

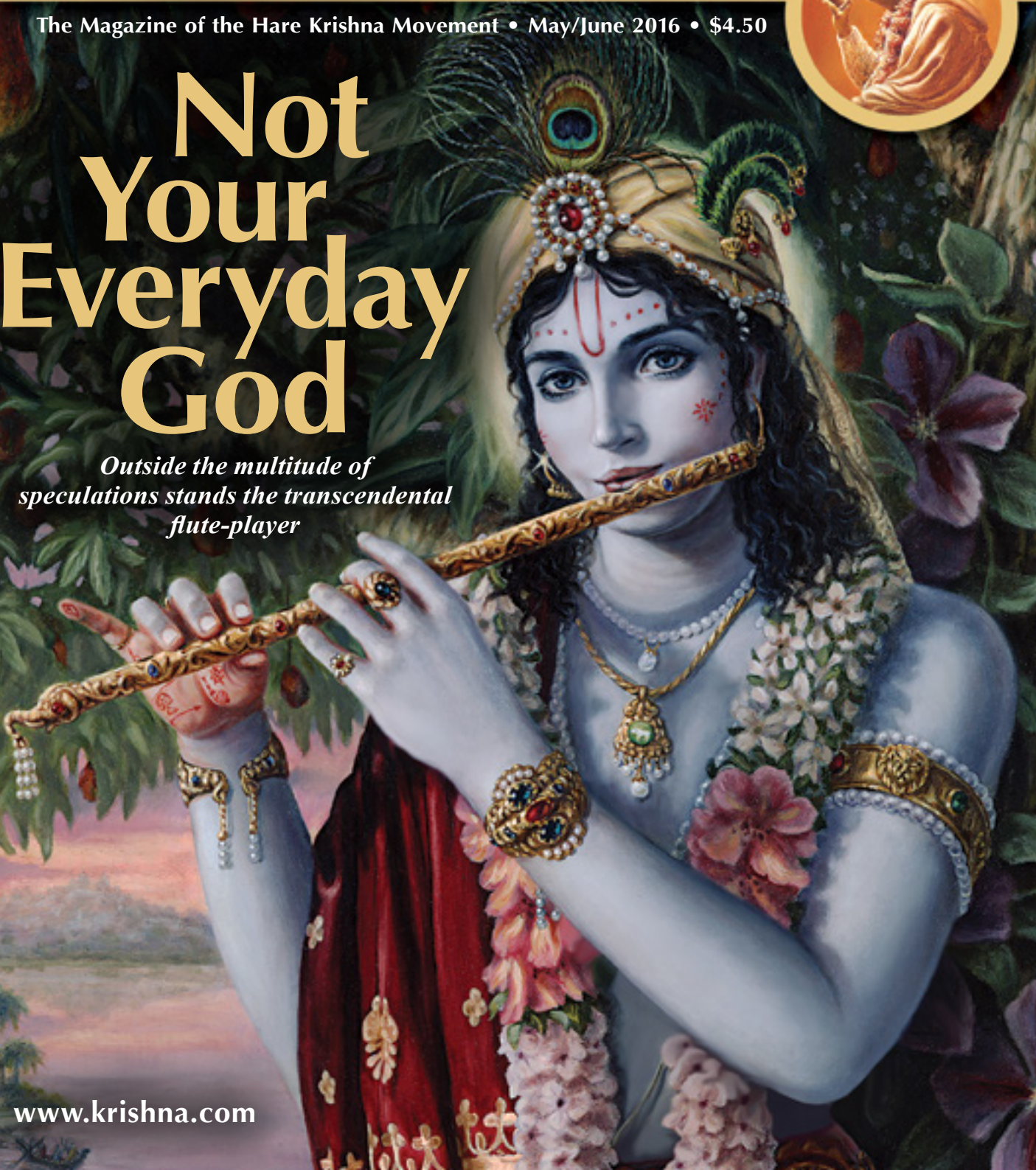
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • May/June 2016 • \$4.50

Not Your Everyday God

*Outside the multitude of
speculations stands the transcendental
flute-player*

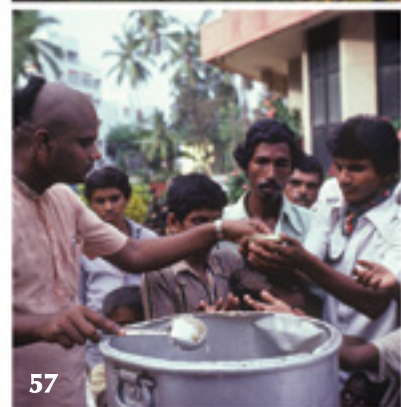
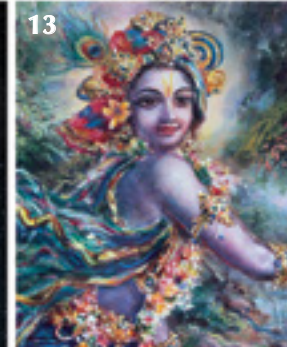


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BACK to GODHEAD

Founded 1944 • Vol. 50, No. 3 • May/June, 2016



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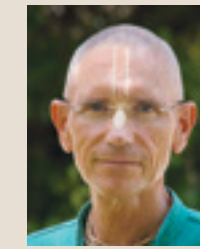
Vedic Thoughts 67

COVER On first encounter, many people balk at the assertion that God is a bluish flute-playing adolescent. But the Vedic literature provides ample evidence and arguments in support of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Godhood. Please see the article beginning on page 13. (Detail from a painting by Viṣṇu Dāsa.)

"Learn to love this natural mode of life, life in a wide-open space. Produce your own grain. Produce your own milk. Save time. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Glorify the Lord's holy names. At life's end, go back to the spiritual world to live forever. Plain living, high thinking – ideal life."
– p.33



WELCOME



Last August, Kolkata's 15,000-seat Netaji Indoor Stadium was filled beyond capacity – twice – to commemorate Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure for America in 1965. In this issue, "Celebrating Prabhupāda's Historic Journey" reports on what took place.

When Prabhupāda boarded the *Jaladuta*, he was leaving India to tell people elsewhere who God is. Perhaps no one he knew expected him to be successful. But he convinced Americans and people around the world that this person named Kṛṣṇa is not a mythological figure but is in fact "the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

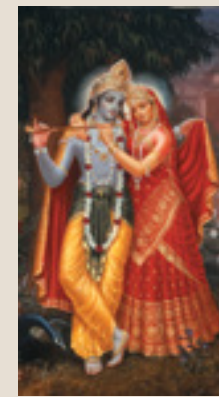
Navīna Śyāma Dāsa's "Not Your Everyday God" shows how Kṛṣṇa shatters limited, stereotypical ideas of God to give us a fuller view of the source of all that is. As a tribute to the person who brought Kṛṣṇa into their lives, in the 1970s disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda built a stunning memorial in his honor in the hills of West Virginia. Satyarāja Dāsa reviews the history of its construction and the efforts underway to restore it to its original glory.

Sureśvara Dāsa's series on Śrīla Prabhupāda continues with a discussion of *varṇāśrama*, a part of Prabhupāda's plan to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness that he left unfulfilled, entrusted into the hands of his dedicated followers.

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

Finding My Role in Life

Many of my family members are devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I am always told that this world is not real and that we all are playing a role in life. I have lost myself. Can you please help me?
Pronab
Via the Internet

Our reply: Yes, we are playing roles, but that is not a bad thing. Kṛṣṇa devotees play roles for the pleasure of the Lord, and so there is ultimate meaning in their play.

Kṛṣṇa advises in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.46), “By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, a man can attain perfection through performing his own work.” So whatever work you are naturally inclined to do you can do for Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa also says, “Therefore, Arjuna, you should always think of Me in the form of Kṛṣṇa and at the same time carry out your prescribed duty of fighting. With your activities dedicated to Me and your mind and intelligence fixed on Me, you will attain Me without doubt.” (*Gītā* 8.7) So as Arjuna attained perfection by dedicating his work to Kṛṣṇa, so can we.

Most important in this age is to chant the holy names of the Lord: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.7: “This instruction to Arjuna is very important for all men engaged in material activities. The Lord does not say that one should give up his prescribed duties or engagements. One can continue them and at the same time think of Kṛṣṇa by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. This will free one from material contamination and engage the mind and intelligence in Kṛṣṇa. By chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names, one will be transferred to the supreme planet, Kṛṣṇaloka, without a doubt.”

We hope these words help you focus your life on Kṛṣṇa.

Qualities of a Brahmachārī

What are the qualities one should have to be *brahmachārī*?
Nilesh Sharma
Via the Internet

Our reply: Devotion to one’s guru is the most important quality of a *brahmachārī*. The *brahmachārī* acts as a menial servant of the guru and attains all the blessings of the Lord by acting in that way.

According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 7, Chapter 12: “The *brahmachārī* should be trained to be satisfied with eating what is absolutely necessary, he should be very expert in executing responsibilities, he should be faithful, and he should control his senses and try to avoid the association of women as far as possible.”

In his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.26, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: “The *brahmachārīs*, or students under the care of a bona fide spiritual master, control the mind by abstaining from sense gratification. A *brahmachārī* hears only words concerning Kṛṣṇa consciousness; hearing is the basic principle for understanding, and therefore the pure *brahmachārī* engages fully in *harer nāmānukīrtanam* – chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord. He restrains himself from the vibrations of material sounds, and his hearing is engaged in the transcendental sound vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

The Purpose of Creation

What is the purpose of God’s creation?
Prosun
Via the Internet

Our reply: The Lord creates the material world to reform fallen

souls. It makes up only one-fourth of the whole creation. The rest is the spiritual abode, full of His devotees.

We unfortunately misused our God-given freedom by choosing not to serve Him. For souls like us, He creates this illusory, temporary place where we can try to enjoy without Him. We keep trying, lifetime after lifetime, but unsuccessfully. The material world is like a prison, but He gives us the opportunity to purify ourselves by engaging in devotional service. We need to beg Him to accept us again. That is the meaning of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. He gives us instructions, sometimes descends Himself, sends His representatives, and is now present in His name. We have to take advantage of these things to become fit to go back to Him.

Reaction for Suicide

What is the reaction for a person who has mutilated the body or committed suicide?
Ann
Via the Internet

Our reply: To misuse our material body is very lamentable. The human form of life is a gift acquired after going through many lower forms of life for a long, long time. In the human form our intelligence should be used to advance spiritually. With this developed intelligence we can choose how to act, and we are held responsible for our actions. If we choose to harm the body or commit suicide, then we get a very bad result. That is, we are not allowed to have another body right away,

because we do not deserve it. But we still have all our desires, and therefore we get the subtle body of a ghost, a situation in which we cannot satisfy our desires. It is a horrible situation.

The best use of the material body is to consider it the temporary temple of our soul. We do what’s needed to keep the body and soul together and engage it in Kṛṣṇa’s service. Kṛṣṇa has given it to us for that purpose.

Living in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

How to follow Kṛṣṇa consciousness while working and living socially?
Sachin
Via the Internet

Our reply: An aspiring devotee is advised to accept what is favorable to devotional service and reject what is unfavorable. So your social life should be with like-minded people. If you must associate with non-devotees, then try to be a good example for them and avoid their bad habits. Balance your life by rising early and chanting and hearing about the Supreme Lord. That will help get you through the day in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Listen to as much spiritual sound as you can. If you cannot go to the temple regularly, use the Internet to see the deities in the temples, hear the classes, and so on. Many temples have webcams that you can tune into. Offer your food to Kṛṣṇa and, if possible, invite devotees to your home for Kṛṣṇa conscious programs. When you have a chance, tell others about Kṛṣṇa.🙏

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

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Take Shelter of DEVOTION

*To enter a true loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa,
we have to stop seeing Him as our order-supplier.*

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

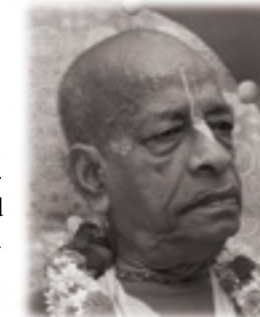
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*kabhu svarge uṭhāya, kabhu narake
dubāya
daṇḍya-jane rājā yena nadīte cubāya*

“In the material condition, the living entity is sometimes raised to higher planetary systems and material prosperity and sometimes drowned in a hellish situation. His state is exactly like that of a criminal whom a king punishes by submerging him in water and then raising him again from the water.” – *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 20.118

LORD CAITANYA is explaining the position of us conditioned souls. We are completely under the grip of material nature. When someone is seated in a car and the driver drives him, if the driver is not under control he drives him anywhere, to any hell. Similarly, we are sitting in the car of this body, supplied by the material nature, and she is driving anywhere, sometimes up, sometimes down. In this way we are suffering life after life, birth after birth. This is our condition. We are not independent; we are completely under the stringent laws of material nature.

Formerly, a culprit would be dunked under water for punishment, and after some time he would be raised up to take a breath. He was suffocating. He was not meant to be killed, but he was given suf-



fering in that way. Similarly, material nature is giving us suffering, miseries. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.37) gives us direction on this point:

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*

“Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. This bewildering, fearful condition is effected by the potency for illusion, called *māyā*. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul.” When we are forgetful of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, when we think, “There is no God. Matter is everything. This material manifestation we see is everything, all in all, and there is no Lord, no supreme controller” – when we think like that, our anxiety begins.

Bhayaṁ, fearfulness. We are all fearful because fear is one of the bodily necessities we all have: We

*Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī delivers cooking ingredients to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.
(Śrīla Prabhupāda relates the incident in this lecture.)*

want to eat something, we want to sleep, we want to mate, and similarly, we have fear. These are the four principles of animal life shared by human beings. We are always fearful. Why? Because we have taken it that there is no God. We are like the forlorn child who thinks he is lost. “I am helpless. Where is my mother? Where is my father?” Similarly, when we are helpless we are fearful. But those who are Kṛṣṇa conscious are not helpless. They know, “Above me there is Kṛṣṇa.”

One of the symptoms of *śara-ṅāgati*, surrender to Kṛṣṇa, is to have the firm conviction that “Kṛṣṇa will protect me. I am engaged in Kṛṣṇa’s service, so Kṛṣṇa will give me pro-

tection.” If I work in some ordinary man’s service, he gives me protection. Don’t you think that if you work for Kṛṣṇa He’ll give you protection? Because we have no faith, we are seeking protection elsewhere. But Kṛṣṇa can protect us. He says, *aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi*: “I shall give you protection from all sinful reactions.” (*Gītā* 18.66)

Simply by Devotional Service

Therefore it is our duty to regain our lost consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the duty of this human form of life. *Ābhajet tam bhaktyaika īsam*. If you want to worship the Supreme Lord, then you have to worship Him simply by service. There is no other process. You cannot worship Kṛṣṇa by controlling breathing or by mental speculation or by some pious activities or char-

getful of Kṛṣṇa this material energy is fearful for me, and when I am fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness there is no question of fearfulness from material nature.”

ity. You have to worship Him simply by your devotional love. That is the only way. *Bhaktyaika* – “only one, *bhakti*.” There is no other means. There is no second means to understand God besides devotional service. Rest assured. Foolish people do not understand this. They come to the impersonal or the void – all the nonsensical conclusions. Because they do not take shelter of devotion, they cannot come to any true conclusion. It is not possible. Therefore, they more or less become atheists or go after the void or impersonalism or create so many other ideas.

But Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, cannot be understood by any process other than devotional service. It is simply a waste of time. If you want to know Kṛṣṇa, if you want to know God, then you have to take to this process. *Guru-devatāmā*: “He is the Supreme Lord, He is the Supersoul, and He is the supreme spiritual master.”

He’s the supreme spiritual master within you. As soon as you take to

devotional service He’ll give you dictation: “Do this.” Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10), *dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ tam*: “I give him intelligence.” What for? *Yena mām upayānti te*: “By which he can come back to Me.” That intelligence. He’ll help you. If you are fully surrendered, then He’ll direct you in such a way that you cannot go elsewhere except to Him – even if sometimes you think, “He is doing something against my will.”

Kṛṣṇa Takes Charge

I have got my personal experience. I never accepted that I would become a *sannyāsī*. I tried my best to keep myself in the material world. Several times Kṛṣṇa frustrated me. He brought me by force to this life, and now I am happy. I can understand how much favor Kṛṣṇa has showed me. Yes. I did not understand in the beginning.

So sometimes, if Kṛṣṇa takes special care for you, He’ll act in such a way that you will have no other way than to go back to Him. Kṛṣṇa will take charge if we sincerely want Him. He sees, “Here is a person who wants Me, but he’s foolish. He wants Me; at the same time he wants to enjoy this material world. So I’ll crush this, crush this – his material propensities – and let him simply become devoted.” Yes. Sometimes we see like that.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Mahārāja Parīkṣit put a question to Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Mahārāja Parīkṣit understood that his grandfathers were put into so many difficulties even though Kṛṣṇa was their personal friend. Everyone was astonished: “How is that? Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is the most pious man. Arjuna is the greatest warrior, and Draupadī, their wife, is directly the goddess of fortune. And above all, Kṛṣṇa is their personal friend. And still they were put into such difficulties. They lost

their kingdom. They lost their wife. For thirteen years they had to undergo so many troubles.” So this was astonishing. Even Bhīṣma cried. “I cannot understand why these five brothers are put into so many difficulties in spite of all their good qualities.”

So their grandson, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, when he was being taught by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, had some suspicions about devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Not suspicions, but just to teach us he inquired, “Lord Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu, the master of the goddess of fortune. Why do people who become Kṛṣṇa conscious or devotees of Viṣṇu remain poor, and others, those who worship Śiva and other demigods, become very rich? What is the reason? Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of everything, but those who want Him become poorer. Lord Śiva doesn’t even have a house of his own – he’s a pauper – but one who worships him becomes richer.”

You know the history of Lord Śiva. He hasn’t got a house even. He lives under a tree or in some mountain. But those who worship Śiva – oh, they get material opulence very nicely. And they can smoke *gāñjā*. So all this captivates people to become devotees of Śiva. Naturally, anyone who wants material prosperity becomes a devotee of Śiva.

So this is contradictory. “Śiva has no house even, not even a dwelling place, a residence. He’s a pauper. And by worshiping him one becomes richer. And Kṛṣṇa – *sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyamānam* – thousands of goddesses of fortune are always serving Him. He has such opulence. But *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, devotees of Kṛṣṇa, appear to be poor. Why?”

Śukadeva Gosvāmī answered, “This very question was also put to Kṛṣṇa by your grandfather Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. So instead of answering myself, I’ll refer to that very question and answer between your grandfather and Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa answered like this: *yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ*: ‘If I do somebody some special favor, then

My first duty is to crush all his material possessions.’” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.88.8) You see? Why? “To make him more surrendered to Me.” When he becomes helpless he has no other way. “Kṛṣṇa, please take me.”

When he has something, he thinks, “Oh, my material possessions will protect me.” Therefore he does not surrender. Now, Kṛṣṇa sees “This living entity is very much My devotee, but he wants some nonsense. So I’ll crush him so that he’ll feel helpless and come to Me. I’ll give him all protection.”

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa tests us to see whether we are sincere devotees. Because we are always after sense gratification, if Kṛṣṇa is not an order-supplier then we reject Kṛṣṇa. We want God, or Kṛṣṇa, to be our order-supplier. So we must order Kṛṣṇa, “Give me this. Give me that. If You cannot give me what I want, then what are You, Kṛṣṇa? I don’t want You.” This sort of *bhakti*, or devotional service, is not accepted by Kṛṣṇa.

My German godbrother told me that during wartime some German women prayed in the church to get back their husband, son, or brothers, because all went to war. But nobody returned, and these women became atheists: “Oh, there is no God. I prayed so much to God to get my husband back, my brothers back, but they are dead.”

If we go to Kṛṣṇa with that purpose – that He should be our order-supplier – then there is no question of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. We must fully surrender: “Let Him do as He likes.”

Śrī Caitanya taught (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 8), *āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣtu mām adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāṭo mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparah*

“I know no one but Kṛṣṇa as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly by His embrace or makes me brokenhearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my

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.”

There is no second means to understand God besides devotional service. Rest assured. Foolish people do not understand this.

worshipable Lord, unconditionally.” Lord Caitanya says, “You may embrace me or trample me with Your feet, You may neglect me, and You may make me brokenhearted by not being present before me all my life.” *Marma-hatām* means “brokenhearted.” “I love You so much. I want You, but You never care for me. That’s all right. Still You are my worshipable Lord, unconditionally. I don’t want any return from You. Still You are my worshipable Deity.” This is pure devotion.

Kṛṣṇa takes all care. Don’t think otherwise. He says, *aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi*: “I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions.” (*Gītā* 18.66) Why should you be so anxious? One who is in love with Kṛṣṇa wants to see Him, wants to love Him. But even if He does not present Himself before the lover, the lover says, “Oh, still You are my lovable object. You are free to treat me as You like, but You are my worshipable Lord.” This is pure. As soon as we come to this stage, that is perfection. Don’t expect anything in return.

Rūpa Gosvāmī’s “Mistake”

There is a nice story about Sanātana Gosvāmī, whom we are now studying. The brothers Sanātana Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī went to Vrindavan for devotional service. Rūpa

Gosvāmī, especially, was always engaged in writing books. And when he was hungry, he would go to some householder and ask, “Please give me a piece of bread.” And everyone in Vrindavan would give. The Gosvāmīs were leaders. All the Vrindavan inhabitants took their advice. They even placed their household quarrels before them: “Swamijī, this is our position. Please settle it.” Whatever decision he would give to the villagers, they would accept. Their court was Swamijī, Rūpa Gosvāmī. He was so lovable.

One day Rūpa Gosvāmī was thinking, “If I could get some ingredients for cooking, then I would invite Sanātana Gosvāmī to take some *prasādam*.” He thought like that. And after, say, one hour, a young girl came with rice, flour, ghee, and vegetables, so many things.

“Bābājī, please accept these ingredients. There is some ceremony at our house, so My mother has sent you all these things.”

Rūpa Gosvāmī inquired, “Oh, You are a very nice girl. Where do You live?”

“I live in this village. You do not know?”

“No, I have never seen You. All right. Thank You very much.”

Then She went away, and Rūpa Gosvāmī invited Sanātana Gosvāmī, “My dear brother, please come and

take your *prasādam* here. I have got some food.”

“All right.”

Sanātana Gosvāmī came during *prasādam* time, and Rūpa Gosvāmī had prepared many nice dishes. The Gosvāmīs were expert in cooking. All devotees are expert in so many things. That is their qualification.

Sanātana Gosvāmī inquired, “How did you get all these nice things here in this jungle?”

Rūpa Gosvāmī narrated the story.

“In the morning I thought, ‘If somebody sends me something . . .’ So by Kṛṣṇa’s grace a very beautiful girl brought all these things.”

“Who?”

He began to describe the girl’s beauty.

Then Sanātana Gosvāmī said, “Oh, I have never seen this beautiful girl.”

“Yes, I have also never seen Her.”

“Ohhh! Then She must be Rādhārāṇī. She must be Rādhā. You have taken service from Rādhārāṇī? Ohhh! You have murdered me. We don’t want to take any service from Kṛṣṇa, and He has taken the opportunity. We want to simply give our service, not any exchange. Oh, you have made a great mistake. Rādhārāṇī has taken this opportunity.” He began to cry.

“We have taken service from Kṛṣṇa. We have given Rādhārāṇī trouble.” This is the mood of the pure devotee. They were very sorry. “Kṛṣṇa was troubled to send all these goods.”

Kṛṣṇa is always looking for the opportunity – “How to serve My pure devotee?” And the pure devotee’s so clever that he won’t accept any service from Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna never said, “Kṛṣṇa, You are God. Why are You putting me to war indirectly? You can give me everything.” Arjuna never said that. And Kṛṣṇa said, “You are a *kṣatriya*. You have to fight.”

We should not take God as our order-supplier. That is not devotion. That is mercantile business. Kṛṣṇa is not going to be your lover if you approach Him with a mercantile mentality. You must give Him service. *Abhajat tam*. This is the process of devotion.

Thank you very much. 🙏

e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



Vaishnaviministry.org

Websites come in all shapes and sizes. Some are encyclopedic and contain large amounts of information. Others are called “landing pages” and contain just enough information to whet your appetite and point you elsewhere for more information. Some websites are complicated places that try to be everything you could want. Others are simple, sleek, and full of space, giving you just enough but not overwhelming you with choices.

Vaishnaviministry.org falls somewhere in the middle. It is easy to navigate and full of space; it’s not a complicated maze of choices but has more than enough information to give you an understanding of the ministry and its work. Everything on the site is accessible from the home page.

The mission of the Vaishnavi Ministry is to “Promote a culture of open-hearted respect for Vaishnavis through association, education, representation, support, and service.” The site gives a

comprehensive overview of the position of women in ISKCON, including what things were like for women during Śrīla Prabhupāda’s time and how things have changed since then up to the present day.

Scrolling up gives you easy access to the latest entries in the blog, and buttons at the bottom of the page allow you to scroll through the pages to see what else is available.

Along the top of the page, on the menu bar, clicking on the title logo on the left always brings you back to the front of the site. On the right, a series of links takes you deeper into the content.

If you click on the Our Mission link you can read the full mission and purpose of the Vaishnavi Ministry. This explains the prime motivation and direction of the ministry, which reports to ISKCON’s Governing Body Commission (GBC).

Clicking the Ministry Members link lets you see who runs the ministry and who is on its advisory council.

The Blog link gives you full access to all the articles available on the site in one long list, ordered by date. There are some detailed and scholarly pieces for you to read.

Under History, the Vaishnavi Ministry has gathered papers, articles, and audio and video presentations on the topic of women in ISKCON. If you have any documents, videos, or audio files that could be preserved in the ministry archives, you are encouraged to send them in.

The Contact link allows you to send comments or questions to the ministry. Most pages have a search box in the right-hand column, and below that some navigation buttons that will help you find something to read.

– Antony Brennan

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NOT YOUR EVERYDAY GOD

Kṛṣṇa is far more colorful and captivating than what most people expect of God.

by Navīna Śyāma Dāsa

GOD. PERHAPS no word in the English language is laden with more emotional baggage. For some it conjures reveries of gratitude and adoration. For many others it evokes anger, fear, or doubt. In either case, the conceptions that flood the mind of the average person – at least in the Judeo-Christian West – are almost all mistaken. People envision a God who has no definite or permanent form and whose primary business is to run this world and, in the process, satisfy the physical and mental desires of its inhabitants. Arising from common biblical interpretations, these notions of divinity have permeated Western society to the point that mainstream motion pictures invariably portray just such a God. But the devotional scriptures of ancient India present a strikingly different reality. Intended for those rare souls who are eagerly seeking to know God in truth, they reveal that, in His original form, He is the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa, who inhabits His own spiritual realm and spends His time accepting and enjoying the service of His devotees. In this

way, though He is indeed the ultimate cause of all creation and the primordial father of all living beings, Kṛṣṇa is not the God that most people imagine.

God's Form

Because the idea of God having a body is seen as limiting, He is generally reduced to little more than a diffuse radiant gas. Even though the Old Testament refers to various parts of God's body – such as His face, His hands, and His back – most readers, following in the footsteps of the prominent Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, take these descriptions to be allegorical. And the New Testament focuses on the personhood of Jesus, the Son, leaving it unclear how personal God, the Father, is. The result is that most people cling to an impersonal conception of divinity. In a conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Iran in 1975, for example, one guest urged that God “need not have a definite form.” Another guest explained that “the energy of light does take the form of

everything which exists. It is the creator of worlds.” Indeed, people who describe the amorphous “white light” of divinity are legion all the time.

In line with this belief, the trend in modern cinema is to depict God as ultimately formless and devoid of personality. For instance, although God appears in the final scene of the 1999 fantasy comedy *Dogma*, the script betrays an underlying impersonal conception. Despite appearing in the form of a healthy young woman and encountering fallen angels and foul-mouthed prophets, God does not speak a single word. Moreover, as She reenters the New Jersey church from which She emerged, a purported apostle explains to the protagonist that God “is not really a woman. She’s not really anything.”

pāda teaches his skeptical audience that Kṛṣṇa’s form does not limit Him, because, being spiritual rather than material, it is not subject to the physical laws that restrict our own bodies. He also advises that we should not expect to be able to see this sublime form with our blunt material senses, but must instead wait for Kṛṣṇa to reveal Himself in response to our loving mood.

God’s Realm

Another stereotype of God concerns His area of primary activity. Whatever He may look like, the practical consensus is that God’s place is here, at the helm of planet Earth. Though the Bible frequently alludes to a heavenly afterlife, little to noth-

erworldly “Adjustment Bureau,” who tell him that the relationship is not sanctioned by “the Plan.” When he asks who sent the officials, he is told they work for “the Chairman.” The movie climaxes with the politician and the woman on a building top, surrounded by officials and facing imminent resetting of their memories. At the last minute, the Chairman sends a revised Plan, and the officials permit the couple to be together.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* shows that there is much more to God’s domain than this one planet, and that He is therefore much more than merely earth’s “Chairman.” The Fifth Canto describes how our universe comprises fourteen planetary systems, each made up of numerous regions that are home to diverse living beings.

And this “universe” is merely one among countless millions of similar – or even larger – cosmic eggs. Thus, even God’s secular kingdom extends far beyond what most people can fathom. But altogether beyond the created world lies the spiritual world. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.20–21) Kṛṣṇa describes

that world – which is “eternal and transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter” – as His supreme abode. Leaving the governance of the myriad mundane universes to His various alter egos, it is there that Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord, spends His leisure time. (Indeed, far from exalting earth as the center of existence, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* presents the entire material creation as merely Kṛṣṇa’s dream.)

On each of the infinite spiritual planets, or Vaikuṅṭhas, Kṛṣṇa as Nārāyaṇa takes a unique form and engages in loving exchanges with entities specifically attracted to that form. On the chief planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa lives in His original form with His most intimate devotees, basking eternally in their love and affection. In Goloka Vṛndāvana, lakes filled with ambrosial water lap shores made of gems, the trees produce whatever one may desire, walking is dance, speech is song, and Kṛṣṇa exhibits His primary

nature. Rather than occupying Himself with the operation of our home world, He prefers to remain enthralled by loving relationships in His own home world. Hence, the God most people think of is a “Chairman,” utterly engrossed in managing our mortal realm, but Kṛṣṇa has better things to do . . . and a more sublime place in which to do them.

God’s Role

Among the most pernicious of the common misconceptions of God is that His main business is to satisfy our longings for things in this world. By and large, the Bible casts God in the role of father. And so, just as we look to our biological father to maintain us and acquire goods for our enjoyment, we tend to turn to our heavenly father only to request the fulfillment of our material desires. At its worst, what Santa Claus is to American children at Christmastime, God becomes to their parents year-round: a benevolent and bearded elderly fellow who’s expected to process their shopping lists and then promptly make his way back up North.

God in modern films has very much the same role. In the 2003 comedy *Bruce Almighty*, a television news reporter who has just been fired complains that God has let him down. Apparently indignant at the accusation of incompetence, God visits Bruce, gives him divine powers, and asks him to see if he can do a better job than God. After Bruce spends some time selfishly abusing his powers, God returns and scolds him for ignoring the “voices in his head,” which are all actually the prayers of humankind (or, at least, of those in the Buffalo, New York area). Bruce responds by setting up a computerized e-mail system to receive and respond to the prayers, but he is quickly overwhelmed. Frustrated, he sets the system to automatically grant all prayers. Predictably, chaos ensues, and Bruce eventually asks God to take back His powers, having by then appreciated the challenges God faces.

Kṛṣṇa, in contrast, is not the chief order-supplier, but rather the supreme enjoyer. In His feature as Paramātmā, the Supersoul residing in the heart of every living entity, He does sanction the pain and pleasure we receive. But in His original feature as Bhagavān, He concentrates on sporting amusement with His eternal friends and relatives in the spiritual world, as described above. When He does venture into the material world, it is likewise in pursuit of pleasure, as the dalliances of His various incarnations demonstrate. When He wants to enjoy a good fight, He comes as Narasimha (half man, half lion). When He wants to enjoy a good back scratch, He comes as Kūrma (a tortoise). When He wants to enjoy playing in the mud, He comes as Varāha (a boar). And when He wants to pull a practical joke on His devotees (and show off a bit at the same time), He comes as Matsya (a fish) or Vāmana (a dwarf).

One should not think, however, that Kṛṣṇa enjoys in place of, or at the cost of, the happiness of other living entities. (Indeed, in one verse

in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [5.29] He declares Himself both the ultimate enjoyer and everyone’s best friend.) On the contrary, His enjoyment is necessary for the genuine happiness of others. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Whole, so there can be nothing truly separate from Him. (*Īsopaniṣad*, Invocation) Consequently, whatever there may be, no matter how apparently independent, is in truth connected to Him in a dependent – and therefore subordinate – relationship. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi* 5.142) That is to say, the circle of existence can have only one center, and everything else must revolve around it. Thus situated, all other living entities are secondary enjoyers, with Kṛṣṇa the only direct enjoyer. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.31.14) analogizes to how food given to the stomach nourishes the entire body, or how water given to the root nourishes the entire tree. Śrīla Prabhupāda similarly explained that when one places ornaments on a person standing before a mirror, that person’s reflection also becomes decorated.

The Kingdom of God exists in the background of most people’s consciousness as a sort of perpetual retirement community.

Thus, even when God is ostensibly portrayed as a person, He (or She) is not permitted the traits of personhood as we know it.

But Kṛṣṇa is nothing so nebulous. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* describes Him as having “blooming eyes like lotus petals,” a head “decked with peacock’s feather,” and a body “tinged with the hue of blue clouds.” Hanging from His neck is “a garland of flowers beautified with the moon-rocket.” In His hands He holds a flute. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes even more features: the curl of white hair known as Śrīvatsa on His chest (3.19.15), the yellow silk garment He wears (3.4.7), the shark-shaped ornaments dangling from His ears (8.18.2), the Kaustubha gem adorning His neck (4.8.48), and the special marks distinguishing His feet, such as the lotus, barleycorn, and elephant goad (10.38.25). In the Iran conversation cited above, Śrīla Prabh-

ing is said about what that life consists of. As a result, the Kingdom of God exists in the background of most people’s consciousness as a sort of perpetual retirement community, not particularly exciting, but warm and safe, and a nice place to go after our “real” life here is over. As for the other planets in this universe, the Bible is more or less silent, and modern science has deemed them lifeless, so there is little reason to expect God to care much about them. Thus, it is assumed that God’s attention must be focused predominantly, if not exclusively, on our one planet, the only place where anything truly interesting happens.

Contemporary movies echo this divine geocentrism. In the 2011 romantic sci-fi thriller *The Adjustment Bureau*, for example, a politician’s attempts to reunite with a woman he met once by chance are repeatedly foiled by members of the oth-



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BBC Meditation

by Kṛṣṇa Dharma Dāsa



The author has been a regular British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) contributor since 1998. BBC Radio 2, where these meditations are aired, attracts from one million to eight million listeners, depending on the time of day. Thoughts from different contributors on topics assigned by the BBC are aired three or four times a day. This is the third in a series of eight meditations.

What Is Victory?

OVER THE YEARS my idea of victory has changed somewhat. In my younger days, filled with the naive certainty of youth, I saw myself conquering the world, acquiring vast riches, fame, and all that sort of thing. That ambition has been rather tempered by reality, as it tends to be, but thankfully I no longer see world conquest as even a desirable victory.

How we see success depends of course on our values, and as a young man material achievements were high up on my list. This tends to be the paradigm instilled in us by modern living – earn more, have more, and find more happiness. Over the years, though, I’ve come to understand that having more things in this world – whether possessions, fame, or fortune – will never make me happy. Most people still think that having more things will make them happy, and our consumer society is built on that illusion. If we were satisfied with the phone or car or clothes or whatever it is we own, then many industries would pretty quickly dry up and die. But thankfully for them, most of us are not so

easily contented. In the universal search for that bit more happiness, society appears to crave the latest, newest, and better model of everything, and business is booming.

But as I grow older, I’m beginning to question whether that makes me happy. Lao Tzu, a great Chinese philosopher, said, “He has the most who wants the least.” In other words, he is saying that what we really want is contentment and peace of mind. We’re hoping that our acquisitions will somehow satisfy us and make us happy, but it never seems to happen. For this reason the *Bhagavad-gītā* says that only one who subdues the ever-demanding senses can be peaceful, not one who strives always to satisfy them. It goes on to say that one whose mind is not controlled won’t be happy even owning the entire earth and all its wealth.

With the *Bhagavad-gītā*’s guidance, I now see victory as conquering my own material wants by turning them away from the things of this world and toward the spirit within. That to me would be the greatest possible victory.

When we accept this reality and “orbit” the Lord in conformity with our intrinsic nature, we are properly situated and feel naturally happy. But when we ignore our dependent condition, and act in defiance of Kṛṣṇa’s position, we find ourselves in artificial misery. Having voluntarily disconnected ourselves from the only source of true pleasure, we doom ourselves to partake of only its pale reflection, sense indulgence, which is temporary and inevitably leads to greater suffering. (*Gītā* 5.22) The great saint Nārada Muni therefore recommends that we take up the process of *bhakti-yoga* and engage our senses in the service of their Lord. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 19.170) For the same reasons, Kṛṣṇa, rather than wasting His time trying to grant our evanescent and whimsical material desires, much prefers to reawaken our spirit of loving service to His lotuslike feet. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 22.39)

As we can see, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as He is described in the Vedic literature, is nothing like the God most people think of. From the Bible to contemporary movies, God is portrayed as an abstract entity whose job is to run this world and keep its inhabitants happy in the here and now. But Kṛṣṇa is a charming young boy who frolics in His own pastoral paradise. And He invites those disaffected by common notions of the divinity and frustrated with the vain quest for worldly happiness to forget religion, forgo their worldly ambitions, and simply divert their energy and attention to Him. In return, He promises to bring us back to Godhead, back to where we belong, to rejoin His loving circle and experience a joy beyond all bounds. (*Gītā* 18.65–66, 9.2, 5.21) 🌀

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BOOK EXCERPT

WHAT IS ASTROLOGY ALL ABOUT?

Astrology is a tool that can help us materially and spiritually, provided we know how to use it.

by Śrī Rādhā Govinda Dāsī

VEDIC ASTROLOGY (known in Sanskrit as *Jyotish*) is an ancient Indian science of karmic analysis to change ourselves for the better. The aim is to get in touch with all the natural and sublime qualities of the soul,

Adapted from How to Mess Up Your Life with Astrology, available at www.smashwords.com. For this excerpt, we’ve retained the book’s style for dealing with Sanskrit words.



regardless of our present conditioning, and reestablish our relationship with God. Some people think that Vedic astrology is some sort of fortune telling – predicting an unchangeable future. Others take astrology as some form of black magic – a tool to get what they want. Others take it simply as a technique for describing different personality types. Actually Vedic astrology is transformational in nature, concerned with aiding the process of

growth, of overcoming limitations and of evolving in consciousness.

Life is full of miseries. As Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita*, this world is a place of suffering, where everything is temporary. Therefore there will always be some distress indicated in our astrological charts. These miseries are meant to wake us up to the reality that we cannot be permanently happy in this world. Therefore in all genuine traditions of knowledge there are illuminated teachers that tell us not to put all our hopes in the mundane sphere but aim for something higher. As Jesus Christ said: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” This heavenly dimension, this realm of pure bliss, can be found also in our hearts. And the best utilization of Vedic astrology is to help discover this treasure-trove of inner happiness.

Astrology and Karma

Vedic astrology should be based on the understanding of the law of karma, of how every action has a reaction that binds us. It’s a great behavioral and psychological science, known to but a few and often

misunderstood. Most do not grasp the truth that life is difficult. They keep on complaining about their responsibilities as if life should be easy. They always ask, “Why me?” They go on moaning and mourning that their difficulties are unfair and should somehow disappear. Whatever unpleasant happens to them, to their family or to their nation, they consider it unwarranted, unjustified and unfair. According to Vedic cosmic chronology we are living in Kali-yuga, the age of quarrel and hypocrisy, and the general trend is to perform activities that generate more confusion and misery. Thus their attempts at removing pain only end up creating more complex problems and heavier karma.

But before delving into Vedic astrology – or any form of astrology – we need to address a few crucial questions; otherwise we might be studying a leaf with no idea of what a tree is. Why does astrology work? What is karma and, more importantly, what is its purpose? Why does karma exist in the first place? What is “destiny”? Is it something unchangeable? And what is freewill? How do freewill and destiny coexist? What is the role of celestial bodies – stars, planets, etc. – in the bigger picture? Are their influences inescapable?

Actually you have freewill, the power to make personal choices. If you didn’t, you could not be held accountable for your actions. When your astrological chart foretells a certain “destiny,” it displays the results of your own free choices. Understanding this concept is essential. Freewill and fate – choice and destiny – have a relationship of cause and effect; they are two points of the same continuum, two faces of the same coin. The whole “system” is what is known as karma. Karma includes the ability to make personal choices and the consequences of those choices.

Who is holding us responsible? Ultimately it’s the Supreme Controller, who established the laws of behavior and who manages this world through His appointed universal agents. Such administrative cosmic leaders include those who rule stars and planets – powerful psychosomatic influences on human beings. That single divine personality, God, who witnesses all our actions, is the one who created the arrangement of rewards and punishments. It is He who established the laws, who enunciated the correct parameters of behavior, and who arranges for the whole universal administration that enforces those laws.

There is a subtle educational process in play; its culmination is the realization of love. But to achieve this lofty goal we have to be warned that acting as a slave to lust, anger and greed is not favorable to our well-being. We have lost our rudder and need direction. Part of that direction is the bestowal of rewards for meritorious acts and the imposition of punishment for self-destructive ones. We conditioned souls have lost our identity and now think ourselves to be a physical body of flesh and bones. We are torn between heaven and earth, between the lower, animal instincts and the most sublime and generous sentiments.

Our desire to enjoy in this world is a perverted reflection of our deep desire to love. The universe is

telling us – through the workings of karma – that we are not well situated; that there is something that needs some radical change, starting with our idea of who we are and what will make us happy. We are similar to a teenager who doesn’t know where he truly belongs. Father God and Mother Nature help us to grow up and find our true place in Existence. We constantly receive reminders that this is not our real home and that our desires need reorientation.

Karma allows you to create your own future, but it also gradually encourages you to evolve. How does karma do that? By rewarding your more selfless deeds, and punishing the more selfish ones. Can you change your fate? This might be an odd question: Who else but you yourself has created your fate in the first place? Planetary astrological influences don’t create your fate; they simply enforce and manifest it. Although their power may appear insurmountable, planets impel rather than compel. By using your freewill you shape your future. Some aspects of the destiny you have created might not be changed, but how you react to what comes your way will determine your growth. The more you react to your circumstances in enlightened, God-conscious ways, the more your future will be bright and auspicious.

Previous Lives and Present Situations

You might look at your astrological chart and wonder: “How did I end up with the planets in this particular position?” It’s because you designed it. Once you understand this fact, it becomes easier to transform and upgrade your existence. Astrology is not just about this body. The features of your body – its looks, its place of birth, its father and mother – have roots beyond and before this lifetime; we are talking about reincarnation. To understand reincarnation we first of all need to understand that

we are not this body; we are transcendental selves, souls, who inhabit the psychophysical structure. For the soul the changing of bodies is like the changing of clothes. And the main reason behind a particular birth is the mentality accumulated in previous existences. To become free of the bondage of birth and death, we have to work on our minds, on the contents of our consciousness. But we cannot get free from the clutches of death without the help of the saintly persons. Therefore the *Vedas* teach us that one must accept a spiritual master, a guru, by surrendering to him, serving him and enquiring from him about the devotional science. The Vedic astrologer

but in this way they may neglect the most important aspect of Vedic astrology, teaching us to align our behavior with the will of God.

Let’s ask ourselves some key questions: When an astrologer looks at a client’s chart and speaks about the future and what will happen, does this really help the client? Is it really useful and productive if, say, the client hears that her son will die from an accident in a few years? Doesn’t this simply create a sense of fear, of morbid expectation and pervasive sadness? And often such foreseen events don’t even happen – because the calculations were faulty. I know of a case in which someone’s son was “destined” to die at seven-

To become free of the bondage of birth and death, we have to work on our minds, on the contents of our consciousness.

should act as an assistant to the spiritual teachers, helping his clients to align with the higher harmony of the universe.


Watch Out Who You Ask For a Reading . . .

Unless the astrologer is also enlightened, his knowledge might turn dangerous and affect the growth of his clients. Some astrologers appear simply eager to impress or to please their clients. If they are greedy and unqualified, instead of being representatives of universal wisdom they end up as hired word-jugglers and amulet marketers. If they don’t intend to help their clients to walk on the path of righteousness, these astrologers should rather choose a more honest profession than play around with other people’s karma. It might be tempting for astrologers to try to set themselves apart, presenting themselves as possessing the mystical skill of predicting the future;

teen of an accident; but the son is now thirty-five – and the accident never occurred.

I also observed that when people consult an astrologer before marriage, they rarely take the astrologer’s words seriously when they hear, “This is not a good match. It may not work.” But when the same people decide to break up the marriage, they then take shelter in astrology, running here and there until they find an astrologer who will confirm and justify the decision. In this way they feel free from responsibilities, “Well, the astrologer told me to do it . . .” Besides the fault of the astrologer, sometimes it’s also the client that’s too easily influenced – or willfully puts words in the mouth of the astrologer. 🌐

Śrī Rādhā Govinda Dāsī studied astrology in India, counseling in France and Germany, and reiki mastership in Brazil. She holds a Bhakti-śāstri degree and a diploma in mediation.



FREE ONLINE COURSE

The Thematic Essence Of the Six Sandarbhas

This course, taught by Cārucandra Dāsa under the auspices of ISKCON Baltimore, is being presented online via video teleconferencing. It consists of six modules, each covering one of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Six Sandarbhas*. Each module is twenty-four weekly classes. Module 1, on *Śrī Tattva-sandarbha*, began in January and will be completed in June. The next module, on *Śrī Bhāgavat-sandarbha*, begins in July. *Bhāgavat-sandarbha* is a treatise on the Absolute Truth, realized in three aspects: Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān – the complete realization of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, including His qualities, abode, and eternal associates.

THE INSTRUCTOR: Cārucandra Dāsa (Chandrakant P. Giri, PhD) is a disciple of His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and a graduate of the Teacher Training Course taught by the Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education (VIHE). He has been teaching “Thematic Essence” courses on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books for the past twelve years.

REGISTRATION: For detailed information and to register for the *Bhāgavat-sandarbha* course, go to www.tinyurl.com/6sandarbha or bhaktishastra.com.



Illustration by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa and Dhṛtī Devī Dāsī

Celebrating Prabhupāda's HISTORIC JOURNEY

On the morning of 13 August 1965, at the Khidirpur dock in Kolkata, Śrīla Prabhupāda boarded the cargo ship Jaladuta to embark on a long and difficult voyage across the Indian and Atlantic oceans.

by Rādhāramaṇa Dāsa

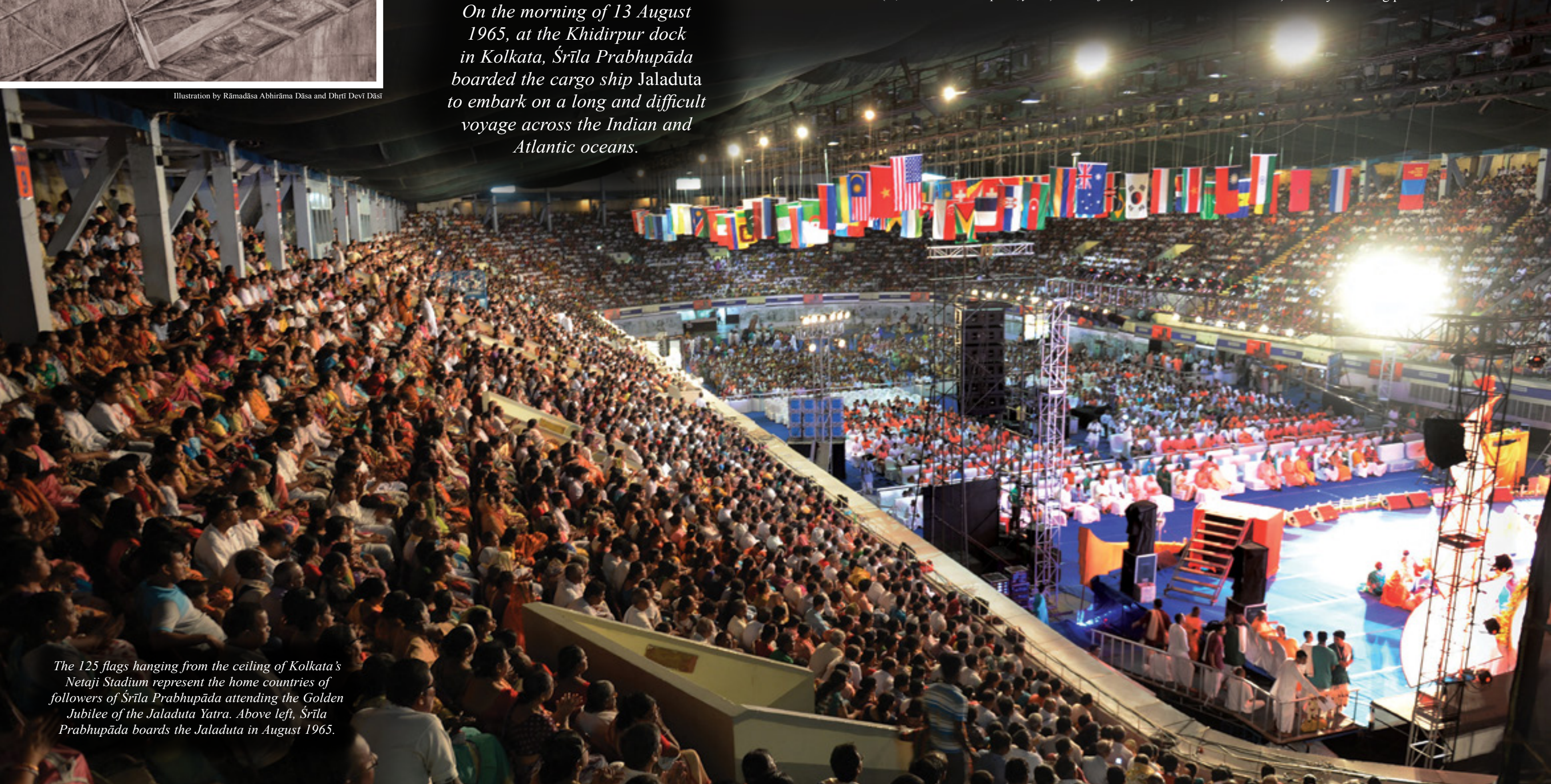
ONLY FOUR people came to see Śrīla Prabhupāda off on his maiden voyage to America. But fifty years later, on August 13–16 last year, ISKCON Kolkata staged the Golden Jubilee of the Jaladuta Yatra,* and followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda from more than 125 countries attended. The event took place in Netaji Indoor Stadium (seating 15,000), from whose ceiling hung the flag of each nation represented. The huge stage was designed to look like the *Jaladuta*, with its portholes, railings, and sails,

*Here Yatra (or, with diacritics in place, *yātrā*) means “journey.”

and even the water of the sea was depicted in flashing blue lights.

The festivities were split into morning and evening sessions – the morning for ISKCON devotees, and the evening for the people of Kolkata. Early in the morning, a hundred buses began transporting attendees. The stadium was stuffed with an audience of devotees and friends from India and abroad. Three thousand people more than the stadium’s capacity attended, packing the stairwells and walkways.

The first day began with talks by ISKCON leaders in praise of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s son Vrindavana Chandra De, the only surviving person who was



The 125 flags hanging from the ceiling of Kolkata’s Netaji Stadium represent the home countries of followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda attending the Golden Jubilee of the Jaladuta Yatra. Above left, Śrīla Prabhupāda boards the Jaladuta in August 1965.



present at Prabhupāda’s departure, recalled seeing his father off with a jar of coconut sweets from his sister (Prabhupāda’s daughter) Bhakti-lata. Prabhupāda asked his son to give his best wishes to his family and to request them to pray for his safe journey. Then, as the bell sounded the ship’s departure, Vrindavan Chandra shed tears and prostrated himself in obeisance before his father.

The morning program included *bhajan*s, *kīrtan*s, and a tribute song for Śrīla Prabhupāda by the young women of the Sri Mayapur International School. India’s Got Talent winners Prince Dance Group presented a drama of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life, from his childhood to his *Jaladuta* journey.

The evening session drew so many local people eager to honor Śrīla Prabhupāda that thousands had to be turned away from the gate.

Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi, Governor of West Bengal, praised Śrīla Prabhupāda. Prominent politician

Kiran Bedi spoke with heartfelt enthusiasm. She tweeted from the event to her 5.1 million Twitter followers: “Very sacred day in Kolkata – ISKCON celebrating 50 yrs of Prabhupada’s journey.” She called the event one of “energy, togetherness and devotion.” She sent several tweets, and at the end of the program danced with devotees. She was overwhelmed by the presence of devotees from over 125 countries and gave a very inspiring talk.

U.S. Congresswomen Tulsi Gabbard, a granddisciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, sent a video message, in which she said in part, “If not for the compassion of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, I never would have achieved this supreme treasure of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names. . . . Those of us who are the spiritual children and grandchildren of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda would all be lost orphans were it not for his compassion and mercy.”

Guinness World Records

Meanwhile, at an adjacent stadium, devotees from 106 countries broke the Guinness world record for “Most Nationalities in a Yoga Lesson.” Devotees performed yoga postures such as *padmāsana* (lotus position) while chanting Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *praṇāma-mantra* and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. The previous record holder, with 84 nationalities, was India’s Ministry of AAYUSH [Health]. The Honorable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Damodardas Modi, who attended that event, sent a message to the organizers of the ISKCON event, offering his best wishes.

Devotees also made another Guinness record: “Most Nationalities in a Choir.” For this feat, devotees from 105 countries sang the Bengali song *Śrī Guru Caraṇa Padma* in praise of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Later in the evening a specially commissioned sculpture, designed by Russian devotee Madana Mohana

Dāsa and made by Ukrainian artist Volodymyr Zhuravel, was unveiled. The beautifully detailed bronze piece consists of two parts. One, depicting Śrīla Prabhupāda boarding the *Jaladuta* in Kolkata, is now at the ISKCON Kolkata temple. The other, showing Prabhupāda alighting from the ship in Boston, will be installed in a public park near Boston harbor.

“Mr. Volodymyr took two months’ leave from his regular work,” said Madana Mohana Dāsa, “and refused other orders so that he could devote himself to completing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s sculpture in time for this event. He worked at least eighteen hours a day on this project.”



The large stage is turned into a ship for the event (far left). At left, a two-part sculpture depicts Prabhupāda leaving India and arriving in America. Below, India’s Got Talent winners Prince Dance Group portrays Prabhupāda’s dream about Kṛṣṇa while at sea.



When the sculpture arrived in India from Kiev, there were huge problems at customs just one day before the festival. But the sculpture somehow arrived at the stadium on the morning of August 13 and was unveiled by Honorable Governor of West Bengal Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi and Smt. Kiran Bedi.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciple Ambarīṣa Dāsa (Alfred Brush Ford) noted in his talk at the unveiling, “We in America were most blessed to be the first place where Śrīla Prabhupāda disembarked.” Ambarīṣa is helping build the world’s largest temple, in Sridham Mayapur, West Bengal.

Other highlights of the evening included a joyful performance of Jayapātāka Swami’s song “*Jadi Prabhupāda Na Hoito*” by Ekalavya Dāsa

Six hundred devotees from 125 countries chant at Victoria Memorial (right) on India’s Independence Day. Below, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sends a message, offering his good wishes. At bottom, Kiran Bedi, a former director general of police, gives a spirited talk in honor of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s achievements. Bottom right, Keshari Nath Tripathi, the governor of West Bengal, praises Śrīla Prabhupāda.



and a large group of young dancers and singers, and a “flash mob” dance performance by 650 students from Kolkata schools to the song “Gopīnātha,” which ended with the dancers forming the word “Kṛṣṇa” with their bodies. Prince Dance Group presented two dances and a drama. For

the pleasure of Lord Jagannātha, famous Odishi dancer Dona Ganguly, wife of legendary cricketer Shri Sourav Ganguly, performed a dance with her daughter and troupe.

Spiritual Tour of Kolkata

On August 14, hundreds of devotees were taken on a bus tour of key places in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life. The stops on the tour included 1 Ulta-danga Junction Road, where Prabhupāda met his spiritual master for the first time; the Rādhā-Govindajī Mandir at Bara Bazaar, where Śrīla Prabhupāda held his own Rathayātrā at five years old; the house at 151 Mahatma Gandhi Road, where he grew up; and the place on Tollygunge Road where he was born in 1896. Finally, devotees visited Khi-

dirpur dock, where Śrīla Prabhupāda left for the U.S. fifty years ago.

On August 15 – Indian Independence Day – 600 devotees, including representatives from 125 countries each carrying their country’s flag, chanted *harināma-saṅkīrtana* from ISKCON Kolkata to the Victoria Memorial, where they continued chanting for nearly four hours.

On August 16 and the evenings of August 14 and 15, devotees gathered at ISKCON Kolkata for cultural performances and talks on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life by his senior disciples.

Devotees from about fifty countries whose trip to Kolkata was sponsored by ISKCON expressed their heartfelt gratitude. Most of them have been devotees for over twenty years and had never been able to

afford the trip to India. We devotees at ISKCON Kolkata realized that Śrīla Prabhupāda personally invited these sincere souls to his birth city on this historic event. And it seemed that Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself took charge of the Golden Jubilee of the Jaladuta Yatra and made it successful to honor His pure devotee His Divine Grace A. C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!* 🙏

Rādhāramaṇa Dāsa is the general manager and spokesperson for ISKCON Kolkata and ISKCON’s liaison with the Government of India. He encountered ISKCON while studying in Russia in 1993. After completing his Master of Technology degree in mechanical engineering, he worked with one of the world’s largest airlines before resigning.

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.vaisnavacalendar.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 Madhusūdana
(April 23–May 21)

MAY

2 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, author of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

3 – **Varūthinī Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

6 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

9 – Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing the temple deity with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

15 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

17 – **Mohini Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

18 – Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of

Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

19 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhu-pāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

20 – Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting.



Lord Nṛsimhadeva

21 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the Six Gosvāmīs. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master (Īśvara Purī).

Month of Trivikrama
(May 22–June 20)

27 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

JUNE

1 – **Aparā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

2 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

15 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a prominent spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (disciplic succession), and the author of *Govinda-bhāṣya*, an important commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmīnī, a prominent female spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

16 – **Pāṇḍava Nirjalā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

Month of Vāmana
(June 21–July 19)

21 – Disappearance of Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, one of the principal followers of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan.

30 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya.

JULY

13 – **Yoginī Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

4 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

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.

KING PṚTHU CHASES MOTHER EARTH

On learning that the earth is withholding her grains from the people, King Pṛthu decides to punish her.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 17

13 इति व्यवसितो बुद्ध्या प्रग्रहीतशरासनः
सन्दधे विशिखं भूमेः क्रुद्धस्त्रिपुरहा यथा

*iti vyavasito buddhyā
pragrhīta-śarāsanah
sandadhe viśikhaṁ bhūmeḥ
kruddhas tri-pura-hā yathā*

iti – thus; *vyavasitaḥ* – having arrived at the conclusion; *buddhyā* – by intelligence; *pragrhīta* – having taken up; *śarāsanah* – the bow; *sandadhe* – fixed; *viśikham* – an arrow; *bhūmeḥ* – at the earth; *kruddhaḥ* – angry; *tri-pura-hā* – Lord Śiva; *yathā* – like.

Having arrived at a conclusion, the king took up his bow and arrow and aimed them at the earth, exactly like Lord Śiva, who destroys the whole world out of anger.

PURPORT: King Pṛthu found out the cause for the scarcity of food grains. He could understand that it was not the people's fault, for they were not lazy in executing their duties. Rather, the earth was not producing sufficient food grains. This indicates that the earth can produce suffi-

ciently if everything is properly arranged, but sometimes the earth can refuse to produce food grains for various reasons. The theory that there is a scarcity of food grains due to an increase of population is not a very sound theory. There are other causes that enable the earth to produce profusely or to stop producing. King Pṛthu found out the proper causes and took the necessary steps immediately.

14 प्रवेपमाना धरणी निशाम्योदायुधं च तम्
गौः सत्यपाद्रवद्भीता मृगीव मृगयुद्रुता

*pravepamānā dharaṇī
niśāmyodāyudham ca tam
gauḥ saty apādravad bhītā
mṛgīva mṛgayu-drutā*

pravepamānā – trembling; *dharaṇī* – the earth; *niśāmya* – seeing; *udāyudham* – having taken his bow and arrow; *ca* – also; *tam* – the King; *gauḥ* – a cow; *satī* – becoming; *apādravat* – began to flee; *bhītā* – very much afraid; *mṛgīva* – like a deer; *mṛgayu* – by a hunter; *drutā* – being followed.

When the earth saw that King Pṛthu was taking his bow and arrow to kill her, she became very much afraid and began to tremble. She then began to flee, exactly

like a deer, which runs very swiftly when followed by a hunter. ❶ Being afraid of King Pṛthu, she took the shape of a cow and began to run.

PURPORT: ❷ Just as a mother produces various children, both male and female, the womb of mother earth produces all kinds of living entities in various shapes. Thus it is possible for mother earth to take on innumerable shapes. At this time, in order to avoid the wrath of King Pṛthu, she took the shape of a cow. ❸ Since a cow is never to be killed, mother earth thought it wise to take the shape of a cow in order to avoid King Pṛthu's arrows. King Pṛthu, however, could understand this fact, and therefore he did not stop chasing the cow-shaped earth. ❶

15 तामन्वधावत्तद्वैन्यः कुपितोऽत्यरुणेक्षणः
शरं धनुषि सन्धाय यत्र यत्र पलायते

tām anvadhāvat tad vainyaḥ
kupito 'tyaruneṣaṇaḥ
śaram dhanuṣi sandhāya
yatra yatra palāyate

tām – the cow-shaped earth; anvadhāvat – he chased; tat – then; vainyaḥ – the son of King Vena; kupitaḥ – being very much angry; ati-aruna – very red; iṣaṇaḥ – his eyes; śaram – an arrow; dhanuṣi – on the bow; sandhāya – placing; yatra yatra – wherever; palāyate – she flees.

Seeing this, Mahārāja Pṛthu became very angry, and his eyes became as red as the early-morning sun. Placing an arrow on his bow, he chased the cow-shaped earth wherever she would run.

16 सा दिशो विदिशो देवी रोदसी चान्तरं तयोः
धावन्ती तत्र तत्रैतं ददर्शनूद्यतायुधम्

sā diśo vidiśo devī
rodasī cāntaram tayoh
dhāvantī tatra tatraīnam
dadarśānūdyatāyudham

- 1) What shape did mother earth assume in order to run from King Pṛthu?
- 2) Why can mother earth take on innumerable shapes?
- 3) Why did mother earth feel safe in the particular shape she took on?
- 4) Where specifically did mother earth run?
- 5) What is the meaning of *dharma jña*?

sā – the cow-shaped earth; diśaḥ – in the four directions; vidiśaḥ – randomly in other directions; devī – the goddess; rodasī – towards heaven and earth; ca – also; antaram – between; tayoh – them; dhāvantī – fleeing; tatra tatra – here and there; enam – the King; dadarśa – she saw; anu – behind; udyata – taken up; āyudham – his weapons.

❹ The cow-shaped earth ran here and there in outer space between the heavenly planets and the earth, and wherever she ran, the king chased her with his bow and arrows.

17 लोके नाविन्दत त्राणं वैन्यान्मृत्योरिव प्रजाः
त्रस्ता तदा निववृते हृदयेन विदूयता

loke nāvindata trāṇam
vainyān mṛtyor iva prajāḥ
trastā tadā nivavṛte
hṛdayena vidūyatā

loke – within the three worlds; na – not; avindata – could obtain; trāṇam – release; vainyāt – from the hand of the son of King Vena; mṛtyoh – from death; iva – like; prajāḥ – men; trastā – being very much afraid; tadā – at that time; nivavṛte – turned back; hṛdayena – within her heart; vidūyatā – very much aggrieved.

Just as a man cannot escape the cruel hands of death, the cow-shaped earth could not escape the hands of the son of Vena. At length the earth, fearful, her heart aggrieved, turned back in helplessness.

18 उवाच च महाभागं धर्मज्ञापन्नवत्सल
त्राहि मामपि भूतानां पालनेऽवस्थितो भवान्

uvāca ca mahā-bhāgam
dharma-jñāpanna-vatsala
trāhi mām api bhūtānām
pālana 'vasthito bhavān

uvāca – she said; ca – and; mahā-bhāgam – unto the great, fortunate King; dharma-jña – O knower of the principles of religion; āpanna-vatsala – O shelter of the surrendered; trāhi – save; mām – me; api – indeed; bhūtānām – of living entities; pālana – in protection; avasthitaḥ – situated; bhavān – Your Majesty.

Addressing the great, opulent King Pṛthu as the knower of religious principles and shelter of the surrendered, she said: Please save me. You are the protector of all living entities. Now you are situated as the king of this planet.

PURPORT: ❺ The cow-shaped earth addressed King Pṛthu as *dharma jña*, which refers to one who knows the princi-

ples of religion. ❻ The principles of religion dictate that a woman, a cow, a child, a *brāhmaṇa*, and an old man must be given all protection by the king or anyone else. Consequently mother earth took the shape of a cow. She was also a woman. Thus she appealed to the king as one who knows the principles of religion. Religious principles also dictate that one is not to be killed if he surrenders. She reminded King Pṛthu that not only was he an incarnation of God, but he was situated as the king of the earth as well. Therefore his duty was to excuse her.

19 स त्वं जिघांससे कस्माद्दीनामकृतकिल्बिषाम्
अहनिष्यत्कथं योषां धर्मज्ञ इति यो मतः

sa tvam jighāmsase kasmād
dīnām akṛta-kilbiṣām
ahaniṣyat katham yoṣāṃ
dharma-jña iti yo mataḥ

saḥ – that very person; tvam – you; jighāmsase – want to kill; kasmāt – why; dīnām – poor; akṛta – without having done; kilbiṣām – any sinful activities; ahaniṣyat – would kill; katham – how; yoṣāṃ – a woman; dharma-jñaḥ – the knower of religious principles; iti – thus; yaḥ – one who; mataḥ – is considered.

The cow-shaped earth continued to appeal to the king: I am very poor and have not committed any sinful activities. I do not know why you want to kill me. Since you are supposed to be the knower of all religious principles, why are you so envious of me, and why are you so anxious to kill a woman?

PURPORT: The earth appealed to the king in two ways. ❷ A king who knows religious principles cannot kill anyone who has not committed sinful activities. Apart from this, a woman is not to be killed, even if she does commit some sinful activities. Since the earth was innocent and was also a woman, the king should not kill her.

20 प्रहरन्ति न वै स्त्रीषु कृतागः स्वपि जन्तवः
किमुत त्वद्विधा राजन् करुणा दीनवत्सलाः

praharanti na vai strīṣu
kṛtāgaḥsv api jantavaḥ
kim uta tvad-vidhā rājan
karuṇā dīna-vatsalāḥ

praharanti – strike; na – never; vai – certainly; strīṣu – women; kṛta-āgaḥsu – having committed sinful activities; api – although; jantavaḥ – human beings; kim uta – then what to speak of; tvad-vidhāḥ – personalities like you; rājan – O King; karuṇāḥ – merciful; dīna-vatsalāḥ – affectionate to the poor.

Even if a woman does commit some sinful activity, no one should place his hand upon her. And what to speak of you, dear King, who are so merciful. You are a protector, and you are affectionate to the poor.

21 मां विपाट्याजरां नावं यत्र विश्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्
आत्मानं च प्रजाश्रेमाः कथमम्भसि धास्यसि

mām vipātyājarām nāvaṃ
yatra viśvam pratiṣṭhitam
ātmānam ca prajāś cemāḥ
katham ambhasi dhāsyasi

mām – me; vipātya – breaking to pieces; ajarām – very strong; nāvaṃ – boat; yatra – where; viśvam – all worldly paraphernalia; pratiṣṭhitam – standing; ātmānam – yourself; ca – and; prajāḥ – your subjects; ca – also; imāḥ – all these; katham – how; ambhasi – in the water; dhāsyasi – you will hold.

The cow-shaped earth continued: ❸ My dear King, I am just like a strong boat, and all the paraphernalia of the world is standing upon me. If you break me to pieces, how can you protect yourself and your subjects from drowning?

PURPORT: Beneath the entire planetary system is the *garbha* water. Lord Viṣṇu lies on this *garbha* water, and from His abdomen a lotus stem grows, and all the planets within the universe are floating in the air, being supported by this lotus stem. If a planet is destroyed, it must fall into the water of *garbha*. The earth therefore warned King Pṛthu that he could gain nothing by destroying her. Indeed, how would he protect himself and his citizens from drowning in the *garbha* water? In other words, outer space may be compared to an ocean of air, and each and every planet is floating on it just as a boat or island floats on the ocean. Sometimes planets are called *dvīpa*, or islands, and sometimes they are called boats. Thus the cosmic manifestation is partially explained in this reference by the cow-shaped earth.

पृथुरुवाच
22 वसुधे त्वां वधिष्यामि मच्छासनपराङ्मुखीम्
भागं बर्हिषि या वृङ्गे न तनोति च नो वसु

- 6) Which particular living entities must be given all protection?
- 7) In what two ways did the earth appeal to the king?
- 8) What argument did the earth make by comparing herself to a boat?

*pr̥thur uvāca
vasudhe tvām vadhiṣyāmi
mac-chāsana-parān-mukhīm
bhāgam barhiṣi yā vṛṅkte
na tanoti ca no vasu*

pr̥thuḥ uvāca – King Pṛthu replied; *vasu-dhe* – my dear earthly planet; *tvām* – you; *vadhiṣyāmi* – I shall kill; *mat* – my; *śāsana* – rulings; *parāk-mukhīm* – disobedient to; *bhāgam* – your share; *barhiṣi* – in the *yajña*; *yā* – who; *vṛṅkte* – accepts; *na* – not; *tanoti* – does deliver; *ca* – and; *naḥ* – to us; *vasu* – produce.

King Pṛthu replied to the earthly planet: My dear earth, you have disobeyed my orders and rulings. In the form of a demigod you accepted your share of the yajñas we performed, but in return you have not produced sufficient food grains. For this reason I must kill you.

PURPORT: The cow-shaped earthly planet submitted that she not only was a woman, but was innocent and sinless as well. Thus she argued that she should not be killed. Besides, she pointed out that being perfectly religious-minded, the king could not violate the religious principles that forbade killing a woman. 9 In reply, Mahārāja Pṛthu informed her that first of all she had disobeyed his orders. This was her first sinful activity. Secondly he accused her of taking her share of the *yajñas* (sacrifices) but not producing sufficient food grains in return.

**23 यवसं जग्ध्यनुदिनं नैव दोग्ध्यौघसं पयः
तस्यामेवं हि दुष्टायां दण्डो नात्र न शस्यते**

*yavasam jagdhy anudinam
naiva dogdhy audhasam payah
tasyām evam hi duṣṭāyām
daṇḍo nātra na śasyate*

yavasam – green grass; *jagdhi* – you eat; *anudinam* – daily; *na* – never; *eva* – certainly; *dogdhi* – you yield; *audhasam* – in the milk bag; *payah* – milk; *tasyām* – when a cow; *evam* – thus; *hi* – certainly; *duṣṭāyām* – being offensive; *daṇḍah* – punishment; *na* – not; *atra* – here; *na* – not; *śasyate* – is advisable.

Although you are eating green grass every day, you are not filling your milk bag so we can utilize your milk. Since you are willfully committing offenses, it cannot be said that you are not punishable due to your assuming the form of a cow.

9) Of what two sinful activities did King Pṛthu accuse the earth?

PURPORT: A cow eats green grasses in the pasture and fills her milk bag with sufficient milk so that the cowherds can milk her. *Yajñas* (sacrifices) are performed to produce sufficient clouds that will pour water over the earth. The word *payah* can refer both to milk and to water. As one of the demigods, the earthly planet was taking her share in the *yajñas* – that is, she was eating green grass – but in return she was not producing sufficient food grains – that is, she was not filling her milk bag. Pṛthu Mahārāja was therefore justified in threatening to punish her for her offense.

**24 त्वं खल्वोषधिबीजानि प्राक्सृष्टानि स्वयम्भुवा
न मुञ्चस्यात्मरुद्धानि मामवज्ञाय मन्दधीः**

*tvam khalv oṣadhi-bījāni
prāk sṛṣṭāni svayambhuvā
na muñcasy ātma-ruddhāni
mām avajñāya manda-dhīḥ*

tvam – you; *khalu* – certainly; *oṣadhi* – of herbs, plants, and grains; *bījāni* – the seeds; *prāk* – formerly; *sṛṣṭāni* – created; *svayambhuvā* – by Lord Brahmā; *na* – do not; *muñcasi* – deliver; *ātma-ruddhāni* – hidden within yourself; *mām* – me; *avajñāya* – disobeying; *manda-dhīḥ* – less intelligent.

You have so lost your intelligence that, despite my orders, you do not deliver the seeds of herbs and grains formerly created by Brahmā and now hidden within yourself.

PURPORT: While creating all the planets in the universe, Lord Brahmā also created the seeds of various grains, herbs, plants, and trees. When sufficient water falls from the clouds, the seeds fructify and produce fruits, grains, vegetables, etc. By his example, Pṛthu Mahārāja indicates that whenever there is a scarcity in food production, the head of the government should take steps to see why production is being held up and what should be done to rectify the situation.

**25 अमूषां क्षुत्परीतानामार्तानां परिदेवितम्
शमयिष्यामि मद्बाणैर्भिन्नायास्तव मेदसा**

*amūṣām kṣut-parītānām
ārtānām paridevitam
śamayisyāmi mad-bāṇair
bhinnāyās tava medasā*

amūṣām – of all of them; *kṣut-parītānām* – suffering from hunger; *ārtānām* – of the distressed; *paridevitam* – the lamentation; *śamayisyāmi* – I shall pacify; *mat-bāṇaiḥ* – by my arrows; *bhinnāyāḥ* – being cut to pieces; *tava* – of you; *medasā* – by the flesh.

[Continued in the next issue.]

Learn to Love The Natural Mode of Life

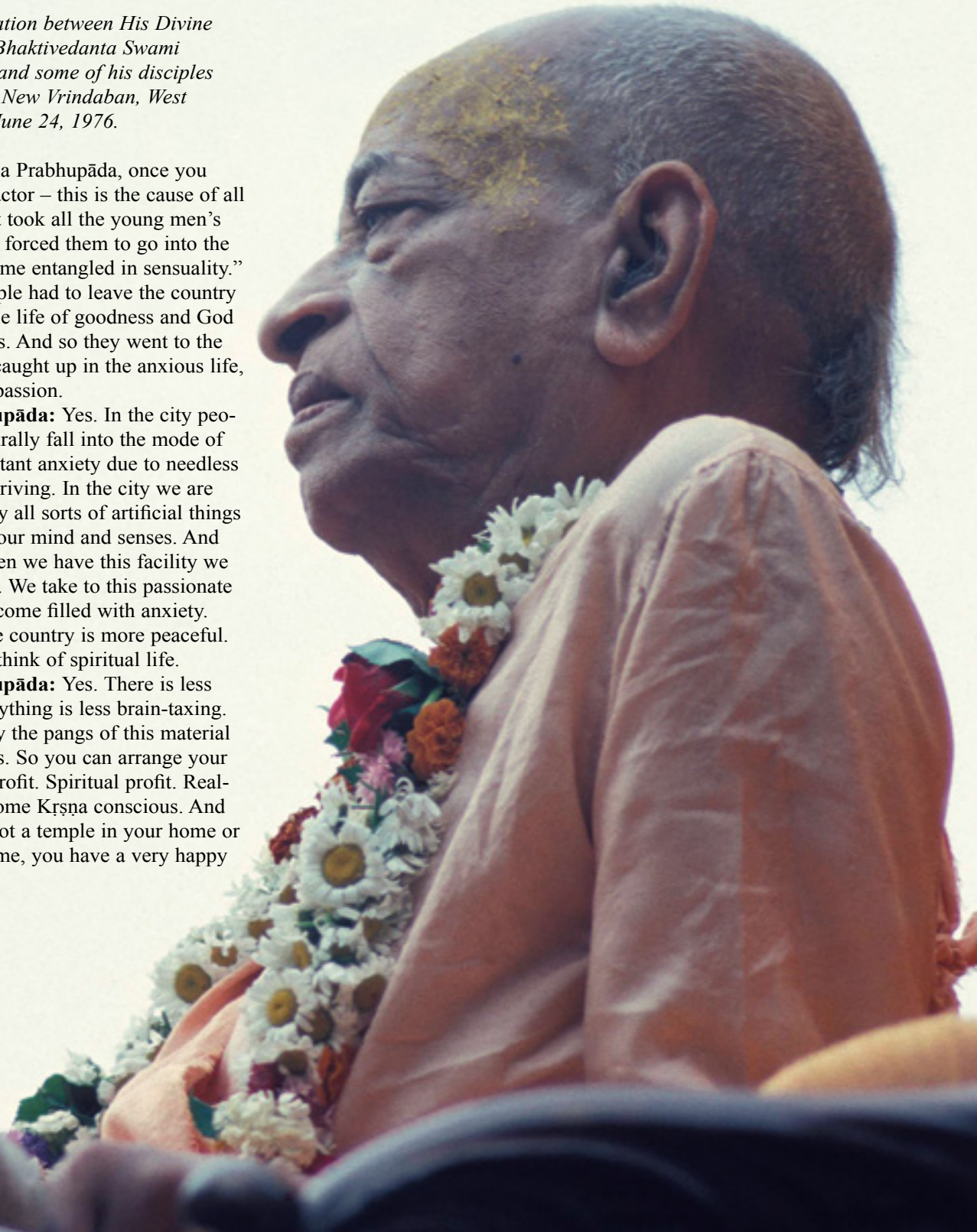
This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place at New Vrindaban, West Virginia, on June 24, 1976.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, once you said, “The tractor – this is the cause of all the trouble. It took all the young men’s farm work. It forced them to go into the city and become entangled in sensuality.” You said people had to leave the country and the simple life of goodness and God consciousness. And so they went to the city and got caught up in the anxious life, the mode of passion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. In the city people must naturally fall into the mode of passion: constant anxiety due to needless lusting and striving. In the city we are surrounded by all sorts of artificial things for agitating our mind and senses. And naturally, when we have this facility we become lusty. We take to this passionate mode and become filled with anxiety.

Disciple: The country is more peaceful. It’s easier to think of spiritual life.

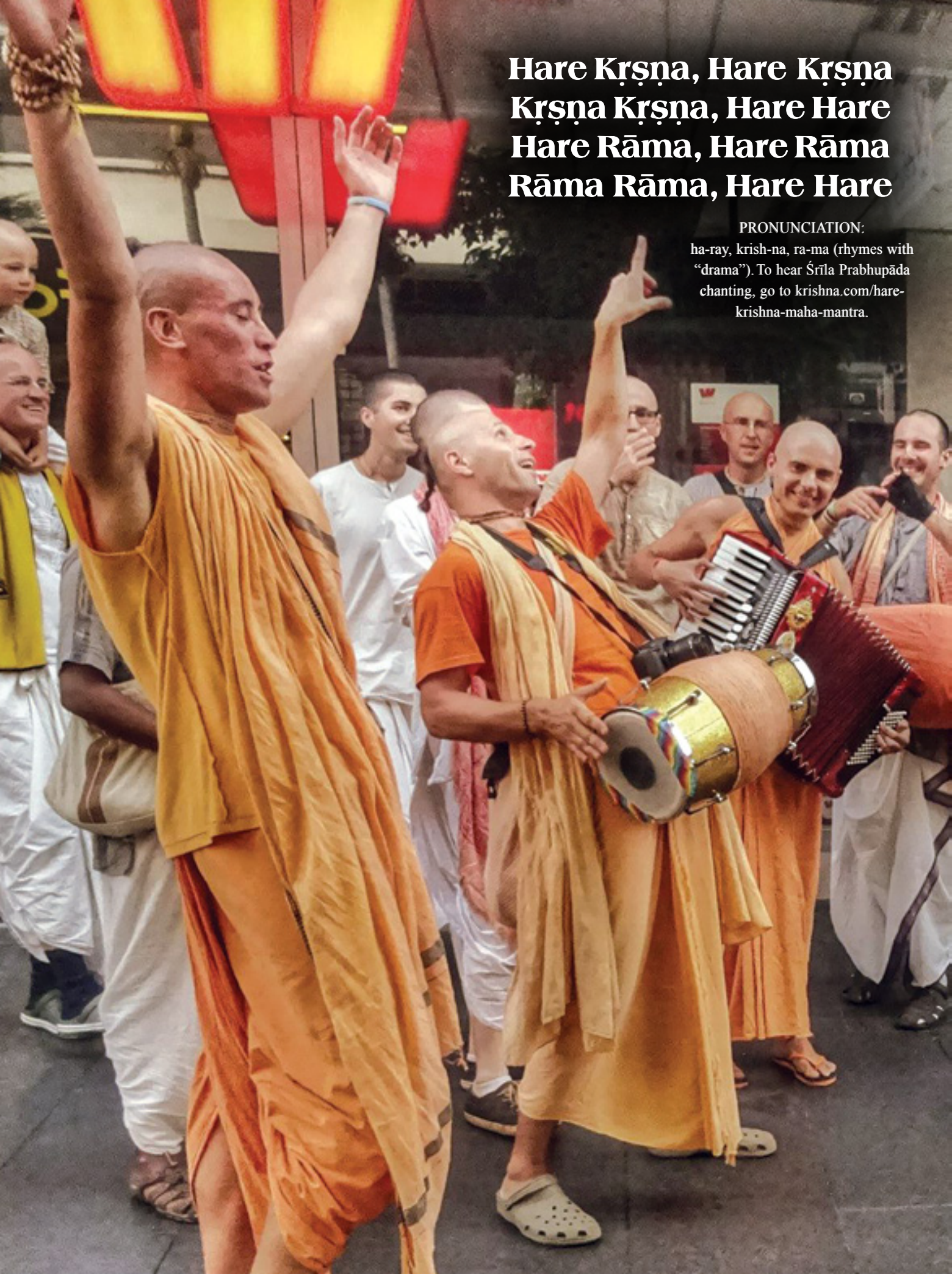
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. There is less disease. Everything is less brain-taxing. In the country the pangs of this material world are less. So you can arrange your life for real profit. Spiritual profit. Realize God; become Kṛṣṇa conscious. And if you have got a temple in your home or near your home, you have a very happy



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.



life. You work just a little – just for your food – in the spring a month and a half or so for planting, in the fall a month and a half for harvesting. And in your remaining time, you become culturally enriched. You engage all your talents and energies for realizing God. Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is ideal life.

You see the minute fibers on this flower? No other manufacturing process in this world can do this – such small fibers. And how brilliant is the color! If you study only one flower, you will become God conscious. There is a mechanism that we call “nature.” And from it is coming everything we see around us. Now, how is it that this mechanism is so perfect? And who has devised this mechanism?

Disciple: Once in London you said, “People do not know that flowers are painted. Kṛṣṇa paints them with thoughts.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Most people think that by itself, unconnected with a painter, this flower has become beautiful. This is foolishness. “Nature has done it.” Whose nature? Everything is being done by the natural mechanism of Kṛṣṇa. *Parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*: the Lord is orchestrating everything by His innumerable, inconceivable energies.

Anyway, learn to love this natural mode of life, life in a wide-open space. Produce your own grain. Produce your own milk. Save time. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Glorify the Lord’s holy names. At life’s end, go back to the spiritual world to live forever. Plain living, high thinking – ideal life.

Modern, artificial “necessities of life” may seem to increase your so-called comfort. But if you forget life’s real aim, that is suicidal. We want to stop this suicidal policy. We don’t directly attempt to stop the modern advancement of technology. The so-called advancement of technology is suicidal, but we don’t always talk of this. [Laughter.] People today are extremely attached to this so-called advancement. Therefore when Lord Caitanya appeared five

hundred years ago, He gave a simple formula: chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Even in your technological factory you can chant. You go on pushing and pulling with your machine, and chant, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.” You can devote yourself to God. What is the wrong there?

Disciple: The leaders know that once a person starts chanting God’s names, in time he’ll lose his taste for this anxious life of technology.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is natural.

Disciple: So the leaders know you are sowing the seeds of their destruction.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Where is the “destruction”? Rather, it is construction: devote yourself to God, and live forever. This is the proper path. Follow it. You will live forever. By our method, *tyaktvā dehaṃ punar janma naiti*. After leaving your present material body, you don’t get any more material bodies. You regain your spiritual body and go back to the spiritual world. And without this spiritual realization, *tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*: when you leave your present material body, you’ll have to accept another material body.

So consider the two methods of living. Which is better? The “advanced” method – accepting more material bodies. Or our “old-fashioned” method – accepting no more material bodies. Which is better?

As soon as you accept a material body, you have to suffer: birth, old

age, disease, death. The material body means suffering. Therefore, if we prepare so that on leaving this present body we undergo no more suffering, that is intelligent. But if we prepare to receive another material body for more suffering, is that intelligent? Unless you understand the Lord, unless you understand Kṛṣṇa, you’ll have to stay in this material world and accept another body. There is no alternative.

Now our method. We understand, first, that *na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*: when the body is finished, the soul goes on living. Unfortunately, many people have become so dull-brained that they cannot understand this simple truth. Every day of their lives, people see that a soul in an infant body is going to take on a childhood body, then a teenage body, next an adult body, and later an aged body. People see, with their own eyes, how the soul is transmigrating from one body to another body to still another body. Nevertheless, with their dull brains they cannot understand that at death, when the aged body is finished, the soul goes on to yet another body, material or spiritual. But people cannot understand this. They are so dull-brained. They cannot make the simple distinction between the body and the soul. It will take five hundred years to teach them this simple truth – their education is so advanced. 🙏

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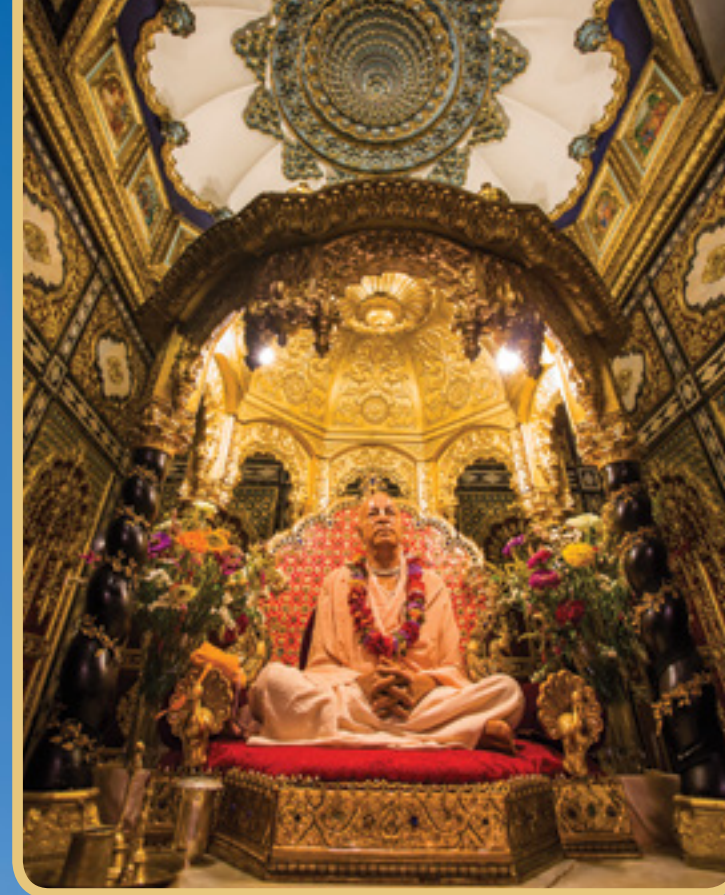


A Facelift for Prabhupāda's PALACE OF GOLD

In the 1970s a dedicated group of devotees cooperated to build it; now a new group is determined to restore it to its former glory.

by Satyarāja Dāsa

Archival research by Caitanya Maṅgala Dāsa



Shyam Pandey

IN THE SUMMER of 1965 His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda left India with a specific mission: his teacher, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, had bestowed upon him the loving task of bringing the profound spiritual wisdom of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world.

Arriving in New York City that fall, Śrīla Prabhupāda naturally felt deep separation from Vrindavan, the sacred land of Lord Kṛṣṇa where he had lived for many years. There he contemplated his mission and the methods he would employ to transplant ancient Vedic wisdom in Occidental soil. While on his way to America by sea, Prabhupāda particularly felt separation from the major deities of Vrindavan, “My Lords, Govindaji, Gopinath, and Radha Damodar,” as he noted in his diary.

He soon opened his first temple on the Lower East Side of New York, and then temples in San Francisco, Montreal, Los Angeles, and London. In all these temples, deities of Kṛṣṇa would grace lavish altars, assuaging his feelings of separation.

It is no wonder, then, that in 1968 when two early disciples, Kīrtanānanda Swami and Hayagrīva Dāsa, bought a farm in West Virginia – a peaceful, rustic environment that Prabhupāda would name “New Vrindaban” – he quickly asked them to establish seven Kṛṣṇa temples, reminiscent of Vrindavan’s seven major temples. Prabhupāda wanted New Vrindaban to be a place of pilgrimage in the West.

“New Vrindaban should be taken up very seriously,” he wrote to Hayagrīva, “because actually I want to develop a replica of Old Vrindaban. I have got ambition to construct

This view of the Palace from the lotus pond was taken in 2011. Inset: Śrīla Prabhupāda sits in the Palace’s main room, where he is worshiped.



Many of the devotees who built the Palace developed their skills while on the job (left). Below, devotees chant in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda's form in the early days of the Palace's existence.

there 7 temples as follows: 1. Radha Madan Mohan, 2. Radha Govinda, 3. Radha Gopinatha, 4. Radha Damodara, 5. Radha Raman, 6. Radha Gokulananda, 7. Radha Syamasundara.”

After visiting New Vrindaban, Prabhupāda said he wanted to make it his new home. He felt comfortable there and saw it as a genuine holy place, a manifestation of the eternal Vṛndāvana, the spiritual world. In June 1969 he wrote to his disciple Dayānanda Dāsa, “I have decided that I shall spend four months in New Vrindaban and eight months in Los Angeles. That will be my regular program.”

In numerous letters, lectures, and public conversations, Prabhupāda outlined the basic concept for New Vrindaban: “simple living and high thinking,” an agrarian, close-to-the-earth, Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life. New Vrindaban would be a place for cow protection and for training ideal *brāhmaṇas*.

Soon after his enthusiastic disciples started conceiving the first tem-

ple complex, Bhāgavatānanda Dāsa, a sculptor who would eventually develop the talents of a structural engineer, suggested they first build a house for Śrīla Prabhupāda. After all, the core of devotional life is service to the spiritual master. The proposed structure would be a place where Prabhupāda could translate India's sacred texts while appreciating the country atmosphere and the association of his dedicated disciples.

The Building Blocks Of Devotion

The original plans for Prabhupāda's New Vrindaban dwelling took shape on a napkin, casually drawn by Kīrtanānanda Swami in 1972. But as construction proceeded, the design became more and more ambitious. It was as if Kṛṣṇa Himself took over the project. The devotees were inexperienced and unpaid, since they saw their work as devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and they had to face the harsh Appalachian winters. But Prabhupāda's home began to exceed

their wildest expectations. While “on the job,” the devotees learned to make and use cement, cut marble and crystal, work with semi-precious stones, carve teakwood, fabricate stained glass, and apply gold leaf. Driven by an intense desire to please Śrīla Prabhupāda, they evolved the concept of a simple home into one for an ornate palace.

Much to the surprise of experts in architecture, construction, and related fields, the New Vrindaban novices gradually created an abiding monument that would be the envy of professionals. The devotees made prodigious use of marble, teak, onyx, and 22-karat gold leaf. With its mirrored ceilings, impeccable stained-glass artwork, and polished mosaic floors, the palace looked like a modern spaceship from ancient India that somehow landed in West Virginia. As if the central structure was not enough, the devotees surrounded it with exquisitely crafted terraces, towers, manicured lawns, and, compli-

ments of Lord Kṛṣṇa, incomparable vistas.

Remembering the Builders

Though many devotees labored incessantly, whether working onsite or raising funds, the following dedicated souls were particularly instrumental.

Varṣānā Swami (then Kaśyapa Dāsa) sculpted the terraces, walkways, roadway, rose garden, pond, and causeway out of a rugged and raw Appalachian ridge. He supervised blasting crews and operated heavy equipment for over eighteen hours a day. His dedication was indispensable in setting the groundwork for the efforts to come.

Sanātha Devī Dāsī conducted much of the initial research and supervised the early design and construction. She had studied structural engineering at Pratt Institute in New York City, but had no idea she would be using her skills in Kṛṣṇa's service.

She created blueprints and coordinated the efforts of marble layers, stained-glass fitters, plumbers, electricians, casters, and cement layers, all crucial to the early stages of construction.

Kulādri Dāsa, New Vrindaban's temple president at the time, was a significant part of the original team. He oversaw the design, coordinated the various departments, and put the final touches of gold leaf on the main structure.

Nityodita Dāsa rose to the challenge not only by mixing and laying cement by hand, a time-consuming chore that was new to him, but by learning how to cut marble and polish the end results like a pro.

Bhāgavatānanda Dāsa was the structural engineer and sculptor. He supervised the construction of the 300-ton dome and sculpted the mood-inducing peacocks, elephants, and ornaments, as well as the embellished walls and columns.

Sudhānu Dāsa went to India to learn carving, a talent he brought back to the Palace and taught to others.

Several devotees contributed their skills in the beaux arts, adding to the palace's elegance: Narendra Dāsa, assisted by apprentices, did a good portion of the glass work, including cutting and fashioning thousands of scraps of fine glass into intricately framed windows and novel stained-glass showpieces. Īsānī Devī Dāsī designed and hand crafted the magnificent chandeliers peppering the Palace, along with the jewelry decorating the deities and the Palace icons of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Muralīdhara Dāsa and Viṣṇu Dāsa created beautiful oil paintings of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. From the vaulted ceiling of the temple room to the large portrait of Śrīla Prabhupāda on the temple wall, all are masterworks that artfully enhance an already extraordinary visage.

Others, like Soma Dāsa, offered numerous talents to the mix: brick and marble laying, concrete work and woodwork, mold making, cast-



Recent renovation work on the exterior wall: At right, workers pour concrete. At far right, the wall shows need of repair. At far right, bottom, an architect's computer drawing shows what the finished wall will look like.



ing, and so on. Soma was present when Prabhupāda came to visit New Vrindaban in the summer of 1974, partly to see how his “home” was coming along. When one devotee asked if the structure should be illuminated with embedded jewels, like Lord Kṛṣṇa’s palace, Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed his cane at the men and women who had been working so

hard on the Palace: “These devotees are my jewels.” Endearingly, he also thanked Soma, leaving his disciple with a treasured memory.

For roughly seven years, the New Vrindaban devotees worked through grueling winters and scorching summers, spending hour after hour on scaffolds, in dry fields, in inhospitable work areas – without caring for

bodily comforts. Indeed, they gave everything they had so they could offer a great tribute to their spiritual master. The Palace is an ultimate gift of love to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Much to the devotees’ dismay, Prabhupāda passed away in November of 1977, and was thus unable to see the completion of his Palace. But because his dedicated disciples viewed

their endeavor as a spiritual offering to their teacher, his physical departure did not dissuade or discourage them from completing it. In fact, they became even more determined to create an enduring monument – a memorial.

From Home to Memorial

A month before he passed away, Prabhupāda reiterated how important the Palace was to him. He several

The Palace is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s most significant *smṛti samādhi* (memorial shrine) in the West. His first *samādhi* is in Vrindavan, where his bodily remains are interred. In Mayapur is his *puṣpa* (flower) *samādhi*, containing flower garlands he wore on his last day. In the New Vrindaban Palace some of his personal items are preserved.

In 2006 ISKCON’s Governing Body Commission (GBC) resolved to formally recognize Prabhupāda’s

ing to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Palace functions as a *smṛti samādhi* in the truest sense of the phrase – anyone who visits will be naturally compelled to remember and appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda. His presence can be deeply felt there.

This fact gives additional meaning to Prabhupāda’s poignant words spoken in 1976, while visiting the Palace a year before his passing: “I’m already living here and always will be.”

From Home to Memorial to Palace

Prabhupāda’s Palace of Gold officially opened on Sunday, September 2, 1979. The Palace lent credibility and gravitas to New Vrindaban, especially for tourists, most of whom had not previously taken the devotee community seriously. While the people and the philosophy behind the Palace might have remained somewhat inscrutable for most, many could now see that the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement was something to be reckoned with. Here was a phenomenon that people could understand – a magnificent structure unique in its styling and formidable in its opulence. A sight to behold. Something to tell their children about. “Who could have created this great wonder?”

The Palace was clearly exceptional. Yogeśvara Dāsa expressed this well in a July 1981 *Back to Godhead* article:

In its design the Palace is unique. While most churches and cathedrals reflect orthodox motifs of their culture, the Palace is a blending of Eastern and Western styles, as if to say that service to God is the universal principle of all religions. While the Eastern roots of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement can be seen in the intricate latticework, peacock windows, and traditional marble patterns, the movement’s presence in the West is reflected in castlelike railings, cathedral-inspired arches, and bright color combinations.



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times expressed his desire to get his strength back so he could visit his home away from home.

“If I survive,” he told some disciples as he lay in bed, “I have a strong desire to go and live there. It will be a great pleasure.” Then, perhaps dismissing the likelihood of recovery, he said, “Let us see to which palace I am going.”

Palace as a “Shrine and Memorial” on a par with those in Vrindavan and Mayapur. “Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Palace, New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA,” the resolution states, “[is hereby] given official recognition as a Shrine and Memorial and included in the Law Book 2.3.2 Shrines and Memorials.” By housing worshipable memorabilia belong-



Above, a backhoe digs a trench for a drainage pipe, being laid at right.



Lakshman Poddar (2)

The Inner Meaning of “New Vrindaban”

THE NOTION of “New (*nava*) Vrindaban” – a replica of the original Vrindavan – is anything but new. It goes back to the *Purāṇas* and was re-envisioned in Sanātana Gosvāmī’s *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Part One, Chapter Seven), the first book in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line, written some five hundred years ago. *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*’s Nava Vrindavan is located in Kṛṣṇa’s opulent city of Dwarka, His princely domain in the material world. Nava Vrindavan is a haven of sorts, complete with facsimiles of His family, friends, and favorite areas in the original Vrindavan. Viśvakarmā, the architect of the demigods, created it to lessen Kṛṣṇa’s intense pining for His village home.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions Nava Vrindavan in his drama *Lalita-mādhava* (Acts Seven and Eight). And while living in Ramakeli (Maldah District, West Bengal), Rūpa and his brother Sanātana had even built a rural area of their own called Gupta (“secret”) Vrindavan, which was also a re-creation of Kṛṣṇa’s holy land. They built lakes resembling Syama Kunda and Radha Kunda and other sacred places associated with Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. In this way they were able to live in Ramakeli while appreciating Kṛṣṇa’s presence. Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed a

similar mood and desire in creating New Vrindaban in West Virginia.

With this as a backdrop, one might question the propriety of building a “palace” in Vrindavan, an area normally conceived of as being down-home and simple – the rural environment of village India. The precedent, however, is Dwarka’s Nava Vrindavan, which was full of grandeur and majesty. And even some places in the original Vrindavan are replete with palatial buildings and untold opulence. Vrindavan has two dimensions: simple, intimate, and sweet (*madhurya*); and grand, opulent, and magnificent (*aiśvarya*). Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura describes the grandeur of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s paternal home, Nanda Mahārāja’s palace, in his great work *Vrajarīti-cintāmaṇi* (Texts 16–18): “His palace is made of glistening sapphires, with coral pillars, gold and lapis lazuli roofs, crystal windows, and large gates made of rubies. His entire capitol is enclosed by a great wall built of sapphires.” Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s disciple Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa develops these ideas in *Aiśvarya-kadambinī*.

In the end, Vrindavan is perfectly complete, exhibiting both simple and opulent dimensions according to Kṛṣṇa’s sweet desire.

In the end, the Palace was everything the devotees had hoped it would be. A commentator for *The Today Show* said, “You won’t believe your eyes.” Prabhupāda would have been proud: Visitors came from all over the world to see what the *New York Times* dubbed “The Taj Mahal of the West.” At its height in the 1980s, the Palace welcomed

hundreds of thousands of visitors a year. These were glory days for New Vrindaban.

The Palace Today

But during the 1980s and early 1990s a series of crimes and spiritual deviations plagued the community. The Palace fell into disrepair. Today,

large pieces of the outer wall have deteriorated, sections of wrought iron have rusted irreparably, and parts of the concrete structure are crumbling away. Over the years, devotees repaired and re-painted, but there were limits to what they could do.

Today, Palace manager Vrajadhāma Dāsa works closely with the Marshall County Tourist Board, and the Palace still receives fifteen to twenty thousand tourists annually. But this is a far cry from the Palace in its heyday. The devotees realize that something needs to be done.

An ambitious multi-year and multi-million dollar renewal effort is in the works, with an enthusiasm that rivals the Palace’s initial construction. The Palace Restoration Committee, established in 2010, is focusing first on the outside Palace wall, and then will move on to the Palace and the grounds.

Gopīśa Dāsa, project manager for Palace restoration, says, “I was absolutely overwhelmed when I first saw the Palace. It was so beautiful. But what was most exciting to me was the spirit of cooperation, to see so many devotees working together for the pleasure of Śrīla Prabhupāda. That same spirit is alive again, and it will facilitate, even mandate, the Palace’s new incarnation. In fact, it is now a priority to improve the entrance way and front steps by 2016 as an offering to Śrīla Prabhupāda for the fiftieth anniversary of ISKCON.”

In 2012, CNN selected the Palace as one of the eight must-see religious sites in America.* This is no doubt a portent of things to come. 🌐

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*www.cnn.com/2012/07/10/travel/beautiful-religious-sites-us/

His Varṇāśrama Challenge

While spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness worldwide, Śrīla Prabhupāda used the Sanskrit term varṇāśrama at least four ways, and applied it differently to ISKCON over three time periods.

by Sureśvara Dāsa

To honor the fiftieth anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's incorporation of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, BTG presents Part Six of a ten-part series celebrating Śrīla Prabhupāda's unique, transcendental position in ISKCON, as well as every follower's foundational relationship with him.

BETWEEN 1965 and 1977 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote dozens of books, opened over a hundred centers, and initiated thousands of

disciples worldwide. By the summer of 1977 his nonstop sacrifice had taken its toll on his body. Returning to Vrindavan¹ to continue translating Sanskrit texts about Kṛṣṇa into English, Prabhupāda commented that his days on earth were numbered. When a disciple later asked if he had any regrets, Prabhupāda acknowledged he had “one lamentation.”

“That you have not finished translating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?”²

“No, that I have not established *varṇāśrama*.”³ (Interview with

Abhirāma Dāsa, 18 February 1996, Vrindavan)

That timeless culture which shepherds us from the material to the spiritual realm, *varṇāśrama* comes up repeatedly in Prabhupāda's teachings. Yet Prabhupāda had been so busy spreading the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement he scarcely had time to demonstrate *varṇāśrama*'s practical application in the modern age. Indeed, only in the last years of his life did he identify *varṇāśrama*'s social/spiritual fea-

tures as the key to attracting humanity en masse to Kṛṣṇa.

“This is the next aspect of Kṛṣṇa consciousness which I wish to push forward. . . . On these farms we can demonstrate the full *varṇāśrama* system. If these farms become successful then the whole world will be enveloped by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. . . . In the cities we are interested for preaching, but we cannot present the ideal *varṇāśrama* system; this is possible only at the farms, so they are very important.”⁴ (Letter



“This is the next aspect of Kṛṣṇa consciousness which I wish to push forward . . . On these farms we can demonstrate the full *varṇāśrama* system. If these farms become successful, then the whole world will be enveloped by Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”



At Krisna-volgy (Krishna Valley), the Hare Kṛṣṇa rural community in Hungary, devotees engage in the traditional work of vaiśyas, tilling with oxen and harvesting wheat with a scythe.



To encourage self-sufficiency and the varṇāśrama way of life, Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Gita-nagari farm in Pennsylvania in 1976.

excerpts from Śrīla Prabhupāda to Hari Śauri Dāsa, recorded in *TKG's Diary*, 10 August 1977)

Despite the importance Prabhupāda gave to *varṇāśrama*, his followers have been slow to embrace this aspect of his mission. To understand why, and what to do now, our first challenge is to recognize the different ways Prabhupāda used the term.

Four Ways⁵

One: Vedic Varṇāśrama

According to India's Vedic literature, Kṛṣṇa consciousness once flourished globally with a culture at once scientific and spiritual, down to earth and out of this world.⁶ Developing their natural vocations (*varṇas*) and transcending them in stages (*āśramas*), people found harmony and fulfillment working together to please life's giver, the Supreme Person.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.13) the

Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, asserts, "According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me." As parts of the body work together to serve the whole, in *varṇāśrama* four broad vocational groups⁷ cooperate to serve the social body.

In Vedic times the guarantors of that cooperation were *samśkāras*, sacred rites of passage through stages of spiritual progress. Prior to conceiving a child, for example, cultured people meditated on the divine, well aware that life comes from life and that the quality of their progeny would reflect the quality of their consciousness.

"That is Vedic civilization," Śrīla Prabhupāda observed, "*samśkāra* before the birth and immediately after the birth, then one after another. . . . Marriage is also another *samśkāra*. . . . There are *daśa-vidha-samśkāra* [ten purificatory rites] . . . [but]

where is *samśkāra* going on [today]? Nobody takes care of . . . *samśkāra*. Still, they are declaring that 'I am *brāhmaṇa* [highborn].' Therefore the conclusion is *kalau śūdra-sambhavaḥ*: 'Everyone is [lowborn]. (Morning Walk, 10 April 1974, Bombay)

Indeed, modern chaos reflects the general quality of the world's population, as if born of a bottle of beer on Saturday night. The sacred act that once called a soul to enter the world and know God is today routinely reduced to a sport hostile to its natural outcome, conception. And those who make it into a womb often don't make it out.

As much as Prabhupāda liked to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness as the positive alternative to modern civilization, he knew the days of classic Vedic *varṇāśrama* – "the days of yore," he called them – were gone. To spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere in modern times would require a special adaptation of *varṇ-*

āśrama culture "according to time, candidate, and country."⁸

Two: Dormant Varṇāśrama

Classic *varṇāśrama* may be gone, but its dormant realities endure, awaiting activation. For example, despite utopian attempts to make humanity classless, by nature classes remain. Speaking with a Russian professor in Moscow during the Soviet era, Prabhupāda compared *varṇāśrama* to the sun:

So . . . sunshine is here in America, in Russia, in India – everywhere. Similarly, this *varṇāśrama* system is prevalent everywhere in some form or other. Just like the *brāhmaṇas*. The *brāhmaṇas* means the most intelligent class of men, brain, brain of the society. . . . Then the *kṣatriyas*, the administrator class. Then the *vaiśyas*, the productive class, and the *śūdras*, the worker class. These four classes . . . are everywhere present in different names. And because it is creation by the original creator . . . it is prevalent everywhere, *varṇāśrama*.

(Conversation with Professor Grigoriy Kotovsky, 22 June 1971, Moscow)

The professor speaking with Prabhupāda was an intellectual, others in his school were administrators, still others workers, and so on. By divine design different classes of people exist, not to exploit but to help and cooperate with one another. Oblivious of the Lord's design, classes clash and suffer. The equality we seek finds perfection in devotional service, where all classes are valued as servants of the Supreme. When these values are forgotten, the Lord's natural *varṇāśrama* order becomes corrupted, as India's history shows.

Three: Materialistic Varṇāśrama

"The vitiated caste system of present India is never sanctioned by the scriptures," Prabhupāda wrote Indian Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Sardar Patel. "But the caste system is made by God according to qual-

ity and work of the subject and it was never designed for the benefit of accidental birth right." (Letter to Dr. Patel, 28 February 1949, Calcutta)

Corrupt *brāhmaṇas* claiming power and privilege based on birth have obscured the truth and beauty of India's original *varṇāśrama* culture. Though typecast by the nature we acquire at birth, by engaging in devotional service we can rise above nature's modes to realize our spiritual potential by cooperatively serving the Lord.

Lacking loving service, too often we compete and bargain with one another, treat God like Santa Claus, and run a ritualistic race to heaven. East or West, such materialistic religion wearies us, as it wearies God. It's love we're all after, intimate

– in a bucolic village as a boy, and later in a clean-and-green city as a youthful prince. If we could show the world a better way to live, Prabhupāda reasoned, everyone would eventually take the divine *varṇāśrama* journey home.

Prabhupāda's conclusion was the fruit of a lifetime of preaching. But since most modern Hare Kṛṣṇa people don't live the way Kṛṣṇa lives, we've been slow to understand how Prabhupāda's application of *varṇāśrama* to ISKCON evolved over time.

Three Applications

One: Forget Varṇāśrama

From 1966 to 1973, the majority of his global preaching years, Śrīla

The equality we seek finds perfection in devotional service, where all classes are valued servants of the Supreme.

exchanges of selfless service, the divine life of *varṇāśrama* culture.

Four: Divine Varṇāśrama

Varṇāśrama that elevates us from material to spiritual consciousness is called *daivī*, or divine. Prabhupāda's divine *varṇāśrama* for the modern day includes four essential features: (1) pure devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as the goal of life; (2) local land-and-cow economics as the model for sustainable living; (3) *varṇāśrama* colleges for vocational and spiritual retraining; and (4) the introduction of *varṇāśrama* principles "according to time, candidate, and country."⁹

Borrowing a phrase from the English poet Wordsworth, Prabhupāda sometimes referred to divine *varṇāśrama* as "plain living and high thinking." When Kṛṣṇa descended to earth, He Himself lived this way

Prabhupāda often dismissed *varṇāśrama* as impractical. "Therefore this is the panacea, to engage everyone in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. . . . This is the only remedy. Now you cannot again introduce this system of *varṇāśrama*." (*Bhagavad-gītā* lecture, 30 December 1968, Los Angeles)

While he was launching ISKCON, Prabhupāda's priority was to put a head back on society: "At the present moment the society is headless, a dead body, or head cracked, crazy. There is head, nonsense head. . . . What is the use of nonsense head? Therefore there is a great necessity of creating a class who will act as brain and head. That is Kṛṣṇa conscious movement." (Lecture, 4 July 1970, San Francisco)

Since *brāhmaṇas* are the head of the *varṇāśrama* social body, as much as possible Prabhupāda was engaging his disciples in brahminical activities:

chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, worshipping in the temple, studying and distributing books, staging spiritual festivals, and so on. For the most part, this strategy worked, but not always, as this exchange with an early follower illustrates:

One day after a lecture [Raphael] approached the Swami, stood beside the dais, and spoke up, exasperated, impatient: “I am not meant to sit in a temple and chant on beads! My father was a boxer. I am meant to run on the beach and breathe in big breaths of air. . . .” Raphael went on, gesticulating and voicing his familiar complaints – things he would rather do than take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Suddenly Prabhupāda interrupted him in a loud voice: “Then do it! Do it!” Ra-

phael shrank away, but he stayed. (Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, Vol. 2, Planting the Seed, Chapter 1)

phael shrank away, but he stayed. (Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta, Vol. 2, Planting the Seed, Chapter 1)

Prabhupāda noted that if we could show the public a better way to live, they would be more inclined to listen to Kṛṣṇa.

And most stayed in those heady days of spiritual revolution. Though pleased with the counterculture youth flocking to his clarion call to chant, Prabhupāda wanted to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to everyone. Soon Kṛṣṇa would set the world stage to help Prabhupāda make *varṇāśrama* culture more relevant and urgent, starting with his own followers.

Two: The World Needs Varṇāśrama

In 1973, owing to artificial manipulation of the oil supply in the Middle East, the world experienced an “energy crisis.” High prices, long gasoline lines, and violence dramatized the folly of a civilization dependent on finite fossil fuels.

Amid the angst, Śrīla Prabhupāda saw an opportunity. Walking and talking with leading disciples the

where, wherever we have got our center, a *varṇāśrama* college should be established.” (Morning Walk, 12 March 1974, Vrindavan)

The devotees were astonished. Why was Prabhupāda reversing his attitude toward *varṇāśrama*? But as they continued to walk with him, they began to understand his new tack as an extension of his compassion.

“Devotee, personally, he has no problem, but he pushes himself in this degraded society to teach . . . how to live, how to become gentlemen. Otherwise, we have no business. But if we don’t give them the opportunity, they’ll not be able to come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Morning Walk, 14 March 1974, Vrindavan)

Since devotees are already with Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda continued, they don’t need *varṇāśrama*. But humanity needs *varṇāśrama* to learn how to live and come home to Kṛṣṇa. It wasn’t long before Prabhupāda

would further extend his compassion by telling the devotees how much they also needed *varṇāśrama*, humanity’s “steppingstone for spiritual understanding” (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 2.31, Purport).

Three: You Need Varṇāśrama

On February 14, 1977, in his quarters in Mayapur, India, Śrīla Prabhupāda reminded the devotees how important it was for them to inspire and educate people by following *varṇāśrama* principles. When a disciple pointed out that Lord Caitanya¹⁰ dismissed *varṇāśrama* as “external,” Prabhupāda replied, “Our position is different. . . . Our duty is that we shall arrange the external affairs all so nicely that one day they will come to the spiritual platform very easily, paving the way.” (Conversation, 14 February 1977, Mayapur)

When another disciple wondered why devotees, who were already on the spiritual platform, beyond the designations of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, should follow *varṇāśrama* principles, Prabhupāda questioned his presumption:

Varṇāśrama . . . should be established to become Vaiṣṇava [devotee]. It is not so easy to become Vaiṣṇava. . . . If Vaiṣṇava, to become Vaiṣṇava is so easy, why so many . . . fall down? It is not easy to become Vaiṣṇava.

The longer Prabhupāda preached in the West the more he saw how even his own followers would need the *varṇāśrama* bridge to come to Kṛṣṇa. As his life on earth was coming to a close, Prabhupāda knew that building the bridge – a bridge the whole world could cross – would be a great challenge.

His Varṇāśrama Challenge

In Part 5 of this series, we saw how Prabhupāda expanded the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in phases. Whereas earlier phases focused on brahminical

concerns and activities – holy names and holy books, temples and deity worship, initiation and congregation – the *varṇāśrama* phase invites everyone to help build a spiritual society.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.8–10) Lord Kṛṣṇa makes a similarly progressive entreaty. “Just fix your mind on Me,” He advises the saintly listener. For those less advanced the Lord then recommends the disciplines of devotional yoga. “In this way you will develop a desire to attain Me.” And for those not ready to follow strict vows, Kṛṣṇa recommends working for Him.

In his commentary to text 10, Prabhupāda reaches out to all kinds of people:

There are many devotees who are engaged in the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they require help. So, even if one cannot directly practice the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga*, he can try to help such work. Every endeavor requires land, capital, organization, and labor. . . . This voluntary service to the cause of Kṛṣṇa consciousness will help one to rise to a higher state of love for God, whereupon one becomes perfect.

Since most people live in or near cities, it is efficient to engage them in building city temples to attract everyone to Kṛṣṇa. At the same time, the modern urge to live a simpler, more natural way of life will find fulfillment the more we engage people in building spiritual communities that live the way Kṛṣṇa lives.

“So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to revive . . . village organization, as you are trying here. Kṛṣṇa, in His natural life, is a village boy in Vrindavan. Vrindavan is a village. . . . But it does not mean that we shall avoid city life or town life. No. Everything, every place is Kṛṣṇa place. Everywhere there should be Kṛṣṇa consciousness. (Lecture, 15 July 1976, Gita-nagari)

Kṛṣṇa’s *daivī-varṇāśrama* village holds the missing pieces to the modern eco-puzzle. “If these farms be-

come successful then the whole world will be enveloped by Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” And since the *varṇāśrama* college holds the blueprints to the village, “The *varṇāśrama* college has to be established immediately. Everywhere, wherever we have got our center . . .”¹¹

Town or country, reviving divine *varṇāśrama* culture will help us envision our natural role in Kṛṣṇa’s world. And by accepting one another as His eternal servants, we’ll find the freedom, equality, and classlessness we seek in this life and the next. 🌍

NOTES

1. The earthly counterpart of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal abode, located some ninety miles southeast of New Delhi, India.
2. “The Beautiful Story of the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” the cream of Vedic literature.
3. *Varṇāśrama* culture teaches us how to practice our *varṇa* (vocation) throughout the stages of spiritual life (*āśrama*).
4. By “farms” Prabhupāda meant agrarian-based villages with social/spiritual features. *Varṇāśrama* cities also included these features, unlike the modern materialistic cities Prabhupāda mentions.
5. For more about the ways Prabhupāda used *varṇāśrama*, see the July/August 2000 issue of BTG (No. 34-4 in the Bhaktivedanta VedaBase).
6. Apart from scriptural evidence,

modern archeologists continue to unearth Vedic artifacts worldwide: www.veda.harekrsna.cz/connections/worldwide.

7. The four vocational groups: (1) priests, teachers, counselors; (2) soldiers, statesmen, administrators; (3) agriculturalists and businessmen; (4) artists, craftsmen, laborers.
8. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā*, 23.105, Purport.
9. Ibid.
10. Lord Kṛṣṇa’s “golden avatar,” who popularized chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing.
11. For more about the *varṇāśrama* college, see the Bhaktivedanta VedaBase: Contents/Compilations/Varnasrama-dharma/VD2

In the next issue: Having seen the scope of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *varṇāśrama* vision, in Part 7 of our series we’ll look at how to find our individual mission in his mission.

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

LOOKING FOR NEWS OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MOVEMENT?

Log on to www.iskconnews.org



The Internet is the ideal place for timely news, and ISKCON Communications maintains an active news page. So whether you want to see what’s happening in ISKCON or have some news to report, log on to www.iskconnews.org.



KIRTAN COURSE

A Transformative Experience

A young devotee from Chile travels to Belgium to increase her enthusiasm for chanting the holy names.

by Cintāmaṇi Mādhavī Devī Dāsī

IN 2012 I HAD to move from the town where I was born in Chile to the capital, Santiago, to continue with my journalism studies. I rented a little room downtown in the city.

When I arrived, a student living there warned me, “This place is nice. The only thing that may annoy you is that your window is right next to a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, and they chant the whole day.”

Maybe he’s exaggerating, I thought.

But the first week, I knew he was telling the truth. From early in the morning I would hear people singing, bells ringing, and some strange deep, thunderous sound (the blowing of a conch shell, I later learned). I also smelled incense, as well as captivating food being cooked with ingredients I couldn’t figure out. I was curious.

What’s behind this that can keep these people chanting every day of the year?



Jahnvi Harrison (left) leads students in kīrtana at Radhadesh, home to Bhaktivedanta College and the Kirtan Course. Above: the author.

The strangest thing was that they were always singing the same words: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Months later I went to the temple for the first time. And after reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, I knew I wanted to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. But the *mahā-mantra* remained a mystery for me. Even after experiencing big changes in my life by chanting the mantra on my beads, I couldn’t understand deeply what was behind

phy, meditation, and *kīrtana*. “Worship Kṛṣṇa with the flower of your attention” was his advice the first day of class. After having chanted my rounds for so long with my mind wandering far and wide, I felt he was talking directly to me.

In the *Harināma Cintāmaṇi*, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, it is said that *pramāda*, or inattention or carelessness while chanting the holy name, is the offense from which all other offenses arise. There are three types of inattention: indifference,

inertia or laziness, and restlessness of the mind. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda instructs that one should always be careful to not only dutifully chant one’s rounds but to chant them properly. The remedy for improper chanting is to associate with devotees who have a taste for the holy name, because by seeing Vaiṣṇavas’ attraction for the name, one will be inspired to give up indifference.

The Kirtan Course was nine weeks of this type of association. We had the opportunity to learn about the



Included in the nine-week Kirtan Course are lessons in the instruments traditionally used in Vaiṣṇava devotional music, as well as classes on the holy name and discussions of songs of Vaiṣṇava poets in Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s line.

these sixteen words. With time, chanting my sixteen rounds became a mechanical duty, especially after I started to work in the rushed world of the media. Most days I would find myself chanting the last rounds at night, hoping to finish quickly to go to sleep. This negligence was silently and seriously undermining my enthusiasm for spiritual life. To revitalize my enthusiasm, I decided to take time off from work, and I made the Kirtan Course at Bhaktivedanta College in Radhadesh, Belgium, my first stop.

Inspiring Teachers

The course started with an introductory workshop by Śačīnandana Swami, who made us dive into the holy name for a week, with philoso-



history and meaning of the *saṅkīrtana* movement from scholarly and senior devotees, as well as leading exponents of *kīrtana*. Kṛṣṇa Kṣetra Swami taught the importance of sound, citing Vedic texts, and the different traditions of devotional music. Kabamba Kānana Swami drew us deep into the meaning of Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, which includes instruction on the appropriate mood with which to chant the holy name. Mahātmā Dāsa explained how humility is the main component of *kīrtana*, and with Jahnvi Harrison we sang prayers by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, trying to understand the mood of an exalted devotee. Mahendra Dāsa took us on a journey through quotations and explanations about *kīrtana* in the sacred literature. Finally, Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami gave us some ideas on how to present all this knowledge in the Western world.

Connecting with The Holy Name

In the purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 12.8, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains,

“The holy name of the Lord and the Lord are nondifferent; therefore when a devotee chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa and His internal potency are dancing on the tongue of the devotee.” To be able to realize this through great devotees who can transmit their blissful connection with the holy name was a transformative experience.

In addition, we seventeen students – from all over the world and from all kinds of backgrounds – learned harmonium, *mṛdaṅga*, and *kartālas* from the best teachers in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

Indeed, these weeks were life changing, because you had the opportunity to appreciate the holy name from when you woke up till you went to sleep. When you feel connected with the holy name by chanting attentively, the whole day has a different taste – the sweet taste of Kṛṣṇa’s company. When we sing the *mahā-mantra* fully conscious, we water a plant that at some point will produce a flower that will bloom within our hearts. As stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 19.152): “When a person receives the seed of devotional service, he

should take care of it by becoming a gardener and sowing the seed in his heart. If he waters the seed gradually by the process of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* [hearing and chanting], the seed will begin to sprout.”

Now I remember the days when the *mahā-mantra* first came through my window and I asked myself what could be the meaning of those words constantly repeated by my special neighbors. I could not have suspected that it was Kṛṣṇa Himself and that in the most merciful and simple way I could approach Him in these hard times of so much pain and quarrel. I hope many devotees can take advantage of the Kirtan Course and help the holy name open the windows of thousands of hearts. 🌸

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The Soul, Its Condition, And Its Path To Freedom

Self-realization entails knowing not only who we are, but also how to free ourselves from our state of bondage.

by Akshay Gupta

FROM BIRTH to death we constantly change our body. The body we have now is different from the one we had ten years ago, ten months ago, ten days ago, and even ten minutes ago. Nevertheless, some deeper part of us remains constant. This part is the soul, which has always existed and will always exist. Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.12) when He states, “Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.”

At death, the soul does not cease to exist; it simply takes on a new body. Kṛṣṇa also affirms this, in His statement “As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.” (*Gītā* 2.13) We living entities are stuck in the perpetual cycle of birth and death known

as *samsāra*, continually taking on and giving up various bodies in the process of reincarnation.

Unfortunately, society today has forgotten the eternal soul. People think they are the body. This illusion is known as false ego, and it creates a great deal of suffering. Because we identify with our bodies, we constantly try to gratify our senses in the pursuit of temporary pleasures. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.4) Lord Rṣabhadeva describes this quest as the source of the soul's bondage in the material world:

When a person considers sense gratification the aim of life, he certainly becomes mad after materialistic living and engages in all kinds of sinful activity. He does

mentary satisfaction until we hanker to gratify our senses yet again.

Moreover, trying to gratify our senses leads to anger, delusion, and bewilderment. Kṛṣṇa says,

While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool. (Gītā 2.62–2.63)

Pursuing sense gratification degrades one's intelligence. But Kṛṣṇa offers a solution that allows the living

entity to achieve peace: "A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires – that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still – can alone achieve real peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires." (Gītā 2.70) Because trying to satisfy bodily desires by enjoying sense gratification leads to anger, delusion, and bewilderment, only by controlling desire can the living entity find peace.

The Covering of Illusion

The illusory nature of matter by which it covers the soul's knowledge is called *māyā*, or illusion. When people fail to inquire about the nature of the soul, they fall victim to *māyā* as they let the temporary affairs of the material world govern their happiness. Furthermore, since people do not use their intelligence to ask why they are suffering

or how they can get out of *samsāra*, they continue to reincarnate through the various species of life.

We can escape *samsāra* and prevent ourselves from reincarnating again in the material world. Kṛṣṇa has explained the system by which the soul migrates from one body to another: "Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail." (Gītā 8.6) Therefore, we have a degree of control over what our next life will be, because at death our thoughts determine our next body.

Because the three modes of nature – goodness, passion, and ignorance – dominate the material world, the qualities we acquire from the modes shape our actions and thus influence our thoughts at death. "When one dies in the mode of goodness, he attains to the pure planets of the great sages. When one dies in the mode of passion, he takes birth among those engaged in fruitive activities; and when one dies in the mode of ignorance, he takes birth in the animal kingdom." (Gītā 14.14–15)

For someone who leads a life in the mode of goodness, the next birth will be in the higher, or heavenly, planets. Someone controlled mainly by the mode of passion will be attached to fruitive activities and, filled with desires at death, will receive a suitable human body to carry out more fruitive activities. Lastly, someone who lives ignorantly like an animal will have animalistic thoughts at death and receive an animal body in the next life.

Regardless of the mode that predominates, one is still stuck in *samsāra* and subject to birth and death. Only by thinking of Kṛṣṇa at death can the soul gain liberation from material existence. "And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body remembering Me alone at once attains my nature. Of this there is no doubt." (Gītā 8.5) Kṛṣṇa then reassures us that once with Him we do not have to take birth again: "From the highest planet in the material

world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again." (Gītā 8.16)

We must be careful, however, not to think we can arrogantly sin and then simply think of Kṛṣṇa at death to enter the spiritual world. Our cumulative thoughts and actions throughout life influence our thoughts at death. Therefore, we should structure our life so that we can never forget Kṛṣṇa. After all, if we cannot remember Kṛṣṇa when struggling for existence, then how can we hope to think of Kṛṣṇa in our final moments, when our bodily processes are shutting down?

Remembering Kṛṣṇa at Death

By engaging in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, we can always remember Kṛṣṇa, even at death. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.23–24) outlines the process of devotional service:

Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia, and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) – these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service.

We should not view devotional service as a troublesome responsibility we must undertake to be freed from *samsāra*. In the process of devotional service, we can be so happy that we lose all other desires except to serve Kṛṣṇa. Caitanya Mahāprabhu has stated, "My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, I do not want material wealth from You, nor do I want followers, a beautiful wife, or the results of fruitive activities. I only pray that by

Your causeless mercy You give Me pure devotional service to You, life after life." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 20.30). Materialists want wealth, many followers, a beautiful mate, and the results of their fruitive activities. But one who tastes the bliss of devotional service loses all material desires.

Because of *māyā*'s powerful grasp on us, our love for Kṛṣṇa lies dormant. While rendering devotional service, we may feel discouraged because we are used to instant gratification. But Kṛṣṇa assures us that although the process of devotional service may be troublesome at first, ultimately we can truly be happy. In describing the different types of happiness one can experience, Kṛṣṇa states:

O best of the Bhāratas, now please hear from Me about the three kinds of happiness which the conditioned soul enjoys, and by which he sometimes comes to the end of all distress. That which in the beginning may be just like poison but at the end is just like nectar and which awakens one to self-realization is said to be happiness in the mode of goodness. That happiness which is derived from contact of the senses with their objects and which appears like

nectar at first but poison at the end is said to be of the nature of passion. And that happiness which is blind to self-realization, which is delusion from beginning to end, and which arises from sleep, laziness, and illusion is said to be of the nature of ignorance.

(Gītā 18.36–39)

Although we may be inclined to laziness and sleep, or to temporary enjoyment and sense gratification, Kṛṣṇa advises that for our long-term happiness we should engage in acts that culminate in self-realization. Because self-realization entails awakening our true identity as spirit souls in the service of Kṛṣṇa, devotional service is a path to self-realization. Regulating our life may at first feel like taking poison, but when we come to the transcendental position, we enjoy long-lasting happiness. Kṛṣṇa wants us to love Him, and so He has mercifully granted us the free will to love Him of our own accord. We can use our free will to either serve Kṛṣṇa and be happy, or to serve *māyā* and continue to suffer in material existence. 🙏

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

Because we identify with our bodies, we constantly try to gratify our senses in the pursuit of temporary pleasures.

not know that due to his past misdeeds he has already received a body which, although temporary, is the cause of his misery. Actually the living entity should not have taken on a material body, but he has been awarded the material body for sense gratification. Therefore I think it not befitting an intelligent man to involve himself again in the activities of sense gratification by which he perpetually gets material bodies one after another.

Furthermore, pleasure that derives from sense gratification only causes misery. As Kṛṣṇa explains, "An intelligent person does not take part in the sources of misery, which are due to contact with the material senses. O son of Kuntī, such pleasures have a beginning and an end, and so the wise man does not delight in them." (Gītā 5.22) Since our body is temporary, any satisfaction we may derive from sense gratification is also temporary and will provide only mo-



Hare Kṛṣṇa Food for Life volunteers distribute food and water to Syrian refugees last November (main photo). Inset: hot meals for Sri Lankan tsunami victims in 2004.



Vaiṣṇava Compassion

Vaiṣṇava acts of compassion are valuable even when apparently not on the level of transcendence.

by Māyāpura-śaśi Dāsa

PURE VAIṢṆAVAS care deeply. They feel the suffering of others in the core of their hearts. Their greatest compassionate wish is to lead others away from their suffering once and for all – by helping them go back home, back to Godhead. Until people reconnect with

Lord Kṛṣṇa and hear how to lead their lives in His service, they will never achieve true happiness, free from suffering.

Since Vaiṣṇavas aim for that most compassionate act of leading people back to the Lord, can they reasonably justify becoming involved with compassionate and charitable acts of a more “mundane” nature?

First let us briefly look at the word *compassion*. According to the Oxford English dictionary, compassion is “sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings of others.” Definitions elsewhere add that to be true compassion, this feeling must then lead to action. In fact, we find different concepts of what compassion means, some people arguing that it is an emotional response, while others claiming it is something beyond emotion.

By mid-September last year, Food for Life Global had already distributed ten thousand plates of prasādam – along with other forms of comfort – in various parts of Europe. Shown here: Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The Vedic tradition has many words and phrases to describe the subtle feelings of compassion: mercy, pity, the wish to relieve others' sorrows and difficulties, the inclination to treat others as one would wish to be treated. Some words describe the state of one's mind after seeing and understanding others' pain and suffering. Vedic literature has many references to compassion, as do the teachings of the great Vaiṣṇavas in Lord Caitanya's line.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838–1914), for example, was the preeminent Vaiṣṇava scholar of his time. He was the father of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was himself a great spiritual leader and the spiritual master of ISKCON's founder-ācārya, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote in *Tattva Viveka*, *Tattva Sutra*, and *Amṇaya Sutra: A Comprehensive Exposition of the Spiritual Reality* (Sree Gaudiya Math, 2001):

Those who think that devotion to God and kindness to the *jīvas* [souls] are mutually different from each other, and perform accordingly in their life, such persons will not be able to follow the devotional culture. Their performances are only a semblance of devotion. Therefore, all the types of beneficence to others, like kindness, friendliness, forgiveness, charity, respect, and so on, are included in *bhakti*. . . . The actions of respect, friendliness and kindness are the very form of love and the characteristic portion of *bhakti*: charity of medicines, clothes, food, water, etc., shelter during adversities, teaching of academic and spiritual educations, etc., are the activities included in the devotional culture.



In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (1.28) Arjuna says, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, seeing my friends and relatives present before me in such a fighting spirit, I feel the limbs of my body quivering and my mouth drying up.” Śrīla Prabhupāda comments:

Arjuna, just after seeing his kinsmen, friends, and relatives on the battlefield, was at once overwhelmed by compassion for them who had so decided to fight amongst themselves. As far as his soldiers

were concerned, he was sympathetic from the beginning, but he felt compassion even for the soldiers of the opposite party, foreseeing their imminent death. . . . He was also crying out of compassion. Such symptoms in Arjuna were not due to weakness but to his softheartedness, a characteristic of a pure devotee of the Lord.

Although Kṛṣṇa then urged Arjuna to fight, Śrīla Prabhupāda's comment about “softheartedness” in the purport

is important in the context of the topic of compassion.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, lists twenty-six good qualities of a Vaiṣṇava. Among other things, devotees work for everyone's benefit and are friendly, merciful, respectful, magnanimous, kind to everyone, and equal to everyone. How compassionate a Vaiṣṇava must be!

During a lecture in Kazakhstan, Nirañjana Swami, an ISKCON

leader in the former Soviet Union, spoke about Vaiṣṇava compassion:

This whole theme expands from one line in *The Nectar of Devotion* – that one should not give unnecessary trouble to any living entity. This is a principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that every Vaiṣṇava should aspire to achieve because, as we say every day:

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca*

*patitānām pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

We offer obeisances to the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord, who are full of compassion for the fallen, conditioned souls. It is a very important quality of a Vaiṣṇava to be compassionate with others. And one of the symptoms of this compassion is that a devotee cannot tolerate seeing others suffer.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in *Jaiva Dharma*,

A natural human sentiment, compassion finds its highest expression in the works of devotees of the Lord. The tenderness of the heart experienced toward Kṛṣṇa is known as *bhakti*. All other *jīvas* are servants of Kṛṣṇa. When one experiences tenderness of heart toward them, it is known as *dayā*, compassion. Therefore, compassion is included within *bhakti*.

In his journal *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* (9/9) he wrote:

Exhibiting compassion towards living entities is of three kinds. Display of compassion in regard to the gross body of the living entities is counted among pious activities. Distributing free food to the hungry people, distributing free medicine to the diseased persons, distributing free water to the thirsty people, and distributing clothes to persons who are afflicted with cold are all born from the compassion in regard to the body. Giving free education is borne from the compassion in regard to the mind of the living entities. But the highest kind of compassion is in regard to the soul of the living entities. From such compassionate propensity, the eagerness for delivering the fallen souls from the miseries of material existence by awarding them the devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is produced.

In 1974 Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the veranda outside his room in Śrī Māyāpura-dhāma, saw a group of

local children fighting with street dogs over scraps of food. Jayapatāka Swami recalls:

When Prabhupāda saw how children had to fight dogs to eat throw-aways, he started to cry. Tears were coming down. He said, “How hungry they must be.” Who would stoop to that situation, to fight off dogs to eat things that other people had thrown away? Prabhupāda was so moved by these hungry children that he said, “We have to organize in such a way that nobody within a ten-mile radius of the temple is hungry. Everyone should have food to eat.” That’s when they organized “ISKCON Food Relief,” which later became “Food for Life.” Prabhupāda wanted a regular program of *prasadam* distribution, and we were distributing seven days a week.
(*Memories: Anecdotes of a Modern-Day Saint*, Vol. 1, Tape 2)

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s message was clear, and soon Kṛṣṇa devotees were inspired to create a global network of free-food kitchens, cafes, vans, and mobile services.

These beginnings developed into Food for Life initiatives that provide food relief around the world, bringing ISKCON wider recognition in society. The program serves two

million *prasadam* meals a day and reacts to worldwide disasters, making Food for Life one of the largest food-relief organizations in the world. And the food distributed is *prasadam* – sanctified food, which brings transcendental benefit.

Charitable Activities By Food for Life

Here are just a few examples of Food for Life’s activities:

In the war zone of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s, Food for Life volunteers visited hospitals, orphanages, basement shelters, homes for the elderly, and institutes for handicapped children every day throughout the three-year conflict, distributing over twenty tons of food.

In his article “Grozny Journal: Krishnas Cast Bread on Roiling Waters in Russia” (December 12, 1995), *New York Times* writer Michael Specter noted Food for Life’s incredible compassionate work in war-torn Grozny, Chechnya:

Here, they have a reputation like the one Mother Teresa has in Calcutta: it’s not hard finding people to swear they are saints. In a city full of lies, greed and corruption, the Krishnas deliver the goods. Each day they serve more than 1,000 hot meals, as many as any



ISKCON Food Relief, here in action in the 1970s (left) and 1980s (above), was inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda in India in 1974. Its current incarnation as ISKCON Food Relief Foundation feeds 1.2 million Indian schoolchildren every school day.

organization in the city.

“Whatever they do God helps them do it,” said Raisa Malocheva, 72, who has been in Grozny every minute of the last year, when it has practically been leveled. “They are the only people left in my life I can rely on.” At least two dozen people waiting for lunch applauded when she spoke.

There are no hard sells from the Krishna team in Grozny. It

wouldn’t do them any good.

“These people have been through enough,” said Viktor Makarov, a slight 31-year-old Krishna member from St. Petersburg who has been living in Grozny for six months. “They are destroyed. They hardly need us telling them to look on the bright side.”*

* <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/12/12/world/grozny-journal-khishnas-cast-bread-on-roiling-waters-in-russia.html>

As I write this, a wonderful example of Vaiṣṇava compassion is taking place in the war-torn city of Donetsk, Ukraine. When Kiśora Gopāla Dāsa, Yūtheśvarī Dāsī, and others at the ISKCON temple in Donetsk witnessed firsthand the deteriorating situation, they decided they had to do



Viśākhā Devī Dāst

something to spread Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. “Horrible things were around us,” Yūtheśvarī says. “Citizens began to kill each other. We understood we had to act. But it was dangerous to distribute books or go on *harināma*. So we decided to distribute *prasāda*.”

They now prepare *prasādam* and distribute it to 600–800 people daily. In a letter to Satyahita Dāsa, 16 March 1974, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

Now I am especially concerned to distribute grains, rice, wheat in the form of dahl and rice prasadam to hungry people all over India. The people here are very disturbed because, partly due to the punishment of Nature, and partly due to the mismanagement of the demon class of men, food is not available. If the people do not even have sufficient food they will not even be able to receive spiritual instructions. So I am hopeful that if we can widely distribute free food-stuffs to the people of India, by giving it out at our centers as well

as by travelling parties to villages, we will win over the whole country and the whole world by this activity on Kṛṣṇa’s behalf.

The final line is especially relevant to this article, as it shows that ISKCON’s founder-*ācārya* saw how the distribution of *prasādam* would win over the whole world. Thus he saw *prasādam* distribution not as isolated acts of compassion, but as a link to the greater goal of leading people back to Kṛṣṇa.

Everyday Acts of Compassion

The examples quoted above are of course “large scale,” but Vaiṣṇavas can also show compassion in their everyday lives. I saw one such example during my last visit to Śrī Māyāpura-dhāma. I observed a group of bemused visitors watching a female resident stoop down and tenderly pick up a huge bright-green grub that was slowly crawling across the busy pathway. I asked if she

needed any help, and she said she didn’t, and then showed me the grub. With an angelic smile she commented on its “sweet face” and how she was worried it would get stepped on. Such a simple act, and yet all who watched her were surely struck by the compassion she had shown. I’m sure they left with a positive impression of how a true Vaiṣṇava always feels compassion, even for an insignificant grub.

In Mukunda Goswami’s fascinating book *Inside the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement*, he quotes an editorial from the former newspaper *Hare Krishna World* (Jan/Feb 1995): “Devotees are not meant to live in ivory chambers, shrinking back from the world and devoting themselves solely to the attainment of otherworldly salvation. We have to show the public that we can benefit their lives, individually and collectively. If someone asks, ‘What’s in it for me?’ – we’d better have some plausible answers.”

Devotees’ participation in this

world was dramatically demonstrated in Sukhumi, Georgia after the most extreme atrocities occurred there in the early 1990s. Mayūradvaja Dāsa skillfully led devotees for over a year in providing food for war victims, including the old, young, immobile, and infirm. Those selfless devotees risked their lives to ensure that the most vulnerable at least had food. In 1995 the then temple president of Sukhumi, Rāghava Paṇḍita Dāsa, was murdered. The mayor and many other prominent city officials publicly praised him and arranged for a large public funeral, such was the high esteem with which the devotees were held by the whole community, due in no small part to their acts of brave and selfless compassion.

ISKCON’s compassionate activities can boost its public recognition in a positive way. Undoubtedly some people will be inclined to learn more about ISKCON and Kṛṣṇa, who inspires devotees to perform selfless acts. Therefore not only do acts of compassion help those in need, but they also attract more people to learn about Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings and thus progress back toward Kṛṣṇa. That’s the greatest compassion and the movement’s ultimate goal.

Charity in the Three Modes

We need to be aware, of course, of the three modes of nature in relation to any intention to do charitable work. Giving charity to someone who will use it in an impure way is said to be in the mode of ignorance (*tamo-guṇa*). Giving charity with the expectation of receiving something in return, or giving reluctantly out of a sense of duty, is acting in the mode of passion (*rajo-guṇa*). Giving charity with no thought of “What’s in it for me?” – giving with care, at the correct time and place, and to a worthy recipient – is an act in the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*). Attention to time, place, and circumstance is therefore essential for a Vaiṣṇava when considering a charitable act.

None of this in any way reduces

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the importance of the higher aim of helping people return to Kṛṣṇa. This is the Vaiṣṇava’s greatest compassion. Keeping the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly in the center of all we do, we can achieve this in different ways – including in our more “mundane” compassionate acts. Being truly and genuinely compassionate in our everyday lives can only help us realize this ultimate goal. That can include something as simple as smiling at a stranger.

It is clearly understandable why Śrīla Prabhupāda did not want his first devotees to be distracted by a variety of activities, but now ISKCON is an immensely larger organization with thousands of devotees all over the world, and therefore with a capacity to become actively engaged in different levels of society. Through the compassionate activities many devotees are engaged in

today, always mindful of time, place, and circumstance, the glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s vision is reaching many more millions of people than might otherwise be reached.

A Vaiṣṇava can show compassion on many levels, including distributing the holy name, literature, and *prasādam* and performing other acts of kindness to relieve the suffering of others. I close with this beautiful quotation from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: “One should be merciful and not cause anxiety to any living entity. The heart should always be filled with compassion for others. Exhibiting mercy to all living entities is one of the limbs of devotional service.”

Māyāpura-śaṣi Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Keśava Bhāratī Goswami, is a retired British Army officer living in Taiwan.

A Pause for Prayer



Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the all-auspicious Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, about whom glorification, remembrances, audience, prayers, hearing, and worship can at once cleanse the effects of all sins of the performer.

Let me offer my respectful obeisances again and again unto the all-auspicious Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The highly intellectual, simply by surrendering unto His lotus feet, are relieved of all attachments to present and future existences and without difficulty progress toward spiritual existence.

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the all-auspicious Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa again and again because the great learned sages, the great performers of charity, the great workers of distinction, the great philosophers and mystics, the great chanters of the Vedic hymns, and the great followers of Vedic principles cannot achieve any fruitful result without dedication of such great qualities to the service of the Lord.

– Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.4.15–17

Śrīla Prabhupāda the Preacher

AT THE TIME Śrīla Prabhupāda left India for America, a superstition among the religious in India held that a *sannyāsī* should never cross the ocean. The rationale apparently was that the decadence of the world outside India would destroy the purity of any *sannyāsī* who did so.

Fortunately, superstition held no sway over Śrīla Prabhupāda. Rather, his resolute faith in the order of his spiritual master powered his actions. His very first meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lit within him the desire to spread the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa, specifically as taught and demonstrated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and that desire eventually carried him across the ocean.

Śrīla Prabhupāda always considered that the institution he created – the International Society for Krishna Consciousness – was a preaching movement. He would often refer to it as his spiritual master’s movement, which he was trying his best to carry forward. In this service to his guru, he enlisted the help of young men and women, and he expressed heartfelt appreciation for their assistance, even saying that his spiritual master had sent them to him.

Significantly, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested even his earliest followers to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They were just learning the basics, but Prabhupāda made it clear right from the beginning that the transcendental knowledge given by Lord Kṛṣṇa should be spread all over the world. When he incorporated his “international” society, it had only one center, but Prabhupāda was thinking far beyond New York’s Lower East Side.

Prabhupāda would often cite Lord Caitanya’s entreaty that every Indian should make his or her life successful by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and then do the best welfare work by helping others

become Kṛṣṇa conscious as well. Prabhupāda would say that Lord Caitanya’s order now applied to the Americans and Europeans who had taken up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If they valued what they had received, naturally they should want to pass it on to others.

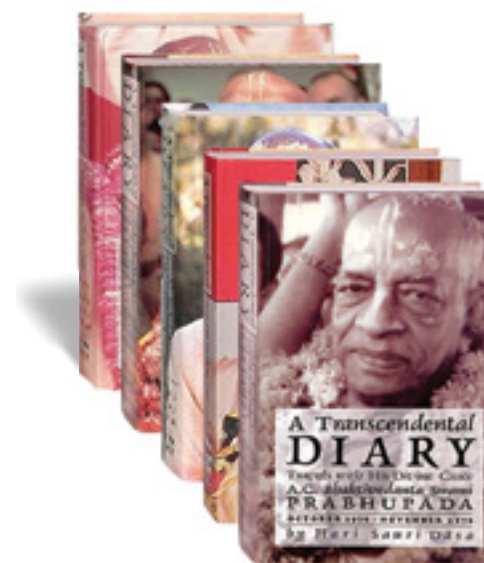
Another Hindu superstition was that Hindus don’t preach. The source of this idea may be the mistaken but popular notion that all paths are equal and eventually lead to the same destination. Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly refutes this misconception in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.25). Prabhupāda argued that anything beneficial to the world should be spread. What can be more beneficial than knowing who we are, who God is, what this world is, how we must act for success in life, and so on?

Because of a superficial view of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, people sometimes challenged Prabhupāda by asking what he was doing to help humanity. He would reply that he was giving the best education. Certainly educating people in eternal religious principles is welfare work of the highest order.

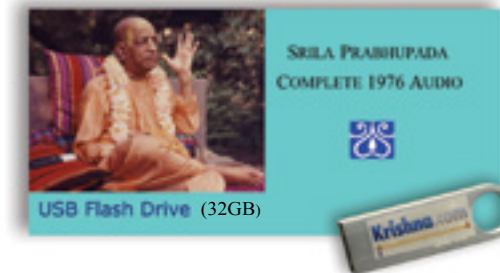
In some circles, the preacher is considered to be in a lower spiritual status than the devotee whose life is spent in a holy place, meditating on Kṛṣṇa. At least two points uphold Śrīla Prabhupāda’s preeminent position among the Lord’s devotees. First, he spent his life carrying out the direct order of his guru to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That in itself makes his life perfect. But second, the greatest lovers of Kṛṣṇa preach not only to fulfill the desire of their guru and Kṛṣṇa (*Gītā* 18.68–69), but because their love for Kṛṣṇa and their compassion for humanity impel them to do so. The preacher’s heart is filled with love and compassion, and there’s nothing better than that.

– Nāgarāja Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Legacy



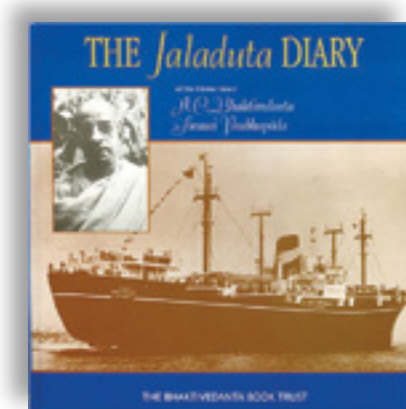
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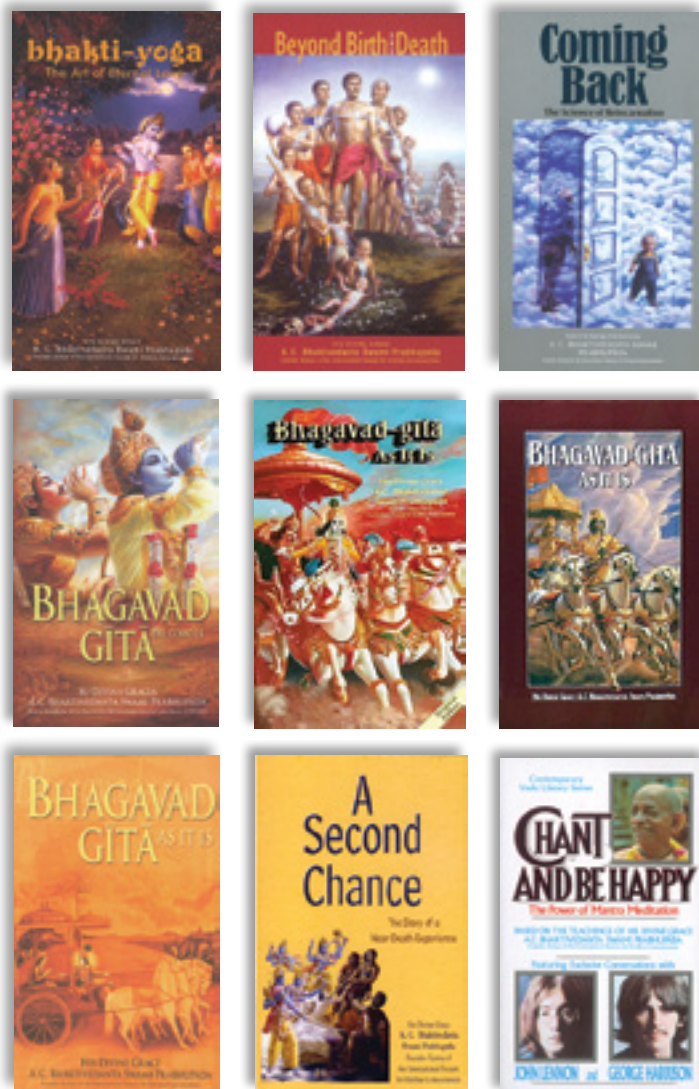
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VEDIC THOUGHTS

In ignorance, people are imagining the form of the Lord; sometimes He has no form and sometimes He has form, according to their different imaginations. But the presentation of Kṛṣṇa in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* is *vijñāna* – scientific, experienced knowledge given by Lord Brahmā and accepted by Lord Caitanya. There is no doubt about it. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute, Kṛṣṇa's color – everything is reality.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.35, Purport

One who sacrifices his happiness for Kṛṣṇa's happiness and who remains always engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service by renouncing his own enjoyment for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure is a devotee. He certainly attains auspiciousness. Devotional service is the propensity to give Kṛṣṇa pleasure. The endeavor to make oneself happy is nondevotional service and is the source of misery.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Amṛta-vāṇī: Nectar of Instructions for Immortality

Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories, being disgusted with all material activities, knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery, but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment, My devotee should remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction. Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment, My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result, and he sincerely repents such activities.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.27–28

Bhakti alone brings one to Him. *Bhakti* alone shows Him. The Supreme Lord subordinates Himself to *bhakti*. Indeed, *bhakti* is supreme.

Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotra 32
Mahābhārata

O Maitreyī, one should see, hear, remember, and inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5

Knowing Him, one transcends death. There is no other path for attaining this goal.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.8

Vaikuṅṭha is the abode of countless spiritual qualities, a world of unapproachable supreme light. It cannot be perceived by material senses, nor compared to anything known. It is supremely ecstatic and beyond the scope of the senses.

O my Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, will I again be able to be a servant of Your eternal servants who find shelter only at Your lotus feet? O Lord of my life, may I again become their servant so that my mind may always think of Your transcendental attributes, my words always glorify those attributes, and my body always engage in the loving service of Your Lordship?

Vṛtrāsura (formerly King Citraketu)
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.11.24

2016 Hare Kṛṣṇa FESTIVAL of INDIA

Schedule for North America



MAY 14–15: Morrisville, NC, Rathayātrā
MAY 28–29: Baltimore Rathayātrā
JUNE 1–12: New York City, Fiftieth Anniversary of
Śrīla Prabhupāda's Incorporation of ISKCON
JUNE 4–5: Atlanta, Pāñihāṭi Festival and Rathayātrā
JUNE 11: New York City Rathayātrā
JUNE 15–18: Tenth Anniversary Kuli Mela, New Vrindaban
JUNE 25: Hartford Rathayātrā
JULY 2–4: Parsippany, NJ, Rathayātrā
JULY 9–10: Montreal Rathayātrā
JULY 16–17: Toronto Rathayātrā
JULY 23: Calgary Rathayātrā
JULY 30: Edmonton Rathayātrā
AUGUST 7: Los Angeles Rathayātrā
AUGUST 14: San Francisco Rathayātrā
AUGUST 20–21: Vancouver Rathayātrā
AUGUST 25–26: Vancouver, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī &
Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā
SEPTEMBER 3–4: Seattle, Flavors of India Festival
and Rathayātrā
SEPTEMBER 17: Chicago Rathayātrā & Fiftieth Anniversary
of Śrīla Prabhupāda's ISKCON
SEPTEMBER 19–20: Chicago, Illinois Institute of Technology
Campus Program
SEPTEMBER 24: Philadelphia Rathayātrā
OCTOBER 8: Potomac, MD, Śrī Rāmacandra Vijayotsava

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