

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



The Magazine
Of the
Hare Krishna
Movement

Nov/Dec 2015
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Lord Caitanya

Visits Vrindavan

ALSO

**The Purpose of
The Vedas**

**Bhakti:
The Only
Transcendental
Yoga**

**Book Excerpt:
Śrīla Prabhupāda
In Africa**

**Transcendental
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And Muslim
Poets**

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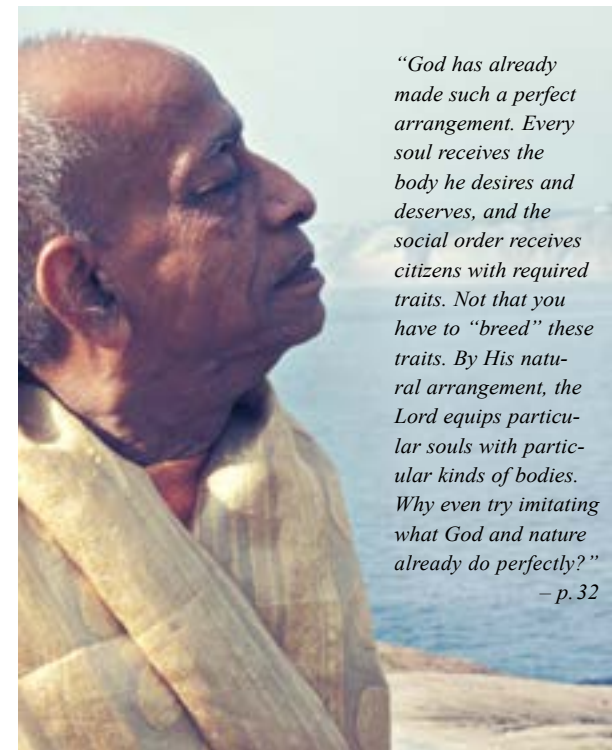
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COVER Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa as His own devotee, visited Vrindavan five hundred years ago and revealed many sites of Kṛṣṇa's activities there fifty centuries ago. Please see the article beginning on page 18. (Copyrighted painting by Sac-cid-ānanda Dāsa. Used by permission.)



“God has already made such a perfect arrangement. Every soul receives the body he desires and deserves, and the social order receives citizens with required traits. Not that you have to “breed” these traits. By His natural arrangement, the Lord equips particular souls with particular kinds of bodies. Why even try imitating what God and nature already do perfectly?”

— p. 32

WELCOME



This issue coincides with the holy month of Kārttika, during which devotees worship Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dāmodara, the darling child of Yaśodā who allowed His mother to bind Him to a grinding mortar. This transcendental pastime of the Lord is one of many that have been remembered and honored in the culture of India for thousands of years.

Vrindavan, the place of Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes, is a pilgrimage site whose current renown derives primarily from Caitanya Mahāprabhu's visit there. This Kārttika, devotees celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of that visit, recounted in Lokanāth Swami's article “Lord Caitanya Visits Vrindavan.”

As Lord Caitanya revealed sacred sites in Vrindavan, His pure representative Śrīla Prabhupāda created new ones around the world. In an excerpt from Satyarāja Dāsa's book *Swamiji*, Brahmānanda Dāsa recalls how Prabhupāda's visit to Kenya inspired Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the hearts of many of that country's residents.

In “Transcendental Poetry and Muslim Poets,” Dāmodara Nityānanda Dāsa discusses a little-known topic – Muslim devotional poetry dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Sureśvara Dāsa continues his series “Śrīla Prabhupāda: Our Founder-Ācārya,” Tattva-vit Dāsa muses on his life and its connection to Prabhupāda's, and Hari Parāyaṇa Dāsa explains why *bhakti* is the highest form of yoga.

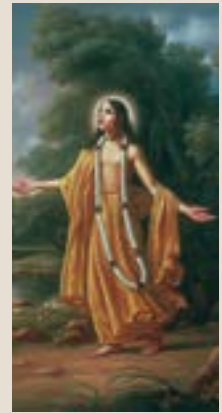
Hare Kṛṣṇa. – Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

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.



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Letters

Cleared Misconceptions

I recently read the article “Can God Be Immoral?” by Mukundamālā Dāsa from the Jan/Feb 2015 issue of BTG. It is a masterful and thorough explanation of a very difficult subject matter. I work very closely with the Hindu community here in Durban, many of whom are very devout. They find Lord Rāma easier to understand than Kṛṣṇa because from their point of view Lord Rāma had only one wife with whom He was very faithful. They find it more difficult to understand Lord Kṛṣṇa’s familiar relationship with the *gopīs*, with whom He was not married.

I also recently heard a BBC podcast by a so-called scholar of Hinduism. He explained that from a Hindu perspective eroticism is acceptable in spiritual life and gave the example of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Mukundamālā Prabhū has very nicely defended Kṛṣṇa and has explained this subject matter from the point of view of our *śāstras*, thus clearing up misconceptions and confusion.

Rāmānujāchārya Dāsa
Durban, South Africa

Freedom

How to be free?

Vikas
Via the Internet

Our reply: When you speak of being free, that could mean many things. Spiritually, freedom means to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death. At the same time, it means freedom from anxiety and from fear of death and other bodily miseries. This kind of freedom is only possible for one who has gotten off the bodily platform and has understood the real position of the self, the soul.

We, the soul, are part of God, Kṛṣṇa, and we are by nature eternal and full of bliss and knowledge. To realize our true nature is the goal of human life and requires a huge change of consciousness, which begins with a change

of what we are hearing. In *bhakti-yoga*, the yoga of the heart, by hearing about God we learn about devotion to Him and how to revive our lost spiritual consciousness. We can hear His instructions from scriptures like the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and we can chant His name and recount His glories regularly. Life today is a struggle, but if you take up these joyful practices, you’ll find yourself progressing toward real, eternal freedom.

General Inquiry

I would like to know more about the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Angie
Via the Internet

Our reply: That’s a big question, but here’s a quick overview of what it means to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. It means that you can begin to explore a different realm of pleasure, a higher platform of knowledge, and a means of discovering your real self and God, Kṛṣṇa. It’s a gradual process of reviving our innate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which has been covered by all the crazy things we have been hearing for many births. The basic message of what we’ve heard is that we are just our body and life is meant for trying to enjoy at any cost.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement presents a different source of hearing; we are getting knowledge from the spiritual platform. This knowledge, found in the ancient Vedic scriptures, reaches the soul, the real person inside. It wakes us up, and we can begin to reconnect with the Supreme.

You can change what you hear by reading *Bhagavad-gītā*, chanting the holy names of God, which are identical to Him, and learning from spiritual authorities who have realized the truth.

By doing these things, you can experience real satisfaction in your

intelligence and in your heart. All of us souls in the material world have been cheating ourselves out of this connection with the source of all pleasure, Kṛṣṇa. He wants us back with Him, so He will help immensely if we take up this simple, joyful process.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the complete science of the soul. It includes explanations of such topics as reincarnation, karma, dharma, all types of yoga systems, material nature and its effect on us conditioned souls, and what it means to take shelter of God. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a sectarian religion; it is a universal teaching for how to perfect our lives and come close to God.

Please read some books by Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. His *Science of Self-Realization* is a good introductory book, as are small books such as *The Perfection of Yoga* and *Beyond Birth and Death*. You can order them from the Krishna.com Store. People all over the world are reading these books and getting great realizations in their spiritual pursuit. Try chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. And if you can visit one of our centers, the devotees there will be happy to answer all your questions.

Increasing Devotion

How can I increase my devotion to Kṛṣṇa and remove material desire?

Akash Poddar
Via the Internet

Our reply: How would you increase your devotion to your wife or husband or child or pet? By pleasing them with things they like, by glorifying their activities, by serving them. In the process of *bhakti-yoga*, we do similar things, but on the eternal platform and in relation to Kṛṣṇa. We are eternally connected to Him by loving service, but we are temporarily “out of service.” So jump back into the fire of service. Begin by cleansing the

heart by chanting His holy names and discussing His glories.

It is so easy to glorify and talk about ourselves. It will take some study and meditation to know how to glorify God, since we have been out of contact with Him for so long. So you need to fill up with Kṛṣṇa by reading and discussing His instructions. Then you will be more inspired to serve Him.

The guru will direct you in how to please Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us many projects to do to spread Kṛṣṇa’s glories. Just pick any one you like. There are so many things that must be done to maintain our temples,

deity worship, public outreach, and so on. There’s no limit.

Become attached to giving to Kṛṣṇa, which waters the plant of devotion. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us many instructions to keep us fixed in consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, and we must follow them: rising early, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa a minimum number of times every day, being vegetarian, offering our food to Kṛṣṇa, and so on.

Spending time in the company of other devotees is important. So try to take advantage of that spiritual aid by visiting ISKCON temples and inquiring from the devotees there. 🌍

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The Purpose of the Vedas



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu categorized all the teachings of the Vedic literature into three progressive stages.

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

Founder-Ācārya of the
International Society for
Krishna Consciousness

*veda-śāstra-kahe – ‘sambandha’,
‘abhidheya’, ‘prayojana’
‘kṛṣṇa’ – prāpya sambandha,
‘bhakti’ – prāptyera sādhana*

“The Vedic literatures give information about the living entity’s eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, which is called *sambandha*. The living entity’s understanding of this relationship and his acting accordingly is called *abhidheya*. Returning home, back to Godhead, is the ultimate goal of life and is called *prayojana*.”

– Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,
Madhya-līlā 20.124

WHY HAVE THE *Vedas*, or the Vedic scriptures, been made? It is not that they are made, but they are coming down to us by a traditional process, by hearing. For example, we accept our father by hearing. A child is born, and when the child sees his brothers and sisters calling a gentleman “father,” he also begins to say “father.” There is no question of studying. How does a child

learn to call the father “father”? He hears. Others are calling him father, so he also calls him father. There is no evidence. There is no study. He simply hears.

Similarly, previously the Vedic knowledge was coming by hearing. There was no need of books. But when this age, Kali-yuga, began five thousand years ago, the Vedic scriptures were recorded. First there was only one *Veda*, known as *Atharva Veda*. Then Vyāsadeva, just to make it clear, divided it into four and entrusted his various disciples to each take charge of one school of *Veda*. Then he wrote the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* to make the Vedic knowledge understandable by the

ciple of God, who are not God-minded, are the lowest creatures. *Na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ*: “Anyone who does not recognize God is the lowest of the lowest creatures.” (*Gītā* 7.15) These terms have been used: *mūḍha*, ass; *duṣkṛtina*, miscreant; and *narādhamā*, lowest of mankind. Mankind is meant for recognizing God. That is human life. In animal life one cannot recognize that there is God and everything is coming from God. Animals cannot read the *Vedas*, or scriptures. They cannot take any instruction. These *Vedas* and other scriptures are for human beings. Therefore, so-called human beings with two hands and two

are playing dangerous things.”

Oh. Just see. Swamiji’s saying, “No, don’t smoke. Don’t take tea. Don’t have illicit connections with women. Be upright. Be a devotee.” “Oh, Swamiji’s dangerous.”

And if somebody teaches, “My dear boys, take LSD, go to hell, and become mad and go to the lunatic asylum,” the thinking is “Oh, that is all right.”

What can be done? This is the situation.

We are situated in a society of the lowest of mankind. Always remember this, that we are situated in a civilization that is the lowest of mankind. I am not only speaking of your United States – all over the world. Even in India, where so much culture was made for understanding God, the foolish government is also teaching this. You see. Don’t think that I am particularly criticizing some country or community. This is the age for such things. It is called Kali. Kali means full of hypocrisy. We have to be very careful. The illusory energy is very strong.

Scriptures Are Reminding Us

Lord Caitanya says that we have to revive our lost relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or God. That is civilization. The relationship is there already. The supreme cause is Kṛṣṇa, or God, but some way or other I have forgotten that. Therefore these scriptures – the *Vedas*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* – are reminding us. They’re meant for reminding us. “Your relationship with Kṛṣṇa is eternal. Why have you forgotten? Therefore you are suffering.”

We have discussed the verse *bhayam dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād īśād apetasya viparyayo śmṛtiḥ (Bhāgavatam 11.2.37)*. Because we have taken a reverse position for forgetting the Supreme, we are put into anxiety. *Viparyayo śmṛtiḥ*. This very word is used. *Viparyaya* means topsy-turvy. “Your memory has become topsy-turvy. Therefore you are suffering.” But people will not

agree to change their way of thinking. “No, we shall adjust. We shall make laws. We shall make agitation. We shall form a party and go on defying God, and we shall be happy in this way.” This godless civilization is now generating the Communist party. To such a dangerous position we are coming. But one who takes shelter of Kṛṣṇa will not be put into danger. Rest assured.

I have to revive my relationship with Kṛṣṇa. That relationship is there; I have simply forgotten it. I have to revive it, or remember it – “Oh, I am such and such.” *Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ (Gītā 7.19)*. I have to become a great soul by surrendering unto God. That surrendering process is *bhakti*, or devotional service. My relationship with the Supreme is eternal, but I have forgotten it. Now, that relationship is that He is the original father of everything and we are all sons. For so long we have been disobedient. Now we have to become obedient. That’s all. “Obedience is the first law of discipline.” As soon as the people of this so-called advanced world become obedient to God, then there will be discipline and there will be peace. There is no discipline now. They are not agreeable to follow any rules and regulations. Everyone is acting as if he is God. But everyone is a dog, thinking he can do anything, whatever he likes. There is no discipline.

A Disciplined Life

The next verse says,

*abhidheya-nāma ‘bhakti’,
‘prema’ – prayojana
puruṣārtha-śiromaṇi prema
mahā-dhana*

“Devotional service, or sense activity for the satisfaction of the Lord, is called *abhidheya* because it can develop one’s original love of Godhead, which is the goal of life. This goal is the living entity’s topmost interest and greatest wealth. Thus one

attains the platform of transcendental loving service unto the Lord.” *Bhakti*, devotional service, means to undergo a disciplinary system in our life so that automatically we can revive our lost relationship with God and become happy. That is called *bhakti*. *Abhidheya-nāma ‘bhakti’, ‘prema’-prayojana*. And why? What is the use? Suppose we don’t revive our relationship? Then you’ll be disturbed.

You are after peace and prosperity. What is the basis of peace? The basis of peace is love. Do you think that without loving anyone you can become peaceful? No. How it is possible? Therefore, if you love God, then you can love everyone. And if you don’t love God, then you cannot love anyone.

In India there is the joint family system. The parents engage the girls and boys for marriage. When a girl is married, she comes to the husband’s family, and because she is now related to her husband, she at once becomes related to the husband’s brother, the husband’s mother, the husband’s father. She becomes related to everyone at once. The central point is the husband.

The central point must be there. So if you can love God, then you can love everything in relationship with God. You can love every man, you can love your country, you can love your society, you can love your friend. Everyone. That is the point.

But people are thinking in a different way: “Why shall I love God only? Why shall I love God? I shall love my family. I shall love my country. I shall love my . . .”

Oh, no, you cannot love. It is not possible. Because you are missing the central point. These are facts. *Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā (Bhāgavatam 5.18.12)*. One who does not love God cannot have any good qualifications. Why? *Manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*. Because he’ll simply speculate on the mental plane and fall down under the spell of the material energy. He

Lord Caitanya says the first purpose of Veda is sambandha, or relationship. What is our relationship with God?

common man in different ways, but the principle is the same.

So Lord Caitanya says the first purpose of *Veda* is *sambandha*, or relationship. What is our relationship with God? The *Vedānta-sūtra* (1.1.1) says, *janmādy asya yataḥ*: Everything is born out of the energy of God, including us. Therefore we call God “Father.” This is accepted in every religion. There is no argument. Now, what is the relationship between the father and the son? Is the relationship for the son to only exact from the father? Is there no duty for the son, or can he simply take from the father? No. There is duty. If a son is sensible and grown up, he knows “I have got my duty: to love my father.” That is a very simple thing, to love one’s father. “My father has done so much for me. I am going to own his estate, and now I am enjoying his earnings. So is it not my duty to show respect to my father?”

Those who are against the prin-

legs are animals if they do not accept the authority of scripture and do not accept the existence of God. *Bhagavad-gītā* very nicely describes them as *narādhamā*, the lowest of mankind. Our civilization is going to the lowest of mankind. And we are trying to advertise that we are advancing.

The Purpose of Education

Yesterday some boy came: “Who is God? I am God.” He was speaking like that. You see. And he appears to be an educated student. This kind of education is going on, that they’re going to be the lowest of mankind. The purpose of education is to make man the highest of mankind, but modern education is teaching man to become the lowest of mankind. And if some students are taught to become the highest of mankind, their guardians become disturbed.

“Oh, my son is going to be the highest of mankind? Swamiji, you

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.”

has no standing. However materially, academically qualified he may be, it is clearly stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that he has no good qualities.

I have given you the list of twenty-six qualities of a devotee as mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. As we become advanced in devotional service, all these good qualities will develop automatically. There is no need of legislation; all those good qualities will develop. Otherwise, what is the meaning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Is it a sentiment or fanaticism? No. It is a science. If you follow the rules and regulations systematically, then all these qualities will develop. You'll see it practically. And as soon as these qualities are there, then you actually become a lover of your country; you become a lover of your fellow man.

It is not expected that everyone will become like that. But if at least ten percent of the population become Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then peace in

the world is guaranteed. Cāṅkya Paṇḍita says, *varam eka guṇī putra na ca mūrkhā-śatair api*: "It is better to have one qualified son than to have hundreds of fools." Similarly, we do not require many moons in the sky. Only one moon is sufficient to drive away the darkness.

The Objective of Human Life

The modern civilization is a godless civilization. If some percentage of the civilized human beings become Kṛṣṇa conscious, that will bring forth peace. Otherwise it is not possible. It is therefore a necessity. Lord Caitanya says, *abhidheyanāma 'bhakti', 'prema'—prajoyana*. *Prajoyana* means that it is necessary. *Puruṣārtha-śiromaṇi prema mahā-dhana*. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's preaching was based on this principle: *premā pumartho mahān*. What is the objective of human life? He said, "The objective of human life is to attain love of God." That's all. That makes one perfect, nothing else.

Lord Caitanya's mission has been described by one of the *ācāryas*, Śrīnātha Cakravartī. He said that the mission of Lord Caitanya is *ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanaya*: "Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is *ārādhyā*." *Ārādhyā* means that He is worshipable. He's the only worshipable personality. *Ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam*: "And as Lord Kṛṣṇa is worshipable, similarly His place of pastimes, Vṛndāvanadhāma, is also worshipable." And what is the best kind of worship for Kṛṣṇa? *Ramyā kācid upāsanā vrajavadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā*: "The highest kind of worship is as demonstrated by the damsels of Vṛndāvana, the girlfriends of Kṛṣṇa." Yes. They had no adulteration; they were simply always thinking of Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa was out of the village, they were thinking at home, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa's soles are so soft. How is He wandering in the jungle? There are so many particles of stone. They must be pricking His feet." Kṛṣṇa is there, they are at home, but they are thinking of Kṛṣṇa – how He's walking, how His soft feet are suffering. In this way they are always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

They are not Vedāntists. They are not *brāhmaṇas*. They are not educated. They are cowherd girls. But their love of Kṛṣṇa is so intense that Lord Caitanya recommends, "Oh, there is no better worship than what was demonstrated by the damsels of Vṛndāvana."

What is the source for understanding Kṛṣṇa? Śrīnātha Cakravartī says, *amalaṁ purāṇam: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If you study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, then you can understand all these things.

So the book is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the ideal worship is that of the damsels of Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable object, and the necessity of life is to attain love of God. This is the whole mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the sum and substance. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu is saying here, *puruṣārtha-śiromaṇi*

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.

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

Month of Dāmodara (October 28–November 25)

NOVEMBER

3 – Appearance of Radha-kunda.

6 – **Ramā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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



Detail from a painting by Dhriti Devi Dāsī

Kṛṣṇa lifts Govardhan Hill

19 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a great follower of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan.

22 – **Utthānā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

25 – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsa-yātrā. Last day of Bhīṣma Pañcaka and Cāturmāsya.

Month of Keśava
(November 26–December 24)

DECEMBER

6 – **Uṭpannā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

Month of Nārāyaṇa
(December 25–January 23)

28 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

prema mahā-dhana. People have their objective of life. Of course, nowadays people are different. Formerly, the Vedic culture promoted dharma to make people religious. Still every civilized nation has some sort of religion, because without becoming religious there is no possibility of peace and prosperity. So this is one of the aims of human society – to make people religious.

And why religious? *Dharma-ārtha*. Then the economic condition will be better. If all people are reli-

gious, then the economic condition will be better. And why is a better economic condition wanted? *Kāma*. *Kāma* means that the necessities of your life will be fulfilled nicely. *Dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa*. Then what is the end? If your society is peaceful, then you can culture your life for liberation.

Dharma-ārtha-kāma-mokṣa: generally these four principles are the aim of human society. But Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, "Yes, these are all right." But *premā pumartho mahān*:

"With all these things, if you have no love of Godhead it is all nonsense. All nonsense. Therefore try to love God, and everything will be all right." This is the mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *premā pumartho mahān*. Here also Lord Caitanya says that we should understand our relationship with God. We should act in that way. That means in devotion. Then we shall have the highest perfection of life, love of God, and our mission of human life will be fulfilled.

Thank you. 🙏



YOU'RE INVITED! The Sunday Feast

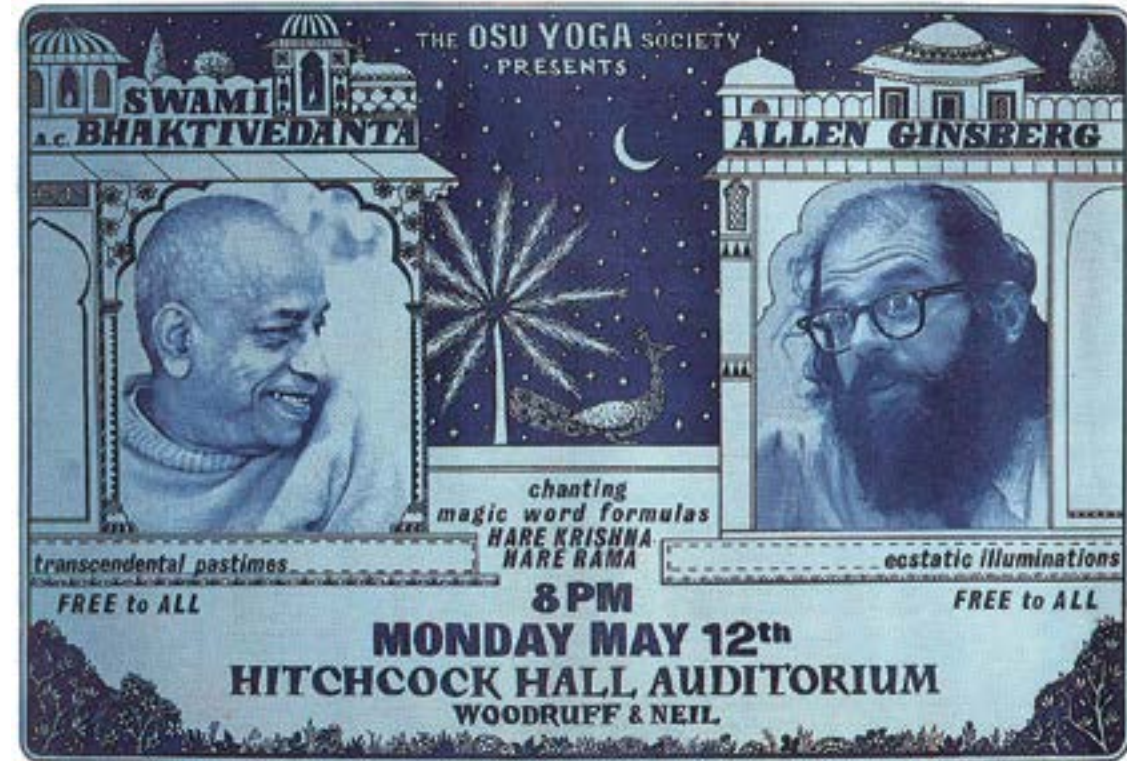
Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday – for regulars as well as newcomers. Come by and get a taste of the world's oldest cultural tradition. Call your nearest center to find out the schedule for the Sunday Feast. (Visit <http://directory.krishna.com>.)

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: OUR FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA

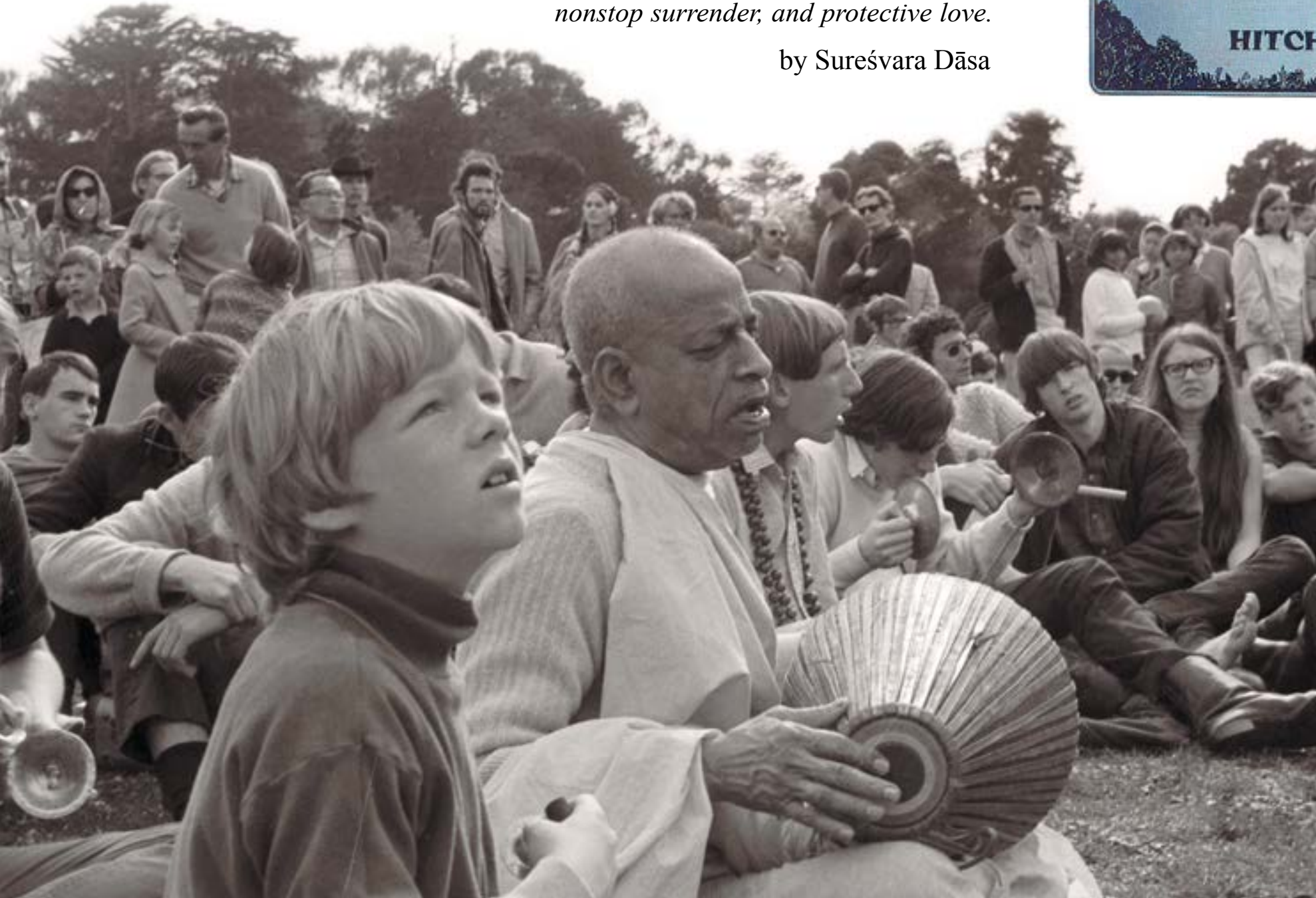
OUR ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

During twelve pioneering years, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted the role of ISKCON's founder-ācārya with complete humility, nonstop surrender, and protective love.

by Sureśvara Dāsa



Śrīla Prabhupāda leads hippies in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, 1967 (below, left). At left, a poster announces Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance at Ohio State University, 1969.



To honor the fiftieth anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's leaving India to found the worldwide Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, BTG presents Part Three of a multi-part series celebrating Śrīla Prabhupāda's unique, transcendental position in ISKCON, as well as every follower's foundational relationship with him.

IT IS MAY 1969. In Columbus, Ohio, devotees have arranged for Prabhupāda to perform onstage with counterculture poet Allen Ginsberg at a small auditorium on the Ohio State University campus. "A NIGHT OF KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS IN COLUMBUS" read the posters. "TRANSCENDENTAL PASTIMES. ECSTATIC ILLUMINATIONS."

On the morning of the event, Ginsberg meets with Prabhupāda at the local ISKCON temple to discuss the evening's program, as well as how Kṛṣṇa consciousness could spread widely in materialistic America. Alluding to a prophetic text from the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāna* (4.129.59), Prabhupāda assures the poet that people everywhere "will take advantage of Hare Kṛṣṇa for the next ten thousand years." Ginsberg has seen Prabhupāda rouse crowds to chant

Hare Kṛṣṇa in New York and San Francisco, but the conservative, provincial students of Columbus will present a special challenge.

That evening the 750-seat auditorium is overflowing, as nearly two thousand students, faculty, and townspeople fill the seats, aisles, and balconies, and spill into the clearing below the stage, flouting all fire codes. As the surprised devotees press through the crowds, distributing *Bhagavad-gītās*, Ginsberg pumps a harmonium onstage, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and the crowd – corn-fed, towheaded Midwesterners – chants back, clapping and singing, celebrating the semester's end.

Then Prabhupāda enters. Smiling and glowing, he ascends the stage, where Ginsberg invites him to lead the chanting. In *The Hare Krishna Explosion* Haya-grīva Dāsa describes what happened next:

Prabhupāda stands and raises his hands, inviting the students also to stand and dance. The response is immediate. Students in the aisles are first to their feet, then students in the rows and balconies arise. There is little room for dancing; a spontaneous bounce catches hold instead. As Prabhupāda bounces on the dais, the

students bounce also. As he waves his arms, they wave theirs. He leads them as a maestro conducts an orchestra, until gradually the inherent spiritual rhythm of the mantra itself prevails . . . the young voices empowered by the mantra, not even knowing the meaning of the words.

“The amazing fact is that everybody was able to get up and dance,” says Ginsberg later, “nearly leaping out of their skins.”¹

Had Prabhupāda disclosed the Purāṇic texts directly preceding the ten-thousand-year prophecy he mentioned, poet Ginsberg would have likely proclaimed Prabhupāda its fulfiller. In those texts Lord Kṛṣṇa tells the Goddess Gaṅgā that five millennia hence He will send his *mantra-upāśaka* (worshiper of the holy names) to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and purify earth, water, sky, and humanity everywhere. “This period of worldwide chanting will continue for ten thousand years.” (*Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, 4.129.49–59)

While fulfilling this and other Vedic prophecies, Prabhupāda never once called attention to himself, instead calling everyone’s attention to Kṛṣṇa. Over the millennia, the Lord would set the stage of world history to send His “worshiper of the holy names” to the right place at the right time to launch the worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa movement – alone.

Alone in America

When Prabhupāda’s spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, dispatched the first Vaiṣṇava preachers from India to Europe in the 1930s, he gave them the full institutional support of his Gauḍīya Mission. But after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta’s demise in 1937, the mission’s leaders neglected their master’s instructions to form a governing body and work cooperatively to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The infighting that ensued so fragmented the mission that by the time Prabhupāda arrived in America to preach in 1965 there was no unified



institution left to support him.

In New York City with almost no friends or funds, Prabhupāda nonetheless saw a fertile preaching field in materially prosperous America, where people were spiritually starving and looking to the East for truth. Hopeful of reviving the cooperative spirit that once galvanized the Gauḍīya Mission, Prabhupāda began writing his now isolated godbrothers, adjuring them to help him seize the time. The following excerpt from one such letter to a former manager of the mission is telling:

I came here to study the situation and I find it very nice and if you are also agreeable to cooperate . . . it will be all very nice by the will [of] Srila [Bhaktisiddhanta] Prabhupada. . . . If you agree then take it for granted that I am one of the worker[s] of the Sri Mayapur Caitanya Matha.² I have no ambition for becoming the proprietor of any Matha or Mandir but I want working facilities.

(Letter to Bhakti Vilāsa Tīrtha Mahārāja, 8 November 1965)

A “servant-leader” long before the phrase occurred, Prabhupāda would still receive no tangible cooperation from his godbrothers. With only the scriptures he translated, annotated, and brought from India to sustain him, Prabhupāda endured mostly alone the brutal New York winter that followed, writing letters and translating the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In a letter six years later, Prabhupāda reflected on those lone struggles:

When I was alone in your New York, I was thinking, who will listen to me in this horrible, sinful place? All right, I shall stay little longer, at least I can distribute a few of my books, that is something. But Krishna was all along preparing something I could not see. . . . Now I can see that it is a miracle. Otherwise, your city of New York, one single old man, with only a few books to sell for barely getting eatables, how he can survive, what to speak of introducing God-consciousness movement for saving the human-

kind? That is Krishna’s miracle. Now I can see it.

(Letter to Sudāmā, 23 December 1972)

From Obscurity to “Swamiji”

The following spring Kṛṣṇa’s miracle-worker-to-be relocated to a loft in New York’s infamous Bowery district. Rife with derelicts and crime, the district was dangerous, but Prabhupāda took the risk to reach counterculture seekers nearby. In the loft, Kṛṣṇa sent Prabhupāda a few regular listeners, who came to his aid when an LSD-crazed youth attacked, forcing him to flee. With the regulars’ help, Prabhupāda at last secured his own place, a cheap storefront on the city’s Lower East Side. Forced by the noncooperation of his godbrothers, Prabhupāda dropped the attempt to revive his spiritual master’s institution, and instead, on July 13, 1966, he officially launched “The International Society for Krishna Consciousness,” a fresh branch of the same disciplic community.³

Śrīla Prabhupāda in New York City during the early days of his movement.

Empowered by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, Lord Caitanya (Kṛṣṇa’s golden avatar), and his spiritual forbears, Prabhupāda inspired a growing flock of followers that summer to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and take up the process of *bhakti-yoga*. No small miracle in New York City, the capital of “Do your own thing.” He did it by stressing the do’s more than the don’ts, the chanting more than the taboos. He had faith that as Kṛṣṇa filled the consciousness of his young aspirants, they would outgrow their old ways and savor the higher taste of devotional service.⁴

It worked. By late November, after a few groups of devotees had received initiation, one of the earlier initiates approached Prabhupāda: “Swamiji, what did you say the rules are for this practice?” Just what Prabhupāda had been waiting to hear, for he knew they would follow the rules only when they were ready. The next day, November 25, 1966, Prabhupāda posted the regulative principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the storefront’s bathroom door.⁵

Only He Could Lead Them

In January 1967 Prabhupāda followed the counterculture trail to San Francisco, where disciples had opened ISKCON’s second temple. There he inspired a new wave of devotees to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and serve Lord Caitanya’s mission. As in New York, the young aspirants marveled at Prabhupāda’s pace – a devotional whirlwind of chanting, teaching, worshiping, cooking, public preaching, private speaking, initiating newcomers, and translating scripture in the wee hours, while everyone else slept.

When Prabhupāda returned to New York in April, despite his seventy-plus years the pace continued unabated. For his first followers this was all part of the wonder that was “Swamiji.” So it was quite a shock when, toward the end of May,

Prabhupāda suffered a heart attack and stroke. He was their shelter; now they would have to shelter him. To help Prabhupāda recuperate, the devotees brought him to a beach cottage on the Jersey shore. But the weather was gray and blustery, so with the doctor’s permission Prabhupāda flew to San Francisco, where the devotees hoped the California sunshine would help him. But when the mountains and fog near his bungalow mostly obscured the sun’s rays, Prabhupāda said he would have to return to India, for its Ayurvedic medicines and bracing heat. Hayagrīva explains what happened next:

Some of the devotees, worried that Swamiji has decided to go to India to leave his body, ask him whether, during his absence, one of his God-brothers should come to America to assume ISKCON leadership.

The minute this question is presented to him, we sense that it is offensive. Swamiji becomes very grave, closing his eyes . . . then suddenly we see tears falling down his cheeks.

“My Guru Maharaj . . . he was no ordinary spiritual master,” he says, wiping away the tears. “He . . . saved me.”

Later, Swamiji tells us what we should have always known: There is no one to replace him. The very idea is insulting.

“If someone comes and tells you something different,” he says, “you will be confused.”⁶

Owing to his absolute surrender to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and Lord Caitanya’s mission, Prabhupāda knew he was being uniquely empowered to turn people outside India’s spiritual culture toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And that only he could lead them.

At the same time, concerned that his followers have a respectful attitude toward his godbrothers, Prabhupāda wrote: “Even amongst our God-brothers we have misunderstanding but none of us is astray from the

service of Krishna. My Guru Maharaja ordered us to execute his mission combinedly. Unfortunately we are now separated. But none of us have stopped preaching Krishna Consciousness. Even if there was misunderstanding amongst the God-brothers of my Guru Maharaja none of them deviated from the transcendental loving service of Krishna.” (Letter to Brahmānanda, 18 November 1967)

From “Swamiji” To “Prabhupāda”

Although Prabhupāda’s uniqueness among contemporary gurus was obvious to his followers, they were still

very humble, very reluctant, but I pressed him, “We’ve got to change this,” and he said, “You can call me ‘Gurudev’ or ‘Guru Maharaj’ or ‘Prabhupāda.’ So I said, “Well, that’s three. We need one. So which one is the best?” And he answered, “‘Śrīla Prabhupāda’ is nice, that is the best.” So I said, “From today you will be called ‘Śrīla Prabhupāda.’”⁷

Never demanding respect but commanding it by his own endearing example, Prabhupāda had seized Kṛṣṇa’s teachable moment to quietly disclose the appropriate address. In a disciplic line there are many “Gurudevas” but “Prabhupāda” is a

The opening of ISKCON London set the stage for the movement’s phenomenal global expansion in the 1970s.

calling him “Swamiji,” a rather common address. In the spring of 1968 Kṛṣṇa revealed an honorific more befitting Prabhupāda’s position. When a devotee learned the Sanskrit affix *jī* was a term of endearment, he asked Prabhupāda if he could add it to his wife’s name, “Govinda,” and call her “Govindajī.”

“No, actually *jī* is a third-class form of address,” Prabhupāda replied. “It’s better not to call her ‘Govindajī.’”

Govinda Dāsī, a plainspoken Texas lady, remembers the rest:

So I piped up. I was sitting right in front of him and I said, “Well, if it’s a third-class form of address, why are we calling you ‘ji’? Why are we calling you ‘Swamiji?’” And he said, “It’s not very important.” I said, “Oh, no, it’s very important. If it’s a third-class form of address, then we don’t want to call you that. We want to call you the most first-class form of address. So tell us what would be a good name for us to call you by.” And he was

guru of gurus, “a master at whose feet all masters sit.”

From “Prabhupāda” To “Founder-Ācārya”

In December 1969, the opening of ISKCON London set the stage for the movement’s phenomenal global expansion in the 1970s. In twelve years Prabhupāda circled the globe fourteen times, initiated thousands of disciples, and established the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement on every major continent. During his travels he founded over a hundred temples, schools, farms, and restaurants, all while writing and publishing dozens of translations and commentaries on foundational Vaiṣṇava scriptures.

But success would bring enemies, the worst from within. In 1970, after critical remarks by a few of his god-brothers negatively influenced some of his leaders, Prabhupāda asked a dozen trusted disciples to help him form a Governing Body Commission (as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta had requested his disciples) to protect

ISKCON and ensure its continuance. On July 28 a legal document called “Direction of Management” listed the GBC members and officially referred to “His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda” as ISKCON’s “Founder-Acharya.”⁸

But bad signs persisted. On one of his books, his ISKCON Press identified the author as “A. C. Bhaktivedānta,” nearly stripping his name of any spiritual significance. When his new publishing house, The Bhaktivedānta Book Trust, moved into its headquarters, Prabhupāda saw nothing on the building identifying the organization’s name or founder. And when some of his temple presidents wrote him on their own stationery, Prabhupāda had to tell them to write him on official temple stationery, displaying his full name and founder-*ācārya* title. For good reason. One day a noncomplying temple president sold the temple, collected the money, and disappeared. He, not ISKCON, had been the legal owner.

After the last incident, in the summer of 1974 Prabhupāda drafted an amendment to his earlier management document, including a strongly worded statement about his position and authority as ISKCON’s founder-*ācārya*:

It is declared that His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda is the Founder-Acharya of (ISKCON) International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He is the supreme authority in all matters of the society. His position cannot be occupied by anyone else, and his name and title must appear on all documents, letterheads, publications, and buildings of the Society.
(Amendments for Official Documents, July 22, 1974)⁹

That same summer, even as Prabhupāda was reasserting his supreme position in ISKCON, while he was translating the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* he reasserted his (and his followers’) fidelity to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta in the mission of Lord Caitanya:

As members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we belong to the family, or disciplic succession, of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, and thus we are known as Sārasvatas. Obeisances are therefore offered to the spiritual master as *sārasvata-deva*, or a member of the Sārasvata family (*namaste sārasvate deve*), whose mission is to broadcast the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (*gaurvāñī-pracāriṇe*) and to fight with impersonalists and voidists (*nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa tāriṇe*).

(*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 10.84, Purport)

Prabhupāda was hopeful that if his followers would do as he was doing – keeping his movement connected

to its spiritual roots while creatively fulfilling Lord Caitanya’s desires – it would survive the ravages of time and eventually carry Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village on earth.¹⁰

NOTES

1. For a complete account of the Columbus event, see *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, by Hayagrīva Dāsa, Chapter 17: The Guru and the Poet. Available on the Bhaktivedānta VedaBase under Books by ISKCON Devotees.
2. Formerly the flagship temple of the Gauḍīya Mission.
3. In his commentary to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 12.73, Prabhupāda calls ISKCON a “branch” of

Lord Caitanya’s “*bhakti-kalpataru*, or desire tree of devotional service.”

4. Prabhupāda’s strategy was based on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s dictum in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.4): “One should fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the *śāstras* should be the servants of this principle.”
5. Prabhupāda required his initiates to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra a prescribed number of times on their meditation beads, and to avoid intoxication, illicit sexual activity, meat-eating, and gambling. For the complete contents of what Prabhupāda posted, see *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, Chapter 5: The Hare Krishna Explosion.
6. *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, Chapter 12: Passage To India.
7. From *Following Śrīla Prabhupāda – Remembrances*, by Yaduvara Dāsa, DVD 01, Boston, May 1968. Available on the Bhaktivedānta VedaBase.
8. On the Bhaktivedānta VedaBase see Contents/Legal Documents.
9. Ibid.
10. In his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 25.264, Prabhupāda cites Lord Caitanya’s prediction: “In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Antya* 4.126)

In the next issue: *In Part Four of our series, we’ll trace the roots of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission, from the time he met his Guru Mahārāja to the event that triggered his mission plan.*

Sureśvara Dāsa joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in 1970. From 2011 to 2015, on behalf of a committee of the movement’s Governing Body Commission called “Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Position,” he traveled the ISKCON world presenting the seminar series “Śrīla Prabhupāda, Our Founder-Ācārya.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes recall this moment – when Acyutānanda Dāsa (at left in photo) and Brahmānanda Dāsa were the first to dance during a Tompkins Square Park kīrtana.



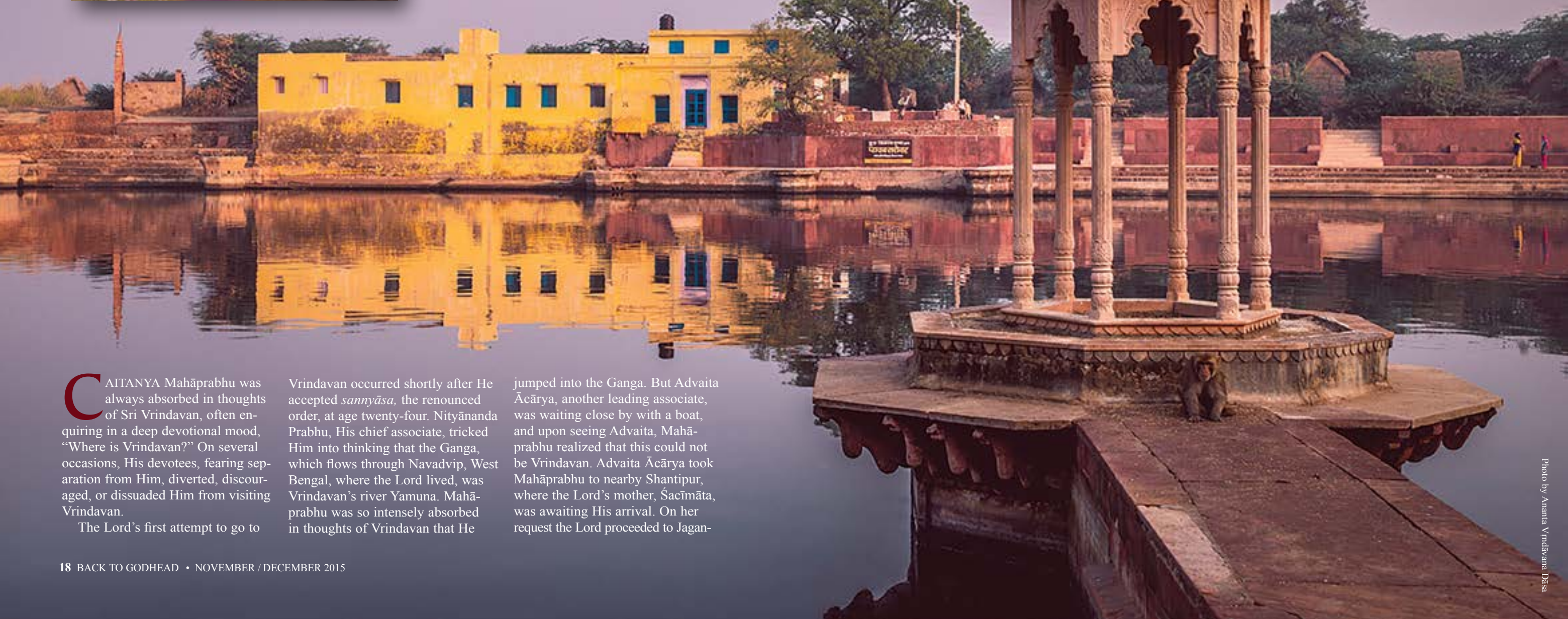


Lord Caitanya Visits Vrindāvan

This year, beginning on the full-moon day of the fall month of Kārttika, Sri Vrindavan-dhama commemorates the five-hundredth anniversary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's two-month visit to Kṛṣṇa's sacred land.

by Lokanāth Swami

Lord Caitanya bathed here, in Pavana Sarovar, before visiting Lord Kṛṣṇa's home on Nandisvara Hill. Inset: In meditation, Nṛsiṃha Brahmācārī creates a beautiful path for the Lord's journey to Vrindavan.



CAITANYA Mahāprabhu was always absorbed in thoughts of Sri Vrindavan, often enquiring in a deep devotional mood, “Where is Vrindavan?” On several occasions, His devotees, fearing separation from Him, diverted, discouraged, or dissuaded Him from visiting Vrindavan.

The Lord's first attempt to go to

Vrindavan occurred shortly after He accepted *sannyāsa*, the renounced order, at age twenty-four. Nityānanda Prabhu, His chief associate, tricked Him into thinking that the Ganga, which flows through Navadvīp, West Bengal, where the Lord lived, was Vrindavan's river Yamuna. Mahāprabhu was so intensely absorbed in thoughts of Vrindavan that He

jumped into the Ganga. But Advaita Ācārya, another leading associate, was waiting close by with a boat, and upon seeing Advaita, Mahāprabhu realized that this could not be Vrindavan. Advaita Ācārya took Mahāprabhu to nearby Shantipur, where the Lord's mother, Śacīmātā, was awaiting His arrival. On her request the Lord proceeded to Jagan-

natha Puri, to live His renounced life there.

From Puri, Caitanya Mahāprabhu soon traveled to South India, and when He returned, His desire to visit Vrindavan was revived. He decided to first go to Bengal to visit His two mothers – mother Ganga and mother Śacī – and the other devotees there. From Bengal He would make His way to Vrindavan.

In Navadvīp, Mahāprabhu informed the devotees that He would be walking to Vrindavan. A devotee named Nṛsimha Brahmācārī wanted to ease the Lord’s journey by creating a picturesque path for Him. He meditated on constructing a beautiful jeweled road, flanked by bakuls, rare flowering trees. In his mind he put up beautiful trees on the banks

After some time in Puri, Caitanya Mahāprabhu yet again strongly expressed His desire to go to Vrindavan, and gently requested His followers not to use any tricks to keep Him back. King Prataparudra (the king of Puri) and other devotees dissuaded Mahāprabhu from leaving, citing as reasons the rainy season and the upcoming Rathayātrā festival. Therefore, after the rainy season and the Rathayātrā, Mahāprabhu began His journey to Vrindavan with a servant, Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya.

Lord Caitanya Travels To Vrindavan

Lord Caitanya’s journey was filled with transcendental events. Leaving Orissa, He passed through the for-



of the lakes on the roadside. But he could not meditatively construct the road beyond Kanai Natashala, near the border of Bihar. He concluded, therefore, that Caitanya Mahāprabhu would not be going to Vrindavan after all. As it turned out, because thousands of devotees wanted to accompany Him to Vrindavan – an inappropriate way for Him to visit that holy place – Mahāprabhu returned to Jagannatha Puri.

est of Jharikhanda, inhabited by wild animals. Tigers, elephants, and deer were all attracted to Him, and He made them chant the holy names and dance in ecstasy. Even the elephants reared up on their hind legs and danced. Deer and tigers, natural enemies, embraced and kissed one another. When all the tigers and deer and elephants danced and jumped, Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya was struck with wonder.

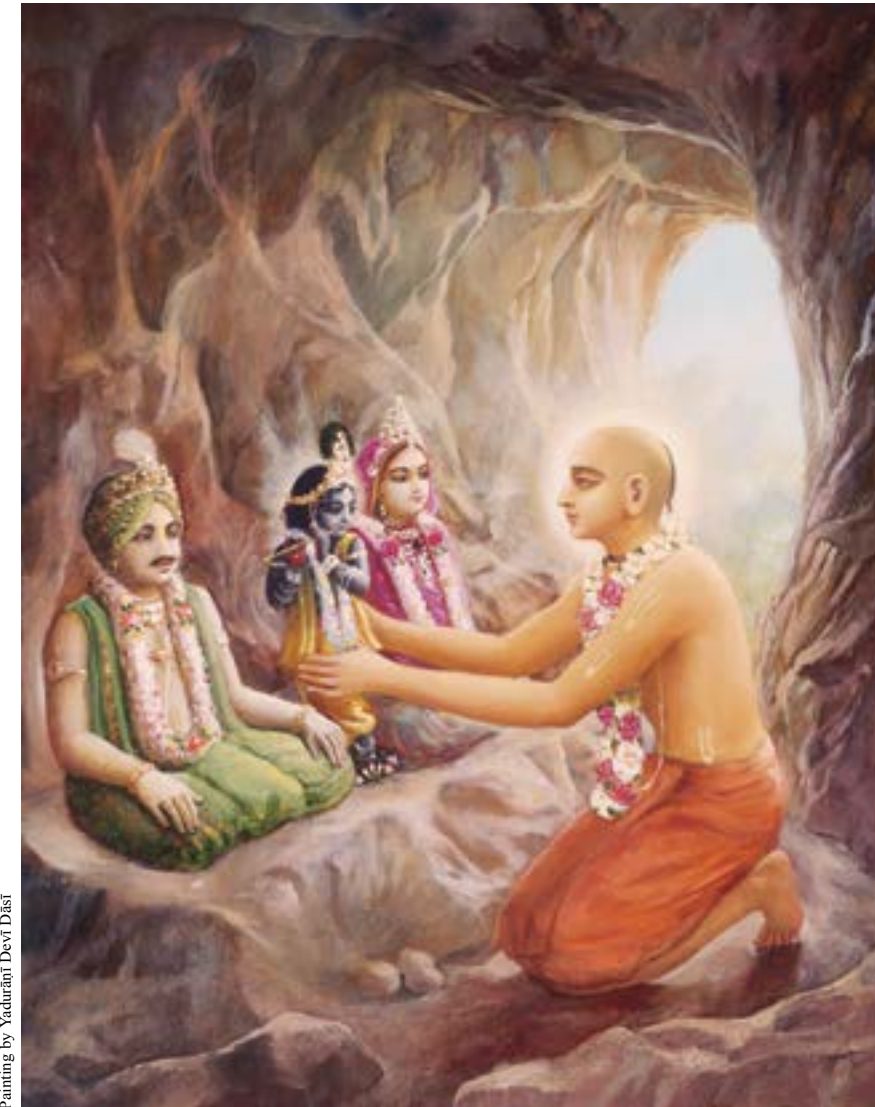


Seeing the animals around Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu remembered Vrindavan. The atmosphere He had created in the forest and the consciousness of the forest residents made Him feel that He had already reached Vrindavan. He then recited a verse about Vrindavan: “Vrindavan is the transcendental abode of the Lord. There is no hunger, anger, or thirst there. Although naturally inimical, human beings and fierce animals live together there in transcendental friendship.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.60)

Caitanya Mahāprabhu smiled on seeing the behavior of the animals, and He continued on His way. His mind had been absorbed in ecstatic love at Jagannatha Puri, but when He passed along the road to Vrindavan, that love increased a hundred times. He reached Varanasi and then several other towns, continuously dancing and chanting as He journeyed through Prayag and headed towards Mathura and Vrindavan.

Reaching Vrindavan

In 1515, Caitanya Mahāprabhu arrived in Vrindavan and revealed the pastime places of Lord Kṛṣṇa. His visit must be understood in terms of His identity and mood. The de-



Painting by Yadurāṅgi Devī Dāsī

At Keshi Tirtha (above), Kṛṣṇa killed the horse-demon Keśi. Below, on the advice of local people, Lord Caitanya finds deities of Kṛṣṇa and His parents in a cave. Opposite page: Radha Kunda, the holiest of holy sites.

scriptions of His visit are captured in scriptures like *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavīrāja Gosvāmī, who puts forward an esoteric reason for it – Lord Caitanya’s desire to experience Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, but in the golden complexion and deep devotional mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore He is known as the Golden Avatar, or Gaurāṅga (“golden body”). Vrindavan evoked in Him deep transcendental mellows as He reenacted the pastimes He, as Kṛṣṇa, had performed there five thousand years ago.

Upon reaching Mathura, Caitanya Mahāprabhu first bathed in the Yamuna River at Vishram Ghat and went for *darśana* of the Kṛṣṇa deity (Keśava) at Janmasthan, the holy birthplace of Kṛṣṇa, after which He performed the *parikramā* (reverential

walk) around Mathura. The Lord's ecstatic love increased a thousand times when He visited Mathura, but it increased a hundred thousand times when He wandered in the forests of Vrindavan, beginning with Madhuvan, Talavan, Kumudavan, and Bahulavan. It was on Kārttika Pūrṇimā, the full-moon day of that holy month, that Lord Caitanya reached Vrindavan and began to visit its twelve sacred forests.

While Mahāprabhu was passing through the forests, the cows, being greatly attracted to Him, surrounded Him and licked Him. When He caressed them, they were unable to leave His association. All the birds began to sing the glories of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and the peacocks danced. As if offering a gift to a friend, the trees shook, bathing the Lord in flowers and presenting their fruits to Him. Throughout His *parikramā*,

Painting by Rāmanātha Dāsa



While walking to Vrindavan, Lord Caitanya induced animals to chant the holy names (left). Below, devotees taking part in ISKCON's Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā enjoy the atmosphere outside the Śeṣa-śāyī Viṣṇu temple.

Lord Caitanya displayed a flood of happiness that drenched all who came in contact with Him.

While walking, the Lord saw two parrots in dialogue and was eager to hear their conversation. On cue, the parrots flew down near Him. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja describes their conversation in detail. First the male parrot glorified Kṛṣṇa's beauty and the effect He had on the *gopīs*. The parrot then said that Kṛṣṇa's company was so alluring that even Lakṣmī Devī underwent penance to take part in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs* – because Kṛṣṇa is Jagat Mohana, the one who attracts everyone

in the universe. The female parrot in turn spoke of Śrī Rādhikā's glorious beauty, Her delightful singing, and Her admirable intelligence, calling her Suśīlatā (“of excellent morals”) and Cittamohinī (“attractor of the mind”). The male parrot continued Kṛṣṇa's glorification, calling Him Vamśīdhārī (“holder of the flute”), Chittahārī (“stealer of the mind”), and Madana Mohana (“attractor of Cupid”). The female parrot's response was a more intense veneration of Rādhārāṇī. In this way Caitanya Mahāprabhu relished the sweet glorifications of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu then arrived at Arishta Gram, where Kṛṣṇa killed the demon Ariṣṭāsura five thousand years ago. This episode led to the manifestation of Syama Kunda and Radha Kunda. With the passage of time, however, these holy lakes had almost disappeared, and none of the local residents could help Lord Caitanya find them. Being the abode of knowledge, He found two paddy fields called Kali Badi (black field) and Gauri Badi (white field) whose waters had reduced to the size of two small ponds. He entered them and bathed while offering them prayers.



Lord Caitanya had rediscovered Syama Kunda and Radha Kunda. As Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is dear to Kṛṣṇa, so is Her *kuṇḍa*, or lake. There Lord Kṛṣṇa had performed water sports and the *rāsa* dance with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the other *gopīs*. Nearby are the *kuṇḍas* of the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's eight closest *gopī* friends. Overwhelmed by ecstatic love, Lord Caitanya danced on the bank of Radha Kunda and drew *tilaka* marks on His body with the lake's clay.

At Govardhan Hill

Then Caitanya Mahāprabhu proceeded to the Govardhan *parikramā* path. When He saw Govardhan Hill, He was overwhelmed with joy and offered obeisances by falling to the ground like a rod. He embraced a Govardhan rock and became mad with ecstatic love. When He arrived at the village of Govardhan, He offered obeisances to the Kṛṣṇa deity named Harideva. Frenzied with ecstatic love, Caitanya Mahāprabhu danced before Harideva. People were astonished to see the Lord's beauty and ecstasy. He bathed in Brahma Kunda and that night stayed at the Harideva temple.

In another temple, on top of Govardhan Hill, resided Gopāla Rāya, the beautiful deity of cowherd-boy Kṛṣṇa discovered by Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī. During the night, Lord Caitanya wondered how He would be able to see Gopāla Rāya without climbing Govardhan Hill, which He considered too sacred to climb. Gopāla Rāya understood His desire and reciprocated. A rumor spread among the villagers that Turkish soldiers were coming to destroy their temples. So the villagers rushed to protect the deities and moved Gopāla Rāya to a village named Ganthuli Gram. The next day, Lord Caitanya bathed in Govinda Kunda and then saw Gopāla at Ganthuli Gram. He was so overwhelmed by ecstatic love that He chanted and danced continuously for three days

and three nights. On the fourth day, Gopāla Rāya returned to His own temple.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu then continued with the Govardhan *parikramā*. At the sight of Govardhan

He became rapturous with love of Kṛṣṇa. While dancing, He recited a verse from the section of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* known as the *Veṇu Gītā* ("The Song of the Flute"): "Of all the devotees, this



Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

Vrindavan's deer approach Caitanya Mahāprabhu (above) on hearing His chanting of the holy names. At right, the path around sacred Govardhan Hill, where Lord Kṛṣṇa performed many of His childhood pastimes.



Govardhana Hill is the best! O my friends, this hill supplies Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Their calves, cows, and cowherd friends, with all kinds of necessities – water for drinking, very soft grass, caves, fruits, flowers, and vegetables. In this way the hill offers respects to the Lord. Being touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Govardhana Hill appears very jubilant." (10.21.18)

Caitanya Mahāprabhu displayed deep transcendental emotions, and His profuse tears fell on Govardhan as if in an *abhiṣeka* (bathing of the Lord).

The Lord then visited Kamyavan and other forests one after the other. He bathed in Pavana Sarovara and climbed the hill called Nandisvara, the site of the house of Mahārāja Nanda, Kṛṣṇa's father. After inquiring from local people, He found three deities in a cave on the hill: Nanda, his wife (Yaśodā), and between them the beautiful child Kṛṣṇa, His body charmingly curved in three places. After offering respects, Lord Caitanya touched Lord Kṛṣṇa with great love. He chanted and danced the entire day and then went to Khadiravan, where Kṛṣṇa killed Bakāsura, a gigantic crane demon.

The Tradition of Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā



Visiting Vrindavan's sacred places on foot (Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā)

BY VISITING and touring Vrindavan, Caitanya Mahāprabhu was reviving Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā, or pilgrimage throughout the greater Vrindavan area. Muslim invasions of Vrindavan had brought to a standstill the local devotees' visits to the sacred sites. For safety, some deities had even been hidden. People gradually lost awareness of places like Radha Kunda. Lord Caitanya's *parikramā* of Vrindavan began the reestablishment of the sacred places. When He visited Vrindavan, the famous Six Gosvāmīs were not yet there, but they arrived later with a mission to locate the forgotten pastime places.

One other person is especially credited with reestablishing Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā: Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. He was a disciple of Kṛṣṇadāsa Brahmācārī, whose spiritual master was Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's closest followers. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī was born in South India and traveled to Vrindavan at the age of twelve. He is famous as the Vrajācārya, or the authority on Vrindavan,

for he not only rediscovered many forgotten places but also established the standard route of the Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā – the path walked by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

As Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī wandered throughout sacred Vraja, various pastime places were revealed to him. In trying to establish the path, he would sometimes get bewildered when he could not gather the required information from the scriptures or local saints. Then the deity of Kṛṣṇa he carried around his neck would climb down and walk ahead of him, showing him the way.

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī organized festivals throughout Vraja during which the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa were enacted to revive people's awareness of them. He established several temples and was the author of fifty-two books, including *Vraja-bhakti-vilāsa*, an elaborate guide to performing Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā. The book describes the glories of *parikramā*, the mood in which it is to be performed, the mantras to be chanted, and rituals to be observed at various places in Vraja.

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states that when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited the temple of Śeṣa-śāyī (Viṣṇu reclining on His serpent bed) and His consort Lakṣmī Devī, He recited a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.31.19), spoken by the *gopīs* when Kṛṣṇa left them during the *rāsa* dance: “O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path.”

fainted. Regaining consciousness, He rolled on the ground in ecstasy. Thereafter He visited Keshi Tirtha and then returned to Akrura Ghat in the evening.

The next morning, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu returned to Vrindavan and bathed at Chira Ghat, where Kṛṣṇa had teased the *gopīs* by stealing their clothes while they bathed in the Yamuna. Lord Caitanya rested under a tamarind tree that had been there since the time of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. Because the river Yamuna flowed nearby, a cool breeze was blowing. Lord Caitanya beheld the beauty of Vrindavan and the river.

that Kṛṣṇa had again appeared in Vrindavan. Some people who had come from Vrindavan to Akrura Ghat reported that they had seen Kṛṣṇa dancing on the hoods of the serpent Kāliya in the Yamuna, just as He had done fifty centuries earlier. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s traveling companion, Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya, wanted to go see the reported Kṛṣṇa. But Mahāprabhu rebuked him, saying that those who were supposedly seeing Kṛṣṇa were mad.

Why would Kṛṣṇa appear in Kaliyuga? asked Lord Caitanya. The scriptures, He explained, say that He appears in only three of the four ages.

In fact, since Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa, there was no need for Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya to go elsewhere. The supposed appearance of Kṛṣṇa at Kaliya Ghat was an illusion, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s appearance was the reality. The so-called Kṛṣṇa turned out to be a fisherman standing in his boat.

As the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 18.118–19) shows, the people then understood the real identity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu: “By Your bodily features we can see that You are none other than the son of Nanda Mahārāja, although the golden luster of Your body has covered Your original complexion. As the aroma of deer musk cannot be concealed by wrapping it in a cloth, Your characteristics as the Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot be concealed by any means.”

Caitanya Mahāprabhu stayed for many days at Akrura Ghat and revived the Kṛṣṇa consciousness of many people. One day, He recalled the celebrated pastime that had occurred there when Akrūra was taking Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma away from Vrindavan. While in the river chanting the Gāyatri mantra, Akrūra saw Vaiṣṇava, as well as Lord Viṣṇu reclining on Ananta-śeṣa. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu recalled Akrūra’s vision, He fell into the Yamuna and almost drowned. Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya jumped into
(please turn to page 61)



The temple at Janmasthan, the holy birthplace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, in Mathura

Thereafter, the Lord arrived at Khela Tirtha and then Bhandiravan. After crossing the Yamuna River, He went to Bhadravan. Then he visited Srivan, Lohavan, Mahavan, and Gokula, the place of Kṛṣṇa’s early childhood pastimes. Upon seeing the spot where Kṛṣṇa freed two demigods who had been cursed to live as trees, Lord Caitanya felt tremendous ecstatic love. Finally He returned to Mathura.

In search of solitude, Lord Caitanya soon moved to Akrura Ghat. He then visited Seva Kunj, the location of the *rāsa* dance in the present town of Vrindavan. He was so overwhelmed by love of Kṛṣṇa that He

He performed *kīrtana* there, His absorption in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa causing His golden complexion to turn bluish.

Quoting the *Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa*, Lord Caitanya told everyone of the importance of chanting the holy name: “In this age of Kali, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. There is no other way, no other way, no other way.”

Has Kṛṣṇa Returned To Vrindavan?

At this time, everywhere Lord Caitanya went the talk of the town was

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.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN IDEAL KING

The professional reciters continue their glorification of King Pṛthu.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 16

12 अन्तर्बहिश्च भूतानां पश्यन् कर्माणि चारणैः उदासीन इवाध्यक्षो वायुरात्मेव देहिनाम्

antar bahiṣ ca bhūtānām
paśyan karmāṇi cāraṇaiḥ
udāsīna ivādhyakṣo
vāyur ātmeva dehinām

antaḥ – internally; bahiḥ – externally; ca – and; bhūtānām – of living entities; paśyan – seeing; karmāṇi – activities; cāraṇaiḥ – by spies; udāsīnaḥ – neutral; iva – like; adhyakṣaḥ – the witness; vāyuh – the air of life; ātmā – the living force; iva – like; dehinām – of all the embodied.

King Pṛthu will be able to see all the internal and external activities of every one of his citizens. Still no one will be able to know his system of espionage, and he himself will remain neutral regarding all matters of glorification or vilification paid to him. He will be exactly like air, the life force within the body, which is exhibited internally and externally but is always neutral to all affairs.

13 नादण्ड्यं दण्डयत्येष सुतमात्मद्विषामपि दण्डयत्यात्मजमपि दण्ड्यं धर्मपथे स्थितः

nādaṇḍyam daṇḍayaty eṣa
sutam ātma-dviṣām api
daṇḍayaty ātmajam api
daṇḍyam dharma-pathe sthitaḥ

na – not; adaṇḍyam – not punishable; daṇḍayati – punishes; eṣaḥ – this King; sutam – the son; ātma-dviṣām – of his enemies; api – even; daṇḍayati – he punishes; ātma-jam – his own son; api – even; daṇḍyam – punishable; dharma-pathe – on the path of piety; sthitaḥ – being situated.

Since this King will always remain on the path of piety, he will be neutral to both his son and the son of his enemy. If the son of his enemy is not punishable, he will not punish him, but if his own son is punishable, he will immediately punish him.

PURPORT: These are the characteristics of an impartial ruler. It is the duty of a ruler to punish the criminal and give protection to the innocent. King Pṛthu was so neutral that if his own son were punishable, he would not hesitate to punish him. On the other hand, if the son of his enemy were innocent, he would not engage in some intrigue in order to punish him.

14 अस्याप्रतिहतं चक्रं पृथोरामानसाचलात् वर्तते भगवानर्को यावत्तपति गोगणैः

asyāpratihatam cakram
pṛthor amānasācalāt

*varṭate bhagavān arko
yāvat tapati go-gaṇaiḥ*

asya – of this King; *apratihatam* – not being impeded; *cakram* – the circle of influence; *prthoḥ* – of King Pṛthu; *ā-mānasa-acalāt* – up to Mānasa Mountain; *varṭate* – remains; *bhagavān* – the most powerful; *arkaḥ* – sun-god; *yāvat* – just as; *tapati* – shines; *go-gaṇaiḥ* – with rays of light.

Just as the sun-god expands his shining rays up to the Arctic region without impedance, the influence of King Pṛthu will cover all tracts of land up to the Arctic region and will remain undisturbed as long as he lives.

PURPORT: Although the Arctic region is not visible to ordinary persons, the sun shines there without impediment. Just as no one can check the sunshine from spreading all over the universe, no one could check the influence and reign of King Pṛthu, which would remain undisturbed as long as he lived. The conclusion is that the sunshine and the sun-god cannot be separated, nor could King Pṛthu and his ruling strength be separated. His rule over everyone would continue without disturbance. Thus the King could not be separated from his ruling power.

15 रञ्जयिष्यति यल्लोकमयमात्मविचेष्टितैः अथामुमाहू राजानं मनोरञ्जनकैः प्रजाः

*rañjayiṣyati yal lokam
ayam ātma-viçeṣṭitaiḥ
athāmum āhū rājānam
mano-rañjanakaiḥ prajāḥ*

rañjayiṣyati – will please; *yat* – because; *lokam* – the entire world; *ayam* – this King; *ātma* – personal; *viçeṣṭitaiḥ* – by activities; *atha* – therefore; *amum* – him; *āhū* – they call; *rājānam* – the King; *manāḥ-rañjanakaiḥ* – very pleasing to the mind; *prajāḥ* – the citizens.

This King will please everyone by his practical activities, and all of his citizens will remain very satisfied. Because of this the citizens will take great satisfaction in accepting him as their ruling king.

- 1) What is the Sanskrit word for “old men”?
- 2) What does Śrīla Prabhupāda say are the two kinds of “old men”?
- 3) What will be King Pṛthu’s relationship with his citizens?
- 4) How will King Pṛthu treat himself in relation to devotees?

16 दृढव्रतः सत्यसन्धो ब्रह्मण्यो वृद्धसेवकः शरण्यः सर्वभूतानां मानदो दीनवत्सलः

*dr̥ḍha-vrataḥ satya-sandho
brahmanyō vṛddha-sevakaḥ
śaraṇyaḥ sarva-bhūtānām
mānado dīna-vatsalaḥ*

dr̥ḍha-vrataḥ – firmly determined; *satya-sandhaḥ* – always situated in truth; *brahmanyāḥ* – a lover of the brahminical culture; *vṛddha-sevakaḥ* – a servitor of the old men; *śaraṇyaḥ* – to be taken shelter of; *sarva-bhūtānām* – of all living entities; *māna-dah* – one who gives respect to all; *dīna-vatsalaḥ* – very kind to the poor and helpless.

The King will be firmly determined and always situated in truth. He will be a lover of the brahminical culture and will render all service to old men and give shelter to all surrendered souls. Giving respect to all, he will always be merciful to the poor and innocent.

PURPORT: The word *vṛddha-sevakaḥ* is very significant. ① *Vṛddha* means “old men.” ② There are two kinds of old men: one is old by age, and another is old by knowledge. This Sanskrit word indicates that one can be older by the advancement of knowledge. King Pṛthu was very respectful to the *brāhmaṇas*, and he protected them. He also protected persons advanced in age. Whatever the King would decide to do, no one would be able to stop. That is called *dr̥ḍha-saṅkalpa*, or *dr̥ḍha-vrata*.

17 मातृभक्तिः परस्त्रीषु पत्न्यामर्ध इवात्मनः प्रजासु पितृवत्स्निग्धः किङ्करो ब्रह्मवादिनाम्

*mātr̥-bhaktiḥ para-strīṣu
patnyām ardha ivātmanaḥ
prajāsu pitṛvat snigdhaḥ
kiṅkaro brahma-vādinām*

mātr̥-bhaktiḥ – as respectful as one is to his mother; *para-strīṣu* – to other women; *patnyām* – to his own wife; *ardhaḥ* – half; *iva* – like; *ātmanaḥ* – of his body; *prajāsu* – unto the citizens; *pitṛvat* – like a father; *snigdhaḥ* – affectionate; *kiṅkaraḥ* – servant; *brahma-vādinām* – of the devotees who preach the glories of the Lord.

The King will respect all women as if they were his own mother, and he will treat his own wife as the other half of his body. ③ He will be just like an affectionate father to his citizens, and ④ he will treat himself as the most obedient servant of the devotees, who always preach the glories of the Lord.

PURPORT: ⑤ A learned man treats all women except his wife as his mother, looks on others’ property as garbage in the street, and treats others as he would treat his own self. These are the symptoms of a learned person as described by Cāṅkya Paṇḍita. This should be the standard for education. Education does not mean having academic degrees only. One should execute what he has learned in his personal life. These learned characteristics were verily manifest in the life of King Pṛthu. Although he was the king, he treated himself as a servant of the Lord’s devotees. According to Vedic etiquette, if a devotee came to a king’s palace, the king would immediately offer his own seat to him. The word *brahma-vādinām* is very significant. *Brahma-vādī* refers to the devotees of the Lord. Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān are different terms for the Supreme Brahman, and the Supreme Brahman is Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is accepted in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.12) by Arjuna (*paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma*). Thus the word *brahma-vādinām* refers to the devotees of the Lord. The state should always serve the devotees of the Lord, ⑥ and the ideal state should conduct itself according to the instructions of the devotee. Because King Pṛthu followed this principle, he is highly praised.

18 देहिनामात्मवत्प्रेष्ठः सुहृदां नन्दिवर्धनः मुक्तसङ्गप्रसङ्गोऽयं दण्डपाणिरसाधुषु

*dehinām ātmavat-preṣṭhaḥ
suhṛdām nandī-varḍhanaḥ
mukta-saṅga-prasaṅgo 'yam
daṇḍa-pāṇir asādhuṣu*

dehinām – to all living entities having a body; *ātma-vat* – as himself; *preṣṭhaḥ* – considering dear; *suhṛdām* – of his friends; *nandī-varḍhanaḥ* – increasing pleasures; *mukta-saṅga* – with persons devoid of all material contamination; *prasaṅgaḥ* – intimately associated; *ayam* – this King; *daṇḍa-pāṇiḥ* – a chastising hand; *asādhuṣu* – to the criminals.

The King will consider all embodied living entities as dear as his own self, and he will always be increasing the pleasures of his friends. He will intimately associate with liberated persons, and he will be a chastising hand to all impious persons.

PURPORT: The word *dehinām* refers to those who are embodied. The living entities are embodied in different forms, which number 8,400,000 species. All of these were treated by the King in the same way he would treat himself. ⑦ In this age, however, so-called kings and presidents do not treat all other living entities as their own self. Most of them are meat-eaters, and even though they may not be meat-eaters and may pose themselves to be very reli-

gious and pious, they still allow cow slaughter within their state. Such sinful heads of state cannot actually be popular at any time. ⑧ Another significant word in this verse is *mukta-saṅga-prasaṅgaḥ*, which indicates that the King was always associating with liberated persons.

19 अयं तु साक्षाद्भगवांस्त्र्यधीशः कूटस्थ आत्मा कलयावतीर्णः यस्मिन्नविद्यारचितं निरर्थकं पश्यन्ति नानात्वमपि प्रतीतम्

*ayam tu sākṣād bhagavāms try-adhīśaḥ
kūṭa-stha ātmā kalayāvātīrṇaḥ
yasminn avidyā-racitaṁ nirarthakaṁ
paśyanti nānātvam api pratītam*

ayam – this King; *tu* – then; *sākṣāt* – directly; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *tri-adhīśaḥ* – the master of the three planetary systems; *kūṭa-sthaḥ* – without any change; *ātmā* – the Supersoul; *kalayā* – by a partial plenary expansion; *avātīrṇaḥ* – descended; *yasminn* – in whom; *avidyā-racitaṁ* – created by nescience; *nirarthakaṁ* – without meaning; *paśyanti* – they see; *nānātvam* – material variegatedness; *api* – certainly; *pratītam* – understood.

This King is the master of the three worlds, and he is directly empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is without change, ⑨ and he is an incarnation of the Supreme known as a śaktyāveśa-avatāra. Being a liberated soul and completely learned, he sees all material varieties as meaningless because their basic principle is nescience.

PURPORT: The reciters of these prayers are describing the transcendental qualities of Pṛthu Mahārāja. These qualities are summarized in the words *sākṣād bhagavān*. This indicates that Mahārāja Pṛthu is directly the Supreme

- 5) According to Cāṅkya Paṇḍita, how does a learned man treat, respectively, all women except his wife, others’ property, and other people in general?
- 6) According to whose instructions should the ideal state conduct itself?
- 7) What example does Śrīla Prabhupāda give of how so-called kings and presidents do not treat all other living entities as their own self?
- 8) What does the term *mukta-saṅga-prasaṅgaḥ* mean?
- 9) What type of incarnation is King Pṛthu?

Personality of Godhead and therefore possesses unlimited good qualities. Being an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mahārāja Pṛthu could not be equaled in his excellent qualities. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is fully equipped with six kinds of opulences, and King Pṛthu was also empowered in such a way that he could display these six opulences of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in full.

The word *kūṭa-stha*, meaning “without change,” is also very significant. 10 There are two kinds of living entities – *nitya-mukta* and *nitya-baddha*. A *nitya-mukta* never forgets his position as the eternal servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who does not forget this position and knows that he is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord is *nitya-mukta*. Such a *nitya-mukta* living entity represents the Supersoul as His expansion. As stated in the *Vedas*, *nityo nityānām*. Thus the *nitya-mukta* living entity knows that he is an expansion of the supreme *nitya*, or the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead. Being in such a position, he sees the material world with a different vision. The living entity who is *nitya-baddha*, or eternally conditioned, sees the material varieties as being actually different from one another. In this connection we should remember that the embodiment of the conditioned soul is considered to be like a dress. One may dress in different ways, but a really learned man does not take dresses into consideration. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.18):

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śvapāke ca
paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

“The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater [outcaste].”

Thus a learned man does not look upon the dresses that externally cover the living entity, but sees the pure soul within the varieties of dress and knows very well that the varieties of dress are the creation of nescience (*avidyā-racitam*). Being a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Pṛthu Mahārāja

did not change his spiritual position, and consequently there was no possibility of his viewing the material world as reality.

20 अयं भुवो मण्डलमोदयाद्रे-
गोप्तैकवीरो नरदेवनाथः
आस्थाय जैत्रं रथमात्तचापः
पर्यस्यते दक्षिणतो यथार्कः

*ayam bhuvō maṇḍalam odayādrer
goptaika-vīro naradeva-nāthaḥ
āsthāya jaitram ratham ātta-cāpaḥ
paryasyate dakṣiṇato yathārkaḥ*

ayam – this King; *bhuvah* – of the world; *maṇḍalam* – the globe; *ā-udaya-adreḥ* – from the mountain where the first appearance of the sun is visible; *goptā* – will protect; *eka* – uniquely; *vīraḥ* – powerful, heroic; *nara-deva* – of all kings, gods in human society; *nāthaḥ* – the master; *āsthāya* – being situated on; *jaitram* – victorious; *ratham* – his chariot; *ātta-cāpaḥ* – holding the bow; *paryasyate* – he will circumambulate; *dakṣiṇataḥ* – from the southern side; *yathā* – like; *arkaḥ* – the sun.

This King, being uniquely powerful and heroic, will have no competitor. He will travel around the globe on his victorious chariot, holding his invincible bow in his hand and appearing exactly like the sun, which rotates in its own orbit from the south.

PURPORT: In this verse the word *yathārkaḥ* indicates that the sun is not fixed but is rotating in its orbit, which is set by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. 11 This is confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* and also in other parts of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that the sun rotates in its own orbit at the rate of sixteen thousand miles per second. Similarly, *Brahma-saṁhitā* states, *yasyājñāyā bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakraḥ*: the sun rotates in its own orbit according to the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The conclusion is that the sun is not fixed in one place. 12 As far as Pṛthu Mahārāja is concerned, it is indicated that his ruling power would extend all over the world. The Himalaya Mountains, from which the sunrise is first seen, are called *udayācala* or *udayādri*. It is herein indicated that Pṛthu Mahārāja’s reign over the world would cover even the Himalaya Mountains and extend to the borders of all oceans and seas. In other words, his reign would cover the entire planet.

[Continued in the next issue.]

- 10) What are the respective characteristics of the *nitya-mukta* and the *nitya-baddha* living entities?
- 11) What two scriptures does Śrīla Prabhupāda cite to confirm that the sun rotates in its own orbit?
- 12) Over what area would King Pṛthu’s reign extend?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Science’s Imitation Barking

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place on an early-morning walk in Geneva on June 6, 1974.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Just look at this fig. In this one fig, you find thousands of seeds, and each tiny seed can produce another tree as big as the original fig tree. Inside each little seed is a whole new fig tree.

Now, where is that chemist who can do such a thing: first, make a tree, and then, make the tree bear fruit, and next, make the fruit produce seeds – and finally, make the seeds produce still more trees? Just tell me. Where is that chemist?

Disciple: They talk very proudly, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but none of these chemists and such can do any of these things.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Once a big chemist came to me and admitted, “Our chemical advancement, our scientific advancement, is like a man who has learned to bark. So many natural dogs are already barking, but no one pays any attention. But if a man artificially learns the art of barking, oh, so many people will go to see – and even purchase tickets for ten dollars, twenty dollars. Just to see an artificial dog. Our scientific advancement is like this.”

If a man makes an artificial imitation of nature, say by barking, people go to see and even pay money. When it comes to the natural barking, no one cares. And when these big so-called scientific rascals claim they can manufacture life, people give all sorts of praise and awards. As for God’s perfect, natural process – millions and millions of beings born at each moment – no one cares. People don’t give God’s process very much credit.

The fool who concocts some utopian scheme for creating living beings from dead material chemicals – he is given all credit, you see: the Nobel Prize. “Oh, here is a creative genius.” And nature is injecting millions and millions of souls into material bodies at every moment – the arrangement of God – and no one cares. This is rascaldom.

Even if we suppose you could

manufacture a man or animal in your laboratory, what would be your credit? After all, a single man or animal created by you, and millions and millions created by the Lord. So we want to give credit to Kṛṣṇa, who is really creating all these living beings we see every day.

Disciple: Prabhupāda, you remember Aldous Huxley, who predicted in *Brave New World* a process of genetically screening babies, of breeding men for certain traits. The idea would be to take one strain of traits and breed a class of working men, take another strain of traits and breed a class of administrators, and take still another strain of traits and breed a class of cultured advisors and scholars.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Once again, that is already present in God’s natural arrangement. *Guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*: according to one’s qualities and activities in his past life, in this present life he gets a fitting body. If one has cultivated the qualities and activities of ignorance, he gets an ignorant body and must live by manual labor. If one has cultivated the qualities and activities of striving passion, he gets a passionate body and must live by taking charge of others – administration.

If one has cultivated the qualities and activities of enlightenment, he gets an enlightened body and must

live by enlightening and advising others.

So you see, God has already made such a perfect arrangement. Every soul receives the body he desires and deserves, and the social order receives citizens with required traits. Not that you have to “breed” these traits. By His natural arrangement, the Lord equips particular souls with particular kinds of bodies. Why even try imitating what God and nature already do perfectly?

I told that scientist who visited me, “You scientists – you are simply wasting time.” Childish. They are just imitating the dog’s barking. The scientist pays no attention, gives no credit to the real dog doing the real barking. Actually, that is today’s situation. When the natural dog barks, that is not science. When the artificial, imitation dog barks, that is science. Isn’t it so? To whatever degree the scientist succeeds in artificially imitating what the Lord’s natural arrangement is already doing – that is science.

Disciple: When you heard, Prabhupāda, about the scientists claiming they can now produce babies in a test tube, you said, “But that is already being done in the mother’s womb. The womb is the perfect test tube.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Nature is already doing everything with utter perfection. But some puffed-up scientist will make a shabby imitation – using the ingredients nature supplies – and get the Nobel Prize.

And what to speak of actually creating a baby – let us see the scientists produce even one blade of grass in their proud laboratories.

Disciple: They should give the Lord and Mother Nature the Nobel Prize.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, yes.

Disciple: Really, I think they should give you the Nobel Prize. You’ve taken so many foolish atheists and created devotees of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, I – I am a “natural dog,” so they’ll not give me any prize. [Laughs.] They will award the prize to the artificial dogs. 🐕

How to Put BTG in Your Will

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

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

e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



www.iskcon.org is the official website of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). The site provides a place for people to find out about ISKCON, its people, their activities, and the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Iskcon.org is primarily an introductory site, meant for people from around the world who have an interest in finding out about ISKCON. ISKCON members who become familiar with

the site feel inspired to direct the inquisitive to it.

Under About Us there are details about ISKCON, its history, and Śrīla Prabhupāda as the founder-*ācārya*. There is also a description of Vaiṣṇavism, its *sampradāyas*, and its place in Vedic culture.

The Activities menu has information about the culture of ISKCON and describes the devotees’ dynamic music, art, dance, and drama. There is also a discussion

of ISKCON’s literary tradition, the movement having printed and distributed half a billion books and magazines. Also under Activities are introductions to *kīrtana*, festivals, and cow protection.

The content in the Beliefs menu digs deeper into Vaiṣṇava philosophy, starting with *bhakti-yoga*. There are sections on meditation, vegetarianism, the use of sacred texts, and reincarnation and karma.

The People menu has brief autobiographies by devotees that show the wide variety of people from all walks of life who have come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. After introducing themselves, they answer the questions “Why am I a devotee?” and “How does devotion guide my life?”

The News menu links to iskconnews.org, “The News Agency of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.”

The Resources menu has a list of tracks from albums by well-known devotee musicians. There are photos of devotees involved in *kīrtana*, food distribution, and other devotional activities. There is a range of answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about death, God, life, the soul, and yoga. There is also a link to the ISKCON Interfaith Statement.

Under Links you can browse an online library, download e-books, and learn more about Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In the Connect menu you can open a live chat with devotees, search the worldwide Temple Directory, subscribe to a newsletter, or send a message and receive an answer by email.

Iskcon.org is a colorful, friendly, easy-to-use website just perfect for sharing with people new to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



Haridāsa Tākura Dāsa



REFLECTING ON HALF A CENTURY

Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in 1965 and gave America's post-war generation – the first to grow up watching TV – sound motives to learn about Kṛṣṇa.



Clockwise, beginning at upper left: Prabhupāda's samādhī in Vrindavan; Dallas temple garden, 1975 (the author is seated at Prabhupāda's right); Jayānanda Dāsa constructing Rathayātrā carts in San Francisco; Prabhupāda onstage at the 1974 San Francisco Rathayātrā festival; the author with family (seated next to his mother), early 1960s.

Viśākhā Devī Dāśī



by Tattvavit Dāsa

WHO WAS Śrīla Prabhupāda, new in America fifty years ago? A hero. Who is he now for me?

In Tim Parks's story *Reverend*, I read about a sixty-year-old Englishman looking back thirty years to recall his deceased father, a clergyman: "He didn't feel like doing research, putting

his father's name into Google or delving into archives. . . . What he wanted, rather, was to assemble a picture of his father" from memory. Disciples ought to be able to say what their guru is for them, what part of their personality they owe him. How did our separate cultures interface? How did my background shape my

involvement in and understanding of his movement?

Prabhupāda turned sixty-nine going to America by sea. In my town in Minnesota, it was summer and I was nearly fifteen. Our baseball team practiced most mornings. The town has a golf course and a public swimming area next to a narrow river. After seeing the Beatles on TV, in 1964, we boys grew long hair. I delivered a Minneapolis newspaper to houses, sometimes stopping at St. Mary's Villa to see my maternal grandmother, who, after outliving my grandfather, would die there.

Prabhupāda's thirty-five-day ocean crossing brought on two heart attacks. He dreamed of Lord Kṛṣṇa telling him not to fear, assuring him of protection. In his diary he

Jan Olof Bengtsson observes, "Whether the potential historical significance of his mission to the West will be realized depends on how his organization (ISKCON) and its work are received in the West by Westerners. And this, in turn, depends on the extent to which his followers succeed in achieving a deep, long-term, selective translation and integration of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava spirituality into the historically evolved culture and society of the West, taking into account its particular characteristics and history in a more conscious, deliberate, and discerning manner than has heretofore been done."*

Bad Choices

My grandmother left an impression on my heart when I was young. She

errors than we are."

Kahneman received the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on the psychology of judgment and decision-making. At the University of California, Berkeley, he was the graduate-school advisor of my longtime friend and former classmate Terry Odean, who gave me Kahneman's best-seller, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, as a Diwali present. Terry holds a chair at Berkeley's business school.

Kahneman writes, "[Improving] the ability to identify and understand errors of judgment and choice, in others and in ourselves . . . may suggest an intervention to limit the damage that bad judgments and choices often cause."

Prabhupāda showed anyone how to recognize a key error: misidentifying the body or mind as one's permanent or existent self. *Aham brahmāsmi*: I am a spirit soul. And souls entangled in the world of matter need to get out of this dreadful temporary environment. For that we need a process. A guru who really represents God suggests practical interventions to limit the damage caused by the bad choice of thinking only of this life.

Prabhupāda offers the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness according to firm guidelines. This process reminds me of the braces that straightened my teeth. Every three weeks the orthodontist adjusted the wires and clamps – tightly! Similarly, Prabhupāda ordered us to restrict sex to procreation; to not gamble or get intoxicated; to not eat meat, fish, or eggs; and to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. By these practices we can gradually reach the spiritual level at which we constantly experience ourselves as transcendental to conditional identifications and attachments. And by gradually obtaining love of Kṛṣṇa, we make our lives successful.

In Los Angeles on Sunday, January 13, 1974, I saw Prabhupāda for the first time. Only two days earlier I had arrived in California – now

twenty-three – to try living in San Francisco's temple for six months. In his class, Prabhupāda discussed the states of ignorance, passion, and goodness. A soul's activity in contact with matter becomes adulterated in acts of foolishness and desire. Without eliminating these effects of ignorance and passion, he said, and elevating yourself to the mode of goodness, you remain ineligible to be the Lord's devotee. Analogously, without an undergraduate degree you cannot enter law school. Good devotees then make further progress and rise to the transcendental level of seeing Kṛṣṇa "by dint of pure affection" and become completely happy.

The analogy was personally relevant. Bachelor's degree in hand, I had applied to law school and graduate school. The University of Wisconsin in Madison accepted me into a Master's program in Buddhist studies. D. T. Suzuki's books inspired me (maybe, like him, I could become a writer and practitioner). But *nirvāṇa*, void and unvaried, seemed not worth years of study. I became more attracted to Kṛṣṇa's wondrously varied eternal world, illustrated in Prabhupāda's book *Kṛṣṇa*, which George Harrison had funded.

John Berryman, a scholar and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet at the University of Minnesota, killed himself when I was taking his seminar. I wondered whether I might end up like him. (The first article I wrote for this magazine discusses this poor soul's desperation due to lust and alcoholism.) Instead of becoming a graduate student, I became obligated to Prabhupāda, an extraordinary teacher free of the faults of most intellectuals. He offered an invaluable remedy for the bad choices I was making.

One Particular Disciple

Prabhupāda's senior disciple in San Francisco especially carried me along for half a year – when a

demanding schedule and absorption in Kṛṣṇa still seemed strange and overwhelming. He was firm on himself and humble with others.

"Bhakta Tom," he said the first week, "we're going out to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Please come with us."

Jayānanda's sincerity encouraged me. He regularly organized the inspiring chanting and dancing on the streets. Tall and charismatic, he played a drum and led the singing.

On a recording, Prabhupāda pauses his lecture upon seeing Jayānanda enter the room and says, "Jayānanda looks like Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Yes! He was tall and stout and strong. Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

Śrī Caitanya benevolently gave humanity a dispensation, five hundred years ago, to chant Kṛṣṇa's names as the sufficient means of spiritual deliverance. Just a recipient of the grace of Prabhupāda and Śrī Caitanya, I lacked any further qualifications to join the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

I had studied intellectual history,

the history of ideas (such as racism in philosophy and literature). I protested the military-industrial establishment's Vietnam War and adopted some hippie ways, a countercultural means of renouncing the materialism of Western culture and society. In the mainstream, the birth control pill and legal abortion encouraged sexual irresponsibility. So did hippiedom, but as the scholar Jan Olof writes, to the extent that hippies authentically sought spiritual enlightenment, they were, in a sense, right to "drop out," and providentially were present to receive and carry on Prabhupāda's mission when he arrived. Prabhupāda often quipped that he had made hippies "happies."

There were things I didn't like about the temple, such as the members' lack of participation in deciding on which direction the center took, but within me were many shameful tendencies even more unlikely, for which I needed spiritual aid, so I mostly cooperated with the devotees.

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In fifty years, in eighty languages, those of us he inspired have distributed a half billion of Prabhupāda's books.

wrote about coming to the West to teach in English, just to execute his guru's order. On September 19 he reached New York, a grandfatherly gentleman far from home, and so poorly accommodated in Manhattan for nine months that today people admire his patience and valor.

By risking his life when most men retire, Prabhupāda demonstrated a devotee's unselfishness. A devotee – happy having Kṛṣṇa – knows perfect happiness yet wholeheartedly cares about others and hence conveys to everyone the bliss of serving Kṛṣṇa. In fifty years, in eighty languages, those of us he inspired have distributed a half billion of Prabhupāda's books. Thanks to his good influence, for the first time in history people all over the world now take Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously.

My Swedish friend the scholar

said something to my mom, pretending not to see me under the kitchen counter. She indirectly said it to me, because I had grown old enough to start discerning what is acceptable.

"Tommy has a bit of the devil in him," Grandma said.

I thus began to benefit from the informed opinion of another, which is a powerful motive for serious self-criticism. While I attended college, Prabhupāda's cultured opinions started motivating me.

"We are often confident even when we are wrong," writes Daniel Kahneman, "and an objective observer is more likely to detect our

* Jan Olof Bengtsson, "The Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement and Western Cultural Identity: Education, Preaching, and Conversion," *ISKCON Studies Journal*, Vol. 2 (2014): pp. 21–44. (Online: <http://isi.sdgaudio.org>)

Jayānanda died of leukemia in mid-1977, renowned as the organizer of the Rathayātra (“Chariot Festival”) in San Francisco and the pioneer of the Rathayātrā parades on Fifth Avenue in New York and Venice Beach in Los Angeles. We talked in the Manhattan temple for the last time. He made the point – again, about bad choices – that unless we keep serving Kṛṣṇa, our mental state will be just crammed with decisions offered by *māyā*, Kṛṣṇa’s illusory energy, and we will be perpetually entangled in the temporary world. Humble Jayānanda knew, from Śrīla Prabhupāda, the art of making the better choice.

you will become cockroaches in your cars. Offering Kṛṣṇa what we eat nourishes the body spiritually and counteracts karmic reactions. Thus Prabhupāda identified errors of judgment and suggested better decisions.

In Dallas, on a scorching summer evening Prabhupāda was sitting at the top of a flight of outdoor cement steps, about to speak with a disciple. The day’s heat was rising from the cement, so he had someone bring a bucket of cold water and pour it over the landing. I stood beside the bottom step and railing, just to watch (not really within earshot). But he saw me from the corners of his eyes and gently raised his folded palms as

for Kṛṣṇa by the devotional process, little by little, little by little. Just like in practical life, we begin to love somebody gradually, one thing after another, not all of a sudden. Then surrender – that is the ultimate state of loving affairs. We surrender to Kṛṣṇa out of love, which is the ultimate perfection.

Memories and Memorials

In 2012 I went to my hometown after being away for forty years. Now my brothers and sister live elsewhere, but we held a reunion at my brother’s summer home at a lake. We had inherited Catholicism. When young, we sometimes prayed: “Now I lay me down to sleep/ I pray the Lord my soul to keep/ And if I die before I wake/ I pray the Lord my soul to take.” God is everywhere and above it all – knowing everyone’s desires – so God is the most capable protector at the time of death, we learned.

We used to sing a likeable hymn in church: “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name.” I and other altar boys memorized Latin prayers for the Mass. Nowadays, I chant Sanskrit prayers and the holy names in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

The church has not changed, except for the addition of ceiling fans. It looks exactly the same, with nothing replaced but the confessional stalls. Even the same old door handles remain in use, and the closet that held the altar boys’ cassocks still holds them.

Colorful pamphlets at the front entry presented positions on faith and practice, but none addressed meat-eating or intoxication – two Catholic allowances beneath Prabhupāda’s purer standards.

Around the early 1960s, on certain rare holy days the priests prostrated themselves on the sanctuary floor. It was in a routine prostrated pose of offering respect to God that I saw Prabhupāda for the first time (just before his class in Los Angeles that January). Bowing to show respect to the Divine is something atheists will

never do, but God comes to everyone as death, and then atheists are forced to fall down before a higher power. Better to voluntarily surrender, Prabhupāda advised.

A local graveyard holds my parents’ ashes and my grandparents’ bodies. I sat on the grass in front of the tombstones and composed a prayer, while my brother walked about and waited. This capable couple – by Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement, meant to look after me the best they could – left a financial trust for my use in illness and old age.

When visiting India, I often go to a white-marble building where Prabhupāda’s body is buried. He passed on in Vrindavan, Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental childhood town. Because this sacred place aids elevation to Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual abode, devotees go there to die. So a Bhaktivedanta Hospice has been built for ISKCON devotees.

Prabhupāda fasted for months as his life dwindled – something his father did in 1930. When I saw the 1977 photos of Prabhupāda’s emaciated body, his seriousness of purpose shocked me; my respect and love increased. A lot of dying people cannot process food, but they are administered nutrition intravenously. Prabhupāda insisted on not being hooked up to tubes and depended on Kṛṣṇa till the end.

Last November, at the evening observance of the anniversary of his last hour, sitting in that same room of his house I felt God’s presence in sound while hearing the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra beautifully sung by Nadiyā Bihārī Dāsi, a married young lady who grew up as a devotee in England. I thought, Kṛṣṇa protected Prabhupāda, his dear devotee. Very intimate associates of Kṛṣṇa appear in the world to make the Lord’s mission happen, and then they return to the spiritual world.

It is offensive to envy a guru who is Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee, to consider him an ordinary man or disobey his instructions. Prabhupāda sometimes quoted a text warning us: Spiritual realization is difficult and sharp like a razor’s edge. A sharp blade gives a

good shave, but inattentiveness, or committing offenses, causes bloodshed. Fortunately, in the association of devotees we learn to avoid offenses. So, from time to time, we can congratulate ourselves on progress: “Lesson learned!”

In 1959 Prabhupāda was sixty-three when he accepted *sannyāsa*, a renounced stage of devoting all his time and energy to the service of the Lord. I am now two years older than he was then, so it is not difficult for me to understand how he felt, physically and mentally, at this age. During his next six years he translated and commented on the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which he published and took to America.

It is more difficult to understand the perfect state of his intelligence at this time: resolute, single-minded, clear of everything that could impede him in all he had to do in his service to his spiritual master, and willing to

let Kṛṣṇa do with him whatever Kṛṣṇa liked. To preach in the West he humbly repeated Kṛṣṇa’s message, with strong faith in Kṛṣṇa’s names, and his glorious activities made Kṛṣṇa glorious worldwide.

He writes that when people are instructed about following the Supreme Personality of Godhead and they adopt Kṛṣṇa consciousness, “that is victory for the Lord,” for Kṛṣṇa then reclaims these souls. Śrīla Prabhupāda is a general, a warrior winning these victories for the Lord. 🌐

Tattvavit Dāsa recently edited a history of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple, entitled Vrindavana Is My Home, by Daivī-śakti Dāsi. He helped Jayādvaitya Swami with the e-book version of the book Vanity Karma: Ecclesiastes, the Bhagavad-gītā and the meaning of life, published this September. Tattvavit blogs at tvdas.tumblr.com.

Prabhupāda spoke daily about how to know Kṛṣṇa in truth. In Dallas, under the evening sky, he described seeing Kṛṣṇa.

Tours in North America

Prabhupāda’s last four years were the years I had his association. I saw him at festivals and heard his classes in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Dallas, Denver, Chicago, Detroit, and Toronto. I traveled across North America twice in the mid-1970s with a group that sold his books to college libraries and professors. We not only visited all the ISKCON temples but followed Prabhupāda’s summer tours. At colleges, I accompanied the group leader, Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami, to classrooms where he was invited to speak, and I did research in libraries for his first book, *Readings in Vedic Literature*.

Speaking at a Sunday program in Toronto, Prabhupāda warned Indian guests not to forget Kṛṣṇa; otherwise, there would be consequences. Now in the West, he said, you have big cars, good salaries, nice apartments – but if you do not offer your food to Kṛṣṇa (which the *Bhagavad-gītā* recommends), then in your next life

a signal for me to leave the private conversation.

Earlier that evening we had all met him in the garden. For me, the most important thing he said was that if you can control your tongue, you can control all your other senses. He meant: chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, eating only food offered to Kṛṣṇa, and telling others about Kṛṣṇa. Traveling worldwide, Prabhupāda spoke daily to people about how to know Kṛṣṇa in truth. In Dallas, under the evening sky, he described seeing Kṛṣṇa:

Kṛṣṇa’s energy is not different from Kṛṣṇa. The sunlight is Kṛṣṇa’s energy, air is Kṛṣṇa’s energy, water is Kṛṣṇa’s energy, land is Kṛṣṇa’s energy, the sky is Kṛṣṇa’s energy. This is Kṛṣṇa’s, or God’s, all-pervasiveness. The universe is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa’s energy. Every working of nature – Kṛṣṇa is doing that. So God is present everywhere. If we can learn how to see Kṛṣṇa always, then our lives are successful. And this is possible by gradually increasing our love

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BHAKTI

The Only Transcendental Yoga

An analysis of four types of yoga described in the Bhagavad-gītā.

by Hari Parāyaṇa Dāsa

LORD KṚṢṆA in his teachings to Uddhava classifies action and knowledge (among other things) as being either under the control of the three modes of material nature or under the spiritual energy (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 11, Chapter 25). Thus the yogic processes explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* can be broadly classified into two groups. In one group, the practices are under the control of *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion), and *tamas* (ignorance). This group comprises *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga** (Figure 1). The other group consists of *bhakti-yoga*, the yoga of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and the only yoga process not under the control of the modes of material nature. *Bhakti* is a purely spiritual process directly under the control of the spiritual energy.

*See the Glossary on page 43.

Material processes yield material results. For example, jogging every day for one hour will make the body fitter; that is, it will lead to a material result. But the body will die someday despite all the jogging. In fact, the results of all material actions are temporary, including those of *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, which are not transcendental activities. Conversely, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14) that by surrendering to Him one can easily overcome the material energy. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the purport: “Therefore surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord is the only means to get free from the clutches of the stringent material nature.” Similarly Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (hereafter *Bhāg.*) (11.14.21), *bhakti-yāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*: “I am attained through unflinching faith and devotional service.”

Distinctions Between Karma-, Jñāna-, and Bhakti-Yoga

To an aspiring transcendentalist the choice between a process that gives eternal, spiritual results and one that yields temporary, material results may seem obvious. Yet some people consider either *karma-yoga* or *jñāna-yoga* the *Gītā*'s main teaching. Such persistent misunderstanding of the *Gītā*'s message might stem from an ignorance of the practices and results of each yoga. For the aspiring *sādhaka* devotee, it is also important to understand how *bhakti* is not covered by karma and *jñāna*. This requires a clear understanding of the differences between the processes of *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga*. What follows is a discussion of their distinctive features. I have based this discussion on Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, known as *Sārārtha Varṣiṇī Ṭikā* (translated by His Holiness Bhānu Swami). I have done this because Viśvanātha carefully analyses, in the context of the *Gītā*, *bhakti-yoga* as both mixed with the other two yogas and as free of their influence. I will conclude with a brief note on Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Gītā* commentary.

Karma-Yoga

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the word *karma* often refers to duties recommended in the Vedic scriptures. These duties are generally of three types: *nitya*, *naimittika*, and *kāmya*. *Nitya* refers to regular duties, such as observing daily sacrifices and rituals. *Naimittika-karma* are rituals for special occasions such as *śrāddha* (offerings to departed souls), marriage, and the birth of a child. *Kāmya-karma* means scripturally prescribed actions performed with the desire for some material gain. *Karma-kāṇḍa*, or *sakāma-karma*, refers to the performance of the above types of karma with desire for material gain in this life or promo-

Practices Under The Control of The Material Energy:

Karma-Yoga Jñāna-Yoga Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga

(Results are material – therefore temporary)

Practice Not Under The Control of The Material Energy:

Bhakti-Yoga

(Results are spiritual – therefore permanent)

Figure 1: Yoga Practices Outlined in the *Bhagavad-gītā*

tion to higher planets for enjoying heavenly pleasure in the next life (*Gītā* 9.20, Figure 2). These are no small pleasures. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the purport to *Gītā* 9.20: "Once situated on those higher planetary systems, one can satisfy his senses hundreds of thousands of times better than on this planet." After exhausting one's "credits," however, one has to return to earth. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "One sim-

Karma-Kāṇḍa or Sakāma-Karma (Rāja-Guṇa):

Perform Scriptural Rituals For Materialistic Desires

(Leads to heaven, followed by rebirth in the mortal world)

Karma-Yoga (Sattva-Guṇa):

Perform Duties Without Desire – Offer Results to Kṛṣṇa

(Leads to purification and advancement to Jñāna-Yoga)

Figure 2: *Karma-Kāṇḍa* and *Karma-Yoga*

ply revolves in the cycle of birth and death on higher and lower planetary systems." The word *yoga* means "connection," and in its highest sense means connection with Kṛṣṇa. In *karma-yoga* this connection is established when the performer surrenders the results of karma (duties) to Kṛṣṇa. If this connection is absent, the word *yoga* is inapplicable. One's occupational duties in *varṇāśrama* come under the definition of karma. This is evident from *Gītā* 2.48, in which Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to fight while performing *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* by being equipoised in success and failure. *Samatvaṁ yoga ucyate*: "Such equanimity is called yoga." *Karma-yoga* is in the mode of goodness because the scriptural duties are performed without desire for results (*Gītā* 18.23, *Bhāg.* 11.25.23); *sakāma-karma* is in the material mode of passion (11.25.23). Because of the absence of desires for results, *karma-yoga* is also called *niṣkāma*. For reasons that will become clear later, I note two important aspects of *karma-yoga* here: (1) the activities are first performed, and then the results are given to Kṛṣṇa, and (2) only scripturally prescribed duties come under the purview of *karma-yoga*.

Even though *karma-yoga* is connected with the divine through the offering of activities, it cannot by itself give transcendental results, such as freeing the performer from

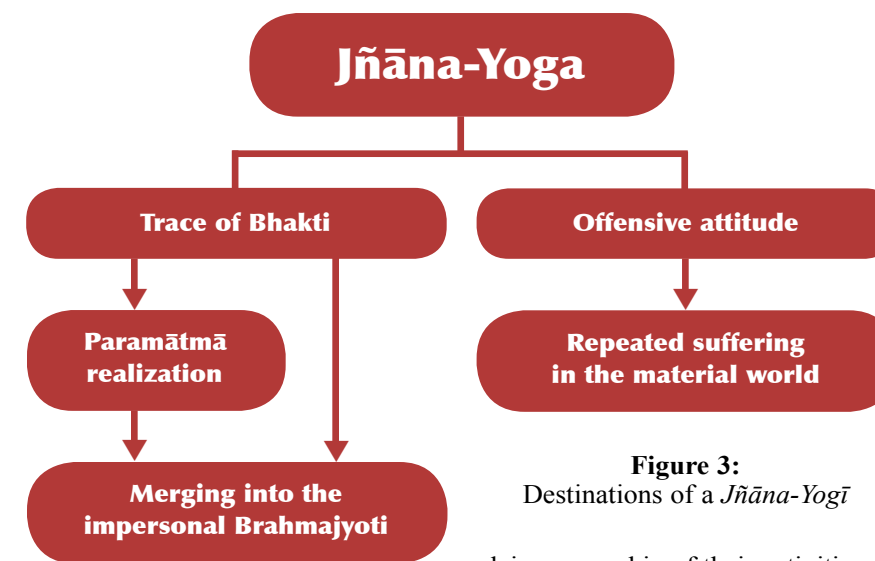


Figure 3: Destinations of a *Jñāna-Yogī*

the cycle of birth and death or giving him love of God. This is because *karma-yoga* is in the material mode of goodness. *Karma-yoga* has one benefit: the results of those prescribed activities whose results are offered to Kṛṣṇa without any personal desire do not bind the performer (*Gītā* 3.9).

Karma-yoga, *jñāna-yoga*, and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* are arranged in a hierarchy so that the faithful performance of one level results in purification and elevation to the next level. The fruit of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* is *jñāna-yoga*, discussed next.

Jñāna-Yoga

The word *jñāna* in *jñāna-yoga* refers to the *jñāna-yogī*'s knowledge that he or she is not the body but the indestructible soul (*Gītā* 2.11–2.39). By *karma-yoga*, attachment for the results of activities is weakened and finally eliminated; one is then able to control one's senses (*saṁyatendriyaḥ*, *Gītā* 4.39). In a heart thus purified, knowledge that one is the soul automatically (*svayam*) manifests (*Gītā* 4.38). This is realized knowledge, as opposed to knowledge that might be read in a book but not experientially verified. In his role as an observer, a person situated in *jñāna-yoga* does not identify with his senses; he does not

porary and His deity forms material – gets only suffering (*Bhāg.* 10.14.4, 10.2.32). Instead of transcendental benefit, he undergoes birth and death repeatedly in *samsāra*.

What constitutes the activities of a *jñānī*? Lord Kṛṣṇa addresses this question in some detail in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter 5. The *jñānī* can take *sannyāsa* and thereby

claim ownership of their activities, nor is he controlled by them (*Bhāg.* 11.25.16).

Although the realization gained by *jñāna-yoga* is of transcendence – of the nonmaterial soul – the realization is still in the material mode of goodness (11.25.24), as in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. Therefore *jñāna-yoga* by itself can again not free one from the cycle of *samsāra*, birth and death; it cannot provide liberation, or *mokṣa*.

This point may seem inconsistent with the understanding that *jñāna-yoga* awards the liberation of merging into Brahman, the impersonal absolute. Brahman, however, is Kṛṣṇa's transcendental effulgence (*Bhāg.* 1.2.11, *Gītā* 14.27), and therefore to achieve even impersonal liberation requires a transcendental process (*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*, *Bhāg.* 11.14.21). Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains this surprising subtlety: even the liberation that ultimately accrues (after great difficulty, *Gītā* 12.5) for the *jñāna-yogī* is due to trace levels of *bhakti*. The *jñāna-yogī* who at the time of death surrenders his *jñāna* itself to Kṛṣṇa (as Kṛṣṇa instructs in *Bhāg.* 11.14.21) acquires – by dint of the trace of *bhakti* that remains – the transcendental result of merging into Kṛṣṇa's effulgence. (Figure 3)

But the *jñānī* without the trace of *bhakti* – such as one who considers Kṛṣṇa's birth and activities tem-

Glossary

- aṣṭāṅga-yoga** – literally “the yoga of eight limbs,” this is the original form of what is known today as *haṭha-yoga*
- cakra** – one of the eight energy points of the subtle body
- guṇa** – one of the three “modes” of nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance
- jñāna** – knowledge
- kāma** – material desire
- kāmya** – with material desire
- karma-kāṇḍa** – the path (*kāṇḍa*) of work (*karma*) for material gain, especially promotion to heaven after death
- karma-yoga** – the yoga of connecting one's activities to the Supreme
- misra** – mixed
- naimittika** – occasional
- nirguṇa** – beyond material qualities or the influence of the three modes
- niṣkāma** – without material desire
- nitya** – regularly performed
- sādhaka** – a person engaged in a regulated practice to attain some goal
- sakāma** – with material desire
- uttama** – the highest
- varṇāśrama** – the Vedic system of four spiritual and four social orders

renounce all actions and the world itself. Or he can continue to perform *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* by giving the results of his activities to Kṛṣṇa. Acting in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* is not a step down for the *jñānī*; rather, in this way he can remain fixed in purity.

Bhakti-Yoga

The main type of *bhakti* is called *uttama-bhakti*, which is on the platform of *prema* (pure love) for Kṛṣṇa. Another type of *bhakti* arises from mixing *bhakti* with *jñāna* and karma. *Sakāma-karma-miśra-bhakti* is *bhakti* mixed with a trace of *sakāma-karma*, a desire for some material goal. There are three types of *sakāma-*

the results of scriptural duties (e.g., *nitya-* and *naimittika-karma*, or *varṇāśrama* duties) are offered to Kṛṣṇa, while in *bhakti* all activities are offered to Kṛṣṇa. Also, the practitioner has knowledge of *ātmā* and Paramātmā, like a *jñānī*, but is superior to a *jñānī* owing to the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa as Bhagavān. Therefore this is not *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, or *uttama-bhakti*, but rather *karma-jñāna-miśra-bhakti*. Such a *bhakta* attains direct service to the Lord (*Gītā* 9.28).

Why is offering what we eat to Kṛṣṇa not *uttama-bhakti*? *Uttama-bhakti* involves more than just offering the final result (cooked food). Rather, the entire activity of cooking is done to satisfy Kṛṣṇa (*Bhāg.*

11.11.32, 11.5.41) A corollary is that all *bhakti-yoga* activities meant only to satisfy Kṛṣṇa are transcendental and come under *uttama-bhakti*. These include traveling, using the Internet, making movies, making devotional art, and a long list of other activities in which Śrīla Prabhupāda engaged devotees to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

If *sakāma-bhakti* becomes *niṣkāma*, the result is *jñāna-miśra-bhakti*. The *jñāna-miśra-bhakta* enters the *śānta-rasa*. Known as the neutral state of love of God, it is characterized by overwhelming awe of Kṛṣṇa. The sages called the four Kumāras exemplify *śānta-rasa*. Some *jñāna-miśra-bhaktas*, such as Śukadeva Gosvāmī, progress to the more mature stage of *prema* (pure love) for Kṛṣṇa through the association of pure devotees (*Bhāg.* 1.7.10, *Gītā* 18.54).

Yoga-miśra-bhakti refers to the mixing of *bhakti* with *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* (*Gītā* 8.9–10). Fixing the life air in the *ājñā-cakra* (between the eyebrows) at the time of death, the *yoga-miśra-bhakta* attains the Lord's abode (*sālokya-mukti*) (*Gītā* 8.13).

Is there no *jñāna* in *uttama-bhakti*? *Uttama-bhaktas* like Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī clearly are storehouses of knowledge, so it is not that *uttama-bhakti* is devoid of knowledge. Rather the knowledge in *uttama-bhakti* is specifically about Kṛṣṇa, such as His form, opulences, and pastimes. This knowledge is transcendental to the three *guṇas* because it is about the transcendental Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore it is not considered *jñāna*, but rather *bhakti* (*Bhāg.* 11.25.24). What is rejected from *uttama-bhakti* is the trace of the *jñānī's* desire to merge into the impersonal Brahman.

In summary, *uttama-bhakti* is both *niṣkāma* and *nirguṇa*. *Niṣkāma* because there are no material desires to fulfill; rather, the only goal is to fulfill Kṛṣṇa's desires. *Nirguṇa* because it is not under the control of the material energy. As a result,

because of *bhakti's* transcendental nature even a new devotee performing *sādhana-bhakti* is connected with transcendence. He is above the *guṇas*, and becomes quickly purified (*Bhāg.* 10.33.39, 2.8.5).

Prabhupāda's Commentary On the Bhagavad-gītā

Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* conveys the urgency to preach the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood is to give the reader transcendental *bhakti* on every page. Today's readers have neither the time nor the patience to go through a book from cover to cover, so they are unlikely to discover the conclusion of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Rather, they just pick and choose from the *Gītā's* pages whatever justifies their way of life.

My understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda's treatment of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that he treats each yoga as a

limb of *bhakti*. His translations and purports highlight the fact that the actions of *bhakti*, the knowledge of *bhakti*, the faith of *bhakti*, and the happiness of *bhakti* are all transcendental to the modes (*Bhāg.* 11.25.23, 11.25.24, 11.25.27, and 11.25.29 respectively). Given the unique mood of Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching movement, as well as his intimate connection with Kṛṣṇa, we can understand why he translates *karma-yoga* as "action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*bhakti*)" or *jñāna-yoga* as "transcendental knowledge," rather than "knowledge in the material mode of goodness." This gives us a window into the unique *rasas* (emotions) of a devotee on the highest platform of *prema*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura defined *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* to refute the prevailing scholarly opinion at his time (primarily of the impersonalist school), and to establish the supremacy of *bhakti*. Both these *ācāryas* lived and

propagated Kṛṣṇa consciousness in their own ways according to time, place, and circumstance. Given that Kṛṣṇa is infinite, His words have infinite and infinitely sweet meanings, and according to their individual *rasas* with Him, our *ācāryas* have presented infinitely sweet commentaries. Although they may differ superficially, the ultimate goal of their commentaries is the same: Kṛṣṇa *prema*. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda's title for his translation is apt: *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. As it is – not covered by the effects of mundane yogic processes such as *karma-yoga* or *jñāna-yoga*, but meant solely for developing Kṛṣṇa *prema*. And by his mercy, his devotees understand these yoga processes in the same way. 🌸

Hari Parāyaṇa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhā-Govinda Swami. He lives in Gainesville, Florida, with his wife, Deva Saritā Devī Dāsī, and their two children.

To offer the results to Kṛṣṇa but not be conscious of Kṛṣṇa during the entire activity is mixed *bhakti*, not *uttama-bhakti*.

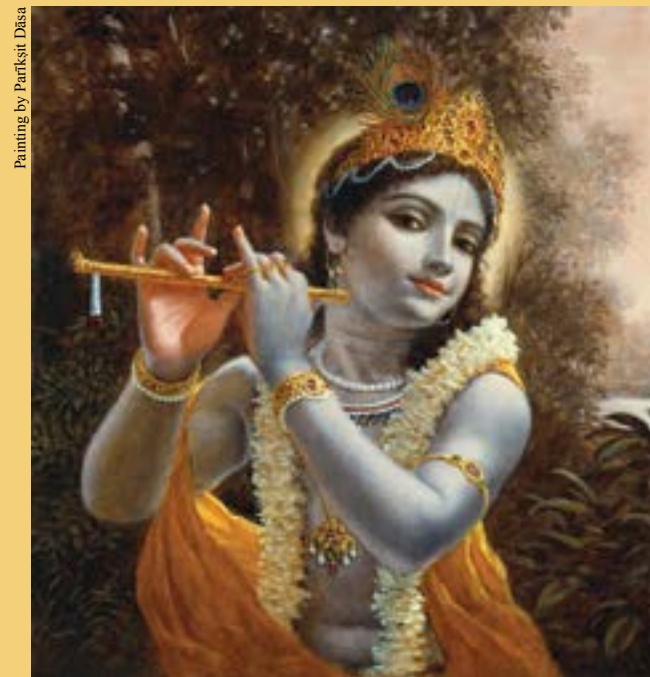
karma-miśra-bhaktas (*Gītā* 7.16): those who are suffering, those who are inquisitive, and those who desire wealth. Because of the transcendental nature of *bhakti*, the result of even mixed *bhakti* is that such devotees, after attaining their desires (relief from suffering, gain of material benefits, or attainment of scriptural knowledge), achieve pure *bhakti* and enter the transcendental Vaikuṅṭha planets (*sālokya-mukti*, *Gītā* 18.56), predominated by the mood of *aiśvarya* (opulence) and *sukha* (real happiness, beyond the neutrality of Brahman realization).

When *bhakti* is predominant but is mixed with *niṣkāma-karma* and *jñāna* it is called *karma-jñāna-miśra-bhakti*. An example could be cooking and offering preparations to Kṛṣṇa. Cooking food for Kṛṣṇa without a desire for the result (to taste the food) is analogous to the activities of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. But in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, only

7.5.24)* For example, one may specifically select Kṛṣṇa's favorite preparations, cook with the desire that they turn out tasty for Him, offer them to Him with love, and then accept the remnants as His mercy. To only offer the results to Kṛṣṇa but not be conscious of Kṛṣṇa during the entire activity is mixed *bhakti*, not *uttama-bhakti*. This is an important metric for *sādhakas* to determine whether they are practicing *uttama-bhakti* or *bhakti* mixed with karma and *jñāna*. Additionally, *uttama-bhaktas* reject *karma-yoga*, considering it a distraction in their worship of Kṛṣṇa, despite the risks associated with neglect of such duties. (*Bhāg.*

*Śrīdhara Swami, considered the original commentator on the *Bhāgavatam*, explains *Bhāg.* 7.5.24: In *ananya-bhakti* (pure *bhakti*), actions should be offered to the Lord before being performed, rather than performing the acts and then offering them later.

A Pause for Prayer



“All glories to the Personality of Godhead known as the son of Śrīmatī Devakī Devī! All glories to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the brilliant light of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty! All glories to the Personality of Godhead, the hue of whose soft body resembles the blackish color of a new cloud! All glories to Lord Mukunda, who removes the burdens of the earth!

“O Lord Mukunda! I bow down my head to Your Lordship and respectfully ask You to fulfill this one desire of mine: that in each of my future births I will, by Your Lordship's mercy, always remember and never forget Your lotus feet.”

– King Kulaśekhara,
Mukunda-mālā-stotra 2–3

BOOK EXCERPT

BRAHMĀNANDA
DĀSA
REMEMBERS

Prabhupāda in Africa

*One of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first disciples sets the stage,
and Prabhupāda arrives to deliver Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Kenya.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA quickly made plans to come to Nairobi, and soon after he disembarked from a 707 East African Airlines jet, a journalist, Mr. Kul Bhusana, approached him at the behest of Brahmānanda. Bhusana asked him a few perfunctory questions, as reporters tend to do.

“What have you come to teach?”

Prabhupāda answered, “Modern civilized man has forgotten his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or God, and is therefore suffering.”

“Have you come only to teach Hindus?” asked Mr. Bhusana.

“No,” Prabhupāda replied, “I am here for everyone. Whether you are Hindu, Muslim, or Buddhist, that doesn't matter. Unless you reestablish



Adapted from Swamiji: An Early Disciple, Brahmānanda Dāsa, Remembers His Guru (Torchlight Publishing, 2014). Copyright Steven J. Rosen. Reprinted with permission. We've added diacritics and made minor changes to match BTG's style. The book is available

from the Krishna.com Store and in India directly from the publisher (<http://www.in.torchlight.com/content/swamiji>).

your relationship with God, you cannot be happy.”

After the interview, Brahmānanda ushered him into the home of a wealthy Indian patron, but he only stayed for one night. As a *sannyāsī*, Prabhupāda would not stay at one house for more than three days. This rule prevents renunciants from becoming overly attached to bodily comforts or inconveniencing their hosts.

Consequently, Brahmānanda next arranged for Prabhupāda to stay at Mr. R. B. Pandya’s house in Mombasa; it was a beautiful oceanfront property in a location that Brahmānanda had earlier described to Prabhupāda as one of the most won-

ated – and the only one, at that time, to live in the temple. Initially, Brahmānanda only worked with the Gujarati community, who gave him financial support but strictly avoided further commitment and even frowned on anyone becoming a monk or getting initiated. Being a Punjabi, Śakti Matī was not constricted by such Gujarati communal policies.

In Nairobi, Śrīla Prabhupāda would hold intimate talks with the gentlemen of the house and give *darśana* (audience) to the family members and their friends in the afternoons. In the evenings, he would conduct *kīrtanas* and give lectures. In this way, he made friends and disciples among prominent Indian

can be centered on God, not on self-interest. A Vaiṣṇava preaches not only by his words, but also by his actions.”

Thus, seeing Brahmānanda’s dedication and example, people developed faith and became life members.

“Our Real Purpose in Africa”

After some time in Africa, Prabhupāda again encouraged Brahmānanda to address the African people directly, as opposed to just the Indian population. The Indians and Africans were completely segregated, and this spoke to the bodily concept of life. Prabhupāda wanted to obliterate this misconception, and preaching to the people of Africa would accomplish this end.

“This is our real purpose in Africa,” he said.

Hearing this, and realizing its implications, Brahmānanda proceeded to organize a program at the University of Nairobi, in which Prabhupāda himself would speak. To get as many people as possible to come, Brahmānanda placed an ad in the newspaper, printed and displayed several posters, and distributed handsomely designed leaflets. As a result, the program was so well attended – with professors, dignitaries, and African students occupying all available seats – that people had to stand outside to look through the doors and windows. When Prabhupāda’s short lecture was over, the audience rose to their feet, cheering and shouting praise. Afterwards, there was an enthusiastic *kīrtana*, a film about the movement, and a sumptuous feast for all. The experience was transformative, and it garnered favorable publicity for the movement in Africa.

Prabhupāda was concerned about reaching the general public. To this end, he not only took part in the university program already mentioned but in an event focusing on an economically deprived area as well. The devotees had rented a large hall one evening and just opened the doors and started chanting. In a short time,

When Prabhupāda’s short lecture was over, the audience rose to their feet, cheering and shouting praise.

derful places in the world, and Prabhupāda was not disappointed.

Brahmānanda remembers: “When Śrīla Prabhupāda walked into his spacious, airy room overlooking the aquamarine-colored sea and saw the cloudless skies, the pleasant sunshine, and the white sandy beach fringed with palm trees, he said, ‘Yes, Brahmānanda, this is one of the most wonderful places in the world.’ Śrīla Prabhupāda quickly recovered his health with the help of the mild climate, the abundant varieties of fruits and vegetables, and various rich milk-products. He then decided to return to Nairobi, the capital of the country, and launch the African preaching campaign from there.”

Soon after, several local devotees started to take Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously, including Śakti Matī Devī Dāsī, who would eventually work tirelessly on Prabhupāda’s behalf. Śakti Matī was a pioneer in the ISKCON African Mission (IAM) as the first Indian Hindu to become initi-

people in Nairobi, who willingly became “life members.” The Life Membership Program was started a year earlier for people who were disinclined to become monks but who had the means to support the movement in other ways, primarily in terms of finance. In exchange, patrons would get a full set of Prabhupāda’s books and, if they traveled, a place to stay at any ISKCON center worldwide. This program helped the movement spread in both Africa and India, among other places.

“Later, I expanded the Life Member Program,” Brahmānanda says. “I stayed for one and a half months in Lusaka, Zambia, moving to a different residence every three days just as Śrīla Prabhupāda had done. In this way I was able to preach by example. People could see firsthand how devotees rose before dawn, took a cold bath, performed *kīrtanas* and *japa*, and refrained from intoxication, illicit sex, meat-eating, and gambling. We wanted to show how one’s life

IN MEMORIAM

Brahmānanda Dāsa
July 14, 1943 – June 7, 2015

BRAHMĀNANDA DĀSA met Śrīla Prabhupāda in New York City in the summer of 1966, and his brother Greg (Gargamuni Dāsa) met Prabhupāda about a month later. Brahmānanda was among the first of Prabhupāda’s disciples to get up and dance during the first outdoor *kīrtana* in the western world, in Tompkins Square Park.

Professor Thomas J. Hopkins, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Franklin & Marshall College, succinctly summed up Brahmānanda’s contribution to early ISKCON: “He was one of [Prabhupāda’s] first disciples in the temple at 26 Second Avenue in New York, and, as ISKCON’s first president, was involved in almost all of the activities that [Prabhupāda] set in motion: dancing and chanting in the City parks, producing the first editions of *Back to Godhead* magazine, arranging meetings and talks, overseeing ISKCON’s first book publications, and – as one of the few disciples with a salaried job – providing a small but steady flow of cash for the operation of the temple.”

Later he was a pioneer for Prabhupāda in bringing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to Pakistan and Africa, and in developing the movement in various parts of India and throughout the



Yinada Devi Dasi

world. He passed away while residing in Vrindavan, the sacred land of Lord Kṛṣṇa. His inspirational talks on Prabhupāda and his vivid memory of his time with his perfect master will be remembered for as long as devotees chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Pictured: Brahmānanda Dāsa (seated) with author Satyarāja Dāsa and his daughter, Prati.

the hall filled up with curious people, who happened in right off the street. By the time Prabhupāda walked in, effulgent in his bright silken robes, the hall was packed to capacity. He quickly passed the considerable crowd, got up on stage, and started chanting. Then he spoke about the meaning of human life. He said that the real aim of our existence is to

understand that we are not this body but pure spirit soul, and that our duty is to serve the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

With great compassion, he conveyed the essence of Vedic thought. Although most people in the audience could not understand what he said, since they spoke only Swahili, they nodded their heads in appreci-

ation. They could feel his determination and his purity. As the *kīrtana* took over the large room, they danced, chanted, and clapped with great zeal.

Several days later, in December of 1971 – after nearly three months in Kenya – Prabhupāda left for India. He succeeded in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Africa and fully

inspiring Brahmānanda and the few devotees who assisted him to carry on the preaching work there.

Under a Tree in a Park

Motivated by Prabhupāda's example, Brahmānanda wasted no time and immediately began organizing Nairobi's first outdoor *kīrtana* performance: It was to be held under the largest tree in Kamukunji Park, a historical landmark connected with Kenyan Independence.

Brahmānanda says, "We simply stood under that tree and started chanting. Soon a large crowd gathered and immediately began chanting with us. Some were even dancing

lectures, life-membership enrollments, and literature and *prasāda* distribution. He even held *saṅkīrtana* processions down the main street, so much so that "Hare Kṛṣṇa" became a household phrase. Brahmānanda felt empowered by Prabhupāda. Whatever he lacked in Pakistan was now turning itself around in Africa – he saw it as a direct blessing from his guru. If one adamantly adheres to the principle of following Prabhupāda's instructions to the letter, he thought, there is no way one can fail.

He says, "Finally we called upon prominent citizens to subsidize the cost of complete sets of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and five-year subscriptions to *Back to Godhead* magazine,

Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*. Hundreds of kids had run after our truck, and we had thrown leaflets to them announcing the evening program. Now they were singing Hare Kṛṣṇa outside the hall at the top of their lungs. So we opened the doors and they flooded in – an ecstatic swirling mass of beautiful black kids. Once they were inside, we started a tumultuous *kīrtana*. The life members had never expected anything like this. They had come wearing their finest clothes and gold jewelry. I invited them to come up and take refuge on the stage, and they did so, sitting down very stiffly and chanting in their usual sedate way while trying not to see what was happening all around them.

"The *kīrtana* was so ecstatic that I jumped off the stage and danced with the kids until we were all exhausted. Then we showed the Rathayātrā film and sent them home with *prasāda*. The members later agreed that from then on we could do all the preaching ourselves, and they would just help out with contributions.

"When we returned to Nairobi, practically every Kenyan greeted us with 'Hare Kṛṣṇa' or 'Hare Rāma.' Even the shoeshine boys were chanting one of our tunes. I was reminded of Vrindavan, India, the transcendental village where Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on earth five thousand years ago. There all the residents chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and greet each other by vibrating the holy name.

"Previously I had written a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda expressing how much I appreciated Vrindavan, and he had replied that this was very good and that I should try to spread the Vrindavan spirit to Africa. Now it appeared to me that, by his grace, Nairobi had indeed become a black Vrindavan."

Satya-rāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor and founding editor of the Journal of Vaishnava Studies. Swamiji is the latest of his more than thirty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He lives near New York City.

"The *kīrtana* was so ecstatic that I jumped off the stage and danced with the kids until we were all exhausted."

in a sort of African shuffle step. We had a battery-powered megaphone, and one young man stepped forward and offered to translate our lectures into Swahili. Everyone really enjoyed this. We then distributed a sweet food preparation called bundi that the crowd liked even more. Every weekend we held this program, and soon we became well known."

Thus, the Nagara-Saṅkīrtana Movement was officially born in Africa under this tree, as it had been in New York under that fortunate elm in Tompkins Square Park. There was no stopping Prabhupāda's mission now. Brahmānanda was in ecstasy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had encouraged him to further expand his preaching endeavors, which he did, with extensive preaching safaris throughout northern and western Kenya, to neighboring Tanzania and Zambia, and even down into Salisbury, Rhodesia. In each of the towns and in the surrounding villages, he held a full program of *kīrtana*, film shows,

which we then donated in their names to all the towns' libraries, schools, and colleges. These institutions were extremely grateful to receive a gift of books from abroad. Large quantities of magazines were also subsidized, which we then distributed to people at token cost.

An Ecstatic Mass of Children

"In Lusaka, Zambia," he continues, "a group of wealthy Indian life members became very enthusiastic about our preaching to the local people. Anxious to participate, they all agreed to come to a program we were holding that night at a social hall in a low-income area of town. In the evening they all arrived at the hall in a caravan of large Mercedes cars. As soon as they entered the hall, a large crowd of children gathered outside. They were excited from the afternoon, when we had driven through the area with our loudspeakers blaring a bouncy Hare

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

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

Transcendental Poetry & Muslim Poets

For centuries, Muslim poets have revealed their attraction to all-attractive Lord Kṛṣṇa.

by Dāmodara Nityānanda Dāsa

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.80), Lord Caitanya lists “poetic” as one of the twenty-six qualities of a Vaiṣṇava, a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He Himself demonstrates a poetic flair in His *Śikṣāṣṭakam* by using seven metaphors to elucidate the benefits of chanting the holy names of the Lord. The Supreme Lord is often referred to as *Uttamaḥśloka*: He who is praised with the choicest poetry. Great devotees like Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura use poetic descriptions comparing Kṛṣṇa’s hue to the fresh rain-cloud, His eyes to lotuses, and the rays

from His toenails to soothing autumnal moons. These metaphors imply that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not lackluster, but poetic. With poetic expression a devotee poet succinctly deals with a variety of topics, including prayer, self-criticism, spiritual happiness, agony in separation from Kṛṣṇa, the superiority of Vaiṣṇavism, the guru/disciple relationship, residence in Vrindavan, and humility.

In *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.56) Lord Brahmā poetically describes Lord Kṛṣṇa’s home, Goloka Vṛndāvana, as the place where every step is a

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu discusses religion with Chand Kazi, the local magistrate, who would later write devotional poems to Lord Kṛṣṇa.



Samādhi of Maulana Chand Kazi, Simanta, West Bengal, India

dance, every word is a song, and the ecstasy never ceases. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.22) states, “Learned circles have positively concluded that the infallible purpose of the advancement of knowledge, namely austerities, study of the *Vedas*, sacrifice, chanting of hymns, and charity, culminates in the transcendental descriptions of the Lord, who is defined in choice poetry.” Śrīla Vyāsadeva (the compiler of the *Vedas*), Vālmīki (the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*), and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī (the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*) saw the Supreme Lord in their meditations and were directed to compose perfect *ślokas*, verses of exquisite poetry.

The Poetry of the Former Dabir Khās

Rūpa Gosvāmī, a great poet and *ācārya* in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family but worked for the Islamic government under Nawab Hussein Shah, the emperor of Bengal. Rūpa was given the Persian title Dabir Khās and endowed with great wealth and prestige. But in the eyes of the conservative Hindu society of sixteenth-century Bengal, he was deemed to have accepted the Islamic faith by dint of his close contact with the Muslim ruler. Lord Caitanya and His follow-

ers, however, held him in the highest esteem, knowing him to be a superlative Vaiṣṇava. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 1.195–198), Rāya Rāmānanda, in a conversation with Śrī Caitanya, extols Rūpa Gosvāmī’s poetic descriptions by quoting an unnamed authority on poetry:

“What use is a bowman’s arrow or a poet’s poetry if they penetrate the heart but do not cause the head to spin?”

Then Rāya Rāmānanda tells Lord Caitanya, “Without Your mercy such poetic expressions would be impossible for an ordinary living being to write. My guess is that You have given him the power.”

Caitanya-caritāmṛta continues: “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu praised the metaphors and other literary ornaments of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s transcendental poetry. Without such poetic attributes, He said, there is no possibility of preaching transcendental mellows.”

Earlier, Lord Caitanya had said of Rūpa’s poems, *tomāra kṛṣṇa-rasakāvya-sudhā-sindhu*: “Your exalted poetic depictions of the mellows of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are like an ocean of nectar.” (*Antya* 1.179)

Islamic Poets and Kṛṣṇa

Innumerable poems about Lord Kṛṣṇa are available in literature writ-

ten by poets of Islamic background. Many of these authors, in the very least, were great admirers of Kṛṣṇa. The persona of Lord Kṛṣṇa – the fact that He is one without a second – attracts one and all, and many have described their feelings through poetry. Poets such as Abdul Rahim Khan-e-Khana, Rasa Khan, Uzir Beg, and Taaz Khan were great devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, as evidenced by the sheer number of their poems that express intense love for Him.

To highlight the universality of *bhakti* and the trans-sectarian appeal of Kṛṣṇa’s all-attractiveness, let us look at a handful of poems, including a poem each from Sayyed Martuza, Nazir Akbarabadi, and Hazrat Mohani. Many Muslim poets wrote in appreciation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but I’ve tried to unearth some of the rarer poems.

A Glimpse at Muslim Devotion to Kṛṣṇa

Sayyed Martuza (1590–1662), a Muslim fakir born in the Murshidabad district of Bengal, wrote poems adoring Kṛṣṇa. The style of his composition is simple and rhythmic. Here is his Bengali poem that was compiled in *Pada-kalpa-taru* by Satishchandra Raya in 1915:

Timely Compassion

*Śyāma! O friend! My afflicted life is assuaged only by You
I cannot forget that auspicious day
when I happened to meet You
As I beheld Your moonlike face, I was overcome by restlessness!
The soul of this unfortunate girl aches; in twenty-four minutes it dies ten times!
O my life – Kānu! Shower Your mercy; provide me shelter at Your feet
I have given up reputation and family tradition; I cannot live without You!
Sayyed Martuza submits at Kānu’s feet: please accept this request, O Hari!
Relinquishing everything, may he remain at Your feet in this body and beyond.*

The following poem is by Maulana Chand Kazi, the Muslim magistrate of Navadvip during Lord Caitanya’s time. Jatindramohan Bhattacharjya compiled this poem in his book *Bangalar Baishnab-Bhabapanna Musalman Kabi, Second Edition*, published in 1945:

The Forbidden Calling of the Flute

*You do not know how to play the flute
Untimely You play it; my heart refuses any reason
When I am seated amongst the elders, You call out my name
Playing on the flute, embarrassing me to no end
As You play the flute from the other bank and I hear from here
Unfortunate lass I am, for I know not how to swim across
The grove whose bamboo makes the flute, be under my feet
Let it be uprooted by storm and set afloat in the Yamuna
Chand Kazi says, “As I listen to Your flute, I crumble down,
I won’t live; I won’t live if I don’t see my Hari.”*

Born in 1869 in Jajpur, Orissa in a Muslim family, Uzir Beg grew up to be an acclaimed poet and wrote many simple and melodious *bha-*

janas that show reverence for Lord Kṛṣṇa. His anthology of poems on Lord Kṛṣṇa is still popular in Orissa. His devotion is illustrated in this *bhajana*, included in Mohammed Yamin’s book *Impact of Islam on Orissan Culture*:

*Krushna pūjana kar, Krushna bhajan kar
Phitiba gati mukti dwāra, Bhaṇe Beg Uzir
Mu mūrkhā durachara, kebala nāma mātra sār*

Worship and recite in praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Only He can make you free



Abdul Rahim

from this worldly life, says this ignorant Beg Uzir. His holy name is the essence.

In the eighteenth century, a Muslim devotee and poetess named Taaz Khan regularly went to the Madana Mohana temple of Karoli, Rajasthan for *darśana*, to offer food, and to take *prasāda*. Until she had *darśana*, she would not accept food or water. In one couplet (also quoted in Prof. Yamin’s book), she writes:

*Nanda ke Kumar, Kurbaan teri Surat par
Hun to Muglaani, Hindumani hirahungi me*

O son of Nanda, I am enchanted by Your sweet face. Although I am born a Muslim, I will remain a devotee of Yours always.

Abdul Rahim Khan-e-khana (1556–1627) was one of the “nine gems” (Navaratna) of the court of Emperor Akbar. In a 2007 Hindi book of Rahim’s poetry, titled *Rahim-ke-dohē*, Aabid Rizvi quotes the following *dohā* (a couplet whose meaning is complete in itself) by Rahim:

The narrow-minded create trouble, and the large-hearted always forgive them. Says Rahim, even Lord Kṛṣṇa forgave when the sage Bhṛgu kicked Him.

Maulana Hazrat Mohani (1878–1951) was born in a modest Muslim zamindar family of Uttar Pradesh. He was a poet, journalist, and parliamentarian of British India, besides being a part of the Indian Independence Movement. He was at Pune, Maharashtra when Janmāṣṭamī came around in 1923, and he wrote this poem extolling Kṛṣṇa:

My heart has fallen in love with Kāna



Tomb of Abdul Rahim Khan-e-khana, Nizamuddin East, Delhi, India

Why would it think of anyone else now?
I looked for Him in Gokula and Vrindavan,
Let's now go to Varshana and see if He's there.
Hazrat, give up for Him all that is yours,
Then go to Mathura and become a renunciant.

Another poem, published by Hazrat himself in *Kulliyat-e-Hazrat*, reflects his desire to reside in Mathura.

Nazir Akbarabadi (1735–1830), a renowned Hindi poet, wrote a series of poems in praise of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His famous poem *Song of the Gypsies* contains the refrain *Sab thath para rah jaega jab lad chalega banjara*: “All your pomp will be of no avail when the gypsy caravan [of life] packs up for the journey.”

Nazir writes that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, has no prescribed work but performs childhood pastimes. And although He is everyone's father, He accepts a father and mother for pastimes. Here is a stanza of Nazir's poem from the Hindi book *Mahakavi Nazir*:

Kanhaiya ka balpan
[Childhood Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa]

Hear of the boyhood pastimes of the milk burglar
The boyhood of the resident of Mathura
The boyhood of the moon-faced dancer
The herdsman who roams from one forest to another
Such is the boyhood of the flute-player
How do I depict the boyhood of Kṛṣṇa Kanhaiyā?

Although some poems of Sayyed Martuza, Nazir Akbarabadi, and Maulana Hazrat Mohani reflect sincere appreciation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's persona, these authors wrote many



Rasa Khan

poems on mundane matters, and unlike other poets I've mentioned, no evidence suggests they were practicing devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa for any significant length of time. Still, in their poems quoted here they do not seem to have violated Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī's gold standard for devotional poetry:

*'yadvā-tadvā' kavira vākye
haya 'rasābhāsa'
siddhānta-viruddha śunite
nā haya ullāsa*

“In the writings of so-called poets there is generally a possibility of overlapping transcendental mellows. When the mellows thus go against the conclusive understanding, no one likes to hear such poetry.”
(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 5.102)

One Muslim poet who became a practicing Vaiṣṇava was Sayyed Ibrahim, better known as Rasa Khan, who lived in the sixteenth century. Attracted by Kṛṣṇa, he moved to Vrindavan as a young man and spent the rest of his life there. He was initiated into the disciplic succession of Vallabhācārya. Rasa Khan wrote, “Worship Govinda the way a village woman carries a water jug.” His advice is worth heeding. It takes a great deal of concentration to carry a water jug on one's head. Without being focused, a woman couldn't carry the jug long distances. But with practice, the task becomes natural and effortless. Rasa Khan uses this metaphor to urge us to worship Govinda with an undeviated mind. Indeed, that is the perfection of life. 🌸

Dāmodara Nityānanda Dāsa (Dr. Dipankar Deb) is a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti Vikāśa Swami. He holds a Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from the University of Virginia and is an associate professor of electrical engineering at IIT RAM, Ahmedabad. He is the author of the book *Muslim Devotees of Kṛṣṇa*, available from the *Krishna.com Store*.



Samādhi of Rasa Khan, Mahavana, Vrindavan, India

BTG Index, 2015

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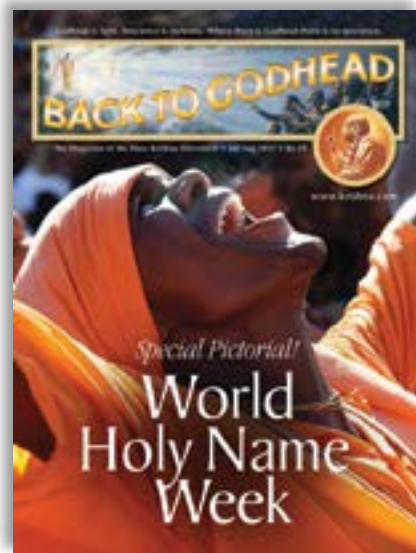
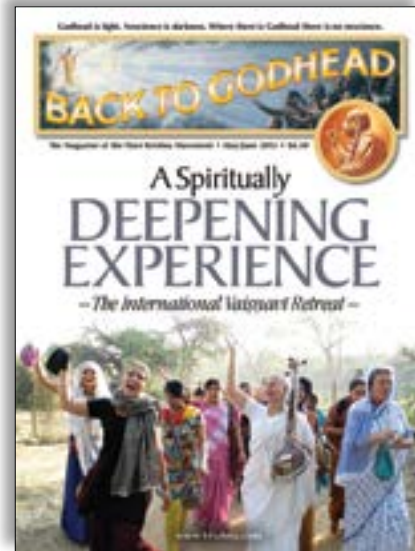
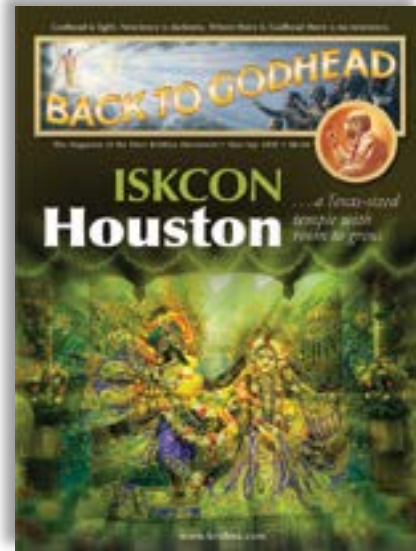
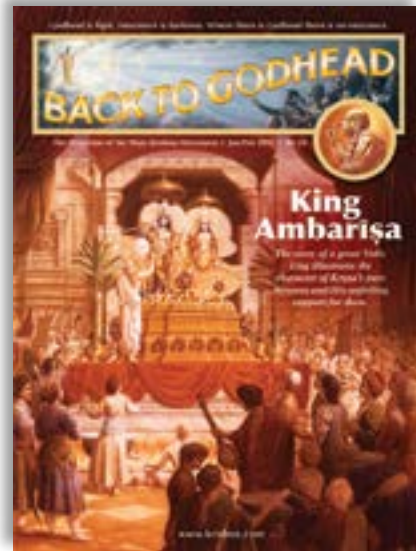
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LORD CAITANYA

(continued from page 26)
the river and rescued the Lord.

After this incident, both the Lord's host and Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya thought that it would be unsafe for the Lord to go alone to the Yamuna and that it would be better to take Him away from Vrindavan. The Lord and Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya then returned to Jagannatha Puri.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 17.228–229), Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes, “When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was elsewhere,

the very name of Vrindavan was sufficient to increase His ecstatic love. Now, when He was actually traveling in the Vrindavan forest, His mind was absorbed in great ecstatic love day and night. He ate and bathed simply out of habit.” The Vrindavan pastimes of Caitanya Mahāprabhu demonstrate His absorption in the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa, the esoteric reason for His appearance in this world around five hundred years ago. 🌸

Lokanāth Swami inaugurated ISKCON's annual Vraja-maṇḍala-

parikramā in 1987. This year's parikramā is especially significant because it coincides with the five-hundredth anniversary of Lord Caitanya's visit. Lokanāth Swami's recent book, Vraja-maṇḍala Darśana, takes readers on an illustrated day-by-day journey along Vrindavan's traditional parikramā path, created by Lord Caitanya. The book's thirty chapters, one for each day of the parikramā, give readers a feel for the walk – its pace, and the sights, sounds, and smells of Vraja.

Village Talk

“WHEN THE HUMAN being gives up the process of hearing about the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, he becomes a victim of hearing rubbish transmitted by man-made machines.” (*Bhāgavatam* 2.2.36, Purport)

When Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote these words, around 1970, the man-made machines delivering the “rubbish” were televisions, radios, and record players. The range of viewing and listening options was nothing like the endless variety we have today. Most people are happy for today’s technological progress, but Prabhupāda’s words should serve as a warning to us all. Our danger today is not just instant access to an array of vices; it’s the easy access to any topic that distracts us from the most important activity of human life: hearing about Kṛṣṇa.

The verse Śrīla Prabhupāda is commenting on appears in Canto Two, chapter two, of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The speaker is Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the main narrator of the work. Speaking thousands of years ago, when according to the Vedic scriptures a godly culture predominated, Śukadeva begins his instructions to King Parīkṣit by saying, “Those persons who are materially engrossed, being blind to the knowledge of ultimate truth, have many subject matters for hearing in human society, O Emperor.” (*Bhāgavatam* 2.1.2) Even during the mostly agrarian life of those times, people found plenty to talk about that had nothing to do with “knowledge of ultimate truth.” They had village talk.

Among Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s short list of instructions to Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī was *grāmya-kathā na śunibe*: “Don’t listen to village talk.” Raghunātha had just renounced his opulent home to accept a life of renunciation, so Lord Caitanya’s words were especially relevant for

him. But they’re valuable for us as well. It’s often said that we live in a global village now. So instead of hearing only local gossip, we can indulge ourselves in the private details of the lives of the famous and infamous all over the world.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda founded this magazine in 1944, he wanted to draw the reader’s mind away from the continuous din of mundane topics that sap the human energy, meant for spiritual purposes. The *Bhāgavatam* compares words detached from God consciousness to filthy places that attract crows. Godly topics are said to be for swanlike persons drawn to areas of pristine cleanliness and goodness.

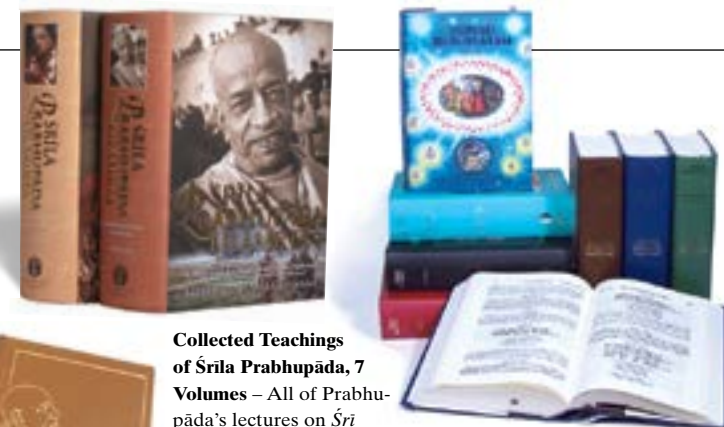
A principle in the science of God consciousness is that with goodness comes happiness. The competitors to goodness – namely passion and ignorance – dominate what we can hear and see today. But our natural desire for happiness will never be fulfilled if we seek shelter in those lower modes.

Articles like those in *Back to Godhead* face strong competition for people’s attention. Not only do readers have thousands of options in books and magazines, but they also have innumerable offerings in the digital media. Though the great spiritual teachers in the tradition of Kṛṣṇa consciousness taught before the digital age, we can easily see how their instructions apply today: Life is too valuable to waste in succumbing to the allure of village talk packaged by masters at grabbing our attention.

We don’t have to accept *māyā*’s soul-killing propaganda in its current forms. By the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his predecessors, we can turn off the village talk of this world and turn on the village talk of Goloka Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eternal home. – *Nāgarāja Dāsa*

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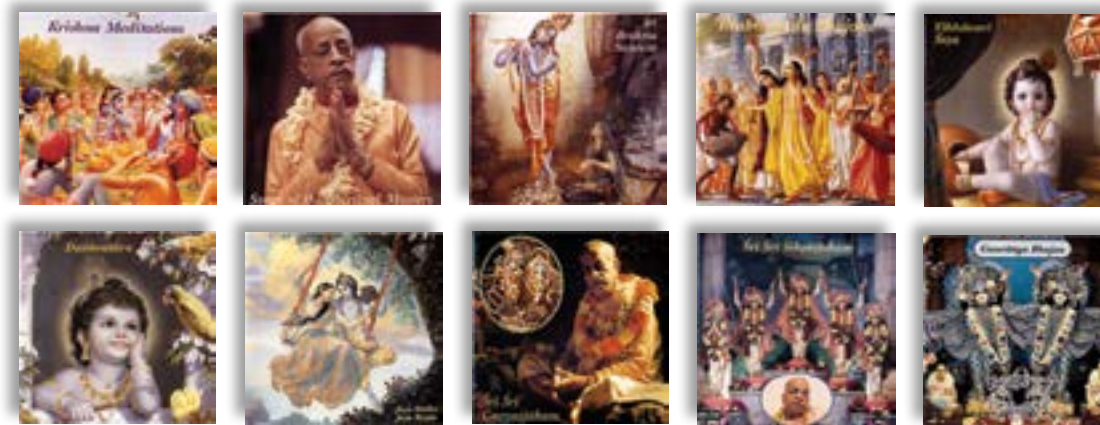
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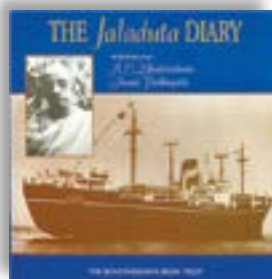


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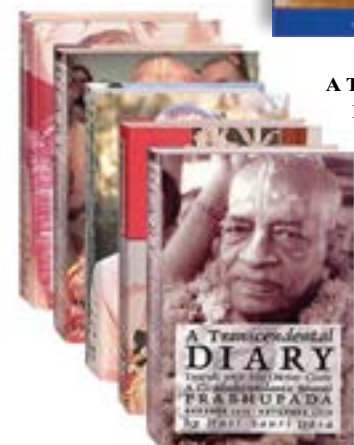
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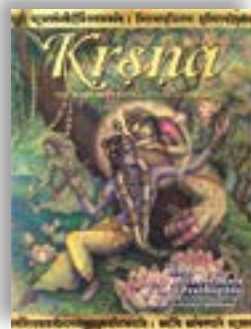


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Jagannātha Puri Pendants – Lord Jagannātha's smiling face will brighten anyone's day. This elegant pendant is perfect for your favorite set of neck beads. About 1 1/2" in diameter. **\$4.95** each.

Blue – KCJP223
Green – KCJP224
Orange – KCJP225

Antique-Silver-Colored Nṛsiṁha Pendant – The elegant silver-colored metal pendant hangs from a thin loop perfect for either a simple chain or your favorite neck beads. 1 1/4" high. **\$3.95** S2JP447



Jagannātha Pendant – Celebrate your devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa by wearing this bright silver Jagannātha pendant. Approximately 3/4" wide. **\$9.95** H4JP458



Find many more pendants and amulets, and a large selection of jewelry at store.krishna.com

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Vraja Prema Mix – Chandan Deluxe, Special Tulasi Flora, Highest Gold, White Rose, and Lavender. **\$33.95** KXFB440

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Vraja Prema Mix – Chandan Deluxe, Highest Gold, Special Tulasi Flora, and Lavender. **\$20.95** KXFB220

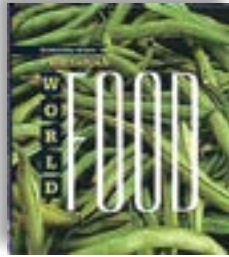
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Laxmi (garden flowers, woods, & spices) – BCFS430
Pariloka (sandalwood, vanilla, & vetiver) – BCFS432
Ram (rosewood, cinnamon, & ylang ylang) – BCFS434
Vishnu (patchouli & sandalwood) – BCFS134

Cookbooks



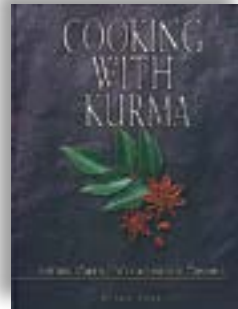
Vegetarian World Food – By Kurma Dasa. Kūrma's vegetarian cuisine is attracting food lovers from all cultures with its exotic flavors, delicate spices, superb nutrition, and positively addictive taste. This cookbook gives you 321 recipes from the Mediterranean, India, Europe, Southeast Asia, and other regions around the globe. Hardbound, 213 pages, 321 recipes, numerous color photographs, 10" x 10". **\$24.95** BLBH298



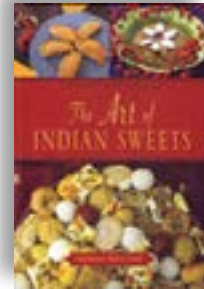
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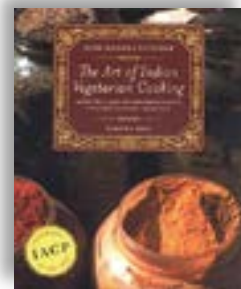
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VEDIC THOUGHTS

The scriptures stress the point that only animals, which are inferior to human beings, do not worship and serve the Supreme Lord. This proves that those who are really on the human platform naturally must develop devotion to the Supreme Lord.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura
Mādhurya-kadambinī, First Shower

Devotees should always be happy with all the dealings of their master, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A devotee may be put into difficulty or opulence, but he should accept both as gifts of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and jubilantly engage in the service of the Lord in all circumstances.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 12.37, Purport

The word *bhakti* cannot be applied to anyone other than Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the only object of devotional service. Brahman is the object of impersonal knowledge, Paramātmā of yoga, but Kṛṣṇa the supreme object of service.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Amṛta Vāṇī

Certainly no means of perfection is superior to the worship of Śrīman Madana-gopāla's [Kṛṣṇa's] lotus feet. That worship yields results far beyond what one could expect. It should be performed mainly through *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, along with reverence and affection for the many places of Śrī Gopāla's pastimes, places one should regularly visit.

Śrī Gopa-kumāra
Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.1.104-105

Because I am transcendental, beyond both the fallible and the infallible, and because I am the greatest, I am celebrated both in the world and in the *Vedas* as that Supreme Person.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 15.18

In this world no one has any permanent relationship with anyone else, O King. We cannot stay forever even with our own body, what to speak of our wife, children, and the rest.

Śrī Akrūra to Dhṛtarāṣṭra
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.49.20

Thus indeed the breath of this Supreme Being constitutes the *R̥g Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharvāṅgīrasa Veda*, *Itihāsa*, and *Purāṇa*.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.1.2

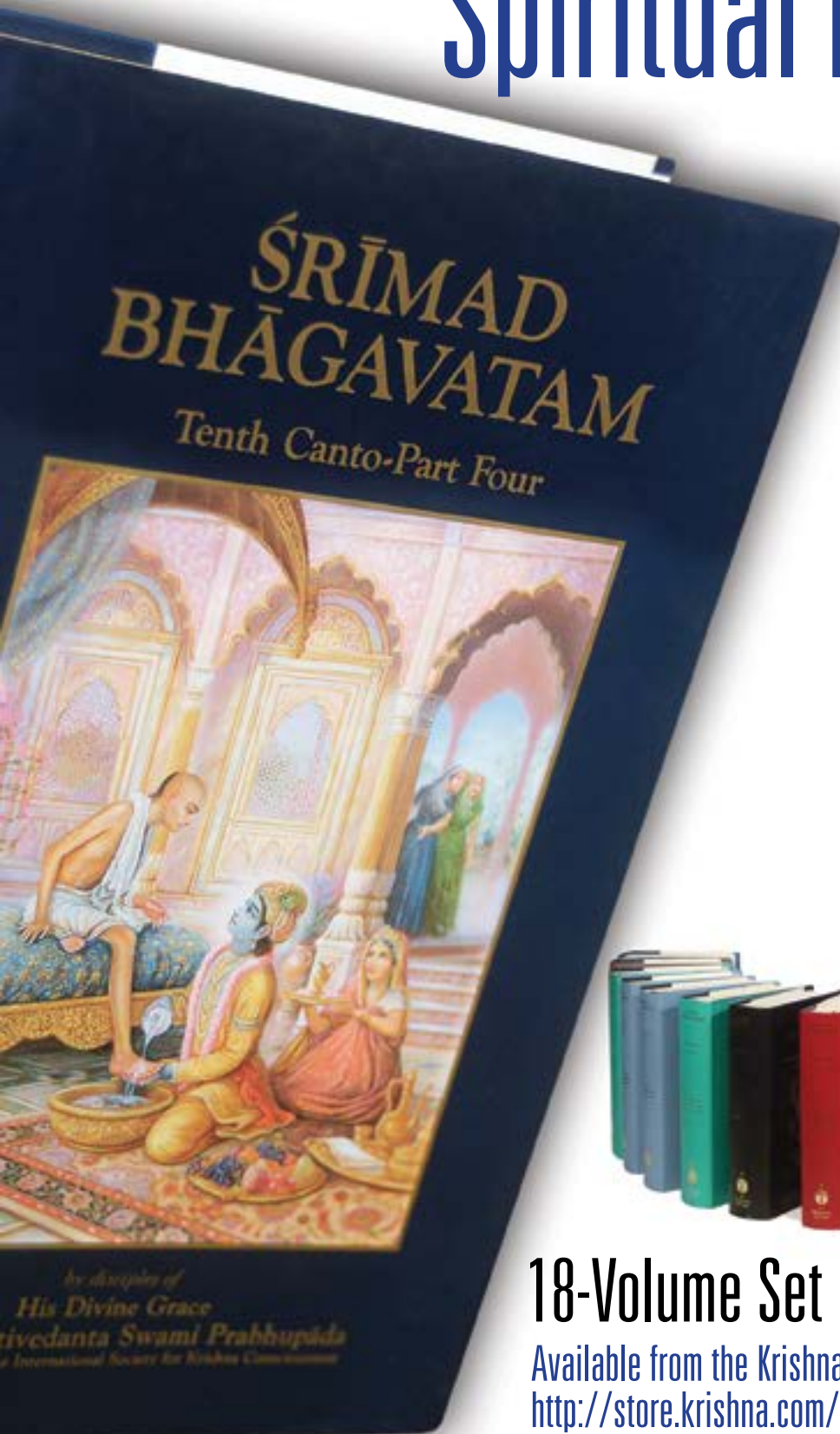
Whatever we see in this world is but an expansion of various energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is like a fire that spreads illumination for a long distance although it is situated in one place.

Śrī Parāśara Muni
Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.22.56

If one very carefully and impartially discusses the characteristics, instructions, and scriptural conclusions of Śrī Mahāprabhu Caitanya-deva, one will be compelled to accept Him as *sarvācārya*, or the supreme authority on everything.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Tattva-sūtra 49

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