

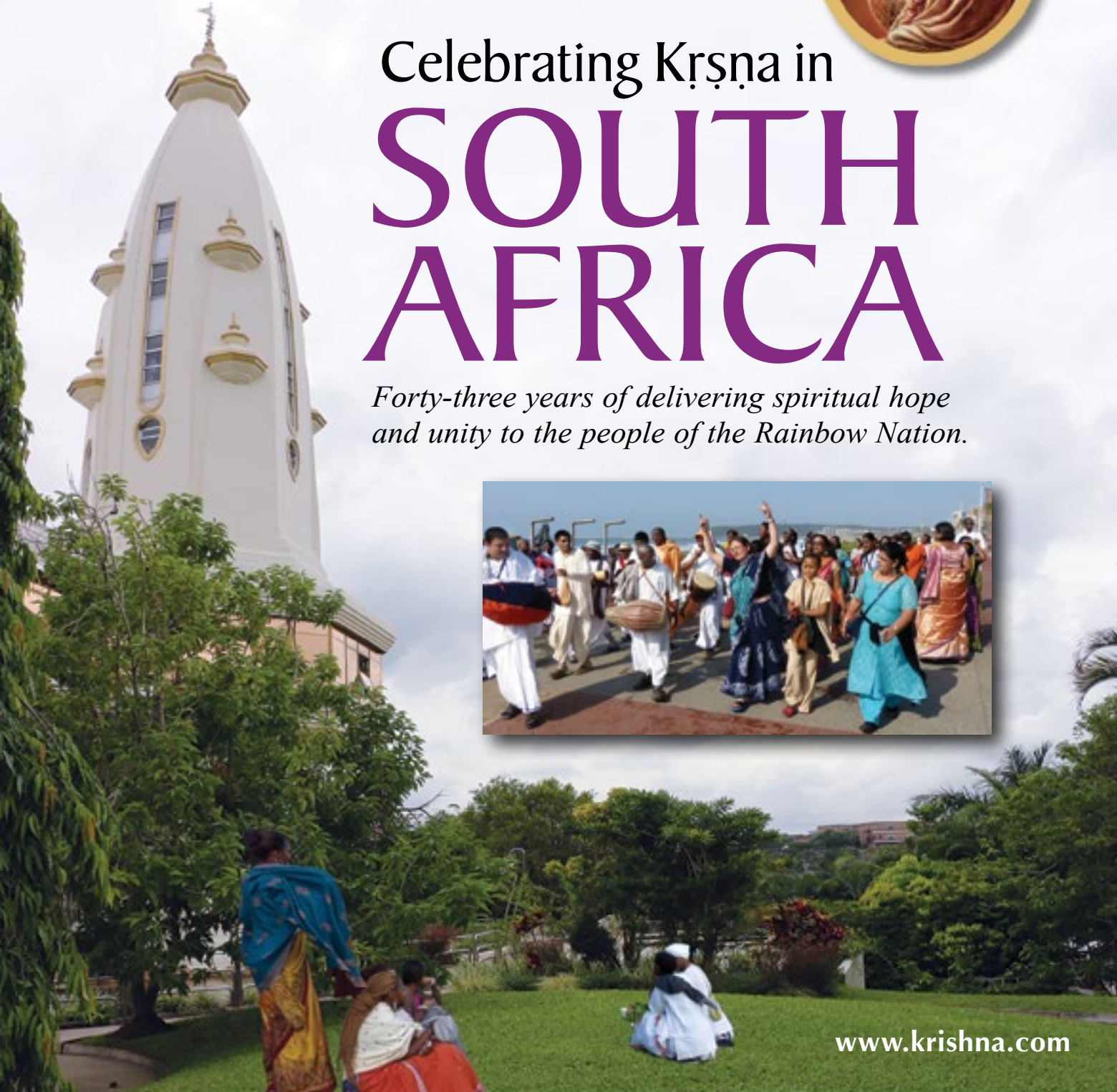
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Sep/Oct 2015 • \$4.50

# Celebrating Kṛṣṇa in SOUTH AFRICA

*Forty-three years of delivering spiritual hope  
and unity to the people of the Rainbow Nation.*



Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

# BACK to GODHEAD

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### Celebrating Kṛṣṇa in South Africa

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**COVER** One of the towers of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple of Understanding in Durban, South Africa. Inset: Devotees chant Kṛṣṇa’s holy names on Durban’s promenade along the shore of the Indian Ocean.

## WELCOME



This issue coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple of Understanding in Durban, South Africa. It also coincides with the fortieth anniversary of a visit to that country by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. To honor these occasions, we’ve dedicated much of this issue to articles related to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in South Africa.

The issue begins as usual with one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s many recorded lectures, this one given in Durban’s city hall. Aware of the country’s racial conflicts, Prabhupāda tells his audience, “Our mission is to come to the platform of our spiritual body.”

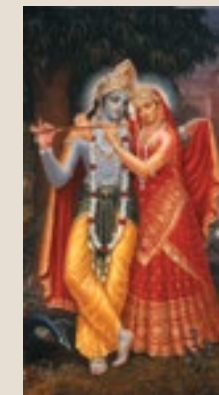
Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī’s “The Sun Behind the Rainbow” presents some history of the Durban temple and of the struggles of the first devotees in launching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in South Africa. Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī, in “Sprouting Bhakti on Campus,” tells us how Bhakti Yoga Societies are delivering Kṛṣṇa’s teachings to grateful university students. And Kṛṣṅgī Devī Dāsī picks out “Three Pillars of ISKCON Durban” to highlight, giving us some insight into how this efficiently run temple is reaching people of all backgrounds in this Rainbow Nation.

The second article in Sureśvara Dāsa’s ten-part series *Śrīla Prabhupāda: Our Founder-Ācārya* tops off the issue.

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

The Magazine of the  
Hare Krishna Movement



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## Letters

### Unwanted Thoughts While Chanting

I chant the *mahā-mantra* at the interval of one day. My issue is that while chanting, a lot of unwanted thoughts keep coming into my mind. I am unable to handle it. What can I do?

Chandan Kumar  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* Despite the influence of the mind and material nature, try not to be discouraged in your practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Continue sincerely hearing and chanting the holy name, become absorbed in the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā* and the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa as presented in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and associate with Kṛṣṇa's devotees. These things are the key to progress in spiritual life.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a gradual process, and we must have firm confidence that by this simple process all unwanted habits will gradually be cleansed from the heart. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.27–28), Lord Kṛṣṇa tells His dear devotee Uddhava: “Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories, being disgusted with all material activities, knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery, but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment, My devotee should remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction. Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment, My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result, and he sincerely repents such activities.”

As we continue chanting and hearing about Kṛṣṇa, we reach the stage called *anartha-nirvṛtti*, when all bad habits naturally disappear. So don't become discouraged.

### Why the Insecurity?

Hare Kṛṣṇa. I have a good family and a job that allows me to keep my family happy. So why am I always feeling insecure?

Sanjay Mallick  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* The feeling of insecurity indicates that you have some spiritual intelligence. In reality, no family or job or any amount of money can offer true security. Materially these things may offer security, but they can go at any moment. Death can take you or someone from your family. Disease is always looming, ready to prevent you from being happy and draining all your money on doctors and medical care. The job market is always changing, and at any moment what is a good job today may be no job tomorrow. So really there is no security in the material world. The real security is in connection with the spiritual world. Lord Kṛṣṇa is in charge of everything. Taking shelter of Him offers the only real security.

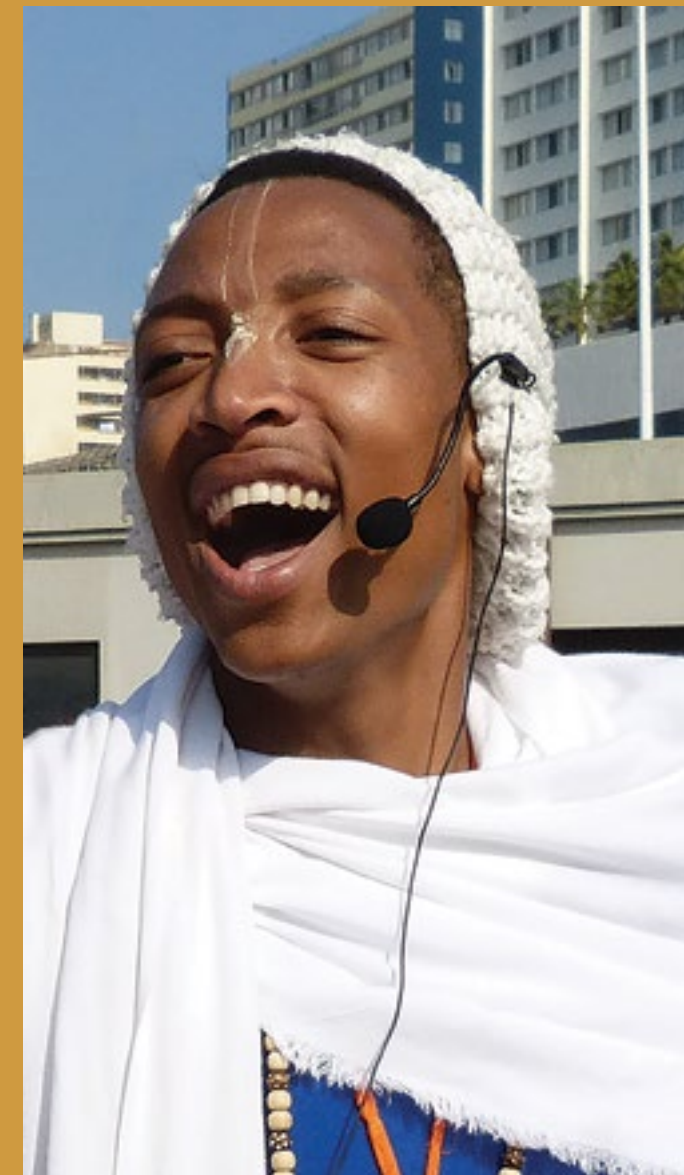
We should perform our duties, of course, and try our best to take care of our dependents and earn an honest living, but in the end the only unbreakable source of happiness and peace is our relationship with God. His protection is above everything else. If you can put this one – the relationship with Kṛṣṇa – before all the zeroes of family, job, money, and so on, then you can have 1,000,000,000, and you can feel secure knowing that Lord Kṛṣṇa is really the one who can offer protection in any circumstance.

*Replies were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, Florida 32616, USA. Email: editors@krishna.com.*

## SPECIAL SECTION

# Celebrating Kṛṣṇa in SOUTH AFRICA

*Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples first arrived in South Africa in 1972, and 2015 marks the fortieth anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's visit there, as well as the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple of Understanding in Durban. This special section includes one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures at the Durban City Hall and three articles that, while relating some of the history of ISKCON South Africa, focus mainly on ISKCON Durban, the country's largest Hare Kṛṣṇa community.*



PHOTOGRAPHERS: Jeffrey Govender, Sita J. Singh, Rāsa-sthālī Devī Dāsī, Śrīnāthajī Dāsa, Śrīdāma Dāsa, Vṛndāvana Candra Dāsa, Nkosinathi Ntuli, Shikar Ramchand, Chanel Baichan, Seema Raghubar, Revati Bhimsen, Tamohara Dāsa, Revaan Asrax

# DELIVERING the MESSAGE of KṚṢṆA

*The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not a new creation but is simply presenting the teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā for the benefit of the whole world.*

by His Divine Grace

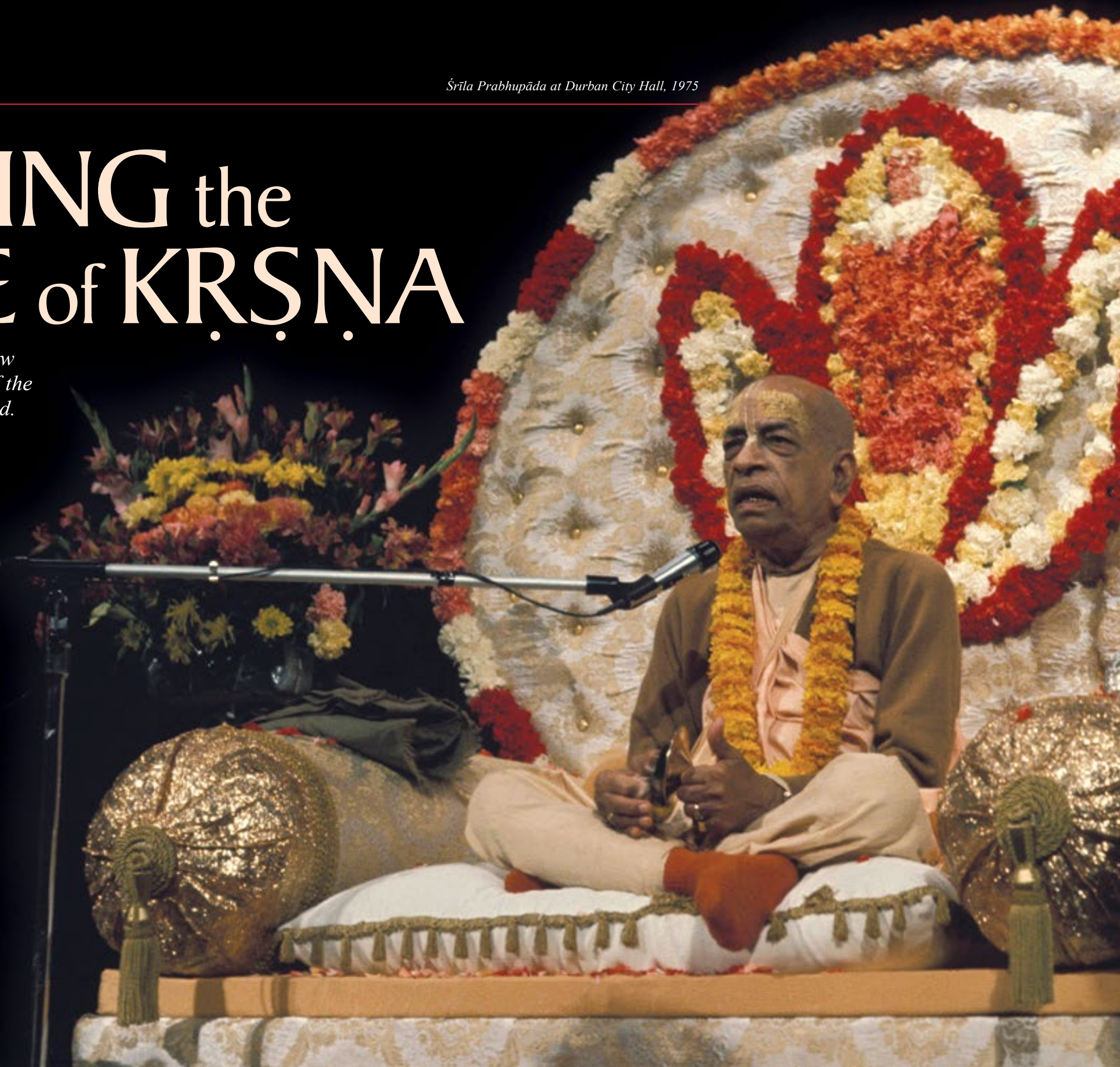
**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society  
for Krishna Consciousness

**L**ADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I thank you very much for your kindly participating in this great movement. This movement was not started by me. It was started long, long ago by Kṛṣṇa Himself. First He spoke the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the sun-god. As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.1),

*imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ  
proktavān aham avyayam  
vivasvān manave prāhur  
manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt*

“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.” If we calculate the age of Manu, we can understand that Kṛṣṇa spoke the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the sun-god, Vivasvān, at least forty million years ago. The name of the predominating deity in the sun planet is Vivasvān, his son is



Vaivasvata Manu, and Manu's son, Ikṣvāku, is the original person in the dynasty Sūrya-varṁśa, in which Lord Rāmacandra appeared. So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is coming from a very, very distant past.

But Kṛṣṇa said, *evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ*: “Formerly the rājarṣis, the saintly kings, used to receive this instruction through the chain of disciplic succession.” (*Gītā* 4.2) That was the way of understanding *Bhagavad-gītā*. Now five thousand years ago, when Kṛṣṇa was talking with Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, Arjuna was perplexed whether

gion and just surrender unto Me.” (*Gītā* 18.66) But people misunderstood. Therefore this time, five hundred years ago, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa Himself, appeared as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa. That is described in the authentic *śāstra*, the Vedic scriptures:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam  
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam  
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair  
yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ*

“In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chant-

ing to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons, and confidential companions.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.5.32) This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement. And Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Kṛṣṇa is very kind upon the conditioned souls. He is trying to elevate them to the real platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness again and again. But we are so stubborn that we are trying to forget Kṛṣṇa again and again.

### Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Order to Indians

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in Bengal, in the district of Nava-dvip, about sixty-four miles north of Calcutta. You can learn about the teachings of Caitanya Mahāprabhu

from our books *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which is seventeen volumes. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke especially to the Indians:

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

“One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India [Bhārata-varṣa] should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people.” He says, “Anyone who has taken birth in India . . .” Bhārata-bhūmi, or India, is *punya-bhūmi*, the pious land. In the *śāstra* we find that even the demigods in the heavenly planets desire to take birth in India; India is so glorious. Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission is that the first business of anyone who has taken birth as a human being in India is to make his life perfect by taking advantage of the Vedic knowledge, because it is available in India. So every Indian, especially the higher circles, namely the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, and *vaiśyas* – especially the *brāhmaṇas* – it is their business to make their life perfect by studying the Vedic knowledge and then to distribute the knowledge all over the world. Because, so far as spiritual knowledge is concerned, outside India people have got very meager knowledge. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested that every Indian study the Vedic knowledge and distribute it throughout the world.

*Para-upakāra* means welfare activity. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the best welfare activity in the world because people are in ignorance. Everyone, practically ninety-nine percent, at the present moment is under the bodily conception: “I am Indian,” “I am American,” “I am Hindu,” “I am Muslim.” That is ignorance. That will be discussed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* very elaborately. So the question may be raised “How can I do activities for the wel-

fare of the whole world?” Caitanya Mahāprabhu encourages,

*yāre dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa  
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra ei deśa*

“Wherever you are staying, by My order you must become a guru.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 7.128)

“But I have no education. How can I become a guru? How can I instruct others?”

Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Yes, that I know. But take My order.”

“Then what shall I do?”

“Become a guru. You haven't got to manufacture any philosophy. Simply instruct whatever Kṛṣṇa has spoken. That's all. Then you become a guru.”

Our request is, you are so many Indians living in this foreign country for generations, so take this instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because you are coming from India, it is a special request to you: “By the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, every one of you become a guru.”

You are staying here in South Africa. So preach as a guru. And what shall you preach? Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that you haven't got to invent anything. Kṛṣṇa's instruction is there in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Don't distort it, but give it as it is. That's your duty.

### Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly said that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa Himself says,

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

“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.” (*Gītā* 10.8) This we have to understand, that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And He is accepted as such. Arjuna heard from Kṛṣṇa about Himself, and he agreed:

*param brahma param dhāma  
pavitram paramaṁ bhavān  
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam  
ādī-devam ajaṁ vibhum*

“You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest, the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn, the greatest.” (*Gītā* 10.12) So Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead by His direct disciple, Arjuna; He is accepted by Vyāsadeva; He is accepted by Nārada Muni; and recently, within two thousand years, He was accepted by all the great *ācāryas* of India, like Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇuśvāmī; and lately, five hundred years ago, by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So there is no doubt about Kṛṣṇa's being the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28) it is confirmed, *ete cāmśa kalāḥ puṁsām kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: “The original Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa.” Similarly, in the *Upaniṣads*, in the *Vedas*, in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* – if you take evidence from the *śāstras*, everywhere you will find the same idea: *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1), written by Lord Brahmā, he says in the beginning,

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

“Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, is the cause of all causes. He is the primal cause, and He is the very form of eternity, knowledge and bliss.” So from śāstric evidences, from authentic evidences, from the *ācāryas*, from *Bhagavad-gītā* itself – everywhere

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

### Spiritual Names

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

you will find the confirmation:  
*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam.*

It is not difficult to take up Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. Simply accept the instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā* and try to preach it to whomever you meet. You may remain as a businessman, you may remain whatever you are, you may remain a family head, but instruct the advice of Kṛṣṇa. This is our mission.

### Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Teacher

The instruction of Kṛṣṇa begins when Arjuna was very much perplexed about whether to fight. On the other side were his brother, his nephews, his son-in-law, his grand-

*evam uktvā hr̥ṣīkeśam  
guḍākeśaḥ parantapaḥ  
na yotsya iti govindam  
uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha*

“Having spoken thus, Arjuna, chastiser of enemies, told Kṛṣṇa, ‘Govinda, I shall not fight,’ and fell silent.” Sañjaya refers to Kṛṣṇa by the name Hṛṣīkeśa. *Hṛṣīka* means the senses, and *īśa* means the master. Everyone has senses, and the master of those senses is Kṛṣṇa. We are not the master. That we have to understand. I say, “This is my hand,” but if Kṛṣṇa withdraws the hand's power, I cannot act. We should understand in this way that none of our senses belong to us. They are given to us for prop-

*ña*, or *yajña-puruṣa*, means Viṣṇu. If you work for Kṛṣṇa, then you are doing right; otherwise you become implicated. This is the teaching of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Now, Arjuna is a fighter, a soldier. He knows how to fight, that's all. He's not a Vedantist; he is not a *brāhmaṇa*; he is not a *sannyāsī*. He is a *grhastha*, a householder. He appeared on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra to fight for political reasons. So he knew all this business, but he used his talent in the fighting art for Kṛṣṇa. He did not want to fight. As a Vaiṣṇava he is very kind. He said, “My brothers, my cousins, certainly they have insulted my wife. They have taken my kingdom by gambling and so many devices. I know that. Still, because they are my brothers, I don't wish to kill them.” This is the Vaiṣṇava's attitude. But Kṛṣṇa's business is *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati* (*Gītā* 4.7). When there is injustice, it must be faced with fighting. That is Kṛṣṇa's version. So Arjuna, as a Vaiṣṇava, did not like to fight. But Kṛṣṇa, as the supreme mediator, desired the battle. That is also good for everything. Whatever Kṛṣṇa does is good. “God is good.” There is nothing bad in what God does.

After Arjuna heard *Bhagavad-gītā* very carefully, Kṛṣṇa asked him, “Now I have explained to you the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the spiritual knowledge. Now whatever you like, you can do.” *Yathecchasi tathā kuru* (*Gītā* 18.63). Now it is up to you. You can decide not to fight. I have no objection, because you have a little independence. But My advice is that you should fight. Now I ask you what you are going to do.”

Arjuna replied, *kariṣye vacanam tava* (*Gītā* 18.73): “Now I shall do it.” This is *bhakti*, to act according to the advice of the Supreme Lord.

Therefore we have to first of all establish our relationship with God. Like the relationship between a father and his son, our relationship with God already exists. Sometimes a son leaves home and forgets

his father. Similarly, we are out of home. We have come from the spiritual world to the material world. We have forgotten our father. So we have to revive the relationship with our father, or God, or Kṛṣṇa. That is the main business of human life.

### The Business of Human Life

In species of life lower than the human being it is not possible to revive our old relationship with God. Therefore this is the greatest opportunity. After all, we are under the grip of material nature's law. That is explained: *tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ* (*Gītā* 2.13). According to our desire, we are creating the type of body that we will enter after death. The child is becoming a boy, the boy is becoming a young man, the young man is becoming a middle-aged man, and the middle-aged man is becoming an old man. What is next after the old body? Next is *tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*: you have to accept another body. This is called the chain or the cycle of birth and death, or the transmigration of the soul. This is going on. Nobody wants to die. Nobody wants to change this body. But this is a problem. One should know it. That we are changing is the first instruction Kṛṣṇa gave to Arjuna. *Tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*.

This is the opportunity, human life. If we want to stop this repetition of birth and death under different obligations and different circumstances, we should take instruction from Kṛṣṇa, try to understand Kṛṣṇa – that is *Bhagavad-gītā* – and make our life successful. We have come from God; we will go back to God if we simply understand Kṛṣṇa, or God. This is the whole instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

When Arjuna was perplexed, he asked, “How shall I kill the other side? Kṛṣṇa, I am not going to fight.”

Kṛṣṇa was smiling. He was thinking, “Arjuna is my friend, and he is so overwhelmed with material consciousness of life. He should not be lamenting like this.”

After Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as his teacher, his master, Kṛṣṇa chastised him.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
aśocyān anvaśocas tvam  
prajñā-vādāms ca bhāṣase  
gatāsūn agatāsūms ca  
nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead.” (*Gītā* 2.11) “My dear Arjuna, you talk just like a learned man.” *Prajñā-vādāms* means talking just like a learned man. “Unfortunately, you are not a learned man be-

cause you are lamenting for this body.” Kṛṣṇa said, *gatāsūn agatāsūms ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*: “Anyone who is learned does not lament for this body, whether it is in the living condition or the dead condition. You are talking like a learned man, but you are not a learned man.” This is the first instruction. Because Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa chastised him with harsh words: “You are not a *paṇḍita*.”

Now, just consider what is the position of this world. Everyone is taking care of the body. But Kṛṣṇa said, *gatāsūn agatāsūms ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*. The *paṇḍita*, one who is learned, knows that he is not

(please turn to page 52)

**Everyone has senses, and the master of those senses is Kṛṣṇa. We are not the master. That we have to understand.**

father, his teacher. When he saw on the battlefield so many relatives, friends, and kinsmen, he was perplexed. He was very compassionate. He said, “Kṛṣṇa, I am not going to fight.” But Arjuna also knew, “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So my perplexity can be eradicated only by Kṛṣṇa.” Therefore he submitted to Kṛṣṇa, “I am in great perplexity.”

Everyone is in great perplexity. There is no doubt. Anyone in this material world is full of anxiety and perplexity. So it is not only Arjuna's problem. It is the problem of everyone. If we want to solve the problems of life, we should accept Kṛṣṇa as the supreme teacher. This is the instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā* and Arjuna. *Śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvām prapannam*: “My dear Kṛṣṇa, now I am asking You to become my teacher and solve my problem.” (*Gītā* 2.7)

Earlier in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.9) Sañjaya, the narrator, said,

er use. Therefore, because they are given to us by the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses, they should be used for Kṛṣṇa. This is *bhakti-yoga*. We should know that although we have these senses, they have been given to us to use but they do not belong to us.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa's name is Hṛṣīkeśa. *Hṛṣīkeṣa hr̥ṣīkeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate* (*Nārada Pañcarātra*). *Bhakti* means to use your senses in the service of Kṛṣṇa. At the present moment, under the condition of material nature, we are using our senses for our sense gratification. That is called the conditional stage. And we are becoming subjected to so many changes of circumstances in different bodies. We are creating a different situation by using the senses for our personal sense gratification, and we have become bound by the laws of nature. That is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.9). *Yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanaḥ*. *Yaj-*



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# The Sun Behind the Rainbow

*Durban's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple of Understanding opened thirty years ago, after many struggles during South Africa's apartheid era.*

by Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī

**A** RAINBOW NEVER ceases to capture my eyes and dazzle my mind. It inspires thoughts of eternity and freedom, and even of another world beyond it. I am part of the diverse spectrum of people who make up the Rainbow Nation, a term for post-apartheid South Africa signifying peace and unity. Proposals for creating peace and unity in South Africa, however, are of limited value if based on material, rather than transcendental, vision. Only the sun can create a true rainbow, and on the horizon of Durban I see the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple of Understanding blazing like a sun, radiating spiritual knowledge to all South

Africans. This knowledge – of God and our relationship with Him – gives rise to spiritual freedom, to the end of the soul's captivity in this world, to eternal life in God's kingdom. The rainbow's power to captivate us lies not so much in the colors themselves as in their harmonious combination created by the sun. The sun of spiritual understanding can harmonize the diverse colors of the Rainbow Nation, creating a captivating display of unity in diversity in service to God.

The Temple of Understanding has shed its light for thirty years as if untouched by time. I perceive it as a gigantic golden lotus opening its

*Young devotees chant in the spacious temple room (right) of ISKCON Durban's Temple of Understanding (left).*



petals on a dazzling pond, or a celestial aircraft that has descended and landed on an ordinary spot. The temple's architectural perfection intrigues me with its fusion of traditional and modern design. Towering above the shimmering octagonal roof, gold-leaf-edged domes display *tilaka*-shaped windows that delight the eye and the soul. Austrian architect Rājarāma Dāsa conceived the

design, which follows principles of the Vedic *Śilpa-śāstra*. The building's very layout is meant to teach spiritual truths – and to suggest stories of courage, determination, and hope.

The temple's story began in the 1970s, when South Africa, unlike the rest of Africa, was a land of plenty. Its booming economy, fertile landscapes, temperate climate, and rich heritage painted a beautiful picture.



*Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha (above), dressed in one of many beautiful outfits offered by Their devotees. Above left: A scene from one of the Rathayātrā plays, which never fail to delight, instruct, and inspire. Left: Murti of Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha on his vyāsāsana.*



But looking closer, we see the picture scathed by racial discrimination and ethnic divide. People of different races, colors, and cultural backgrounds lived under the banner of apartheid (“apartness” or “separateness”), the policy of racial segregation that forced whites and nonwhites to live separately and inflicted unfair treatment on the “lesser races” of Africans, Indians, and Coloreds (of

mixed race). Violence and bloodshed stained the colors of the rainbow. Elsewhere, Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha had founded his International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in 1966. Circling the globe repeatedly, he brought together people from many countries and ethnic and religious backgrounds, unifying them on the principle that as spiritual souls we are one in the eyes of God and

can unite in service to Him. Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha often commented that ISKCON was the real United Nations.

### **Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha's Emissaries Arrive**

Following in Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha's footsteps in creating awareness of universal spiritual brotherhood, a



## Nelson Mandela's Journey with ISKCON South Africa

BHAKTI TĪRTHA SWAMI introduced Nelson Mandela at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple's Diwali program in 1994: "Here we are in the Hare Kṛṣṇa facility. We are a society that is known worldwide for having people of all different races, all different economic and social positions and backgrounds, and all different religions – Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians – who worship together. Our founder wanted to see a world based on the common ground of applying 'loving our neighbor as ourselves' in a way that makes results, in a way that's effective and improves the quality of life."

Bhakti Tīrtha Swami, ISKCON's first African-American *sannyāsī* to travel throughout Africa propagating Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission, had a friendly relationship with many heads of state, including Nelson Mandela.

"Not only is he about all races and tribes working together," Bhakti Tīrtha Swami said of Mr. Mandela, "but also about people working together on religious considerations."

To the South African devotees, Nelson Mandela was someone who shared their ideal of spiritual oneness in a culturally diverse setting. And by his efforts to end apartheid, he indirectly helped the devotees spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Mandela recognized the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's contributions to a nonracist South Africa when he visited the Temple of Understanding on two occasions. The first time, he bowed down to the deity of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He told Bhakti Caitanya Swami that he had wanted to positively change people's lives through political means. Bhakti Caitanya Swami told him that Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to do the same thing, but through spiritual means, and that he was already doing that all over the world.

Mandela became silent and then turned to Bhakti Caitanya Swami.

"How did he do it?" he asked.

When he heard about Śrīla Prabhupāda's efforts in creating a worldwide society based on people's spiritual equality, he appreciated Śrīla Prabhupāda



Nelson Mandela with Indradyumna Swami at the Festival for the Children of the Rainbow Nation, 1997.

and his movement even more.

On Mandela's second visit to the temple, Bhakti Tīrtha Swami began quoting a verse from the *Bhagavad-gītā* – and Mandela finished it. He said that when he and his colleagues were imprisoned on Robben Island, an Indian lawyer gave him a *Bhagavad-gītā*, which he read and discussed with his fellow prisoners. Clearly, he was familiar with the principles by which the devotees shape their lives.

In 2013 a dense sadness swept over South Africa when Madiba, as Mandela was affectionately known, passed away. The South African devotees honored his saintly qualities and his fight for religious freedom and expression. Indradyumna

Swami, in his homage to Mandela, wrote:

Madiba, tonight I would like to address what I feel was your greatest quality: your ability to make everyone – regardless of their race, religion, or creed – feel welcome under your leadership. I experienced this personally when you graciously accepted the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's invitation to be our special guest at the "Festival for the Children of the Rainbow Nation" in 1997. The long program was attended by 50,000 boisterous children, and after it was over, I was walking you back to your car, surrounded by many security men.

I was anxious about whether you had enjoyed and appreciated the event, so I turned to you and asked, "Mr. President, did you like the festival?"

You stopped and, taking both of my hands in yours, said, "Mahārāja, this was the very best day of my life!"

Suddenly all the anxiety and fatigue I was experiencing, all the worries and woes associated with organising a program of such magnitude, vanished. You kept holding my hand until we reached your car.

As you got in, you smiled at me as if to say, "Well done."

I realized your greatness came not only from your ability to accomplish great political feats, but also in your kindness and compassion to reach out and touch the hearts of the private citizen, even a foreigner like me who was trying through spiritual ideology to propagate your desire for social cohesion.

few of his disciples, headed by Kṣudhi Dāsa, arrived in South Africa in 1972 to start the Society there. They were wary of the political turmoil, yet unafraid. Śrīla Prabhupāda had spoken of how his guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, had convinced him that spreading Kṛṣṇa's message could not wait for India's independence. Prabhupāda's example inspired his missionaries to South Africa, but they wondered how they could spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness when they were forbidden to mix with nonwhites, the majority of the population.

These pioneer devotees endured countless struggles and challenges, risking their lives to spread the message of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Some were persecuted and imprisoned, others deported. Somehow they were able to reach out to people and win their favor. The Gujarati community provided shelter in their homes, shielding the devotees from the op-



Flower petals fly during the deities' annual Puspābhiṣeka ("flower bath") festival.

pressive government. Eventually the devotees had to run from the secret police, so they traveled from town to town and set up hall programs in the Indian districts. Still, they needed a base, a place from which to freely propagate their mission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had opened temples and *bhakti-yoga* centers in many parts of the world, and he hoped the same could be done in South Africa.

Even though a center was eventually established in Yeoville, near Johannesburg, Śrīla Prabhupāda envisioned something greater. Visiting the country in October 1975, he saw a fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of Kṛṣṇa consciousness despite the challenges the devotees faced.

"When Śrīla Prabhupāda visited," recalls Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami, one of the pioneers in South Africa, "there was no integration of races, so in his lectures he strongly emphasized that we are not a man or a woman or black or white but we all are



allowing international organizations into the country, fearing they would encourage free mixing of races. So the registrar refused; he said it had to be registered as the “Society for Krishna Consciousness in South Africa.” After Gokulendra failed to convince him otherwise, he remembered the Simply Wonderfuls (round butter-and-powdered-milk sweets) he had brought, and he slipped some onto the registrar’s tea plate. While the haughty official drank his tea, he looked at the sweets, picked one up, and took a bite. As he savored the delicious *prasāda*, he turned to his secretary and said, “Give them their name.”

Shortly afterwards, a 120-acre farm in Cato Ridge became the main center and haven for the devotees. Living in the countryside ensured less resistance to their efforts and more freedom to approach the mixed races. Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami started “tent campaigns,” traveling with others to different areas in the province, setting up a tent, and inviting people to an evening of spiritual discourses, dramas, *kīrtana*, and *prasāda*. These programs inspired many from the Indian community to become committed devotees. The devotee farm community grew, but still a temple closer to a city was needed.



During the festival of Govardhana Pūjā (above), devotees admire the replica of Govardhana Hill, made mostly of tasty prasāda. At left, Gīri Govardhana, a sacred stone from Govardhana Hill, sits in His honored position on the altar. At right, a retreat attendee learns to chant on beads. At far right, devotees prepare a flower outfit for the deities.

eternal servants of God, and therefore equal. In that political climate, stressing equality was controversial, but Śrīla Prabhupāda fearlessly spoke about this from *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Two, at public programs at the Durban City Hall, with over two thousand people attending, and at the University of Witwatersrand (WITS), addressing students and lecturers across the racial divide.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples tried to boldly spread Kṛṣṇa’s message as their spiritual master was doing. Along with a few other devotees, Gokulendra Dāsa, the first South African to join ISKCON, approached the chief registrar in Pretoria to register the society as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. The government was cautious about



## Interview with His Holiness Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami

*Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami, originally from England, is a much loved devotee in South Africa. Maybe that's because he is the only devotee since the initial days of ISKCON in South Africa who has braved the storms and never left. Or maybe it's because of his forty-one years of bringing many souls to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Whatever it is, he is still active in contributing to the country's spiritual heritage through Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He now has disciples in South Africa, the Ukraine, and other parts of the world.*



**As a pioneer of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in South Africa, what were some of your initial impressions and experiences?**

I was quite naïve. I thought South Africa would be like the jungle described in Tarzan movies, and I was expecting hot weather, wild animals, and trees. So when I arrived in Johannesburg, which turned out to be a concrete jungle in the middle of a bitterly cold winter, I was disappointed.

The people were generally reserved, and there were no friendly dealings among the races. It had a lot to do with government policy. Anything not “normal” was treated with suspicion. And we were young white boys in saffron “bed sheets,” bald heads, and chanting a mantra. So we were most “un-normal.” Even when I first went out on book distribution the devotees warned me not to talk to nonwhites too much. It wasn't even acceptable to share a car with them. I had to be vigilant because at that time the secret police were everywhere and they were quick

to act on anything they believed to be a threat to the government.

In 1975 we were convinced that spies came to the Sunday program in the Johannesburg temple to find out if we were breaking any laws. And we believed the temple room was bugged, so whenever we discussed sensitive issues like traveling and visa requirements, we would talk in the garden. In other words, we were paranoid, and for good reason, because we were under surveillance by the secret police.

The Indians, however, were enthusiastic to meet and interact with us. They were living in a country that believed and taught that the Indians' culture and beliefs were inferior. And we

were white people embracing the Vedic culture. So they looked at us in awe. As Śrīla Prabhupāda had said of his Western “boys and girls” in India – they were his dancing white elephants that all the Indians wanted to see. It was like that here too.

**What were some of the struggles you encountered in a racist apartheid South Africa? Do you recall any incidents?**

I had numerous brushes with the law while staying illegally in the Indian areas, but one incident stands out. As I didn't have a valid visa and passport, and had already been arrested for distributing books in central Durban, it was only a matter of time before the police would come looking for me. I knew that.

I was doing the tent campaign in the suburb of Phoenix. In 1978, Phoenix had a population of over a quarter

of a million Indians, and they loved the campaign. The simple program of *kīrtana*, talk, film, drama, and raw peanuts for *prasāda* attracted over a thousand Indians every night. The marquee was over forty meters long in an open field. We borrowed electricity from the surrounding houses.

Three Indian devotees and I lived in the tent and would ask families to kindly allow us to bathe in their homes. But there were the odd few who didn't like us, or maybe feared us, or were suspicious of a white man talking about Indian culture. I heard rumors that some people thought I was a spy working for the apartheid regime, while others thought I was CIA – a rumor which started in India and filtered down to South Africa.

I clearly recall the day I heard the sirens. It was quiet, and I was chanting my *japa* when the jarring and offensive sound of the siren echoed through the marquee. I could see the police van pull up, and I froze for an instant. Kṛṣṇa in my heart allowed me quick thinking. In an open field there was nowhere to run, so I hid under the stage. It was made from scaffoldings and was a meter and a half high and ten meters long. Fortunately we had quite a bit of stuff under there, so it was a good camouflage, and I was slight of frame.

I saw two police officers emerge from their van. One was an Afrikaans man, and the other an Indian. They confronted the timid devotees about my whereabouts in raised, angry voices and aggressive hand gestures. The devotees acknowledged that I was living there but had gone out for the moment. The policemen were suspicious and walked around to inspect the place. I had to bite my lip to not cry out in agony lying under the stage with the red ants biting me and the hard scaffolding pinching into my flesh, my heart thumping as the Afrikaans officer slowly and deliberately approached the stage. As if distracted by something, he walked by and announced that they would return.

We anticipated them coming the next day, and when they did, I hid in a nearby house. The family that kept me took an enormous risk, as they would have also been implicated.

The Afrikaans officer was the station commander, Captain Bezuidenhout, and his right-hand man, the Indian officer, was Constable Jagannath. They had received complaints that a white man was living in the area and holding religious gatherings, and they had every intention of arresting me.

How do I know this? Thirty years later ISKCON had built a large temple in the center of Phoenix. A gentleman and his family had started visiting our temple. They would often come to me for spiritual guidance and to ask questions. In due course they became committed devotees and asked if I would initiate them. At the time of initiation, after Kṛṣṇa Līlā Dāsa received his new name and beads, he begged forgiveness for hunting me and trying to arrest me – he was that Constable Jagannath.

**How do you see ISKCON's role now in South Africa, a democratic country facing new challenges?**

ISKCON's role is always the same irrespective of the political climate, whether it is democracy, republicanism, monarchy, aristocracy, dictatorship, or apartheid. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a nonsectarian, nonracial, non-sexist philosophy and therefore for everyone. Apartheid did not stop the flow of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy, and a democratic country simply means that anyone can go to any area and share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others. We now have less resistance in bringing Kṛṣṇa's message to the people, and since the dissolution of apartheid we have communities of devotees in areas like Soweto and Stellenbosch, which were previously reserved for only black or only white people.

South Africa has one of the best constitutions in the world, and freedom of religion is our right. But South Africans still suffer from the effects of apartheid, and the only way we can have true equality is to understand we are not the material body. Therefore we are not English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Sepedi, Xhosa, Venda, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi, SiSwati, Tsonga, Tamil, Hindi, or Gujarati. Rather we are spirit souls and the eternal servants of God, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In the meantime, the government discovered that many foreign devotees, routinely denied missionary visas or extensions on their tourist visas, were living illegally in the country. The devotees risked being prosecuted and deported. Tulasī Dāsa, the Cato Ridge temple president, reported this injustice to the *Leader*, an Indian newspaper. The *Leader* ran an article exposing the devotees'

plight, causing an uproar among the Indians. Mr. Rajbansi, a member of parliament who represented Indians, submitted an official plea to the government. But the government had to be cautious. It was creating a tricameral parliament; although still white dominated, it would give a limited political voice to the country's colored and Indian groups. The government withheld judgment for a year,

and then, to gain favor with the Indian community, it issued work permits to the devotees. Now the foreign devotees' stay was unhindered.

### Selfless Efforts To Build the Temple

The need for a central base kept growing. Finally, in 1980, Mr. Rajbansi helped the devotees procure a

large piece of land in Chatsworth, on the outskirts of Durban. There a temple like no other in the southern hemisphere would be built. ISKCON's Governing Body Commissioner (GBC) at the time, Bhagavān Dāsa, saw the temple as the way to convince the government that ISKCON had a prominent role to play in the country. Together with Tulasī Dāsa, the coordinator of the project, he

urged the devotees to stop their other activities and start fund-raising.

“We loved to speak to people about Kṛṣṇa and distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books,” Rāmānuj-ācārya Dāsa explains, “but to build the temple everything had to stop, and some of us had to sell oil paintings. We had to grow our hair and replace our devotional attire with smart Western dress. We set up shops

to sell paintings, the main method of collecting funds. We also had groups of devotees traveling throughout South Africa and Namibia, soliciting donations and selling paintings.”

Śrī Mūrti Devī Dāsī, one of the first Indian women to join at Cato Ridge, described the new-temple project as a war, so great were the devotees' sacrifices. For example, her late husband, Śyāmalāla Dāsa,



was traveling in a remote part of the country to collect funds when his car went over a cliff. For days, no one knew where he was. But Kṛṣṇa had saved him.

Today, when I look at the gold-rimmed *tilaka* windows on the domes, I see the devotees' faith and devotion reflected in them. *Tilaka*, the markings on a Vaiṣṇava's body, symbolize victory by the Lord's protection. The devotees trusted Kṛṣṇa's protection and knew their success depended on Him. But the tests didn't end. Money was scarce and living conditions austere. The devotees didn't give up. They formed their own con-

struction company, and with much effort a temple started to emerge.

Nandakumāra Dāsa, one of the first presidents of the Temple of Understanding, recalls, "The gold leafing of the *tilaka* windows and of the base of the spires took place early in the morning when it was still dark and there was no wind. The gold leaf was thinner than paper, and there had to be no wind so that it could not fly away or get spoilt whilst we tried to 'paint' it on. We were thirteen floors up on scaffolding, without any safety measures in place. It was quite daunting and scary, as we had to use both hands

while trying to balance on the metal piping that made up the scaffolding."

The devotees spent days focusing on the task, and the *tilaka* on the domes began to shine.

"During the initial part of the construction, there was a drought," says Rāmānujācārya Dāsa, speaking of how Kṛṣṇa responded to their efforts. "No rain meant the construction could go on unimpeded. Also, the water meter broke, which reduced our costs for the tons of water we were using for the construction. No doubt Kṛṣṇa was helping us."

The devotees were soon to see the Lord for whom they had made

*Śrīla Prabhupāda at the Johannesburg temple in 1975 (above). Top right, pūjārīs perform worship of Govardhana-śilās before the Govardhana-pūjā festival. Above center: A devotee cooks for the deities. At right, the late Śyāmalāla Dāsa was a major fundraiser for the temple construction.*



## Vrindavan Spreads to South Africa

ŚRĪLA Prabhupāda was so encouraged by the devotees' efforts and perseverance in South Africa that he wrote in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.13.60):

**Translation:** Vṛndāvana is the transcendental abode of the Lord, where there is no hunger, anger, or thirst. Though naturally inimical, both human beings and fierce animals live there together in transcendental friendship.

**Purport:** In the material world one may collect funds all over the world in order to distribute food freely, yet those to whom the food is given may not even feel appreciative. The value of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, will gradually be very much appreciated. For instance, in an article about the temple of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Durban, South Africa, the *Durban Post* reported, "All the devotees here are very active in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the results are obvious to see: happiness, good health, peace of mind, and the development of all good qualities." This is the nature of Vṛndāvana. *Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇāḥ*: without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, happiness is impossible; one may struggle, but one cannot have happiness. We are therefore trying to give human society the opportunity for a life of happiness, good health, peace of mind, and all good qualities through God consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would often express that the Vrindavan mood would pervade the world through the spreading of God consciousness. Wherever there are centers broadcasting Kṛṣṇa's glories, Vrindavan, the spiritual world, will be present.

In South Africa, over the past forty-three years Kṛṣṇa's message has been gradually received and appreciated, culminating in fifteen centers and temples in Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Lenasia, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch, Midrand, Sandton, Soweto, Mpumalanga, Ladysmith, Newcastle, Pietermaritzburg, and Phoenix.

The Phoenix temple, located on the outskirts of



ISKCON Phoenix temple and deities.



Durban, is the second-largest temple in South Africa.

It sprouted from the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha temple, with many

devotees having their roots there. It is named New Jagannātha Puri, and the presiding deities are Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva, and Subhadrā Devī.

The centers throughout South Africa host numerous colorful festivals, university and outreach programs, street chanting, *prasāda* and book distribution, workshops and seminars on the Vedic perspective, and an array of other devotional activities. The number of attendees to the various programs is on the rise, making Śrīla Prabhupāda's words stand true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda envisioned a Rainbow Nation for South Africa way back then. Recently, Brahmānanda Dāsa, the earliest pioneer of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Africa, told of Śrīla Prabhupāda's final instructions to him about his efforts in Africa.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'This is what I want in Africa.' And he said, 'In South Africa, I want the Europeans, Indians, and Africans dancing together.' That's all he said. I mean, can you imagine? [Brahmānanda starts to cry.] This is Prabhupāda."

difficult sacrifices. Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha, forty-two-inch marble deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, arrived in South Africa from Jaipur, India. The late Bimala Prasāda Dāsa, the head *pūjārī*, had overseen the sculpting, arranged the safe transport of

the deities, and dealt with customs and other complications.

### The Installation: October 1985

Finally, the day arrived for the grand installation, and 1985 summoned a

new hope for the Rainbow Nation when thousands of people thronged to the two-day event. The visitors flooding through the entrance gate, crossing the bridge, and entering the temple didn't know they were leaving the Iron Age, crossing the bridge

of material life, and entering another realm. But when they entered, they felt the transition. The air was thick with a spiritual presence. Everyone was mesmerized by the octagonal temple floor covered in cream-colored marble, the hundreds of mirrors adorning pictures of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the dazzling chandeliers hanging be-

low eight panels of three-meter-long Kṛṣṇa paintings, and the thousands of lights that lit up the floral designs and intricate artwork. Mādhavendra Purī Dāsa, the interior designer, used materials from all over the world to create the stunning effect.

Standing amid this artistic splendor, the devotees focused their eyes

on the altar. There, on large lotus-shaped bases, stood the charming forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Adding to the devotees' excitement was the news that a sacred thread on Lord Rādhānātha's body had revealed itself. Surely this was a sign of His pleasure and His reciprocation with



A young devotee releases a prayer lantern at the lantern festival held during the temple's annual youth retreat.



*Kīrtana draws a crowd to a Rathayātrā festival stage (below), while a kīrtana inside a festival tent (“Bhakti Cloud”) for youth sends a dancer swirling (left). Below left, a devotee teaches a Hare Kṛṣṇa tune on the harmonium.*



the devotees for their efforts.

At the opening ceremony, guests and devotees from around the world listened to talks by leaders of the movement and the country. The speakers assured the audience that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would now spiral to new heights in South Africa.

**Better Times, But Challenges Remain**

“Apartheid continued for some years after we opened the temple,” says

Bhakti Caitanya Swami, a pioneer in ISKCON’s development in South Africa and now one of the two GBC representatives for the country. “In 1988, when I was regional secretary for Gauteng and temple president of the Muldersdrift/Johannesburg temple, we were prosecuted for allowing nonwhites to live in the temple or attend programs there. We had to stop nonwhites from coming, or face fines for each day we allowed them to come. Fortunately, the idea of the racial laws being dropped was

becoming more and more accepted. None of the law authorities showed up for the hearing, and the whole matter was dropped.”

Today, racial prejudice is not the challenge it was then.

“South Africa is an extraordinary country, in which there is great diversity amongst the people,” Bhakti Caitanya Swami continues. “Not only are there black African people, white people, Indian people, and colored people, but even within each group there is great diversity. Through

Kṛṣṇa consciousness all these different people can live together and engage in devotional service happily, without worrying about the differences. In this way ISKCON in South Africa is a wonderful display of unity in diversity.”

The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple of Understanding continues to help unify the colors of the Rainbow Nation. Even though Indians predominate at the temple, its activities touch people of all races. Devotees go out into the streets to share

The presiding deities (right): Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha, with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Girī Govardhana. Guests attending a retreat get their first look at the gorgeous temple ceiling (below). Opposite page, bottom: Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the center of the ceiling, and one of the ornate temple lights.



Kṛṣṇa's message with anyone interested to hear it. Busloads of school-children and other tour groups from all ethnic and religious backgrounds enjoy temple tours, and many of the guests – especially the children – respond loudly to the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names. Tribal groups in traditional costumes have chanted and danced before the deities.

The temple has given prominence to the province by winning the Kwa-Zulu Natal Landmark Tourist award for 2013, but those who worked to build the temple see its real value. As the devotees celebrate its thirtieth anniversary and the fortieth anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's visit, the resplendent temple continues to radiate the same message at the dawn of new struggles in the Rainbow Nation. Political instability, the increase of crime, and other crises in the country show that our internal enemies – lust, greed, anger, pride, selfishness, and envy – must be eliminated. Only

spiritual understanding and practices will conquer these treacherous enemies, the roots of the evils of society. Fortunately, the Lord's holy names resonate from the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple of Understanding, purifying the atmosphere and the hearts of those who hear it. With God in the center, a bright rainbow shall paint the sky. 🌈

*Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Holiness Girirāja Swami, lives with her husband and two children in Durban. She writes for Hare Krishna News (a local publication), and is writing books for children and young adults, which she plans to publish.*

*The author offers thanks to Svarūpa Dāmodara Dāsa (former temple president), who gave advice and ideas for the articles, to his wife Sukumārī Devī Dāsī, who transcribed the interview, and to all*

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# Sprouting Bhakti On Campus

*South Africa is ready for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, with BYS students leading the way.*

by Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī

SEE HIS MANE of bobbing dreadlocks. Over one shoulder hangs a backpack with a button that reads “Proudly South African.” A giant psychology textbook tucked under his arm, he approaches the Westville campus hangout. I whip out a flyer, compelling him to stop. “Dreadlocks” glances over the words “Mantra Meditation” and “Free Vegetarian Feast.” His eyes come alive. A bright white smile illuminates his dark skin.

I remember why I’m standing here in the cold drizzle, enduring blaring music under harsh neon lights. It is this simple act of sharing with another human being an opportunity to connect to Kṛṣṇa.

After looking at my watch, I quicken my pace and head off to the Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS) program we’re holding in the same building where Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured forty years ago. He recognized the potential for reaching out to students, who were young and intelligent and

therefore most likely to appreciate his gift. More than building a temple in Durban or celebrating a Rathayātrā festival, he stressed spiritual education at universities.

Westville campus was Durban’s designated Indian university during apartheid. After Śrīla Prabhupāda’s visit, his followers worked diligently to maintain regular programs at BYS, the campus wing of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami recalls how during the late seventies he alone or with a few other devotees hosted the program, armed with only a video projector and oatmeal cookies. Even so, more than a hundred students attended. Visiting “White universities” was risky; the students in general were unwelcoming, and some yelled offensively or even threatened the devotees. And an African university was practically unheard of.

I reach the room. There is Mdu, one of our regulars who comes from an African family and practically



*On the temple grounds (above), university students gather for the realization session at the annual youth retreat, organized by the Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS). At left, Vraja Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, a visiting brahmacārī, gives an introductory talk to students attending the retreat.*





Kīrtanas around the campfire are a popular feature of the four-day retreat.

grew up in a church. Next to him is Tae-Hun Lee, a post-doctorate mathematician from South Korea with a natural inclination to serve humanity. Revaan is an engineering graduate trying to understand the roots of his Indian culture. Next to him is Claire Burke, an astronomer from the UK. Joe and Jack, two blind African students, enter. They had the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra typed out in Braille, and they love to learn *Bhagavad-gītā* verses by ear. Thobile leads them into the room. She is crazy about *kīrtana* and starts the chanting with her rich, soulful voice.

I get a text message from David and Luke, two white undergraduates who love yoga: “Caught in yet another physics quiz. Going to miss the program.”

The colorful mixture of cultures in the room reminds me of the risks taken by the pioneer devotees and the blood and sweat of all those succeeding them. Now students bear fewer scars of oppression, and programs are multiracial. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s gift is for everyone.

BYS operates on five campuses in Durban, a total of eight programs a week. Each session includes *kīrtana*, a topical discussion, and *prasāda*. Some programs are option-

al classes within the academic timetable. Others are later in the day and cater to residential students. Second-level sessions are tailored to students who want to adopt serious spiritual practices. BYS teams up with Food For Life to host a free lunch once a week at different campuses. Over the years, BYS has held a variety of campus festivals, delivering Kṛṣṇa consciousness through meditation, hip hop, poetry, and food art. Once a month students visit our Temple of Understanding in Chatsworth.

Durban is not the only hotspot; South Africa is buzzing with soul-searching students. Fast-paced Gauteng is home to four major universities, all with active BYSs that also offer hatha yoga sessions and the much adored “Evenings of Kirtana.” At the University of Witwatersrand (WITS), BYS received an award for Most Outstanding Society in 2014 by Public Protector Advocate Tuli Madonsela. WITS BYS hosts an annual “Spring Fest,” which through exhibitions and campus parades promotes spiritual culture. And the fruits are clearly visible. Five young WITS graduates are serving in leadership positions in ISKCON South Africa.

The retreats' classes on Kṛṣṇa-focused art and cooking help to nurture devotion in the students.



a meticulous syllabus, meditation seminars, and student wellness programs, devotees are carefully watering the sprouts of devotion. They operate from a house in which students can rent rooms and benefit from daily spiritual practice and *prasāda* with devotees. Last year marked their first “Buddhafest: Celebrating Awakening,” which attracted students with a taste for meditation and thought-provoking entertainment. Students in Stellenbosch have shown rapid and steady progress. A group of twelve serious practitioners visited holy places in India during the campus break in 2014.

### Speaking to the Heart

It's discussion time at BYS. “Life doesn't really make sense, does it?” I ask. “The equation doesn't balance. We are born. Soon it's all about getting an education. We hunt for a job, create a family, and die. What is the point of it all? Shouldn't we ask why?”

Looking straight at me, Dreadlocks doesn't flinch.

“We are driven by the taste of happiness. It is what we want most, right? Yet even those who have all the things we want can't shrug off the feeling of being unsatisfied. Is it surprising that happiness slips through our fingers? How can we be happy if we are not even sure who we are? It seems like you're an African man and I'm an Indian woman.

### A Natural Attraction

Dreadlocks walks in during the *kīrtana*. His hands find the jembe drum like a long-lost cousin. He catches sight of the pull-up banner with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and it doesn't take long for him to connect the dots. He begins miming the words. The African people are gifted with rhythm and beat in their blood. Simply share the holy name with them, and it becomes as natural as breathing. Watching him, I remember “By once chanting the holy name of the

Lord one can be freed from the reactions of more sins than he can even imagine performing.” (*Prema-vivarta*) How powerful is the act of sharing! A simple flyer, a smile, and now the holy name transforms another life.

Not all campuses have been spiritually fertile. In the eighties Indradymna Swami and Bhakti Brṅga Govinda Swami visited Stellenbosch University, in the Western Cape, without much success. In the last ten years, however, student outreach at Stellenbosch has planted seeds that have grown roots. By offering

### BBT Africa at Work

by Mukundānghri Dāsa

AFRICA IS “young and growing,” the *Economist* magazine says. With its abundant mineral resources, growing population, swelling market, and emerging workforce, Africa is a dormant giant waiting to rise.

But the significance of the ascent of material prospects for Africa can never compare with the significance of the rise of Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the continent. The moon of spiritual knowledge in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books eclipses all other prospects no matter how effulgent they seem.

His books are a gateway to understanding the self and to the treasure of love of God.

The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Africa (BBT Africa) was established in February 2010 to present Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to the people of Africa. It has published books in English, French, Swahili, Zulu, Xhosa, Setswana, Afrikaans, and Mauritian Creole.

It has produced fourteen translations of various books in six languages, with another eight books in the pipeline, including translations in Amharic, Sotho, and Chichewa.

BBT Africa's head office is in Johannesburg, and it has ambassadors in Ghana, Togo, Kenya, Malawi, Botswana, Nigeria, Mauritius, Ivory Coast, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### Other Projects

Together with this established method of outreach, BBT Africa has embarked on forays into academic discourse and social transformation.

The Annual Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture is BBT Africa's hallmark event. Since 2013, BBT Africa has staged an academic

lecture at the University of Witwatersrand to profile Śrīla Prabhupāda's life and teachings. Speakers discuss global issues from the vantage of Vedic knowledge.

To effect social transformation, BBT Africa strives to increase access to Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Every year the Shastra-Dana program places hundreds of books in libraries across the continent. Prisons, schools, hospitals, and universities have all been touched by this wave of distribution.

The Annual BBT Africa Conference aims to inspire greater efforts in book distribution. For five years, temple leaders and book distributors have met to evaluate the progress of book distribution in Africa.

### The African Audience

Africa boasts more than 2,100 languages, and its cultures are just as diverse. This poses a challenge for BBT Africa: What languages are to be tackled first? What reach will they have? Are the books sensitive to cultural sentiment yet still true to the

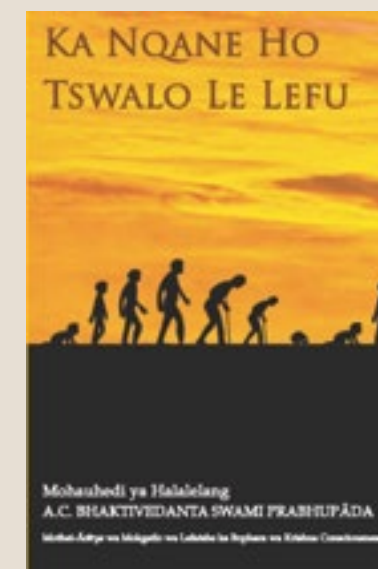
author's intent? To answer these questions and others requires a careful understanding of the African audience.

Africans have an appetite for the teachings of Vedic culture. While deeply entrenched cultural norms make them somewhat conservative, they usually respond to the books and other outreach activities with joy and open-mindedness. Africans from different cultural and religious backgrounds appreciate the non-sectarian spiritual message in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

### A Mainstream Publisher

BBT Africa is an official member of the Publishing Association of South Africa. In the publishing industry, PASA membership gives BBT recognition for its unique position as the world's largest publisher of Vedic literature. And that recognition opens doors to new markets, and thus to souls yet to read the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

*Mukundānghri Dāsa is BBT Africa's manager for strategy and innovation.*



**Beyond Birth and Death**  
(Sotho)



**On the Way to Kṛṣṇa**  
(Mauritian Creole)



*Newcomer Fortune Ndlovu plays the traditional jembe drum (this page) during a kirtana outing on the Durban beach promenade.*



Yet don't we feel the same pain?"

He nods. His eyes show he has seen suffering.

It's the basics. Yet it always shocks me how Śrīla Prabhupāda's simplest teachings can strike the core of any human being.

During his first strawberry-halava experience, Dreadlocks notices a book lying on a table nearby. It is the latest publication of the Africa branch of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) in the Zulu language. I see his surprise.

"In Zulu?" he asks, flipping through the pages.

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to man in his language, it goes to his heart."  
[Nelson Mandela]

I say a silent thank you to Kṛṣṇa for BBT Africa.

Printing books in local languages has spurred book distribution in South Africa. Devotees are adapting fresh ideas like self-serve smart boxes that allow people to choose a

book and leave the cash in a secure compartment. The thirty-seven smart boxes in Durban alone sold 750 books in four months. Exclusive Books, a leading bookseller in South Africa, stocks selected books by Śrīla Prabhupāda in eighty percent of its Durban stores. Traditional methods like door-to-door sales and traveling parties still form the core of book distribution. During the December Book Marathon, some students fill their backpacks with books and meet people on the street. Others choose a creative route: in 2013 a contemporary short drama called "Hip-Hop Gita" helped distribute five hundred *Bhagavad-gītās*. Book sponsorships by donors allow devotees to offer books to students at discounted rates. In 2014 the number of books distributed in Durban increased by thirty-three percent over the previous year.

I find out that Dreadlocks is Fortune Ndlovu. He is from Ladysmith, a rural town in northern KwaZulu-Natal, and is staying on campus. I

invite him to the national student retreat to be held in July at the Temple of Understanding. Sixty students from all over South Africa will converge for the four-day winter retreat, and only a few slots remain.

July arrives, and the retreat focuses on the theme "My Spiritual Journey." A cooking course equips students with vegetarian survival skills. Interactive group projects culminate in artistic presentations. Evenings are spent around a campfire, with *kīrtanas* and dramatic stories from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. On the last day, the women sport colorful saris and decorated faces, the men appear in dhotis. They head out onto the city promenade for a beach *kīrtana*.

Fortune is there, chanting, dancing, and having the time of his life. 🙏

*Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī is a disciple of Kadamba Kānana Swami. She has a master's degree in chemical engineering and serves full time at ISKCON Durban, overseeing BYS.*

# 3 Pillars of ISKCON Durban

*A close-up look at three of the temple's thirty-two departments.*

by Kṛṣṅāṅī Rādhe Devī Dāsī

I HAVE JUST returned home after a festival at the temple and still feel the positive energy, warmth, and love shared among many friends who have now become more like family. As I entered the temple this evening, the sound of the conch shell resonated and an emphatic melody of devotional song permeated the air

as the altar opened for the *ārati*. The temple was packed, and the many friends around me clapped their hands, danced, and sang in glorification of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Under the dim temple lights, all focus was on the magnificent deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha. A mood of devotion and a spirit of

togetherness pervaded the atmosphere.

I was fortunate to be raised in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. My parents were Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees from before the opening of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha temple, and I have never missed a Rathayātrā festival or a major festival at the temple. I therefore feel a close connection to the

*Durban's annual Rathayātrā festival, held Easter weekend on the city's Golden Mile, includes both a daytime and a nighttime chariot parade.*



congregation, the driving force behind the temple's operations.

Although ISKCON Durban has over thirty departments, I feel a special connection to three pillars of the temple: congregational development, the Rathayātrā festival, and the Food For Life initiative. It's easy to identify a connection between the three: the temple's emphasis on growing and nurturing the congregation has produced an inspired congregation whose spirit of service spearheads outreach programs like Rathayātrā and Food For Life.

These three departments have combined to become a powerhouse that makes ISKCON Durban an effective spiritual organization. Let's take a look at each one.

### Congregational Development

The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha temple is the flagship ISKCON temple in South Africa. In the KwaZulu-Natal province, where Durban is located, there are over six hundred initiated devotees and thousands

*Devotees and guests gather for the start of the daytime parade (above). Colorful powder fills the air (right) during the festival's "Rainbow Splash."*

of Kṛṣṇa conscious followers who practice devotion at home. Many of these devotees form an integral part of the operations and sustainability of the temple. Seventy percent of the temple management team consists of congregation devotees, and many nonresident devotees perform other temple services as well. An important vision of the management team is for the temple to be felt an exten-

sion of the home, and the home an extension of the temple. With this mood the members of the congregation come together in service and friendship.

*Saṅga* (association) is pivotal in the development of the temple community. Sunday Love Feasts at the temple are always special. Devotees and first-time visitors converge to participate in *bhajan*s, observe the



*ārati* ceremony of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha, acquire understanding of Vedic scriptures, and enjoy delicious, purifying *prasāda*. Over five hundred people attend these weekly programs.

Through interaction at the Sunday program, festivals commemorating special holy days, and regular group meetings, devotees are offered a platform to form friendships. In

KwaZulu-Natal there are thirty groups known as *Nāma-haṭṭas* ("marketplaces of the holy name"). These weekly evening programs are hosted in various geographical areas, and many devotees look forward to them as the highlight of their week.

The groups range from twenty to eighty devotees. The size and nature of the *Nāma-haṭṭas* allow for personal association, spiritual nourish-

ment, and forging of relationships with like-minded people. The get-togethers mirror the Sunday Love Feast, but have a more interactive and relaxed flavor. The aim of the *Nāma-haṭṭa* program is to provide knowledge of God from the authentic Vedic scriptures and give people, especially from the Hindu community, the satisfaction of eradicating doubts and misconceptions. They



*The temple's forty-plus annual festivals provide plenty of opportunity for joyful kīrtanas (left). Below, children concentrate on their Kṛṣṇa conscious art while their parents are engaged elsewhere. At bottom, the author addresses women at a "Women's Day" program at the temple.*

million guests. Although the temple celebrates more than forty festivals a year, the Rathayātrā ranks high on the temple calendar of events.

It all began in 1981 on Durban's North Coast, when for the first time onlookers witnessed the exotic ancient festival. Thereafter devotees focused on building the temple, and the Rathayātrā festival was postponed. Three years after the opening of the Temple of Understanding, they again promoted culture and peace through the chariot festival.



see the philosophy in action when they chant Kṛṣṇa's names together and dance in bliss.

The Nāma-haṭṭa programs also serve to accommodate those curious about the *Vedas* but unable to visit the temple. The regular program attendees invite friends and neighbors to join in, so by sharing love and goodwill within the community there is a constant cycle of receiving and giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

A strong culture of service exists within the congregation, its members serving in all thirty-two departments of the temple and managing a few by themselves. The deity worship department, an important focus of the temple, is supported by the congregation's commitment to high standards of worship. It is always a pleasure to see a team of eager devotees enjoying each other's company

while offering service to the temple. The true spirit of the congregation comes alive during major festivals, when members enthusiastically band together as strategic and operational managers.

Seminars presented by dozens of visiting gurus to South Africa throughout the year further advance the association, knowledge, and spirit of service. The congregation greatly supports the *kīrtana* evenings, the seminars on Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, the workshops, and the retreats. Durban is the home of the Bhaktivedanta College of Education and Culture, so devotees are privileged to register for systematic understanding of Vedic scripture. The College offers formal, accredited study programs.

In a remarkable synergy, the congregation reflects the temple, and the temple shapes the congregation. The

members of the congregation are actively involved in the temple and spare no effort in forging ahead to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness in innovative and exciting ways within the greater community.

### **Rathayātrā: The Festival of Chariots**

Women in brightly colored saris dance to the beats of traditional musical instruments, and flags marked with Lord Jagannātha's face sway swiftly in the warm air as three beautiful flower-decorated chariots glide along Durban's promenade. Scottish bagpipers, African gumboot dancers, and Indian classical dancers escort the chariots along the route. For twenty-seven years ISKCON Durban has hosted a multicultural event that attracts over half a



Under Indradyumna Swami's leadership, the chariots of Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva, and Subhadrā Devī once again took to Durban's streets. At the peak of the apartheid regime, during the Christmas period in 1988, throngs of eager participants and tourists gathered to behold the much publicized event. Even before the demise of apartheid, the Rathayātrā festival broke racial barriers, as the mayor of Durban granted ISKCON permission to host an all-inclusive event on prominent beachfront land.

Since then, the festival has grown in magnitude and exciting features have been added. The four-day event is held over the Easter weekend on Durban's Golden Mile, a holiday hub for international tourists and visitors from other cities in South Africa. The climate is ideal for enjoying the surf, and the seashore

festival attracts those enjoying the holiday spirit.

Rathayātrā 2013 stands out for having gained support and recognition from the local government. The slogan “Culturally Many, Spiritually One” attracted people from all racial backgrounds to experience Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a unique way through interfaith discussions, yoga, and rock bands. During the “Rainbow Splash,” guests splattered colored powder on each other in keeping with the festival theme. For the first time, the Philharmonic Orchestra (famous in South Africa) played Hare Kṛṣṇa tunes and the KwaMashu choir sang the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

The carnival atmosphere continues every year, as the festival grounds are turned into a kaleidoscope of color and flavor. Imagine walking through a decorative coliseum of fifty-two tents. The vegetarian food stalls offer tantalizing Eastern and Western treats. A Vedic village provides fun activities to stimulate the children’s spiritual enquiry. The main cultural arena is a large tent that hosts a twelve-hour nonstop cultural show. Daily at the temple, cooks prepare a hundred large pots of *prasāda* on open wood fires to be transported in insulated trucks to the festival grounds, where free meals are served throughout the day.

The three majestic chariots take to the streets twice during the festival. Even hotel guests curiously peering through windows are inspired to pull on the chariots’ ropes and sing and dance. The evening parade lights up the night sky as the fifteen-meter-high chariots are enveloped with lights.

By creating a united platform to worship God, the Festival of Chariots spreads a message of peace and goodwill to the people of South Africa. When South African society was indoctrinated to see differences, the festival was a stimulant to see that we are all children of God. On this platform lies abundant peace and happiness.

### Food for Life

Eager children run out of their homes with cups and bowls as they hear the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*. Tiny feet race to the finish line, eager to be first in queue to receive a warm plate of wholesome sanctified vegetarian food. Food For Life, in affili-

*Twenty-one teams of devotees are involved in Food for Life throughout South Africa. Right and below: Devotees provide a nutritious prasāda meal to Durban-area schoolchildren.*



ation with ISKCON South Africa, distributes over ten thousand meals a day across South Africa. This is due to the efforts of twenty-one teams. Food For Life delivers *prasāda* meals not only to the needy, but also to 250,000 guests at the annual Rathayātrā festival.

In 1997, Kapiladeva Dāsa, who started the Food For Life project in Durban, was instrumental in providing meals for 50,000 schoolchildren in a massive Food For Life initiative – the Festival of the Children of the Rainbow Nation, attended by former president Nelson Mandela and a high-

light in the history of Food For Life in South Africa.

A large percentage of South African government schools serve children at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. Food For Life embarked on an outreach project to feed these children. The devotees also deliver *prasāda* to children who are physically or mentally challenged and attend special-needs institutions. The school staff and the students welcome these visits to their campuses with big smiles and open hearts.

Food For Life has 195 volunteers across South Africa. Although many

have family and work commitments, they sacrifice to offer this loving, compassionate service. Lakṣmīnātha Dāsa, who has been involved in Food For Life for the past twenty years, recently attained the milestone of having served over ten million plates of *prasāda* during this period.

“The most attractive thing,” Lakṣmīnātha says, “is to see the smiles and joy on the faces of children when we distribute *prasāda* in the rural areas.”

Raised as one of eight children in a home without a stable income, he understands hardship.

“During the 1960s we experienced poverty,” he says. “Nobody was working, and basic needs were hard to come by. I therefore identify with families who look forward to a meal from Food For Life.”

In Durban, Food For Life is on the mayor’s hotline for disaster-relief meal distribution. The team also works closely with the South African Red Cross Society and other community-action groups. A vision of the team is to be among South Africa’s largest charitable organizations, focusing on nutrition for the body and the soul.

# 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 Hṛṣīkeśa**  
(September 1–28)

SEPTEMBER

**5** – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for a schedule of events.

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

**9** – **Vyañjulī Mahā-dvādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans for Annadā Ekādaśī.

**18** – Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

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

**24** – **Parśvā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today; feast tomorrow.)

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

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

**27** – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

**28** – Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. Third

month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

**Month of Padmanābha**  
(September 29–October 27)

OCTOBER

**4** – Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the United States.

**9** – **Pakṣa-vardīnī Mahā-dvādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans for Indirā Ekādaśī.

**23** – Rāmacandra Vijayotsava, the anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the thirteenth century.

**24** – **Trisprśā Mahā-dvādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans for Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī.

**25** – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, great associates and followers of Lord Caitanya.

**27** – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śārādīyā Rāsa-yātrā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Murāri Gupta, an associate of Lord Caitanya. Also, the fourth month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from *ūrad dāl*).

a few universities. She serves as a member of the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha temple management team as communications and public relations officer. She is also passionate about educating children in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and has founded and currently hosts the "Krishna's Kids" program at the Durban temple.

will help create a cumulative change of consciousness in all walks of South African society. 🌍

*Kṛṣṅāṅgī Rādhe Devī Dāsi, a disciple of Indradyumna Swami, lives in Durban with her husband Muralīdhara Dāsa and their daughters Vraja-Sundari (age seven) and Varsana-Rani (three). She teaches English at*

Although there are more than twenty state-of-the-art Food For Life kitchens across the country, the one at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha temple remains special, as it all began there three decades ago. To make *prasāda* more accessible to outlying areas, the team hopes to set up fifty more kitchens within the next two years. Surely this widespread initia-

## 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.

# THE PROFESSIONAL RECITERS PRAISE KING PṚTHU

*Despite King Pṛthu's humble protests, professional reciters continue to speak of the greatness of his upcoming godly reign.*

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 16

4 एष धर्मभृतां श्रेष्ठो लोकं धर्मेऽनुवर्तयन्  
गोप्ता च धर्मसेतूनां शास्ता तत्परिपन्थिनाम्

*eṣa dharma-bhṛtām śreṣṭha  
lokaṁ dharme 'nuvartayan  
goptā ca dharma-setūnām  
śāstā tat-paripanthinām*

*eṣaḥ* – this King Pṛthu; *dharma-bhṛtām* – of persons executing religious activities; *śreṣṭhaḥ* – the best; *lokaṁ* – the whole world; *dharme* – in religious activities; *anuvartayan* – engaging them properly; *goptā* – the protector; *ca* – also; *dharma-setūnām* – of the principles of religion; *śāstā* – the chastiser; *tat-paripanthinām* – of those who are against religious principles.

**This King, Mahārāja Pṛthu, is the best amongst those who are following religious principles. As such, he will engage everyone in the pursuit of religious principles and give those principles all protection. He will also be a great chastiser to the irreligious and atheistic.**

PURPORT: The duty of the king or the head of the government is described very nicely in this verse. It is the duty of

the governmental head to see that people strictly follow a religious life. A king should also be strict in chastising the atheists. ❶ In other words, an atheistic or godless government should never be supported by a king or governmental chief. That is the test of good government. In the name of secular government, the king or governmental head remains neutral and allows people to engage in all sorts of irreligious activities. In such a state, people cannot be happy, despite all economic development. However, in this age of Kali there are no pious kings. ❷ Instead, rogues and thieves are elected to head the government. But how can the people be happy without religion and God consciousness? ❸ The rogues exact taxes from the citizens for their own sense enjoyment, and in the future the people will be so much harassed that according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* they will flee from their homes and country and take shelter in the forest. ❹ However, in Kali-yuga, democratic govern-

- 1) What does Śrīla Prabhupāda say is the test of good government?
- 2) What kinds of people are now being elected to head the government?
- 3) What does the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* predict will be people's reaction to bad government?
- 4) How can democracy be a solution to bad government?



ment can be captured by Kṛṣṇa conscious people. If this can be done, the general populace can be made very happy.

### 5 एष वै लोकपालानां विभर्त्येकस्तनौ तनूः काले काले यथाभागं लोकयोरुभयोर्हितम्

*eṣa vai loka-pālānām  
bibharty ekas tanau tanūḥ  
kāle kāle yathā-bhāgam  
lokayor ubhayor hitam*

*eṣaḥ* – this King; *vai* – certainly; *loka-pālānām* – of all the demigods; *bibharti* – bears; *ekāḥ* – alone; *tanau* – in his body; *tanūḥ* – the bodies; *kāle kāle* – in due course of time; *yathā* – according to; *bhāgam* – proper share; *lokayor* – of planetary systems; *ubhayor* – both; *hitam* – welfare.

**This King alone, in his own body, will be able in due course of time to maintain all living entities and keep them in a pleasant condition by manifesting himself as different demigods to perform various departmental activities. Thus he will maintain the upper planetary system by inducing the populace to perform Vedic sacrifices. In due course of time he will also maintain this earthly planet by discharging proper rainfall.**

PURPORT: 5 The demigods in charge of the various departmental activities that maintain this world are but assistants to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When an incarnation of Godhead descends on this planet, demigods like the sun-god, the moon-god, or the King of heaven, Indra, all join Him. Consequently the incarnation of Godhead is able to act for the departmental demigods to keep the planetary systems in order. 6 The protection of the earthly planet is dependent on proper rainfall, and as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures, sacrifices are performed to please those demigods who are in charge of rainfall.

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni  
parjanyaḥ anna-sambhavaḥ  
yajñād bhavati parjanyo  
yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

“All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of

- 5) What is the relationship between demigods and the Supreme Personality of Godhead?
- 6) How can proper rainfall be ensured?
- 7) How do the Vedic scriptures recommend we counteract the situation created by bad leaders?
- 8) Why are citizens suffering from taxation in the current age?

*yajña* [sacrifice], and *yajña* is born of prescribed duties.” (*Gītā* 3.14)

Thus the proper execution of *yajña*, sacrifice, is required. As indicated herein, King Pṛthu alone would induce all the citizens to engage in such sacrificial activities so that there would not be scarcity or distress. In Kali-yuga, however, in the so-called secular state, the executive branch of government is in the charge of so-called kings and presidents who are all fools and rascals, ignorant of the intricacies of nature’s causes and ignorant of the principles of sacrifice. Such rascals simply make various plans, which always fail, and the people subsequently suffer disturbances. 7 To counteract this situation, the *śāstras* advise:

*harer nāma harer nāma  
harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva  
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

Thus in order to counteract this unfortunate situation in government, the general populace is advised to chant the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

### 6 वसु काल उपादत्ते काले चायं विमुञ्चति समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु प्रतपन् सूर्यवद्विभुः

*vasu kāla upādatte  
kāle cāyam vimuñcati  
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu  
pratapan sūryavad vibhuḥ*

*vasu* – riches; *kāle* – in due course of time; *upādatte* – exacts; *kāle* – in due course of time; *ca* – also; *ayam* – this King Pṛthu; *vimuñcati* – returns; *samaḥ* – equal; *sarveṣu* – to all; *bhūteṣu* – living entities; *pratapan* – shining; *sūrya-vat* – like the sun-god; *vibhuḥ* – powerful.

**This King Pṛthu will be as powerful as the sun-god, and just as the sun-god equally distributes his sunshine to everyone, King Pṛthu will distribute his mercy equally. Similarly, just as the sun-god evaporates water for eight months and, during the rainy season, returns it profusely, this King will also exact taxes from the citizens and return these monies in times of need.**

PURPORT: The process of tax exaction is very nicely explained in this verse. Tax exaction is not meant for the sense gratification of the so-called administrative heads. Tax revenues should be distributed to the citizens in times of need, during emergencies such as famine or flood. Tax revenues should never be distributed amongst governmental servants in the form of high salaries and various other allowances. 8 In Kali-yuga, however, the position

of the citizens is very horrible because taxes are exacted in so many forms and are spent for the personal comforts of the administrators.

The example of the sun in this verse is very appropriate.

9 The sun is many millions of miles away from the earth, and although the sun does not actually touch the earth, it manages to distribute land all over the planet by exacting water from the oceans and seas, and it also manages to make that land fertile by distributing water during the rainy season. As an ideal king, King Pṛthu would execute all this business in the village and state as expertly as the sun.

### 7 तितिक्षत्यक्रमं वैन्य उपर्याक्रमतामपि भूतानां करुणः शश्वदार्तानां क्षितिवृत्तिमान्

*titikṣaty akramam vainya  
upary ākramatām api  
bhūtānām karuṇaḥ śaśvat  
ārtānām kṣiti-vṛttimān*

*titikṣati* – tolerates; *akramam* – offense; *vainyaḥ* – the son of King Vena; *upari* – on his head; *ākramatām* – of those who are trampling; *api* – also; *bhūtānām* – to all living entities; *karuṇaḥ* – very kindhearted; *śaśvat* – always; *ārtānām* – to the aggrieved; *kṣiti-vṛtti-mān* – accepting the profession of the earth.

**This King Pṛthu will be very, very kind to all citizens. Even though a poor person may trample over the King’s head by violating the rules and regulations, the King, out of his causeless mercy, will be forgetful and forgiving. As a protector of the world, he will be as tolerant as the earth itself.**

PURPORT: King Pṛthu is herein compared to the earthly planet as far as his tolerance is concerned. Although the earth is always trampled upon by men and animals, it still gives food to them by producing grains, fruits and vegetables. 10 As an ideal king, Mahārāja Pṛthu is compared to the earthly planet, for even though some citizens might violate the rules and regulations of the state, he would still be tolerant and maintain them with fruits and grains. In other words, it is the duty of the king to look after the comforts of the citizens, even at the cost of his own personal convenience. This is not the case, however, in Kali-yuga, for in Kali-yuga the kings and heads of state enjoy life at the cost of taxes exacted from the citizens. Such unfair taxation makes the people dishonest, and the people try to hide their income in so many ways. 11 Eventually the state will not be able to collect taxes and consequently will not be able to meet its huge military and administrative expenses. Everything will collapse, and there will be chaos and disturbance all over the state.

### 8 देवेऽवर्षत्यसौ देवो नरदेववपुर्हरिः कृच्छ्रप्राणाः प्रजा ह्येष रक्षिष्यत्यञ्जसेन्द्रवत्

*deve ’varṣaty asau devo  
naradeva-vapur hariḥ  
kṛcchra-prāṇāḥ prajā hy eṣa  
rakṣiṣyaty añjasendravat*

*deve* – when the demigod (Indra); *avarṣati* – does not supply rains; *asau* – that; *devaḥ* – Mahārāja Pṛthu; *naradeva* – of the king; *vapuḥ* – having the body; *hariḥ* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *kṛcchra-prāṇāḥ* – suffering living entities; *prajāḥ* – the citizens; *hi* – certainly; *eṣaḥ* – this; *rakṣiṣyati* – will protect; *añjasā* – very easily; *indra-vat* – like King Indra.

**When there is no rainfall and the citizens are in great danger due to the scarcity of water, this royal Personality of Godhead will be able to supply rains exactly like the heavenly king Indra. Thus he will very easily be able to protect the citizens from drought.**

PURPORT: King Pṛthu is very appropriately compared to the sun and the demigod Indra. King Indra of the heavenly planets is in charge of distributing water over the earth and other planetary systems. 12 It is indicated that King Pṛthu would arrange for the distribution of rainfall personally if Indra failed to discharge his duty properly. Sometimes the King of heaven, Indra, would become angry at the inhabitants of the earth if they did not offer sacrifices to appease him. King Pṛthu, however, being an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, did not depend on the mercy of the heavenly King. It is foretold herein that if there would be a scarcity of rain, King Pṛthu would manage to counteract the deficiency by virtue of his godly powers. Such powers were also exhibited by Lord Kṛṣṇa when He was present in Vṛndāvana. Indeed, when Indra poured incessant water on Vṛndāvana for seven days, the inhabitants were protected by Kṛṣṇa, who raised Govardhana Hill over their heads as a great umbrella. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa is also known as Govardhana-dhārī.

### 9 आप्याययत्यसौ लोकं वदनामृतमूर्तिना सानुरागावलोकेन विशदस्मितचारुणा

- 9) How is an ideal king like the sun?
- 10) How will King Pṛthu be like the earth?
- 11) What is the ultimate result of unfair taxation?
- 12) Why is King Pṛthu compared to King Indra?

āpyāyaty asau lokam  
vadanāmṛta-mūrtinā  
sānurāgāvalokena  
viśada-smīta-cāruṇā

āpyāyaty – enhances; asau – he; lokam – the whole world; vadana – by his face; amṛta-mūrtinā – moonlike; sa-anurāga – affectionate; avalokena – with glances; viśada – bright; smīta – smiling; cāruṇā – beautiful.

**This King, Pṛthu Mahārāja, by virtue of his affectionate glances and beautiful moonlike face, which is always smiling with great affection for the citizens, will enhance everyone's peaceful life.**

10 अव्यक्तवर्त्मैष निगूढकार्यो  
गम्भीरवेधा उपगुप्तवित्तः  
अनन्तमाहात्म्यगुणैकधामा  
पृथुः प्रचेता इव संवृतात्मा

avyakta-vartmaṣa nigūḍha-kāryo  
gambhīra-vedhā upagupta-vittaḥ  
ananta-māhātmya-guṇaika-dhāmā  
pṛthuḥ pracetā iva saṁvṛtātmā

avyakta – unmanifested; vartmā – his policies; eṣaḥ – this King; nigūḍha – confidential; kāryaḥ – his activities; gambhīra – grave, secret; vedhāḥ – his accomplishing; upagupta – secretly kept; vittaḥ – his treasury; ananta – unlimited; māhātmya – of glories; guṇa – of good qualities; eka-dhāmā – the only reservoir; pṛthuḥ – King Pṛthu; pracetāḥ – Varuṇa, the King of the seas; iva – like; saṁvṛta – covered; ātmā – self.

**The reciters continued: No one will be able to understand the policies the King will follow. His activities will also be very confidential, and it will not be possible for anyone to know how he will make every activity successful. His treasury will always remain unknown to everyone. He will be the reservoir of unlimited glories and good qualities, and his position will be maintained and covered just as Varuṇa, the deity of the seas, is covered all around by water.**

PURPORT: There is a predominating deity for all the material elements, and Varuṇa, or Pracetā, is the predominating deity of the seas and the oceans. From outward appearances the seas and oceans are devoid of life, but a person acquainted with the sea knows that within the water exist many varieties of life. The king of that underwater kingdom is Varuṇa. Just as no one can understand what is going

on beneath the sea, no one could understand what policy King Pṛthu was following to make everything successful. Indeed, King Pṛthu's path of diplomacy was very grave. His success was made possible because he was a reservoir of unlimited glorified qualities.

The word *upagupta-vittaḥ* is very significant in this verse. It indicates that no one would know the extent of the riches King Pṛthu would confidentially keep. The idea is that not only the king but everyone should keep his hard-earned money confidentially and secretly so that in due course of time the money can be spent for good, practical purposes. In Kali-yuga, however, the king or government has no well-protected treasury, and the only means of circulation is currency notes made of paper. Thus in times of distress the government artificially inflates the currency by simply printing papers, and this artificially raises the price of commodities, and the general condition of the citizens becomes very precarious. Thus keeping one's money very secretly is an old practice, for we find this practice present even during the reign of Mahārāja Pṛthu. Just as the king has the right to keep his treasury confidential and secret, the people should also keep their individual earnings a secret. There is no fault in such dealings. The main point is that everyone should be trained in the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma* so that the money is spent only for good causes and nothing else.

11 दुरासदो दुर्विषह आसन्नोऽपि विदूरवत्  
नैवाभिभवितुं शक्यो वेनारण्युत्थितोऽनलः

durāsado durviṣaha  
āsanno 'pi vidūravat  
naivābhavitum śakyo  
venāraṇy-utthito 'nalaḥ

*durāsadaḥ* – unapproachable; *durviṣahaḥ* – unbearable; *āsannaḥ* – being approached; *api* – although; *vidūra-vat* – as if far away; *na* – never; *eva* – certainly; *abhibhavitum* – to be overcome; *śakyaḥ* – able; *vena* – King Vena; *araṇi* – the wood that produces fire; *utthitaḥ* – being born of; *analaḥ* – fire.

**King Pṛthu was born of the dead body of King Vena as fire is produced from araṇi wood. Thus King Pṛthu will always remain just like fire, and his enemies will not be able to approach him. Indeed, he will be unbearable to his enemies, for although staying very near him, they will never be able to approach him but will have to remain as if far away. No one will be able to overcome the strength of King Pṛthu.**

[Continued in the next issue.]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

# The Solution to Food Shortages

*The following exchange took place after a talk by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda before the World Health Organization, in Geneva, on June 6, 1974.*

**WHO member:** Your Divine Grace, do you have any suggestions for solving the worldwide problem of food shortages?  
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. My suggestion is that people should utilize all this vacant land for crops. I have seen so much land lying dormant. For instance, in Australia and also in America, there is so much land lying dormant. The people are not utilizing it.

And whatever produce they get, sometimes they dump tons of it into the ocean to keep the prices high. And I have heard here in Geneva that when there was excess milk production, some of the people wanted to slaughter twenty thousand cows just to reduce the milk production.

This is what is going on in people's brains. Actually, they have no brains. So if they want to get some brains, they should read these authentic Vedic literatures, and they should take spiritual guidance. And that guidance is simple: produce your food – all the food the world needs – by properly utilizing the land.

But today people will not utilize the land. Rather, they have left their villages and farmlands and let themselves be drawn into the cities for producing nuts and bolts. All right, now eat nuts and bolts.

Mahatma Gandhi's basic program was to revive the natural, God-given way of life. Simple villages and farms. This can solve India's – and the whole world's – food problems. But our big Pandit Nehru

topsy-turvied everything. He wanted more industrialization.

Gandhi's program was very nice: organize yourselves into small farming villages and produce your own food. Live free from cities and factories. This way, you can work only three months and still you get your produce for the whole year.

Three months' work for the whole year's produce. And the rest of the time, the time you save you can use for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Sing the Lord's glories and develop your original God consciousness. This is our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Be spiritually advanced – be a human being.

Otherwise, the life you are leading is risky. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.13) it is said, *tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati*: however big a plan we may make, someday we will have to give up this plan, because someday we will have to give up this body. And there is no guarantee what kind of body we are going to get next time.

Suppose that this time, this life, I am very busily constructing a big skyscraper. Next time, next life, I may have to live in that skyscraper in the body of a cat or dog, because I have developed the grossly selfish, body-centered consciousness of a

cat or dog. And at that time who will care about my so-called title to the skyscraper?

These are the facts. Because nobody can change nature's law. Nature's law is exactly like an infectious disease – expose yourself to it, and it takes hold of you, that's all. *Kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo 'śya sad-asadyoni-janmasu*: one gets born into a nice or nasty situation because of his prior actions and because of nature's inexorable reactions. This is nature's law.

But now many people do not even believe that there is a life after death. In Moscow a big professor named Kotovsky told me, "Swamiji, after death there is nothing." You see? He's a big professor. And yet he has no knowledge of the soul. A big professor – just see. This kind of nonsense is going on.

So as this godless civilization drags on, by nature's law there will be more and more problems. As predicted in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there will be *anāvṛṣṭi*, insufficient rain; and as a result, *durbhikṣa*, insufficient food production. Of course, these problems have already begun.

And on the plea of providing relief from the drought and famine, the government will crush the people with excessive taxation. And

consequently, *ācchīna-dāra-draviṇā yāsyanti giri-kānanam*: the people will be so disturbed that they will give up their hearth and home and go to the forest. They will feel utterly harassed – by scarcity of rainfall, by scarcity of food, and by the government's excessive taxation.

In such a predicament, how can one keep his brain in equilibrium? He will become mad. Unless we take the instruction of the scriptures, all these tragedies are guaranteed to befall us. So we should immediately take this instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.14) to heart:

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni  
parjanyaḍ anna-sambhavaḥ  
yajñād bhavati parjanyo  
yajñāḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

"All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. And rains are produced by sacrifice."

This is why we have introduced this movement, this chanting of the names of the Lord. This is sacrifice. And in this age of confusion, this unfortunate age, this sacrifice alone is possible. This is the remedy, the solution for all the world's problems. But people will not take the remedy. They have got their own remedy. 🙏

*Bhagavad-gītā. Janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ (Gītā 4.9).* You should understand Kṛṣṇa in truth. And there is no difficulty. Kṛṣṇa is explaining Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Our only request is that all of you try to understand *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. Don't interpret in a different way. Then you will understand Kṛṣṇa. And as soon as you understand Kṛṣṇa, you become free from this material bondage. We have to give up this body; that is certain. The cats and dogs will give up their body, and we'll also give up our body. But before giving up this body, if we simply understand Kṛṣṇa, then our life becomes successful. What is that success? After giving up this body

we are not going to accept another material body. Then we will stand in our original, spiritual body.

The spiritual body is there within the body. Our mission is to come to the platform of our spiritual body. It is very simple – simply by understanding the instruction of Kṛṣṇa. And Caitanya Mahāprabhu has simplified it even more. He advises, "Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra."

*harer nāma harer nāma  
harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva  
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

"In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way." (*Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa* 3.8.126) In this age we are fallen, so the method given is very simplified.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.3.51) it is said,

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann  
asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ  
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya  
mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*

"My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom." This age is called Kali, the age of misunderstanding and fighting. In this age there are many faults in human society. It is just like an ocean of faults. But there is one great opportunity. What is that? If one takes to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, he becomes eligible to go back home, back to Godhead.

Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is giving you this information, just as a peon delivers a letter from a friend. We are trying to deliver to you the message of Kṛṣṇa. Kindly accept it and use it.

Thank you very much. 🙏

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## THE MESSAGE OF KRṢṂA

(continued from page 11)

this body; he is soul. So our first business is to take care of the soul. And this human form of body is the opportunity for that. In the human form of body we can understand *Bhagavad-gītā*, not in the dog's body. That is not possible. So by evolution, we, the soul, pass from aquatic to plant, then insect, then bird, then beast, then human being, then civilized human being. In this civilized form of human being, if we do not take this knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā* personally given by the Lord Himself, then we are missing the point. This is the whole lesson of the Vedic literature, that the human form of life is meant for self-realization:

"I am not this body. I am spirit soul. My business is different from simply taking care of the body." This is human civilization.

Therefore our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is a very important movement. We request everyone to study this movement very seriously and make one's life successful. And what is that success? Simply try to understand Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is explaining Himself. When I speak of Kṛṣṇa, everyone should know that Kṛṣṇa means God. So if we simply try to understand Kṛṣṇa, or God, in this life, then we become liberated. We become free from this material bondage. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna (Gītā 4.9).* This is the assurance given in the

# The FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA Principle

Although the English-Sanskrit compound “founder-ācārya” is less than a century old, its seeds in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition date from the time of Lord Caitanya.

by Sureśvara Dāsa

To observe the fiftieth anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s leaving India to found the worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, BTG presents Part Two of a ten-part series honoring Śrīla Prabhupāda’s unique, transcendental position in ISKCON, as well as every follower’s foundational relationship with him.

**E**SPECIALLY in ISKCON’s early years, when Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings were just beginning to see print, his first followers would often write him questions – some lofty, some lame – and with endless patience Prabhupāda would reply.

In late 1968, after a major American publisher came out with an abridged edition of Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, several devotees wrote letters asking about the disciplic succession

of spiritual masters listed at the end of the Introduction. Why, for example, was the *Gītā*’s hero, Arjuna, not listed?

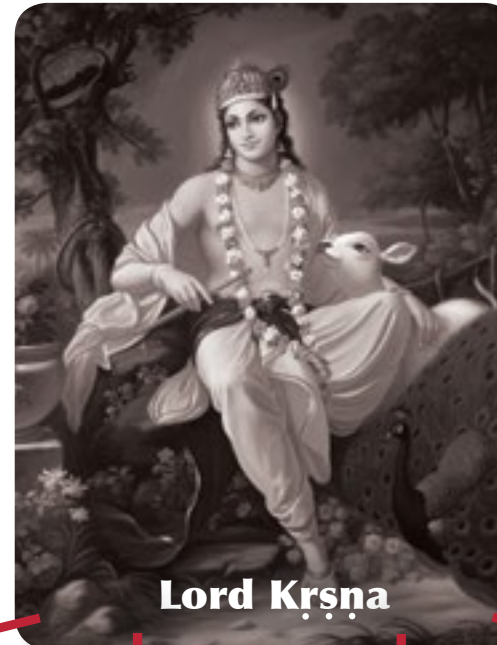
To one such letter Prabhupāda replied that “disciplic succession does not mean one has to be directly a disciple of a particular person.” For example: “Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and we also accept the same truth under the disciplic succession of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Things equal to the same thing are equal to one another.”<sup>1</sup> In other words: “Disciplic succession means to accept the disciplic conclusion.”<sup>2</sup>

Out of those who accept the disciplic conclusion, a few may live it so wonderfully that they inspire many who come later to surrender to Kṛṣṇa. It is that rare soul Prabhupāda’s own

spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, had in mind when he compiled the list Prabhupāda gave us as “The Disciplic Succession.” Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta called his list the “Bhāgavata-paramparā,” the line of great ācāryas (exemplars) whose lives embody the teachings of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, “the beautiful story of the Personality of Godhead.”

In his commentary to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31, Prabhupāda describes the necessity of following the “ācārya-sampradāya,” the line of great exemplars, to please Kṛṣṇa and return to His spiritual kingdom:

The leaders of the four Vaiṣṇava disciplic successions and the prominent spiritual master in each line.



Lord Kṛṣṇa

Out of those who accept the disciplic conclusion, a few may live it so wonderfully that they inspire many who come later to surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

The ācārya gives the suitable method for crossing the ocean of nescience by accepting the boat of the Lord’s lotus feet, and if this method is strictly followed, the followers will ultimately reach the destination, by the grace of the Lord. This method is called ācārya-sampradāya. . . . Therefore one must accept the ācārya-sampradāya; otherwise one’s endeavor will be futile.

After Lord Caitanya’s time (1486–1534), the ācārya-sampradāya culture nurtured the seeds that would eventually blossom as the English-Sanskrit phrase “founder-ācārya.” We will now look at four of those seeds, as well as the great Gauḍīya ācāryas<sup>3</sup> who sowed them.



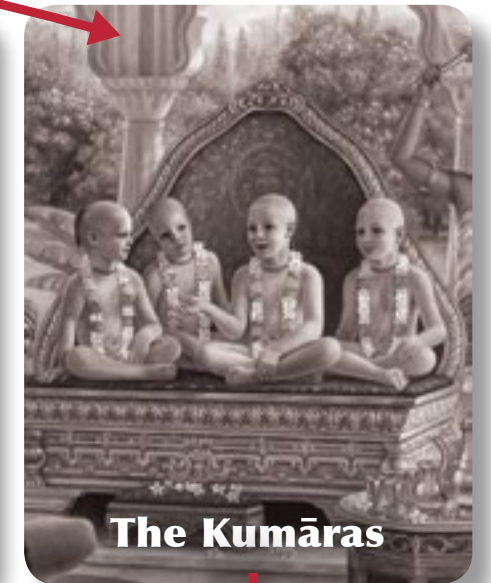
Lord Brahmā



Lakṣmidevī



Lord Śiva



The Kumāras



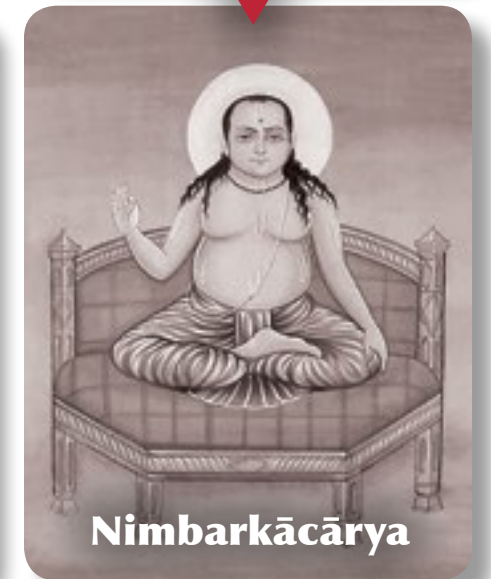
Madhvācārya



Rāmānujācārya



Viṣṇusvāmī



Nimbarkācārya



Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

were recovered, and how the king and his accomplices later surrendered to Kṛṣṇa – foreshadowed dramas Lord Caitanya continues to enact through ISKCON and cooperative Gauḍīya groups today. Suffice it to say that the Gosvāmīs Sabha – dedicated to articulating, preserving, and distributing the Lord’s teachings – planted the founder-*ācārya* principle’s organizational seed.

### A Philosophical Seed

Around 1552, seven years after the Sabha’s founding, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī finished his landmark work *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (“The Ocean of the Pure Nectar of Devotional Service”). In his commentary to the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, Chapter 5, text 203, Prabhupāda writes: “Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is described as the *bhakti-rasācārya*, or one who knows the essence of devotional service. His famous book *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the science of devotional service, and by reading this book one can understand the meaning of devotional service.”

So essential for devotees did Prabhupāda consider Śrī Rūpa’s masterwork that, for more than six months in 1969, he suspended his *Bhāgavatam* writing to produce a summary study of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* he called *The Nectar of Devotion*. In his Introduction Prabhupāda writes that “in our mental activities we should always try to think of Kṛṣṇa and try to plan how to please Him, following in the footsteps of the great *ācāryas* and the personal spiritual master.”

skillful organizer. For example, he founded Vrindavan’s famous Rādhā-Dāmodara temple, where he established a library of all the Gosvāmīs’ works. Śrī Jīva had those works copied, and then dispatched his three best students – Śrīnivāsa, Narottama, and Śyāmānanda – to Bengal on the first Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava book-distribution party.

The story of what happened to that party – how the books were stolen by a king’s thieves, how they

### An Organizational Seed

In 1545 Lord Caitanya’s chief disciples, the Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan, founded the Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabha, which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta later identified as the gathering or congregation of devotees who worship “the King of all Vaiṣṇavas in the world,” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.<sup>4</sup>

As the Sabha’s most prolific writer and philosopher, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī also emerged as the group’s most

Later in the book Prabhupāda repeats the distinction between “the great *ācāryas* and the personal spiritual master” by the way he translates Śrī Rūpa’s phrase *sādhu-vartmānu-varttanam*:<sup>5</sup> “following in the footsteps of great *ācāryas* (teachers) under the direction of the spiritual master.”<sup>6</sup>

In Part One of this series we learned that initiating and instructing spiritual masters are like parents and relatives respectively. As a child may at first see his parents and relatives as everything, then matures to see them in perspective, so a disciple may initially see his spiritual parents and relatives as everything, then matures to appreciate them in relation to “the great *ācāryas*.”

To help us understand this philosophical seed of the founder-*ācārya* principle, we will now hear how the *ācārya-sampradāya* culture inspired one famous disciple to appeal to his great guru in relation to their worshipping *ācārya*.

### A Cultural Seed

Before the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava saint Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura was born, Lord Caitanya told Lokanātha Gosvāmī: “Within a short time a prince named Narottama will become your disciple. He will be a gifted devotee, full of love and devotion, and empowered to save the fallen conditioned souls from hellish life. His enchanting, beautiful *kīrtana* will melt even wood or stone.” (*Narottama-vilāsa*) After the Lord left this world, however, Śrī Lokanātha was so distraught that he withdrew from everyone and vowed never to accept disciples.

Later in Vrindavan, when Śrī Jīva noticed that Narottama was drawn to the saintly Lokanātha, Śrī Jīva told his student Narottama to approach Lokanātha for initiation. But as ardently as Narottama approached Lokanātha, just as adamantly Lokanātha refused. Desperate, Narottama, the son of a king, vowed to become Loka-

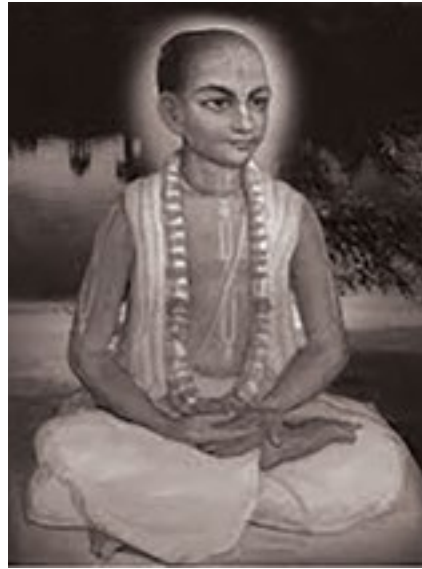
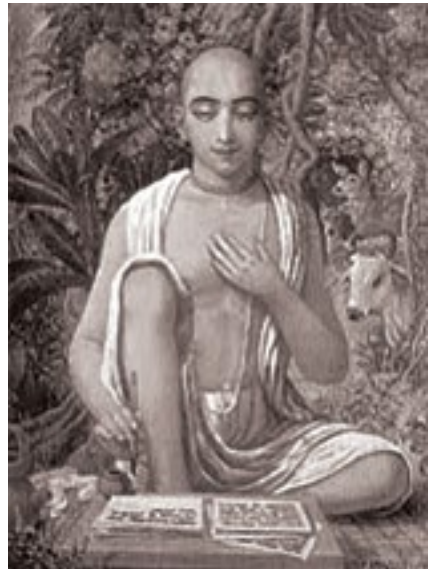
nātha’s menial servant and took to cleansing the area where the saint performed his early-morning ablutions.

Although Lokanātha was absorbed in his solitary Kṛṣṇa meditations, he noticed that someone was doing this service, but didn’t think much about it. One day, after an entire year had passed, he decided to find out who was so conscientiously cleaning up after him. The next morning, he came earlier than usual and hid behind a tree. When Narottama approached, Lokanātha saw who it was. Narottama fell at the saint’s feet and begged to be accepted as his disciple. Lokanātha refused at first, then later relented, conquered by the pure devotion of this saintly devotee.<sup>7</sup>

Although Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura was the only initiated disciple of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, in Song 17, verse 4, of Narottama’s famous song collection *Prārthanā* he longs for Lokanātha to bring him to their ultimate shelter in the disciplic succession, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:



The Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavana



Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura

prabhu lokanātha kabe saṅge  
laiñā jābe  
śrī rūpera pāda-padme  
more samarpibe

“When will my lord and master, Lokanātha Gosvāmī, take me with him and place me at the lotus feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī?”

As “the chief of the Six Gosvāmīs,”<sup>8</sup> Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was Narottama and Lokanātha’s *bhaktirasācārya*, the master most expert at relishing the moods of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. And as Narottama’s *dīkṣā-guru*, Śrī Lokanātha had the pleasure and privilege to bring his disciple closer to the foundational leader of the Six Gosvāmīs’ Sabha.

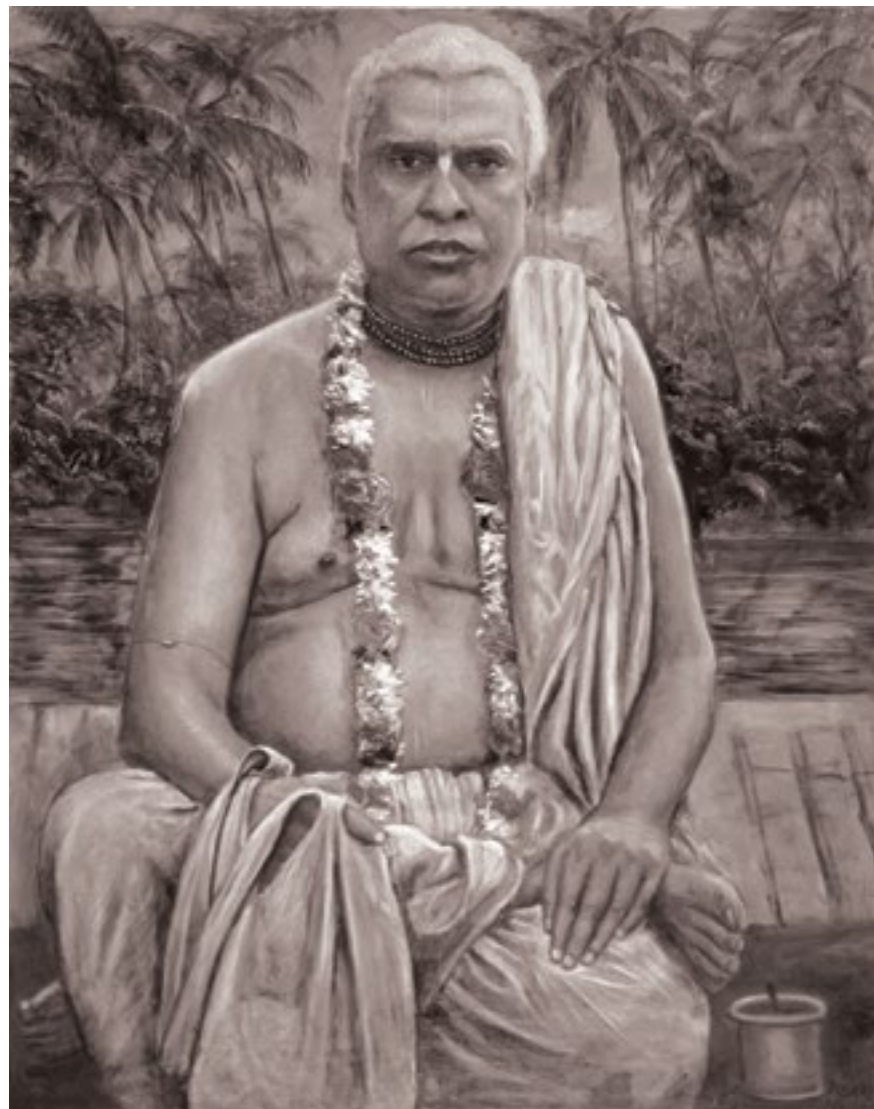
“*Rasācārya*” may sound close to “founder-*ācārya*,” but by Lord Caitanya’s inscrutable will, the organizational, philosophical, and cultural seeds sown early for “founder-*ācārya*” would have to wait another three centuries, within a crucible of disgrace, before finishing seeds arrived to conclusively establish the founder-*ācārya* principle.

### Literary Seeds

In the late nineteenth century the great Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura identified and

exposed more than a dozen counterfeit Vaiṣṇava groups who, starting just a century after Lord Caitanya’s departure, had effectively disgraced Vaiṣṇavism. Not only did Śrīla Bhaktivinoda restore within India the Lord’s teachings and the glory of the Vaiṣṇavas, he also conceived a mission to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness globally, thus helping to fulfill a sixteenth-century scriptural prophecy: “In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard.” (Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, *Antya-khaṇḍa* 4.126)

When reports reached Śrīla Bhaktivinoda of a rising Western interest in Indian culture, and Sanskrit in particular, the Ṭhākura sent a copy of



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Painting by Puskarā Dāsā

his Sanskrit work *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* to the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. When Emerson gratefully replied, requesting books in English, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda penned *Lord Caitanya – His Life and Precepts*, and sent copies to several Western intellectuals and universities. But it was a Bengali work by the Ṭhākura, published in 1900 as *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, that contained conclusive literary seeds for the founder-*ācārya* principle.

In Chapter 6, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda described three kinds of megamasters in a disciplic tradition. The first is the *sampradāyera ādi-guru*, the primeval guru of the tradition, directly enlightened by the Lord Himself. Following the first guru are the *śikṣā-guru-pratiṣṭhita*, greatly revered preceptors who keep the line’s teachings intact over long spans of time. But when the Ṭhākura identified the third guru, he described him in the superlative: “However, the *ādyācārya*, or original guru of a disciplic branch, is appropriately worshiped and respected as the *guru-siromaṇi*, the topmost crown jewel of the spiritual masters. His perfect philosophical conclusions are to be followed by all in his succession; any contrary instructions will not be accepted.”<sup>9</sup> The stage was set for the founder-*ācārya* seeds to bear fruit.

### The Seeds Bear Fruit

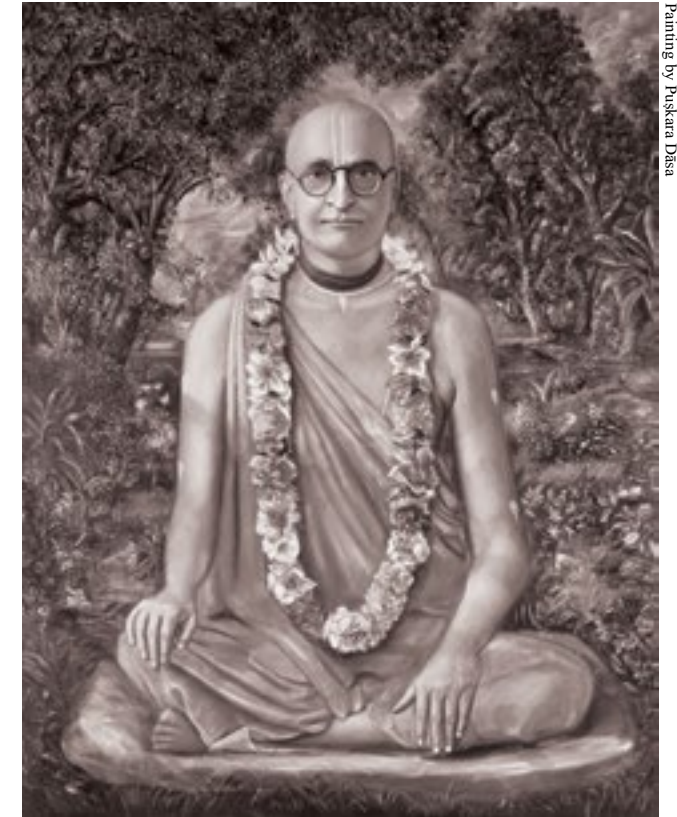
In the 1880s, while envisioning a worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda revived the Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabha and launched a Bengali spiritual journal, *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* (“For the Satisfaction of the Devotees”). Four decades later, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda’s illustrious son Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reinvented the Sabha as the “Gauḍīya Mission” and transformed his father’s journal into *The Harmonist*, an English-language periodical, with the Ṭhākura’s scholarly disciple Professor Nisikanta Sanyal as

his co-editor.

Timed to coincide with the launch of the Mission’s grand new Calcutta headquarters, the October 1930 *Harmonist* carried the first of a three-part series by Professor Sanyal about “The Gaudiya Math.” It was in this article that the “founder-*ācārya*” phrase, seeded for centuries, finally fructified:

The Gaudiya Math is also identical with its founder Acharyya [*sic*]. The associates, followers, and abode of His Divine Grace are limbs of himself. None of them claim to be anything but a fully subordinate limb of this single individual. This unconditional, causeless, spontaneous submission to the Head, is found to be not only compatible with, but absolutely necessary for the fullest freedom of initiative of the subordinate limbs.<sup>10</sup>

During the Gauḍīya Mission’s finest hour – the first Vaiṣṇava preaching expedition to Europe – the book Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta’s leading English preachers took with them was *Shree Krishna Chaitanya*, written by Professor Sanyal and edited by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. The work was written with sufficient breadth, depth, and excellence to impress the intelligentsia of the West. In its front matter, the elaborate Table of Contents highlighted the intimate connection between the *ādi-gurus* (the primeval preceptors of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*) and the *sampradāyas’* founder-*ācāryas* (the *ādi-gurus’* extraordinarily empowered repre-



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Painting by Puskarā Dāsā

sentatives, who revitalized their disciplic successions within recorded history):

The systems of Sree Vishnuswami, Sree [Nimbarka], Sree Ramanuja and Sree Madhva . . . are connected with the ancient times by their recognition of the [remote] authority of the eternal ancient teachers, [namely] Lakshmi, Brahma, Rudra and the four [Kumaras], respectively. The four Founder-Acharyas of the Iron Age professed to preach the views of those original teachers of the religion.

*Shree Krishna Chaitanya* strictly applied “founder-*ācārya*” to the four *sampradāyas’* revitalizers, otherwise known as *sampradāya-ācāryas*. Since Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta founded but a branch of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya, itself but an extension of the Brahma-Madhva-sampradāya, he knew some would consider him presumptuous if he used the title. For the written record, however, he allowed Professor San-

yal to confidently refer to him as the Gauḍīya Mission's "founder-acharyya" within the pages of the *Harmonist*.<sup>11</sup>

In Part Four of this series, we'll see another reason why Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta could, with similar confidence later, forgo the founder-ācārya title: he could foresee what would soon befall his own institution, as well as the one disciple who would be ready, willing, and able to start a fresh branch of Lord Caitanya's mission, far away from Mother India.

Caitanya, who appeared in Bengal, India, sometimes called Gaudadesa.<sup>4</sup> For more about the origin and evolution of the Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabha, see Bhakti Vikāśa Swami's *Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*, Volume 1, pp. 70–73.

<sup>5</sup> *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.2.100.  
<sup>6</sup> *The Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter 6, devotional principle (4), p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> A complete account of Lokanātha's accepting Narottama may be found in Dr. O. B. L. Kapoor's *The Goswamis of Vrindavan*.

<sup>8</sup> *The Nectar of Devotion*, Preface, sentence 2.

<sup>9</sup> This version is based on Jayapatāka Swami's translation of *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* texts in his 1989 Vyāsapūjā offering, as well as Bhānu Swami's narrative version of the texts, both available on the Bhaktivedanta VedaBase.

<sup>10</sup> For the evolution of the founder-ācārya phrase within the literature of the Gauḍīya Mission, see Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa's definitive *Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of*

*ISKCON*, pp. 32–46, at [www.founder-acharya.com](http://www.founder-acharya.com).

<sup>11</sup> *Harmonist* 28.5:131 & 33.4:90–96.

*In the next issue: Having looked at the historical development of the founder-ācārya principle in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, in Part Three of our series we will see how Śrīla Prabhupāda emerged as the founder-ācārya of a dynamic new branch of Lord Caitanya's community, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).*

*Sureśvara Dāsa joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in 1970. Since 2011, on behalf of a committee of ISKCON's Governing Body Commission called "Śrīla Prabhupāda's Position," he has been traveling the ISKCON world, presenting the seminar series "Śrīla Prabhupāda, Our Founder-Ācārya." To find out how to bring the series to your area, please write to Sureśvara at [suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com).*

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# Śrīla Prabhupāda's Giant Step

THE EVENTS WE'RE commemorating in this issue could never have taken place without the occurrence of an earlier event that also coincides with this issue. Fifty years ago, on September 17, 1965, the cargo ship *Jaladuta* docked at Commonwealth Pier in Boston, and the ship's only noncrew passenger, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, took his first step in America. Śrīla Prabhupāda started the International Society for Krishna Consciousness the following year, in July 1966, and ISKCON is gearing up to celebrate 2016 as its Golden Jubilee.

When Prabhupāda landed in America, I was fourteen years old and living in northern Vermont, about two hundred miles from Boston. I was one of 194 million people in America. What were the odds that our paths would ever cross? But Kṛṣṇa ignored statistics and probability, and in June 1974 I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda for the first time when he arrived for the annual Rathayātrā festival in San Francisco, just a few weeks after my first visit to the temple.

A much-published photo of that festival shows Śrīla Prabhupāda dancing in ecstasy on-stage, his arms raised high as thousands join him in chanting the holy names. By then I had a budding commitment to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and at that festival I started wearing *tulasī* neck beads. That simple act turned out to have profound consequences.

I was a lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, and regulations forbade wearing neck jewelry with my uniform. In my enthusiastic immaturity, I told my commanding officer and the base's legal office that wearing the neck beads – visibly – was an essential part of my newfound religion. The Air Force wasn't quite sure how to react to that, and six months later they granted me an

honorable discharge, and I moved into the San Francisco temple.

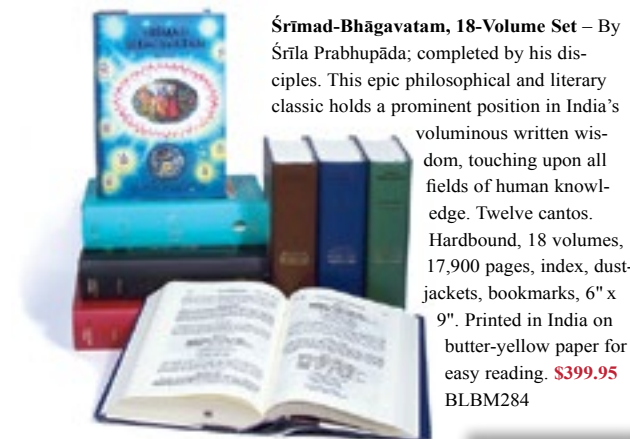
My story is one among thousands that unfolded only because Śrīla Prabhupāda, driven by the deepest compassion for humanity, risked his life to carry the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa outside India. Despite his advanced age, less than optimum health, and seeming poverty, Prabhupāda left the peace and sanctity of Vrindavan to sail halfway around the world and save me – and so many others.

When I consider the trajectory of my life before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda, I'm reminded of a statement by Prahlāda Mahārāja: "Because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But Your servant Nārada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.28)

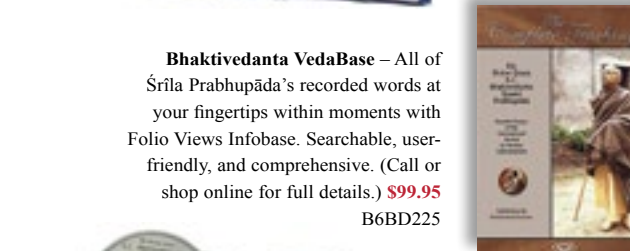
During this year's fiftieth anniversary of Prabhupāda's arrival in America and next year's fiftieth anniversary of the founding of ISKCON, may we all think deeply about how Prabhupāda gave us the means and opportunity to free ourselves from lifetimes of suffering and return to Kṛṣṇa. In gratitude, may we try to repay some of our debt to him by serving the mission so dear to his heart – the mission of delivering Lord Kṛṣṇa to every soul on the planet.

Borrowing a few words from Neil Armstrong, I would say that Śrīla Prabhupāda's one small step onto Commonwealth Pier was truly one giant leap for mankind. And not just a figurative leap. Thanks to that step, thousands of people today are joyfully leaping in *kīrtanas* all over the world.— *Nāgarāja Dāsa*

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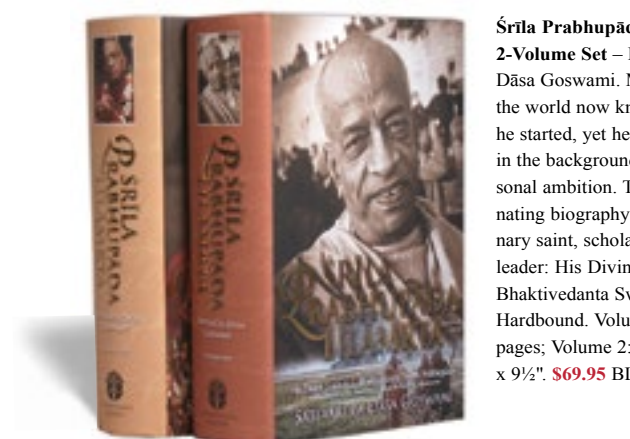


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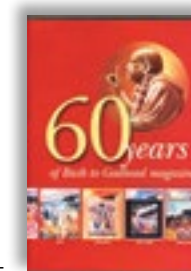


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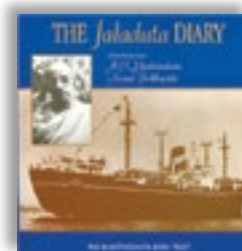


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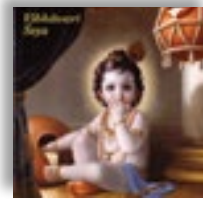
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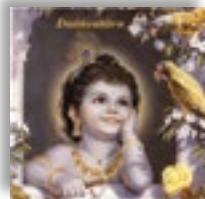
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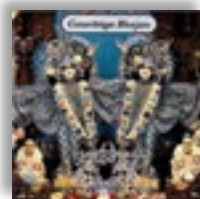
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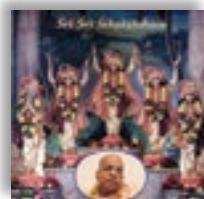
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# VEDIC THOUGHTS

There is nothing in the world with which the Lord is disconnected. The only thing we must learn is to excavate the source of connection and thus be linked with Him by offenseless service. We can be connected with Him by the transcendental sound representation of the Lord. The holy name of the Lord and the Lord Himself are identical, and one who chants the holy name of the Lord in an offenseless manner can at once realize that the Lord is present before him.

His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.32–33, Purport

The materialistic philosophy, whether appearing in India or in a foreign country, is certainly a failure, because it is out of touch with reality.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura  
*Amṛta Vāṇī*

There is only one God. If there were more than one God, this material world would not be organized so well. If there were many competing independent Gods, they would decree different, conflicting material laws, each according to his own desire. Of this there is no doubt. Looking at the material world, an intelligent and thoughtful person cannot fail to accept the idea that it was created according to the will of a single Supreme Person.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura  
*Tattva-viveka* 1.21, Commentary

Those words describing the glories of the all-famous Personality of Godhead are attractive, relishable, and ever fresh. Indeed, such words are a perpetual festival for the mind, and they dry up the ocean of misery.

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.12.50

When a diseased eye is treated with medicinal ointment it gradually recovers its power to see. Similarly, as a conscious living entity cleanses himself of material contamination by hearing and chanting the pious narrations of My glories, he regains his ability to see Me, the Absolute Truth, in My subtle spiritual form.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.26

The Lord desires to be the servant of anyone who desires to be the servant of the Lord.

Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura  
*Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa* 17.25

His loosened hair crowned with a peacock feather and flowing over His shoulders, His handsome form bending in three places, and His feet crossing as He dances, merciful and charming Kṛṣṇa plays His bamboo flute. Such is the Lord whom I worship.

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# 2015 Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival of India

*Schedule for North America*



[festivalofindia.org](http://festivalofindia.org)

**September 6:** Vancouver, Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūja

**September 26:** Philadelphia Rathayātrā (CANCELED\*)

**September 26–27:** Cary, North Carolina Rathayātrā

**October 24:** Potomac, Maryland Śrī Rāmacandra Vijaya Festival

\*Preempted by Pope Francis's visit to Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Rathayātrā will be back on Festival of India's annual tour the fourth Saturday in September 2016, to celebrate the eleventh anniversary of the Philadelphia Rathayātrā.

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*Pictured: 2012 Rathayātrā Parade, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia*

