña* nor gave him his

share after the offering. But after the destruction of the *yajña* arena by the followers of Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā pacified him and assured him that he would get his share of *prasāda*. Thus he was requested to rectify whatever destruction was caused by his followers.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.11) it is said that all the demigods are satisfied when one performs *yajña*. Because the demigods expect *prasāda* from *yajñas*, *yajña* must be performed. Those who engage in sense gratificatory, materialistic activities must perform *yajña*, otherwise they will be implicated. Thus Dakṣa, being the father of mankind, was performing *yajña*, and Lord Śiva expected his share. But since Śiva was not invited, there was trouble. By the mediation of Lord Brahmā, however, everything was settled satisfactorily.

The performance of *yajña* is a very difficult task because all the demigods must be invited to participate in the *yajña*. In this Kali-yuga it is not possible to perform such costly sacrifices, nor is it possible to invite the demigods to participate. Therefore in this age it is recommended, *yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ* (*Bhāg.* 11.5.32). Those who are intelligent should know that in the Kali-yuga there is no possibility of performing the Vedic sacrifices. But unless one pleases the demigods, there will be no regulated seasonal activities or rainfall. Everything is controlled by the demigods. ❻ Under the circumstances, in this age, in order to keep the balance of social peace and prosperity, all intelligent men should execute the performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña* by chanting the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. One should invite people, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and then distribute *prasāda*. This *yajña* will satisfy all the demigods, and thus there will be peace and prosperity in the world.

Another difficulty in performing the Vedic rituals is that if one fails to satisfy even one demigod out of the many hundreds of thousands of demigods, just as Dakṣa failed to satisfy Lord Śiva, there will be disaster. But in this age the performance of sacrifice has been simplified. One can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and by pleasing Kṛṣṇa one can satisfy all the demigods automatically.

- (1) What should be the aim of our activities?
- (2) What is the name for activities to satisfy the Supreme Godhead as prescribed in the Vedic literature?
- (3) What is the result of any activity besides *yajña*?
- (4) What does *karma-bandhanaḥ* mean?
- (5) What did the demigods expect to receive after the *yajña* was performed by Dakṣa?
- (6) What *yajña* should be performed in Kali-yuga?

## CANTO 4: CHAPTER 7

मैत्रेय उवाच

1 इत्यजेनानुनीतेन भवेन परितुष्यता  
अभ्यधायि महाबाहो प्रहस्य श्रुयतामिति

*maitreya uvāca*  
*ity ajenānūnītena*  
*bhavana parituṣyatā*



*abhyadhāyi mahā-bāho  
prahasya śrūyatām iti*

*maitreyaḥ*—Maitreya; *uvāca*—said; *iti*—thus; *ajena*—by Lord Brahmā; *anunītena*—pacified; *bhavana*—by Lord Śiva; *parituṣyatā*—fully satisfied; *abhyadhāyi*—said; *mahā-bāho*—O Vidura; *prahasya*—smiling; *śrūyatām*—listen; *iti*—thus.

**The sage Maitreya said: O mighty-armed Vidura, Lord Śiva, being thus pacified by the words of Lord Brahmā, spoke as follows in answer to Lord Brahmā's request.**

महादेव उवाच

2 नाघं प्रजेश बालानां वर्णये नानुचिन्तये  
देवमायाभिभूतानां दण्डस्तत्र धृतो मया

*mahādeva uvāca  
nāgham prajāśa bālānām  
varṇaye nānucintaye  
deva-māyābhibhūtānām  
daṇḍas tatra dhṛto mayā*

*mahādevaḥ*—Lord Śiva; *uvāca*—said; *na*—not; *agham*—offense; *prajā-īśa*—O lord of created beings; *bālānām*—of the children; *varṇaye*—I regard; *na*—not; *anucintaye*—I consider; *deva-māyā*—the external energy of the Lord; *abhibhūtānām*—of those deluded by; *daṇḍaḥ*—rod; *tatra*—there; *dhṛtaḥ*—used; *mayā*—by me.

**Lord Śiva said: My dear father, Brahmā, I do not mind the offenses created by the demigods. Because these demigods are childish and less intelligent, I do not take a serious view of their offenses, and I have punished them only in order to right them.**

PURPORT: There are two types of punishment. One is that which a conqueror imposes on an enemy, and the other is like that a father imposes on his son. There is a gulf of difference between these two kinds of punishment. Lord Śiva is by nature a Vaiṣṇava, a great devotee, and his name in this connection is Āśutoṣa. He is always satisfied, and therefore he did not become angry as if he were an enemy. He is not inimical to any living entity; rather, he always wishes the welfare of all. Whenever he chastises a person, it is just like a father's punishment of his son. (7) Lord Śiva is like a father because he never takes seriously any offense by any living entities, especially the demigods.

3 प्रजापतेर्दग्धशीर्ष्णो भवत्वजमुखं शिरः  
मित्रस्य चक्षुषेक्षेत भागं स्वं बर्हिषो भगः

*prajāpater dagdha-śirṣṇo  
bhavatv aja-mukhaṁ śiraḥ  
mitrasya cakṣuṣekṣeta  
bhāgam svam barhiṣo bhagaḥ*

*prajāpateḥ*—of Prajāpati Dakṣa; *dagdha-śirṣṇaḥ*—whose head has been burned to ashes; *bhavadu*—let there be; *aja-mukham*—with the face of a goat; *śiraḥ*—a head; *mitrasya*—of Mitra; *cakṣuṣā*—through the eyes; *ikṣeta*—may see; *bhāgam*—share; *svam*—his own; *barhiṣaḥ*—of the sacrifice; *bhagaḥ*—Bhaga.

**Lord Śiva continued: Since the head of Dakṣa has already been burned to ashes, he will have the head of a goat. The demigod known as Bhaga will be able to see his share of sacrifice through the eyes of Mitra.**

4 पूषा तु यजमानस्य दद्विर्जक्षतु पिष्टभुक्  
देवाः प्रकृतसर्वाङ्गा ये म उच्छेषणं ददुः

*pūṣā tu yajamānasya  
dadbhīr jakṣatu piṣṭa-bhuk  
devāḥ prakṛta-sarvāṅgā  
ye ma uccheṣaṇam daduḥ*

*pūṣā*—Pūṣā; *tu*—but; *yajamānasya*—of the performer of the sacrifice; *dadbhīḥ*—with the teeth; *jakṣatu*—chew; *piṣṭa-bhuk*—eating flour; *devāḥ*—the demigods; *prakṛta*—made; *sarva-aṅgāḥ*—complete; *ye*—who; *me*—unto me; *uccheṣaṇam*—a share of the sacrifice; *daduḥ*—gave.

**The demigod Pūṣā will be able to chew only through the teeth of his disciples, and if alone, he will have to satisfy himself by eating dough made from chickpea flour. But the demigods who have agreed to give me my share of the sacrifice will recover from all their injuries.**

PURPORT: The demigod Pūṣā became dependent on his disciples for chewing. Otherwise he was allowed to swallow only dough made of chickpea flour. Thus his punishment continued. He could not use his teeth for eating, since he had laughed at Lord Śiva, deriding him by showing his teeth. (8) In other words, it was not appropriate for him to have teeth, for he had used them against Lord Śiva.

5 बाहुभ्यामश्विनोः पूष्णो हस्ताभ्यां कृतबाहवः  
भवन्त्वध्वर्यवश्चान्ये बस्तरश्मश्रुर्भृगुर्भवेत्

(7) How is Lord Śiva's mood like that of a father?  
(8) Why was Pūṣā not given his teeth back?

*bāhubhyām aśvinoḥ pūṣṇo  
hastābhyām kṛta-bāhavaḥ  
bhavantu adhvaryavaś cānye  
basta-śmaśrur bhṛgu bhavet*

*bāhubhyām*—with two arms; *aśvinoḥ*—of Aśvinī-kumāra; *pūṣṇaḥ*—of Pūṣā; *hastābhyām*—with two hands; *kṛta-bāhavaḥ*—those in need of arms; *bhavantu*—they will have to; *adhvaryavaḥ*—the priests; *ca*—and; *anye*—others; *basta-śmaśrur*—the beard of the goat; *bhṛguḥ*—Bhṛgu; *bhavet*—he may have.

**Those who have had their arms cut off will have to work with the arms of Aśvinī-kumāra, and those whose hands were cut off will have to do their work with the hands of Pūṣā. The priests will also have to act in that manner. As for Bhṛgu, he will have the beard from the goat's head.**

PURPORT: Bhṛgu Muni, a great supporter of Dakṣa, was awarded the beard of the goat's head which was substituted for the head of Dakṣa. ⑨ It appears from the exchange of Dakṣa's head that the modern scientific theory that the brain substance is the cause of all intelligent work is not valid. The brain substance of Dakṣa and that of a goat are different, but Dakṣa still acted like himself, even though his head was replaced by that of a goat. The conclusion is that it is the particular consciousness of an individual soul which acts. The brain substance is only an instrument which has nothing to do with real intelligence. The real intelligence, mind and consciousness are part of the particular individual soul. It will be found in the verses ahead that after Dakṣa's head was replaced by the goat's head, he was as intelligent as he had previously been. He prayed very nicely to satisfy Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu, which is not possible for a goat to do. Therefore it is definitely concluded that the brain substance is not the center of intelligence; it is the consciousness of a particular soul that works intelligently.

The whole movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to purify the consciousness. ⑩ It doesn't matter what kind of brain one has because if he simply transfers his consciousness from matter to Kṛṣṇa, his life becomes successful. It is confirmed by the Lord Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā* that

- (9) How does the exchange of Dakṣa's head contradict the theory that the brain is the cause of intelligence?**  
**(10) Why doesn't it matter what kind of brain one has?**  
**(11) What is the meaning of the word *mīdhuṣṭama*, used to describe Lord Śiva?**

anyone who takes up Kṛṣṇa consciousness achieves the highest perfection of life, regardless of whatever abominable condition of life he may have fallen into. Specifically, anyone in Kṛṣṇa consciousness goes back to Godhead, back to home, on leaving his present material body.

मैत्रेय उवाच

6 तदा सर्वाणि भूतानि श्रुत्वा मीदुष्टमोदितम्  
परितुष्टात्मभिस्तात साधु साध्वित्यथाब्रुवन्

*maitreya uvāca  
tadā sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
śrutvā mīdhuṣṭamoditam  
parituṣṭātmabhis tāta  
sādhu sādhu ity athābruvan*

*maitreyaḥ*—the sage Maitreya; *uvāca*—said; *tadā*—at that time; *sarvāṇi*—all; *bhūtāni*—personalities; *śrutvā*—after hearing; *mīdhuḥ-tama*—the best of the benedictors (Lord Śiva); *uditam*—spoken by; *parituṣṭa*—being satisfied; *āt-mabhiḥ*—by heart and soul; *tāta*—my dear Vidura; *sādhu sādhu*—well done, well done; *iti*—thus; *atha abruvan*—as we have said.

**The great sage Maitreya said: My dear Vidura, all the personalities present were very much satisfied in heart and soul upon hearing the words of Lord Śiva, who is the best among the benedictors.**

PURPORT: In this verse ⑪ Lord Śiva is described as *mīdhuṣṭama*, the best of the benedictors. He is also known as Āśutoṣa, which indicates that he is very quickly satisfied and very quickly angered. It is said in *Bhagavad-gītā* that less intelligent persons go to the demigods for material benedictions. In this connection, people generally go to Lord Śiva, and because he is always quickly satisfied and gives benedictions to his devotees without consideration, he is called *mīdhuṣṭama*, or the best of the benedictors. Materialistic persons are always anxious to get material profit, but they are not serious about spiritual profit.

Sometimes, of course, it so happens that Lord Śiva becomes the best benedictor in spiritual life. It is said that once a poor *brāhmaṇa* worshiped Lord Śiva for a benediction, and Lord Śiva advised the devotee to go to see Sanātana Gosvāmī. The devotee went to Sanātana Gosvāmī and informed him that Lord Śiva had advised him to seek out the best benediction from him (Sanātana). Sanātana had a touchstone with him, which he kept with the garbage. On the request of the poor *brāhmaṇa*, Sanātana Gosvāmī gave him the touchstone, and the *brāhmaṇa* was very happy to have it. He now could get as much gold as he desired simply by touching the touchstone to iron.

[continued in the next issue]



## GOD REALIZATION

(continued from page 14)

extends beyond the narrow bounds to which our body and genealogy usually restrict us. In other words, we become a universal person, not a parochial one. Consequently, we cannot help having respect for everyone. This becomes especially true when we develop pure love for God, for if we love Him, how can we not love all the souls related to Him? This is the true meaning of the terms *brotherhood* and *sisterhood*.

If we do not have this consciousness of our divine connection, however, then our sense of brotherhood and sisterhood is a sham because it does not extend beyond our own bodily connections—such as family, friends, associates, and so on. This means that we are still governed by our false ego, whose only motive is to feel like a lord. And while we may call each other brother and sister, at heart we remain envious of one another, especially when we may be materially inferior in some way.

Because of this ignorance of our true identity and our relationship with God and all other souls, we blindly and foolishly start wars over differences of race, religion, politics, beliefs, and culture. Thus, transcendental knowledge is absolutely essential for everyone—especially government leaders—to foster real, durable peace in the world.

### *An Expert Preacher*

As we become proficient students and practitioners of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the Lord may bless us to become expert at passing it on to others. There is no greater preacher than God Himself, for Lord Caitanya, as He traveled throughout India, convinced millions of persons to love, worship, and surrender to Kṛṣṇa. His preaching was so powerful and irresistible that He stirred and won the hearts of even the most hardhearted. Therefore, should we fully surrender to God and desire to spread this precious knowledge, He may reward and empower us, as He did Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Indeed, as devotees we feel gratified when we see that our efforts help people understand this impor-

tant philosophy, revive their God consciousness, and rebuild their shattered lives—becoming truly happy and fulfilled. We know we are performing the highest welfare work. For what could be better than helping others end the vicious cycle of birth, disease, old age, and death and return to their original home, the spiritual world, to perform eternal devotional service for God?

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself says, “For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” Thus, we should try to share these teachings with anyone who may be receptive to them. This is the easiest way to obtain God’s special mercy for advancing spiritually.

### *Friendly*

Once we are aware of our eternal relationship with all beings, we can become truly friendly with everyone. A real friend is one who will not deceive or mislead us, but will always be straightforward and truthful with us. There is no greater friend in this world than the pure devotees, for they speak the highest truth. By their mercy they help reawaken our relationship with God and thereby enable us to experience unending happiness.

### *Compassionate*

As devotees advance spiritually, they become more sensitive to the sufferings of others. Consequently, they try to relieve those sufferings. While there are thousands of remedies available in the marketplace for countless difficulties, all of them are at best palliative. They do not attack and remove the root cause of our suffering—spiritual ignorance. Unless that is eradicated, a person continues to make harmful decisions and engage in harmful practices (in violation of God’s orders) that result in karmic afflictions.

During the reign of Lord Rāmacandra there was virtually no suffering because everyone in His kingdom followed His laws and orders. Similarly, if people understand and

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practice the Vedic teachings faithfully, they also will be spared of suffering. In fact, Lord Kṛṣṇa promises that if we perform our duties according to His injunctions and follow His teachings faithfully, without envy, we will become free from the bondage of selfish activities.

Once, Kṛṣṇa bestowed His compassion on the great saint Mādhavendra Purī, who lived in India during the fifteenth century. A renunciant monk, he one day wandered into the village of Govardhana, in the Vṛndāvana area. He was hungry and tired, so he sat down beneath a tree to rest and meditate. Suddenly, a charming cowherd boy wandered over to him, gave him a pot of fresh milk to drink, and then quickly departed. Later, after Mādhavendra Purī fell asleep, in a dream he saw the same boy, who then in-

formed him that He was none other than Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus, for His sincere devotee God's compassion knows no bounds.

#### *Learned*

God's devotees attach little significance to worldly knowledge. More important is the knowledge God revealed in the holy scriptures for our ultimate salvation. This has eternal benefit; therefore we must try to learn as much of it as possible and then use it in our daily activities. In this way we can give it practical expression and observe its salutary effects in our lives and the lives of others.

This does not necessarily mean that a devotee of Kṛṣṇa must remain uninformed about current events. No. But these events should be seen through the eyes of the Vedic scriptures. This

means seeing today's world pretty much as a vast mental institution, in which everyone is trying to lord it over everyone else—to become a bigger enjoyer, owner, knower, and controller. And throughout the pursuit, everyone, including the doctors, is suffering—living with false hopes and often dying in deep despair. Rarely does anyone know of or experience the true, unbroken happiness of God consciousness.

Unfortunately, in today's educational system we are taught everything about everything, mainly to make money and enjoy sensual pleasure. But we are not taught the most important knowledge of all: Who are we? Why are we here? Where have we originally come from? And what is the true purpose of our life? While there are many books written by worldly philosophers on this subject, most of them offer us worthless speculations based on the authors' limited knowledge and experience. Rejecting the Lord's absolute statements, these "savants," in their own pursuit of lordship, offer their own relativistic panaceas for universal happiness. Unlike the Lord, they do not authoritatively answer the all-important questions. And unless they do, with their limited guidance we cannot hope to overcome and transcend our personal sufferings and be free of them forever.

Therefore, we should obtain our knowledge from the proper source: the Lord and His pure authorized devotees. Unalloyed devotees have undergone the necessary purifying process of devotional service and practices. Consequently, they spend virtually all their waking hours in God-centered activities—receiving God's mercy and sharing it with many sincere truth seekers. We will one day obtain the opportunity to do the same if we strive diligently to acquire and implement the twenty-eight godly qualities discussed in this series of articles. ☸

*Amala Bhakta Dāsa is well known for his audio recordings of Kṛṣṇa conscious books (available from the Krishna.com Store). He is also the author of four books, the most recent of which is The Supreme Mystic, a biographical novel about the early years of Lord Kṛṣṇa.*

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Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma  
Hare Rāma  
Rama Rāma  
Hare Hare

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

# Some Thoughts on the GURVASTAKA PRAYERS

by Rādhikā Ramaṇa Dāsa

*The Gauḍiyā Vaiṣṇava ācārya Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura composed Guruvaṣṭaka, or “Eight Prayers to the Spiritual Master,” around three hundred years ago. Because honoring the spiritual master is essential to one’s spiritual progress, Śrīla Prabhupāda instituted the practice of singing Guruvaṣṭaka every morning in every ISKCON temple. The prayer is of great importance not only to members of ISKCON, but to any serious spiritual aspirant.*

## Gurvaṣṭaka 1

*samsāra-dāvānala-liḍha-loka-  
trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam  
prāptasya kalyāṇa-guṇārṇavasya  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

*ghanā-ghanatvam*—the dense cloud  
*kārūṇya*—of mercy  
*trāṇāya*—meant for the deliverance  
*loka*—of the world,  
*liḍha*—which is being burnt  
*dāvānala*—by the forest fire  
*samsāra*—of material existence.

“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who is an ocean of auspicious qualities and who has obtained the dense cloud of mercy meant for the deliverance of the world, which is being burnt by the forest fire of material existence.”

(Word-for-word given in the order of the English translation:)

*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*guroḥ*—of the spiritual master  
*arṇavasya*—who is an ocean  
*kalyāṇa-guṇa*—of auspicious qualities  
*prāptasya*—and who has obtained



The structure of the *Gurvaṣṭaka* prayers is quite simple. The basic components are found in the last line of each verse: “I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who is . . .” The rest of the verse consists of adjectives describing the spiritual master. “. . . who is an ocean of good qualities,” and so on.

Usually the easiest way of grasping the meaning of a Sanskrit verse in English is to proceed backwards—from the last line to the first. We can see this clearly if we look at the order of words given above in the translation.

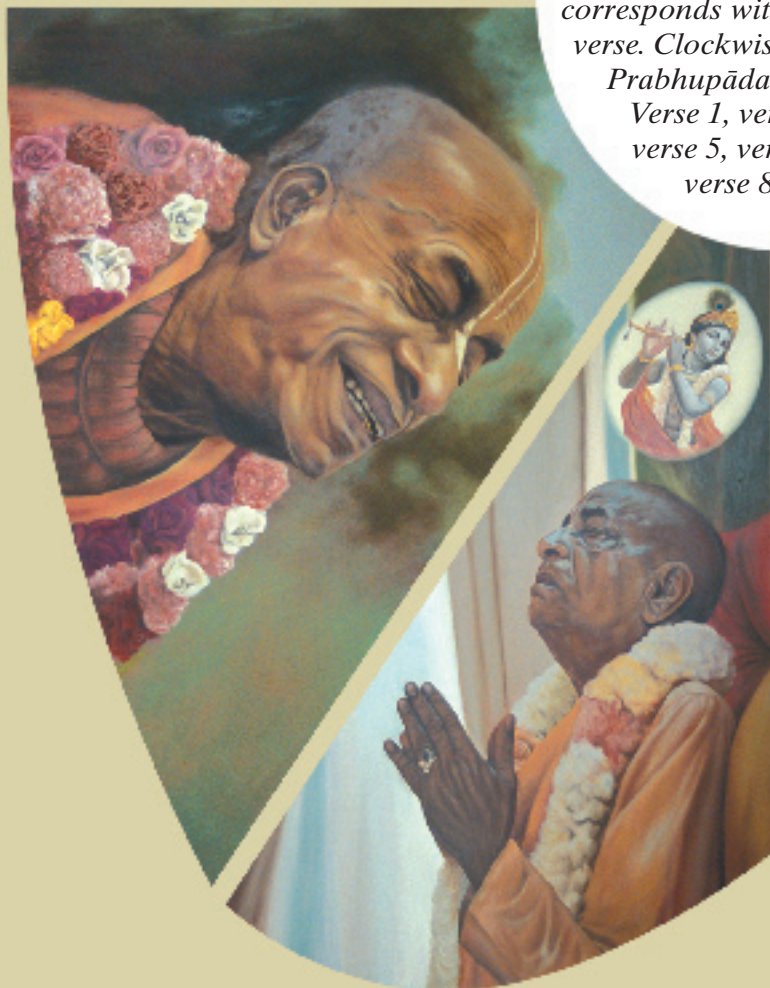
The first verse of the *Gurvaṣṭaka* glorifies the spiritual master very beautifully. There are

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*These panels, painted by Rudradeva Dāsa, are destined for the ceiling of the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple at Prabhupada Desh, outside Vicenza, Italy. Each panel corresponds with one Gurvaṣṭaka verse. Clockwise, beginning with Prabhupāda smiling at left: Verse 1, verse 4, verse 2, verse 5, verse 3, verse 7, verse 8, verse 6.*





two metaphors used here: the spiritual master is like an ocean and like a cloud. He is like an ocean because he is the unfathomable reservoir of auspicious qualities. One cannot find any limit to these qualities, just as it is difficult to find the shore of the ocean. But in regards to his mercy, the spiritual master is like a cloud. He is not the source of the mercy himself; rather, he receives it from Kṛṣṇa, just as a cloud draws water from the ocean. But then, just as a cloud pours water freely upon everyone, so the spiritual master liberally bestows his mercy on all conditioned souls, often blessing those whom even Kṛṣṇa considers unworthy. The ocean may be inaccessible to someone who lives far inland, but the clouds still bring the ocean's water to him. The best example of this is Śrīla Prabhupāda, who brought Kṛṣṇa's mercy to even the most spiritually barren places. His dedicated disciples continue his mission of mercy.

## Gurvaṣṭaka 2

*mahāprabhoḥ kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta-  
vāditra-māḍyan-manaso rasena  
romāñca-kampāśru-taraṅga-bhājo  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*



“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, whose mind is gladdened by playing musical instruments, singing, dancing, and chanting in the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya, and who experiences waves of tears, trembling, and standing of the hair due to his absorption in *rasa*.”

*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*guroḥ*—of the spiritual master  
*manasaḥ*—whose mind  
*māḍyat*—is gladdened  
*kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta-vāditra*—by playing musical instruments, singing, dancing, and chanting  
*mahāprabhoḥ*—(in the *saṅkīrtana* movement) of Lord Caitanya  
*bhājah*—and who experiences  
*aśru-taraṅga*—waves of tears  
*kampa*—trembling  
*roma-ñca*—and standing of the hair  
*rasena*—due to (his absorption in) *rasa*

Once again, as in the first verse, the structure here is quite simple: I offer obeisance to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who is . . .” The rest of verse is simply two adjectives describing the spiritual master. In fact, the first three lines of the verse consist of only four words in Sanskrit.

The reason for this is that Sanskrit likes to use long compound words to describe a person or object, because it is a much more concise way of saying things. For example, in English we use compounds like “basketball,” which means “a ball which is meant to be thrown into a basket.” Sanskrit has four main types of compounds:

1. descriptive compound: e.g., *sundara-gopāla*, “beautiful cowherd”
2. syntactic compound: e.g., *madhu-sūdana*, “the killer of Madhu”
3. possessive compound: e.g., *pītāmbara*. *Pīta* means “yellow” and *ambara* means “clothing,” but *pītāmbara* together does not mean “yellow clothing.” Rather it means “one who has yellow clothing,” namely Kṛṣṇa.
4. dual compound: e.g., *rādhā-govinda*, “Rādhā and Govinda.”

The first compound in this verse takes nearly two lines: *kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta-vāditra-māḍyan-manasaḥ*. *Manasaḥ* means “mind.” But the compound is not talking about the mind. Rather, it is referring to “he who has a mind.” This is a possessive compound. It means “he whose mind is gladdened by playing musical instruments, singing, dancing, and chanting.”

The second compound is relational. *Romāñca-kampāśru-taraṅga-bhājah*: “One who experiences waves of tears, trembling, and hair standing on end.”

Each of the two compounds above has more sub-compounds within it. But together, the two compounds pretty much cover the entire verse.

Things to be careful of when singing the verse: the first word should be pronounced *mahāprabhoḥ*, not *mahāprabhu*, since this disrupts the meter and rhythm of the verse; *bhu* is a short syllable, whereas *bhoḥ* is a long syllable. The meter of the verse requires a long syllable. *Nṛtya* should not be pronounced *nitya*. This changes the meaning completely; *nṛtya* means “dancing,” whereas *nitya* means “eternal.”

The second verse is very nice because it tells us that one of the qualities of the spiritual master is that he is blissful. The secret of his happiness? He is always engaged in chanting and dancing in the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya.

## Gurvaṣṭaka 3

*śrī-vigrahārādhana-nitya-nānā-  
śṛṅgāra-tan-mandira-mārjanādau  
yuktasya bhaktāṁś ca niyuñjato 'pi  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who is himself engaged and who also engages the devotees in activities such as cleaning Kṛṣṇa's temple and in always offering varieties of clothing and ornaments in the worship of the deity.”



*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*guroḥ*—of the spiritual master  
*yuktasya*—who is (himself) engaged  
*ca*—and  
*niyuñjataḥ api*—who also engages  
*bhaktān*—the devotees  
*mārjanādau*—in activities such as cleaning  
*tan-mandira*—His (Kṛṣṇa’s) temple  
*nitya*—(and in) always (offering)  
*nānā-śṛṅgāra*—varieties of clothing and ornaments  
*ārādhana*—in the worship  
*śrī-vigraha*—of the deity

This verse has the longest compound in the *Gurvaṣṭaka* prayers—the entire first two lines are only one word. “I offer my obeisances to the spiritual master who is himself engaged and who engages the devotees in . . . (two-line compound).”

The word *mārjanādau* consists of two words, *mārjana*, which means “cleaning,” and *ādi*, “and so on.” So *mārjanādau* means “in cleaning, and so on.” In other words, this verse is not just about cleaning the temple, but rather about all kinds of practical devotional service performed by the spiritual master. Whereas the previous verse describes the spiritual master’s *bhajana* and *kīrtana*, this verse is about his “hands-on” service.

A nice point to remember here is that the spiritual master is an *ācārya*, or one who teaches by example. He engages his disciples in devotional service—the word *niyuñjataḥ* can be translated as “one who orders or commands.” But at the same time, he engages himself in these same activities (*yuktasya*) to set a good example for his disciples.

The spiritual master shows by example how to worship the deity in the temple. He is an expert caretaker of the Lord, and we can assist him in his service. Thus, whenever we perform deity worship, we first request permission from the spiritual master in this way: “My dear spiritual master, who gives the fruit of the highest bliss—the bliss of love of Godhead—please engage me in the blissful service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who bestows bliss upon the land of Vraja.” (*Pañcarātra-pradīpa* 4.2).

#### Gurvaṣṭaka 4

*catur-vidha-śrī-bhagavat-prasāda-  
svādv-anna-triptān hari-bhakta-saṅghān  
kṛtvaiḥva trptim bhajataḥ sadaiva  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

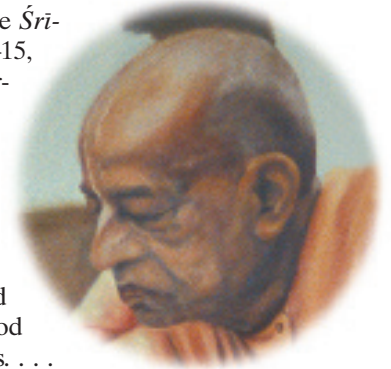
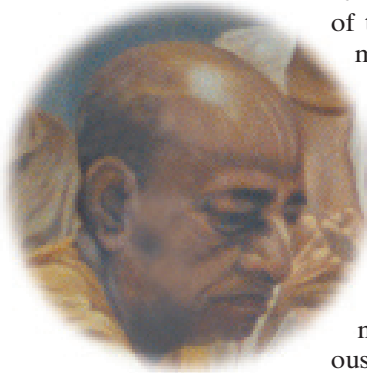
“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who always feels satisfaction after making the devotees of Lord Hari satisfied by palatable food which consists of four kinds of food offered to the Lord.”

*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*guroḥ*—of the spiritual master  
*sadā eva*—who always  
*bhajataḥ*—feels  
*trptim*—satisfaction  
*kṛtvā*—after making  
*bhakta-saṅghān*—the devotees  
*hari*—of Lord Hari  
*trptān*—satisfied  
*svādu-anna*—by palatable food (which consists of)  
*catur-vidha*—four kinds  
*śrī-bhagavat-prasāda*—of food offered to the Lord

The structure of this verse is more difficult than the others. Here, the meaning of the word *bhajataḥ* is not the usual “worship” but rather “feel.” The spiritual master feels satisfied after he makes the devotees satisfied by giving them Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*. Literally, the verse says that the spiritual master makes “groups of satisfied devotees” (*trptān bhakta-saṅghan*). How does he satisfy them? The rest of the compound answers this questions: *svādu-anna*, “by tasty food.” This is no ordinary food; it is the Lord’s *prasāda*. This *prasāda* comes in four varieties, according to the way in which it is eaten—chewed, licked, sucked, and drunk. Another categorization is according to the way the *prasāda* tastes—salty, sweet, sour, or pungent.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the varieties of *prasāda* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.7.12–15, Purport): “The most important word in these verses is *mahā-guṇam*, indicating that the *brāhmaṇas* were offered very palatable food of exalted quality. Such palatable dishes were generally prepared with two things, namely food grains and milk products. . . .

Still today in India, from these two things, namely food grains and milk, hundreds and thousands of varieties of food are prepared, and then they are offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. . . . Even today in Jagannātha-kṣetra and other big temples, very palatable dishes are offered to the deity, and *prasāda* is distributed profusely. Cooked by first-class *brāhmaṇas* with expert knowledge and then distributed to the public, this *prasāda* is also a blessing from the *brāhmaṇas* or Vaiṣṇavas. There are four kinds of *prasāda* (*catur-vidha*). Salty, sweet, sour, and pungent tastes are made with different types of spices, and the food is prepared in four divisions, called *carvya*, *cūṣya*, *lehya*, and *peya*—*prasāda* that is chewed, *prasāda* that



is licked, *prasāda* tasted with the tongue, and *prasāda* that is drunk. Thus there are many varieties of *prasāda*, prepared very nicely with grains and ghee, offered to the deity, and distributed to the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas and then to the general public. This is the way of human society.”

According to the fourth verse of *Gurvaṣṭaka*, all this distribution of *prasāda* is done under the direction of the spiritual master. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura uses the word *bhakta-saṅghān*, which means “groups or societies of devotees.” In other words, the spiritual master distributes *prasāda* in large quantities, and when he sees that the devotees are satisfied, he is also satisfied.

Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions the four kinds of food in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *pacāmy annaṁ catur-vidham*, “I am the fire of digestion and I digest the four kinds of foodstuff.” Also, the *Bhāgavatam* tells us that when the wives of the ritualistic *brāhmaṇas* went to feed Kṛṣṇa, they brought him four kinds of food.

In his translation of this *Gurvaṣṭaka* verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes an important point in the first line: “The spiritual master is always offering Kṛṣṇa four kinds of delicious food.” Since the spiritual master is always satisfying the devotees with four kinds of food, and the food is *bhagavat-prasāda*, then he must be constantly offering food to Kṛṣṇa.

So what are some examples of the four kinds of food? A nice meditation would be to make a list of dishes in each category, cook them for Kṛṣṇa on Janmāṣṭamī, and then request our spiritual master to let us assist him in offering them to the Lord.

### Gurvaṣṭaka 5

*śrī-rādhikā-mādhavayor apāra-  
mādhurya-lilā guṇa-rūpa-nāmnām  
prati-kṣaṇāsvādana-lolupasya  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who is very eager to relish at every moment the unlimited sweet or conjugal pastimes, qualities, form, and names of Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava.”

*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*guroḥ*—of the spiritual master  
*lolupasya*—who is very eager  
*āsvādana*—to relish  
*pratikṣaṇa*—at every moment  
*apāra*—the unlimited  
*mādhurya*—sweet or conjugal



*lilā-guṇa-rūpa-nāmnām*—pastimes, qualities, form, and names  
*śrī-rādhikā-mādhavayor*—of Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava

This verse is very simple and sweet. The word *lolupasya* is especially significant. The Sanskrit language is very subtle and emotionally rich. One reason for this is that Sanskrit has a wide array of different kinds of verbs, which allow the speaker to express a variety of moods and feelings. Some examples are: the imperative (do this!), optative (you should do this), subjunctive (if you were to do this), desiderative (I desire to do this), and causative (I make you do this). Depending on what ending you add to the verb, you get a different mood. The word *lolupa* is in the grammatical form known as the intensive. This form is used when one wants to convey the intensity or repetitiveness of an activity. “The devotee sings sincerely” or “Nityānanda Prabhu repeatedly requests Jagāi and Mādhāi.” The intensive is used rarely in Sanskrit, and so when it is used, it has a powerful effect. Here the verb is *luḥ*, “to desire.” Thus, the word *lolupa* means that the spiritual master “eagerly desires” or “ardently longs” to taste the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. When we add the word *pratikṣaṇa* (“at every moment”), we really see the intensity of the spiritual master’s desire.

The pastimes of the Lord are unlimited (*apāra*), and thus there is no limit to how much one can relish them. Śrīla Prabhupāda focuses especially on the word *pratikṣaṇa* in his explanation of this verse. “*Pratikṣaṇa* means he is thinking that way twenty-four hours a day. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One must be engaged twenty-four hours a day in thinking of Kṛṣṇa. You have to make yourself a program like this. We, at least, have made such a program. All the boys and girls in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are engaged twenty-four hours daily—not just officially, not that once a week they meditate or go to some temple. No, they engage twenty-four hours a day.” (*Journey of Self Discovery*).

### Gurvaṣṭaka 6

*nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai  
yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇiyā  
tatrāti-dākṣyād ati-vallabhasya  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who is very dear because of his expertise in the matter of making whatever suitable arrangements are desired by the *gopīs* for the perfection of the conjugal pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.”

*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*guroḥ*—of the spiritual master  
*ati-vallabhasya*—who is very dear



*ati-dākṣyāt*—because of his expertise  
*tatra*—in the matter of making  
*yā yā*—whatever  
*yuktiḥ*—suitable arrangements  
*apekṣaṇīyā*—are desired  
*ālibhiḥ*—by the gopis  
*siddhyai*—for the perfection  
*rati-keli*—of the conjugal pastimes  
*nikuñja-yūnaḥ*—of Rādhā  
 and Kṛṣṇa

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are described in this verse as *nikuñja-yūnaḥ*. *Yūnaḥ* is the dual form of the word *yūvan*, which means “youth.” And *nikuñja* means “forest bowers.” So *nikuñja-yūnaḥ* means “the two youth in the forest bowers.”

A girl’s girlfriends are known in Sanskrit as *āli* or *sakhī*. Here, *ālibhiḥ* refers to the girlfriends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the *gopīs*.

The repetition of the word *yā* makes it an indefinite pronoun. The spiritual master does not only what the *gopīs* desire, but *whatever* they desire. In other words, he assists in any and every way (*yā yā*) necessary. Thus, the verse expresses the selfless mood of the spiritual master. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains: “Kṛṣṇa likes Rādhārāṇī. Therefore all the *gopīs*, they’re trying to push Rādhārāṇī to Kṛṣṇa. *Nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇīya*. That is expert. ‘Oh, Kṛṣṇa likes this *gopī*. All right, push her.’ That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To satisfy the senses of Kṛṣṇa, not satisfy my senses. That is *bhakti*. That is called *prema*, love for Kṛṣṇa.”

In a lecture to students at Stockholm University, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that this verse of the *Gurvaṣṭaka* includes all the relationships between the Lord and His devotees. “The spiritual master’s ultimate goal is that he wants to be transferred to the planet of Kṛṣṇa, where he can associate with the *gopīs* to help them serve Kṛṣṇa. Some spiritual masters are thinking of becoming assistants to the *gopīs*, some are thinking of becoming assistants to the cowherd boys, some are thinking of becoming assistants to Nanda and Mother Yaśodā, and some are thinking of becoming God’s servants. Some are thinking of becoming flower trees, fruit trees, calves, or cows in Vṛndāvana.”

The spiritual master endears himself (*ati-vallabha*) to the Lord’s personal associates because he is so expert (*dākṣya*) in performing his service. Thus, he himself is regarded as a confidential associate of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda says that in all the Vaiṣṇava literature, the spiritual master is described either as “one of the confidential associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or a manifested representation of Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 1.46).



*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair*  
*uktas tathā bhāvya eva sadbhiḥ*  
*kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya*  
*vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

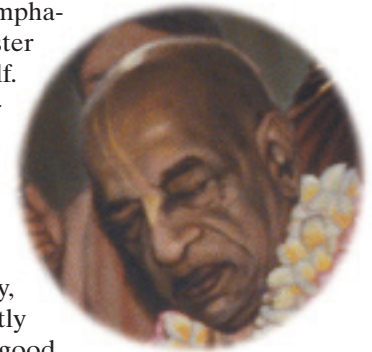
“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, who is described by all the scriptures as directly possessing the quality of being Hari and who is indeed recognized as such by saintly persons. However, he is actually dear to the Lord.”

*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*tasya*—of him  
*guroḥ*—the spiritual master  
*uktaḥ*—who is described  
*samasta-śāstrair*—by all the scriptures  
*sākṣāt-dharitvena*—as directly possessing the quality of being Hari  
*eva*—(and who is) indeed  
*bhāvya*—recognized  
*tathā*—as such  
*sadbhiḥ*—by saintly persons.  
*kintu*—however  
*yaḥ*—he is  
*eva*—actually  
*priyaḥ*—dear  
*prabhoḥ*—to the Lord

This is a powerful verse that Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes very often in his books and lectures. The verse contains a dialogue within itself. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura first emphasizes how the spiritual master is as good as God himself. *Sākṣād-hari* means “directly Hari,” and the *tva* suffix makes the word an abstract noun—the quality of being Hari Himself. All the scriptures describe the spiritual master in this way, and those who are saintly also accept him to be as good as Hari. However (*kintu*) . . .

The spiritual master is not Hari. Rather, he is very dear to Hari, and for this reason we should honor him just as we would honor the Lord himself. The *Upaniṣads* declare, *ācāryaḥ devo bhava*: “Let the teacher be like God.” Just as the deputed representative of the President is honored like the President, so the bona fide representative of the Lord is worshiped like the Lord Himself.

If the spiritual master or his disciples think that he is actually God, however, they are in deep illusion. Śrīla Prabhupāda uses this verse to point out the defects in impersonalistic philosophy, which blurs the distinction between the Lord and His devotee: “The distinction is



that between *sevya-bhagavān* (he who is worshiped) and *sevaka-bhagavān* (he who is the worshiper). The spiritual master is God, and Kṛṣṇa is God, but Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable God whereas the spiritual master is the worshiper God. The Māyāvādīs cannot understand this. They think, ‘Because the spiritual master has to be accepted as God and because I have become a spiritual master, I have become God.’ This is rebellious.” (*Teachings of Queen Kuntī* 26). Indeed, when the king’s messenger begins thinking he is the king, he is in deep trouble.

The bona fide spiritual master, on the other hand, thinks of himself as Kṛṣṇa’s servant and offers all the honor he receives to the Lord. Such a spiritual master should be worshiped wholeheartedly, just like Kṛṣṇa Himself. In fact, this is one meaning of the word *prabhupāda*. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains: “The word *pāda* means ‘position,’ and *Prabhupāda* indicates that he is given the position of *prabhu*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for he acts on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.23.18, Purport).

And finally, we may ask, “Why is the spiritual master so dear to Kṛṣṇa?” Kṛṣṇa answers this question himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.69): “There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he [who explains this supreme secret to the devotees], nor will there ever be one more dear [*priya*].” Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, “So the guru has got two businesses. He has to make devotees and teach them the principles of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore he’s so dear.”

Pay special attention to your pronunciation when singing this verse. The short words and variety of sounds make this a rather difficult verse to pronounce correctly.

## Gurvaṣṭaka 8

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo  
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi  
dhyāyan stuvāms tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“I offer obeisances to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, by whose grace there is Bhagavān’s grace and without whose grace there is no means of success or refuge from any side. I meditate on and praise his glory at the three junctures of the day.”

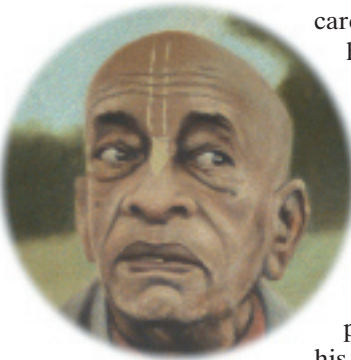
*vande*—I offer obeisances  
*śrī-caraṇa-aravindam*—to the lotus feet  
*guroḥ*—of the spiritual master  
*yasya*—by whose  
*prasādāt*—grace  
*bhagavat-prasādah*—(there is) Bhagavān’s grace  
*yasya aprasādāt*—(and) without whose grace  
*na*—(there is) no  
*gati*—means of success or refuge  
*kutaḥ api*—from any side.  
*dhyāyan*—(I) meditate on  
*stuvan*—(and) praise

*tasya*—his  
*yaśaḥ*—glory  
*tri-sandhyam*—at the three junctures of the day

This verse has a grammatical structure difficult to preserve in English translation. Although the verse consists of a single coherent sentence in Sanskrit, proper English grammar requires that we split it up into two or more sentences. This is because the versatile role of relative clauses in Sanskrit is difficult to mimic in English.

In English, a relative clause is usually marked by a word that begins with “w.” For example, “I offer obeisances to the spiritual master, by whose mercy one achieves Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.” Here, everything after the comma is a relative clause. In Sanskrit, relative clauses are marked by words that begin with *y*, such as *yasya prasādāt*. If we were to maintain the structure of this verse in English, we would get: “By whose grace there is Kṛṣṇa’s grace and without whose grace there is no means of success in any way, to his—the guru’s—lotus feet I offer my obeisances, meditating on and praising his glory at the three junctures of the day.” Not bad, but still not smooth.

It is especially important to be careful with our pronunciation here. The only difference between the two clauses—*yasya prasādāt* and *yasyāprasādāt* is a single vowel. The first has a short *a* at the end of *yasya*, whereas the second has a long *ā*. But the long *ā* brings on an opposite meaning—“without his mercy, there is no means of success.” The *ā* should be held



twice as long as the short vowel. Otherwise, we might end up saying something we did not intend.

Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes this verse often in his writings and lectures, emphasizing the importance of faithfully following the instructions of the spiritual master. In the Second Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.41), Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one.” Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that this means that one should “accept the instruction of the bona fide spiritual master as one’s mission in life.”

What happens if we displease the spiritual master? “There is no means of success in any way.” A vivid example of this is found the Sixth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Once, Lord Indra, king of the *devas*, became exceedingly proud of his position and failed to properly honor his spiritual master Bṛhaspati. Understanding the situation, Bṛhaspati simply left Indra’s court and became invisible to the demigods. Indra immediately realized his mistake, but it was already too late. Soon, the demons attacked and seriously wounded the demigods, who all went to Lord Brahmā for shelter. Lord Brahmā’s words were clear and uncompromising: “Because of your mis-



behavior toward Bṛhaspati, you have been defeated by the demons. My dear demigods, since the demons were weak, having been defeated by you several times, how else could you, who were so advanced in opulence, be defeated by them? . . . By their devotion to [their guru] Śukrācārya, they have increased their strength so much that now they are even able to easily seize my abode from me.” Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in the purport: *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasado yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto ’pi*.

And what is the result of pleasing the spiritual master? The best example of this is Śrīla Prabhupāda, who crossed the ocean at the age of sixty-nine to fulfill his spiritual master’s instruction to preach in the West. De-

spite facing fragile health, a foreign culture, and a materialistic audience, he persevered with resolute purpose, and soon Kṛṣṇa gave him astonishing success. If we can satisfy the spiritual master by our service, says Śrīla Prabhupāda, then our “path for realization of God is guaranteed.” All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura! ❁

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(Background painting by Dhṛti Devi Dāsī)



# The Government's Duty: **TO TEACH KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS**

*Why the secular state is missing the point.*







by Candraśekhara  
Ācārya Dāsa

IN SEPTEMBER 2005, the French diplomatic magazine *Label France* published an article entitled, “One Hundred Years of Secularism ‘A la Française.’” It describes the celebration of the centennial anniversary of the 1905 law that officially separated the Church from the State. The author of the article writes, “Secularism facilitates the peaceful co-existence of all spiritual convictions.” But then, ironically enough, he mentions the March 2004 law that states, “In schools, high-schools and colleges, the wearing of symbols or of clothes by which the students may express any religious belonging is strictly prohibited.”

In the wake of the riots that shook and embarrassed France in November of 2004, one must question the efficacy of secular education. Is not the most important duty of the government to uphold religious principles and lead its citizens towards self realization? Unless governments implement Kṛṣṇa conscious education, society will never be peaceful.

As Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, we acknowledge the ontological premise that we are not our bodies. We accept the idea that we are eternal spirit souls who have only one function, namely that of rendering eternal service to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The goal of human life is to disentangle ourselves from illusion and re-awaken our original love for Kṛṣṇa, so that we, as spirit souls, may return to His kingdom after death. This re-awakening of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a difficult task because we have been absorbed in

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*As an ideal Vedic ruler concerned for the spiritual welfare of his citizens, King Prācinabarhiṣat sought guidance from the great sage and devotee Nārada. Their discussions are related in the Fourth Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*

Detail from a painting by Parikṣit Dāsa



deep ignorance life after life, since time immemorial.

It is hence understandable that we cannot become Kṛṣṇa conscious on our own effort alone. Rather, we need pushing and guidance, both individually and collectively. It follows, then, that a government's prime duty is to guide its dependents, the citizens, towards the awakening of their dormant love for Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, citizens will be misled into sensual gratification and will become increasingly entangled in the cycle of birth and death.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.14.18) it is stated:

*yasya rāṣṭre pure caiva  
bhagavān yajña-pūruṣaḥ  
ijyate svena dharmeṇa  
janair varṇāśramānvitaiḥ*

“The king is supposed to be pious in whose state and cities the general populace strictly observes the system of eight social orders of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, and where all citizens en-

gage in worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead by their particular occupations.”

In Māyāpur in March 1976, the *Back to Godhead* staff asked Śrīla Prabhupāda about the duty of the government.

“To understand what God wants” he replied, “and to see that society works toward that aim. Then people will be happy.”

Throughout his teachings on this subject, Śrīla Prabhupāda repeats this one point time and time again, namely that the sole duty of the government and of the educators is to teach and lead the citizens towards Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

### **Kṛṣṇa Conscious Kings of the Past**

From the Vedic histories we learn of great Kṛṣṇa conscious kingdoms, such as that of Parīkṣit Mahārāja. Parīkṣit was such a Kṛṣṇa conscious king that in his empire Kali (the personification of the evils of this age) could

not find a single piece of land on which to exist. This is because in Parīkṣit's kingdom there was absolutely no meat-eating, gambling, intoxication, or illicit sex. Parīkṣit Mahārāja made sure that everyone, regardless of social status or level of spiritual advancement, was gradually directed towards self-realization. In contrast, today's secular governments thrust their citizens towards the grossest type of sinful activity. Out of desperation, these misled citizens eventually protest and riot. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.2.8) compares modern government leaders to “avaricious and merciless rulers.” It predicts that as Kali-yuga, the current age, progresses, these government leaders will “plunder men's wives and properties,” so much so that the citizens will “flee to the mountains and forests.”

Secularists may claim, “At least, the curriculum of secular education does not favor any one group; it is neutral.” Scrutiny reveals, however, that secular education indeed favors one particular group. It favors atheists. The unchallenged prejudice—which every-

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*Chanting with the  
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## ***Kṛṣṇa consciousness goes beyond religious labels. It deals directly with all spirit souls, regardless of their external designation.***

• • •

one takes for granted, and which lies at the foundation of secularism—is the conviction that atheism is knowledge and that theism is only subjective belief. Of course, it has recently become a fashion in secular institutions to teach courses such as “World Religions” and “The Religious Experience,” but these courses are taught from an atheistic reductionistic worldview. An overriding trend in modern academic institutions is to teach students that the Big Bang and Darwin’s theory of evolution are the only reality. Indeed, echoing the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda, modern education has one agenda only, namely that of making the world godless.

Article 1 of the 1905 French law mentioned above declares, “The Republic assures freedom of thought. The Republic assures the unimpeded practice of all cults.” This sounds promising, but in practice we observe the exact opposite. What to speak of the “the unimpeded practice of all cults,” children in France cannot even go to school wearing a cross of Jesus, a star of David, a Sikh turban, Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*, or any other religious insignia. Yet the secularists deceive the masses with chic and sophisticated philosophical pretenses, thus cheating them. Again, the *Bhāgavatam* predicts that in Kali-yuga, hypocrisy will be accepted as virtue and anyone clever at juggling words will be considered a learned scholar. Thus the affirmation of the principle of the French Republic, which supposedly guarantees the freedom to practice the religion of one’s choice, is only a bluff.

### **The Eternal Religion**

If government leaders throughout the world were to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, guided by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, theism would prevail.

Even so, some Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Christians, and others might protest, feeling discriminated against because they may not fully subscribe to the entire Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. As devotees of Kṛṣṇa, however, we are sure that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is all-encompassing and all-inclusive; it does not discriminate against anyone. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa consciousness goes beyond religious labels. It deals directly with all spirit souls, regardless of their external designation. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal religion of all living entities. Being a Muslim, Christian, Jew, or Hindu is of no relevance when discussing *sanātana-dharma*. *Sanātana-dharma* applies to all living entities in all of existence.

For example, the following two verses are taken from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, apparently a Hindu scripture. But if educators teach these verses to their students, where is the question of partiality towards one religion or another?

“That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible. No one is able to destroy that imperishable soul.” (2.17)

“One who sees the Supersoul accompanying the individual soul in all bodies, and who understands that neither the soul nor the Supersoul within the destructible body is ever destroyed, actually sees.” (13.28)

According to these two famous verses, each of us, regardless of religious affiliation, is a spiritual being subordinate to God. Where, then, is the question of partiality? Nevertheless, there could still be some theists who, although accepting these verses, may not be ready to fully embrace the entire Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology. Some people could still protest: “We don’t believe in reincarnation, we don’t accept that God is a per-

son, and we certainly don’t think that Kṛṣṇa is God.”

In this case, Kṛṣṇa conscious government leaders and educators should be tolerant and compassionate. For example, a Kṛṣṇa conscious leader should encourage the Muslims to become better Muslims and the Christians to become better Christians, all the while understanding that different spirit souls influenced by various combinations of the modes of nature may need more time to come to the platform of pure devotional service, the true religion of the soul. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, we should encourage everyone in their particular faith, making sure that they are at least following the tenets laid down by their particular prophets. This would undoubtedly lead to a peaceful situation in the world. On the other hand, we can clearly see that secular education leads only to frustration and suffering. The November 2004 riots in France are one among many testimonies of this fact, of which Śrīla Prabhupāda was convinced: “Just like nowadays it has become—what is it called? Secular state. ‘Don’t talk of God.’ This is the present situation of the world. Atheist class. ‘Don’t talk of God.’ But they do not know that they have not much improved by ‘Don’t talk of God.’ The situation is becoming grimmer and grimmer. But they have no eyes to see. They have no eyes to see. This godless civilization will not make them happy. That’s a fact.” (Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.1, Hong Kong, April 18, 1972) ❀

*Candraśekhara Ācārya Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti Cāru Swami, joined ISKCON in 1993. He was a leading distributor of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in the mid 1990s. Since 1997 he has served as the personal secretary of his spiritual master.*

## DEAD BODY

(continued from page 15)

guide? I have asked so many Christian gentlemen and priests about this: “Your Bible teaches, ‘Thou shall not kill.’ Why are you violating this commandment?” They give me vague answers. They have not even taught the people what is sinful. That means a lack of brains in society.

**Van den Heuvel:** My organization is not directly concerned with people’s brains.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Your organization may not be directly concerned, but if human society is brainless, then no matter what organizations you make, people will never become happy. If people are not taught by the intelligent class of society how to discriminate between pious and sinful activities, then they are no better than the animals.

**Van den Heuvel:** Of course, when you speak of the distinction between pious activities and sinful activities . . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** They see no such distinction anymore. But in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness society, I instruct my students from the very beginning to avoid sinful activities. They must give up completely all meat-eating, gambling, illicit sex, and intoxication. And now just compare their character and behavior with anyone else’s. Even the Christian priests are surprised. They say, “These boys are our boys. How is it that before joining your movement, they never came to church but now they are mad after God?” In the streets, people ask, “Are you Americans?” You see. Everything can be rectified by proper guidance. But if there is no brain in society, you can manufacture so many organizations, but people will go on suffering. That is nature’s law: If the people are sinful, they have to suffer.

**Van den Heuvel:** I don’t think that you can expect an international organization to indoctrinate people.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Why not? It should be international—everyone. The United Nations is meant for international activity, so our proposal is that the United Nations maintain an international organization of first-class intelligent men to act as the brains of society. Then people can be happy. But if you want to keep the hands and

legs working without direction, without a brain, then you will never be successful.

**Van den Heuvel:** I think of myself as a servant of mankind, with a view toward helping people to understand one another and the world a little better. I’m trying now to organize workers’ education programs.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Please try to understand. I’m stressing on the point of society’s brain. If there is no ideal class of men, if the brain is not in order, then any amount of education or organization you do will be unsuccessful. The United Nations is an organization for all human society, but they have no department which can actually be called the brain organization.

**Van den Heuvel:** That’s true.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is my point.

**Van den Heuvel:** We are only servants of the leaders of our member states. If Mr. Nixon and all the other heads of state don’t have brains, then I’m afraid the United Nations can’t do anything to give them brains.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Then your big organization is just decoration for a dead body. A body with no brain is a dead body. You may decorate a dead body to your full satisfaction, but what is the use? Without a brain-class of men in society to instruct the others what is right and what is wrong, then the social body is headless. And whatever work you do will simply be useless decoration for a dead body. ❀

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Prague, Czech Republic — Govinda's, Na hrazi 5, 180 00 Prague 8-Liben/ Tel. +420 (02) 683-7226/ E-mail: goodday@volny.cz  
Prague, Czech Republic — Balarama Restaurant, Orlicka 9, Praha 3, Vinohrady 130 00/  
Tel. & fax: +420 222 728 885  
Presov, Slovak Republic — Govinda's, Hlavna 70, 08001/ Tel. +0042 (191) 722 819  
Tallinn, Estonia — Damodara, Lauteri Street 1, 10114/ Tel. +372 6442650  
Zürich, Switzerland — Govinda's Veda-Kultur, Preyergasse 16, 8001/ Tel. & fax: +41 (01) 251 88 59/  
E-mail: info@govinda-shop.ch

## COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

### RUSSIA

Astrahan — 141052, 8-59, Botvina st./ Tel. +7 (8510) 28-9431  
Chita — 27, Kurnatovskogo st./ Tel. +7 (30222) 23-4971 or -0911  
Ekaterinburg — 620078, G. Ekaterinburg, per. Otdelniy 5DK VOG/ Tel. +7 (3432) 74-2200 or 49-5262  
Yekaterinburg — st. Krimskaia 6A/ Tel. (3952) 38-71-32 or 3240-62/ E-mail: iosk@iosk.irkutsk.ru  
Kazan — 13, Sortirovochnaya st. pos. Yudino/ Tel. +7 (8432) 55-2529 or 42-9991  
Krasnodar — 418, Stepnaya st., selo Elizavetinskoye, Krsnodarski kraï/ Tel. +7 (8612) 50-1694  
Kurginovo — 8, Shosseinaya st., pos. Ershovo, Urupski region, Karachayevo-Cherkessia  
Moscow — 8/3, Khroshevskeye sh. (mail: P.O. Box 69), 125284/ Tel. +7 (095) 255-6711/  
Tel. & fax: +7 (095) 945-3317  
Moscow — Nekrasovskiy pos., Dmitrovskiy reg., 141700/ Tel. +7 (095) 577-8543, -8601, or -8775/  
Fax: +7 (095) 446-4746/ E-mail: shyamara.ms@pamho.net  
Murmansk — 16, Frolova st. (mail: P.O. Box 5823)/ Tel. +7 (8152) 58-9284/  
E-mail: upendra@mun.rospace.ru  
Nijny Novgorod — 14b, Chernigovskaya Str., 603001/ Tel. +7 (8312) 30-5197 or 25-2592  
Novorossiysk — 117, Shillerovskaya st./ Tel. +7 (86134) 38-926 or 51-415  
Novosibirsk — 18/2, Kholodilnaya st., 630001/ Tel. +7 (3832) 46-2655 or -2666  
Omsk — 664099, 42 10th Severnaya st. (mail: P.O. Box 8741)/ Tel. +7 (3812) 24-5310 or 41-4051  
Perm — 12, Verkhnekuryinskaya st., 614065/ Tel. +7 (3422) 33-5740 or 27-0681/ E-mail: ffl@pi.ccl.ru  
Rostov-Na-Donu — 84/1, Saryana st., 344025 (mail: P.O. Box 64, 344007)/ Tel. & fax: +7 (8632) 51-0456  
Samara — 122, Aeroportovskoye sh., Zubchiminovka/ Tel. +7 (8462) 97-0318 or -0323  
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Vladimir — Ul. Nikolo-Galeyskaya 56/25, 60000/ Tel. +7 (0922) 32-6726  
Vladivostok — 5-1, Rudneva st., 690087/ Tel. +7 (4232) 23-6685

### RESTAURANTS

Ekaterinburg — Sankirtana, 33 Bardina st./ Tel. +7 (3432) 41-2737  
St. Petersburg — Govinda's, 58, Angliyskiy pr., 190008/ Tel. +7 (812) 113-7896  
Vladivostok — Gopal's, 10/12, Oleansky pr./ Tel. +7 (4232) 26-8943/  
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E-mail: premada@iskcon.donetsk.ua  
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or 72-6869/ E-mail: kharkov@pamho.net  
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Nikolaev — 5-8, Sudostroitelny per., 327052/ Tel. +380 (0510) 35-1734  
Vinnica — 5, Chkalov st., 28601/ Tel. +380 (0432) 32-3152

### OTHER COUNTRIES

Almaty, Kazakhstan — 5, Kommunarov per., 480022/ Tel. +7 (327) 235-3830 or -3930  
Baku, Azerbaijan — 2, Zardobi per., Uzbekistan st., pos. 8th km. 370060/ Tel. +994 (12) 21-2376/  
E-mail: baku@pamho.net  
Bishkek, Kirgizstan — 5, Omsky per., 720007/ Tel. +7 (3312) 24-2230 or 44-3776  
Dushanbe, Tadzhikistan — 38, Anzob st., 734001/ Tel. +7 (3772) 27-1920 or -3990/  
E-mail: gurupriya@cada.tajik.net  
Kishinev, Moldova — 13, A. Popovich st., 277022/ Tel. +373 (2) 55-8099 or 76-9254  
Minsk, Belarus — 11, Pavlova st., 220053/ Tel. +375 (172) 13-0629  
Sukhumi, Georgia — st. Pr-t Mira d 274/ Tel. +995 (8122) 2-9954  
Tashkent, Uzbekistan — 54, Ul. Ceryakova, 700005/ Tel. +7 (3712) 93-0352 or 34-4612  
Tbilisi, Georgia — 16, Kacharava st., Avchalskoye sh., 380053/ Tel. +995 (32) 62-3326 or 98-5812

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### AUSTRALIA

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Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6262-6208/ E-mail: ad@actweb.net  
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Fax: +61 (03) 9690-4093/ E-mail: melbourne@pamho.net  
Newcastle — 28 Bull St., Mayfield, NSW 2304/ Tel. +61 (02) 4967-7000/

E-mail: iskcon\_newcastle@yahoo.com.au

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Tel. +61 (08) 9370-1552/ Fax: +61 (08) 9272-6636/ E-mail: iskconperth@optusnet.com.au  
Sydney — 180 Falcon St., North Sydney, NSW 2060 (mail: P.O. Box 459, Cammeray, NSW 2062)/  
Tel. +61 (02) 9959-4558/ Fax: +61 (02) 9957-1893/ E-mail: info@iskcon.com.au  
Sydney — Govinda's Yoga and Meditation Centre, 112 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst NSW 2010/  
Tel. +61 (02) 9380-5155/ E-mail: info@govindas.com.au

### RURAL COMMUNITIES

Bambra, VIC (New Nandagram) — 50 Seaches Outlet, off 1265 Winchelsea Deans Marsh Rd.,  
Bambra VIC 3241/ Tel. +61 (03) 5288-7383/ E-mail: iskcon@bigpond.net.au  
Cessnock, NSW (New Gokula) — Lewis Lane (off Mount View Rd., Millfield, near Cessnock  
[mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock, NSW 2325])/ Tel. +61 (02) 4998-1800/ Fax: (Sydney temple)  
Murwillumbah, NSW (New Govardhana) — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 687), NSW 2484/  
Tel. +61 (02) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (02) 6672-5498/ E-mail: ajita@in.com.au

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Brisbane — Govinda's, 99 Elizabeth St., 1st floor, QLD 4000/ Tel. +61 (07) 3210-0255  
Brisbane — Krishna's Cafe, 1st Floor, 82 Venture St., West End, QLD 4000/ E-mail:  
brisbane@pamho.net  
Cairns — Gaura Nita's, 55 Spence St., Cairns, QLD/ Tel. +61 (07) 4031-2255 or (0425) 725 901/  
Fax: +61 (07) 4031 2256/ E-mail: gauranitais@in.com.au  
Maroochydore — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 2/7 First Avenue, QLD 4558/ Tel. +61 (07) 5451-0299

Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-2939  
Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-1578  
New Castle — Krishna's Vegetarian Cafe, 110 King Street, corner of King & Wolf Streets,  
NSW 2300/ Tel. +61 (02) 4929-6900

Perth — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 200 William St., Northbridge, WA 6003/ Tel. +61 (08) 9227-1684/ E-mail: perth@pamho.net

### NEW ZEALAND, FIJI, AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Christchurch, NZ — 83 Bealey Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 25-190)/ Tel. +64 (03) 366-5174/  
Fax: +64 (03) 366-1965/ E-mail: iskconchch@clear.net.nz  
Hamilton, NZ — 188 Maui St., RD 8, Te Rapa/ Tel. +64 (07) 850-5108/ E-mail: rmaster@wave.co.nz

Labasa, Fiji — Delailabasa (mail: P.O. Box 133)/ Tel. +679 812912  
Lautoka, Fiji — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +679 664112/ Fax: +679 663039  
Nausori, Fiji — Hare Krishna Cultural Centre, 2nd Floor, Shop & Save Building 11 Gulam Nadi  
St., Nausori Town (mail: P.O. Box 2183, Govt. Bldgs., Suva)/ Tel. +679 9969748 or 3475097/  
Fax: +679 3477436/ E-mail: vdas@frca.org.fj

Rakiraki, Fiji — Rewasa (mail: P.O. Box 204)/ Tel. +679 694243  
Suva, Fiji — 166 Brewster St. (mail: P.O. Box 4229)/  
Tel. +679 331 8441/ Fax: +679 331 9097/ E-mail: iskconsuva@connect.com.fj

Wellington, NZ — 105 Newlands Rd., Newlands/ Tel. +64 (04) 478-4108/  
E-mail: iskcon.wellington@paradise.net.nz

Wellington, NZ — Gaura Yoga Centre, 1st Floor, 175 Vivian St. (mail: P.O. Box 6271, Marion Square)/  
Tel. +64 (04) 801-5500

### RURAL COMMUNITY

Auckland, NZ (New Varshan) — Hwy. 28, Riverhead, next to Huapai Golf Course (mail: R.D. 2,  
Kumeu)/ Tel. +64 (09) 412-8075/ Fax: +64 (09) 412-7130

### RESTAURANTS

Auckland, NZ — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 268 Karangahape Road/ Tel. +64 (09) 300-7585  
Labasa, Fiji — Hare Krishna Restaurant, Naseakula Road/ Tel. +679 811364  
Lautoka, Fiji — Gopal's, Corner of Yasawa St. and Naviti St./ Tel. +679 662990  
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Dolphins FNPF Place, Victoria Parade/  
Tel. +679 314154/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj  
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Opposite University of the South Pacific,  
Laulaca Bay Rd./ Tel. +679 311683/ E-mail: vdas@govnet.gov.fj  
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 18 Pratt St./ Tel. +679 314154  
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 82 Ratu Mara Rd., Samabula/ Tel. +679 386333  
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Terry Walk, Cumming St./ Tel. +679 312295

## AFRICA

### GHANA

Accra — Samsam Rd., Off Accra-Nsawam Hwy., Medie, Accra North (mail: P.O. Box 11686)/  
Tel. & fax +233 (021) 229988  
Kumasi — Twumduase Land, Near Emina Hospital (mail: P.O. Box KS 10076)/  
E-mail: shastra316@yahoo.com

Nkawakaw — P. O. Box 69  
Sunyani — Plot No. 146, South Ridge Estates (mail P.O. Box 685)

Takoradi — New Amanful, P.O. Box 328  
Tarkwa — State Housing Estate, Cyanide

### RURAL COMMUNITY

Eastern Region — Hare Krishna Farm Community, P.O. Box 15, Old Akrade

### NIGERIA

Abeokuta — Ibadan Rd., Obanatoka (mail: P.O. Box 5177)  
Benin City — 108, Lagos-Uselu Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 1207)/ Tel. +234 (052) 258636  
Enugu — 5/6, Destiny Layout, Old Abakaliki Rd., Near Enugu Airport, Emene  
Ibadan — Ibadan-Lagos Express Way, Opposite Ile-Marun (mail: UIPO Box 9996)/  
E-mail: gboyega@ibadan.skannet.com

Jos — Airforce Base, Abattoir Rd., by Nammua, Giring Village (mail: P.O. Box 6557)  
Kaduna — Federal Housing Estate, Abuja Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 1121), Goningora Village/  
Tel. +234 (062) 231335

Lagos — 12, Gani Williams Close, off Osolo Way, Ajao Estate, International Airport Rd.  
(mail: P.O. Box 8793, Marina)/ Tel. & fax +234 (01) 876169

Port Harcourt — Umuebule 11, 2nd tarred road (mail: P.O. Box 4429), Trans Amadi  
Warri — Okwodiete Village, Kilo 8, Effurun/Orerokpe Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 1922)



# CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

## SOUTH AFRICA

- Cape Town — 17 St. Andrews Rd., Rondebosch 7700/ Tel. +27 (021) 689-1529/  
Fax: +27 (021) 686-8233/ E-mail: cape.town@pamho.net
- ◆ Durban — 50 Bhaktivedanta Swami Circle, Unit 5 (mail: P.O. Box 56003), Chatsworth, 4030/  
Tel. +27 (031) 403-3328/ Fax: +27 (031) 403-4429/ E-mail: iskcon.durban@pamho.net
- ◆ Johannesburg — 58 Kingston Ave., Auckland Park (mail: P.O. Box 649)/ Tel. +27 (011) 726-1168 or (083) 231-0878
- ◆ Lenasia — 7971 Capricorn Ave., Ext. 9, Lenasia (mail: P.O. Box 926, 1820)/ Tel. +27 (011) 894-1975 or 7969/ Fax: +27 (011) 894-1975/ E-mail: iskconjh@iafrica.com
- Pretoria — 1189 Church St., Hatfield 0083 (mail: P.O. Box 14077, Hatfield 0028)/  
Tel. & fax: +27 (12) 342-6216/ E-mail: iskconpt@global.co.za

## OTHER COUNTRIES

- Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire — AICK-CI, 01 B.P. 8366/ Tel. & fax +225 563402
- Baie du Cap, Mauritius — St. Martin/ Tel. +230 521-0028
- Gaborone, Botswana — P.O. Box 201003/ Tel. +267 307768/ Fax: +267 301988/  
E-mail: dkkoshal@infow.bw
- Kampala, Uganda — 9 Dewington Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 1647), Kampala/ Tel. +256 7564-2741
- Kisumu, Kenya — Cairo Rd., P.O. Box 9202/ Tel. +254 (035) 40983/ Fax: +254 (035) 43827
- Lome, Togo — BP 3105 Lome-Togo, Sis Face Place Bonke, Cote Blue Night, Toloin Kodome  
228/ Tel. +228 2217477 or 9028793/ Fax: +228 2217477/ E-mail: varaha.bts@pamho.net
- Marondera, Zimbabwe — 6 Pine Street (mail: P.O. Box 339)/ Tel. +263 (028) 887-7801
- Mombasa, Kenya — Hare Krishna House, Sauti Ya Kenya and Kisumu Rds.  
(mail: P.O. Box 82224)/ Tel. +254 (011) 312248
- Nairobi, Kenya — Muhuroni Close, off West Nagara Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 28946)/  
Tel. +254 (02) 744365/ Fax: +254 (02) 740957
- ◆ Phoenix, Mauritius — Hare Krishna Land, Pont Fer (mail: P. O. Box 108, Quartre Bornes)/  
Tel. +230 696-5804/ Fax: +230 696-8576/ E-mail: iskcon.hk@intnet.mu
- Rose Belle, Mauritius — Shivala Lane/ Tel. +230 627-5030
- RURAL COMMUNITIES
- Mauritius (ISKCON Vedic Farm) — Hare Krishna Rd., Vrindaban/ Tel. +230 418-3185  
or 418-3955/ Fax: +230 418-6470
- Uganda (Hare Krishna Farm) — Seeta Town, Kampala

## LATIN AMERICA

### ARGENTINA

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- Rosario — Paraguay 556 (2000)/ Tel. +54 (041) 252630 or 264243/ Fax: +54 (041) 490838
- San Miguel — Muqoz 1745, entre Concejal Tribulato y España, (1663), Pcia. Buenos Aires/  
Tel. +54 (011) 4664-6631 or 4667-0483/ E-mail: bhaktiyoga@sinectis.com.ar
- RURAL COMMUNITY
- Bhaktilata Puri — Ciudad de la Paz 3554 (1429) Capital Federal/ Tel. & fax: +54 (01) 523-8085

### RESTAURANTS

Buenos Aires — Jagannath Prasadam, Triunvirato 4266 (1431)/ Tel. +54 (01) 521-3396

Buenos Aires — Restaurante Tulasi, Marcelo T. de Alvear 628, Local 30

### BOLIVIA

- Cochabamba — Av. Heroínas E-435 Apt. 3 (mail: P. O. Box 2070)/ Tel. & fax: +591 (042) 54346
- La Paz — Pasaje Jauregui, 2262/ Tel. +591 (02) 390458/ Tel. & fax: +591 (02) 392710/  
E-mail: maturesh@bo.net
- Santa Cruz — Calle 27 de Mayo No. 99 esq. Justo Bazan/ Tel. & fax: +591 (03) 345189

### RURAL COMMUNITY

Bolivia — (contact ISKCON Cochabamba)

### ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

- Cochabamba — Restaurant Gopal, calle España N-250 (Galeria Olimpia)/ Tel. +591 (042) 34082
- Cochabamba — Restaurant Govinda, calle Mexico #E0303/ Tel. +591 (042) 22568
- Cochabamba — Restaurant Tulasi, Av. Heroínas E-262
- La Paz — Restaurant Imperial, Calle Sagarnaga No. 213
- Oruro — Restaurant Govinda, Calle 6 de Octubre No. 6071
- Santa Cruz — Snack Govinda, Calle Bolívar esq. Av. Argomosa (primer anillo)/ Tel. +591 (03) 345189
- Sucre — Restaurant Sat Sanga, Calle Tarapacá No. 161/ Tel. +591 (64) 22547

### BRAZIL

Belo Horizonte, MG — Rua Ametista, 212, Prado, 30410-420/ Tel. +55 (31) 3337-7645/  
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- ◆ Curitiba, PR — Rua Dona Branca do Nascimento Miranda, 50, Pilarzinho, 82120-340/  
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- ◆ Porto Alegre, RS — Rua Jose Bonifacio, 605, Bom Fim, 90040-130/ Tel. +55 (51) 3332-1704/  
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- ◆ Recife, PE — Rua Bernardo Guimarães, 114, Boa Vista, 50050-440/ Tel. +55 (32) 214-2021/  
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- Suzano, SP — Rua XV, 585, Jardim Chacara Mea, 08696-550/ Tel. +55 (11) 4752-2553/  
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- RURAL COMMUNITIES
- Caruaru, PE (Nova Vrajadhama) — Serra dos Cavalos, Distrito de Murici,  
P. O. Box 283, 55000-000/ E-mail: yagnivi@yahoo.com.br
- Parati, RJ (Goura Vrindavana) — P.O. Box 74.862, 23970-000/ Tel. +55 (24) 3371-7364/  
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- ◆ Pindamonhangaba, SP (Nova Gokula) — Ribeirao Grande, P.O. Box 1009, 12400-990/  
Tel. +55 (12) 3645-8238/ E-mail: giriraj@ig.com.br
- Teresopolis, RJ (Vrajabhumi) — Prata dos Aredes, P. O. Box 92430, 25953-970/  
Tel. +55 (21) 2644-7213/ E-mail: Irvraja@uol.com.br
- ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS
- Campina Grande, PB — Govinda, Rua Teodosio de Oliveira Ledo, 144, Centro, 58101-440/  
Tel. +55 (83) 342-0239/ E-mail: mahant12000@yahoo.com.br
- Natal, RN — Govinda, Rua Juiz Amaro Bezerra, 196, Cabo Branco/ Tel. +55 (83) 247-876/  
E-mail: govinda\_dd@hotmail.com
- Rio de Janeiro, RJ — Sabor Saber, Rua das Laranjeiras, 430-A, Sobreloja, Laranjeiras,  
22240-006/ Tel. +55 (21) 9169-3192
- Sao Paulo, SP — Gopala Prasada, Rua Antonio Carlos, 413, 01309-011/ Tel. +55 (11) 3283-3867/ E-mail: gopalaprasada@bol.com.br
- MEXICO
- ◆ Guadalajara — Pedro Moreno No. 1791, Sector Juarez, Jalisco, 261278/ Tel. +52 (33) 616-4481
- Mexico City — Tiburcio Montiel 45, Colonia San Miguel, Chapultepec D.F., 11850/  
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- Monterrey — Juan Ignacio Ramón 841, Col. Barrio Antiguo, entre Dr. Coss y Diego de Montemayor,  
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- Monterrey — Playa Revolcadero 3329, Col. Primavera, c.p. 64830/ Tel. +52 (81) 83871883/  
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- Tulancingo — Apartado 252, Hildago/ Tel. +52 (775) 34072
- RURAL COMMUNITIES
- Guadalajara — (contact ISKCON Guadalajara)
- Veracruz — Mail: Jesus Garcia 33, Col. Ferrocarril, Cerro Azul/ E-mail: libbhkti@mail.internet.com.mx
- ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT
- Veracruz — Restaurante Radhe, Sur 5 No. 50, Orizaba, Ver./ Tel. +52 (2717) 14825
- PERU
- Lima — Pasaje Solea 101, Santa Maria-Chosica/ Tel. +51 (511) 360 3381
- ◆ Lima — Schell 634 Miraflores/ Tel. +51 (014) 444-2871
- ◆ Lima — Av. Garcilaso de la Vega 1670/ Tel. +51 (014) 433-2589
- RURAL COMMUNITY
- Correo De Bella Vista — DPTO De San Martin
- ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT
- Cuzco — Espaderos 128
- OTHER COUNTRIES
- Asunción, Paraguay — Centro Bhaktivedanta, Mariano R. Alonso 925/ Tel. +595 (021) 480-266/  
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## An Extraordinary Birthday

THIS ISSUE of *Back to Godhead* corresponds with the celebration of Janmāṣṭamī, the anniversary of the advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa five thousand years ago. *Janma* means “birth,” and *aṣṭamī* means “eighth.” The Vedic scriptures tell us that Lord Kṛṣṇa made His divine appearance on earth on the eighth day of the waning moon in the month of Hṛṣīkeśa.

Even though *janma* means “birth,” Śrīla Prabhupāda would most often refer to the advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa as His “appearance.” He knew that if people heard the word *birth* applied to Kṛṣṇa, they would probably get the wrong idea. Kṛṣṇa isn’t born like us. We ordinary souls, moved by a complex system under Kṛṣṇa’s ultimate control, take repeated births in the material world, impelled by our deeds and misplaced desires. But Kṛṣṇa is above the workings of the material energy. It’s His own energy, and He comes and goes by His own sweet will.

Kṛṣṇa only seems to be born like us. The Vedic scriptures tell of His apparent birth from the womb of Devakī in the prison of His uncle Kāṁsa. But descriptions of that event say that to convince Devakī that He was not an ordinary child, Kṛṣṇa at once showed her His form as four-armed Lord Viṣṇu.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.35) says, “Learned men describe the births and activities of the unborn and inactive.” The paradoxical language of this text implies that Kṛṣṇa’s births and activities are nothing like ours. He is indeed “unborn,” as this verse says, but He often appears in this world by what seems to be, in some respects at

least, an ordinary birth.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9), Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.” In the Sanskrit for this verse, we find the word *tat-tvatah*, “in reality.” The reward promised here—eternal life with Kṛṣṇa—cannot be gained by a misguided understanding of Kṛṣṇa. People may think they know Kṛṣṇa, when in fact they know Him only as what they believe to be a mythological figure or a legend whose exploits have become exaggerated over the centuries. To attain Kṛṣṇa, we have to know Him in truth, and that correct understanding can be achieved only under the guidance of scripture, as well as Kṛṣṇa Himself and His pure representatives.

There’s so much to know about Kṛṣṇa. And deep knowledge of Him helps us progress to the highest goal of life—pure love for Him. If we take advantage of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and books written by those who know Kṛṣṇa in truth, our misconceptions will dissolve and our natural love for Him will shine through.

In the West, people with little or no knowledge of Kṛṣṇa may attend Janmāṣṭamī celebrations for the cultural experience. Ideally, they’ll come away from the festivities with not only fond remembrances of new sights, sounds, and flavors, but also a deepened awareness that Lord Kṛṣṇa is not an ordinary person and His “birth” is something special too.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa*



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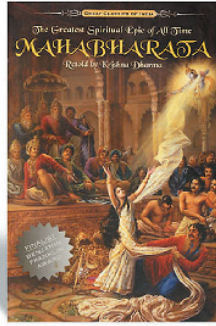
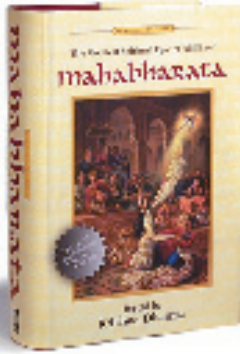


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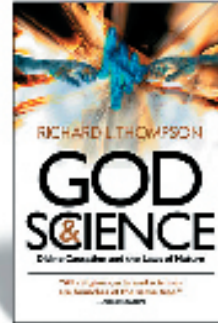
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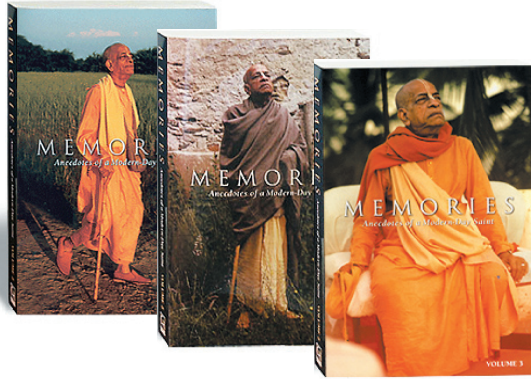
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# Vedic Thoughts

The devotee always thinks of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the proprietor; therefore the results of his business are offered to the Supreme Lord. One who thus lives in the material world with his family and children never becomes affected by the contaminations of the material world.

His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.19, Purport

For one who is meditating on sense gratification, material life, although lacking factual existence, does not go away, just as the unpleasant experiences of a dream do not.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.22.56

The transcendental goddess Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the direct counterpart of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is the central figure for all the goddesses of fortune. She possesses all the attractiveness to attract the all-attractive Personality of Godhead. She is the primeval internal potency of the Lord.

*Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra*  
Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līla* 4.83

Of the many ways to chant Kṛṣṇa's glories, foremost is His *nāma-saṅkīrtana* [chanting His names]. It is deemed the best because it can evoke at once the treasure of pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣṇudutas  
*Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.3.158

Those who understand the inconceivable, impersonal absolute will find that pure transcendence in their hearts. That is not, however, what is in our hearts. In our hearts resides a charming, lotus-faced, lotus-eyed person who wears golden garments and whose complexion is the color of a dark rain cloud.

Śrī Kaviratna  
Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvalī* 77

I worship Keśava [Kṛṣṇa], who returns from the forest of Vraja beautifying the roads with His footprints, whose garland is made gray by the dust thrown up by His herd of restless cows, and whose clothing, scarf, and crown are moving along with the waves of the blowing wind.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī  
*Śrī Keśavāṣṭakam* 6

Every soul has the option of accepting either the path of the senses or the path of spiritual well-being. The wise, after carefully weighing these options, accept the path of spiritual well-being, whereas deluded souls prefer the path of sense enjoyment.

*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. 1.2.2

He is the one omnipresent Lord and controller; only those wise souls who worship Him obtain eternal happiness, not anyone else.

*Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* 2.1

# Festival Of India 2006



## Schedule for North America

**July 4: Washington, D.C., Rathayātrā**

**July 9: Montreal Rathayātrā**

**July 15–16: Toronto Rathayātrā**

**July 23: Detroit Rathayātrā**

**July 30: Los Angeles Rathayātrā**

**August 6: San Francisco Rathayātrā**

**August 12–13: Vancouver Rathayātrā**

**August 16: Vancouver Janmāṣṭamī/  
Vyāsa Pūjā Festival**

**August 20: Edmonton Rathayātrā**

**August 27: Calgary Rathayātrā**

**September 2–4: Seattle Rathayātrā**

**September 16: Newark, New Jersey,  
Rathayātrā**

**September 23: Philadelphia Rathayātrā**

**September 30: Washington, D.C.,  
Śri Rāmacandra Vijaya Festival**

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**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Some of these dates are not yet confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to confirm the festival dates with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held. Or email Festival Of India: [madhuha@festivalofindia.org](mailto:madhuha@festivalofindia.org).

*Left: First Tampa Rathayātrā, January 2006*