

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



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Nov/Dec 2014 • \$4.50



# Limited and Unlimited Consciousness

*Examining the essential difference between us and God.*

**The Vulture  
Is Cursing  
The Cow:  
Prabhupāda  
and the  
“God Is Dead”  
Controversy**

**A Back to  
Godhead  
Distributor’s  
Inspiring  
Journey**

**Śrīla Prabhupāda  
Speaks Out:  
Chewing  
The Chewed**



**Beyond the  
Resplendent  
Rainbows**

**TOVP  
(Temple  
Of the Vedic  
Planetarium):  
The Future  
In the  
Making**

**How I Came  
To Kṛṣṇa  
Consciousness:  
My Metamorphosis  
From Judaism  
To Vaiṣṇavism**

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

# BACK to GODHEAD

Founded 1944 • Vol. 48, No. 6 • November / December, 2014



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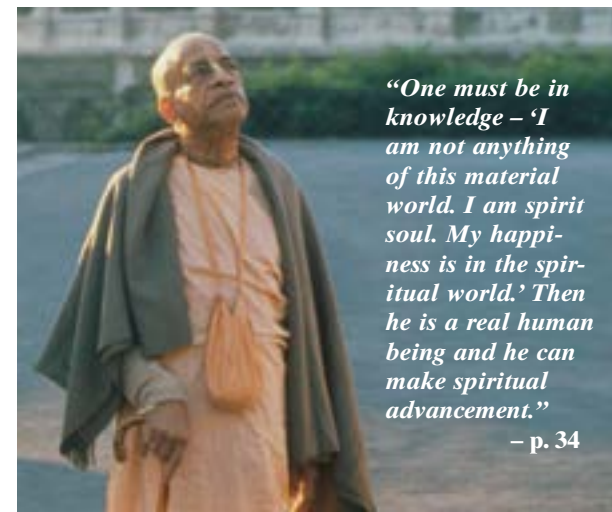
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**COVER** The Supersoul. The Vedic scriptures tell us that God exists in three primary features – as the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Bhagavān), as the Supersoul (Paramātmā) in every heart and every atom, and as God's effulgence (*brahmajyoti*). To read about the difference between the Supersoul and us infinitesimal souls, please see the Founder's Lecture beginning on page 6. (Painting by Dhṛtī Devī Dāsi.)



*"One must be in knowledge – 'I am not anything of this material world. I am spirit soul. My happiness is in the spiritual world.' Then he is a real human being and he can make spiritual advancement."*

– p. 34

## WELCOME



When His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda left India for America in 1965, his mission, as described in the standard prayer to him, was to

deliver "the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism." In this issue, Śrīla Prabhupāda refutes the idea, central to impersonalistic philosophies, that we are all God – a fallacy promoted by many teachers from India before and after him. By understanding the difference between "Limited and Unlimited Consciousness," we can quickly disabuse ourselves of any notion that we might be God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda worked tirelessly to save people from the spiritually devastating effects of impersonalism and voidism, and he encouraged his disciples to do the same. He had many plans for grabbing people's attention and drawing it to Lord Kṛṣṇa's unadulterated teachings. One plan was the building of a magnificent temple – The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium – near the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in West Bengal. Here we present an update on that project, the completion of which will surely inspire countless souls to ask, "What's this all about, anyway?" With that inquiry, they'll move one step closer to a reunion with Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person and the soul of all souls.

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.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.



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

# BACK TO GODHEAD

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Hare Krishna Movement



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# Letters

## Life in Svargaloka

All glories to your service to *Back to Godhead* magazine! I love to read it from the first to the last word every time.

I especially appreciated your reply in the Letters section of the March/April 2014 issue entitled “One-on-One Spiritual Master.” It is very valuable advice. I think it is the need of the day that the new generations of devotees join ISKCON through Śrīlā Prabhupāda; it will be very auspicious for strengthening ISKCON.

I have a few questions.

Is there any type of *varṇāśrama* system in the Svargaloka planets of the demigods who manage universal administration (such as Indraloka)? If yes, then how do we explain the descriptions of one celestial personality enjoying with many beautiful women in the gardens? What is the role of women in that system? Some women are mentioned as wives of demigods, but there are others, like society girls, who seem to be there for the entertainment of the male section.

If there is no *varṇāśrama*, then it seems even more difficult to have any regulative principles in their society. Does the law of karma work on demigods?

In Indraloka, it is said that there are thirty-three million demigods and demons. How do these demons contribute in the universal administration? What is their role in Indraloka (other than competing with demigods)?

Govindānandīnī Devī Dāsi  
New Jersey

*Our reply:* We’ll answer according to our general understanding of the heavenly planets, although there may be some exceptions to these points.

Although Indra can be considered a king, and his guru, Bṛhaspati, a *brāhmaṇa*, there is no *varṇāśrama*

system in Svargaloka. *Varṇāśrama* is meant for human beings on earth, from which one goes up or down after death. Human beings are supposed to try to elevate themselves, especially to the platform of liberation, and *varṇāśrama* is Kṛṣṇa’s system for organizing human society to do that.

To understand Svargaloka, keep in mind that it is the place where one enjoys the results of one’s good karma. That’s its primary purpose, and it’s especially the goal of followers of the *karma-kāṇḍa* sections of the *Vedas*. Everyone there is enjoying, and sexual enjoyment is prominent (for both men and women, naturally). The society girls must also be enjoying, even though from our perspective it might seem that they are being exploited.

The four regulative principles followed by members of ISKCON are for human beings to make spiritual progress, which is not the primary purpose of Svargaloka. In the heavenly planets, the residents are allowed to enjoy things like sex and intoxication as the results of their good karma accumulated on earth. Again, it’s the place for enjoying, not for undergoing *tapasya*, or austerity for spiritual elevation. When the results of the Svargaloka residents’ good karma run out, they return to earth. Strict followers of the *karma-kāṇḍa* path think that this is the goal of life: to accumulate *puṇya* (good karma) on earth and then enjoy in heaven. They desire to do this eternally, in a continuous cycle, and have no thought of liberation from repeated birth and death.

Generally the demigods don’t incur new karma but are only working off (through enjoyment) the results of their old (good) karma. Of course, we never work off all of our karma, which traces back many lifetimes. So when they return to earth, they still have good and bad karmic results to suffer and enjoy.

Ordinarily, there are no demons in Indraloka, except in times such as when Bali Mahārāja conquered it. The number thirty-three million refers to administrative demigods who perform various functions all over the universe, not just in Indraloka.

One final note to help clarify things: The heavenly planets include both “the staff” and “visitors.” It’s a playground, with Indra (and probably the society girls) being part of the staff that provides for the enjoyment of the visitors.

## Solving Problems by Chanting

Can chanting help in reconciling with my ex-husband? I am chanting sixteen rounds on my beads almost every day. I understand that chanting helps in purifying the soul, the heart, and the mind. Is it possible that chanting can help in solving emotional problems? I have been divorced for one year, and I am thinking of reconciling with my ex-husband. I am not chanting with

the hope of expecting something in return.

Yashoda  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* As you undoubtedly know, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* you are chanting is a prayer in which the chanter is asking, “O Lord, or energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service.” If your motive in chanting is not to get something from Kṛṣṇa but to serve Him, He will do whatever is best to help you reach that goal. He will know whether reuniting with your ex-husband will be spiritually helpful or not, and He will arrange things in the way that will be most spiritually beneficial.

There’s no definitive answer to your question. Kṛṣṇa will judge your needs and desires. If your true desire is to be united with your ex-husband even if it hurts your spiritual life, Kṛṣṇa may say, “Okay, this person is not serious about devotional service; I’ll let her reunite with her husband and stay in illu-

sion if that’s what she really wants.”

Kṛṣṇa is a person, and being supremely intelligent, He can take many variables into consideration. The best advice we can give is to chant sincerely and let Kṛṣṇa decide what is best for you, whatever that may be.

## CORRECTION

The painting accompanying the article “Death Scenes with a Message” in the July/August issue was inaccurate. The painting shows three Viṣṇudūtas coming to rescue the dying Ajāmila from the hands of the Yamadūtas. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, however, that there were four Viṣṇudūtas. Śrīlā Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his commentary that four Viṣṇudūtas arrived because Ajāmila had chanted a name of the Lord containing four syllables: Nārāyaṇa.

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# Limited & Unlimited Consciousness



Lord Kṛṣṇa in His form as the Supersoul resides in the heart of every living being and in every atom of creation. While our consciousness is limited to our own body, His pervades everything.

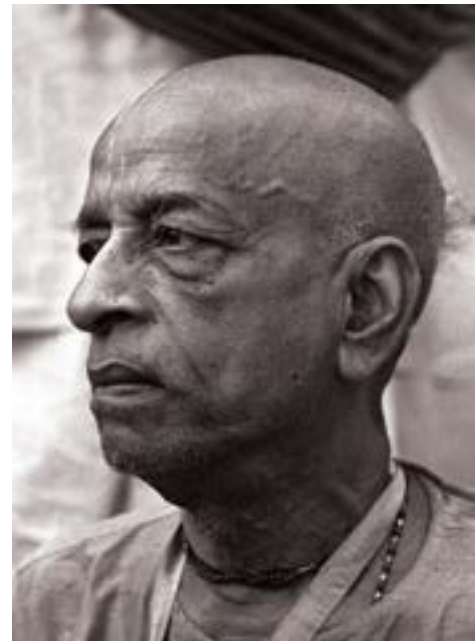
*Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches that the individual living entity, though possessed of the attributes of God, is never equal to Him.*

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

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society  
for Krishna Consciousness

**W**HAT IS THE objective of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement? It is a process for purification of consciousness. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.17) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *avināsi tu tad viddhi yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam*: “That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible.” There are two kinds of consciousness. One consciousness is limited, and the other consciousness is unlimited. The unlimited consciousness is there in God, and the limited consciousness is there in you, in me, and in all living entities.

If I pinch your body you feel pain. This is consciousness. “Somebody is pinching me.” But if I pinch somebody else, you cannot feel it. Therefore your consciousness or my consciousness is limited to this body. Similarly there is another consciousness, which is Kṛṣṇa’s consciousness, or universal consciousness. If I pinch your body, Kṛṣṇa as Paramātmā,



the Supersoul, feels that I am pinching somebody. These things are explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter 13, mentions *kṣetra-jña*. *Kṣetra*, which means field, refers to the body, and *jña* means knower. So *kṣetra-jña* means the knower of the body. Kṛṣṇa

Detail from a painting by Yaduraj Devi Das

says that in every body there is a *kṣetra-jñā*. I know the pains and pleasures of my body; you know the pains and pleasures of your body.

Kṛṣṇa says,

*kṣetra-jñāṁ cāpi mām viddhi  
sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata*

“O scion of Bharata, you should understand that I am also the knower in all bodies.” (*Gītā* 13.3) Kṛṣṇa is present in everyone’s body:

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām  
hṛd-deśe ’rjuna tiṣṭhati*

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart, O Arjuna.” (*Gītā* 18.61) Therefore He knows the pains and pleasures of all bodies. That is

*tāni* (*Gītā* 7.26): Kṛṣṇa knows everything. He knows whatever has happened in the past, whatever will happen in the future, and whatever is happening at present, but we do not know. First of all we should understand that this is the difference between God and the living entity.

### Understanding The Difference

The *jīva*, or individual soul, is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as being part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. The example is given of a big fire and its sparks. The sparks are small, but in quality they are fire. They are not different from fire. If a spark of the fire falls on your cloth, it will immediately burn the cloth. The burn-

*parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate  
svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*

“The Supreme Lord has nothing to do, and no one is found to be equal to or greater than Him, for everything is done naturally and systematically by His multifarious energies.”

Suppose I want to paint a nice flower. I require the brush, I require the paint, I require the intelligence, I require the time, and somehow or other, in a few days or a few months, I paint a very nice flower. But Kṛṣṇa’s energy is so experienced that by working His energy, many millions of colorful flowers come at once.

The foolish scientists say that this is the work of nature. No. Nature is instrumental. Behind nature is

the brain of God, Kṛṣṇa. This understanding is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One who is Kṛṣṇa conscious understands that this flower has not come about blindly. These varieties of flowers, trees, and leaves are developing under the direction of

Kṛṣṇa, but His direction is so powerful that the development comes at once – *svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*. A great scientist pushes a button on a machine, and immediately something wonderful happens. But it is not that the machine is working independently; the scientist is pushing the button. Similarly, don’t accept this nonsense idea that nature is producing independently. No, nature cannot produce. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.10),

*mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ  
sūyate sa-carācaram  
hetunānena kaunteya  
jagad viparivartate*

“This material nature, which is one of My energies, is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, producing all moving and nonmoving beings. Under its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.” *Mayādhyakṣeṇa:*

“Under My supervision” nature is working. Not blindly. To think nature is working independently is crude knowledge. A child sees an airplane flying in the sky, and he may think the airplane is flying automatically, by itself. No. Without the touch of the pilot, the machine cannot work. The machine may be perfect, but the pilot is required.

At the present moment civilization is trying to avoid God, the brain of God. That is foolishness. Kṛṣṇa says *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ*: “Nature is working under My supervision.” The Kṛṣṇa conscious person sees the hand of God behind nature. That vision is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.22.53) states,

*eka-deśa-sthitasyaḡner  
jyotsnā vistāriṇī yathā  
parasya brahmaṇaḥ śaktis  
tathedam akhilaṁ jagat*

“Whatever we see in this world is but an expansion of various energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is like a fire that spreads illumination for a long distance although it is situated in one place.” This verse explains the manifestation of this world. The sun, an emblem of fire, is situated ninety-three million miles away, but because it is a fiery planet, its heat and light is expanded, and in that heat and light everything is being generated.

We have got practical experience. In western countries where there is not sufficient heat and light, the trees and flowers do not grow so luxuriously. And when there is snowfall or no sunlight, the trees become dry and leafless. So, as the heat and light of the sun are the cause of the different leaves and flowers and fruits, similarly Kṛṣṇa has got two kinds of energy, like heat and light. That heat and light is the spiritual energy and the material energy. The material energy is practically darkness; there is no light. The Vedic instruction is therefore *tamasi mā jyotir gamaḥ*: “Don’t keep yourself within this darkness;

go to the light.” Besides this material sky of our experience, there is another sky, the spiritual sky.

This material sky is naturally in darkness; therefore Kṛṣṇa has created the sun. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.52) states,

*yac-cakṣur eṣa savitā  
sakala-grahāṇāṁ  
rājā samasta-sura-mūrtir aśeṣa-tejāḥ  
yasyājñayā bhramati  
sambhṛta-kāla-cakro  
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ  
bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, under whose control even the sun, which is considered to be the eye of the Lord, rotates within the fixed orbit of eternal time. The sun is the king of all planetary systems and has unlimited potency in heat and light.” The scientists say that the sun is rotating in its orbit so carefully that if it moves toward one side the whole universe will be immediately turned into ice, and if it moves toward the other side then immediately the whole universe will be ablaze. The scientists have seen so far that the sun is moving very carefully. Neither this side, nor that side – exactly in its orbit. Who has planned this orbit? The *Brahma-saṁhitā* informs us, *yasya-ajñayā*: “by whose order” the sun is rotating exactly in its orbit (*bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakro*). Lord Brahmā says, “I am offering my worship to that person: *govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*. That person is Govinda, Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Brahmā is not struck with wonder by the arrangement of the material world – how the sun is moving, how the moon is moving, how nature is working. He knows that there is a big brain behind it all: Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8):

*ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo  
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate  
iti matvā bhajante mām  
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

## You cannot know the pains and pleasures of others. But Kṛṣṇa knows. That is the difference between God and the living entity.

the difference between Kṛṣṇa, or God, and us. That is the test. Somebody is claiming, “I am God.” How can you be God? You cannot know the pains and pleasures of others. But Kṛṣṇa knows. That is the difference between God and the living entity. God is conscious and we are conscious, but our consciousness is limited and God’s consciousness is unlimited. That is the difference.

Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, “I explained this yoga system to the sun-god.”

And Arjuna inquired, “How is that, Kṛṣṇa? Both You and I were born recently. How can You say that You explained this knowledge to the sun-god long, long ago – forty million years ago?”

Kṛṣṇa answered, “My dear Arjuna, you are My eternal friend. You are always with Me. When I instructed the sun-god, you were also present, but you have forgotten. I do not forget.”

That is the difference between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. *Vedāhaṁ samati-*

ing quality is there, either in the big fire or in the small fire. Therefore, qualitatively we are one with God.

Another example is the drop of ocean water. The chemical composition of the drop of ocean water is the same as the chemical composition of the big mass of water.

Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful; we are also powerful. Kṛṣṇa can create; we also can create. Kṛṣṇa can create innumerable planets floating in the air; we can create a tiny airplane or Sputnik flying in the air. You see? So the creative power is there in both God and the *jīva*, but there is far difference between Kṛṣṇa’s creative power and my creative power.

### The Brain Behind Nature

In the *Vedas* (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8) it is said,

*na tasya kāryaṁ kāraṇaṁ ca vidyate  
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛṣyate*

### 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 millennia 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 **picque**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

### Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean “servant.” For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means “servant of Kṛṣṇa.”

“I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.” Anyone who has understood Kṛṣṇa rightly, in truth, is Kṛṣṇa conscious. He is *budhā*, actually in knowledge. Kṛṣṇa is so great. Kṛṣṇa’s great power is so great.

### Understand Kṛṣṇa The Right Way

Generally people take Kṛṣṇa very slightly. “Oh, Kṛṣṇa danced with the *gopīs*.” They do not know what Kṛṣṇa is. Therefore they go to hell by hearing Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa-līlā* from unauthorized sources. We have to face so many questions sometimes: “Why did Kṛṣṇa act like this?” Peo-

ple know Me in truth.” One has to understand Kṛṣṇa in truth; then his Kṛṣṇa consciousness will help him become *budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*: a learned person who feels the presence of Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Then he’ll be fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How can one understand Kṛṣṇa in truth? That is stated by Kṛṣṇa:

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

“One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every liv-

## Kṛṣṇa should be understood as He is – not by fiction, not by speculation, not by so-called scholarly, foolish commentation.

ple ask this because they are listening to professional *Bhāgavata* readers. When these professional narrators read the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in public gatherings, they immediately open to the *rāsa-līlā* chapters. Because they have no other knowledge, they cannot explain the *Bhāgavata*. They have no brain to explain all the intricate verses in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, beginning with the first verse: *janmādy asya yataḥ*. Therefore they do not know Kṛṣṇa. They jump to the spiritual *rāsa-līlā*, and people misunderstand.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.3) Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

*manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu  
kaścid yatati siddhaye  
yatatām api siddhānām  
kaścin mām vetti tattvataḥ*

“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one

knows Me in truth.” One has to understand Kṛṣṇa in truth; then his Kṛṣṇa consciousness will help him become *budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*: a learned person who feels the presence of Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Then he’ll be fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How can one understand Kṛṣṇa in truth? That is stated by Kṛṣṇa:

*bhaktiṁ mām abhijānāti  
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ  
tato mām tattvato jñātṛvā  
viśate tad-anantaram*

“One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.”

Kṛṣṇa should be understood as He is – not by fiction, not by speculation, not by so-called scholarly, foolish commentation. Try to understand Kṛṣṇa as He is. That is right

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then one will be able to understand how Kṛṣṇa is working, how the whole world – the material atmosphere, the material cosmic manifestation – is working. Kṛṣṇa says, *mayādhyakṣeṇa*: “under My supervision.”

Of one who understands Kṛṣṇa scientifically, Kṛṣṇa says,

*janma karma ca me divyam  
evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ  
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma  
naiti mām eti so ’rjuna*

“One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material abode, O Arjuna.” (*Gītā* 4.9) Not the foolish man, but the intelligent man who knows Kṛṣṇa actually – he immediately becomes liberated. After giving up this body, he never comes back to accept another material body. He goes back home, back to Godhead.

### Our Original Glowing Quality

How has the living entity, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, gotten this condition of material life? That can be explained in this way: Like the spark, as long as the *jīva* is in the “fire” – connected to Kṛṣṇa in devotional service – it is just like fire; it is glowing, glowing. It is only a spark, but it is glowing. But if it falls from the fire, then immediately it becomes extinguished. The glowing quality becomes extinguished.

There are three positions of the living entity according to the quality of the material nature with which he associates. The living entity is of one type, but when he comes into this material world he associates with three kinds of material qualities: *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa*, and *tamo-guṇa*, or the qualities of goodness, passion, and ignorance.

One who is in *sattva-guṇa* has brahminical qualifications. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, (please turn to page 55)

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

nature and forgetting God.  
**Māyāvādī**—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal.  
**Modes of nature**—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.  
**Nityānanda**—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.  
**Prasāda**—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion.  
**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.  
**Śāstra**—scriptures, especially the Vedic scriptures of India.  
**Śrī**—an honorific meaning “opulent” (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).  
**Śrīla Prabhupāda**—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.  
**Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. (Cited as *Bhāg.*)  
**Supersoul**—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.  
**Vaiṣṇava**—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).  
**Varṇāśrama**—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).  
**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.  
**Vṛndāvana**—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.



“God is dead. . . .  
And we have killed him.”  
– Nietzsche

# THE VULTURE IS CURSING THE COW

Prabhupāda and the  
“God Is Dead” Controversy

by Satyarāja Dāsa

**A**LTHOUGH Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was not the first philosopher to proclaim that “God is dead” – indeed, his predecessor Hegel had used the same phrase almost twenty years earlier – it was Nietzsche who brought the idea into public consciousness.

In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (usually translated as *The Cheerful Science* or *The Gay Science*), published in 1882, Nietzsche puts the words in the mouth of a fictional character known simply as “the madman.” After entering a busy marketplace, the character asks, “Where is God?” Reacting to his audacity, mobs of people ridicule him, prompting him to respond to his own question:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean

Nietzsche does not mean that God has experienced a physical death (since God is not a physical being). Instead, he hypothesizes that if a Christian society starts to doubt the existence of a spiritual being, the moral fabric of such a society will be pulled apart. Nietzsche is not trying to kill God himself; society had already done that. He is trying to posit a way for humanity to reconstruct itself in the vacuum left by the destruction of Christian morality.<sup>2</sup>

### “God Is Dead” Reprise

After Nietzsche’s time, the “God is dead” notion died down – until the 1960s, when it reincarnated by way of an informal group of Protestant theologians, including Thomas Altizer, Gabriel Vahanian, Paul van

9, 1966), *The New York Times* had run a similar story that also focused on the new Protestant theology. Nietzsche would have been proud.

But not everyone bought the idea, then or now. For example, theologians such as Karl Barth and John Warwick Montgomery countered “God is dead” theology to good effect. More currently, Michael Shermer’s article “Why Nietzsche and Time Magazine Were Wrong”<sup>3</sup> pokes holes both in Nietzsche’s prediction of increasing secularization and in the philosophical position of the “God is dead” theologians. As evidence, he cites the fact that an ever-increasing number of people in the West are still religious or spiritual, despite the emphasis on science. Additionally, Shermer notes, statistics indicate that few have felt the need to shift their belief to a depersonalized God or to nontraditional forms of religion.

### Bringing God Back to Life

In the spring of 1966 – when *Time* and other news media were rife with “God is dead” coverage – Śrīla Prabhupāda was starting his movement in New York City. Judging by how frequently he used the phrase “God is dead,” he was aware of the relevant news items. His first documented use of the phrase, in fact, occurred in April of 1966, just as national periodicals were first apprising people of this new trend in Christian theology.<sup>4</sup> From then on, it would consistently arise in his public lectures: “In America,” he said, “when I first went, they were popularizing the theory that ‘God is dead.’ But they again accepted and said: God is not dead, but He is here with Swamiji.”<sup>5</sup>

Prabhupāda seemed to know about the Protestant dimension, too, or at least that the idea had penetrated the Christian tradition: “At the present moment in many Christian churches, this philosophy is being taught that God is dead. But so far we are concerned, we

cannot accept this philosophy, that God is dead. But we preach on the other hand that God is not only not dead, but He can be approached finally face to face. And the method is very simple, chanting the holy name of God.”<sup>6</sup>

Prabhupāda’s guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, had briefly referred to the “God is dead” theme in his introduction to the *Brahma-saṁhitā*,<sup>7</sup> written in the 1930s. Since this predates the *Time* magazine article by several decades, he was likely recalling Nietzsche, but Prabhupāda’s usage seems to suggest his awareness of the theme’s more contemporary manifestation.

As for Prabhupāda’s books, “God is dead” appears in his *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Beyond Illusion and Doubt*, *Mukunda Mālā Stotra*, *Quest for Enlightenment*, *Elevation to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness*, *A Second Chance*, *The Laws of Nature*, and several others. It appears most frequently in books generated from lectures and conversations, such as *The Science of Self-Realization* and *The Journey of Self-Discovery*, indicating that he found the topic useful when speaking in public. An online search reveals that he used the phrase well over a hundred times in dialogues, lectures, and letters.

### Why Was Prabhupāda So Concerned?

The phrase “God is dead” encapsulates much of what Prabhupāda came to correct in the western world. For example, consider the last sentence uttered by Nietzsche’s madman: “Must we ourselves not become gods . . . ?” Prabhupāda equates the notion of “God is dead” with the attempt to usurp God’s position. After all, why kill off the Supreme if we don’t want, at least

on a subliminal level, to replace Him? Prabhupāda says, “So these atheistic theories, that ‘Everyone is God,’ ‘I am God,’ ‘You are God,’ ‘God is dead,’ ‘There is no God,’ ‘God is not a person’ – we are fighting against these principles. We say, ‘God is Kṛṣṇa. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa. He is a person, and He is not dead.’ This is our preaching. Therefore it is a fight.”<sup>8</sup>

Implied in “God is dead” is this: “If God is dead, then I can do as I



please. I answer to no one. I am, in effect, God.”

In Prabhupāda’s words:

There is a nice Bengali proverb, *śakuni svape garu more nā*. *Śakuni* means the vulture. The vulture wants some dead carcass of an animal, a cow especially. So for days together it does not get it, so it is cursing some cow. “You die.” So does it mean that by his cursing the cow will die? Similarly, these vultures, *śakuni*, they want to see God is dead. At least, they take pleasure. “Oh, now God is dead. I can do anything nonsense I like.” This is going on. *Śakuni* is cursing. The vulture is cursing the cow.<sup>9</sup>

Many of the “God is dead” theologians based their work on the prominent twentieth-century Protestant philosopher Paul Tillich, who famously referred to God as the “ground of Being,” as opposed to a Supreme Person, or as a “God who is above the God of theism.” Thus, he perpetuated the Māyāvāda doctrine of an impersonal Absolute, albeit in western terms. In fact, the word *Brahman*, the Sanskrit term for the impersonal Godhead, is often translated as “ground of being,” the phrase popularized by Tillich. Prabhupāda came to the West to show the limitations of this impersonalistic conception. For God to be complete, Prabhupāda taught, He must have both impersonal and personal features.

This whole cosmic manifestation is nothing but the expansion of the potency or energy of Kṛṣṇa. This is the conclusion. This expansion of energy is impersonal. Kṛṣṇa . . . He is the original source. The sunshine is coming from the sun globe, but the sun globe is more important than the sunshine. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa’s personality is more important than His impersonal feature, the expansion of His energy. If we understand the example of the sun, then it is very easy to understand the difference between the impersonal and the personal features of the Absolute Truth.<sup>10</sup>

Prabhupāda saw the “God is dead” philosophy as a simple lack of intelligence, or at least a lack of the kind of intelligence that allows one to distinguish matter from spirit.

God is not dead; your intelligence is dead. You have a dead body, and you’re proud of it. The body is just like a motorcar. A motorcar is dead, and if there is no driver it does not work. Similarly, the body is dead, and as soon as you, the soul, leave the body, it stops working. That means you are occupying a dead body. It is working only as long as you are there, but actually the body is dead. And you are decorating a dead body. All your acquisitions are simply decorations on a dead

## These theologians wanted to recreate religion from the ground up, beginning with the “death of God” as we know Him.

ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Nietzsche’s decree was not a denial of God but a proclamation that the modern world (for him, nineteenth-century Germany) had moved beyond the traditional God of Christianity and the sense of morality that had come from the Bible. When Nietzsche wrote, “God is dead,” he was referring to the plight of modernity, indicating that its people had outgrown contemporary European society, its laws, customs, and religious institutions. But now what? Through the mouth of a madman, Nietzsche questions what we should do now that society has taken God – at least as He was previously understood – out of the equation.

Buren, William Hamilton, and others. They expressed the need to make God more relevant in the modern world. Preferring Paul Tillich’s conception of the divine as “the ground of Being” (as opposed to a personal deity), and heeding Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s insistence that Christians “come of age,” these theologians wanted to recreate religion from the ground up, beginning with the “death of God” as we know Him. Theirs was an attempt to accommodate secularization and a world enamored more by science than by spirituality. To this end, they made prodigious use of Nietzsche’s phrase.

Their modernist position garnered considerable popularity in the West, reaching a highpoint with *Time* magazine’s cover story on April 8, 1966: “Is God Dead?” The article addressed possible reasons for America’s growing atheism and the work of the “God is dead” theologians. Just a few months earlier (January



body. *Aprāṇasyaiva dehasya maṇḍanaṁ loka-rañjanam*. Some rascal may applaud, “Oh, you are so intelligent; you are decorating your body so nicely.” But an intelligent man will say, “What a fool he is, that he’s decorating a dead body.”<sup>11</sup>

### An Inaccurate Conception, To Say the Least

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.27) Kṛṣṇa declares, “One who has taken his birth is sure to die, and after death one is sure to take birth again. Therefore, in the unavoidable discharge of your duty, you should not lament.” Consequently, the death of God is necessarily an inaccuracy, to say the least, since He never took birth. He says this Himself later in the *Gītā* (7.25): “I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My internal potency, and therefore they do not know that I am unborn and infallible.” Of course, proponents of the “God is dead” doctrine

do not literally say that God suffers conventional death. But their conception has many other flaws, as Prabhupāda has shown in the few examples cited above.

Hari Śauri Dāsa, who served as Prabhupāda’s secretary and traveled with him extensively in 1975 and 1976, documented how Prabhupāda spoke about “God is dead” while in his presence:

In class, Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to preach on points raised during the walk, especially the idea that “God is dead.” . . . Once again Śrīla Prabhupāda’s common sense logic revealed the narrow and limited thinking of atheistic philosophers. “This is our position. . . . God is not dead; God is coming very soon. Wait a few years. . . . You rascal, God is not dead. God is coming to kick you, to kill you. . . . What is death? You have to change your body. It may be lower degree or higher degree, but you have to change your body. There are 8,400,000 species

of life, forms of life. You have to accept one of them. That is our real problem. If we forget the real problem and blindly or foolishly say that God is dead – God may be dead – but God’s law is not dead. Suppose a king dies, does it mean the government dies? Hmm? The government will go on. You can say God is dead – God is not dead, neither you are dead – but if you foolishly say that God is dead that does not mean His law is also dead. The law will go on. One king may be dead. The next, his son or somebody will become king and the government law will go on. So what is the use of talking foolishly like God is dead. God is never dead. This is going on. . . .”

Prabhupāda declared that anyone who proclaims such a philosophy is actually dead, because he identifies with the gross physical body, which is always dead. It is simply a machine and moves only due to the presence of the soul. As Kṛṣṇa chastised Arjuna in the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā* for his bodily concerns, Śrīla Prabhupāda similarly criticized the modern-day thinkers. “So all these rascal philosophers they are writing about this body. That’s all. But this is not the subject matter for the learned scholars. What is this body? A combination of matter. It is moving and as soon as the living soul is out of the body it is useless. So what is the importance of talking about this dead body?”

His conclusion was as crushingly final to the foolish philosopher’s speculative talk as death itself. “When death will come no one will save you. You are challenging God is dead. When God will come and make you killed, nobody can save you. We are so foolish for thinking that God is dead and I shall continue my life and my wife, my children, my countrymen, my nation will save me. That is not possible.”<sup>12</sup>

In his “God is dead” philosophy, Nietzsche was reacting to the rule-bound Christianity of his rigid era, as were the Protestant theologians of the 1960s. But they went too far. Prabhupāda came to set the record straight through a devo-

# CALENDAR

*This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, 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.krishnadays.com](http://www.krishnadays.com).*

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

**Month of Dāmodara**  
(October 9–November 7)

### NOVEMBER

**3 – Utthānā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

**6—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsa-yātrā.** Last day of Bhiṣma Pañcaka and Cāturmāsya.

**Month of Keśava**  
(November 7–December 6)

**18—Utpannā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans.

### DECEMBER

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

**Month of Nārāyaṇa**  
(December 7–January 5)

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

**18—Saphalā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

### JANUARY

**1—Putradā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans.



## YOU’RE INVITED! The Sunday Feast

Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday—for regulars as well as newcomers. Come by and get a taste of the world’s oldest cultural tradition. Call your nearest center to find out the schedule for the Sunday Feast.

(See “Centers,” pages 56–58, or visit [directory.krishna.com](http://directory.krishna.com).)

tional process of chanting and dancing. Nietzsche, in fact, would have appreciated Prabhupāda’s process, for it is said that the German philosopher showed his appreciation of the sacred through dance. Indeed, Nietzsche danced daily, saying it was his “only kind of piety,” his “divine service.”<sup>13</sup> To conclude, then, I’ll invoke one of Nietzsche’s most famous sayings: “I should only believe in a God who knows how to dance.”<sup>14</sup>

### ENDNOTES

1. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Section 125, tr. Walter Kaufmann (NY: Random House, 1991, reprint). The title of this book is sometimes rendered *The Cheerful Science*, as I do earlier in this article.
2. Davis, Lane. Berkow, Jordan ed. “Thus Spoke Zarathustra Study Guide: The Death of God and Modern Theology”. GradeSaver, 10 November 2007; Web, 2 May 2014.
3. *Skeptic* magazine (Volume 6, No. 3), November 1998.
4. The pertinent portion of the lecture: “In Russia they are preach-

ing godless civilization: ‘There is no God.’ Here also there are even some churches. I know they are preaching that God is dead. You see? They are preaching like that. So the condition is very precarious at the present moment. And we are preaching *Bhagavad-gītā* and the formula, but the formula is practically very difficult to apply in the present circumstances. You see?”

5. Room Conversation, December 13, 1970. This is also confirmed in a letter to Madhukaṇṭha Dāsa dated November 16, 1970: “When I first went to your country in New York, I found everyone imbued with the idea that God is dead. Now gradually people are understanding that God is not only not dead, but He is factually present with us at every moment. If we have the necessary qualification, to see God eye-to-eye is quite possible.”

6. Letter to Kīrtanānanda Swami, June 30, 1968.

7. The pertinent portion of the Introduction: “People are so much apt to indulge in transitory speculation even when they are to educate

themselves on the situation beyond their empiric area or experiencing jurisdiction and almost foolishly they dare to declare that God is dead.”

8. Room conversation, December 13, 1970.

9. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class, 7.9.12, Montreal, August 18, 1968.

10. Class on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 20.110, New York, July 17, 1976.

11. Room conversation, June 1974, Paris. See <http://www.krishna.com/vision-see-life-stone>.

12. Hari Śauri Dāsa, *A Transcendental Diary, Volume Two*.

13. <http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2010/12/11/why-did-nietzsche-love-to-dance/>

14. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 1.7. See <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1891nietzsche-zara.asp>

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# FREEDOM?

*Is there a conception of truth or freedom  
beyond the bars of race, religion,  
nationality, and political affiliation?  
Is there something higher we can strive for?*

by Devāmṛta Swami

photos by Lebo Komane

the spiritual reality. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda came to South Africa twice. He also went to Kenya, where he exhorted the students, the general population, and the leaders to build their nation on the spiritual platform.

What I'm going to propose to you tonight is that indeed, if we're going to have real progress, we need to consider the spiritual platform, and then we can understand full freedom in contrast to partial freedom. I'm going to touch upon a thirst that cannot be quenched by politics and economics. I'd like to introduce the most important human right that distinguishes us from the birds, the bees, and the beasts.

After World War II, many nations of the world came together in the United Nations and approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The world was still traumatized by the horrors of WWII, in which 55 million people died. The consciousness at that time was "Never again! Let us make this Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in that way clear a path forward for the progress of humanity."

*This is the second annual Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture, given at Wits University in Johannesburg under the auspices of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Africa. The lecture was given last March.*

**F**REEDOM IS A TOPIC that resonates with all human beings. You can approach the concept from many angles: political freedom, economic freedom, intellectual freedom, religious freedom, academic freedom, artistic freedom, and so on. People are enamored by freedom of movement, freedom of assembly. Whenever you hear that something is free, you get the sense that there are no boundaries, no limitations: free elections, free markets, free love, free thinking.

Marketers tap into humans' love of freedom and things free. You

go to a store and what do you see: "Buy two, get the third one free." Marketers know you don't need two but you can't resist the temptation of getting something for free. You rationalize: "I came to the store to get one, but maybe I could store the other two or give them away."

My point is that there is something attractive about freedom and things that are free. Yet we need to try to broaden our understanding of the concept of freedom.

I'm attracted to a statement by Nelson Mandela: "There's no such thing as part freedom." But "part freedom" is what our economic and political leaders have been offering the world. We need to go much deeper; we need to have a broader understanding of freedom, based not simply on materialism but on





### Five Myths of Human Progress

There are five great myths of human progress, and they have all turned out to be suspect.

Myth number one: Money brings happiness. I spoke about this a few years ago at the University of Cape Town, to an audience of two hundred students and profes-

sors. I asked them: “I’m sure you’re familiar with the current science of happiness – now about twenty years old. You’re familiar with the research showing that beyond a middle-class level of financial attainment, any further increase in wealth will not make you any happier.” I asked for a show of hands. About eighty percent were aware of the finding. Academics will quib-

ble about details, but the general concept is accepted. So then I said, “Knowing this, and knowing your level of intelligence and potential success, how many of you are prepared to live your life on a basic middle-class standard?” No hands were raised.

So what we see is a disconnection between knowledge and lifestyle. From the viewpoint of the

ancient Vedic wisdom of India, the problem is that it’s not real knowledge. Real knowledge is evidenced in our actions. If we don’t demonstrate knowledge in our actions, we actually don’t know.

Now myth number two: Technology brings well-being. Are our technologically complicated lives actually better in terms of freedom from anxiety, freedom from stress?

Yet we seem to have bought very deeply into the money goals, the technology goals.

And that brings us to myth number three. Perhaps this myth is not as prevalent in South Africa as in other places. Still, myth number three has a major impact on the whole world: Weapons bring security. In some revered nations of the world, at least fifty percent of the government revenue is spent on the military. And the taxpayers are convinced: “All this spending on the military is for the security and protection of humanity.”

Myth number four: The earth provides virtually unlimited resources for our exploitation.

And myth number five: The earth provides limitless room for disposal of waste after we’ve done our exploiting.

### Replacing the Myths

These myths are being punctured these days, but what are we going to put in their places? Unless we have a deep spiritual understanding of what the self is, we’ll never be able to escape these material traps – economics, politics, and so on. These are necessary, but we’ve come to a time when the greatest concepts of material life are shaky. Even the whole idea of democracy and its emphasis on economic growth as a cherished destination is shaky.

A few weeks ago *The Economist* magazine ran a special report on democracy. *The Economist*, published in the UK and distributed around the world, is known to be the party line for many news publications around the world. Social scientists contributing to the special report said, “We have to be honest: democracy is in trouble.” The twentieth century was the great peak for democratic motivation. The fall of the Soviet Empire, the fall of apartheid – these events and others brought exhilaration. But as we go into the twenty-first century, for the past eight years, according to political studies, democracy has been receding in the world. There are two main causes for that. These

causes are important to understand because many of our concepts of freedom are tied to the democratic process.

Hundreds upon hundreds of years ago Plato pointed out that the Achilles heel of democracy is that the people can be easily bought off with populist proposals that just focus on short-term gain, short-term stimulations. *The Economist* admitted that Plato had it right. What has upset the applecart? The global financial crisis: democracy could not prevent that. It could not reform the banking system.

But there’s an even greater reason: China. China is showing that what is important is not freedom of expression, of speech, of thought. What is important is growth – economic growth achieved by any means. When America was at its economic peak, for it to double the standard of living took thirty years. China does that every ten years. And their leaders are now quite upbeat: “What is all this talk about freedom? Where’s your economic growth? Look at our example! We have a tightly controlled society run by professional managers. We decide what’s good for the people.”

Go to China and you will see gleaming airports, brand new highways, superfast transport systems. People around the world are thinking: “This is what we want – the fruits of rapid economic acceleration. We can do without the freedom of speech, the freedom of assembly, the freedom of thought, if we have the temporary stimulations that an advanced consumer society can give.”

What can we say to that, if the goal is rapid economic acceleration? If that is what will satisfy the human being, then let us do whatever is necessary to get that. If prosperity is more important than freedom, then we should restructure our political economies.

The Chinese are saying that this is the way. “What is the use of your democratic systems?” Their leaders openly say that. “You elect incompetent leaders; you elect sweet-talkers. Look at us! We assemble

the brightest, most competent people, and we tightly control society. Look what we're able to provide the people. Look at our standard of living and how rapidly it increases!"

### The Need for Precise Spiritual Knowledge

I point this out because what we're seeing is a misguided, mistaken understanding of what is best for the human being. Forgetting our nonmaterial identity, we're struggling to seek fulfillment through matter. Sentimentally, we may talk about our spirituality, our spiritual self, but where is the precise scientific knowledge of the spirit soul?

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, the prime Vedic text, Kṛṣṇa – presented as

tial for change, a great hope, and yes, in terms of the externals, there is adjustment. But then, again and again, the people become disappointed. Often political change means the ins become the outs and the outs become the ins. Is there a way we can focus on the real needs of the human being?

### Five Levels of Experiencing the Supreme

Perhaps we've become distracted. I'd like to present to you a possible way we can visualize the Supreme Absolute Truth in our daily life. Five levels – three are just about material nature, ordinary material existence, but two are transcendental, beyond matter, beyond time

"Food on my table, I know God is able." That is correct. It is the very beginning of God-realization. I'm reminded of a commendation by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization upon the passing of Nelson Mandela. They complimented him on understanding that so much of freedom depends on food, not simply in growing food but in distributing food.

So this first level of God-realization, *anna-maya*, is indeed important. We can't live without food. Yet the UN has calculated that one third of all the food produced in the world is wasted: 1.3 billion metric tons annually. Of all the fruits and vegetables grown in the UK, thirty percent is wasted for cosmetic reasons: the fruits and vegetables don't look good enough for the consumers.

If we have so much trouble on the first level of God-realization, how can we proceed any further? Think of the little baby being nursed at the mother's breast: the child is simply focused on being fed. So much of the world has problems just eating. One billion people in the world are starving, and one billion people are obese. Obviously, there's a crisis in distribution and in how human beings view simple living.

Moving beyond this first level of God-realization we go to *prāṇa-maya*: understanding God through the fact you're alive. In churches children get up and give testimony: "I thank God for my mother, I thank God for my father, I thank God that I'm alive today." That is noteworthy. That is the second level of God-realization given in the ancient Vedic texts. There are many places in the world where you're afraid what tomorrow will bring: "Will my life be taken away? Will I be incarcerated? Will I be brutalized?" So we don't want to minimize the *prāṇa-maya* level – thankfulness to God for being alive – just as we don't want to minimize the first level, *anna-maya* – thanks to God for food on the table. These are preliminary levels of God-realization. You see your dependency,

your helplessness. Whether you're rich or poor, your life is very fragile. The world's food supply is very fragile. A pious person can see the presence of God in these preliminary levels of existence.

Another preliminary level is called *jñāna-maya*. It's appropriate that we discuss that level here at the university. The third level, *jñāna-maya*, refers to appreciating God because you can think, you can intuit; you have cognition, you can get an education, you can be cultured. The university is an active place for the intelligence. It's an active place for acquiring knowledge. But what is the purpose of that knowledge? Bhaktivedanta Swami, Śrīla Prabhupāda as his followers affectionately refer to him, pointed out that if we become so caught in knowledge of material adjustment, knowledge of material alteration, and we forget the most important knowledge, of the unit of spiritual consciousness known as the *ātmā* in Sanskrit, we've wasted our human form of life. So yes, human beings need intellectualism, art, culture. And they can appreciate the presence of the Supreme Absolute Truth just in their thought processes: I think, therefore I am.

### Beyond the Material

But there are levels of God-realization beyond these three material levels. The classic spiritual text *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us that we must go to level number four, known as *vijñāna-maya*: understanding that we have a spiritual identity different from the body and mind. When we enter the spiritual laboratory, we can begin to experience the power of our soul in relation to the Supreme Soul.

The culmination of the different levels of God-realization is number five, known in Sanskrit as *ānanda-maya*. It is the crown of human achievement: relishing the love supreme, the relationship between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, of which the individual soul is part. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains that this relationship will

satisfy your core being. No amount of material adjustment, of material construction, deconstruction, reconstruction, will satisfy you or society, because our real problem is disconnection from the Supreme Absolute Truth, disconnection from God.

When we say Kṛṣṇa, we're referring to God. The precise meaning of the word *Kṛṣṇa* is "the unlimited all-attractive source of pleasure." In *Bhagavad-gītā* He claims that all living entities, no matter what species, are all His parts, His children. Yet we've become distracted by existence in the material world and have forgotten our purpose in life: how to be truly free.

I was reading about Robben Island [where Nelson Mandela spent eighteen of his twenty-seven years in prison], and I noted the prison system in the apartheid days. According to your perceived ethnicity—white, Indian, mixed, or African—you'd receive a certain standard of food. Moreover, based on periodic evaluations of your tractability, you would be designated as a class D prisoner, class C prisoner, class B, or class A. What would you do in those circum-

stances? Would you try to improve the prison conditions? Of course, and those political prisoners, those anti-apartheid fighters, certainly acted in such a way that their privileges within the prison would increase. But, while focusing on the struggle within the prison, they always kept their vision on the struggle without. And this is what the ancient Vedic texts advise us – how to live in this temporary world of matter. We are spirit souls entrapped in temporary material bodies in a temporary material world. Yes, we should live comfortably; we should live with justice and dignity. But at the same time, we should know that real freedom is not on the material plane. Real freedom is in the spiritual reality. Until we can act on that, we'll always be frustrated.

I'm reminded of another statement by Nelson Mandela: "Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished." How good is the human being? We need transcendental knowledge to inform us, knowledge beyond matter; then we can understand the true potential, the true goodness of

## We may talk about our spirituality, our spiritual self, but where is the precise scientific knowledge of the spirit soul?

the supreme source, the Absolute Truth, the ultimate reality – says that as long as we think we are matter, as long as we have no precise understanding of our spiritual identity, we must be subject to illusion. Our efforts for progress must be thwarted because we actually don't know that our number one priority is enlightenment. Yes, we must take care of our material needs, and certainly there has been great injustice in the distribution of economic prosperity and in the political sphere. While taking care of those, dare I say, external priorities, we have forgotten how powerful our spirit soul is, and we have forgotten our connection to the Supreme Soul. Unless we have a class of leaders who can uplift the people with spiritual knowledge, we will always see society declining, despite so many revolutions, so many restructurings of the political economy.

We'll see that actually not much changes. There seems to be a poten-

and space. Without a grasp of the top two levels of the five, we cannot benefit humanity.

I'll list these levels using Sanskrit terms. You see, Sanskrit is a language particularly appropriate for discussing enlightenment. Every language has its strength: English is the business language; German is still known as the scientific language, especially for engineering; French supposedly is the language of love; Sanskrit is the language of spiritual science.

The first level of our experiencing the presence of the Supreme in our life is called *anna-maya*: realization of God based on food. The fact that I'm being maintained – that I can eat, and there's food for me – is a very preliminary realization of God. We cannot maintain ourselves. We do not control nature, despite our technology. Someone who appreciates the Supreme simply because he or she can eat is noteworthy, even though the appreciation is rudimentary. People say,

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the human being. Then we can truly understand that flame, which is hidden, because after all, by material methods we can't see our spiritual identity, and therefore we forget all about it. We are then easily manipulated by external material desires.

People need to be educated in spiritual knowledge. I'm not talking about religious belief. Whatever religion you may call yourself, fine, but what is the nature of the self? Am I material or spiritual? And what is the ultimate reality I'm part of? This knowledge is essential. If the people get this kind of knowl-

edge, they won't be so manipulated by temporary promises of economic acceleration, which won't satisfy them anyway.

### Three E's

Three E's are troubling humanity today: the environment, energy, and economics. Problems on these fronts are eluding solution. You see, no amount of material gain will contribute to your deep and crucial satisfaction. There are not enough resources in the world to fulfill the ever-increasing material desires of

the people. Nor is there enough space for disposing the waste. Just this fact alone should tell us we need to adopt a different approach. It's not just a good idea – it is absolutely necessary.

My request is that you all consider how to go another route. Yes, we need to correct corruption and faulty political and economic systems. But while we're trying to survive in the prison, let us not forget what full freedom is: the freedom of the spirit self in relationship to the Supreme Self. This is the  
(please turn to page 55)

## e-Krishna

### Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



[www.howicame.com](http://www.howicame.com) collects stories from around the world about how ISKCON devotees came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. An initiative of the ISKCON Governing Body Commission Outreach Committee, it is designed to inspire devotees in their practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by revealing the many ways people discover Kṛṣṇa on the way

to devotional service.

The website's secondary purpose is to help ISKCON devotees evaluate different forms of outreach and help them better serve the needs of people just beginning to learn about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

To analyze the effects of different forms of outreach, howicame.com has an anonymous online

survey where you can check boxes to answer questions about the influences that drew you to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and which parts you found most or least appealing.

If you have your own inspiring story about how you came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, click on Submit Your Story and fill in the details. Your story may be inspiring to other readers. Stories about how devotees came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness have long been a popular feature in *Back to Godhead*.

You can browse the site in a number of ways to see how others were inspired over the years. Tools in the right-hand column help you find interesting stories. Under Browse By, click on Media to choose to read, listen to, or watch devotees telling their stories. Or you can click on the Year of Joining button to browse stories by time frame. This way you can look at stories "back in the day" or choose to hear from those who have found Kṛṣṇa more recently.

In this same section you can type the name of a devotee into the search box to look for the stories of particular people.

You can also browse a list of Major Influences to find stories grouped according to the reasons devotees were attracted to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

—Antony Brennan

## BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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.

# VENA REBUKES THE SAGES

*The sages continue to offer King Vena good advice, to no avail.*

## CANTO 4: CHAPTER 14

### 19 तस्य राज्ञो महाभाग भगवान् भूतभावनः परितुष्यति विश्वात्मा तिष्ठतो निजशासने

*tasya rājño mahā-bhāga  
bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ  
parituṣyati viśvātmā  
tiṣṭhato nija-śāsane*

*tasya* – with him; *rājñah* – the king; *mahā-bhāga* – O noble one; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *bhūta-bhāvanaḥ* – who is the original cause of the cosmic manifestation; *parituṣyati* – becomes satisfied; *viśva-ātmā* – the Supersoul of the entire universe; *tiṣṭhataḥ* – being situated; *nija-śāsane* – in his own governing situation.

**O noble one, if the king sees that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original cause of the cosmic manifestation and the Supersoul within everyone, is worshiped, the Lord will be satisfied.**

PURPORT: It is a fact that the government's duty is to see that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is satisfied by the activities of the people as well as by the activities of the government. There is no possibility of happiness if the government or citizenry have no idea of Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the original cause of the cosmic manifestation, or if they have no knowledge of *bhūta-bhāvana*, who is *viśvātmā*, or the Supersoul, the soul of everyone's soul. The conclusion is that without

engaging in devotional service, neither the citizens nor the government can be happy in any way. At the present moment neither the king nor the governing body is interested in seeing that the people are engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ① Rather, they are more interested in advancing the machinery of sense gratification. Consequently they are becoming more and more implicated in the complex machinery of the stringent laws of nature. ② People should be freed from the entanglement of the three modes of material nature, and the only process by which this is possible is surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is advised in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Unfortunately neither the government nor the people in general have any idea of this; they are simply interested in sense gratification and in being happy in this life. The word *nija-śāsane* ("in his own governmental duty") indicates that both the government and the citizens are responsible for the execution of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Once the populace is situated in the *varṇāśrama-dharma*, there is every possibility of real life and prosperity both in this world and in the next.

### 20 तस्मिंस्तुष्टे किमप्राप्यं जगतामीश्वरेश्वरे ।लोकाः सपाला हेतस्मै हरन्ति बलिमादृताः

- 1) What are leaders interested in today rather than devotional service?
- 2) What is the only process to be freed from the entanglement of the three modes of material nature?

*tasmīns tuṣṭe kim aprāpyam  
jagatām īśvareśvare  
lokāḥ sapālā hy etasmai  
haranti balim ādṛtāḥ*

*tasmīn* – when He; *tuṣṭe* – is satisfied; *kim* – what; *aprāpyam* – impossible to achieve; *jagatām* – of the universe; *īśvara-īśvare* – the controller of the controllers; *lokāḥ* – the inhabitants of the planets; *sapālāḥ* – with their presiding deities; *hi* – for this reason; *etasmai* – unto Him; *haranti* – offer; *balim* – paraphernalia for worship; *ādṛtāḥ* – with great pleasure.

**The Supreme Personality of Godhead is worshiped by the great demigods, controllers of universal affairs. When He is satisfied, nothing is impossible to achieve. For this reason all the demigods, presiding deities of different planets, as well as the inhabitants of their planets, take great pleasure in offering all kinds of paraphernalia for His worship.**

**PURPORT:** 3 All Vedic civilization is summarized in this verse: all living entities, either on this planet or on other planets, have to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead by their respective duties. When He is satisfied, all necessities of life are automatically supplied. In the *Vedas* it is also stated: *eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13). From the *Vedas* we understand that He is supplying everyone's necessities, and we can actually see that the lower animals, the birds and the bees, have no business or profession, yet they are not dying for want of food. They are all living in nature's way, and they all have the necessities of life provided – namely eating, sleeping, mating, and defending.

Human society, however, has artificially created a type of civilization which makes one forgetful of his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Modern society even enables one to forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead's grace and mercy. 4 Consequently modern civilized man is always unhappy and in need of things. People do not know that the ultimate goal of life is to approach Lord Viṣṇu and satisfy Him. They have taken this materialistic way of life as everything and have become captivated by materialistic activities. Indeed, their leaders are always encouraging them to follow this path, and the general populace, being ignorant of the laws of God, are following their blind leaders down the path of unhappiness.

5 In order to rectify this world situation, all people

3) What is the summary explanation of Vedic civilization?

4) What is the consequence of modern society's enabling one to forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead's grace and mercy?

5) How can the world situation be rectified?

should be trained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and act in accordance with the *varṇāśrama* system. The state should also see that the people are engaged in satisfying the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the primary duty of the state. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was started to convince the general populace to adopt the best process by which to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thus solve all problems.

21 तं सर्वलोकामरयज्ञसङ्ग्रहं  
त्रयीमयं द्रव्यमयं तपोमयम्  
यज्ञैर्विचित्रैर्यजतो भवाय ते  
राजन् स्वदेशाननुरोद्धुमर्हसि

*tam sarva-lokāmara-yajña-saṅgrahaṁ  
trayīmayam dravyamayam tapomayam  
yajñair vicitrair yajato bhavāya te  
rājan sva-deśān anuroddhum arhasi*

*tam* – Him; *sarva-loka* – in all planets; *amara* – with the predominating deities; *yajña*—sacrifices; *saṅgrahaṁ* – who accepts; *trayī-mayam* – the sum total of the three *Vedas*; *dravya-mayam* – the owner of all paraphernalia; *tapah-mayam* – the goal of all austerity; *yajñair* – by sacrifices; *vicitrair* – various; *yajataḥ* – worshiping; *bhavāya* – for elevation; *te* – your; *rājan* – O King; *sva-deśān* – your countrymen; *anuroddhum* – to direct; *arhasi* – you ought.

**Dear King, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, along with the predominating deities, is the enjoyer of the results of all sacrifices in all planets. The Supreme Lord is the sum total of the three Vedas, the owner of everything, and the ultimate goal of all austerity. Therefore your countrymen should engage in performing various sacrifices for your elevation. Indeed, you should always direct them towards the offering of sacrifices.**

22 यज्ञेन युष्मद्विषये द्विजातिभि-  
र्वितायमानेन सुराः कला हरेः  
स्विष्टाः सुतुष्टाः प्रदिशन्ति वाञ्छितं  
तद्वेलनं नार्हसि वीर चेष्टितुम्

*yajñena yuṣmad-viṣaye dvijātibhir  
vitāyamānena surāḥ kalā hareḥ  
sviṣṭāḥ sutuṣṭāḥ pradiśanti vāñchitam  
tad-dhelanam nārhasi vīra ceṣṭitum*

*yajñena* – by sacrifice; *yuṣmat* – your; *viṣaye* – in the kingdom; *dvijātibhir* – by the *brāhmaṇas*; *vitāyamānena* – being performed; *surāḥ* – all the demigods; *kalāḥ* – expansions; *hareḥ* – of the Personality of Godhead; *su-iṣṭāḥ* – being properly worshiped; *su-tuṣṭāḥ* – very much satisfied; *pradiśanti* – will give; *vāñchitam* – desired result; *tad-*

*helanam* – disrespect to them; *na* – not; *arhasi* – you ought; *vīra* – O hero; *ceṣṭitum* – to do.

**When all the brāhmaṇas engage in performing sacrifices in your kingdom, all the demigods, who are plenary expansions of the Lord, will be very much satisfied by their activities and will give you your desired result. Therefore, O hero, do not stop the sacrificial performances. If you stop them, you will disrespect the demigods.**

वेन उवाच

23 बालिश बत यूयं वा अधर्मे धर्ममानिनः  
ये वृत्तिदं पतिं हित्वा जारं पतिमुपासते

*vena uvāca  
bāliśā bata yūyam vā  
adharme dharmamāninaḥ  
ye vṛttidam patim hitvā  
jāram patim upāsate*

*venaḥ* – King Vena; *uvāca* – replied; *bāliśāḥ*—childish; *bata* – oh; *yūyam* – all of you; *vā* – indeed; *adharme* – in irreligious principles; *dharmamāninaḥ* – accepting as religious; *ye* – all of you who; *vṛttidam* – providing maintenance; *patim* – husband; *hitvā* – giving up; *jāram* – paramour; *patim* – husband; *upāsate* – worship.

**King Vena replied: You are not at all experienced. It is very much regrettable that you are maintaining something which is not religious and are accepting it as religious. Indeed, I think you are giving up your real husband, who maintains you, and are searching after some paramour to worship.**

**PURPORT:** King Vena was so foolish that he accused the saintly sages of being inexperienced like small children. In other words, he was accusing them of not having perfect knowledge. In this way he could reject their advice and make accusations against them, comparing them to a woman who does not care for her husband who maintains her but goes to satisfy a paramour who does not maintain her. 6 The purpose of this simile is apparent. It is the duty of the *kṣatriyas* to engage the *brāhmaṇas* in different types of religious activities, and the king is supposed to be the maintainer of the *brāhmaṇas*. If the *brāhmaṇas* do not worship the king but instead go to the demigods, they are as polluted as unchaste women.

24 अवजानन्त्यमी मूढा नृपरूपिणमीश्वरम्  
नानुविन्दन्ति ते भद्रमिह लोके परत्र च

*avajānanti amī mūḍhā  
nṛpa-rūpiṇam īśvaram  
nānuvindanti te bhadrām  
iha loke paratra ca*

*avajānanti* – disrespect; *amī* – those (who); *mūḍhāḥ* – being ignorant; *nṛpa-rūpiṇam* – in the form of the king; *īśvaram* – the Personality of Godhead; *na* – not; *anuvindanti* – experience; *te* – they; *bhadrām* – happiness; *iha* – in this; *loke* – world; *paratra* – after death; *ca* – also.

**Those who, out of gross ignorance, do not worship the king, who is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, experience happiness neither in this world nor in the world after death.**

25 को यज्ञपुरुषो नाम यत्र वो भक्तिरीदृशी  
भर्तृस्नेहविदूराणां यथा जारे कुयोषिताम्

*ko yajña-puruṣo nāma  
yatra vo bhaktir idṛśī  
bharṭṛ-sneha-vidūrāṇāṁ  
yathā jāre kuyoṣitām*

*kaḥ* – who (is); *yajña-puruṣaḥ* – the enjoyer of all sacrifices; *nāma* – by name; *yatra* – unto whom; *vaḥ* – your; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *idṛśī* – so great; *bharṭṛ* – for the husband; *sneha* – affection; *vidūrāṇām* – bereft of; *yathā* – like; *jāre* – unto the paramour; *ku-yoṣitām* – of unchaste women.

**You are so much devoted to the demigods, but who are they? Indeed, your affection for these demigods is exactly like the affection of an unchaste woman who neglects her married life and gives all attention to her paramour.**

26 विष्णुर्विरिञ्चो गिरिश इन्द्रो वायुर्यमो रविः  
पर्जन्यो धनदः सोमः क्षितिरग्निरपाम्पतिः  
27 एते चान्ये च विबुधाः प्रभवो वरशापयोः  
देहे भवन्ति नृपतेः सर्वदेवमयो नृपः

*viṣṇur viriṅco giriśa  
indro vāyur yamo raviḥ  
parjanya dhanadaḥ somaḥ  
kṣitir agnir apāmpatiḥ*

*ete cānye ca vibudhāḥ  
prabhavo vara-śāpayoḥ  
dehe bhavanti nṛpateḥ  
sarva-devamayo nṛpaḥ*

*viṣṇuḥ* – Lord Viṣṇu; *viriṅcaḥ* – Lord Brahmā; *giriśaḥ* – Lord Śiva; *indraḥ* – Lord Indra; *vāyuḥ* – Vāyu, the direc-

6) What was the purpose of Vena's simile that the *brāhmaṇas* were like a woman with a paramour?

tor of the air; *yamaḥ* – Yama, the superintendent of death; *raviḥ* – the sun-god; *parjanyaḥ* – the director of rainfall; *dhana-daḥ* – Kuvera, the treasurer; *somaḥ* – the moon-god; *kṣitiḥ* – the predominating deity of the earth; *agniḥ* – the fire-god; *apām-patiḥ* – Varuṇa, the lord of waters; *ete* – all these; *ca* – and; *anye* – others; *ca* – also; *vibudhāḥ* – demigods; *prabhavaḥ* – competent; *vara-śāpayoḥ* – in both benediction and curse; *dehe* – in the body; *bhavanti* – abide; *nṛpateḥ* – of the king; *sarva-devamayāḥ* – comprising all demigods; *nṛpaḥ* – the king.

**Lord Viṣṇu; Lord Brahmā; Lord Śiva; Lord Indra; Vāyu, the master of air; Yama, the superintendent of death; the sun-god; the director of rainfall; Kuvera, the treasurer; the moon-god; the predominating deity of the earth; Agni, the fire-god; Varuṇa, the lord of waters, and all others who are great and competent to bestow benedictions or to curse, all abide in the body of the king. For this reason the king is known as the reservoir of all demigods, who are simply parts and parcels of the king's body.**

PURPORT: There are many demons who think of themselves as the Supreme and present themselves as the directors of the sun, moon, and other planets. This is all due to false pride. Similarly, King Vena developed the demonic mentality and presented himself as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such demons are numerous in this age of Kali, and all of them are condemned by great sages and saintly persons.

28 तस्मान्मां कर्मभिर्विप्रा यजध्वं गतमत्सराः  
बलिं च मह्यं हरत मत्तोऽन्यः कोऽग्रभुक्पुमान्

*tasmān mān karmabhir viprā  
yajadhvam gata-matsarāḥ  
balin ca mahyam harata  
matto 'nyaḥ ko 'gra-bhuk pumān*

*tasmāt* – for this reason; *mām* – me; *karmabhiḥ* – by ritualistic activities; *viprāḥ* – O brāhmaṇas; *yajadhvam* – worship; *gata* – without; *matsarāḥ* – being envious; *balim* – paraphernalia for worship; *ca* – also; *mahyam* – unto me; *harata* – bring; *mattaḥ* – than me; *anyaḥ* – other; *kaḥ* – who (is); *agra-bhuk* – the enjoyer of the first oblations; *pumān* – personality.

**King Vena continued: For this reason, O brāhmaṇas, you should abandon your envy of me, and, by your ritualistic activities, you should worship me and offer me all paraphernalia. If you are intelligent, you should know that there is no personality superior to me, who can accept the first oblations of all sacrifices.**

7) What was the cause of the king's ruin?

PURPORT: As stated by Kṛṣṇa Himself throughout the *Bhagavad-gītā*, there is no truth superior to Him. King Vena was imitating the Supreme Personality of Godhead and was also speaking out of false pride, presenting himself as the Supreme Lord. These are all characteristics of a demonic person.

मैत्रेय उवाच

29 इत्थं विपर्ययमतिः पापीयानुत्पथं गतः  
अनुनीयमानस्तद्याज्जां न चक्रे भ्रष्टमङ्गलः

*maitreya uvāca  
ittham viparyaya-matiḥ  
pāpīyān utpatham gataḥ  
anunīyamānas tad-yācñām  
na cakre bhraṣṭa-maṅgalaḥ*

*maitreyaḥ uvāca* – Maitreya said; *ittham* – thus; *viparyaya-matiḥ* – one who has developed perverse intelligence; *pāpīyān* – most sinful; *utpatham* – from the right path; *gataḥ* – having gone; *anunīyamānaḥ* – being offered all respect; *tad-yācñām* – the request of the sages; *na* – not; *cakre* – accepted; *bhraṣṭa* – bereft of; *maṅgalaḥ* – all good fortune.

**The great sage Maitreya continued: Thus the King, who became unintelligent due to his sinful life and deviation from the right path, became actually bereft of all good fortune. He could not accept the requests of the great sages, which the sages put before him with great respect, and therefore he was condemned.**

PURPORT: The demons certainly cannot have any faith in the words of authorities. In fact, they are always disrespectful to authorities. They manufacture their own religious principles and disobey great personalities like Vyāsa, Nārada, and even the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. As soon as one disobeys authority, he immediately becomes very sinful and loses his good fortune. 7 The King was so puffed up and impudent that he dared disrespect the great saintly personalities, and this brought him ruin.

30 इति तेऽसत्कृतास्तेन द्विजाः पण्डितमानिना  
भग्न्यायां भव्ययाज्यायां तस्मै विदुर चुक्रुधुः

*iti te 'sat-kṛtās tena  
dviajāḥ paṇḍita-māninā  
bhagnyāyām bhavya-yājñāyām  
tasmai vidura cukrudhuḥ*

[Continued in the next issue.]

# A Back to Godhead Distributor's INSPIRING JOURNEY



*A retired college principal dedicated to delivering Kṛṣṇa's teachings passes away in the most favorable atmosphere for remembering the Lord.*

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

**I**F ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA could go door to door distributing *Back to Godheads* in the burning heat of Delhi despite his advanced age, why can't I serve similarly in my own small way?"

This thought galvanized Bhagavan Malwadkar, a retired college principal in Maharashtra. He hand delivered *Back to Godhead* (BTG) magazines to 170 subscribers in 10 cities, going to each of them month after month for thirteen years. He served the recipients of the magazine not just as a humble subscription deliverer, but also as a venerable spiritual mentor. Thus Baladeva Dāsa (his initiated name) offered the tireless labor of the later half of his life to Kṛṣṇa's service. He had also offered the best fruits of the earlier half of his life – including a lion's share of his savings, as well as two of his sons, who serve as *brahmacārīs* in ISKCON. In reciprocation for his service, Kṛṣṇa arranged for both of Baladeva Dāsa's sons to be by his side chanting the holy names as he breathed his last on March 23, 2014, in the auspicious morning hours.

## A Principal with Principles

This remarkable life journey began in the pious land of Solapur, Maharashtra, close to Pandharpur, the abode of Viṭṭhala, a celebrated, immensely loved form of Kṛṣṇa. From childhood, Bhagavan grew up hearing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and relishing the devotional songs of exalted Marathi saints such as Tukārāma Mahārāja. An excellent student, Bhagavan chose to dedicate his life to education, becoming an exemplary teacher at the Chin-tamani Vidya Mandir, a college in Pune.

Malwadkar Sir, as the students called him, soon became respected for his competence at teaching, his concern for his students, and his courage of conviction in maintaining his incorruptible integrity. In a country where education is worshiped with an almost religious frenzy, and where educational failure is a social stigma, students and parents often seek good grades by any means, including bribing or even threatening teachers. Amidst it all, Malwadkar Sir stood tall, remaining unfazed and uncompromising even when goons sent by disgruntled parents of underperforming students threatened him.

Once, when the disconsolate mother of a failed student sent her gold bangles with her son, asking that he be passed, Malwadkar Sir gently but firmly told the boy, “You don’t have to give me anything. Just give your studies more time. And if you have any difficulties in your studies, I will give you more time.”

Due to his sterling qualities and his commitment to serving the student community, he went on to become the principal of the college till he took voluntary retirement in 2002 at the age of fifty-four, wanting to devote himself more to spiritual growth.

## “A Good Spiritual Institution” Becomes “My Spiritual Calling”

On the home front, he married a pious lady, Shailini Upale (who later became Sura-priyā Devī Dāsī), and had three sons: Prashant, Siddhnath, and Santosh. In the housing complex where he lived, Malwadkar would organize *kirtana* programs every Saturday evening, inviting different devotional groups to sing.

Siddhnath was my classmate at the Government College of Engineering, Pune, and was introduced to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in 1997

through the weekly *Bhagavad-gītā* program conducted at my hostel room. Both he and his younger brother Santosh became immensely inspired by the spiritual wisdom of the *Gītā* and desired to dedicate their lives to sharing it by becoming *brahmacārīs*. They told their father of their aspiration. Many fathers – perhaps most – would have been infuriated or devastated, unable to tolerate the idea of their son’s becoming the antithesis of their dreams: a shaven-headed robe-clad monk. In contrast, Malwadkar replied with equanimity.

“As a father I am sad, but as a spiritualist I am happy. And if doing this makes you happy, that will be my happiness.”

As a responsible father, he had already visited ISKCON when his sons started going there and had endorsed it as “a good spiritual institution.” From that level of distant appreciation, ISKCON rose, in his eyes, to the level of his spiritual calling when he read the condensed biography of its founder, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The tireless, fearless, and peerless struggles of Śrīla Prabhupāda to share *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* all over the world became a life-transforming inspiration for Malwadkar. Becoming committed to serious spiritual practice, he soon received initiation from His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, receiving the name Baladeva Dāsa.

## Personalized and Personal BTG Distribution

Inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s BTG distribution in Delhi, Baladeva Dāsa took up – as his life’s mission – the distribution of BTG’s Marathi avatar, *Jau Devachya Gava*. He distributed thousands of BTGs not only to the hundreds of people he knew from his earlier life as a principal, but also to hundreds of strangers attracted by his gentle and dignified presentation. Additionally, he felt inspired to make annual subscriptions for BTG so that people would have a regular monthly connection with Kṛṣṇa. Within a short period, he made hundreds of sub-

scribers. But the infamous unreliability of the Indian postal system made the delivery of the BTGs erratic. Greater than the subscribers’ dissatisfaction at not getting their money’s worth was Baladeva Dāsa’s dissatisfaction at not being able to keep his promise to share Kṛṣṇa’s magazine regularly. In his typical roll-up-your-sleeves get-on-with-the-job attitude, he came up with a bold quintessentially do-it-yourself solution: “I will deliver BTG each month myself.”

That many of his subscribers lived in cities several hours away from Pune was no deterrent. That he would have to spend his own pension money to finance his distribution journeys was no deterrent. That he would have to travel in noisy, stuffy, bumpy buses for several days each month was no deterrent. Month after month, for over a dozen years, he hand delivered BTG to 170 subscribers. For most of them, he became a loved elderly relative and a revered messenger of Kṛṣṇa. He continued his personalized and personal distribution till nearly the last year of his life – even after a deadly abdominal cancer eroded his vitals, and even after a major surgery sapped his remaining energy reserves.

## A Family United Spiritually Amidst Calamity

Over a decade before cancer afflicted him, it took another toll in his family. In 2001, his wife was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer that had spread through the bones all over her body. He and his sons gallantly stood by her side in the last leg of her life, doing everything possible to assist her in departing with dignity in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.\*

Following India’s time-honored tradition of focusing on God in the later part of life, Baladeva Dāsa had started minimizing his worldly

\* An article about her appeared in BTG and can be read here: <http://www.thespiritualscientist.com/2012/04/how-my-cancer-became-a-blessing/>



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## How to Put BTG in Your Will

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put *Back to Godhead* in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. In the USA, bequests are free of estate tax and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government.\* You can give needed support for *Back to Godhead* by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to Back to Godhead, 18024 NW 112th Blvd., Alachua, FL 32615* (insert amount being given here) *to be used to support Back to Godhead and its related activities, including the Krishna.com website.* A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name BTG as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living. It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

\*If you live outside the USA, check the estate tax laws for your country.



entanglements, even before he came to know about his cancer. He sold both his houses and distributed the money equally among his three sons. As two of his sons were *brahmacārīs* (Siddhnath had become Saṅkīrtana Ānanda Dāsa, and Santosh had become Sundara Vara Dāsa), he gave their share as a donation to the Pune temple. Wanting to live in the temple's sanctified atmosphere and attend *maṅgala-ārati* daily, he started staying in the temple's crowded dormitory, as the small temple had no private room to offer him. Although this was a great austerity for him, given his advanced age and frail health, he accepted it gracefully and gratefully, focusing his mind on Kṛṣṇa and preparing for the final exam of death.

requesting several of his counselees to continue his program of personal delivery of BTG.

He told Sundara Vara, "You are *brahmacārīs*, meant to serve Kṛṣṇa. You shouldn't be serving me like this, nor should I be taking service from you."

Sundara Vara replied, "If it had not been for Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings, I would not be serving you. But having been blessed by those teachings, I cannot *not* be serving you."

### Spiritual Success Amidst Material Distress

Sarasvatī Devī Dāsī (Dr. Jadhav), the surgeon who operated on him as a last-ditch effort to check the

About a week before his departure, Baladeva offered his last good wishes and farewells to his relatives.

"Please don't allow any material relatives to come to see me," he requested. "From now onwards I want to focus on Viṭṭhala alone."

On his last night, he told his sons, "I feel as if an electric stove is burning in my body. Please help me remember Kṛṣṇa."

Saṅkīrtana Ānanda Dāsa described the spiritual world by reciting and explaining *Brahma-saṁhitā* verses, and described Kṛṣṇa's sweet glories by reciting and explaining the *Gopī-gītā* of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Becoming spiritually absorbed, Baladeva Dāsa transcended the pain and remained in devotional consciousness till morning, when he told Saṅkīrtana Ānanda, "Now it's morning – go and chant your rounds."

Recognizing signs of impending death, as described in Ayurvedic guidebooks, his sons knew that the end was now just

minutes away. They called several more devotees for *kīrtana*. Then they arranged to phone His Holiness Lokanāth Swamī, who chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and encouraged his disciple: "Please remember Kṛṣṇa."

Three minutes later, at 6:57 A.M., Baladeva Dāsa departed from the world amidst the chanting of the holy names, leaving behind a legacy of hundreds of hearts that had come closer to Godhead, inspired not just by his vigorous distribution of *Back to Godhead*, but also by his dedicated living and leaving on the path back to Godhead. 🌸

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On his last night, he told his sons, "I feel as if an electric stove is burning in my body. Please help me remember Kṛṣṇa."

During Baladeva Dāsa's last months, Sundara Vara Dāsa took off from most of his services as a senior *brahmacārī* at ISKCON Pune and focused on taking care of Baladeva. To offer better care than what was materially possible in the temple and spiritually possible in a hospital, Sundara Vara arranged for his father's stay at the hospital-cum-home of Niraj Kamthe, an Ayurvedic doctor (Ayurved-acharya) and devotee, in Saswad, a suburb near Pune. Niraj Kamthe arranged one room with the necessary medical facilities for Baladeva Dāsa and another for his caregiver. In the last month of Baladeva's life, Saṅkīrtana Ānanda Dāsa, who was now serving as a temple manager at ISKCON's Kolkata temple, came to Pune, and both sons served as caregivers for their father in the improvised hospice.

Though his disease had now become devastating, Baladeva Dāsa, far from feeling sorry for himself, remained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness,

cancer, noted that though his cancer was at an advanced stage where the pain becomes unbearable and even drives people mad, Baladeva Dāsa remained stoic and focused on Kṛṣṇa.

All who came to see Baladeva during his last days, he encouraged to take spiritual life more seriously.

On his last Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance day of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he fasted fully and remained peaceful throughout the day.

When asked about his apparent serenity, he replied, "I just couldn't come out of Shantipura."

His sons understood. He had felt himself spiritually transported to Shantipura. During his pilgrimages to Lord Caitanya's birthplace in Mayapur, West Bengal, Baladeva had felt a mystical connection with Shantipura (about thirty-five kilometers from Mayapur), the abode of Advaita Ācārya. It was in response to Advaita's fervent petitions that Lord Caitanya descended.



# Chewing The Chewed

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place in May 1974 during a morning walk in Rome.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** *Adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisraṁ punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām.* Life after life, people are simply trying to enjoy their senses. Life after life, the same thing over and over again. The same eating, the same sleeping, the same sexual intercourse, and the same defending, either as man or as dog. *Punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām:* again and again, chewing the chewed. Whether you become a demigod or a dog, in the material world everyone is given the facilities for these four things: eating, sleeping, having sexual intercourse, and defending.

Actually, if some danger were to come now, we humans might be victims, but a bird would immediately fly away. So the bird has better facility for defense. Is it not? Suppose all of a sudden a car came directly at us. We would be killed. We could not do anything, but even the smallest bird – "Hut! I'm leaving!" He can do that. Is it not so? His defensive measures are better than ours.

Similarly, if we wanted to have sex, we would have to arrange for it. Find out some mate and a suitable time and place. But the female bird is always around the male bird, at any time. Take the sparrows, or the pigeons. Have you seen? Immediately they are ready for sex. And what does the bird do about eating? "Oh, there is some fruit." Immediately the bird can eat. And sleeping is also easy and convenient.

So these facilities – don't think that they are available only in your skyscrapers. They are available for the birds and the beasts. It is not that unless you have got a very nice apartment in the skyscraper, you cannot have all these facilities of eating, sleeping, defending, and having sex. You can have them in any material body, in any species: *Viśayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt. Viśayaḥ* means the facilities for material sense enjoyment. Our process is *viśaya chādiyā se rase majiyā*. One has to give up this unsatisfying material enjoyment and relish transcendental bliss, the taste of spiritual enjoyment. It is enjoyment on a different platform.

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But today people are so befooled by the bodily concept of life that their only enjoyment is this material, so-called enjoyment.

So the scriptures advise, "This temporary, inferior enjoyment is available in any form of material life – either as man or as bird or as beast. Why are you repeatedly going after this same unsatisfying enjoyment in all these different species of life? *Punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*: In all these different forms, again and again, you are doing the same stupid, unsatisfying thing."

But *matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā*: those who are befooled by material sensual enjoyment cannot become Kṛṣṇa conscious, by their own endeavor or even by instruction from a spiritual master. And *mitho 'bhipadyeta*: these foolish people may hold many conferences and meetings to inquire, "What are the problems of life?" – but still they cannot take to the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Why? *Gṛha-vratānām*: as long as they have got this determination – "We shall be happy in this material world" – they cannot take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Gṛha* means "home" and also "body." Those who are trying to be happy within this material body – they cannot take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because *adānta-gobhiḥ*: their senses are so uncontrolled. Therefore these people must repeatedly undergo the ordeal of chewing the chewed. Again and again, the same sensual enjoyment: eating, sleeping, mating, and defending.

**Disciple:** So our task is to convince people that they can't be happy in the material world?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. And they have already got very convincing experience. Daily they are founding so many parties, manufacturing so many means and plans and this and that, but still they are not happy. And yet they are such great fools that in spite of being repeatedly baffled, still they are chewing what they have already chewed – the same thing all over again, in somewhat different forms.

What is the difference between the communists and capitalists? After all, both groups are simply looking after how they can make things into a better arrangement for their own sensual enjoyment. The two groups are fighting, but everyone's aim is *gṛha-vratānām*: "We shall remain within this material world and be happy here."

**Disciple:** The idea is, if we can get enough food and sex, we will be happy.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That's all. And then people become impotent. And they beg the doctor, "Give me some sex medicine." You see? *Punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*. Chewing the same old tired thing. And when they feel disgusted with sex at home: "Let us go to the prostitute. Let us go to the naked dance." They have no other ideas. So this class of men cannot take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. First of all, one must be in knowledge – "I am not anything of this material world. I am spirit soul. My happiness is in the spiritual world." Then he is a real human being and he can make spiritual advancement. So the next question is, "How can one become interested in the spirit soul or Kṛṣṇa consciousness?" How? This is the question. Animals – and people like animals – cannot become interested.

*naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ  
sprṣaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ  
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam  
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvāt*

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.32) says, "The consciousness of these rascals and fools cannot be turned toward the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who acts wonderfully, until they touch their heads to the lotus feet of a devotee of the Lord who is *niṣkiñcana*, who has nothing to gain in this material world and is simply interested in Kṛṣṇa."

If you get the opportunity of touching your head to the lotus feet or even the dust of the lotus feet of such a great devotee, your spiritual advancement is possible. Otherwise, it is not. The dust of the lotus feet of a great devotee can help you. 🌸

## HOW I CAME TO KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

# MY METAMORPHOSIS From Judaism to Vaiṣṇavism

*"Merciful music and Kṛṣṇa's transformative power saved me from a life of impersonalism."*

by Len Cohen

**W**HAT WAS I, a nice Jewish fellow, doing in front of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple? I didn't fit in there with the Indian culture. I couldn't relate to the women in saris. I wasn't wearing a dhoti. I wasn't wearing *tilaka*. I didn't belong there. Maybe I should have gone back to my local synagogue and looked for God there. That's where I belonged. But I didn't go there. I persisted in looking for my self-realization at this ISKCON Temple in Philadelphia.

My spiritual journey included Conservative Judaism, Native American Vision Quests, and various forms of Hinduism. Eventually I found true meaning in being a Vaiṣṇava.

When I was eight years old I began going to Hebrew School to prepare for my Bar Mitzvah. I didn't know what God looked like or what He did, and I didn't care much for God at the time. At Hebrew School we studied the Torah, the holy book worshiped by Conservative Jews. But the best part of my experience there was when a man named Schlomo came to our classroom with his accordion to sing Israeli folk songs. His short red hair gleamed with sweat as he belted out his songs in Hebrew. We all sang along vigorously. Finally something in Hebrew School meant something to me: music.



Yamarāja Dasa

I could understand it.

Unable to name more than three of the Ten Commandments, I flunked my Bar Mitzvah test. I wasn't interested in religious things. My parents rarely went to synagogue. When Chanukah came around, they embarrassed me by displaying a plastic electric menorah in our front window. They were not devout, religious Jews, but like the rest of my neighbors, they liked to keep up the appearance of Judaism. They were "show-bottle" Jews.

### My Bar Mitzvah

It was November 1963, and President Kennedy had been assassinated the week before. The whole country was in

mourning. Kennedy pieces filled the newspapers, magazines, and television. But I had passed my Bar Mitzvah exam on retake, and I was concerned only about myself. Would I still be Bar Mitzvahed that weekend? The answer was yes.

Soon I was on the *bimah*, the raised platform with a desk for reading the sacred Torah. Standing in front of the congregation and next to the rabbi, I sang the *shema*, the most important prayer in Judaism, and took my *aliyah*, reading from the Torah. I enjoyed being the

center of everyone’s attention, and I was excited to be so close to the holy book. At the end of the service, the rabbi handed me something packaged in an ornate box on behalf of the congregation’s sisterhood. What wonderful object could be inside? In the privacy of my home I opened the gift. It was a *kiddush* cup for drinking wine.

*I suffered in Hebrew School for five years, I thought, and all I got for my Bar Mitzvah was a lousy kiddush cup?*

That evening, with my parents in tow, I went to the premier hotel in Philadelphia for my Bar Mitzvah celebration. All the men wore tuxedos, even me. Music still appealed to me. The bandleader said it was time to dance to a tune called

After exploring mystical Judaism and Tibetan Buddhism, in August of 1997 I went on my first Vision Quest. I went to find out who I was and what my service to God was. The Vision Quest was a wilderness rite of passage involving purification in a sweat lodge and then sleeping and fasting on an isolated mountaintop for four days. I was badly in need of an emotional tune-up to get some direction in my life. I was forty-seven years old and firmly in the grip of a midlife crisis. I had gone through two marriages, had a daughter in California I barely knew, and had tried various drugs without finding happiness. The idea of climbing a mountain and fasting to seek answers to the question of my life appealed to my biblical sen-

sibilities. Maybe this was what a Jew should do. I would suffer as Job did, submit myself to a lot of austerities, and hope for a mystical vision.

I flew to Telluride, Colorado, and drove past majestic Mount Wilson, my ultimate destination. Rising up 14,252 feet in a symmetrical line of jagged peaks, Mount Wilson was framed by a beautiful cloudless turquoise sky. The pyramidal snow-dusted summit reflected the silver beams of a full moon. It was a magnificent sight.

The next day, after being purified in the sweat lodge, I hefted my fifty-pound backpack and began to hike up Mount Wilson with my fellow Vision-Questers.

On the way up I wondered: Will I actually see God up there? What will He or She look like? Will He look like the bearded old man in Michelangelo’s painting? Maybe God will take on the appearance of a burning bush or a cloud overhead, as in the Old Testament.

I didn’t have a clue what God

looked like or how He spent His time. I reached the summit, found an isolated place to camp, and began my fast. After four days, when returning to base camp I had a mystical experience. (Maybe starving for four days had something to do with it!) For hours I heard a heavenly choir singing in a high pitch. I didn’t know who was singing or what they were saying, but I was impressed. Gradually, this divine singing faded away, and I went back to my life in the material world.

While this “heavenly choir” was a revelation to me, in the end I found that the Vision Quest path was too impractical. I had to undergo severe austerities to achieve any result. How could I go to work after fasting and hallucinating for days? And I still didn’t know what I was supposed to do for the rest of my life.

### Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple

I was just another lost soul in *māyā*, still searching for that elusive God. I didn’t know what else to do, so I kept doing what I had always done: I worked in the material world. Every day I passed the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple on my way home from work as an elementary school counselor, but I was afraid to go in. What would I do there? I didn’t identify with the dark-skinned men who sometimes wore extra-long shirts and Gandhi-esque pants. I clearly didn’t belong.

Still, I became interested in Indian culture, so I began to take sitar lessons from a talented Muslim musician. He played sitar, tabla, and a bass sitar his uncle invented, called the surbahar. I took lessons for several years; music was still very important to me.

One day I met the head *pūjārī* of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple. She was taking voice lessons from my sitar teacher, and she invited me to the temple for lunch. Finally, here was my in! I went to the temple the next afternoon, and soon I was going there every Friday night. We sang *bhajan*s, the *pūjārī* leading, accom-

panying herself on the harmonium. Even though I didn’t know the meaning of the Sanskrit and Bengali words, I would sit on the floor, face the deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and repeat with my heart what I heard. I connected with the spiritual aspect of the music. I could see God up there on the altar. He and His consort looked beautiful. Finally I knew what God looked like.

The *bhajan*s transported me to the spiritual realm even though I didn’t know what I was singing. For the short time I chanted, I could taste bliss and happiness. I was finally communing with God, a God with a real face, a bluish cowherd boy who dressed in yellow, played a flute, and wore a peacock feather in His turban.

The temple was immaculate. The marble floor was checkered in black and white, and the life-sized statue

of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, sat on his raised seat with a great view of the deities. He wore a knitted wool cap to keep out the November chill. His meditation bag was close at hand.

In our *bhajana* band I played my sitar, the head *pūjārī* was on vocals and harmonium, the temple president’s son was on tablas, and a female devotee played the esraj. Soon we performed for the entire Hare Kṛṣṇa community. We sang about Kṛṣṇa, the beautiful boy who is also God. In my soul, singing about the Lord seemed right.

After our performance, we joined everyone in an exuberant *kīrtana*, followed by a delicious feast of Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*.

Surely the music and the food were central to my attraction to the temple. Through the music, I discovered I had a connection to God that

we all have in our heart. I had completed my journey and found what I was looking for all of this time: Kṛṣṇa. Before Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I was lost in the material world, but now I felt more peaceful and had a genuine spiritual grounding. My life was uplifted.

My wife and I were married in a Vedic ceremony in my home a year later. We have now been married ten years. We have a beautiful temple room in our house and regularly read from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa has made me more self-realized, and I hope I can become a selfless servant of God. Additionally, I chant with devotees in public, attend Rathayātrās, Sunday feasts, and major temple festivals, and I think about how best to serve Kṛṣṇa. This is the story of how one Conservative Jew transformed into a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. *Jaya Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana!* 🌸

When returning to base camp I had a mystical experience – for hours I heard a heavenly choir singing in a high pitch.

“Who’s Got the Bug?” I’d been looking forward to this Bar Mitzvah tradition. It had little to do with spirituality, and more to do with me getting to show off a little.

I took center stage. When the wild music started, I danced like a monkey with a severe case of fleas. I scratched and jumped, grimaced, and flung my arms out wildly – a brave performance for such a shy, nerdy kid with black-framed glasses. My braces-filled mouth grinned as I whirled around. This was fun! Eventually, I got tired and someone else “got the bug.” Music had saved me again. Thank you, Schlomo, and thank you, Bar Mitzvah.

### Vision Quest

Years later, after I finished graduate school, I worked as a counselor in many schools, but I felt I was only going through the motions in my job. There was a hole in my heart, and I didn’t know how to fill it. Something was missing.

## A Pause for Prayer



“O Supreme Lord, the living entities in this world are bewildered by Your illusory energy. Becoming involved in the false concepts of ‘I’ and ‘my,’ they are forced to wander along the paths of fruitive work. I too am deluded in this way, O almighty Lord, foolishly thinking my body, children, home, wife, money, and followers to be real, though they are actually as unreal as a dream. Thus mistaking the temporary for the eternal, my body for my self, and sources of misery for sources of happiness, I have tried to take pleasure in material dualities. Covered in this way by ignorance, I could not recognize You as the real object of my love.

Just as a fool overlooks a body of water covered by the vegetation growing in it and chases a mirage, so I have turned away from You. My intelligence is so crippled that I cannot find the strength to curb my mind, which is disturbed by material desires and activities and constantly dragged here and there by my obstinate senses.

Being thus fallen, I am approaching Your feet for shelter, O Lord, because although the impure can never attain Your feet, I think it is nevertheless possible by Your mercy. Only when one’s material life has ceased, O lotus-navel Lord, can one develop consciousness of You by serving Your pure devotees.”

– Śrī Akrūra to Lord Viṣṇu, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.40.23–28

# BEYOND the RESPLENDENT RAINBOWS

*Considering that rainbows are visible only when certain conditions are met, one may reasonably ask, “Who set the conditions?”*

by Dāmodara Nityānanda Dāsa

**I**N 1666 NEWTON demonstrated that normal white light is composed of all the colors. By refracting (bending) light through a glass prism, he separated it into its component colors. Then, by sending the refracted light back through another prism, he combined the components back into white light, proving that the prism itself wasn't creating the colors. He also figured out that many materials refract light, including water. Raindrops refracting and reflecting light are the key to producing a rainbow, which, he concluded, is a successful collaboration between the sun, zillions of tiny raindrops (sometimes less than one millimeter across), and our eyes, which must be observing those raindrops at just the right angles.

Three conditions are mandatory to see a rainbow. First, the sun needs to be behind us. Second, there must

be raindrops ahead of us, whether miles or a few hundred feet away. Third, the sunlight must reach the raindrops without any obstruction, such as clouds. When a ray of light enters a raindrop and refracts, it separates into component colors. Red light refracts, or bends, the least, while violet light refracts the most. The different-colored rays travel toward the back of the raindrop. Some of the light exits, but some of it bounces back at an angle, towards the front of the raindrop. Some of the light reflects more than once, but to keep this discussion simple, I'll restrict it to the light that reflects just once. When light exits the front of the drop, some of it again refracts, separating the colored rays still further.

Key to why we see a rainbow is that red light exits the raindrop at angles that are always smaller than

42 degrees from the direction of the sunlight entering the drop. And this is the same for all raindrops, for the sun is very far away. The angle at which the red light exists can be anything less than 42 degrees, and the maximum angle is different for different colors. For violet light, the maximum angle is about 40 degrees. The different maximum angles for each color account for the stripes in the rainbow.

How does one spot a rainbow under the right conditions? Facing the rain, imagine a line from the sun, through your head, and to the far end of your shadow. The higher the sun, the steeper this line is and the shorter your shadow. At about 42 degrees away from that line – straight up, to the right or left – one can see the red band. At about 40 degrees away from it – up, right or left – one can see the violet band.

**“The whole cosmic order is under Me.  
By My will it is manifested again and again.”**

– *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.8)

Since the 40-degree band is closer to the imaginary line than the 42-degree band, the violet band is on the inside of the red band, with the other colors in between.

Now you might wonder, at the maximum angle for violet light, do we see only violet light? After all, red light can also emerge at 40 degrees, as it is smaller than 42 degrees. The answer is that at the maximum angle for any color, that color dominates. And why is the rainbow a bow and not straight? Go back to that imaginary line from your head to the end of your shadow. When you measure 42 degrees in all directions – away from the imaginary line – you are tracing an arc of color. But not all rainbows are full arcs; some are just little pieces. That happens when there aren't enough raindrops in all directions or when certain parts of the rainbow are in the shadow of obstructing clouds. When the sun is high, the rainbow may just peek above the horizon, whereas just before sunset or around sunrise, when the sun is low and your shadow is long, then a rainbow may be enormous.

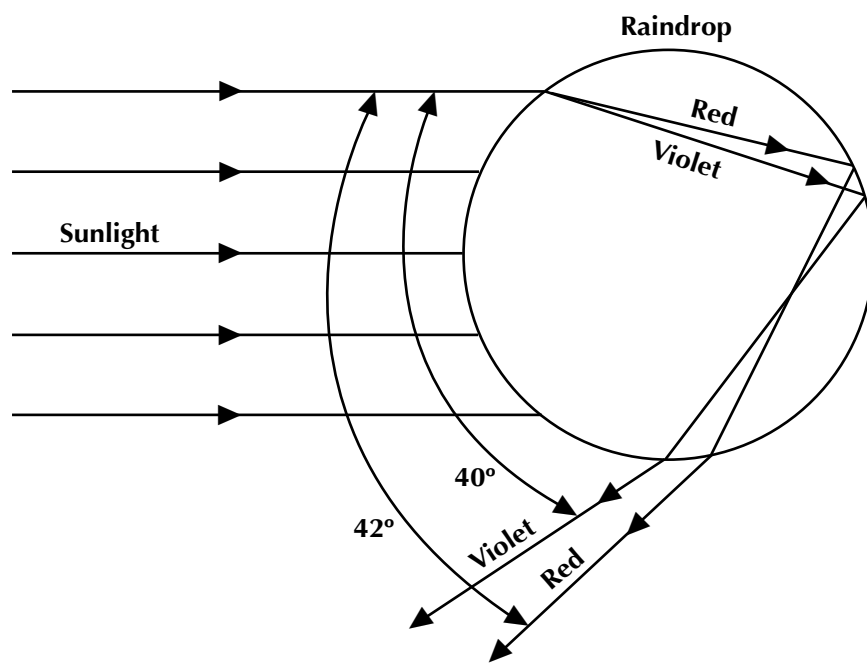
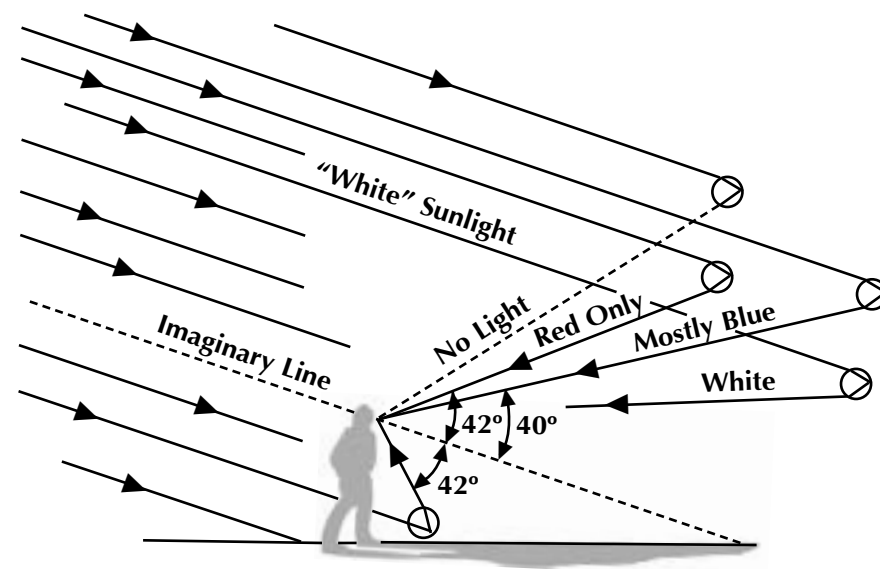
### The Challenge of Universal Constants

Modern science can't explain why the physical laws are as they are, or why the universal constants have the values they have. However, when we look closely at the Vedic scriptures we get much insight. When I said that we cannot see the light from the raindrops beyond 42 degrees, did it occur to you that it is 42 degrees because that's how it is ordained by the Supreme Lord's inconceivable energy? If yes, then you are fortunate, for you can easily learn all there is to know about rainbows and beyond. If no, then while you can find out experimentally that it is indeed 42 degrees, you may erroneously infer that it randomly happens under "right conditions" for the rainbow to be visible to your eyes. That inference is precarious, for you would explore ways to deny the supreme intel-

ligent designer, who through His diverse energies creates wonderful precise art like a rainbow. And not just rainbows; there is a perfect brain behind all the natural physical laws. "Brain" implies a person. That person, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the supreme scientist under whose will the whole cosmos works. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.8) He says, *prakṛtiṁ svām avastābhya viṣṭjāmi punaḥ punaḥ*: "The whole cosmic order is under Me. By My will it is manifested again and again."

A rainbow governed by precise scientific laws of reflection and refraction is also a work of art. When the right conditions are met,

a rainbow can manifest by the subtle energies of the Supreme Lord, just as a rose can bloom overnight because of those same energies. Kṛṣṇa is the greatest artist. When we observe the artistic work in a rainbow, we can understand that the color adjustment, the shape, and so on, have demanded the minute attention of an intelligent designer, for if the rainbow were truly random, why would it follow exact laws of certain angular shifts? But the gross materialist, not seeing the hand of God in such manifestations, concludes that the Absolute Truth is impersonal. Actually, the Absolute is personal, but independent.



Painting by Rāmādāsa Abhirāma Dāsa

When Lord Kṛṣṇa entered Dvārakā, it appeared "as if a dark cloud were surrounded simultaneously by the sun, moon, lightning, and rainbows."

Unless engaged in His service one cannot fathom how He acts. Everything is revealed in loving devotional service.

### Indra and the Sun-God

The Supreme Lord does not personally paint the rainbows, for His energies in the form of demigods such as the sun-god and the rain-god (Indra) act in unison. Rainbows only appear to come into being without an artist's aid. In the normal course, Lord Indra and the sun-god are involved together in the creation of rainbows, which occur under prescribed laws. But since Indra and the sun-god are specially empowered, there is exception to the laws if these demigods so desire. For instance, at the outset of the battle between Indra's son Arjuna and the sun-god's son Karṇa, an interesting symbolic con-

frontation took place between Indra and the sun-god. Thundering clouds that flashed with lightning suddenly covered the sky, and without the cooperation of the sun, a profusion of rainbows appeared. Seeing Lord Indra affectionately sending his signs to encourage his son Arjuna and forecast his victory, the sun vanquished the clouds that came too near his son Karṇa. Thus Arjuna was covered by the shadow of Indra's clouds, whereas Karṇa was fully exposed, bathed in the rays of the sun.

The word *guṇa* can mean "string" or "mode." Just as a rainbow has no string, the appearance of the Personality of Godhead has nothing to do with the modes of material nature. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.20.18) states: "When the curved bow of Indra [the rainbow] appeared in the sky, which had the quality of thundering sound, it was unlike ordi-

nary bows because it did not rest upon a string. Similarly, when the Supreme Lord appears in this world, which is the interaction of the material qualities, He is unlike ordinary persons because He remains free from all material qualities and independent of all material conditions." In their purport to this verse, the disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda quote his commentary:

Sometimes, in addition to the roaring thunder of the clouds, there is an appearance of a rainbow, which stands as a bow without a string. Usually, a bow stays in the curved position because it is tied at its two ends by the bowstring; but in the rainbow there is no such string, and yet it rests in the sky so beautifully. Similarly, when the Supreme Personality of Godhead descends to this material world, He appears just like an ordinary human being, but He

is not resting on any material condition. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says that He appears by His internal potency, which is free from the bondage of the external potency.

The bow of the Supreme Lord or His intimate devotee like Arjuna is often compared to a rainbow.

When Hanumān met Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa at the edge of the lake by Rishyamukha Hill, he prostrated himself before the princes and inquired respectfully, “What brings you two shining ascetics to this region? You appear like a pair of royal sages fit to rule the entire world, and Your massive bows glow like rainbows.”

compared to lightning. And the flower garlands on His chest are compared to a rainbow. So all these activities of the firmament, being impossible simultaneous factors, cannot be adjusted by comparison. The adjustment is possible only when we think of the inconceivable potency of the Lord. The Lord is all-powerful, and in His presence anything impossible can be made possible by His inconceivable energy. But the situation created at the time of His passing on the roads of Dvārakā was beautiful and could not be compared to anything besides the description of natural phenomena.

All laws are subservient to Him.

## Majestic rainbows remind us of the supreme inconceivable intelligence and the ability of the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Now, consider what *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.11.27) states: “As the Lord passed along the public road of Dvārakā, His head was protected from the sunshine by a white umbrella. . . . His yellow garments and garlands of flowers made it appear as if a dark cloud were surrounded simultaneously by the sun, moon, lightning, and rainbows.” How is a magnificent rainbow possible when dark clouds surround the sun? As if anticipating this question, Śrīla Prabhupāda answers:

The sun, moon, rainbow, and lightning do not appear in the sky simultaneously. When there is sun, the moonlight becomes insignificant, and if there are clouds and a rainbow, there is no manifestation of lightning. The Lord’s bodily hue is just like a new monsoon cloud. He is compared herein to the cloud. The white umbrella over His head is compared to the sun. The movement of the bunch-hair fan of flukes [hair] is compared to the moon. The showers of flowers are compared to the stars. His yellow garments are

### One Among Countless Stars

Given that mere reflections and refractions of sun rays create splendors like rainbows at certain conditions, fathom this: the sun is only one of the countless stars in the sky. By using thermal, electrical, and nuclear powerhouses, the scientific brain supplies heat, light, and energy to some extent, but Lord Kṛṣṇa provides the whole planet with unlimited energy from just one sun. He says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.12), “The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me.” The light of the sun originally emanates from the *brahmajyoti*, the effulgence of the Lord.

Everything is ultimately an expansion of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore there is no other object of meditation besides Kṛṣṇa. A *bhakti-yogi* is fixed in devotional service at all times, and whatever he sees, such as the resplendent rainbows, contributes to his appreciation of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and meditation on Him. The exquisite beauty of rainbows and

the precise reflections and refractions involved in their formation remind him of the Supreme Lord’s perfect design. Kṛṣṇa is the source of all rainbows.

Scientists are accorded great acclaim for a few spaceships, while Kṛṣṇa effortlessly creates gigantic planets and stars, and perfectly maintains them. He says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.13), *gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojasā*: “I enter into each planet, and by My energy they stay in orbit.” The laws made by the supreme brain are perfect. The sun never rises in the west and never sets in the east, nor is the colorful rainbow seen when the sun is ahead of us.

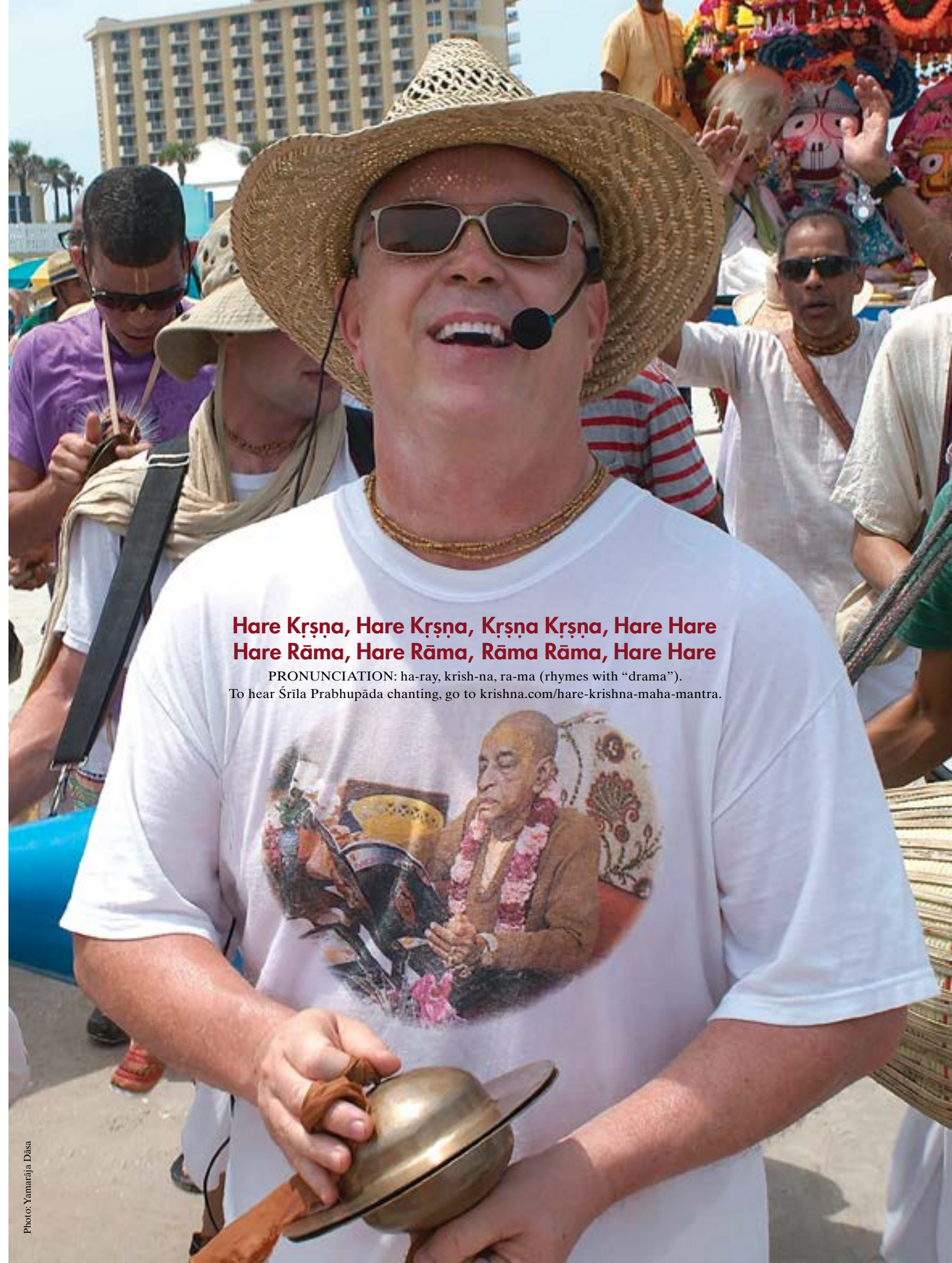
Indeed, majestic rainbows remind us of the supreme inconceivable intelligence and the ability of the supreme scientist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, let us glorify the source of rainbows through the second stanza from *Śrī Vraja-Rāja-Sutāṣṭakam* (“Eight Prayers Glorifying the Son of the King of Vraja”):

*Rāja-Sutāṣṭakam* (“Eight Prayers Glorifying the Son of the King of Vraja”):

*bhru-viśaṅkita-vaṅkima-śakru-dhanuṁ  
mukha-candra-vinindita-koṭi-vidhum  
mṛdu-manda-suhāsyā-subhāsyā-yutaṁ  
bhaja kṛṣṇa-nidhiṁ vraja-rāja-sutam*

“He whose broadly bending eyebrows appear like arched rainbows, whose pure moonlike face belittles millions of moons, who is endowed with sweet gentle smiles and pleasant speech – just worship Kṛṣṇa, the dark jewel, the son of the King of Vraja.”

*Dāmodara Nityānanda Dāsa* (Dr. Dipankar Deb) is a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti Vikāśa Swami. He holds a Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from the University of Virginia and is the author of an upcoming book, *Science, Nescience and Perfect Design*.



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

PRONUNCIATION: ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”).  
To hear Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting, go to [krishna.com/hare-krishna-maha-mantra](http://krishna.com/hare-krishna-maha-mantra).

# TOVP

## The Future in The Making

*Metaphorically, prominent ācāryas in Lord Caitanya's line laid the foundation for the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.*

by Ajita Nimāi Dāsa

THE CONSTRUCTION of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (TOVP) – the biggest Vedic temple in the world – is well underway in the holy town of Mayapur, West Bengal. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee, appeared in Mayapur in 1486 CE and inaugurated the *saṅkīrtana* movement of the congregational chanting of God's names.

His movement has since spread all over the world through the unyielding dedication of His devotees. The most notable recent devotee was His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

While the movement he founded, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), continues to expand the *saṅkīrtana* movement's enlightening influence in various ways, the TOVP is its biggest construction project today.



Workers atop one of the corner towers (main photo) help give a sense of the size of the structure, shown above in a computer-graphics illustration.

## The Future Rests on the Past

The TOVP is far from complete, and the same can be said of the astronomical mission of the *sañ-kīrtana* movement. But their current state points to a magnificent future for both. The future rests on the past, and deep appreciation of the past Vedic culture can inspire a stupendous future for Vedic projects today. The Vedic literature asserts that the Vedic tradition is not only old, but timeless. When introducing to Arjuna the topic of transcendental knowledge, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells him:

*imañ vivasvate yogañ  
proktavāñ aham avyayam  
vivasvāñ manave prāha  
manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt*

*The view from the  
Ganges (right).  
Below: the frame  
for the main  
dome. Opposite  
page: members  
of ISKCON's  
governing body  
and others get a  
close-up look.*



“I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.” (*Gītā* 4.1) Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport that this knowledge has been extant in human society for at least two million years. The sacred system of *paramparā* (disciplic succession) keeps the knowledge flowing from one generation to the next. But this current of spirituality must not be taken for granted. Its carriers at any time in history are always up against the opposing undercurrent of materialism that characterizes the material world. Time and again this untiring, sinister current sidelines the spiritual current and becomes prominent in the world, creating tough times for the bearers of the *paramparā* system.

To set things right, sometimes Kṛṣṇa descends to reveal spiritual knowledge. About five thousand years ago He spoke the *Gītā* to Arjuna in the dramatic setting of a world war.



*sa evāyañ mayā te 'dya  
yogaḥ proktaḥ purāṇaḥ  
bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti  
rahasyaṇ hy etad uttamam*

“[Because it has been lost in the course of time,] that very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science.” (*Gītā* 4.3)

And then five hundred years ago Lord Caitanya revealed the same knowledge once again by teaching

and exemplifying the practical message of devotion. At other times, the *ācāryas*, prominent links in the *paramparā* chain, keep the message alive and distribute it profusely. The TOVP is a tribute to the glorious *ācāryas* of Lord Caitanya's Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *paramparā*.

It's not easy to keep a flame burning in turbulent winds. It's tougher still to light more lamps in the process. While all links in the *paramparā* are praiseworthy, those who operate in turbulent anti-spiritual times to create a blazing spiritual movement are extra special.





After Lord Caitanya and the Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan left this world, by an inconceivable arrangement of the Lord the *saṅkīrtana* movement gradually disintegrated. By the 1700s, the ruling Moghul invaders had wantonly destroyed many temples in Vrindavan. Devotees were living under the constant threat of Moghul cruelty. During these oppressive times, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura held the fort for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Vrindavan. Despite the times, he produced literary works full of deep spiritual realizations about Vrindavan. When the very authenticity of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was under attack, Viśvanātha's ardent follower Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa produced a landmark commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*: the *Govinda Bhāṣya*. Despite determined opposition, these *ācāryas* not only kept the tradition alive, but also produced literature that is today a signature of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

By the 1800s, the British were ruling India. Their goal was to obliterate Vedic literature and culture. The British-run educational system taught that the Vedic literature is full of fantastic mythological narrations with no connection to reality. This message encouraged many young Indian intellectuals to reject



The start of the deities' chambers (top, left). Top: Ambarīṣa Dāsa (writing), chairman of the TOVP project, and Ṣaḍbhujā Dāsa, managing director. Above: Bolivian blue marble for use around the altars. Left: a marble quarry in Turkey. Far left: current and proposed layout of the temple compound.

Vedic schools of thought, including Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, then in a pathetic state. Many groups proclaiming to be Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas had cropped up. But their behavior and philosophical understanding were far removed from the pure teachings of Lord Caitanya. Like the mud-born lotus, amidst such harsh, filthy, anti-spiritual circumstances appeared Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura. He struggled hard against the strong opposing currents to establish the pure original teachings of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. He wrote extensively, preached door-to-door in villages, and published authentic philosophical works of the Six Gosvāmīs. His son Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura carried forward his father's mission with fiery zeal, establishing sixty-four Gauḍīya Maṭha temples all over India. His foremost disciple, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, established ISKCON. Volumes of books describe his monumental life and spectacular success. But we must not forget the hardships he underwent to serve his spiritual master and Lord Caitanya, driven by his compassion for us.

If we deeply appreciate what these exalted *ācāryas* have done for Kṛṣṇa, the world, and us, we will always worship them within our hearts with gratitude and affection. The TOVP will express these highly elevated spiritual feelings by placing fifteen *ācāryas* – from the Six Gosvāmīs to Śrīla Prabhupāda – on the main altar. This will be the first time in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava history that so many past *ācāryas* reside on the main altar of a temple. Dedicated artists are using the latest technology and careful research to create lifelike deities portraying the mood and personality of each *ācārya*. Unlike the Lord, who can accomplish everything effortlessly, these *ācāryas* toiled unimaginably hard. They used their spiritual acumen while depending on the Lord's mercy alone. They accomplished what is ordinarily impossible. The TOVP is a salute to their sacrifices and contributions. Indeed, the TOVP and the *saṅkīrtana* mission

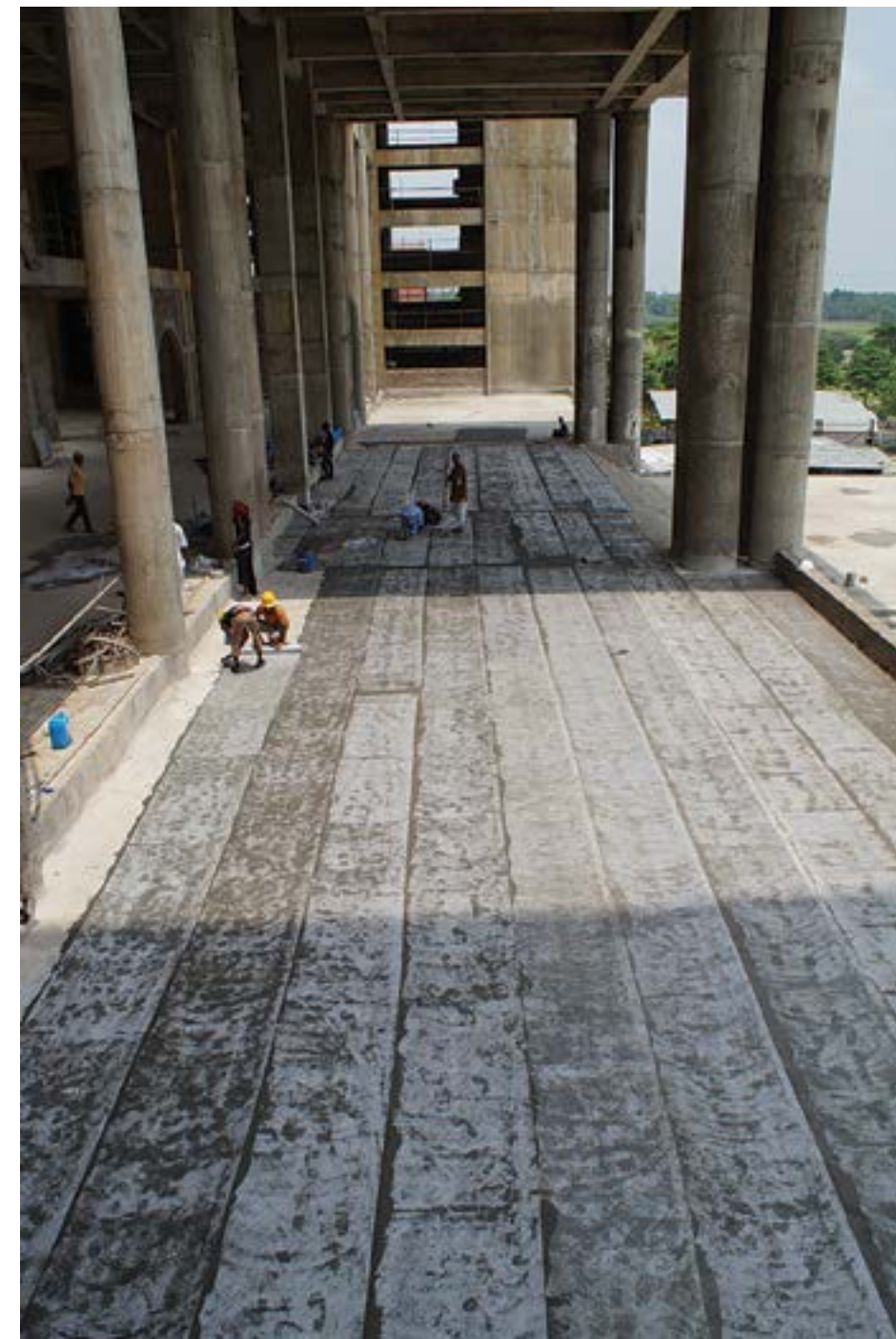


are growing all over the world on the philosophical, institutional, literary, and cultural foundation they laid.

### Taking Shape

Phase One of the TOVP construction is near completion. It consists of the RCC (reinforced cement concrete) framework of columns, the brickwork, and the massive domes that will be the most striking feature of the temple. The RCC framework is complete. The spaces are now well defined, the structure's immensity apparent. The brickwork is defining the edges of the building, which has started looking more like

*Artists work on models of prominent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas (above and left). Top right and right: workers prepare a floor for the next stage.*



a temple than a construction site. The third ring of concrete and steel forming the central dome is under construction. The domes will be ready by the first quarter of 2015.

The best waterproofing company in the world is using the best technology to protect the superstructure against cracks and water seepage. The goal is to construct a building that will last for at least a thousand years without needing renovation. The massive structure of the TOVP is already visible from miles away. Residents of the area, who could

already see Śrīla Prabhupāda's Samādhi, can now see his gift to Lord Caitanya.

Phase Two will be all about the finishing, interior and exterior. There will be at least twenty-two types of finishing work, including carpentry, woodwork, flooring, doors, and windows. Also included are the astonishing gold work and

*A crane lowers a steel panel into place in the main dome (below). At right, work progresses on the dome's second ring.*



marble cladding, and the *kalaśa* (“pitcher”) on top of each of the three domes. Apart from the gold inlays inside the temple, the domes will be decorated on the outside by a mesh of gold work. Spotless white marble for the interiors and the exteriors of the temple has started arriving from Vietnam. Exquisite, rare dark-blue marble has arrived from Bolivia for embellishing the gorgeous altar in the central dome.

Work has started on the design of the *kalaśa*, which symbolizes abundance, growth, and new life. The *kalaśa* on top of the central dome will be four stories (sixty-eight feet) tall. It will be coated with the extremely hard ceramic material known as titanium nitride (TiN), which looks like gold, lasts very long, and will make the *kalaśa* maintenance free.

A team of artists considers every

detail of the various aspects of the design. Each component gets painstaking attention before getting finalized. The temple site is clean. The construction work is of the highest quality, ensured not only by strict monitoring of the work but also by inspiring the workers. Recently all the workers attended a class on the importance and significance of the project.

From the top of the central dome

will hang the world's largest chandelier, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's most cherished ideas for the temple. It will depict the structure of the universe as described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as the spiritual world beyond, up to the highest spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana. Visitors will be able to study the universe from multiple levels. Galleries and exhibits at each level will explain the purpose of the

universe and its various aspects. The highest level will take visitors on a tour of the spiritual world.

### Śrīla Prabhupāda's Desire

Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say that Bombay was his office, Vrindavan his home, and Mayapur his place of worship. On Lord Caitanya's order, the Six Gosvāmīs discovered and excavated many holy places in Vrindavan, Kṛṣṇa's town. Similarly, recent Gauḍīya ācāryas contributed immensely to Mayapur, Lord Caitanya's town. Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda Thākura discovered Lord Caitanya's birthplace. Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura discovered many pastime places of Lord Caitanya and founded the Gauḍīya Maṭha, with a prominent branch – the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha – in Mayapur. Similarly, the TOVP will be Śrīla Prabhupāda's most striking contribution to Mayapur, his place of worship.

Centuries ago, devoted kings built grand temples. For example,

the massive temple of Ranganath Swamy (a reclining form of Lord Viṣṇu) in Trichy, Tamil Nadu, was built between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries CE. During this period, the rulers of the region changed, but all of them gave paramount importance to the temple's construction. Times have changed. The rulers of the India don't build temples anymore. Temples are now built by raising funds from the public. Mayapur is the international headquarters of ISKCON. Consequently, the TOVP is not a local temple of Mayapur or even India. Due to the interconnected nature of modern times, and the international outreach of Śrīla Prabhupāda's ISKCON, the TOVP is an international temple for the entire population of the earth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda taught his followers to desire big for the service of Kṛṣṇa. The TOVP was one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's grandest desires. The desires of pure devotees are fulfilled by the Lord Himself. For example, years before Śrīla Prabhu-

pāda started ISKCON, he had a desire to build a grand temple in Juhu, Bombay. Years later the landmark Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī Temple manifested. The TOVP team would like to move the deities – the Pañca Tattva, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and the Eight Gopīs, and Lord Nṛsimhadeva – into the TOVP by 2022. When devotees of the Lord come together and cooperate in the spirit of gratitude and love, anything is possible. 🌸

*Ajita Nimāi Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānāth Swami. He is a member of the congregation of the Sri Sri Radha Vrindavan Chandra Temple (aka NVCC) in Pune, India. He has a master's degree in computer science from IIT Bombay and works with Symantec Corporation as a senior manager.*

Website: [www.tovp.org](http://www.tovp.org)  
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YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/tovpinfo](http://www.youtube.com/user/tovpinfo)

### LIMITED CONSCIOUSNESS

(continued from page 10)

*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam  
kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca  
jñānam vijñānam āstikyam  
brahma-karma svabhāva-jam*

“Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom, and religiousness – these are the natural qualities by which the *brāhmaṇas* work.” (*Gītā* 18.42) One who has the brahminical qualities can understand his relationship with the Supreme Lord.

The example of a spark is given to explain the situation of the *jīva* under the influence of each of the three qualities: When a spark falls on dry grass, the grass becomes blazing. If the spark falls on wet ground, the glowing quality may remain for some time, but it will be extinguished. And if the spark falls on water, it is extinguished. Similarly, when the living entity comes to this material world, if by chance he is in the association of the quality of goodness he keeps his God consciousness. If he is in the association of passion, he is materially busy. And if he associates with the quality of ignorance, he becomes an animal or an animal-like man.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is giving everyone the chance to glow again by association with Kṛṣṇa. If you put that spark – or that extinguished charcoal – into the fire, it will again light. Similarly this Kṛṣṇa consciousness move-

### FREEDOM?

(continued from page 24)

knowledge Kṛṣṇa gives. It's this knowledge Bhaktivedānta Swami came to give: build your nation on the spiritual platform. Amidst all your economic and political endeavors, don't forget the real you – the spirit soul – and your relationship to the Supreme Soul.

Don't succumb to the global materialistic mantra. I was in China last year, and I explained to my audience of psychologists that

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ment is trying to bring forth again the dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness in every living entity.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said,

*nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya'  
kabhu naya  
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya*

“Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. It is not something to

be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, this love naturally awakens.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 22.107)

We are just trying to revive people's original Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We are trying to awaken human society to come to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and live this life successfully. That is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Thank you very much. 🌸

China has a mantra, the same mantra that has shackled the whole world: “Work, buy, consume, die.” This is the tragedy. And if our leaders cannot offer anything higher than this as the main goal, the main lifestyle of the human being, there will be no solution to the problems of today.

I appeal to you all to please consider another route. Yes, live comfortably. Yes, take care of your body and mind. But understand that such endeavors are external; they're not

the main goal of life. We want the full freedom, not the part freedom. Full freedom can happen only on the spiritual platform. 🌸

*Devāmṛta Swami was born in New York City and came to Śrīla Prabhupāda's service after graduating from Yale University in 1972. He accepted the renounced order in 1982. He is a member of ISKCON's Governing Body Commission, with responsibilities in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the USA.*

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*The Internet is the ideal place for timely news, and iskcon.com, run by ISKCON Communications, maintains an active news page. So whether you want to see what's happening in ISKCON or have some news to report, log on to [www.iskconnews.org](http://www.iskconnews.org).*





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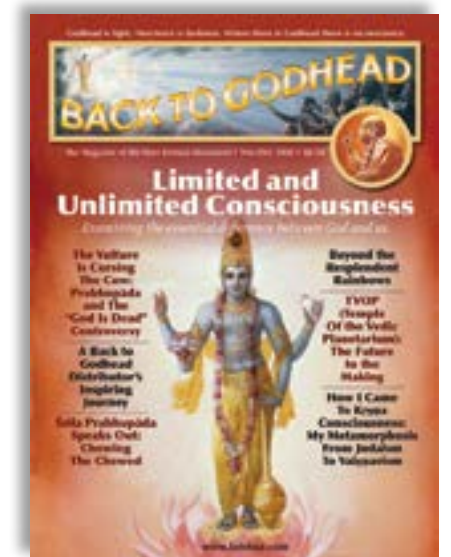
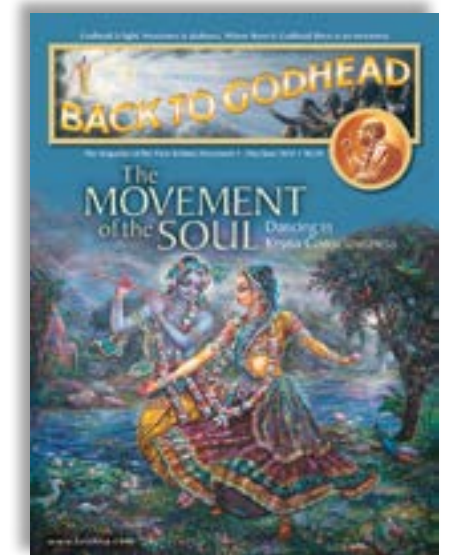
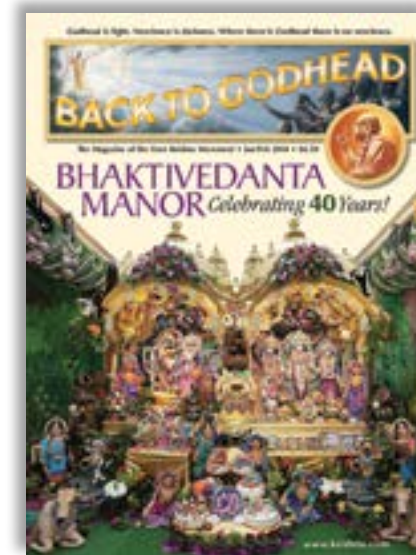
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*The Vaiṣṇava Path in George Harrison’s Songs*, Gaurī Dāsa, Jan/Feb, page 47.

*The Vulture Is Cursing the Cow: Prabhupāda and the “God Is Dead” Controversy*, Satyarāja Dāsa, Nov/Dec, page 12.

*Why Is the Bhagavad-gītā So Pessimistic?* Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, Mar/Apr, page 20.

*Writing for Kṛṣṇa: The Price and the Prize*, Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, Jan/Feb, page 12.



# The Gold Standard for God Knowledge

CERTAIN PHRASES AND IDEAS tend to be especially memorable for devotees who regularly read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. One such idea is that we must know not only that God is great but also *how* He is great.

Here's one example of Prabhupāda making this point.

The highest summit of spiritual perfection is knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unless one is firmly convinced of the different opulences of the Supreme Lord, he cannot engage in devotional service. Generally people know that God is great, but they do not know in detail how God is great. Here [in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter 10] are the details. If one knows factually how God is great, then naturally he becomes a surrendered soul and engages himself in the devotional service of the Lord. When one factually knows the opulences of the Supreme, there is no alternative but to surrender to Him. This factual knowledge can be known from the descriptions in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* and similar literatures. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.7, Purport)

Too many people today don't think about God at all, and those who do have little information about Him. But the information is available. The Vedic literature teaches so much about God that even after studying it for more than forty years I'm still learning new things. Śrīla Prabhupāda's writings, all derived from Vedic authority, contain an abundance of material about God, and now his faithful disciples and granddisciples are producing English translations of other books, including the incomparable works of the Six Gosvāmīs. The Gosvāmīs and other prominent devotees in Lord Caitanya's line exhaustively studied the vast Vedic literature to uncover things about God hidden

from all but the most determined and qualified researcher.

The vagueness of the ill-informed conception of God hinders His appeal. Lord Caitanya and His followers presented abundant Vedic evidence to establish that Kṛṣṇa is God – the original person and the source of everyone and everything. They cleared up misconceptions about other divine beings and presented encyclopedic details of Kṛṣṇa's innumerable forms. Not only can we learn about Kṛṣṇa's transcendental home, family, friends, activities, and so on, but we can also learn about these same realities in reference to His innumerable expansions and avatars. A lifetime of study is not enough to learn all there is to know about God.

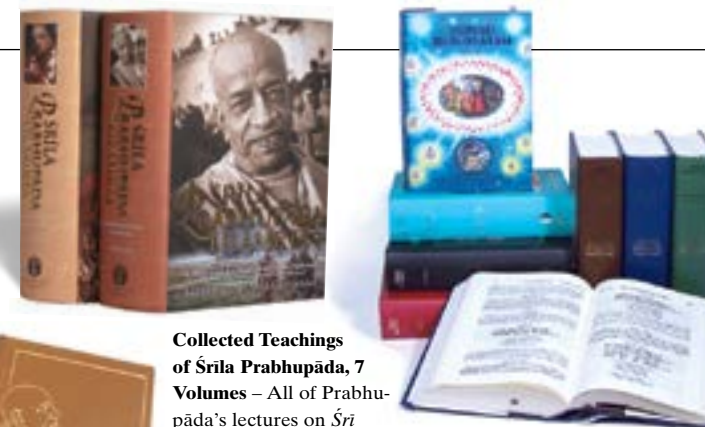
The goal, of course, is not just the scholarly pursuit of information on God. Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that knowledge of Him inspires surrender to Him. "Knowledge" here implies true understanding, which can be achieved only with some faith. But anyone who truly understands how God is great will feel the stirrings of devotion.

One prominent obstacle to taking advantage of the exhaustive knowledge of God in the Vedic literature is to devalue the *Vedas* by labeling them a product of India, without universal relevance. The world is shrinking, however, and cultures, for better or worse, are merging. While much of value can be lost with the demise of traditional cultures, one gain may be an increased openness to "foreign" ideas. The Vedic message only seems foreign outside India. As Prabhupāda would point out, gold is gold, no matter where it's mined or minted. The treasury of Vedic wisdom is always open for withdrawals by anyone with the desire for eternal profit.

– Nāgarāja Dāsa

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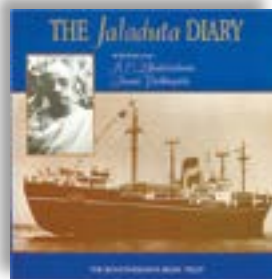


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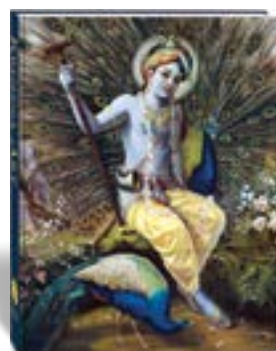
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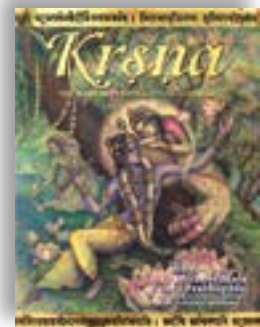
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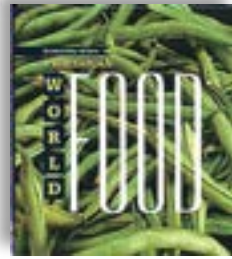
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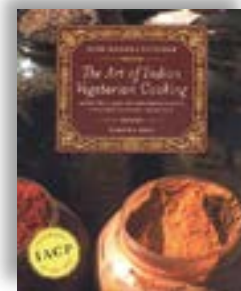


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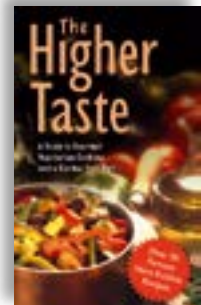
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## VEDIC THOUGHTS

Everyone has a tendency to love someone. That Kṛṣṇa should be the object of love is the central point of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By constantly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and remembering the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, one can be fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus make his life sublime and fruitful.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
*Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Chapter 35

A person who gives up all fruitive activities and offers himself entirely unto Me, eagerly desiring to render service unto Me, achieves liberation from birth and death and is promoted to the status of sharing My own opulences.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.29.34

*Praṇava*, or *omkāra*, is an indirect name of Kṛṣṇa, the original sound of the *Vedas*, *śabda brahma*. The noun *praṇava* is formed from the verb *praṇu* (“to sound”), made from the prefix *pra* (“very much”) and the verb *nu* (“to praise”). Therefore *praṇava*, or *omkāra*, is the sound incarnation of the Supreme Brahman, the person worthy of our praise and worship.

Śrīla Bhaktinodā Ṭhākura  
*Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta*, Chapter One, Part 5

When transcendental devotional service, by which love for Kṛṣṇa is attained, is exe-

cuted by the senses, it is called *sādhana-bhakti*, or the regulative discharge of devotional service.

Such devotion eternally exists within the heart of every living entity. The awakening of this eternal devotion is the potentiality of devotional service in practice.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī  
*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.2

In this Kali-yuga, of what use is a collection of hundreds or thousands of other scriptures in the home of someone who does not have the scripture *Bhāgavatam*?

*Skanda Purāna, Viṣṇu-khaṇḍa* 5.16.40

With their words, they offer prayers to the Lord. With their minds, they always remember the Lord. With their bodies, they offer obeisances to the Lord. Despite all these activities, they are still not satisfied. This is the nature of pure devotees. Shedding tears from their eyes, they dedicate their whole lives to the Lord's service.

*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*  
Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 23.23

We can accept either that which is immediately appealing (*preyas*) or that which is permanently beneficial (*śreyas*). The wise, after careful consideration, accept that which is enduringly salutary, whereas those whose judgment is poor prefer fleeting gain and pleasure.

*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.2

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