

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



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • July/Aug 2016 • \$4.50



# Villa Vrindavan

Kṛṣṇa's Home in Tuscany

*Lord Kṛṣṇa's Renaissance  
estate has become a Vrindavan  
temple – and more.*





Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

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**COVER** The temple known as Villa Vrindavan sits in the Chianti Hills near Florence. Inset (left to right): Yamunā Devī Dāsī (visiting from London) and three artists with paintings hanging in the villa – Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa, Jñānāñjana Dāsa, and Dhṛtī Devī Dāsī. (Photos by Sanātana Dāsa.)

"Let's say a child is flying a kite from the roof of some building, and a gentleman sees him – running carelessly this way and that, coming closer and closer to falling over the edge. Naturally the gentleman will say, 'Hey! You're going to fall!' That is his duty.

"Now, the child may scream, 'Leave me alone! Why are you bothering me?'

"'Because I am a human being,' the man will say, 'and you are a foolish child. Therefore, I am bothering you.'" – p. 30

## WELCOME



When Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees bought an old Italian villa in 1979, they created a temple, offices, living quarters, storage places, and so on. But Villa Vrindavan, as it's called, is a big place, and

some spacious rooms were long left unused or underused. In this issue, Tattvavit Dāsa tells us what's been done with them – stunning results that grew from a great idea.

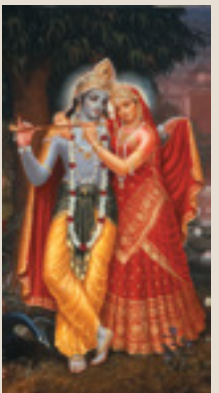
Followers of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the founder of this magazine, have been honoring 2016 as the fiftieth anniversary of the incorporation of his Society in July 1966. For this July/August issue, we're presenting a summary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's legacy, written by Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa. Sureśvara Dāsa's series "Śrīla Prabhupāda: Our Founder-Ācārya" continues with part seven. And Dr. A. D. Śrīraṅgapriya Rāmānujadāsan, a disciple in the line of the great spiritual master Śrī Rāmānujācārya, praises Śrīla Prabhupāda by pointing out many similarities between the lives and teachings of these two exemplary devotees.

This issue also coincides with Janmāṣṭamī, the celebration of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance in this world. Satyarāja Dāsa presents what for many is sure to be a new perspective on this divine event.

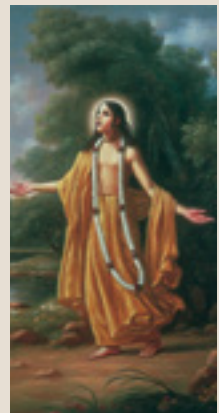
Hare Kṛṣṇa. – Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

## OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



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



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



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



# BACK TO GODHEAD

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Hare Krishna Movement



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# Letters

## Wanting to See Kṛṣṇa

I want the *darśana* [audience] of God, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When will He show His grace? I have been chanting for two years, and now I am becoming bored to chant because I am not getting *darśana* of God. When will He come in front of my eyes and by this I will be free from *māyā*? When will that day come?

In fact, my mind says that chanting is useless, because I am not seeing any love towards God. Will it be possible to see Kṛṣṇa in this life? Or how much time will it take?

Vijay  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* It is good that you are anxious to see Kṛṣṇa. We must remember, though, that we left Kṛṣṇa out of envy and have been in the material realm for thousands of lifetimes, sunk in our selfishness. It will take some time to get out of the mode of expecting a quick result for our work. We can’t expect to be purified in a couple of years, as we are covered by all kinds of contamination.

Kṛṣṇa has given us the process of chanting His glories as the means to clean up the mess in our heart and mind. We must stick to the process even though it may be taking time. Keep being anxious to serve Him. That is the proper attitude that will attract Him to reveal Himself to you.

Kṛṣṇa is waiting for us to be pure and fixed on pleasing Him, without wanting anything in return. As new devotees just beginning to connect with Him again, we need to go deep inside and find the dirty spots and work on them. This is done while chanting. We are praying; “O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service. Please accept me.” We have to prove to Kṛṣṇa that we are willing to serve Him without motive.

As neophytes, we are in a mixed position – doing some for Him and some for us. That is natural. A change of consciousness has to take place, and the process is gradual. It won’t

happen overnight.

By the mercy of the guru we will ultimately become free from impurity, so we have to follow the guru’s instructions and pray for his mercy. Keep up the hankering to see Kṛṣṇa, increase your hearing and chanting, be careful not to commit offenses, and beg for His mercy. Surely He will help you and eventually show Himself to you.

## Work or Renunciation?

My wife and I want to devote twenty-four hours a day to chanting and meditating on Kṛṣṇa. We feel that if we keep working to earn money, we will not be able to see Kṛṣṇa in this life. We spend our leisure time in reading spiritual books and chanting. But when time comes to go to the office, we feel sad. We fear that if we leave our job, how will we earn our bread and butter? But at the same time we want to devote more time to Kṛṣṇa. What should we do?

Varun Ratanpal  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* It is nice to hear that you have strong attraction for service to Kṛṣṇa. You will be able to give up your material obligations when the time is right. Make sure the time is right and that everything is in place to be able to continue serving and keeping body and soul together. You may have to make a plan to gradually “close shop,” in order not to inconvenience family members and dependents. But if you are free to go, then you should pray to Kṛṣṇa to help you find a comfortable situation to merge yourselves in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It would be good to consult your spiritual master or senior devotees you know at your temple. They will be able to advise you in a more personal way.

## Remembering Birth

Why do we not remember the pain of our birth? I think that if we remembered it always, then we could

naturally surrender to God. We forget it, so we don’t give attention to future pains.

Vijay Vishwakarma  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that the trauma of birth wipes out our remembrance of the pain. Yes, if we could remember, that would be an impetus for taking up spiritual life and getting out of here for good. Kṛṣṇa also arranges that we forget our past lives as animals and so on. Otherwise, the memory would be too much to handle.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that the child in the womb, if lucky, will remember at about seven months that he is there again and will have to take another birth. He prays to God and promises that he will do things right this time and not end up in this situation again. Unfortunately, most forget

that promise. But the devotees of the Lord try to remind everyone that the goal of life is to serve Kṛṣṇa. Even if we can’t remember the horror of life in the womb and the pain of birth, the scriptures and devotees tell us that these sufferings are real, and they teach us how to avoid undergoing them again.

## Meditation on Kṛṣṇa’s Feet

In the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is written that one should meditate upon the limbs of Kṛṣṇa beginning from the feet. It is also stated there that one should not meditate on Kṛṣṇa above his legs because His smiling face is like the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam*. Unless one is sufficiently cleansed he should not meditate above the legs of Kṛṣṇa and also not read more than the first two cantos of the *Bhāgavatam*, which constitute His legs.

Please enlighten me. Should I forget His smiling face with His flute and so on and just concentrate on His legs?  
Adam Tati  
Via the Internet

*Our reply:* When we consider all of Prabhupāda’s instructions on this point, it seems that the best way to apply this instruction is to begin your meditation at Kṛṣṇa’s feet and go up from there. Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to meditate on the full form of the Lord, including His face. He gave us the “Govinda Prayers” to sing while viewing the Lord after His dressing. These prayers describe Lord Brahmā’s beautiful vision of the Lord’s features. Prabhupāda wanted us to see Kṛṣṇa’s smiling face and His lips playing the flute. But it is proper to start with seeing His feet, and then continue on with respect.

As for reading the *Bhāgavatam*, Prabhupāda did want us to start with the first cantos and read progressively. This practice helps us clearly understand the Lord’s position, His incarnations, powers, forms, expansions, and so on – all to fix in our minds that He is the Supreme. With that foundation, we’ll properly understand and respect His intimate pastimes described in the Tenth Canto. Early on, Prabhupāda gave us the book *Kṛṣṇa*, his summary study of the Tenth Canto. He didn’t know how long he would live, and he wanted to make sure we had access to all of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes recounted there. He also wanted to make sure the pastimes were mixed with lots of philosophy, so that we would maintain the proper understanding of Kṛṣṇa’s position. Prabhupāda expected us to read *Kṛṣṇa*, and to distribute it to nondevotees as well. So please take advantage of meditating on all the features of the Lord and become captivated by His pastimes in the *Bhāgavatam*. 🌀

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

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Painting by Saccidananda Das

# The Key to Understanding THE SUPREME

*Understanding the Supreme Truth is not difficult for one  
who accepts the words of scripture and pure souls.*

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

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*tvām śīla-rūpa-caritaiḥ  
parama-prakṛṣṭaiḥ  
sattvena sātvikatayā prabalaś ca  
śāstraiḥ  
prakhyāta-daiva-paramārtha-vidām  
mataś ca  
naivāsura-prakṛtayaḥ prabhavanti  
boddhum*

“O my Lord, those influenced by demonic principles cannot realize You, although You are clearly the Supreme by dint of Your exalted activities, forms, character, and uncommon power, which are confirmed by all the revealed scriptures in the quality of goodness and the celebrated transcendentalists in the divine nature.”

– *Stotra-ratna* 12, by Śrī Yāmunācārya, quoted as *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 3.87

**T**HOSE WHO ARE of the atheistic mentality, atheistic consciousness, have decided not to believe in God, so it is very difficult for them to believe. Those who have decided in favor of the atheistic conclusion will never accept any argument for God. Otherwise, to understand the science of God is not very difficult. If one is simple, he can understand. Everything required is there. *Tvām śīla-rūpa-caritaiḥ parama-prakṛṣṭaiḥ*. When God comes as an incarnation or sends His representative, they



perform wonderful acts. They are not ordinary, common men. Whether God or God's representative, they act in ways not possible for any common man. That is the particular symptom of God and God's representative.

*Parama* means the highest class of superiority, which is not possible for ordinary men. People take the acts of God and His representatives as miracles, stories, or allegories. But actually they

are not so. For example, when Lord Rāmacandra appeared, He made a bridge between India and Ceylon. There is no history in the world that one has made a bridge over the ocean, the Indian Ocean. And how was the bridge made? Not in the present, modern way. Not by pouring concrete into the ground and then adding pillars and so on. No. The stones were floating. Rāmacandra's assistants were monkeys. What kind of engineers are they? They could order, “Bring some stones.” They had very good health, so they brought big, big stones, which began to float.

Now, one may question, “How can a stone float?” But why can't a stone float? If this big, big lump of matter – the earth planet – and other planets are floating in the air, why can't a stone float? If God likes, it will float. That is God's desire. It is God's plan.

*Displaying His power as God, Lord Kṛṣṇa dances on the head of the serpent Kāliya. The Vedic scriptures and saints of the tradition confirm the authenticity of Kṛṣṇa's acts that revealed His Godhood.*



Now, you can see that a ship on the ocean carrying fifty thousand tons is floating. But if you take, say, a small needle and put it on the ocean, it will sink at once. It is simply a question of arrangement. A small needle will go down immediately to the depths of the sea, and a ship with a load of fifty thousand tons will float.

If a man can make an arrangement some way or other so that he can float a fifty-thousand-ton ship, is it not possible for God to float a stone on the ocean? Is there any reason to disbelieve it? There is no reason. And we can see. By God's energy these big, big lumps of matter, these planets, are floating in the

## Depend on the Supreme Will

The common saying is "Man proposes, God disposes." Therefore a devotee never depends on himself. He never considers, "I am independent." He simply depends on the supreme will of the Lord. That is devotion. "If God desires . . ." If Kṛṣṇa desires . . ."

Whenever we used to ask our Guru Mahārāja, "Is such and such going to happen?" he never said, "Yes, it is going to happen. Yes, we are going to do it." No. "Yes, if Kṛṣṇa desires, it may be." He never said positively. He would say, "If Kṛṣṇa desires."

Actually this is the fact. If Kṛṣṇa desires, if God desires, anything

*Tvām śīla-rūpa-caritaiḥ parama-prakṛṣṭaiḥ.* When the incarnation of God comes, He performs wonderful acts. Kṛṣṇa performed wonderful acts. Leaving other things aside, simply consider the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is such wonderful philosophy. Nobody can deliver such philosophy. There is no comparison in the history of the world. It is full of information about the science of God. And in childhood Kṛṣṇa did so many wonderful things. Those who are surrendered believe, and therefore they receive the desired result.

## The Authority of Scripture

And where are the activities of God and His representative described? In the *śāstras*, or scriptures, which are books of authority. Vyāsadeva had no business, Śukadeva Gosvāmī had no business, to present some fiction, some allegory. Fools interpret the *śāstras* – "This means this. This means that" – according to their own opinion, as if God left something unclear for some foolish commentator to clarify. For example, in the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (1.1) it is stated, *dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ*. Now, some eminent politician has interpreted *dharma-kṣetra*, *kuru-kṣetra* to be the body. There is no dictionary in the world where it is stated that *kuru-kṣetra* means the body, but still this politician is interpreting in that way, as if Kṛṣṇa left it for him – "In the future the meaning of *kuru-kṣetra* will be disclosed by that fool."

These things are going on. And people are captivated by nice explanations. The theory is "Everyone can interpret in his own way, everyone is free, everyone is God." This is all nonsense.

We should give up that nonsensical way of realizing God. We should learn from the authorized scriptures. *Sattvena sātṭvikatayā prabalaś ca śāstraiḥ*. In the scriptures the science of God is described. And the scriptures are to be accepted without any

argument. I have given the example of cow dung. In the *śāstra* cow dung is stated to be the purest substance. In one place it is stated, "The stool of an animal is impure. If anyone touches it, he will have to bathe and then purify himself." But for cow dung it is stated, "If there is any impure place, just smear it with cow dung, and it will be all nice." Now, the argument is "How can you say that the stool of an animal is impure and cow dung is pure?" But that is not a contradiction. That is actually the fact. And modern scientists have analyzed cow dung and found that it is full of antiseptic properties. It is God's wish.

Now, consider the cow. What does the cow eat? Dry grass. And what does it produce? Milk, which is full of vitamins. Now, if you think, "Oh, since dry grass contains many vitamins, let me eat dry grass," you will die. It is God's arrangement. The cow can produce nutritious foodstuff by eating dry grass. It is God's desire. The cow will eat at least twenty pounds of grass. The elephant will eat a hundred pounds of branches and twigs. Everything is God's arrangement.

The activities of God are mentioned in the authoritative *śāstra*, and they are practically demonstrated when God is present.

And *prakhyāta-daiva-paramārtha-vidām mataiś ca*. *Mata* means opinion. We take the opinion of a person who is accepted. For example, you are selling *Back to Godhead* by using Ginsberg's name because he is popular. Similarly, there are popular representatives, popular authors, like Vyāsadeva, Nārada, Asita, Devala, Kumāra, Kapila, Manu. They have accepted what the *śāstra* teaches about God. Even in the modern age, Śāṅkarācārya accepted Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* naturally accept Kṛṣṇa. We have to follow them.

So we have the opinions of great scholars and stalwarts, we have the authority of the *śāstra*, and we have

the practical demonstration of Kṛṣṇa's activities. These things are there. And still, those who are atheists will not accept Kṛṣṇa.

## The Lord's Characteristics

Now, also quoted here is a related verse by Śrī Yāmunācārya (*Stotra-ratna* 13):

*ullaṅghita-trividha-sīma-samātiśāyi-sambhāvanam tava  
parivraḍhima-svabhāvam  
māyā-balena bhavatāpi  
nighuhyamānam  
paśyanti kecid anīṣam tvad-ananya-bhāvāḥ*

"O my Lord, everything within material nature is limited by time, space, and thought. Your characteristics, however, being unequaled and unsurpassed, are always transcendental to such limitations. You sometimes cover such characteristics by Your own energy, but nevertheless Your unalloyed devotees are always able to see You under all circumstances." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 3.89)

God may hide Himself by His *yogamāyā*, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.25): *nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ*. In the *Īsopaniṣad* (Mantra 15) also we find that the Supreme Lord is hidden within the *brahma-jyotir*; His all-pervading spiritual energy: "Please remove this covering so that I can actually see You." So within the *brahma-jyotir* is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Ordinarily people are amazed simply with the *brahma-jyotir*. They do not go deeper into the matter.

*Ullaṅghita-trividha-sīma-samātiśāyi*. God is beyond the limitation of our thinking and philosophical speculation. *Sambhāvanam tava parivraḍhima-svabhāvam*: "Your very grave and confidential activities are very difficult for ordinary men to understand." *Māyā-balena bhavatāpi nighuhyamānam paśyanti kecid anīṣam*: "Although *yogamāyā* covers all Your activities, someone can see You."

## What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

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

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

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

## Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṅ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

## Spiritual Names

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

The theory is "Everyone can interpret in his own way, everyone is free, everyone is God." This is all nonsense.

air. That is called omnipotence. If He likes, one thing will float. If He does not like, it will go down.

There is a very nice verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.19) where Prahlaḍa Mahārāja prays, "The parents' care for their children is not sufficient to protect them. Medical help for a patient is not sufficient to cure a disease. And a ship on the sea is not sufficient to protect a man from drowning." In this way he has given different examples. "Whatever counteraction we use against the impediments to our progress is not sufficient if there is no will of God. If there is no will of God, then it is not sufficient protection."

Perhaps you know, every one of you. It happened to your country. The British manufactured a ship, the Titanic. It was considered the safest ship; it would never sink. On the first voyage, with many important men onboard, it sank. Is it not a fact? So your arrangement is not sufficient – unless God's desire is there.

wonderful can be done. If He does not desire, it will never be done, however much you may try.

We are praying to Kṛṣṇa, and if He desires, we'll have a nice house. If He does not desire, we may remain here. It doesn't matter. But we shall prosecute our business, Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

There is nothing to stop our devotional service, in whatever condition we may be. *Ahaituky apratihātā*. Devotional service is without any impediment, *apratihatā*. Nothing can check it. That is devotional service. It continues in any circumstance. No material circumstances can check your Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When you are firmly convinced and situated in that position, that is real *bhakti-yoga*. Nothing can disturb you. Nobody can say, "Oh, because of this condition, now I am unable to prosecute Kṛṣṇa consciousness." That means he was never in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Nothing can check Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



Not sometimes or accidentally, but *anīṣam*: “Continuously he can see You.” *Ananya-bhāvāḥ* means “those who have unflinching devotion unto You.” They can see.

There is a very good example in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. While Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the Vraja *gopīs*, the cowherd girls of Vrindavan, He all of a sudden disappeared, and all the *gopīs* became mad after Him and began to search in the forest: “Where is Kṛṣṇa?” So Kṛṣṇa, at one place, situated Himself as Viṣṇu, with four hands. Then the *gopīs*, in their search for Kṛṣṇa, saw, “Here is Viṣṇu sitting.” They did not care. “Oh, He is Viṣṇu. We don’t want Him.”

Now see. They are seeing Viṣṇu sitting, but they do not care for Viṣṇu: “Oh, we don’t want this.” They do not care for even Viṣṇu. They are searching after Kṛṣṇa.

And when Rādhārāṇī came, Kṛṣṇa could not hide Himself as Viṣṇu with four hands. He had to become two-handed. Rādhārāṇī’s love was so forceful that Kṛṣṇa could not retain His hiding in His feature of Viṣṇu. For other *gopīs* He could hide Himself as Viṣṇu, but they did not care. They simply offered their respects. “Oh, Viṣṇu. All right.” But they want Kṛṣṇa. But when Rādhārāṇī came, Kṛṣṇa could not hide Himself with His four hands.

He immediately became two-handed as Kṛṣṇa.

### Only by the Force of Love

It is the force of love, the force of ecstasy, that will help you understand the science of Kṛṣṇa, not any other way. You cannot speculate. What is your power of speculating? Your senses are limited. In the conditioned stage our power to acquire knowledge through the senses is limited. By limited senses you cannot understand the science of Kṛṣṇa. It is *acintya*, beyond the jurisdiction of our thinking, our understanding. There is no alternative to following the opinion of the *ācārya*, or spiritual master. *Ācāryopāśanam*. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.8) it is stated, “If you want to make progress in knowledge, then you have to worship the *ācārya*.”

In the *Veda* it is said, *ācāryavān puruṣo veda*. *Veda* means knowledge or one who knows. Who knows? “One who has an *ācārya* to guide him.” Therefore this Vedic system gives us the injunction *tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet*: “To learn the truth one must go to the authority.” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12)

How to become an authority? There is no question of research. In the material world one earns a doctorate by research work, but here

there is no question of research. You simply have to accept what is stated in the *Veda*. That’s all. That makes you all right. The research is already done. There is no question of taking trouble yourself. You simply accept. Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-dharmān parit-yajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*: “Give up everything and surrender unto Me.” (*Gītā* 18.66) We cannot foolishly go on saying, “Oh, why shall I surrender?” as some so-called learned commentator suggests when he says, “Not to Kṛṣṇa, but to somebody else.” Not like that.

Kṛṣṇa says, “Surrender.” Surrender yourself and you will see how you are making progress. That is the thing. Kṛṣṇa says, “Surrender.” You surrender. That will make you happy. There is no question of “All right. Let me research whether by surrendering to Kṛṣṇa I shall be happy.”

If you want you can go on researching, but you will never be successful. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.34) it is stated,

*panthās tu koṭi-śata-vatsara-sampragamyō  
vāyor athāpi manaso muni-puṅgavānām  
so 'py asti yat-prapada-sīmny avicintya-tattve  
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, only the tips of the toes of whose lotus feet are approached by the yogis and *jñānīs*, who travel for billions of years at the speed of the wind or mind.” If you research the Supreme at the speed of the mind or the wind for ten million years or more, still you will find that you have not reached the goal. *Avicintya-tattva*: still it will be inconceivable.

So the best course is to believe in Kṛṣṇa by accepting the opinion of the authorities and by the evidence of His activities in His incarnations. To understand the Supreme, submit yourself, that’s all.

Thank you very much. ❀

# e-Krishna

## Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



ONE OF THE benefits of Internet technology is that a large volume of information in many locations and formats can be brought together and made accessible in one easy-to-use format. With the advent of mobile computing on tablets, laptops, and cell phones, this information can be accessed almost anywhere.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 4.130) Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, “Maintenance of the Vaiṣṇava etiquette is the ornament

of a devotee.” This makes it important for all devotees to be well versed in matters of etiquette.

To provide a go-to source for the understanding and practice of Vaiṣṇava etiquette, [www.vaishnavaetiquette.com](http://www.vaishnavaetiquette.com) brings together information from across many of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, other Vedic literature, and lectures by senior devotees.

There are two menus, on either side of the homepage. Three buttons in the right column allow

you to browse the site for audio, video, and articles. The right column also has a tag cloud, a box with a number of words inside, some larger than others. Information posted to the site is tagged with a word that categorizes the information. The larger the word in the tag cloud, the more information in that category. Each word is a link to a list of articles on the site. This allows you to easily browse the site for information in these categories.

A search box allows you to find information about the particular term you are looking for. Above the search box you can also enter your email address and subscribe to receive notice when new material is added to the site.

In the left column you can browse information on the site in a range of categories. The topics include how we should interact with others, how we should serve and honor *prasādam*, how we should carry ourselves in the temple and other holy places, and much more. Clicking on each of these buttons brings you to a list of lectures you can choose from.

In the center column is a list of links to seminars by senior devotees who go in to great detail about the many facets of Vaiṣṇava etiquette.

If you type the word “manual” into the search box and click on the link that says “download” in the search results page, you can download a PDF copy of the book “A Manual of Vaiṣṇava Etiquette and Lifestyle.” This book discusses many of the etiquette issues discussed on the website.

— *Madhumaṅgala Dāsa* (aka Antony Brennan, now an initiated disciple of His Holiness Janānanda Goswami)

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# ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S LEGACY LIVES ON

*Though Prabhupāda was present for only the first eleven years of ISKCON's fifty-year history, he continues to guide and inspire his followers to expand what he began.*

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

“IT’S AN astonishing story. If someone told you a story like this, you wouldn’t believe it. Here’s this person, he’s seventy years old, he’s going to a country where he’s never been before, he doesn’t know anybody there, he has no money, has no contacts. He has none of the things, you would say, that make for success. He’s going to recruit people not on any systematic basis, but just picking up whomever he comes across and he’s going to give them responsibility for organizing a worldwide movement. You’d say, ‘What kind of program is that?’ There are precedents perhaps. Jesus of Nazareth went around saying, ‘Come follow me. Drop your nets, or leave your tax collecting, and come with me and be my disciple.’ But in his case, he wasn’t an old man in a strange society dealing with people

whose backgrounds were totally different from his own. He was dealing with his own community. Bhaktivedanta Swami’s achievement, then, must be seen as unique.”

— History of religion professor Thomas Hopkins in *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna: Five Distinguished Scholars on the Kṛṣṇa Movement in the West*

This astonishing story has continued for many decades after Hopkins’s insightful observation, made in the early 1980s, though of course not at the same dramatic scale or pace. In this article I will try to document how the legacy of *bhakti-yoga* that Śrīla Prabhupāda brought to the world is continuing and expanding even now.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to share his love for Kṛṣṇa with the whole



world, and to fulfill that divine aspiration, he urged his followers to distribute more and more books, build more and more temples, and inspire more and more people to take to the practice of *bhakti-yoga*. Therefore, the movement he started, popularly known as the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, has often used success in these activities as its definition of success. And rightly so, because these activities have been and will continue to be pivotal in shaping the movement's composition, outreach, and trajectory. But the movement often gets reduced to these highly visible activities alone, and much has already been written on them. Therefore I will dwell on other ways in which

the term *congregation member* is not used uniformly throughout the ISKCON world, when I use it here I'm referring to both initiated devotees and people who have not yet made that commitment.

ISKCON started in America and then spread to other countries, mainly in the Western world. Its devotional culture was so utterly different from mainstream Western culture that devotees felt the only way they could practice their adopted spiritual culture was by moving into the temple, which offered a safe haven from the materialistic outside world. Predictably, many of the movement's early members were renunciants. Even many married couples, sometimes

those of gurus and Governing Body Commission (GBC) members.

As the composition of the movement has changed from temple-supported renunciants (including families) to financially independent householders, its mode of interaction with the world has changed from renunciation to penetration. In its first few decades, *dhoti*- or *sari*-clad devotees dancing and distributing literature were the movement's defining face. They exist even now, but they no longer represent the movement's cross-section. The well-educated, influential professional is as much integral to the movement as to modern society. The tech-savvy colleague in the office may well be a Hare Kṛṣṇa, a modern *bhakti-yogi* who has both penetrated into and integrated with the mainstream culture. According to individual nature and commitment, each member performs a delicate dance of balance between tradition and modernity.

## 2. Establishment of robust systems of education

Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasized that devotees should systematically study the Vedic scriptures he translated and commented on. Such study would deepen their philosophical conviction and fine-tune their spiritual practices. Accordingly, ISKCON temples diligently conduct a daily morning class on the sacred *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Additionally, ISKCON has come up with programs for systematic scriptural study catering to all its members, from newcomers to seasoned practitioners. Most centers periodically conduct introductory courses on the *Bhagavad-gītā* that give newcomers an overall grasp of its coherence and relevance. For regular practitioners, many temples and educational centers offer the Bhakti Śāstri course, which provides progressive study of the movement's essential literature. Thousands of students all over the world have availed themselves of the course, the teaching of which is supervised by

the ISKCON Board of Education. Additionally, many devotee communities have started schools to provide their children with a holistic education that teaches not just material knowledge and skills that secular schools offer but also spiritual wisdom and values that the tradition offers. Further, for youth studying in universities, several temples have started customized youth centers near colleges. These centers provide students havens for community and spirituality where they can de-stress from the competitive tension of their academic careers.

## 3. Evolution of diverse community-support systems

The movement has developed other community-support systems as well. ISKCON has been at the forefront in reaching out to the larger community through its extensive food-relief programs. Hare Krishna Food for Life is the world's largest vegetarian food-relief organization. With projects in over 60 countries, it provides more than 1.5 million free meals daily, including in disaster areas in various parts of the world. The Indian wing of this initiative, ISKCON Food Relief Foundation, runs a Mid-day Meal program, providing nutritious and delicious *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* every school day to over 1.2 million students from all backgrounds.

To provide philosophical and practical guidance to members, devotee communities in various parts of the world have developed devotee-care systems, such as the counselor system. To help devotees find compatible spouses, leaders of several devotee-communities have set up marriage boards and other matrimonial portals, physical and digital. To help train talented and dedicated young devotees to take up the mantle of the movement's leadership and thereby enable a smooth succession from one generation of leaders to the next, various leadership-training forums have also been established.

Devotee professionals have also

set up hospitals and hospices. The *bhakti* tradition places great importance on departing from the world in a spiritually conducive circumstance and consciousness. Accordingly, devotees have set up a hospice in the holy land of Vrindavan, where committed practitioners can prepare to face life's final exam – death – in a setting that is medically and spiritually favorable. As the body takes its inevitable course towards destruction, the soul takes its conscientious course towards spiritual elevation, if not liberation. Similar hospices are planned for other places, including Mayapur, West Bengal, home to the movement's world headquarters.

## 4. Spreading of eco-friendly culture

Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly stressed the principle of simple living and high thinking, and he wanted to demonstrate it through self-sufficient communities that featured God-centered eco-friendly living. In his cutting critique of materialistic civil-

ization's reckless encroachment on nature, Śrīla Prabhupāda proved prescient. Over the last four decades since Prabhupāda's critique, many studies have shown how indiscriminate exploitation of the environment has jeopardized the future of humanity, indeed of the earth itself. As the world is becoming increasingly aware of the staggering ecological and economic costs of our past centuries of environmental exploitation, green consciousness is rising. *Bhakti-yoga* takes this ascent of human consciousness towards its zenith in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which reenvision the universe as a cosmic family, with God as the father, nature as the mother, and all living beings – not just human beings – as children.

This inclusive vision provides an additional impetus towards raising eco-awareness – vegetarianism. Studies have shown that producing and consuming nonvegetarian food harms the ecology much more than the pollution from all the world's

**The movement became stabler as devotees settled to a level of practice they could sustain throughout their lives.**

the *bhakti* legacy moves on. I will not attempt a comprehensive analysis of the entire movement, a task best left to a historian. Nor do I claim that my examples of ongoing legacy are the most important or the most representative; these are just the examples that strike me from my limited perspective as a second-generation Indian member of the movement.

## 1. Emergence of a vibrant congregation

Perhaps the single most striking feature of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's history is its shift from a temple-based movement to a congregation-based one. The word *congregation* conventionally refers to any group of people who come together, including for religious purposes. Within the ISKCON lexicon, however, it generally refers to people who worship at the temple but live independently, outside the temple management structure. Though

with children, lived and served in the temple, which provided for their basic needs. But as the years passed, most devotees found their initial zeal of having joined an exotic movement cooling down. And more and more devotees got married, started families, and pursued careers, thus leaving the temple environment. For its first decade or so, more than ninety percent of ISKCON's members lived in the temple. Now more than ninety percent of its members live outside. Among some of the movement's leaders, this dramatic shift in demographics initially caused some concern that ISKCON's spiritual standards would be diluted. But what emerged was not so much dilution as consolidation – the movement became stabler as devotees settled to a level of practice they could sustain throughout their lives. Indeed, dedicated congregation members now manage temples. They also occupy the highest ecclesiastical positions in the movement, including

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vehicles. ISKCON has been a global pioneer in spreading vegetarianism, especially in the West. This pioneering is philosophical, offering a more spiritual and dignified conception of our nonhuman brothers and sisters. But it is also practical. Through many outlets, ISKCON provides an array of delectable vegetarian dishes of *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* to a world that mistakenly equates vegetarianism with a diet of vegetables alone.

Besides contributing to the mainstreaming of vegetarianism, ISKCON in various parts of the world has developed eco-friendly communities that subsist on, as Śrīla Prabhupāda would say, “the land, the cow, and Kṛṣṇa.” Initially these communities tried to avoid all modern things,

principle was relevant to ISKCON in the Western world, where the *bhakti* culture ubiquitous in traditional India was seen as utterly foreign, if not incomprehensibly alien.

To help correct such perceptions, some devotee intellectuals felt inspired to enter the academy to gain formal training to respectably present the tradition’s voice in today’s multicultural milieu. Such an outreach of the tradition to scholars has important precedents. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla Prabhupāda, sent one of his scholarly disciples, Sambidananda Das, to London to write his doctoral thesis on the history and literature of the Gauḍīya

theological contributions. Other devotee scholars have written defining books on the modern-day leaders of the tradition – Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura and Bhaktivinoda Thākura – and on the foundational books of the tradition, namely the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Satyarāja Dāsa has founded the *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*, now a major voice in the deep study of the Vaṣṇava tradition. Devotee scholars joined hands with the broader Hindu community to set up the Oxford Center for Hindu Studies (OCHS) at Oxford to create a vibrant example of contemporary scholarship. In an academia shaped by Abrahamic stereotypes of religion and dominated by non-dualist perceptions of Hinduism, devotee scholars have done pioneering work in ensuring that insider perspectives and the *bhakti* tradition are given their due place in the academic study of Hinduism.

Of course, the legacy of love that is the *bhakti* tradition continues most vibrantly beyond the external structures and systems. It lies in the hearts of the thousands of practitioners for whom Kṛṣṇa becomes an increasingly intimate reality through their daily devotional and meditational practices. And as they resourcefully share that reality with others, they provide serenity amid anxiety, spirituality amid materialism, and purposefulness amid pointlessness. 🌸

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**ISKCON has developed eco-friendly communities that subsist on, as Śrīla Prabhupāda would say, “the land, the cow, and Kṛṣṇa.”**

but in time each arrived at its own balance, using nature’s resources and modern amenities. Today many of these communities serve as not just serene spiritual sanctuaries but also as crucibles of ecological research. They demonstrate that prosperity achieved by living in harmony with nature is a viable, even preferable, alternative to prosperity by exploiting nature.

##### 5. Presence in academia

No movement can exist in a social vacuum, oblivious to the intellectual and cultural trends of the larger society of which it is a part. A major place where such trends are understood is in academia, its study of religion being especially relevant to religious organizations. The university significantly shapes public perceptions of a religion, especially where it is a minority religion and so, for the mainstream society, is more learned about than lived. This

Vaiṣṇavas. Religious traditionalists often find academia’s approach to studying religion distressingly unsympathetic to insider perspectives. The output of academic study can sometimes be summed in the epitaph “Operation successful, patient dead.” Yet discerning traditionalists know that academia will continue to shape how the public perceives the tradition. Scholars are often not privy to insider perspectives. Therefore, if public perception is to reasonably reflect the reality of the tradition’s contributions, the onus falls on insiders to academically train themselves to present the insider perspective in a way intelligible to the outsider.

The late Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, one of the movement’s most prominent leaders and a *sannyāsī* and guru, gave a major boost to the tradition’s academic penetration by entering the academy and writing a seminal thesis on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s

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

##### PRONUNCIATION:

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





# Reasons to Get Along

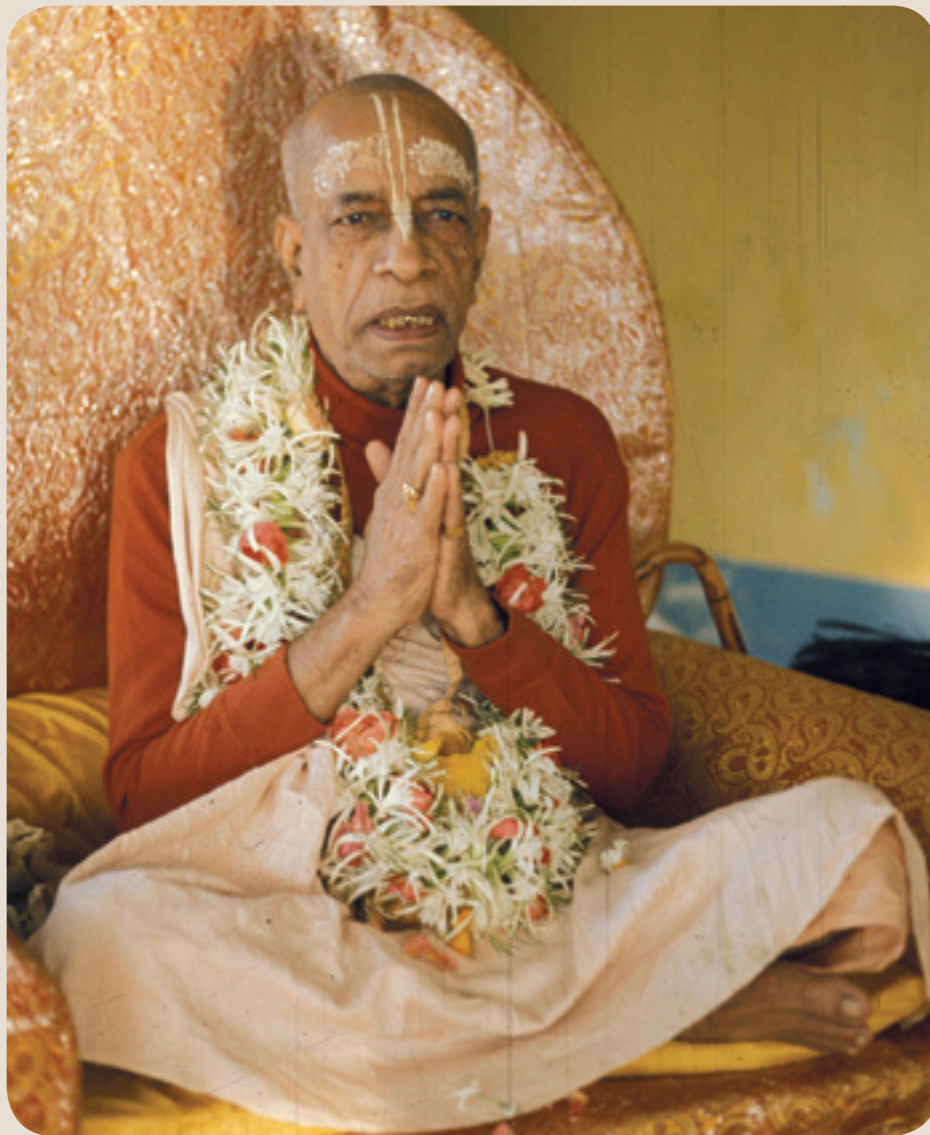
*Some remarkable correlations between the lives and philosophies of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Rāmānujācārya.*

by Dr. A. D. Śrīraṅgapriya Rāmānujadāsan

**T**HIS IS Kali-yuga, the age of quarrel, when even good people are looking for a fight. Yet Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the *yuga-avatāra* (the incarnation for this age), looked for reasons to get along rather than reasons to argue. Emphasizing our natural fellowship in God, He took on Kali's divisive influence without affronting even a blade of grass. His corresponding peace process was a philosophy of inconceivable oneness in difference – *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* – a mandate for self-respect and not megalomania, freedom and not anarchy, individuality and not alienation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was Mahāprabhu's main man, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism's most illustrious ambassador, and everybody's ever well-wisher. In 1965 he left his spiritual oasis, crossed the Atlantic, and wound up on skid-row. The ultimate legal alien. A Vaiṣṇava-man in New York. From there, he galvanized the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to (as the Society's incorporation papers read) "achieve real unity and peace in the world" and "teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement." Prabhupāda showed that *acintya-bhedābheda* was not only a unity of ideas; it was a unity of people.

This article acclaims Prabhupāda's mission from a Śrī Vaiṣṇava viewpoint. When Kevala-advaitins (Māyā-



Above: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.  
Opposite page: Śrī Rāmānujācārya



vādīs) were bullying everyone by saying that *bhakti* was okay for the intellectually challenged but impersonalism was for real men, Prabhupāda riposted: No. India's greatest thinkers have adored Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently, he did not just inspire

thoughtful or disillusioned Westerners; he championed all Vaiṣṇavas. We all owe him gratitude.

But why should Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Vaiṣṇavism's greatest philosopher, interest Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas themselves?

Because Prabhupāda liked him.

Prabhupāda was totally devoted to Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda's books, which explain and safeguard Kṛṣṇa's teachings, are complete in themselves. There is no need to look any further. And yet within his chaste purports, Prabhupāda cites Rāmānujācārya's tradition over a hundred times. Also, Prabhupāda had helped produce *Prapanna-jīvanāmṛta*, an anthology replete with Śrī Vaiṣṇava quotations. Two of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism's classic poems, *Mukunda-mālā* and *Stotra-ratna*, were among Prabhupāda's favorites. He sang them to himself and in public.

## Similar Lives

Prabhupāda definitely had a soft spot for Rāmānujācārya. Their congruent lives indicate why.

Both had an unconventional schooling that foretold their awaiting missions. Rāmānujācārya's parents were Kṛṣṇa devotees yet had him taught by a renowned Māyāvādī. While other children were playing marbles, Rāmānuja was rehearsing the arguments that would later leave Māyāvāda in tatters.

Similarly, though Prabhupāda's father wanted Abhay to remain a devout follower of Rādhārāṇī, he did not send Abhay to a traditional *guru-kula*, but to a British college. Home was practically a medieval temple, yet Abhay was being tutored by the Empire. He studied Shakespeare and Keats and developed a fluency and love for the global language – English. Kṛṣṇa had it all planned.



From childhood, both had friendship circles broader than normal. Teenager Rāmānuja empathized with tribals and later saluted a “lower-caste” as his mentor. Similarly, Abhay mingled cordially with Calcutta’s many religious and racial communities.

Both endured incompatible wives before renouncing marriage to make the world their family.

Each had little time with his guru, but the moments were decisive. One glimpse and Yāmunācārya knew that Rāmānuja would look after Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. Likewise, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī intuited immediately that Abhay Charan would fulfill Mahāprabhu’s global mission.

they were doing, these people were perfect candidates for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Tompkins Square Park was Kṛṣṇa’s plan; it was also part of the earth, and these people were members of the human race.”

Prabhupāda did not see *mlecchas* (persons considered uncivilized by Vedic standards), but only spiritual potential, and whatever a born *brāhmaṇa* could do, they could do – better too. His Western disciples would take Vedic culture into modernity and beyond. He empowered women to worship deities, recite confidential mantras, lead *kīrtanas*, record albums, manage temples, and give lectures.

These initiatives irked the orthodox. Rāmānujācārya faced jealous

Not that He’s simply attached to Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs*. He’s attached to everyone, every living entity. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is the best friend of everyone.  
(Lecture, 16 October 1972)

These were the empathies, revolutions, and risks of forthcoming preachers, not reticent gnostics. Rāmānujācārya and Prabhupāda did not rest in cozy holy places. They traveled till exhausted. As a cow’s milk is not for herself, so too their every excellence was for saving others.

### Philosophical Kinship

Their similar lives reflected their congruent philosophies.

Vaiṣṇavism is timeless. Yet by the eighth century she was suffocating under the miasma of Kevala-advaita (Māyāvāda). This doctrine alleges that ultimate reality is a Thing without form, qualities, or personality. Creation is an illusion, and liberation is realizing total identity with the impersonal absolute (*aham brahmāsmi*).

Rāmānujācārya (eleventh century) faced the whole “I am the Brahman” psychosis head on and said: Get real. The soul is not the center of the spiritual universe; God is. Our oneness with God lies in our essence – in our servitude and love – not in absolute equality.

What followed was Vedānta’s heavyweight clash, the rumble in the scriptural jungle. First Rāmānujācārya meticulously summarized Kevala-advaita, and then he refuted it. His conclusions remain foundational:

(a) Ultimate reality is neither impersonal nor formless. He is the Supreme Person, with a body, immaculate excellences, and devoid of blemish.

(b) God is Nārāyaṇa; all things exist in Him and He in them. He is the material and efficient cause of everything, which He ubiquitously ensouls (*antaryāmī*).

(c) His indwelling presence sustains and rationalizes the plurality of souls. Matter, time, and space too are real, and the cosmic cycles are His majestic sport. The infinite One enjoys both being the many finites and transcending them.

(d) The Lord cannot be attained through knowledge (*jñāna*) or works (karma). Surrender (*śaraṇāgati*) evokes His salvific grace. To know God, love God (*ananya-bhakti*).

(e) The soul never equates to God. Even liberated souls are His servants. Nevertheless, God shares everything and keeps everyone happy.

(f) As body is to soul (*śarīra-śarīrī bhāva*), servant is to master (*śeṣa-śeṣī bhāva*), and protected is to protector (*rakṣya-rakṣaka bhāva*), just so we are inseparable fractions of His glory (*mama tejaḥ amśa sambhavam*). Thus individuality and variety (*viśiṣṭa*) coexist within the one (*advaita*) Supreme Person, i.e. *viśiṣṭa-advaita*.

Rāmānujācārya and other stalwart Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Viṣṇusvāmī (eighth century), Nimbarkācārya (twelfth century), and Madhvācārya (thirteenth century) do occasionally differ. But all concur resolutely that God is a person and we are His eternal servants.

A mellow new wave comes with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (fifteenth century). Consolidating and amplifying preceding truths, His *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* celebrates diversity while highlighting harmony in God. This applies to the souls, universes, peace, happiness. Prabhupāda clarifies:

The varieties are one and at the same time different. This is the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. The conclusion given in *Brahma-saṁhitā* is this:

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

“Kṛṣṇa, known as Govinda, is the supreme controller. He has an

eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, for He is the prime cause of all causes.” Because the Lord is the supreme cause, everything is one with Him, but when we consider varieties, we find that one thing is different from another.  
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.31, Purport)

*Bhagavad-gītā* [15.7]: *mamāi-vāṁśo . . . jīva-bhūtaḥ* – the living entities are part and parcel of God. So we are one with God, since we have God’s qualities in minute degree. But God is the master, and we are always subordinate. *Eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*: we are protected, we are maintained, we are predominated.  
(*Civilization and Transcendence*, Chapter 11)

The *brahmāṇḍas*, the universes, exist during the duration of a breath of the Supreme Lord. . . . Thus they are also within the womb of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mahā-Viṣṇu. Noth-

ing, therefore, is separate from the Supreme Lord.  
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.3.32, Purport)

*Acintya-bhedābheda*, simultaneous oneness and difference. The living entity cannot enjoy life in opposition to the Supreme Lord; he has to dovetail his activities with the Lord by practicing *bhakti-yoga*.  
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.35, Purport)

Clearly, *viśiṣṭa-advaita* (variety within the one) and *acintya-bhedābheda* (simultaneous oneness and difference) are akin. Mahāprabhu Himself gave Rāmānujācārya both an esoteric preview of His mission and approval of *viśiṣṭa-advaita*. Further, He regarded the Śrī Vaiṣṇava principles of *ananya-bhakti* (exclusive devotion) and *bhāgavata śeṣatva* (service to the devotees) as especially meritorious. (See Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura’s *Navadvīpa-dhāmā-māhātmya*.) So trusted is the relationship, that Prabhupāda used



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**For both Rāmānujācārya and Prabhupāda, genius was not for winning arguments, but friends – bringing people to Kṛṣṇa.**

For both Rāmānujācārya and Prabhupāda, genius was not for winning arguments, but friends – bringing people to Kṛṣṇa. To attract the masses both stretched the mores.

Rāmānujācārya’s outreach transcended caste, communal, and gender boundaries. When temple priests scolded the common people to stay out, Rāmānujācārya said, “Please come in.” Hitherto, the erudite had rejected all but spartan savants; Rāmānujācārya taught any newcomer. He marveled at a young woman’s scholarship, adopted a Turkish princess, and had a pious homeless woman enshrined. Rāmānujācārya had the love and courage to initiate outsiders into the Śrī Vaiṣṇava aristocracy.

Prabhupāda too was the people’s champion. Class, race, or sophistication was immaterial. As Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami writes in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* (Chapter 20), “Never mind whatever sinful things

persecution, and Prabhupāda’s god-brothers neglected him. As Prabhupāda’s movement flourished, their neglect sometimes degenerated into uncomplicated envy. Evil Duryodhanas are easily faced, but when even Bhīṣmas fight you, it is demoralizing and difficult to stay focused on your duty. Both Rāmānujācārya and Prabhupāda did. Gloriously.

Both were “green.” Rāmānujācārya promoted the universe as God’s body, clarified that He incarnates in all species for their welfare, and always fitted temples into the countryside. Similarly, Prabhupāda’s eco-friendly farming communities exemplified a simple, more natural way of life. He emphasized God’s love for all creatures, and consequently humankind’s responsibility towards them.

You have seen Kṛṣṇa’s picture. He’s embracing the calf also, and He’s embracing Rādhārāṇī.



*viśiṣṭa-advaita* to explain the divinity of Mahāprabhu as Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of oneness in diversity. Prabhupāda cherished the affinity.

Culturally also, Śrī and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism match. In home or temple, deity worship defines the milieu – what Kṛṣṇa likes, devotees like. Hence diet, morals, routines, music, dress, art, literature, festivals, and pilgrimage places are shared. Mantra meditation pulsates through both communities. Rāmānujācārya enjoined constant utterance of the esoteric *dvayam* mantra, and Mahāprabhu evangelized the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Both incantations emphasize that service is life’s singular goal, achieved through the mediation of the Lord’s beloved consort (either as Śrī Mahālakṣmī or Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī). Her recommendation is guaranteed (via the disciplic succession) through fidelity to one’s own guru. Where the shepherd, there the flock. Hence in both traditions service to the guru

naturally extends to the entire community.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lauds the heartlands of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. In Mahāprabhu’s time, a small community of Śrī Vaiṣṇavas lived genially in Navadvip, and He always found Śrī Vaiṣṇavas most agreeable. Indeed apart from Navadvip, Jagannatha Puri, and Vrindavan, Sri Rangan was the only place where Mahāprabhu stayed for long. Prabhupāda appreciated South India’s traditional values, learning, and devotion.

### Limits to Tolerance, No Limits to Love

With so many reasons to get along, Śrī and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism also share a singular antagonist. Rāmānujācārya saw impersonal monism (Kevala-advaita/Māyāvāda) as the public enemy number one. Better gross materialism than “liberated” impersonalism. Atheism and hedonism deny or ignore God, and so

are silly and unfortunate; Māyāvāda tries to usurp His position, making it worse than everything else. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism concurs. Māyāvāda is the definition of offensiveness (*māyāvādī kṛṣṇe aparādhī*). The Māyāvādīs propaganda spoils everything (*māyāvādī-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa*). Wherever Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached, everybody immediately liked Him – except Māyāvādīs.

When even God cannot escape its envy, we must be clear on what is so bad about Māyāvāda. Rāmānujācārya’s critique is very technical. The Gauḍīya tradition astutely employs the term *māyavāda* to easily name, shame, and explain Kevala-advaita’s hidden agenda. Kevala-advaita’s contention (*vāda*) is that under illusion (*māyā*), the impersonal absolute mirages as a personal God, individual souls, and the physical world. Reversing the tape, Māyāvāda would have God collapse back into emptiness while

we leapfrog over the illusion of God back into the original Thing. With no God and no devotee, devotion becomes meaningless, and only nebulous bliss remains.

Māyāvāda’s slander could but be hurtful to a pure devotee like Prabhupāda, who knows Kṛṣṇa personally. They love each other and share their thoughts, possessions, and indeed their lives. Thus, Māyāvāda is nauseating – the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes an impersonal Thing. Māyāvāda is ungrateful – all the Lord’s salvific incarnations and pastimes reduce to mere allegories. Māyāvāda is arrogant – its megalomaniacal campaign seeks parity with God. Māyāvāda is not just another faith – it destroys devotion and ends all true religion.

Māyāvāda’s pogrom will destroy you too. Rāmānujācārya clarifies at *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.12 that personality and individuality are eternal, cherishable, and divine gifts. Prabhupāda specifically mentions him when emphasizing the same point. Conversely, Māyāvāda’s proposal that God is not a person would mean that (sharing of Its nature) neither are we. By denying Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we deny our own personality and life itself.

In reality, Kṛṣṇa wants to enjoy with us all His flavors of love. He is there for everyone, but Māyāvādīs incorrigibly alienate themselves from His salvific grace. Theologically, Māyāvāda is attempted murder; personally, it is spiritual suicide. Consequently, Māyāvādīs endanger others and themselves. If you really love a Māyāvādī, get him off the impersonalist wagon. Stern love. You don’t sympathize with an alcoholic by pouring him another drink; you break the bottle to save the boozier. Love the Māyāvādī by shattering his annihilating Māyāvāda; hate the sin but not the sinner.

In the town of Melukote, Rāmānujācārya not only wrote his critique of Māyāvāda but also engaged Advai-

tins in the devotional community. Similarly, for all his scathing criticism, Prabhupāda was sensitive, humble, and kind towards Māyāvādīs. Landing in America, Prabhupāda befriended Swami Ramamurti Mishra. This retired medic was not just a yoga instructor; he was an ordained Māyāvādī minister. Yet when Swami Ramamurti Mishra was ill, Prabhupāda tended, cooked for, and fed his ideological nemesis. Dr. Mishra: “His Holiness Prabhupāda Bhaktivedanta Goswamiji really knocked me down with love. He was really an incarnation of love. . . . He saved my life.”

Correspondingly, throughout ISKCON centers globally, Māyāvādīs might be lambasted in the lec-

ture only to be affectionately and sumptuously fed at the love feast to follow – and invited to come back soon. Ultimately, it is not how sweetly you talk, but how you treat people that really matters. There were clear limits to Prabhupāda’s ideological tolerance, but there was no limit to his love.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world . . .

Still, both *viśiṣṭa-advaita* and *acintya-bhedābheda* heartily face life’s opposites: an infinite God and His finite creatures, a flawless heaven and a corrupted earth, a faithful Master with prodigal servants, vivacious

**Resist Kali’s disruptive and depressing tendencies by remembering the unifying, rampant, and triumphant force of divine love.**

spirit trapped in insentient matter, and a yearning for eternal pleasure in a temporal world full of pain. Both philosophies urge us to resist Kali’s disruptive and depressing tendencies by remembering the unifying, rampant, and triumphant force of divine love – the falconer will never abandon the falcon, things will never fall apart, the center will always hold. Both unity and diversity are an eternal fact because God keeps everything together.

### The Yuga Dharma

As ardently as both Śrī and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism combat Māyāvāda’s moribund and escapist doctrines, so too Vaiṣṇavism is refreshingly world-affirming. Both Śrī and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism value life, pluralism, and modernity.

In Kali-yuga, discord becomes increasingly normal. Nations fight nations, and within one nation religions clash. In the same religion sects brawl, and within sects are warring factions. Happy families are increasingly rare, and schizophrenia

*Viśiṣṭa-advaita* sanctifies all creation as a coherent body with God as its central Soul. Similarly, *acintya-bhedābheda* always chooses harmony over exclusion. Whether it is (seemingly) contradictory scriptural texts, alternative moods and modes of worship, or social, gender, or lifestyle diversities, both *viśiṣṭa-advaita* and *acintya-bhedābheda* emphasize the deepest transcendental unity in God. Even Māyāvādīs, the ultimate anti-socials, are allowed to enjoy

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the perversity of their solitary confinement. There is room for all in God.

While Rāmānujācārya is Śrī Vaiṣṇavism’s unifying theologian, Nam-ālvār is her bard of hope. He is foremost among those pure devotees of Viṣṇu prophesized to be born in South India. Nam-ālvār came but days after Kṛṣṇa left this world, and this left him traumatized. Nonetheless he sees the early days of dark Kali-yuga as a golden era of opportunity. Modern people are going from bad to worse, but their perversity cannot prohibit God’s grace; astonishingly, His mercy is quickened. The reprobates will be given a break. “Triumph!” Nam-ālvār roars. ‘Swept away are pain and hell as globally people will chant, leap, and dance. International minstrels will conquer Kali with music. Serve

them, all you lovers of God!’” (*Tiruvaimoli* 5.2.1–10) Later, Periya-ālvār prayed that people everywhere, in cities and the countryside, would feel the chorus “Surrender to Nārāyaṇa.” His daughter, Śrī Āṇḍāl, gathered all her girlfriends to praise Kṛṣṇa’s holy names, and King Kulaśekhara implored the citizens of the world to do likewise.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism reveals that Kṛṣṇa Himself incarnated as Caitanya Mahāprabhu and prophesied a pivotal and global future for the holy names. Every town and village will resound with the chanting of God’s names; in the age of Kali there is no other way. Mahāprabhu’s *saṅkīrtana yajña* reminds us not to obsess about our own salvation but to be a blessing to the world. Robustly and all together, take it to the streets: God is Nārāyaṇa, who resides in all beings

and in whom all beings reside, and He is Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive centripetal force who holds everyone together. Prabhupāda encapsulated Vaiṣṇavism’s cohesive form and function brilliantly: “Everything is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa.”

Kṛṣṇa consciousness recognizes the world as a divine confederation. The love of the world is fickle and selfish; Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental amour is unconditional. Soul to soul, Kṛṣṇa is not liberal – He is promiscuous. He will if you will. Even if you don’t believe in Him, He won’t stop believing in you. Kṛṣṇa is the only friend who will always be there. Since Kṛṣṇa is friendly to all, we too should wish everybody well. Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged all devotees to be this world’s true and effective peacemakers. In *Dharma: The Way of Transcendence*, he writes, “‘Here is a spirit soul,’ he thinks, ‘part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa.’ That kind of vision is the basis of universal brotherhood. . . . Then there will be love, brotherhood, equality, and fraternity.”

Kṛṣṇa is everybody’s reason to get along. What to speak of the need of the hour, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the savior for the age. Kṛṣṇa consciousness begins with chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names and blossoms in doing things His way and not ours. “Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven”: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. 🌸

*Dr. A. D. Śrīraṅgapriya Rāmānujā-dāsan, who lives in England, studied under traditional Śrī Vaiṣṇava teachers. He lectures at schools, universities, and interfaith forums from a Hindu (particularly Vaiṣṇava) perspective. While orthodox Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, his family members love and respect Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON, which they regard as the global and authentic voice of all Vaiṣṇavas and sanātana-dharma.*

## 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 PRTHU COMMANDS MOTHER EARTH TO PRODUCE

*The earth having assumed the form of a cow,  
King Prthu threatens to kill her if she continues  
to withhold food grains from the citizens.*

### CANTO 4: CHAPTER 17

## 25 अमूषां क्षुत्परीतानामार्तानां परिदेवितम् शमयिष्यामि मद्वाणैर्भिन्नायास्तव मेदसा

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

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

Now, with the help of my arrows, I shall cut you to pieces and with your flesh satisfy the hunger-stricken citizens, who are now crying for want of grains. Thus I shall satisfy the crying citizens of my kingdom.

PURPORT: Here we find some indication of how the government can arrange for the eating of cow flesh. It is here indicated that in a rare circumstance when there is no supply of grains, the government may sanction the eating of meat. However, when there is sufficient food, the government should not allow the eating of cow’s flesh just to satisfy the fastidious tongue. ❶ In other words, in rare circumstances, when people are suffering for want of grains, meat-eating or flesh-eating can be allowed, but not otherwise. The maintenance of slaughterhouses for the satisfaction of the tongue and the killing of animals unnecessarily should never be sanctioned by a government.

As described in a previous verse, cows and other animals should be given sufficient grass to eat. If despite a sufficient supply of grass a cow does not supply milk, and if there is an acute shortage of food, the dried-up cow may be utilized to feed the hungry masses of people.

1) In what rare circumstance may meat-eating be allowed?

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According to the law of necessity, first of all human society must try to produce food grains and vegetables, but if they fail in this, they can indulge in flesh-eating. Otherwise not. ❷ As human society is presently structured, there is sufficient production of grains all over the world. Therefore the opening of slaughterhouses cannot be supported. In some nations there is so much surplus grain that sometimes extra grain is thrown into the sea, and sometimes the government forbids further production of grain. ❸ The conclusion is that the earth produces sufficient grain to feed the entire population, but the distribution of this grain is restricted due to trade regulations and a desire for profit. Consequently in some places there is scarcity of grain and in others profuse production. If there were one government on the surface of the earth to handle the distribution of grain, there would be no question of scarcity, no necessity to open slaughterhouses, and no need to present false theories about over-population.

## 26 पुमान् योषिदुत क्लीब आत्मसम्भावनोऽधमः भूतेषु निरनुक्रोशो नृपाणां तद्वधोऽवधः

*pumān yoṣid uta klība  
ātma-sambhāvano 'dhamah  
bhūteṣu niranukrośo  
nṛpāṇām tad-vadho 'vadhaḥ*

*pumān* – a man; *yoṣit* – a woman; *uta* – also; *klībaḥ* – a eunuch; *ātma-sambhāvanaḥ* – interested in self-maintenance; *adhamah* – lowest of humankind; *bhūteṣu* – to other living entities; *niranukrośaḥ* – without compassion; *nṛpāṇām* – for the kings; *tat* – of him; *vadhaḥ* – killing; *avadhaḥ* – not killing.

**Any cruel person – be he a man, woman, or impotent eunuch – who is only interested in his personal maintenance and has no compassion for other living entities may be killed by the king. Such killing can never be considered actual killing.**

- 2) Why can the opening of slaughterhouses not be supported at the present time?
- 3) Why is the distribution of grain restricted today?
- 4) What are the characteristics of a superior devotee?
- 5) On what condition did Prahlāda Mahārāja wish to be liberated from the material world?
- 6) What was King Pṛthu's response to the earth's saying that if he destroyed her, he and his subjects would all fall down into the waters of the *garbha* ocean?

PURPORT: The planet earth is actually a woman in her constitutional form, and as such she needs to be protected by the king. Pṛthu Mahārāja argues, however, that if a citizen within the state – be he man, woman, or eunuch – is not compassionate upon his fellow men, he or she may be killed by the king, and such killing is never to be considered actual killing. As far as the field of spiritual activities is concerned, when a devotee is self-satisfied and does not preach the glories of Kṛṣṇa, he is not considered a first-class devotee. ❹ A devotee who tries to preach, who has compassion upon innocent persons who have no knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, is a superior devotee. ❺ In his prayer to the Lord, Prahlāda Mahārāja said that he was not personally interested in liberation from this material world; rather, he did not wish to be liberated from this material condition until all fallen souls were delivered. Even in the material field, if a person is not interested in others' welfare, he should be considered to be condemned by the Personality of Godhead or His incarnation like Pṛthu Mahārāja.

## 27 त्वां स्तब्धां दुर्मदां नीत्वा मायागां तिलशः शरैः आत्मयोगबलेनेमा धारयिष्याम्यहं प्रजाः

*tvām stabdhām durmadām nītvā  
māyā-gām tilaśaḥ śaraiḥ  
ātma-yoga-balenemā  
dhārayiṣyāmy aham prajāḥ*

*tvām* – you; *stabdhām* – very much puffed up; *durmadām* – mad; *nītvā* – bringing into such a condition; *māyā-gām* – false cow; *tilaśaḥ* – into small particles like grains; *śaraiḥ* – by my arrows; *ātma* – personal; *yoga-balena* – by mystic power; *imāḥ* – all these; *dhārayiṣyāmi* – shall uphold; *aham* – I; *prajāḥ* – all the citizens, or all the living entities.

**You are very much puffed up with pride and have become almost insane. Presently you have assumed the form of a cow by your mystic powers. Nonetheless I shall cut you into small pieces like grain, and I will uphold the entire population by my personal mystic powers.**

PURPORT: The earth informed King Pṛthu that if he destroyed her, he and his subjects would all fall down into the waters of the *garbha* ocean. ❻ King Pṛthu now replies to that point. Although the earth assumed the shape of a cow by her mystic powers in order to be saved from being killed by the king, the king was aware of this fact and would not hesitate to cut her to pieces, just like small bits of grain. As far as the destruction of the citizens is concerned, Mahārāja Pṛthu maintained that he could uphold everyone by his own mystic powers. He did not need the help of the earthly planet. Being the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, Pṛthu Mahārāja possessed the power of Saṅkarṣaṇa, which is explained by the scientists as the power of grav-

itation. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is holding millions of planets in space without any support; similarly, Pṛthu Mahārāja would not have had any difficulty supporting all his citizens and himself in space without the help of the planet earth. The Lord is known as Yogeśvara, master of all mystic powers. Consequently the planet earth was informed by the king that she need not worry about his standing without her help.

## 28 एवं मन्युमयीं मूर्तिं कृतान्तमिव बिभ्रतम् प्रणता प्राञ्जलिः प्राह मही सञ्जातवेपथुः

*evam manyumayīm mūrtim  
kṛtāntam iva bibhratam  
praṇatā prāñjaliḥ prāha  
mahī sañjāta-vepathuḥ*

*evam* – thus; *manyu-mayīm* – very much angry; *mūrtim* – form; *kṛta-antam* – death personified, Yamarāja; *iva* – like; *bibhratam* – possessing; *praṇatā* – surrendered; *prāñjaliḥ* – with folded hands; *prāha* – said; *mahī* – the planet earth; *sañjāta* – arisen; *vepathuḥ* – trembling in her body.

**At this time Pṛthu Mahārāja became exactly like Yamarāja, and his whole body appeared very angry. In other words, he was anger personified. After hearing him, the planet earth began to tremble. She surrendered, and with folded hands began to speak as follows.**

PURPORT: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is death personified to miscreants and the supreme beloved Lord to the devotees. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says, *mṛtyuḥ sarva-harāś cāham*: “I am all-devouring death.” ❼ Faithless unbelievers, who challenge the appearance of God, will be delivered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead when He appears before them as death. Hiranyakaśipu, for example, challenged the authority of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the Lord met him in the form of Nṛsinhadeva and killed him. Similarly, the planet earth saw Mahārāja Pṛthu as death personified, and she also saw him in the mood of anger personified. Therefore she began to tremble. One cannot challenge the authority of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in any circumstance. It is better to surrender unto Him and take His protection at all times.

धरोवाच

## 29 नमः परस्मै पुरुषाय मायया विन्यस्तनानातनवे गुणात्मने नमः स्वरूपानुभवेन निर्धुत- द्रव्यक्रियाकारकविभ्रमोर्मये

*dharovāca  
namaḥ parasmai puruṣāya māyayā  
vinyasta-nānā-tanave guṇātmane  
namaḥ svarūpānubhavena nirdhuta-  
dravya-kriyā-kāraka-vibhramormaye*

*dharā* – the planet earth; *uvāca* – said; *namaḥ* – I offer my obeisances; *parasmai* – unto the Transcendence; *puruṣāya* – unto the person; *māyayā* – by the material energy; *vinyasta* – expanded; *nānā* – various; *tanave* – whose forms; *guṇa-ātmane* – unto the source of the three modes of material nature; *namaḥ* – I offer my obeisances; *svarūpa* – of the real form; *anubhavena* – by understanding; *nirdhuta* – not affected by; *dravya* – matter; *kriyā* – action; *kāraka* – doer; *vibhrama* – bewilderment; *ūrmaye* – the waves of material existence.

**The planet earth spoke: My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are transcendental in Your position, and by Your material energy You have expanded Yourself in various forms and species of life through the interaction of the three modes of material nature. Unlike some other masters, You always remain in Your transcendental position and are not affected by the material creation, which is subject to different material interactions. Consequently You are not bewildered by material activities.**

PURPORT: ❽ After King Pṛthu gave his royal command, the planet earth in the shape of a cow could understand that the King was a directly empowered incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently the King knew everything – past, present, and future. Thus there was no possibility of the earth's cheating him. The earth was accused of hiding the seeds of all herbs and grains, and therefore she is preparing to explain how the seeds of these herbs and grains can be again exposed. The earth knew that the King was very angry with her, and she realized that unless she pacified his anger, there was no possibility of placing a positive program before him. Therefore in the beginning of her speech she very humbly presents herself as a part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's body. She submits that the various bodily forms manifest in the physical world are but different parts and parcels of the supreme gigantic body. It is said that the lower planetary systems are parts and parcels of the legs of the Lord, whereas the upper planetary systems are parts and parcels of the Lord's head.

- 7) How does God make His appearance before the faithless nonbelievers?
- 8) What did the earth understand about King Pṛthu after he gave his command?



The Lord creates this material world by His external energy, but this external energy is in one sense not different from Him. Yet at the same time the Lord is not directly manifest in the external energy but is always situated in the spiritual energy. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.10), *mayādhyaṅga prakṛtiḥ*: material nature is working under the direction of the Lord. Therefore the Lord is not unattached to the external energy, and He is addressed in this verse as *guṇa-ātmā*, the source of the three modes of material nature. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.15), *nirguṇaṁ guṇa-bhoktr ca*: although the Lord is not attached to the external energy, He is nonetheless the master of it.

The philosophy of Lord Caitanya, upholding that the Lord is simultaneously one with and different from His creation (*acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*), is very easily understandable in this connection. The planet earth explains that although the Lord is attached to the external energy, He is *nirdhuta*; He is completely free from the activities of the external energy. The Lord is always situated in His internal energy. Therefore in this verse it is stated: *svarūpa-anubhava*. The Lord remains completely in His internal potency and yet has full knowledge of the external energy as well as the internal energy, just as His devotee remains always in a transcendental position, keeping himself in the service of the Lord without becoming attached to the material body.

9) Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says that the devotee who is always engaged in the devotional service of the Lord is always liberated, regardless of his material situation. If it is possible for a devotee to remain transcendental, it is certainly possible for the Supreme Personality of Godhead to remain in His internal potency without being attached to the external potency. There should be no difficulty in understanding this situation. Just as a devotee is never bewildered by his material body, the Lord is never bewildered by the external energy of this material world. A devotee is not hampered by the material body, although he is situated in a physical body that runs according to so many material conditions, just as there are five kinds of air functioning within the body, and so many organs – the hands, legs, tongue, genitals, rectum, etc. – all working differently. The spirit soul, the living entity, who is in full knowledge of his position is always engaged in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare and is not concerned with the bodily functions. Although the Lord is connected with the material world, He is always situated

in His spiritual energy and is always unattached to the functions of the material world.

As far as the material body is concerned, there are six “waves,” or symptomatic material conditions: 10) hunger, thirst, lamentation, bewilderment, old age, and death. The liberated soul is never concerned with these six physical interactions. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, being the all-powerful master of all energies, has some connection with the external energy, but He is always free from the interactions of the external energy in the material world.

30 येनाहमात्मायतनं विनिर्मिता  
धात्रा यतोऽयं गुणसर्गसङ्ग्रहः  
स एव मां हन्तुमुदायुधः स्वरा-  
डुपस्थितोऽन्यं शरणं कमाश्रये

yenāham ātmāyatanam vinirmitā  
dhātrā yato 'yaṁ guṇa-sarga-saṅgrahaḥ  
sa eva mām hantum udāyudhaḥ svarāḍ  
upasthito 'nyam śaraṇam kam āśraye

yena – by whom; aham – I; ātma-āyatanam – resting place of all living entities; vinirmitā – was created; dhātrā – by the Supreme Lord; yataḥ – on account of whom; ayam – this; guṇa-sarga-saṅgrahaḥ – combination of different material elements; saḥ – He; eva – certainly; mām – me; hantum – to kill; udāyudhaḥ – prepared with weapons; svarāḍ – completely independent; upasthitaḥ – now present before me; anyam – other; śaraṇam – shelter; kam – unto whom; āśraye – I shall resort to.

**The planet earth continued: My dear Lord, You are the complete conductor of the material creation. You have created this cosmic manifestation and the three material qualities, and therefore You have created me, the planet earth, the resting place of all living entities. Yet You are always fully independent, my Lord. Now that You are present before me and ready to kill me with Your weapons, let me know where I should go to take shelter, and tell me who can give me protection.**

**PURPORT:** The planet earth herein exhibits the symptoms of full surrender before the Lord. As stated, no one can protect the person whom Kṛṣṇa is prepared to kill, and no one can kill the person whom Kṛṣṇa protects. Because the Lord was prepared to kill the planet earth, there was no one to give protection to her. We are all receiving protection from the Lord, and it is therefore proper that every one of us surrender unto Him.

[Continued in the next issue.]

## ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

# Where Is Your Freedom?

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

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Thanks to modern so-called education, people have become asses – no sense of the distinction between the body and the soul. Are our children here getting enough milk?

**Disciple:** Yes, as much as they want.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Children must get at least two cups of milk a day. If they drink plenty of milk, their body becomes stout and strong, and they develop a keen brain for understanding the distinction between their body and their soul.

Do people see how our simple, natural way of life benefits society? Do they see we are not killing our children through abortion, but rather maintaining them with buckets and buckets of milk? Is this not a better civilization?

9) According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, what devotee is always liberated?

10) What are the six “waves,” or symptomatic material conditions?



Just consider. Due to selfishness, or fear of “overpopulation,” people are killing children – mothers are killing their own children. Is that civilization?

**Disciple:** In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that those in the mode of ignorance take irreligion to be religion, and religion to be irreligion.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Religion? For these modern rascals, there is no religion. And there is no morality. For instance, here we have so many children, but never do we say, “We cannot maintain these children – kill them.” We never say that.

So many children? Never mind. Let them all be trained as Kṛṣṇa con-

free.” This is simply foolishness. If you were actually free, that would be another thing. But by nature’s law you are not free. You are responsible for even your tiniest act. Commit even the tiniest misdeed, and you are responsible.

So where is your freedom? *Ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate*: “Identifying falsely with his material body, the bewildered soul thinks himself freely doing activities that the body and nature’s modes carry out by themselves.” [Gītā 3.27] Of course, because the soul wants to think himself the independent doer, because he wants to take credit and be “responsible,” he

is a fact. You’re talking foolishly – “I accept death” – but you don’t accept it. No, not at all. But because you have no choice, then you say, “I accept death.” The real fact is this: You do not wish to die. Unfortunately, you find you have no alternative. “Oh, then I accept. All right.” [Laughter.]

So you can talk like that – foolishly. [Laughing.] But an intelligent man does not want to die. He wants to become spiritually realized and then return to the spiritual world and live with God. He wants to find the way to avoid death forever.

**Disciple:** One time a college student bragged to me, “Death? I’m not afraid of death.” But when I made as if to strike him, naturally he cringed in fear. “See?” I told him. “You are afraid.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Even a dog is afraid of death. What to speak of a man. When animals are taken to be slaughtered, they wail with fear. Even animals are afraid of death. So of course man is afraid of death. Everyone is afraid of death.

**Disciple:** Sometimes people say, “We’re enjoying life. Why are you always bothering us about death?”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Why? Because I love you. And I am intelligent enough to understand that when you die, when you leave your body, you may get a degraded body and spend your next life as a dog. I have concern for you: “Please, friend, don’t become a dog.”

Let’s say a child is flying a kite from the roof of some building, and a gentleman sees him – running carelessly this way and that, coming closer and closer to falling over the edge. Naturally the gentleman will say, “Hey! You’re going to fall!” That is his duty.

Now, the child may scream, “Leave me alone! Why are you bothering me?” [Laughter.] Why are you bothering me?”

“Because I am a human being,” the man will say, “and you are a foolish child. Therefore, I am bothering you.”

**No one wants to die – unless he’s a madman. So how can these modern rascals think they’re free when they have to die?**

scious, God conscious citizens. Let them live comfortably and drink their milk.

So, which is the better civilization? Running around in motorcars – *put-put-put-put-put* – and killing your own child. Is that civilization?

**Disciple:** In a sense, many of the children here are not even our own. When, say, a mother with no husband comes here to live with us, naturally we also welcome her children.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is compassion. We welcome children – and the modern rascals kill children. So why do people not see the distinction between our traditional civilization and their so-called modern civilization?

**Disciple:** They don’t have any good argument against our civilization and our compassion, except that they want to be free to do as they like. No hindrances. Complete freedom.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But they’re not free. Rather, they’re fools. They’re not free. Who can be free of nature’s law? But still they’re thinking, “We’re

becomes responsible. Because he chooses to act not on God’s account but on his own account, he becomes accountable.

Again, where is your freedom? The Lord’s material energy – this energy we call “nature” – goes on working, with or without your approval. If you are free, then why is your body growing old and preparing to die? If you are free, then do not die.

No one wants to die – unless he’s a madman. So how can these modern rascals think they’re free when they have to die? What is the answer?

**Disciple:** They will spout some nonsense. “I accept death as part of life.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Death is “part of life”?

**Disciple:** Yes. “It’s natural.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Well then, rascal, when there is some danger of death, why do you go away? Sit down and die. [Laughter.]

In truth you don’t accept death. You’re simply bluffing, talking foolishly. You don’t want to die. That

## HOW I CAME TO KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

# An Accident . . . OR MAYBE NOT

*A decision at the scene of an auto accident leads to a small reward and a life-changing purchase.*

by Śrī Caitanya Candra Dāsa

ONE DAY during my student years at MIT Pune (Maharashtra Institute of Technology), I was strolling on the streets of Kothrud at dusk. I was superficially observing shops, restaurants, people, and vehicles, but my mind was absorbed in other thoughts. From my childhood I had always deliberated on subjects like the mind, consciousness, suffering, and death. After I became a student at the engineering college, my thoughts on these topics intensified. I used to think, Why am I suffering? Was there any time when I was not suffering? What is the purpose of the universe? How long will the universe continue to exist? Is there any way to get out?

### The Accident

While walking on the road that evening, I was again delving into thoughts of suffering, disease, and death. Is there any way out of the miseries of life? Is anyone free from suffering? What is ultimate goal of life? Suddenly I heard a loud *bang*! There had been a car accident, and people gathered around. When I went near, I saw two young girls lying on the ground in a pool of blood. I pushed myself nearer out of curiosity. One girl was half conscious, and





the other unconscious. Despite seeing the girls' precarious condition, nobody was ready to go near and help. People stopped an auto rickshaw passing by. Seeing the tangle, the driver understood the seriousness of the situation and was reluctant to get involved. But people quickly loaded the two girls into his rickshaw.

Now who will go with them? They saw me, another young person, and urged me to go. I was caught in a dilemma. I thought, *I might have to face the police and get caught up in their investigation.* A series of quandaries flashed through my mind. I was about to refuse, but suddenly a

hadn't realized it before. The parents thanked me a lot. I asked the girls what exactly had happened during the accident, but they couldn't recall anything. The parents gave me an envelope as a token of gratitude. When I came back I found a hundred rupees in it. Because of my religious family background, I understood that I should use the money in God's service; otherwise I might get the karma of the donor.

### My First Bhagavad-gītā

I had a friend who used to go to the ISKCON temple, so I asked him to get a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā* for me.

**Suddenly a voice from within commanded me to help. I told the rickshaw driver to take us to nearby Krishna Hospital.**

voice from within commanded me to help. So I relented.

I told the rickshaw driver to take us to nearby Krishna Hospital. The unconscious girl's head was on my lap, her blood drenching my clothes. Her sister was crying bitterly, and I was trying to solace her, though I myself was in shock and dismay.

At the hospital the girls were taken inside to the emergency ward. I got the phone number of their parents and called them. Their mother answered, but I asked for the father, feeling more comfortable to speak to him on such a delicate matter. I informed him of the situation and urged him to reach the hospital as soon as possible. Then I left.

### Meeting Again

After a week I called the father again. He earnestly requested me to visit their house and gave me the address. When I went there the next day, I saw the two girls sitting with their parents. They were twins! I

He bought *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda – for exactly a hundred rupees. After I read this *Bhagavad-gītā*, a paradigm shift occurred: I became serious about spiritual life. The unanswered questions I'd had for many years about suffering, the universe, the mind, and death were answered beyond expectation.

I understood from *Bhagavad-gītā* that this world is like a hospital. We are admitted here because we have the disease of forgetfulness of God. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.15) Kṛṣṇa describes this ephemeral world:

*mām upetya punar janma  
duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam  
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ  
samsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ*

“After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogis in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest per-

fection.” If we want to get free from suffering, we have to get out of this hospital. We cannot expect a peaceful stay as long as we are in the hospital.

To get cured from the disease of material existence we have to serve the Lord with love and devotion. And the best way to do this in the current age is by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

There is another world, called the spiritual world, where we originally belong. When we purify ourselves by chanting the holy names of Lord, we will soon attain the spiritual world, where there is no misery but only unlimited bliss in close association with God. Once we go there, we never return to this miserable world, as Lord Kṛṣṇa describes:

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo  
na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ  
yad gatvā na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama*

“That supreme abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by fire or electricity. Those who reach it never return to this material world.” (*Gītā* 15.6)

I had been searching for such a world since my childhood. After a few more years of education and then a job, I joined the ISKCON Pune temple full time. Later I understood who had inspired me from within to board the auto rickshaw after the accident and help the girls.

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ  
hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati  
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni  
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.” (*Gītā* 18.61)

I admitted the girls into Krishna

# 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](http://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 Vāmana (June 21–July 19)

### JULY

#### 1 – **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.

6 – Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā in Jagannatha Puri. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

#### 15 – **Śayanā Ekādaśī**

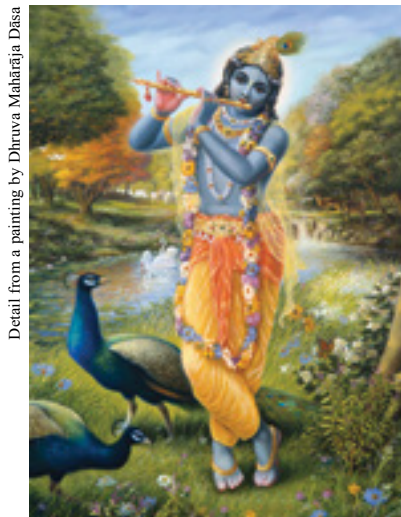
Fasting from grains and beans.

19 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan. First month of Cātur-māsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

## Month of Śrīdhara (July 20–August 18)

24 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan.

27 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.



Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

28 – Fiftieth anniversary of the incorporation of ISKCON, in New York City, 1966.

#### 30 – **Kāmikā Ekādaśī**

Fasting from grains and beans.

### AUGUST

#### 14 – **Pavītropanā Ekādaśī**

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

15 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of

the six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

18 – Jhulana Yātrā ends. Appearance anniversary of Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting. Second month of Cātur-māsya begins (fasting from yogurt).

## Month of Hṛṣīkeśa (August 19–September 16)

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

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

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

28 – **Annadā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans.

Hospital, but they admitted me into the Kṛṣṇa temple. For the twins it was an accident, but for me it was not an accident, but Kṛṣṇa's wonderful arrangement. Kṛṣṇa is so kind that even if we have a slight desire

to know the answers, He arranges circumstances inconceivably to help us find the answers. When one is serious about finding the truths of life, the Lord from within guides in miraculous ways. 🙏

Śrī Caitanya Candra Dāsa has been a brahmācārī at the ISKCON Pune temple since 2007. He currently serves as a temple manager at the New Vedic Cultural Center (NVCC), Pune.



# Villa Vrindavan

## Kṛṣṇa's Home in Tuscany

*Lord Kṛṣṇa's Renaissance estate has become a Vrindavan temple – and more.*

by Tattvavit Dāsa

VILLA VRINDAVAN, in Italy, almost looks too old to have a future, but the humble devotees there are confident it will. ISKCON's oldest building probably, the villa is four centuries old. Naturally, not everything works. A sunken semi-circular fountain does not spout. The front roof nobly displays a stopped clock; the bell over it no longer chimes times. When devotees moved in with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, putting their faith in the Lord's names and graces they named the hundred-and-twenty-acre estate after India's transcendent village where Kṛṣṇa enacted a humanlike childhood. How and why is the project now moving ahead?

Reasons why include the villa's historical worth and lovely location. It faces Florence, five miles away, due north. Long ago, trees at the front blocked the view of the city, even from a roomy rectangular balcony held twenty-five feet high by a row of sandstone columns. Yet through branches at one spot on the long driveway you can see a tiny image of Florence's landmark: Santa

Maria del Fiore's six-hundred-year-old dome.

Six years ago, I read *Brunelleschi's Dome*, Ross King's award-winning book about Filippo Brunelleschi's expertise in constructing the cathedral's pointed dome. Michelin's guidebook says that Brunelleschi's and the Florentine architects' elegant works recreated the natural harmony of the countryside – the Chianti hills.

Tall cypresses, the silver of olive groves, and the vineyards' aligned, green geometry harmoniously please the human eye. Panoramas of the low-lying hills and valleys unfold from the northeast to the southwest of Villa Vrindavan, some mornings layered with fog.

Across the region of Tuscany, the Renaissance architects built villas or redid some castles as mansions.



*Devotees bought the 400-year-old villa, set in the famous Chianti Hills, in 1979. Inset: The view from the new art gallery overlooking the backyard garden.*





In the early fourteen hundreds stood a small palace belonging to the Machiavelli family, which was purchased almost two centuries later and taken down by the architect Joannes Baptistae Michelozzi to build what is now Villa Vrindavan, according to *Le Ville di Firenze di Qua d'arno*, by G.L.O. Cardini. The architect's name is inscribed on the balcony wall, beneath two busts of Michelozzi.

It is a historic neighborhood – I walked to Niccolo Machiavelli's house in five minutes. After fourteen years of government service,

Catholic Church banned the book.

I imagined comparing *The Prince* and *Bhagavad-gītā*: Kṛṣṇa teaches the prince Arjuna about the soul and dharma, prescribing a theocentric life that boosts true happiness in relation to worldly duties and ultimate spiritual aims. To shut down destroyers of dharma, Kṛṣṇa drove Arjuna's chariot at Kurukshetra, a place of dharma. Kṛṣṇa says that the resolute determination for dharma does not arise in the minds of rulers and others too attached to worldly power and pleasure (*Gītā* 2.44).

Among humans, Kṛṣṇa's divinity is

sublimely present as the ruler who protects the people (*Gītā* 10.27).

Eventually, Michelozzi's villa was sold seven times, starting in 1715. The third owner, the Fenzi family (possessing banks and railroads), enriched the villa to the point that Cardini says it “encapsulated the aspiration to opulence and elegance of the second half of the nineteenth century.” During World War II, the Machiavellian Nazi army occupied Florence; an Allied bombardment on July 26, 1944, nearly destroyed San Casciano, a town near Villa Vrindavan. In 1979, ISKCON

became the villa's notable, uncus-  
tomary owner.

### Under Kṛṣṇa's Supervision

Matsya Avatāra Dāsa (Marco Ferinni) contributed to purchasing and renovating the villa. He was the temple president and one of Italy's largest furniture designers in 1981, when he was profiled in this magazine. His father, Caitanya-Nitāi Dāsa, a retired director of a construction firm, repaired the villa and remodeled the ground floor of a two-story adjunct farm building – the long *limonaia*, a



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he lived there, exiled from Florence (replaced by Michelozzi), and in 1513 wrote *The Prince*. He informs readers that in politics the ends justify the means – even good leaders act unethically. Machiavelli also indicates the attrition of human life's spiritual value; as it wears away or is removed from people, they are no longer thought of as souls worth saving or as made in God's image. This justifies war, because people are then no more than animals. The

*Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vraja-sundara (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, above) inspire the devotees to dance while singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra (above right), or to chant it softly on beads in the temple (right).*



Sanātana Dāsa





Centro Studi Bhaktivedanta

Sanātana Dāsa



Centro Studi Bhaktivedanta

*Popular speakers on Kṛṣṇa consciousness are the renunciant Rādhānāth Swami (far left, at the microphone in the temple) and the householder Marco Ferinni (Matsya Avatāra Dāsa) in public spaces (left and below).*



Sanātana Dāsa



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*A flute-player (far left) enhances a kīrtana. Kṛṣṇa tends cows, which are gentle, quiet creatures, and you can learn to milk one at the villa (left). Married couple Rohiṇī Kumāra Dāsa (right), wrapped in a shawl in winter, and Karuṇā Rasa Dāsī live in a house nearby.*



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winter storehouse for lemon trees – as a Vrindavan temple, with chandeliers, a marble altar and floor, marble-embellished walls, and marble-framed windows and mirrors.

For thirty-five years, people have congregated in the temple to hear talks about Kṛṣṇa and sing the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

The upper floor of Villa Vrindavan's temple is used for Kṛṣṇa's cooking, paraphernalia, and clothes. Karuṇā Rasa Dāsī, a determined but gentle devotee, has dedicated a decade to supervising the deity services that she and the devotees perform. She is married to Rohiṇī Kumāra Dāsa, who supervises the forest, cuts logs for the community's stoves, and sells logs.

The devotees care for five cows





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Sanātana Dāsa

Giorgia and Francesco (above) oversee a program for new visitors. Pastry cooks (right) prepare food for a picnic in the forest (far right). The crowded room in the restaurant (below) is just one of its three dining rooms.



Sanātana Dāsa



Sanātana Dāsa

and a calf, a service that includes cutting, drying, and baling hay grown on the villa property. In October, picking olives and making olive oil start. The villa takes the service of idealistic young volunteers in WWOOF, a worldwide network helping organic farms.

People trek and cycle on the villa's forest roads, which are old and wide, with drains and stone walls. Via Romea, the ancient road to Rome, runs near the villa, intersecting its forest roads, and now mayors, along with Villa Vrindavan, are seeking funds to revive it as an outdoor attraction. David, who is developing the forest for tourists and may start renting bicycles to them, informed me that Mediterranean trees retain their leaves all winter.

Villa Vrindavan's first president, Matsya Avatāra, no longer lives there, but he visits on special occasions from his home about an hour away. He lectures on many topics these days, including the composite topic of Dante, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and human psychology. In 2009 I saw him speak on Dante at Palazzo Vecchio, Florence's seven-hundred-year-old town hall – the Italians have a particular regard for Dante. For years as a boy, before going to sleep Matsya Avatāra learned the *Commedia* by hearing his paternal grandfather recite it. (I happened to start reading it, in Laurence Binyon's rhymed translation, when I was thirty-six – myself “midway through life,” as the opening line went, announcing Dante's spiritual

crisis.) In Matsya Avatāra's hometown, Ponsacco, Pisa, his Center for Bhaktivedanta Studies has a wide, even international, outreach: pastoral, academic, governmental.

One of the Center's graduates, Pietro Leemann (Matsya Avatāra's disciple Parameśvara Dāsa), is a teacher of new cooks and a respected farmer-chef. His Swiss parents were schoolteachers and advocates of a natural diet. He owns a natural-cuisine restaurant in Milan – Joia (try the recipes at joia.it) – rated “one star” by Michelin. That's good – and a rarity for a vegetarian restaurant. The English title of his fourth book is *The Spice of Life: A Vegetarian Cook in Search of Truth*. I met him one sunny Sunday afternoon at Villa Vrindavan after he





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*Vedic martial arts, taught by Murāri Caitanya Dāsa (above in black), attract people to the dharma of the kṣatriyas, or warrior class (the Sanskrit words kṣatriya-dharma are inscribed around the necks of the T-shirts). The firing line (right) looks dangerous. Below, in green and white, Jāhnvā Sundarī Dāsī leads her Cintamani Yoga class. Below right, two men discuss products in the boutique.*



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the south side, created by Emanuele Fenzi, or sit in basement rooms with arched ceilings off the park, including a cozy three-room, family-run restaurant, located beside the neat new bazaar called Magic India. In the high season, a restaurant near Machiavelli's house draws one to two hundred cultural tourists daily, a restaurant worker told me – a number the villa's restaurant could also handle. One weekend, forty Indian-dance



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spoke on food to an outside group that confers about values for peace. Recently, the villa converted parts of its east and west wings into a guesthouse, providing rooms for visiting devotees and members of groups who rent large rooms in the

villa for such activities as shiatsu and tai chi. Attendees at classes, forums, meetings, seminars, conferences, and chanting festivals – and the Sunday visitors, some with leashed dogs – gather for meals and conversation in the hillside park on



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*Rathāyātra, a chariot festival seen by thousands of tourists during its long procession, passes Florence's cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore (above). At the festival, enthusiasm overwhelms chanters of the holy names (left).*



students and teachers simultaneously used three renovated halls for different dance practices. The halls are also used for exhibitions, yoga practice, martial arts. Murāri Caitanya Dāsa and his wife, Monica, teach the Vedic martial arts. Their classes promote safety in devotee communities, inspire law-enforcement agents in liaison with the couple, and introduce their students to Kṛṣṇa consciousness via a moral code for *kṣatriyas*, extracted from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books.

Time to Fill the Villa

A few years ago, the Italian devotees finally arrived at an answer to a very important question that lingered for decades: What will give the villa an inner identity again? Its two main floors both have one immense room and four large rooms, all with high ceilings. These floors connect by a wide, arched, thirty-step stone staircase. Could all ten rooms be integrated?

For their answer, the devotees harked back to the early eighties, when about ten Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) artists lived in or around Villa Vrindavan. A few senior artists from America taught new painters, and an art professor from Florence also taught at the villa. Besides forming an art academy, the BBT artists met dozens of established Italian painters and began a gallery by hanging paintings in some of the villa’s rooms and the temple room. But everything stopped in the mid-eighties, after an impasse due to managerial setbacks.

Twenty-five years later, Kṛṣṇa transformed Villa Vrindavan into a stunning art gallery by a stroke of serendipity. This was the effect of the



Prema Sukha Devī Dāsī



Pāṇḍu Putra Dāsa

*Jñānāñjana Dāsa paints Arjuna’s arm (left). Jñānāñjana and Pāṇḍu Putra Dāsa (above) were partners in the creation of the collection of Mahābhārata paintings that hang in Villa Vrindavan’s new art gallery. They stand before a painting of Lord Kṛṣṇa entering Dwarka.*

synergy among several devotees: Jñānāñjana Dāsa (a BBT painter), Pāṇḍu Putra Dāsa (Jñānāñjana’s patron), Mahāprabhu Dāsa (director of the Museum of Sacred Art in Belgium), and Parābhakti Dāsa (Villa Vrindavan’s president). [See the sidebar on page 50.] Before the ribbon-cutting at the

villa doors, on September 24, 2015, I saw Jñānāñjana beaming with a smile. His twelve-year project – a collection of twenty-four grand paintings of *Mahābhārata*’s episodes and intrigues – fit perfectly into the ground floor, without anyone having planned the match. An average framed *Mahābhārata* painting is six feet high,

and there are five rooms of them. The gallery displays sixteen sculptures. The upper floor holds thirty-one paintings, by various artists, of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Caitanya, plus a room for Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *mūrti* and three beautiful paintings of his predecessors by the Italian artist Praśānta Dāsa. In a speech at the opening, Massim-



iliano Pescini, San Casciano's mayor, said, "The gallery is auspicious for the future of Villa Vrindavan, because it makes it an important cultural center. This challenges the people in the area to work closely with the Hare Kṛṣṇa community, and it shows them the impor-



MOSA Villa Vrindavan



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Śrīla Prabhupāda called our BBT paintings "windows into the spiritual world." They show the loveliness of the highest reality. Prabhupāda thought that Indian art looked either mythological or too regional (Odishan art, for instance). Since this was the first time Westerners were learning that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Prabhupāda thought that Kṛṣṇa should be realistically shown. All reality comes from Kṛṣṇa, so just as we paint real trees and persons, we should show Kṛṣṇa as a person.

It's challenging for artists to naturalistically render a transcendental figure whom they've never seen. Kṛṣṇa's body is not subject to nature, with muscles, bones, and skin. He needs to be drawn as a gentle form, with gentle lines. Realistic lighting helps in doing this sort of art. Divine bodies are self-effulgent – the sun is the only experience we have of that. So shadows on Kṛṣṇa have a bright or light color to give the idea that His body is spiritual. Christian art was once Gothic, and transcen-

dence was represented by a gold background. A divine image occupied the foreground and merged with the golden spiritual background. Renaissance painting introduced the representation of space through perspective. This and other innovations signified a secularization – compared with earlier methods – of how spiritual content was painted. Christian artists began painting naturalistic representations of God and heavenly beings. Renaissance artists sometimes used the human figure to represent perfect or mystical bodies, with a sky, a landscape – everything. Later came the highly ornate Baroque art. These two forms of Italian art, grounded in realism, were pictorially ideal for the new Kṛṣṇa art.

Renaissance and Baroque art also dealt with sentiments and relationships. Sometimes the realism yields to showing relationships and expressions of behavior in a poetic way. This is conducive to representing Kṛṣṇa's *rasas*, His loving relationships and personal pastimes with His devotees.

Prema Sukha Devī Dāśī



Prema Sukha Devī Dāśī

*Prema Sukha Dāśī (upper left) prepares a pattern for stenciling the corners of a frame. She and others work on two frames (above). At left (from left), Jñānāñjana, Gopāl, Rāmadāsa, and Pāṇḍu Putra prepare a canvas for a painting. Finally (right), a painting goes up.*

tance of dialogue with the Indian community – both of which point to a better future for the devotee community."

Visiting from Rome, Basant Gupta, India's ambassador to Italy, called the art gallery – dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma –

unique. He complimented ISKCON on its fiftieth anniversary of learning and teaching the *Bhagavad-gītā* worldwide. He even quoted some of its verses.

Weeks later, Jñānāñjana told me how and why his art keeps pace with the Renaissance aesthetic:

Italy is the source of Renaissance art. Surrounded by Renaissance art while growing up, I became sensitive to this artistic sensibility. It's a manner of figurative painting that is lifelike and three-dimensional. It creates an illusion of depth. Renaissance painters treated the painting as a window into space.





Of course, Indian decorative elements stylize the realism of the transcendental figures. I followed the *Mahābhārata* tradition and used ethnic references in my portraits of the characters. The *Mahābhārata* is full of descriptions of opulence, so gold is really highlighted in this collection. The warriors' effulgent costumes, chariots, weapons, and property are elaborately painted to signify their advanced status and opulence.

Florence is the root of the Renaissance and is said to have the greatest concentration of art, in proportion to its size, in the world. And Villa Vrindavan embodies Renaissance architecture. Now Kṛṣṇa art, by our adapting the Renaissance aesthetic, has entered Western culture and fit into it.

A generalization about the artist's concluding point is that contextual factors support Kṛṣṇa consciousness and can build bridges to it. These themes were discussed at an academic conference held at Villa Vrindavan in July 2010.

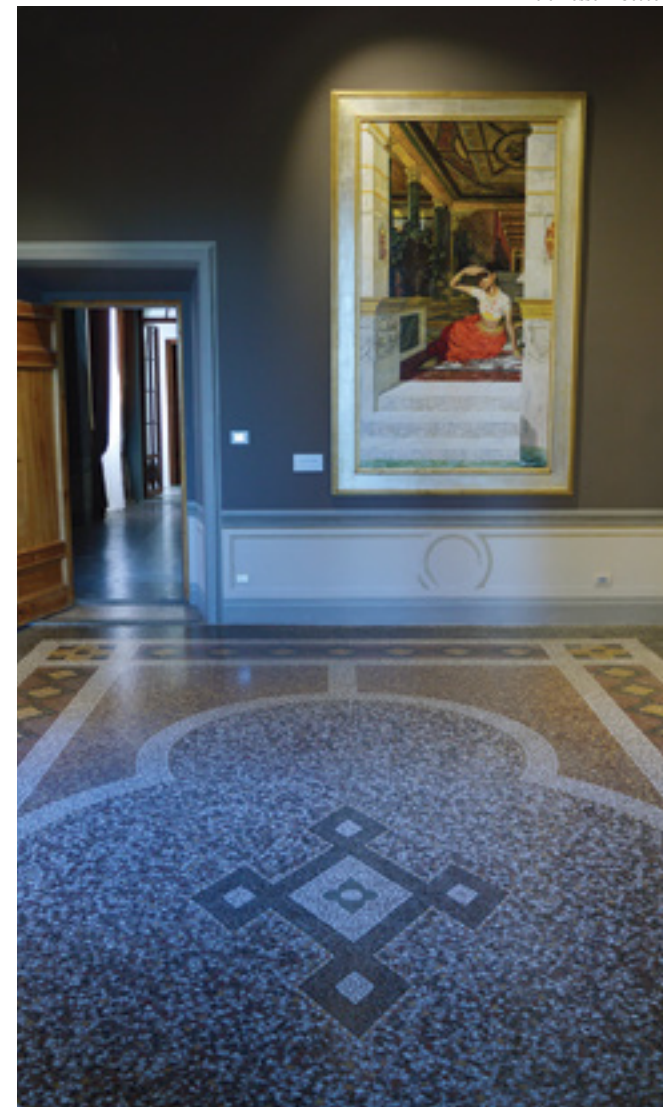
The Swedish scholar Jan Olof Bengtsson presented a paper saying that Westerners "need subjectively to feel that the Hare Kṛṣṇa religion is their own, not just in terms of its attractive novelty, and not even just in terms of its universal truth, but



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Prema Sukha Devi Dasi



Mikele Rosselli-Cecconi

*Clockwise from left: An inlaid floor in the villa complements a painting. A room on the upper floor holds Śrīla Prabhupāda's mūrti. An ornate ceiling offsets the paintings in a red room. The villa's front entry leads into this large room with grey walls. Flat designs on the wall seem three-dimensional.*

also in terms of something that connects to or is, if possible, identical with their own existing cultural identity, their own past, their history and traditions.”\*

Kṛṣṇa is the source of all beauty, Jan Olof said, so anyone visiting San Marco, San Lorenzo, the Duomo, the Uffizi, and the Palazzo Pitti in Florence is perchance close to Kṛṣṇa.

Besides seeing Michelangelo's

\*Jan Olof Bengtsson, "The Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement and Western Cultural Identity: Education, Preaching, and Conversion," *ISKCON Studies Journal*, Vol. 2 (2014): p. 28. (Online: <http://isi.sdgaudio.org>)



Prema Sukha Devi Dasi



MOSA Villa Vrindavan



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## The Combined Force Behind the Art Gallery

**Mahāprabhu Dāsa** is the director of the Museum of Sacred Art (MOSA) and the director of ISKCON Communications in Europe. MOSA is an international visual-arts project within ISKCON that aims to promote ISKCON's and India's devotional arts in both ISKCON and museums worldwide. It has galleries in Radhadesh and Villa Vrindavan. MOSA has helped the Paris, Brussels, and Antwerp temples acquire high-quality art.



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Mahāprabhu redid both Villa Vrindavan and its chapel as art galleries. The chapel is for temporary exhibitions. The first one was "Illuminations from the *Bhagavad-Gita*," an art collection by Kim and Chris Murray.

**Pāṇḍu Putra Dāsa** is the art director of Villa Vrindavan's MOSA. He joined ISKCON in 1975, and in the 1980s he headed Villa Vrindavan's book distribution. In 2009 he sold his house and became the patron of Jñānāñjana's *Mahābhārata* project. Jñānāñjana painted in Pāṇḍu Putra's picture-frame workshop. They planned a traveling exhibition, and even went to India to scout for galleries. Later they agreed with Mahāprabhu to install the collection permanently in the villa.



Santana Dasa

Because the paintings are large, Pāṇḍu Putra's son, Pāṇḍu Rāja, assembled the frames inside the villa and assisted Prema Sukha Dāsī, his mother, in gilding and painting frames and painting the gallery walls, which are almost fifteen feet high.

**Parābhakti Dāsa** is the president of Villa Vrindavan. The art gallery fits well with his approach to

spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"I don't present ISKCON as a minority religion with a big philosophy but no value to people in general," Parābhakti says. "Rather, I give the message that what devotees are doing is useful for everyone. I'm not one-dimensional in my outreach. I use all the possibilities to inform people about Kṛṣṇa's teachings: spiritual, cultural, ecological, even medical. I regularly speak at interfaith and intercultural programs at local and national institutions."

In Rome, Parābhakti and members of various groups began celebrating Diwali last year by floating candles on the River Tiber. At the Diwali celebration held at La Sapienza University, Parābhakti's friend Basant Gupta, the Indian Ambassador, spoke on the value of spirituality, highlighting ISKCON's contributions to society.

Around Diwali, at a four-day meeting organized by Religions for Peace at Castel Gandolfo, the Pope's summer-holiday residence (on loan from the Vatican), Parābhakti managed a youth workshop and offered a lamp to Lord Kṛṣṇa before five hundred people. He was in China for ten days on another initiative of Religions for Peace.

He is on the Advisory Board of an Oxford-born movement called Evidence Based Medicine. EBM provides physicians with the expertise to take into consideration the psychological and religious aspects of personalized care. Medical students now study the issue of euthanasia and the treatment of depression by mantra.

Parābhakti's daughter, Giorgia, is certified to teach yoga, and she studied communications at Warwick University in Coventry and in Italy. Her fiancé, Francesco, is a video animator. They plan to conduct Villa Vrindavan's tourist program, centered on the new art gallery.



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seventeen-foot-tall David – in the classical pose known as *contrapposto*, with one leg holding the figure's full weight and the other leg forward, causing the "hips and shoulders to rest at opposing angles," the Accademia Gallery says, "giving a slight s-curve to the

entire torso" – anyone who also views the all-beautiful form of the Lord of Vrindavan will be much closer to Kṛṣṇa.

David resembles Kṛṣṇa: both famous youths killed gigantic opponents to protect the people they lived with. Kṛṣṇa, the source of every-

thing, says He is the prowess and ability in man (*Gītā* 10.8, 7.8), be he hero or sculptor.

The Villa Vrindavan experience complements the cultural tourists' visits to Italy, and Florentines can have an inner experience of Kṛṣṇa's all-attractiveness through art, books,



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dance, music, meals, walking, shopping, farming, and a variety of classes. Buses from Florence stop at Villa Vrindavan's entrance. 🚗

For more information, visit [www.villavrindavana.org/en/](http://www.villavrindavana.org/en/).

*Tattvavit Dāsa lives in Europe and has written seven Back to Godhead articles – and edited or contributed to four more – about Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Switzerland, France, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Belgium, Greece, England, and now Italy. Visit [tvdas.tumblr.com](http://tvdas.tumblr.com) to read his blog.*



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*In September 2015, the MOSA art gallery opened (top). The honored guest, Basant K. Gupta, the Ambassador of India (above), admires paintings by Kim Waters. A guest views paintings of Lord Rāmacandra's pastimes (left).*



# The Dual Stories of KṚṢṆA'S BIRTH

*Yes, Kṛṣṇa appeared as a newborn in a prison cell,  
but there's a lesser-known fact of His birth.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

LAST YEAR ON Janmāṣṭamī, the celebration of Kṛṣṇa's appearance in this world, numerous Indian newspapers and magazines reminded readers that two years earlier they had celebrated the 5,125th anniversary of Kṛṣṇa's birth. The *New Indian Express* (October 1, 2015), echoing reports found throughout the subcontinent, boldly proclaimed that through archaeoastronomy and similar technologies, scientists and theologians could ascertain when Kṛṣṇa was born: July 27, 3112 BCE, according to the Gregorian Calendar.

Whether or not their methods are adequate or their findings accurate, a far more important consideration is who Kṛṣṇa is and what His birth and activities really mean. Of course, first and foremost, Kṛṣṇa, or God, is ultimately “unborn,” and therefore His

appearance in the world is less about when and more about why: His “birth” should be seen as an act of grace, a show performed for our benefit. His appearance in the material world is meant to cure us of our spiritual amnesia by reminding us of our real life in the kingdom of God and encouraging us to return there.

As commonly understood, Kṛṣṇa appeared over fifty centuries ago in Mathura, India, as the divine child of Devakī and Vasudeva in the jail cell of the tyrant Kāṁsa, a demon in human guise. Why were they in a jail? King Kāṁsa, while transporting his sister Devakī and her new husband by chariot after their wedding, heard a voice from the sky, telling him that her eighth child would kill him. His initial response was to kill Devakī outright, thus nullifying

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*After traveling to Vrindavan from Mathura, where Kṛṣṇa was born, Kṛṣṇa's father, Vasudeva, stealthily exchanges Kṛṣṇa for Yaśodā's daughter, Subhadrā.*

Painting by Yadurāṁ Devī Dāśī





the chance that any of her children might slay him. But Vasudeva pleaded for her life, saying that he would deliver any child she bore into Kamsa's hands. The demonic king agreed to this proposition but went one step further: he locked them in his prison, so there would be no possibility of their deceiving him and letting their children go free.

The Lord chose to begin His earthly sojourn in a prison, but we should never think that His situation is like ours. Our life in the material world is tantamount to a prison sentence, and we are trapped until we develop love for God. Only then can we know release from material suffering and attain the freedom to return to our spiritual home. Kṛṣṇa's birth, on the other hand, was not

in the girl's place, Vasudeva took the female child and returned to Mathura. He reentered the prison and shackled himself as before, so no one would know he had gone.

When Kamsa learned that Devakī had given birth, he viciously burst in to kill the infant. With intense desperation, he tried to smash the baby against the stone floor. But the baby girl manifested a frightening eight-armed form. Yogamāyā turned into Mahāmāyā – or Durgā, the goddess of the material spheres.

"Fool!" she said. "You can't kill me. And know this too, Kamsa: The child who will be your undoing is already born."

With these frightening words, she disappeared.

Kamsa soon sent numerous

knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." The word *janma* (birth) is used in this verse in relation to Kṛṣṇa's appearance. In other words, devotees are mandated not only to learn the mysteries of the Lord's activities, but also how He appears in this world. His "birth" is instructive, telling us about His true nature and thus liberating us from material existence. But we must know His birth and activities in truth, and this is where one would do well to hear them from a master in disciplic succession, one who has "seen" this truth.

If one does so, one becomes privy to esoteric nuances that would otherwise remain hidden. While the common narrative related in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other traditional texts tells us what happened on the face of it, there is also an "inside story," a deeply philosophical reading that highlights Kṛṣṇa's true nature.

The more common narrative tells us that Kṛṣṇa was born in Mathura and was transferred to Vrindavan when Vasudeva carried Him across the Yamuna. But this contradicts the notion that Kṛṣṇa never leaves Vrindavan, as articulated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.5.461) and quoted by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 1.67):

*kṛṣṇo 'nyo yadu-sambhūto  
yaḥ pūrṇaḥ so 'śty ataḥ paraḥ  
vṛndāvanaṁ parityajya  
sa kvacin naiva gacchati*

"The Kṛṣṇa known as Yadukumāra is Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. He is different from the Kṛṣṇa who is the son of Nanda Mahārāja. Yadukumāra Kṛṣṇa manifests His pastimes in the cities of Mathurā and Dvārakā, but Kṛṣṇa the son of Nanda Mahārāja never at any time leaves Vṛndāvana." With this as a backdrop we could legit-

imately ask, how is it that Kṛṣṇa takes birth in nearby Mathura if He never leaves Vrindavan? Wouldn't being born in Mathura mean that He was at one point – at least during birth and soon thereafter – outside His sacred village?

But before going on to explain this, a few words are in order about what Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is saying in the above verse. It is not that there are "many Kṛṣṇas," as some scholars have mistakenly theorized and as a superficial reading of this verse might indicate. Rather, what is being referred to here is the complex topic of expansion and incarnation, so thoroughly detailed in Vaiṣṇava texts. Śrī Rūpa's verse tells us that the original form of Kṛṣṇa, i.e., Vrindavan Kṛṣṇa, expands into plenary forms and other manifestations for specific purposes. Thus, when the Lord apparently ven-

tures out of Vrindavan, He actually remains there in an unmanifested state. Meanwhile, He continues on in His unfolding pastimes in one of His other forms, such as Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva).

Now, having understood Śrī Rūpa's comment according to the tradition itself, let us reexamine the story of Kṛṣṇa's birth in light of the fact that He never leaves Vrindavan. According to the *ācāryas*, Yaśodā had actually given birth to twins, a boy and a girl. The boy was Kṛṣṇa in His original form, and when Vasudeva arrived with *his* baby, an expansion of Kṛṣṇa (Vāsudeva), the expansion merged into Kṛṣṇa's original form, the son of Yaśodā. After this, Vasudeva returned to Kamsa's cell in Mathura with the baby girl, as the traditional story reveals.

This unique version comes to us, once again, from Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava

theologian Rūpa Gosvāmī. In his *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.5.452–456) he writes:

To give pleasure to His loving associates and even to relish His own wonderful pastimes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested in Vraja [Vrindavan]. Because the parental love of Nanda and Yaśodā is without parallel, Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally thinks Himself their son. In ancient times, devotees revealed that the Lord appeared in His Vāsudeva expansion in the home of King Vasudeva, and at the same time He appeared in His original form in the village of Vraja. It was thus said that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Yogamāyā were the twin children of Yaśodā in Vrajabhūmi. When Mahārāja Vasudeva arrived there, he entered Yaśodā's maternity room, seeing only Yaśodā's daughter. The Vāsudeva expansion that King Vasudeva had brought with

## The Lord chose to begin His earthly sojourn in a prison, but we should never think that His situation is like ours.

ordinary: He not only appeared before His parents as God – first in His majestic four-armed Viṣṇu form, in full regalia, and then in the form of a divine baby – but He was also not forced to take birth by the laws of material nature. He appeared according to His own sweet will.

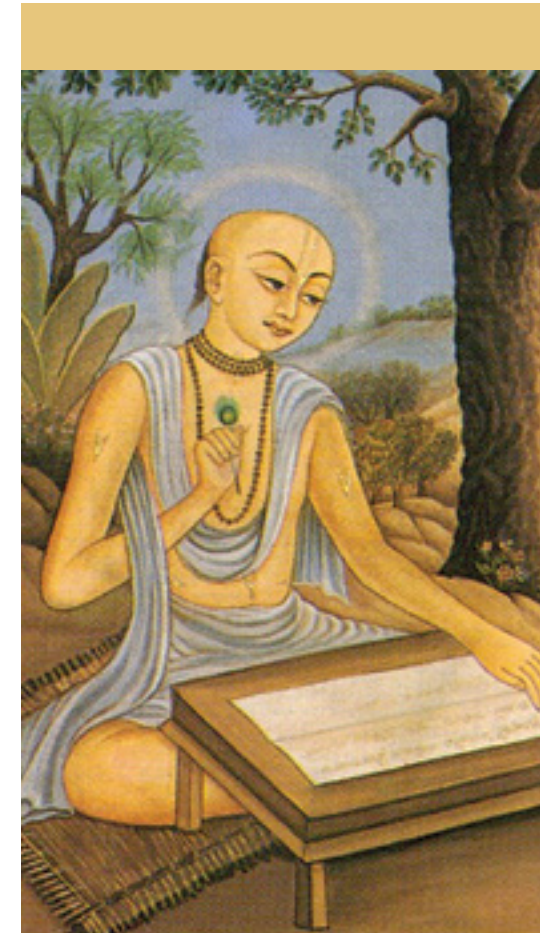
As soon as Vasudeva and Devakī began to delight in their newborn, by Kṛṣṇa's mystic potency the jail guards fell asleep and the heavy prison doors flew open. Vasudeva knew what to do. He picked up baby Kṛṣṇa and carried Him across the Yamuna, from Mathura to Gokula (in the Vrindavan area). Entering his stepbrother Nanda Mahārāja's house, he saw that Yaśodā (Nanda's wife) had just given birth to a baby girl, Subhadrā, also known as Yogamāyā, the Lord's spiritual energy. By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement, Yaśodā and everyone else in her house were fast asleep. Leaving baby Kṛṣṇa

demons, one by one, to hunt down Kṛṣṇa and kill Him. Some of them found Him in Nanda and Yaśodā's safe hamlet across the Yamuna, but the Lord easily destroyed them. The pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's subduing the demons convey the truth of good conquering evil. While they are literal stories of Kṛṣṇa's manifest actions, they also provide metaphors by which devotees live.

We generally understand that Nanda and Yaśodā were Kṛṣṇa's foster parents, a notion that, while true, is only part of the story.

### The Full Version

According to Vaiṣṇava tradition, it is important to hear these stories, not only because of the philosophical points they convey but also because they free us from the cycle of birth and death. As Kṛṣṇa Himself says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9), "One who



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him from Mathurā entered the body of the original Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who had just taken birth as the son of Yaśodā. In this way the two forms of Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa became one. Because this pastime is very confidential, it is not conveyed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other texts. Nevertheless, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and other great devotees have indirectly described it in their writings.

There are hints of these truths in Sanātana Gosvāmī’s *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, where the *gopīs* deny that Vasudeva and Devakī are Kṛṣṇa’s actual parents (2.6.287), and where Akrūra says outright that Kṛṣṇa is simply not Vasudeva’s son (2.6.304, Sanātana’s own commentary). But once Rūpa Gosvāmī fully articulates it, as seen above, the complete story can be found throughout the Gauḍīya canon, most famously in the third chapter of Jīva Gosvāmī’s *Gopāla-campū* and in Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s Tenth Canto commentary, *Sārārtha-darśinī* (Chapter Three, verses 47–55).

In two particular verses of his *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā* (*Anuccheda* 149), Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is emphatic: (3) “Kṛṣṇa became the son of Nanda and Yaśodā. He was not the son of anyone else”; (16) “Nanda and Yaśodā, and not Vasudeva and Devakī, are the real parents of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

### Confirmed by Śrīla Prabhupāda

As the greatest ambassador of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in the modern world, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda supports the conclusions of his predecessors. The subject at hand is no exception. For example, in commenting on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.3.47), he writes:

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura discusses that Kṛṣṇa appeared simultaneously as the son of Devakī and as the son of Yaśodā, along with the spiritual energy Yogamāyā. As the son of Devakī, He first appeared as

Viṣṇu, and because Vasudeva was not in the position of pure affection for Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva worshiped his son as Lord Viṣṇu. Yaśodā, however, pleased her son Kṛṣṇa without understanding His Godhood. This is the difference between Kṛṣṇa as the son of Yaśodā and as the son of Devakī. This is explained by Viśvanātha Cakravartī on the authority of *Hari-vaṁśa*.

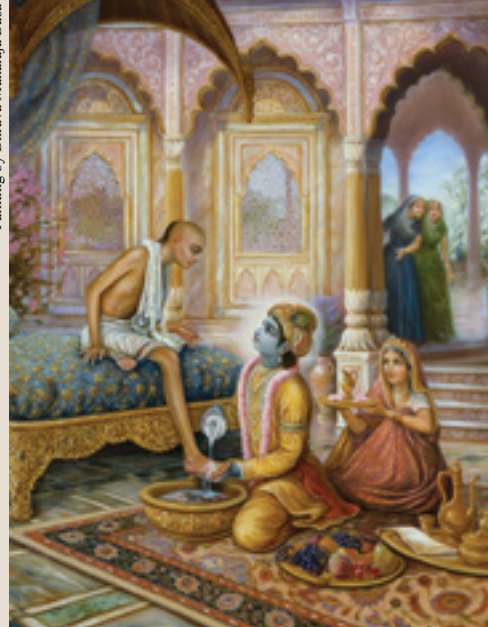
The late Gour Govinda Swami, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s prominent disciples, lectured on this subject in Bhubaneswar (August 18, 1995) and elsewhere:

Exactly at the same time when Yaśodā-mātā gave birth to Kṛṣṇa in Vrindavan, Devakī also gave birth to a child in the prison house of Kāṁsa. That is described in the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam*. On one hand, the son of Nanda and Yaśodā is Svayam Bhagavān, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead . . . . On the other hand, manifesting from the womb of Devakī came the four-handed form Vāsudeva, who is a *prābhava-prakāśa* expansion of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, the Ādi Puruṣa complete original Supreme Personality Kṛṣṇa took birth from mother Yaśodā, while [an expansion as] Lord Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) simultaneously manifested from the womb of mother Devakī.

[As] Vasudeva was leaving the prison of Kāṁsa, Yaśodā-mātā gave birth to yet a second child, a daughter. So, Yaśodā-mātā gave birth to one son and one daughter. Vasudeva Mahārāja arrived in Vrindavan, put down the *prakāśa* expansion, and then picked up the daughter. While he was doing those things, he did not see Yaśodā’s son, Kṛṣṇa. How could such a thing happen? Well, by her own potency, Yogamāyā kept the son of Nanda hidden, and Vasudeva could not see Him. Vasudeva only saw the daughter. The son of Vasudeva and Devakī is a four-handed plenary portion of Kṛṣṇa. So when Vasudeva put Him on the lap of Yaśodā, that plenary portion entered into the

# A Pause for Prayer

Painting by Dhruba Mahārāja Dāsa



Kṛṣṇa washes the feet of His devotee Sudāmā.

I pray to have the friendship of Lord Kṛṣṇa and to engage in His service, and to surrender fully unto Him in love and affection, life after life. I do not want any opulence. I only desire not to forget His service. I simply wish to be associated with His pure devotees. May my mind and activities be always engaged in His service.

The unborn Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, knows that many great personalities have fallen from their positions because of extravagant opulence. Therefore, even when His devotee asks for some opulence from Him, the Lord sometimes does not give it. He is very cautious about His devotees. Because a devotee in an immature position of devotional service may, if offered great opulence, fall from his position due to being in the material world, the Lord does not offer opulence to him. This is another manifestation of the causeless mercy of the Lord upon His devotee. His first interest is that the devotee not fall.

Sudāmā Vipra

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Chapter 81

child, Śyāmasundara Kṛṣṇa, who already was lying there.

Prabhupāda again refers to the dual birth in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.5.1–2, when describing Nandotsava, the birth celebration that took place in Nanda Mahārāja’s home:

The *jāta-karma* ceremony can take place when the umbilical cord, connecting the child and the placenta, is cut. However, since Kṛṣṇa was brought by Vasudeva to the house of Nanda Mahārāja, where was the chance for this to happen? In this regard, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura desires to prove with evidence from many *śāstras* that Kṛṣṇa actually took birth as the son of Yaśodā before the birth of Yogamāyā, who is therefore described as the Lord’s younger sister. . . . According to the opinion of some authorities, Kṛṣṇa was actually born as the son of Yaśodā. In any case, . . . we

can accept that Nanda Mahārāja’s celebration for the ceremony of Kṛṣṇa’s birth was proper. This ceremony is therefore well known everywhere as Nandotsava.

From the time of Kṛṣṇa to the present, Nandotsava is celebrated on the day after Janmāṣṭamī. Chapter Five of Prabhupāda’s book *Kṛṣṇa* (and thus the fifth chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s Tenth Canto) elaborates on the significance of this day, explaining that when Kṛṣṇa was born, Vrindavan’s many saintly villagers came to see Him and congratulate the new cowherd parents. Nanda Mahārāja, taking advantage of the auspicious occasion, gave many valuables in charity to all his guests, such as clothes, ornaments, and cows. The festival is considered the most glorious moment associated with the day of Kṛṣṇa’s appearance. In fact, Nandotsava is in some ways the real Janmāṣṭamī because it is the initial celebration of Kṛṣṇa in

His original form.

In 1896, Prabhupāda himself appeared in this world on Nandotsava, the day after Kṛṣṇa’s appearance day, thus infusing an already auspicious day with even greater potency. For members of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, while Janmāṣṭamī is one of the most important days of the year, Nandotsava will always have special meaning, not only because of its relation to the original Personality of Godhead, but because it is the appearance day of the person who gave us that Supreme Personality. Indeed, without Śrīla Prabhupāda, the secrets and mysteries of Kṛṣṇa’s appearance would remain far, far away. 🌟

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ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: OUR FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA

# FINDING OUR MISSION IN HIS MISSION

*To make our best contribution to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement takes time, thoughtfulness, and guidance from experienced devotees dedicated to serving Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission.*

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.*

takes spiritually guided thoughtfulness. "A devotee is as thoughtful as a nondevotee is speculative." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 4.24.59, Purport) To find our mission in Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission, let's first look at the challenge of knowing who we are and what our duty is.

ONLY TWICE in the *Bhagavad-gītā* do two verses begin with the same Sanskrit line. In 9.34 and 18.65 Kṛṣṇa highlights our need to always think of Him, and in 3.35 and 18.47 He stresses the importance of doing our own duty. Indeed, acting dutifully for Kṛṣṇa, according to our nature, helps us remember the Lord, the perfection of life.

Confused about her duty, a disciple once complained, "You know Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda – what does Kṛṣṇa want us to do?"

"That is not the point," Prabhupāda chided. "Kṛṣṇa wants to know what you want to do!" (*Prabhupāda-līlā*, Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, Seattle, 1968)

Since Kṛṣṇa knows us better than we know ourselves, knowing what Kṛṣṇa wants us to do

## "Who Am I?"

"Know thyself," the philosopher Socrates admonished his students, for "the unexamined life is not worth living." And who am I? "Immortal soul," Socrates asserted. When the court at Athens sentenced him to death for disrespecting "the gods," Socrates was unafraid. "How shall we bury you?" a tearful friend asked. "Any way you like," replied Socrates, "that is, if you can catch me, and I don't slip through your fingers." (from Plato's *Phaedo*, 115b.)

Nearly two millennia later another now-famous "self" appeared in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "This above all, to thine own self be true," Polonius advises Laertes. But it is one's worldly interests, not the immortal soul, that

*During an initiation ceremony in New York, an initiate bows before Śrīla Prabhupāda, now formally his spiritual master.*



Polonius has in mind – an earthly “self.”

The downgrade continues today with *Self* magazine displaying well-built flesh as the self. Photo captions are enough to convey this “philosophy.” To think of the body as the self, to compete to satisfy its demands, and then to die is hardly better than animal life. Our capacity for higher consciousness should tell us something: we have a higher calling.

### Mixed-Up

In Vedic times different classes of human beings were born and raised to cooperate in devotional service to the Supreme. Lacking that spiritual focus, today’s classes often conflict, and today’s individuals are often conflicted. As Prabhupāda told the World Health Organization, such a population is called “*varṇa-saṅkara*, mixed population.” (Lecture, World Health Organization, Geneva, 6 June 1974) In a word, “mixed-up.”

Small wonder that professions like life coaching and occupational therapy have become so popular. By and large modern, materialistic culture is unaware that life has a sacred purpose. To understand what God is calling us to do, we moderns, largely disconnected from a culture of self-realization, need help. In a spiritual society, the first help is spiritual parents.

### Spiritual Parents

According to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.18), we should not become “a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother, or a worshipable demigod” unless we can deliver our “dependents from the path of repeated birth and death.” Quite a responsibility. “That is the real contraceptive method,” Prabhupāda wryly observed. “That we are married, undoubtedly, husband and wife, but unless we are competent to give protection to [our] children – no more death – we should not beget children. This is the real

contraceptive.” (Lecture, Mayapur, 26 February 1976)

By contrast, modern groups like the International Planned Parenthood Federation are committed to providing “services” like contraception and abortion. “This is Kali-yuga,” Prabhupāda would remark. “Even in the womb they are coming after you with a knife.”<sup>1</sup> Consigning themselves to a similar fate, such people kill the human opportunity to escape the nightmare of birth and death.

In a letter to a disciple, Prabhupāda underscored the responsibility that comes with that opportunity: “These children are given to us by Krishna, they are Vaisnavas [devotees] and we must be very careful to protect them. These are not ordinary children, they are Vaikuntha children,<sup>2</sup> and we are very fortunate we can give them a chance to advance further in Krishna Consciousness. That is a very great responsibility.” (Letter to Arundhatī Dāsī, 30 July 1972)

### Spiritual Teachers

Spiritually-minded parents naturally want their children educated by spiritually-minded teachers. Such a partnership helps children grow up to be all they can be in devotional service. But knowing what’s best for a child takes time and perseverance, even for great teachers. Con-

sider Dhruva Mahārāja’s talks with Nārada Muni.

From saints to serpents, the sage Nārada engages all kinds of embodied beings in devotional service, yet few have been as precocious as five-year-old Prince Dhruva. Forbidden by a spiteful stepmother to sit on the lap of his father, King Uttānapāda, Dhruva angrily approached his natural mother for help to avenge the insult. Convinced that no one but the Supreme Lord could pacify her son, Dhruva’s mother inspired the boy to seek God in the forest and follow the mystic path.

Meeting Dhruva in the wilderness, Nārada advised him to go back to his mother and return when he was grown-up. In the meantime, Dhruva should live undisturbed and satisfied with his lot as ordained by the Supreme. Good advice, acknowledged Dhruva, but because “I am covered by ignorance . . . this kind of philosophy does not touch my heart.”

In his commentary, Prabhupāda writes, “Dhruva Mahārāja indirectly informed the great sage Nārada that there are four kinds of human spirit” – the saintly spirit, the warrior spirit, the mercantile spirit, and the worker spirit. What are appropriate instructions for one spirit are not necessarily appropriate for another. Further, “unless a child is trained according to his tendency, there is no possibil-

ity of his developing his particular spirit. It was the duty of the spiritual master or teacher to observe the psychological movement of a particular boy and thus train him in a particular occupational duty.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.8.36, Purport)

With Dhruva’s help, Nārada was able to determine how to best engage him in devotional service. Although Dhruva’s intent was to achieve a kingdom greater than his father’s, by Nārada’s expert guidance he came face to face with the Lord Himself within six months, fulfilling the mission of human life.

Since spiritual teachers play such crucial roles in helping us find and develop our life’s mission, how can we meet them?

### Mystical Meetings

As Lord Caitanya instructed Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī: “Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 19.151)

When we’re serious and sincere, we attract the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, who sends a genuine spiritual master to help us come home to Him. How the Lord does this is mystical and unique for each person, yet to protect all concerned, the Vedic literature cautions prospective gurus and disciples to thoroughly examine one another before formally entering into a relationship.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “In *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, by Sanātana Gosvāmī, it is directed that the spiritual master and the disciple must meet together at least for one year, so that the disciple may . . . understand that ‘Here is a person whom I can accept as my guru,’ and the guru also can see that ‘Here is a person who is fit for becoming my disciple.’” (Lecture, Honolulu, 21 January 1974)

In Prabhupāda’s ISKCON, before the mutual examination begins it is important that senior devotees ground a newcomer in the life, teachings, mood, and mission of our founder-*ācārya*. Indeed, even when Prabhupāda was traveling as the movement’s sole initiator, he depended on his local leaders to train and test aspiring initiates. In ISKCON’s multiple-guru culture today, the grounded aspirant will be better able to approach initiation with a cool head: “Who will best guide and engage me in Prabhupāda’s mission?”

By following Nārada’s instructions, Dhruva mystically met the Lord. Prabhupāda offers his followers a similar opportunity: “When one

spiritual master is essential. Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Just like in the school, college, somebody is being trained up as a scientist, somebody is trained up as an engineer, as a medical man, as a lawyer. According to the tendency, practical psychology of the student, he is advised that ‘You take this line.’” (Lecture, Vrindavan, 29 September 1976)

At the same time, “Kṛṣṇa wants to know what you want to do.” As Dhruva helped Nārada understand how to engage him in devotional service, by being introspective we can also help our spiritual masters engage us so we can see the Lord in the direction of our service. What follows are a few pointed questions

**As Prabhupāda’s own spiritual master would say, “Don’t try to see God. Work in such a way that God will see you.”**

becomes serious to follow the mission of the spiritual master, his resolution is tantamount to seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.51, Purport) As Prabhupāda’s own spiritual master would say, “Don’t try to see God. Work in such a way that God will see you.” (Lecture, New York City, 16 November 1966)

### How Shall We Work For the Lord?

Seeing the Lord through our service to Him is more than an inference or figment; it is an ongoing experience. Prabhupāda writes: “By intense service of the Lord, one can experience the presence of the Lord transcendently. Therefore seeing the Lord means being engaged in His service because His service and His person are identical.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.6.22, Purport)

Once again, to know how to serve the Lord, the guidance of the

we can ask ourselves before our spiritual masters do:

1. To what service am I most drawn?
2. If I had all the money I needed, what would I do?
3. If I had all the time I needed, what would I do?
4. If I knew I only had one year to live, what would I do?
5. Doing what service do I most forget time?

The answer to any one of these questions may give us a hint of our mission. “A devotee is as thoughtful as a nondevotee is speculative.” The more thoughtful and introspective we are about ourselves, the more our spiritual masters can help us be all we can be – and more – in Prabhupāda’s mission.

### Pure Devotee’s Meditation

How can we be more than we are? That happens when we completely connect our tiny self to the Supreme



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Self, Kṛṣṇa. Such was the case with Prince Dhruva, whose meditation on the Lord was so “heavy” that the entire world felt its weight. Prabhupāda explains with an analogy:

When hundreds of persons are sitting in an airplane, although they remain individual units, they each share in the total force of the airplane, which runs at thousands of miles per hour; similarly, when unit energy is identified with the service of the total energy, the unit energy becomes as powerful as the total energy. . . . Dhruva Mahārāja, because of his spiritual advancement, became almost the total heaviness, and thus he pressed down the whole earth. Moreover, by such spiritual power his unit body became the total body of the universe. Thus when he closed the holes of his unit body to firmly concentrate his mind on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all the units of the universe – namely all the living entities, including the big demigods – felt the pressure of suffocation, as if their breathing were being choked.

Noting the power of Dhruva's intense meditation on the Lord, Prabhupāda then expressed his personal realization about the pure devotee's power to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

This example of Dhruva Mahārāja's . . . clearly indicates that a devotee, by his personal devotional service, can influence all the people of the whole world to become devotees of the Lord. If there is only one pure devotee in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can change the total consciousness of the world into Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.8.80, Purport)

## Our Foundational Inspiration

In the years since Prabhupāda spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness worldwide, his personal example has continued to be the foundational shelter and

inspiration for all generations of his followers. In a tribute to His Divine Grace, a granddisciple once wrote:

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you “walked through fire” to establish ISKCON. The risks you took are legendary and beyond the call of duty. Leaving the transcendental shelter of the holy *dhāma*, you crossed the ocean, suffered heart attacks, and put yourself in the association of uncultured Westerners. You tolerated the struggle and loneliness of a stranger in New York, the toll of world travel at the age of seventy, the criticism of your godbrothers, and the foolish mistakes of young disciples. No one took greater risks than you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to save us by establishing this International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. (Devakī Devī Dāsī, entry in the 1999 *Vyāsa-pūjā* book on behalf of the ISKCON temple in Riga, Latvia)

In his book *The Śikṣā-guru*, ISKCON leader Śivarāma Swami observes that all gurus and disciples are dependent on their founder-*ācārya* “as a building is dependent on its foundation.” As neglecting the foundation eventually collapses a building, so neglecting our founder-*ācārya*, our foundational spiritual master, eventually collapses guru-disciple relationships, with – as history has shown – “devastating consequences.”<sup>3</sup>

Absorbing ourselves in Prabhupāda's life, teachings, mood, and mission – with the intent to cooperatively serve – is the best foundation for pursuing genuine guru-disciple relationships, as well as finding our mission in his ISKCON mission. As singular and selfless as his own sacrifice was, Prabhupāda would be happy simply to see everyone do what they love to do for Kṛṣṇa:

It does not matter what one is. One must dedicate everything in the service of the Lord. If one is a learned scholar, scientist, philosopher, poet, etc., then he should employ his learning to establish

the supremacy of the Lord. . . . Similarly, if one is a businessman, an industrialist, an agriculturist, etc., then one should spend his hard-earned money for the cause of the Lord. . . . One should try to engage in the service of the Lord everything for which one has specific attraction, and that is the way of peace and prosperity. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.32, Purport)

If we engage everything we love in Kṛṣṇa's service, day by day Kṛṣṇa will show us how to serve with unalloyed love for Him – the perfection of our mission in Prabhupāda's mission. 🌸

## NOTES

1. In Vedic cosmology, the present age of quarrel, hypocrisy, and ignorance.
2. Children who achieved a high degree of spiritual advancement in their previous life.
3. For more about the foundational position of the founder-*ācārya*, see *The Śikṣā-guru: Implementing Tradition Within ISKCON*, Chapter 7, “The Distinctive Role of the Founder-*Ācārya*,” Śivarāma Swami, The Bhaktivedanta Institute, Hungary, 1999)

*In the next issue: As we find and develop our mission to help our founder-ācārya respiritualize human society, we'll be better able to develop real love for him. In the next lesson, we'll look at why that intimacy with Śrīla Prabhupāda we hanker for can be so elusive.*

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

# 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 fourth in a series of eight meditations.*

## Journeys

Life today is full of journeys, it seems. I know that I enjoy the freedom of my car and think nothing of a fifty- or sixty-mile trip, a good two-day walk in olden days. Daily there's the morning and evening commute to consider, which here in London where I live is less of a journey and more of a battle to the near death. Thankfully I only have to go twenty or so miles, but a lot of people nowadays have to commute as much as a hundred miles and back every day.

Life can be quite hectic, but in the midst of all our moving around it's important not to forget that our whole life is itself a journey. All of us are traveling continuously through life, observing so many changes as we go. In fact, the *Bhagavad-gītā* suggests that by carefully considering this we can understand that we are eternal beings. We go from childhood to youth to old age, but through all these changes of external body we remain the same unchanging spiritual person.

For me the most important journey is the one within, the search for my true self. This is truly a voyage of discovery, but I don't have to go anywhere to experience it. It is the practice of yoga, which means to reconnect with the spirit. Each day then, before embarking on the furious rush of daily life, I sit down for a couple of hours to journey within myself, to peacefully meditate and contemplate my real existence, beyond the ephemeral world.

Vedic teachings tell us that this fleeting life is but one small part of a great journey. It ends when we reach God, where we are said to really belong. We are thus enjoined to prepare for that end by cultivating our inner life. By such practice, which I do by the simple method of chanting God's holy names, we can ultimately perceive our true existence. The *Bhagavad-gītā* describes that existence as eternity and bliss, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* promises us that when we finally achieve it, our stressful travels in this world will be over.



## Radical Revolution

A REVOLUTION WAS taking place when Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in America in the sixties. Or at least some people thought of it that way. Young people were challenging the status quo in various areas of life. In some ways there was nothing new about young people rebelling. America's post-war Baby Boomers were doing what the youth of generations before them had done – disagree with their parents. The Baby Boomers were just more serious about it, and they did in fact bring about significant changes in America and the rest of the world.

Still, although the sixties might have won some freedoms and opened some minds, today's endless list of evils in the world raises doubts about the overall success of that decade.

The word *revolution* means an overthrow, but it also means a turning that takes a thing back to where it started, as in one revolution of the earth in twenty-four hours. Overall, after the sixties and all the clamor, the world ended up in the same place – predominantly a place where the default position is to believe in material solutions, whether social, political, economic, cultural, psychological, or technological. Whatever the sixties' revolution gave us, its reliance on solutions drawn from these areas guaranteed failure in the quest to achieve truly meaningful change.

Another word associated with the sixties is *radical*. Radicals turned peaceful protests into violent ones to insure that “the Establishment” understood the seriousness of their demands. Some radicals proposed doing away with all positions of authority and turning to anarchy.

The word *radical* comes from the Latin word for *root*. A truly radical solution goes to the root of the problem. Sixties so-called radicals who promoted anarchy thought they were going as far as they could. Apparently they didn't know that

the only solution that gets to the root of all problems is the spiritual one.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was the true radical revolutionary of the sixties. Accompanying him on his journey to America were two hundred sets of his three-volume translation, with commentary, of the First Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – a book “full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11). The millions of words generated during the sixties couldn't bring about real change. But because the transcendental words of the *Bhāgavatam* go to the root of the problem, it could. The lives of those who accepted its wisdom improved at the deepest level.

In the middle of the sixties – September 17, 1965 – Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in Boston on board the ship *Jaladuta* on his way to New York. While in port, he wrote a Bengali poem to Lord Kṛṣṇa in which he prayed for His blessings to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in America. The poem includes these lines: “The words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if a sober person repeatedly receives it with submissive aural reception, then he will be able to understand Your message.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa's essential message, revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and other time-honored books of India, is that each of us is an eternal spiritual being with an unbreakable connection to Kṛṣṇa, who is God Himself. Having forgotten that connection, we suffer endless problems, ignorant of the solution within easy reach. The glowworms of material solutions can never overcome abject darkness, but the sunlight of the revolutionary books Śrīla Prabhupāda valiantly delivered can light up the world.

– Nāgarāja Dāsa

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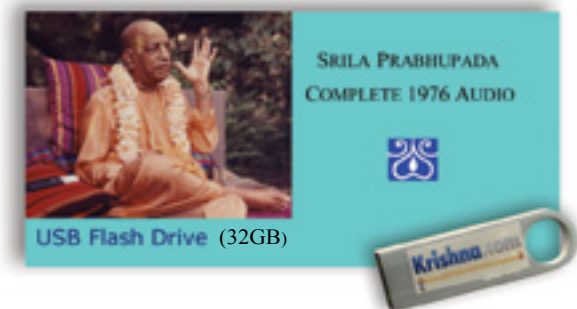
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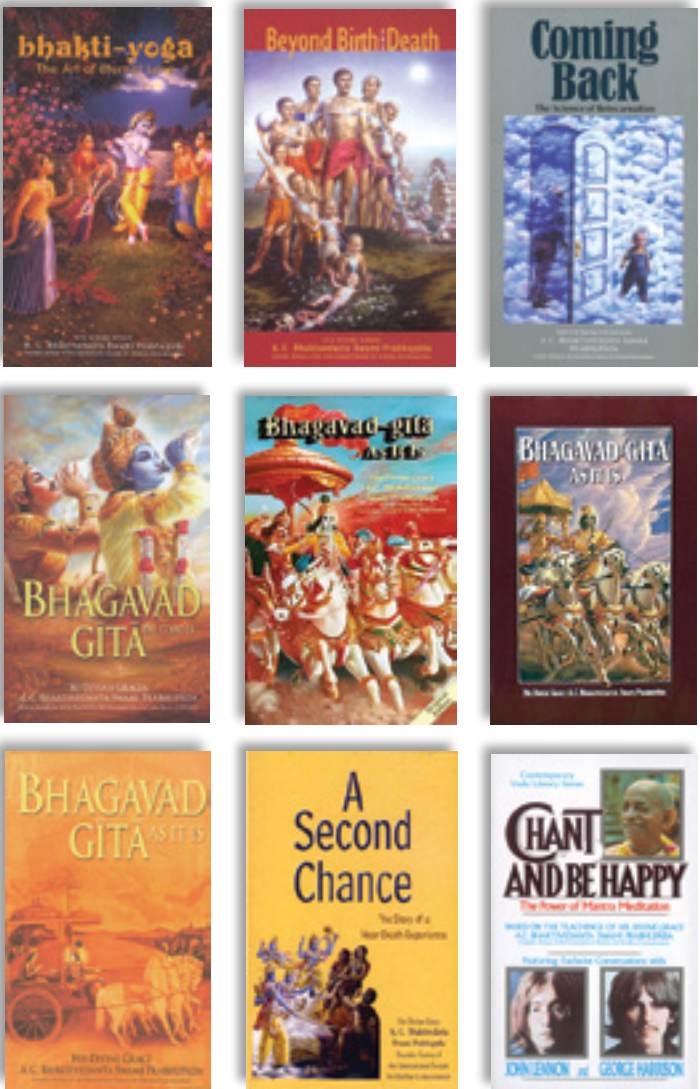
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VEDIC THOUGHTS

One must understand the transcendental birth of the Lord and the devotee. The purpose of the Lord’s taking birth is to establish devotional service, which is the perfect system of religion, and the purpose of the birth of a devotee is to broadcast the same system of religion, or the bhakti cult, all over the world.

His Divine Grace A. C.  
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.20.34, Purport

Though living within the material world, in bodies composed of the five elements, persons expert in relishing devotional service to the Lord are always worshipable for persons like me.

Lord Śiva  
*Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.3.54

The Supreme is eternal, self-effulgent, always free from material contact, supremely pure, and the sole all-pervading, all-knowing witness and overseer of the entire universe. No reasonable person can present any evidence that these words may also be a description of the individual spirit soul. These words are a thunderbolt that strikes the tree of impersonalist monism and fells it.

Śrīla Madhvācārya  
*Śrī Tattva-muktāvalī* 61

By rendering service to Śyāma [Kṛṣṇa] one attains His transcendental abode, which is full of spiritual bliss and astonishing, variegated pastimes. And within that spiritual world, one attains the eternal shelter of Śyāma.

*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.13.1

Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental body is composed of eternity, consciousness, and bliss, without even a trace of material qualities. He is not subject to material time or space. On the contrary, He exists fully at all places and in all times simultaneously. His form and existence are the embodiment of absolute nonduality.

*Nārada-pañcarātra*  
Quoted in *Jaiva Dharma*, Chapter 13

O my Lord! O unlimited one! Although I was merged in the ocean of nescience, I have now, after a long time, attained You, just as one may attain the seashore. My dear Lord, by getting me, You have obtained the right person upon whom to bestow Your causeless mercy.

Śrīla Yāmunācārya  
*Stotra-ratna* 21

Whenever pure topics of the transcendental world are discussed, the members of the audience forget all kinds of material hankerings, at least for the time being. Not only that, but they are no longer envious of one another, nor do they suffer from anxiety or fear.

The Pracetās  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.35

Learned Uddhava, those who fix their consciousness on Me, giving up all material desires, share with Me a happiness that cannot possibly be experienced by those engaged in sense gratification.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.12



# 2016 Hare Kṛṣṇa FESTIVAL of INDIA

## *Schedule for North America*

**NOTE:** Some of these dates are yet to be confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to confirm the festival date with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held. Or email Festival of India: madhuhadasa@gmail.com.



**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 and Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā

**September 3–4:** Seattle, Flavors of India Festival and Rathayātrā

**September 17:** Chicago Rathayātrā and 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



Śrīla Prabhupāda at San Francisco Rathayātrā, 1974