

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



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Sept/Oct 2016 • \$4.50

ISKCON Vladivostok

*Despite many challenges, the intrepid devotees
in this remote city 5,700 land miles from Moscow
built a suitable temple to worship the Lord.*



ALSO:

- Fictitious Happiness
- Learn How to Love Kṛṣṇa
- Śrīla Prabhupāda at the 1965 World's Fair
- Meditating on the Dāmodarāṣṭaka
- To Love Is to Cooperate

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

BACK to GODHEAD

Founded 1944 • Vol. 50, No. 5 • September / October, 2016



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COVER Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees chant the Lord's holy names along the waterfront in Vladivostok, the chief city in far-eastern Russia and now home to a purpose-built temple for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Please see the article beginning on page 20. (Photo by Oleg Strizh.)

"God gave you so much energy and intelligence for attaining self-realization. First you must realize this precarious position you are in – repeatedly dying, life after life, and taking birth repeatedly in various species for more and more suffering. This is your problem, and this problem you are to solve now that you have received the human form. In human life, after all, you possess advanced intelligence. But instead of using this advanced intelligence for self-realization, modern man has used it to go from the castor-oil lamp to the electric lamp. That's all."

– p. 48

WELCOME



When, in 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in Gainesville, Florida, just down the road from the *Back to Godhead* offices in Alachua, he said he was "very much obliged to you

that in this remote place, which is thousands and thousands of miles away from Lord Caitanya's birthplace, Navadvip, you are carrying out, to fulfill His desire, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra."

I was reminded of this when His Holiness B.V.V. Narasimha Swami sent us the article on ISKCON Vladivostok that appears in this issue. From my perspective, Vladivostok, in Russia's Far East, is about as far away from anywhere as one can get. It turns out, though, that it's quite a bit closer to Lord Caitanya's birthplace than I am, and by the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers, a community of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees is flourishing there.

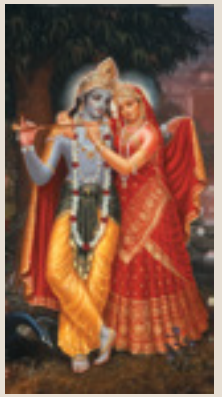
Meanwhile, the Yamunā River, in the heart of India – known as Puṇya Bhūmī, or "the pious land" – is not flourishing. Dams in Har-yana state divert her sacred water, and none of it makes it out of Delhi – or into Vrindavan, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal home. Shatakshi Goyal writes about the Yamunā River and her role in a documentary on the river's plight.

With Caitanya Caraṇa's article "Meditating on the Dāmodarāṣṭaka," we honor the sacred month of Kārttika, which coincides with this issue.

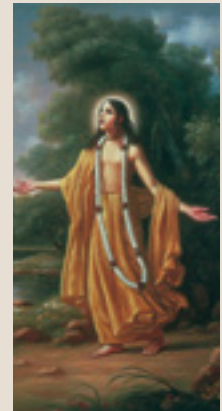
Hare Kṛṣṇa. – Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

OUR PURPOSES

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



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



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



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



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Letters

Sympathy for Karṇa

I'd like to comment on the article "Karṇa's Options," by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, in the January/February issue. According to Krishna Dharma's and Ganguli's versions of the *Mahābhārata*, Karṇa was put into a very tragic situation. He was born the son of the sun-god and Queen Kuntī. At birth he was abandoned by Kuntī and was adopted by a chariot-driver and his wife. Karṇa was identified as the son of a charioteer, and as a result he was denied the training his *kṣatriya* nature led him to desire. Two verses in *Bhagavad-gītā* show how all of us not only follow our nature but should strive to do so to avoid dangerous situations in the future:

"Even a man of knowledge acts according to his own nature, for everyone follows the nature he has acquired from the three modes. What can repression accomplish?" (3.33)

"It is far better to discharge one's prescribed duties, even though faultily, than another's duties perfectly. Destruction in the course of performing one's own duty is better than engaging in another's duties, for to follow another's path is dangerous." (3.35)

When Karṇa appeared at the martial exhibition to show his prowess, he was shunned. Duryodhana stood up for him and made him the king of Anga, a position his nature needed in order to feel complete. Karṇa vowed his loyalty to Duryodhana, and for thirteen years he ruled Anga. His adoptive parents loved him when he was an abandoned child. His wives, whom they chose for him, his sons, daughters, and friends, all became part of his kingdom.

It wasn't until Kuntī approached him right before the battle that Karṇa realized his true identity. He was very confused. He felt it unrighteous to abandon all the people who loved and respected him. He knew that Duryodhana would not win the battle, and

he had great respect for Yudhiṣṭhira. He hurled insults at the Pāṇḍavas only to please Duryodhana.

When Kṛṣṇa approached Karṇa, Karṇa lamented that he wasn't able to do what Kṛṣṇa wanted. He knew the battle would happen and the outcome would be the same regardless of which side he took. At the end of the conversation with Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa embraced Karṇa. Karṇa's mind felt heavy, and it seemed to him he was not destined to enjoy happiness and prosperity in this life.

"Karṇa's Options" condemns Karṇa for the motives behind his actions and for "rejecting God for the world." I can accept that he was not acting on the platform of pure devotional service, but he was a great soul put into a very confusing situation. I empathized with Karṇa because sometimes even as devotees we want to do what is right but lack the inner strength to do it. Karṇa's decision before the battle of Kurukshetra exemplifies this dilemma. Kṛṣṇa asked him not to fight for Duryodhana, but Karṇa, although he knew Kṛṣṇa was his well-wisher, lacked the inner strength to rise above his circumstances.

Kṛṣṇa Bhāva Dāsī
Via the Internet

Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa replies: Thank you for your important comment. I fully agree that Karṇa had a difficult life and had to make an extremely hard choice towards the end. The article was drawn from a book of mine. In the book's introduction I mention that Karṇa was the character in the *Mahābhārata* with whom I empathized the most, and I explain why, based on some incidents from my life. This empathic tone may have been lost in the Q&A format of the article. Still, beyond confusion about duty or obligation to those who had respected him, Karṇa's wrong actions went to misdirection of head, if not heart.

1. His suggesting that Draupadī be disrobed and his calling her a prostitute were unwarranted, unnecessary, and unconscionable.
2. His coming over to the Pāṇḍavas' side would have required him to abandon only the nefarious Kauravas, not his family or the parents who had cared for him or his wives and children.
3. His choosing to join the unfair and brutal scheme to kill Abhimanyu was shockingly anti-heroic.

Karṇa was certainly not an unquestionably virtuous hero repeatedly wronged by Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas, as some populist retellings of the *Mahābhārata* depict. My article aimed primarily to counter such misrepresentations – it didn't aim to cast Karṇa as a villain. But his grievous actions poignantly illustrate a timeless truth: attachment to bad associ-

ation can make even a good person act badly.

God in Illusion?

What do you say to someone who says, "I am God. You feel separate from God until you become self-realized. When you become self-realized, you realize that you are God"?

This person says that God has created the sense of separation and God will remove it when you become self-realized.

Julian Flores
Via the Internet

Our reply: To say "I am God but now I'm in illusion" is nonsense. God can never be in illusion. Illusion is a creation of God, which means that illusion is subordinate to Him. A magi-

cian can't be fooled by his own tricks.

To say that a part of God is deluded is similarly unreasonable. God is one. There's no question of separating a part of Himself and placing that part under illusion. Even if it were possible, why would God do that? Besides, this person's contention is that the part is actually God too – the part is the same as the whole. What kind of logic is that? But even if we grant that idea, then if the part is in illusion, the whole must be too.

These ideas are just word jugglery. They don't correspond to reality. God doesn't forget that He is God. A "God with amnesia" fails the God test, being subject to countless limitations and miseries. The so-called God may say that he will overcome these when he becomes self-realized, but obviously God doesn't need to become self-realized. He's eternally aware of His supreme position.

Kṛṣṇa teaches that He is God and we souls suffering in the material world are one with Him but also have our individual identities. It is like the relationship of the sun and the sun's rays. In a sense they are the same thing, but they are also different. We can be in illusion because we are infinitesimal, but the infinite God can never be covered by illusion.

The spiritual teachers in our line have written extensively on these points. The debate between the proponents of "We're all God" and the devotees, who say "We're servants of God" has been going on for a long time. Lord Caitanya's follower Jīva Gosvāmī, especially, systematically refuted all of the arguments of the impersonalists of his time, who were much more worthy opponents than their modern-day descendants. 🙏

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Learn How to LOVE KṚṢṆA

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that by directing to Kṛṣṇa our natural inclination to love, we'll progress in peace and happiness.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas
tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-
vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śāstram bhāgavataṁ pramāṇam amalam
premā pum-artho mahān
ittham gaura-mahāprabhor matam atas
tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

“The Supreme Lord to be worshiped is the son of the king of Vraja. His personal abode is Vṛndāvana. The most favorable mode of serving Him is that which was practiced by the young maidens of Vraja. The scripture *Bhāgavatam* is the spotless source of reliable knowledge, and pure love of God is the supreme goal of life. Such are the opinions of Gaura Mahāprabhu, and therefore we respect them implicitly.”

– *Caitanya-mata-mañjuṣā*, by Śrīnātha Cakravartī

OUR PROGRAM is to worship with love and devotion Govinda, the original person. *Govindam ādi-puruṣam*. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We are teaching people to love Kṛṣṇa, that's all. Our program is to place your love in the proper place. Everyone wants to love, but they are being frustrated because their love is misplaced. People do not understand this.

They are being taught, “First of all, love your



body.” Then, a little extended, “Love your father and mother.” Then, “Love your brother and sister.” Then, “Love your society, love your country, love the whole human society, humanity.”

But all this extended so-called love will not give you satisfaction unless you reach the point of loving Kṛṣṇa. Then you'll be satisfied. For example, if you throw a stone into a reservoir of water, immediately a circle is formed, and the

circle expands and expands and expands. When the circle touches the shore, it stops. Until the circle reaches the shore, it goes on increasing. Similarly, we have to increase in love. You can say, “I love my society,” “I love my country,” “I love my human nation,” “I love living entities in general,” and on and on. But if you directly touch Kṛṣṇa, then everything is included. It is so nice. Kṛṣṇa means “all-attractive,” so He includes everything. Why everything? Because Kṛṣṇa is the center.

In a family, if you love your father, then you love your brothers, sisters, your father's servant, your father's home, your father's wife – everyone. The central point is your father. This is a crude example. But similarly, if you love Kṛṣṇa, then your love will be expanded everywhere.

Another example: If you love a tree, then you love the leaves, the flowers, the branches, the trunk,

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta describes how Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, wandering in a garden on a full-moon night, suddenly saw Lord Kṛṣṇa, who smiled and then disappeared, causing Caitanya Mahāprabhu to faint in ecstasy.

the twigs, everything. And if you simply pour water on the root, then your loving the tree will automatically serve all the parts of the tree. If you love your countrymen, if you want to see that your countrymen become educated and advanced economically and mentally and physically, then what will you do? You pay tax to the government. You don't hide your income tax. You simply pay tax to the central government, and it will be distributed to the educational department, to the defense department, to the hygiene department, everywhere.

These are crude examples, but actually, if you want to love everything, then try to love Kṛṣṇa. You'll not be frustrated, because that kind of love is complete. When your love is complete, then you will not be frustrated. It is like being completely fed. If you are completely satisfied with food, then you say, "I am satisfied. I don't want any more."

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is very simple. It was inaugurated by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu

especially, although it is very old, rooted in the Vedic scripture. But still, from the historical point of view this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has existed since Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on this planet five thousand years ago. And later on, five hundred years ago, Lord Caitanya expanded that movement.

Natural Subordination

Lord Caitanya's mission is to teach that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the right person to worship, or to be subordinate to. Everyone is subordinate. To think otherwise is a false conception. Everyone wants to be independent, but nobody is independent. Everyone is subordinate. Nobody can say, "I am independent." Can you say, any one of you, that you are independent? Is there anybody? No. Everyone is subordinate willingly. It is not that by force everyone becomes subordinate. A girl says willingly to a boy, "I want to become your subordinate." Similarly a boy says to a girl, "I want to be your

subordinate." Why? Because that is our nature.

I want to be subordinate because my nature is to be subordinate. But I do not know this. I prefer to reject this subordination, but I must accept subordination because subordination is the fact. Take a worker, for example. He works here, but if he finds better wages in another place, he goes there. But that does not mean he becomes independent. He is subordinate. Lord Caitanya teaches that if you want to be subordinate or if you want to worship somebody, then worship Kṛṣṇa.

Who worships somebody? Unless you feel that somebody is greater than you, why will you worship that person? I worship my boss because I think he is greater than me. He gives me wages, a salary, six hundred dollars monthly. Therefore I must worship him; I must please him.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that you should become a subordinate of Kṛṣṇa. *Ārādhyo bhagavān vrajēśa-tanayaḥ*. If you want to worship, worship Kṛṣṇa. And next, *tad-dhāmaṁ vṛndāvanam*. If you want to worship somebody, then love Kṛṣṇa or worship Kṛṣṇa or His place, Vṛndāvana.

Everyone wants to love some place. That is now nationalism. Somebody says, "I love this American land." Somebody says, "I love this Chinese land." Somebody says, "I love the Russian land." Everyone wants to love some land. This is called *bhauma iya-dhīḥ*. People are naturally inclined to love some material land. Generally, we love the place where we were born.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "Because you are inclined to love some person, love Kṛṣṇa. Because you want to love some land, love Vṛndāvana." *Ārādhyo bhagavān vrajēśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam*. But if somebody says, "How to love Kṛṣṇa? I cannot see Kṛṣṇa," then Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā*. If you want to know the process of worshiping Kṛṣṇa, or loving Kṛṣṇa, just try to follow the foot-

prints of the *gopīs*, the cowherd girls of Vrindavan. Their love is the highest perfectional love.

The Gopīs' Perfect Love

There are different kinds of love or worship in the world. The beginning is "O God, give us our daily bread." This is the beginning. When we are taught to love God, we are instructed, "Go to the temple, go to church, and pray to God for your necessities, for your satisfaction of your grievances." That is the beginning. But that is not pure love. Pure love, the perfection of pure love, can be found amongst the *gopīs*. They are the example or pure love.

How do they love Kṛṣṇa? Kṛṣṇa was a cowherd boy, and with His friends, other cowherd boys, He used to go with His cows to the pasturing ground the whole day. That was the system. People at that time were satisfied with land and cows. That is the solution to all economic problems. They were not industrial; they were not servants of anyone. Simply get production from the land and take milk from the cows, and the whole food problem is solved.

Kṛṣṇa used to go to the pasturing ground, and the *gopīs* were at home. That is the Vedic system. They would stay at home and be protected by the father, the husband, or the elder sons. But Kṛṣṇa was, say, miles away in the pasturing grounds, and the *gopīs* at home were thinking, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa's feet are so soft. Now He's walking on the rough ground. The stones are pricking His soles. He must be feeling some pain." Thinking in this way, they used to cry. Just see. Kṛṣṇa is miles away, and they are simply thinking of what Kṛṣṇa is feeling: "Kṛṣṇa may be feeling like that."

This is love. They are not asking Kṛṣṇa, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, what have You brought from the pasturing grounds? What is in Your pocket? Let me see." No. They were simply thinking of Kṛṣṇa, thinking of how Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied. They used

to dress themselves nicely because they would think about going before Kṛṣṇa with a nice dress. "Oh, He'll be happy to see it."

Generally, a boy or a man becomes happy to see his lover or wife nicely dressed. Therefore it is the nature of the woman to dress nicely. And according to the Vedic system, a woman should dress very nicely just to satisfy her husband. That is the Vedic system. If her husband is not at home, then she should not dress nicely. There are injunctions. There are different dresses for different women. By seeing the dress one will understand what she is. One can understand by seeing the dress that she is an unmarried girl. One can see by the dress that she is married. One can see by the dress that she is a widow. One can see by the dress that she is a prostitute. The dress was so important.

But we are not going to discuss these social concerns now. We are discussing the love affairs of Kṛṣṇa.

The relationship of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* was so intimate and so unalloyed that Kṛṣṇa Himself admitted, "My dear *gopīs*, it is not in My power to repay you for your love." Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He became bankrupt. "My dear *gopīs*, it is not possible for Me to repay my debts which you have created by loving Me." That is the highest perfection of love. *Ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū*.

I'm describing the mission of Lord Caitanya. He is instructing us that the only lovable object is Kṛṣṇa and His land Vṛndāvana. And the process of loving Him is the vivid example of the *gopīs*. There are different stages of devotees, and the *gopīs* are on the highest platform. And amongst the *gopīs*, the supreme is Rādhārāṇī. Nobody can surpass the love of Rādhārāṇī.

Literature on Love

Now, to learn this science of loving God, there must be some book, some authoritative literature. Caitanya

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

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

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

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

Pronunciation

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

Spiritual Names

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



YOU'RE INVITED! The Sunday Feast

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

Visit <http://directory.krishna.com>.

Mahāprabhu says, *śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalām*: The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the spotless description of understanding how to love God. There is no superior description. From the beginning it is teaching how to love God. The first verse in the First Canto is *janmādy asya yataḥ . . . satyaṁ param dhīmahi*: “I offer my unalloyed devotion unto the Supreme, from whom everything has emanated.” If you want to learn how to love God, or Kṛṣṇa, then study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the preliminary study is *Bhagavad-gītā*.

So study *Bhagavad-gītā* to understand the real nature or identity of God and yourself and your relationship with God, and then, when you are a little conversant – when you are prepared to say, “Yes, Kṛṣṇa is the only lovable object” – then

the next book you take is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* is the entrance. Students pass their school examinations and then enter the college. So you pass your school examination – how to love God – by studying *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Then study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That is the graduate study. And when you are still further advanced, post-graduate, then study *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*.

An Invitation

There is no difficulty. The fact is that we have to learn how to love Kṛṣṇa. The direction is there and the method is there, and we are trying to serve you as far as possible. We are sending our students into the streets to invite you. And if you kindly take up this opportunity, then your life

will be successful. This human form of life is meant for developing love for God. In all other lives we have loved. We have loved our children, we have loved our wife, we have loved our nest in the bird’s life, in the beast’s life. There is love. There is no necessity of teaching a bird or beast how to love the children. There is no necessity, because that is natural. To love your home, to love your country, to love your husband, to love your children, to love your wife, and so on, all this love is there more or less in the animal kingdom also. But that sort of love will not give you happiness. You’ll be frustrated because this body is temporary. Therefore all these loving affairs are also temporary, and they are not pure. They are simply a perverted reflection of the pure love existing between you and Kṛṣṇa.

If you really want peace, if you really want satisfaction, if you don’t want to be confused, then try to love Kṛṣṇa. This is the plain program. Then your life will be successful. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not something manufactured to mislead and bluff the people. It is a most authorized movement, authorized by the Vedic literature, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Vedānta-sūtras*, *Purāṇas*. And many, many great saintly persons have adopted this means. The vivid example is Lord Caitanya. You see His picture. He is in the dancing mood.

You have to learn this art; then your life will be successful. *Premā pum-artha mahān*. You haven’t got to practice anything artificial and speculate and bother your brain. We have the instinct to love others. That is natural. But we are misplacing our love, and therefore we are frustrated. Frustrated. Confused. If you don’t want to be confused, if you don’t want to be frustrated, then try to love Kṛṣṇa, and you’ll feel for yourself how you are making progress in peacefulness, in happiness, in everything that you want.

Thank you very much. 🙏

TEMPLE OF THE VEDIC PLANETARIUM

Mayapur, West Bengal, India

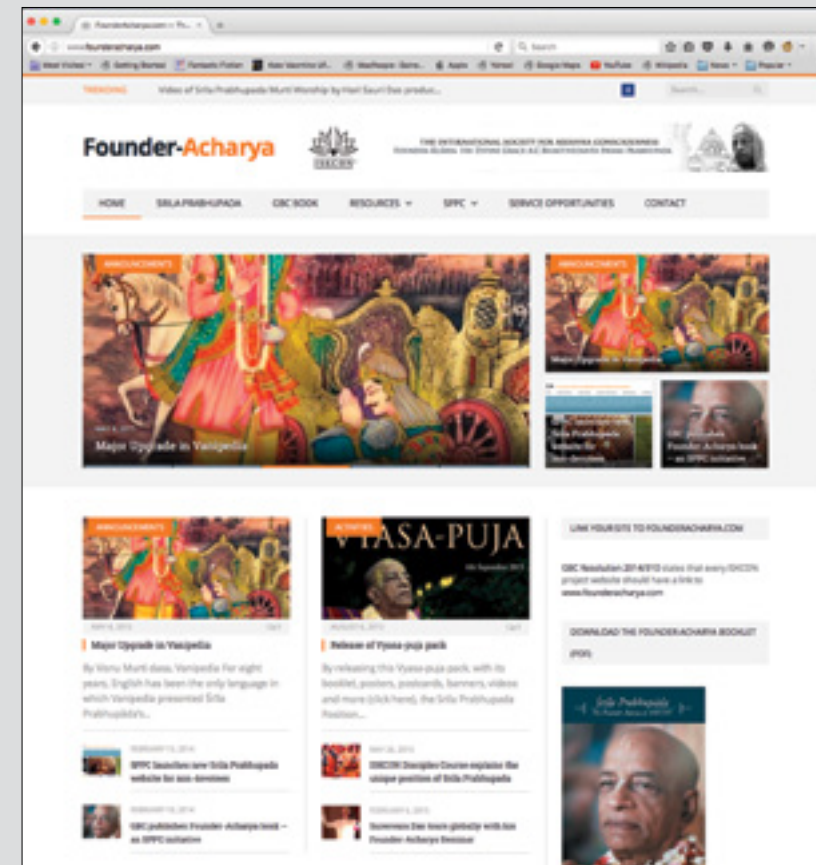
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- facebook.com/tovp.mayapur
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- tovp.org



e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



www.founderacharya.com is the official ISKCON site for His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The site is created and managed by the Śrīla Prabhupāda Position Committee, part of the ISKCON GBC Strategic Planning Network. The website serves to educate devotees on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s unique position as the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

On the menu bar, the Śrīla Prabhupāda button reveals a brief biography of His Divine Grace. The GBC Book button opens a page where you can download *Śrīla Prabhupāda: The Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON*, a book by

ISKCON scholar Ravindra Svārūpa Dāsa, written to help devotees understand how Śrīla Prabhupāda is in the center of our lives and our Society, and to know how to keep him in that essential role.

The Resources button has a dropdown list of pages. First is Biographical Books, a list of books by Prabhupāda disciples detailing his life and times. Next is Vanipedia, a website created to document and categorize the teachings and philosophy that are Śrīla Prabhupāda’s legacy and the core of his mission to carry out the orders of his spiritual master.

Next on the list under Resources is Websites on Prabhupāda, a page providing links to the

Vanipedia and Bhaktivedanta Archives websites. The Vyasa Puja Tributes page allows Śrīla Prabhupāda disciples to offer their tributes to be included in the yearly Vyāsa Pūjā book. You can download and read the book from the previous year. Last on the list is a page describing the ISKCON Disciples Course, its purpose, and how to apply for the course.

The next button on the menu bar is SPPC, or Śrīla Prabhupāda Position Committee, the creators of founderacharya.com. First on the dropdown list is Websites, with links to sites created by the SPPC. Second on the list is The Vyasa Puja Project, a page describing the importance of celebrating Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Vyāsa Pūjā. It includes resources that can be downloaded and used to inspire ISKCON temples and communities worldwide in celebrating Prabhupāda’s Vyāsa Pūjā festival.

Last on the list under SPPC is a page describing the Founder-Acharya Seminar, in which fundamental topics on understanding Śrīla Prabhupāda’s position are explored in depth. At the bottom of the page is a link to videos of the entire seminar.

The next button on the menu bar, Service Opportunities, opens a page requesting assistance from devotees for the further development of founderacharya.com.

Last on the menu bar is Contact, a page providing contact information and a web form for questions or messages.

Founderacharya.com is designed for ISKCON devotees. The SPPC has also created a sister site, www.prabhupada.net, intended primarily for a nondevotee audience. This site provides a modern, accessible explanation of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life and teachings and is a good site to share with interested people.

– Madhumāṅgala Dāsa



Detail from a painting by Parikṣit Dāsa

Meditating On the Dāmodarāṣṭaka

The supreme controller is controlled – and still remains in control.

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

P RAYER IS THE universal language by which the human heart communes with the divine heart. Poetry is an artistic means for verbalizing the heart's deep emotions. Singing is a popular method to express one's emotions.

The integration of these three – prayers composed poetically and sung individually or collectively – is a powerful and joyful way to channel human emotions towards the divine. In the world's great theistic traditions are found many examples of beautiful prayer-songs. Such prayers are usually composed by saints who verbalize their love and longing for the Lord.

In the *bhakti* tradition, singing poetic prayers is an important devotional practice. One such prayer-song is the *Dāmodarāṣṭaka* found in the *Padma Purāṇa* and composed by the great sage Satya-vrata Muni (krishna.com/damodarastakam). In the Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* tradition, during the sacred month of Kārttika (October-November) this song is sung daily, often both morning and evening. Singing the *Dāmodarāṣṭaka* and offering a lamp to Lord Dāmodara is a treasured form of devotional service that attracts thousands the world over to come to Kṛṣṇa temples.

The song's title is a combination of two words: Dāmodara (a name of Kṛṣṇa) and *aṣṭaka* (a composition with eight parts). This title reveals both the song's theme and its literary structure. It is about the

Lord, whose belly (*udara*) was bound with a rope (*dāma*), and it is in the genre of *aṣṭakas*. As the *bhakti* tradition considers the number eight auspicious, many prayers are composed as songs of eight stanzas.

Dāmodarāṣṭaka is essentially a meditation on a Kṛṣṇa pastime described in the *bhakti* texts, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The meditation integrates narration and exposition in a seamless poetic flow.

VERSE 1: The uncatchable is caught

The song's first verse begins with the mode of expression found throughout: the offering of obeisance. The object of obeisance is predictably the Supreme, but He is referred to with a significant name: the controller (*īśvara*). This pastime centers on the theme of how the supreme controller becomes controlled and still remains in control. It depicts a form of God that can seem diminutive and ungodlike to the devotionally uninformed. God is usually conceived of and revered as the supreme ruler of all of existence. The *bhakti* tradition acknowledges this divine majesty, but focuses on a far more personable manifestation of God – as a loving and loveable cowherd who in His childhood play seems an ordinary child. Lest hearers be misled by appearances, the song begins with an assertion of the protagonist's divinity by identifying Him as the controller. Further underscoring His transcendence, the song declares that His form is made

Yaśoda approaches to bind fearful Kṛṣṇa the butter thief while monkeys enjoy the bounty.

of eternity-knowledge-bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*).

The verse conveys His beauty by referring to one of His ornaments: His effulgent earrings. *Bhakti* savants explain that whereas we humans wear ornaments to enhance our beauty, Kṛṣṇa's beauty is complete in itself, not needing any ornaments. When He wears ornaments, they don't beautify Him; He beautifies them. Thus, He is celebrated as the ornament of all ornaments (*bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.12).

Among Kṛṣṇa's various ornaments, why are the earrings singled out for mention? The Vaiṣṇava saint Sanātana Gosvāmī explains in his illuminating commentary *Digdarśinī-ṅkā* that the earrings alone

over. She hastily put aside Kṛṣṇa and rushed to take the milk pot off the stove. Just as someone savoring a delicacy becomes indignant on suddenly finding it whisked away, Kṛṣṇa became indignant.

Hungry and angry, Kṛṣṇa looked around for some quick relief. He saw the butter pots His mother had been churning. Breaking them, He ate the butter. His hunger was somewhat mitigated, but His anger still remained. However, He also became apprehensive about being punished for His naughtiness in breaking the pots. So, He fled to another room where butter pots were hung from the roof. Noticing a grinding mortar just below a pot, He climbed atop it, cracked open the pot, and started eating more butter. The fragrance

(Mantra 4) declares that the Supreme supersedes everyone in speed and can't be approached even by the gods. Yet here He is not just approached but also caught by Yaśodā. The next verse reveals what enables her to achieve this astonishing feat.

VERSE 2: Bound not by the rope's length but by the devotion's depth

The second verse begins with an activity extraordinary for the Supreme: crying. Crying is what we mortals do when afflicted by the world's many miseries. And crying is what sometimes impels us to go to the Lord for relief. The *Bhāgavatam* (3.28.32) states that meditating on the Lord's beautiful smile can evaporate an ocean of tears. But here the one who relieves everyone's tears is Himself in tears. How is this to be understood?

The *bhakti* tradition explains that such tears are categorically different from our tears. The emotions underlying them are spiritual, not material. The transcendental realm is not devoid of emotions, but is permeated with pure spiritual emotions. The Lord of that realm, Kṛṣṇa, is the supreme relisher of emotions and is celebrated as *Rasarāja* (the king of those who relish *rasa*, spiritual emotion). We too can enter that realm by purifying our emotions and directing them towards Him. In fact, much of *bhakti's* widespread appeal comes from its utilizing emotions as pathways to the divine.

This verse states that Kṛṣṇa was weeping and rubbing His two eyes with His two lotus hands. The *Bhāgavatam* (1.8.31) elaborates this scene, stating that He had lowered His head in fear that His mother would punish Him. Here it is indicated He also stole glances at her with terror-filled eyes (*sātāṅka-netram*). Due to His earlier running and present crying, His chest moved rapidly up and down. This motion

caused three lines to appear on His throat – lines that became visible when He looked up at His mother. Three lines on the throat indicate a well-formed body that is neither too fat nor too thin, just as six-pack abs are considered nowadays a sign of health and handsomeness.

The verse then condenses the action, mentioning only that Kṛṣṇa was tied by His mother. The *Bhāgavatam* describes how Yaśodā struggled to tie Him. She just couldn't get the rope to go round His body – it remained short by the width of two fingers. She lengthened the cord by tying two ropes; still it remained two fingers short. No matter how many ropes she tied together, still the lengthened rope remained two fingers short.

Through this mysterious event, Kṛṣṇa conveyed His infinitude. He was in a tiny form that barely extended across the mortar to which He was being tied; still, by His supreme mysticism He made it impossible for any rope to extend around Him.

Bhakti commentators explain that the gap of two fingers can be filled, metaphorically speaking, by human endeavor and divine grace. Our endeavor can neither replace grace nor force grace to manifest. But by endeavoring in a devotional mood, we can attract divine grace. Yaśodā wanted to tie Kṛṣṇa not just because His mischievousness had angered her but also because she was lovingly concerned that His mischievousness would mar His prospects in life. While she struggled in vain to tie Kṛṣṇa, her mood changed from anger to appreciation of her son's extraordinariness. As her disposition became increasingly devotional, Kṛṣṇa became increasingly satisfied by the purity of her intention and the sincerity of her effort. So, He allowed Himself to be tied. The song conveys that she succeeded in tying Him not because of the rope's length, but because of her devotion's depth (*bhakti-baddham*).

The last line of this stanza con-

tains the first of the three references to the title's eponym, *Dāmodara*. The other two references come in the sixth and seventh texts.

The poetic refinement of this stanza is evident in its placing the most significant words at the start and at the end (*rudantam* and *bhakti-baddham*).

VERSE 3: When sweetness supersedes greatness, love conquers the beloved

From the third verse, the song shifts from narration to exposition, dwelling on the significance of what has just happened. By such pastimes, Kṛṣṇa inundates His devotees in a lake of bliss (*ānanda-kunḍa*) and teaches those attracted to His majestic form that He is conquered only by intimate devotion.

God is both great and sweet. Awareness of His greatness evokes submission, whereas awareness of His sweetness evokes affection. Devotee seekers need to be aware

of both features, for submission and affection symbiotically reinforce devotion. For exalted devotees such as Yaśodā, however, their awareness of Kṛṣṇa's greatness is almost entirely eclipsed by their absorption in His sweetness. Yaśodā is concerned not about how great Kṛṣṇa is, but about how greatly He depends on her. If she doesn't feed Him, He will become weak and may even die. If she doesn't invoke auspiciousness for Him by her prayers, evil may befall Him. If she doesn't discipline Him, He will become spoiled. Such intense love that is oblivious to His greatness is supremely endearing to Kṛṣṇa – it enables Him to relish the full gamut of relationships. When His devotees are too aware of His greatness, that awareness inhibits their expression of love for Him, thus limiting the range of possible loving reciprocations.

In this pastime, Kṛṣṇa lets Himself be tied, conveying that He is conquered by pure love. Thus, He encourages all devotees to rise in their God consciousness towards the

Among Kṛṣṇa's various ornaments, why are the earrings singled out for mention? The earrings alone get to kiss Kṛṣṇa.

get to kiss Kṛṣṇa. When He runs, the earrings move back and forth, thus getting to touch ("kiss") His cheeks.

After this philosophically and poetically pregnant introduction, the song orients us in space by mentioning the arena of the action: the effulgent Gokula (*gokule bhrājamānam*).

The song has also introduced us to the protagonist and the venue, and now it starts describing the action. In fear, Kṛṣṇa ran away from His mother Yaśodā but was caught by her (the *gopī*, or cowherd woman), who ran faster than Him.

The backstory is that once when Kṛṣṇa was sleeping, Yaśodā was churning butter. Kṛṣṇa woke up, went to her, and started tugging at her sari, conveying His hunger for her milk. She lovingly placed Him on her lap and started breastfeeding Him. While Kṛṣṇa was feasting on the milk, suddenly Yaśodā smelled the milk on a nearby stove spilling

and noise attracted several monkeys from the vicinity. When they gestured, asking for the butter, Kṛṣṇa gleefully shared it with them. While they were thus enjoying the butter, suddenly the monkeys' mouths dropped open in alarm. Kṛṣṇa whirled around and saw His mother creeping up on Him. Panicking, He jumped off the mortar and fled.

Yaśodā had returned to the churning room to find a mess. Kṛṣṇa's absence and the trail of His butter-marked footprints had given away the mischief-maker's identity and escape route. Following the trail, she had come to catch Kṛṣṇa and discipline Him.

The song presumes familiarity with the pastime, so it eschews a linear narrative and includes only sections relevant to its exposition.

Kṛṣṇa ran here and there to escape from Yaśodā, but she managed to catch Him. The *Īsopaniṣad*



Yaśodā finds that catching Kṛṣṇa is no easy task.

level of unfettered love.

Meditating on Kṛṣṇa's loving nature, the poet Satyavrata Muni becomes overwhelmed by love and offers obeisance – not once, but hundreds of times.

**VERSE 4:
Love desires nothing other than the beloved**

The song now addresses a theme common to most prayers – an appeal for benedictions. Satyavrata Muni acknowledges the Lord's capacity to give benedictions by addressing Him with two pertinent names: *varam deva* and *vareṣa* – both meaning “the Lord of benedictions.” But he follows that acknowledgment by immediately refusing the benediction of liberation.

To appreciate the magnitude of this refusal, we need to understand the underlying worldview. People in general are materialistic, and their materialism carries into their religion. So, when they approach God, they pray for various material things. The

Vedas encourage such pious materialism as a steppingstone towards pure spiritual love. The Vedic worldview is based on a tri-level cosmology with the earth occupying an intermediate level between the upper heavenly realms and the lower hellish realms. In this worldview, ascent to heaven is often considered the highest benediction. But Satyavrata Muni's devotion is so exalted that the heavens are not even mentioned – even for the sake of rejection.

The *Upaniṣads* go beyond the pious materialism of the *Vedas* to a world-rejecting transcendence. In the Upaniṣadic worldview, liberation is often considered the ultimate attainment. Satyavrata Muni's rejection of liberation suggests he aspires for something higher. Does he aspire for God's personal abode, Vaikuṅṭha? No, for he also rejects the benediction higher than liberation, which Sanātana Gosvāmī explains is the attainment of Vaikuṅṭha. Then the sage refuses any other benediction that might be considered worthwhile. All this negation is the build-

up to the climactic expression of his cherished aspiration: constant meditation on the Lord, who has manifested in the form of a cowherd boy.

This aspiration is a riveting testimony to the purity of his love. In pure love, we desire our beloved more than anything else and turn away from anything that turns us away from the beloved. Here meditation on this love-filled Dāmodara pastime has triggered such a rapture of devotional ecstasy in the sage that nothing else holds any appeal. Thus, he desires to forever meditate on this supremely relishable pastime. Reiterating his aspiration, he concludes by asking rhetorically: What other benediction is desirable?

**VERSE 5:
Devotion catapults us to the summit of yogic meditation**

The fifth verse moves from rejection of the negative to elucidation of the positive. It describes the beauty of the form on which the sage desires to constantly meditate. Comparing the Lord's face to a lotus, he mentions some of its striking features: the silken locks of hair that frame the face, the beautiful reddish lips, and the marks of Yaśodā's loving kisses. He desires fervently that his mind be absorbed perennially in such contemplation. Stressing the intensity of his aspiration, he proclaims that millions of other benedictions are of no value to him.

The sage's expression echoes the *Bhagavad-gītā's* description (6.20–23) of *samādhi*, the state of the topmost absorption in transcendence. Yogis thus absorbed feel there is no gain greater than this. That the sage has attained a similar level of unflappable absorption indicates that he is situated in *samādhi*.

And he has attained it simply by meditating on the Lord's pastimes. Whereas yoga focuses on stopping the negative, material emotions of the mind, *bhakti* focuses on activating the positive, spiritual emo-

tions of the soul. As emotions are natural to us, activating pure emotions is easier than rejecting all emotions. Thus, *bhakti* makes progress towards transcendence easier, faster, and sweeter. Pertinently, the *Gītā's* chapter on yoga concludes (6.47) with the declaration that the topmost yogis are those who are devotionally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa.

**VERSE 6:
Two strategies for begging**

The sixth verse expresses the sage's longing for the direct *darśana* (sight) of Kṛṣṇa, distinct from the constant inner *darśana* he has sought in the previous two verses. Knowing that such a direct *darśana* is an extremely exalted boon, he delays verbalizing his request till the end of the verse, prefacing it by glorifying the Lord and expressing his own wretched condition.

Seeking grace is akin to begging. While asking for alms, beggars often praise the donor's magnanimity and express their own penury, thus hoping to invoke compassion. A similar dual strategy can be applied when we beseech the Lord for mercy.

The sage spontaneously resorts to one of the best means to please the Lord and invoke his compassion: reciting His names. While offering obeisances, he refers to the Lord by six relevant names. Sanātana Gosvāmī explains how these forms of address reinforce his prayer:

- O Deva: You have a divine form, hence I desire to see You.
- O Dāmodara: You are so affectionate to your devotees, so You will certainly appear.
- O Ananta: You are unlimitedly merciful.
- O Viṣṇu: You are all-pervasive, so You can easily appear before me.
- O Prabhu: You are the master with limitless powers; so, even if not perceivable with mundane senses, You can appear to me.
- O Īśa: You are the supremely independent controller; so You can bestow Your mercy even upon the unfit.

The sage then conveys his wretched condition in three ways. He states that he is fallen and is also ignorant, not knowing how to come out of his fallen condition. And he metaphorically conveys the extent of his misery by declaring that he is drowning in an ocean of misery. This reference to a body of water contrasts poignantly with an earlier reference to a body of water – the third verse stated that Kṛṣṇa is drowning the devoted residents of Gokula in a lake of ecstasy.* When He blesses His devotees thus, how can He let another devotee drown in an ocean of distress?

Satyavrata Muni begs the Lord to cast a merciful glance (*kṛpā dr̥ṣṭi*)

yard, dragging the mortar with Him. When the mortar got stuck between the trees, Kṛṣṇa tugged at it and – wonder of wonders – the two trees came crashing down, and from them emerged two celestial beings. These beings were Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, sons of the treasurer of the gods, Kuvera. Due to licentious behavior in their previous life, the sage Nārada had cursed them to lose their celestial bodies and become incarcerated in arboreal forms. When they begged forgiveness, Nārada assured them that they would become trees in Kṛṣṇa's courtyard and would be delivered by Him. Wanting to fulfill His devotee Nārada's promise, Kṛṣṇa now liberated them by not just

The ocean afflicting the sage is not the ocean of material existence, but the ocean of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

on him and relieve him of his suffering. Significantly, the ocean afflicting the sage is not the ocean of material existence, but the ocean of separation from Kṛṣṇa. So, in the verse's conclusion, he voices his request: Please become visible to these eyes (*edhy akṣi dr̥śyah*).

**VERSE 7:
The bound is still the liberator**

In the seventh verse, Satyavrata Muni, recognizing that Kṛṣṇa grants *darśana* only to those who have devotion, prays for devotion and creatively links his request with a continued narration of the pastime. After Kṛṣṇa was tied to the mortar, He moved towards two giant trees in the court-

freeing them from their tree bodies but also granting them devotion.

Satyavrata Muni cites this narrative as a precedent for the Lord's bestowing mercy on the unqualified. Just as He had blessed the two celestials with devotion, the sage requests that he too be similarly blessed. And he reinforces that request by declaring (for the third time in the song) that he doesn't desire liberation. Such repeated rejection of liberation suggests that what is conventionally called liberation is not really liberation, especially when it takes one away from the Lord and His service. The *Bhāgavatam* (3.29.13) asserts that devotees refuse such service-bereft liberation even if it is offered to them. Thus, the *Bhāgavatam* and the *Dāmodarāṣṭaka* concur that devotional service to the supreme liberator is itself the supreme liberation.

This verse centers on poetic use of the motif of bondage and liberation. The Lord is the giver of

*The third verse of *Dāmodarāṣṭaka* is quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 19.230). There Śrīla Prabhupāda translates *sva-ghoṣam* (His personal associates) as “the *gopīs*.”



The demigods Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva pray to Kṛṣṇa, who has delivered them from living as trees in His courtyard.

liberation from all bondage, yet in this pastime He Himself was bound (*baddha-mūrti*). That is not the only wonder. Those who are bound need others to free them – and they can't usually free others. But even when Kṛṣṇa was bound, He remained omnipotent and freed those who were bound (*moctau*).

**VERSE 8:
The unlimited Lord offers
unlimited ecstasy**

The last text reveals how those with devotion cherish not just the object of devotion but also the things connected with that object. Thus, the sage begins by offering obeisance not to the Lord, but to the rope that binds the Lord's belly. The rope is glorified in two ways: first by declaring it to be effulgent, and then by stating the glory of the object that it bound – the Lord's abdomen, the source and abode of the whole universe. In *bhakti* cosmology, the universe arises from the abdomen of a

manifestation of the Lord through a complex sequence of expansions and emanations.

The sage then offers obeisance to Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa's beloved consort. As the romantic pastimes of the Lord are confidential, the *bhakti* tradition stresses that they not be publically discussed. And yet a song about the glory of devotion calls for at least a reference to the supreme devotee, Rādhā.

Rādhā is not directly present in this pastime; still, indirectly She pervades it and is in fact its essence. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition explains that Rādhā is not just the topmost devotee. She is also devotion personified. Here personification refers not to a literary device, but to an ontological reality – in the person of Rādhā resides all devotion. By offering obeisance to Her, the sage beseeches Her mercy so that he too may be enriched with devotion.

And the final obeisance is predictably to the Lord, but with a significant definer: He is the performer

of unlimited pastimes (*ananta-līlā*). While the word *ananta* was used in the sixth text as a noun to refer to the Lord, here it is used as an adjective to describe His inexhaustible pastimes.

Given that this song has described the immense ecstasy in meditating on one pastime, the concluding obeisance conveys that the Lord, being the performer of unlimited pastimes, is the reservoir of unlimited ecstasy. In loving Him, all our heart's deepest and greatest longings for happiness will be perennially and perfectly fulfilled. ☪

Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānāth Swami, holds a degree in electronic and telecommunications engineering and serves full time at ISKCON Mumbai. He is a BTG associate editor and the author of eighteen books. To read his other articles or to receive his daily reflection on the Bhagavad-gītā, "Gita-Daily," visit thespiritualscientist.com.

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Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare



PRONUNCIATION:
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Śrīla Prabhupāda
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ISKCON Vladivostok

Where Kṛṣṇa Reigns in Russia's Far East

Despite many challenges, the intrepid devotees in this remote city 5,700 land miles from Moscow built a suitable temple to worship the Lord.

by B.V.V. Narasimha Swami



Dāru Mūrti DevDāst



THE CITY OF Vladivostok (“Ruler of the East”) is situated in the far east of Russia, a few hundred kilometers north of China. The region was long under Chinese rule, but Russia acquired it through the Treaty of Beijing in 1860. In time Russians migrated from the western part of the country, and it is now an important port serving the eastern region of Russia.

In the late 1980s, when the USSR gave up its communist regime and opened its doors to other ideals, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement established centers across Russia, Vladivostok being one city where the people were immediately interested. The first devotee to arrive was Abhimanyu Dāsa. He was soon joined by Vrajendra Kumāra Dāsa, who went on to become ISKCON’s regional secretary for Russia’s far eastern region. Under his leadership many people took up Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and today there are more than eighty-five initiated devotees in the area.

The first center was in a rented building. Later, as the community grew, the devotees had to relocate. They found a disused building owned by the city. With

A colorful presentation (left) is part of the scene whenever the devotees of ISKCON Vladivostok chant in public. Above, the new temple opened in November 2014.

Olga Struzh

Photos from the early days of ISKCON Vladivostok (right and below), where devotees first arrived in the late 1980s after the breakup of the USSR.



Kṛṣṇa Keśava Dāsa (above left, with his wife, Anaṅga-latā Dāsī) owns a window-framing business and was a major contributor to the temple construction. Above: construction-team leader Dvārakā-dhīśa Dāsa. Left: Vrajendra Kumāra Dāsa, regional secretary for Russia's far-east.

the city's permission, they moved in, renovated the building, and gradually made it into a suitable center. But the local government decided they needed the property back, so the devotees relocated again. They started to look for a new building, but rising property prices made the search a great challenge. Finally, they decided to build a temple, and with help from the congregation, they formed a committee and began raising money.

A major source was the devotee-run restaurant Ganga, which has been in operation for many years and has gained the respect of the local people. Baked samosas filled with cheese or fruit jams are a favorite with customers. As many as fourteen thousand samosas have been sold in one day. In 2007, the Vladivostok temple was honored by ISKCON's Governing Body Commission for outstanding service in the field of prasādam distribution, specifically



Yadushihra Dāsa

through the Ganga restaurant.

Another major contributor to the temple was Kṛṣṇa Keśava Dāsa, a devotee since the year 2000. He operates a window-framing business and donated a major portion of his profits. He also daily supplies his staff with lunch boxes of *prasādam* from Ganga.

Construction Begins

With the support of the congregation, gradually enough money was raised to buy land, and construction

Happy devotees dance in kīrtana in the new temple (above). Below, a kīrtana leader (at far right in the photo) accompanies himself on an accordion.



Oleg Strizh



Oleg Strizh

of the temple began in the summer of 2011. In line with Vedic principles, a deity of Ananta-śeṣa, the serpent-bed of Lord Viṣṇu, was placed eight meters below the ground to support the temple.

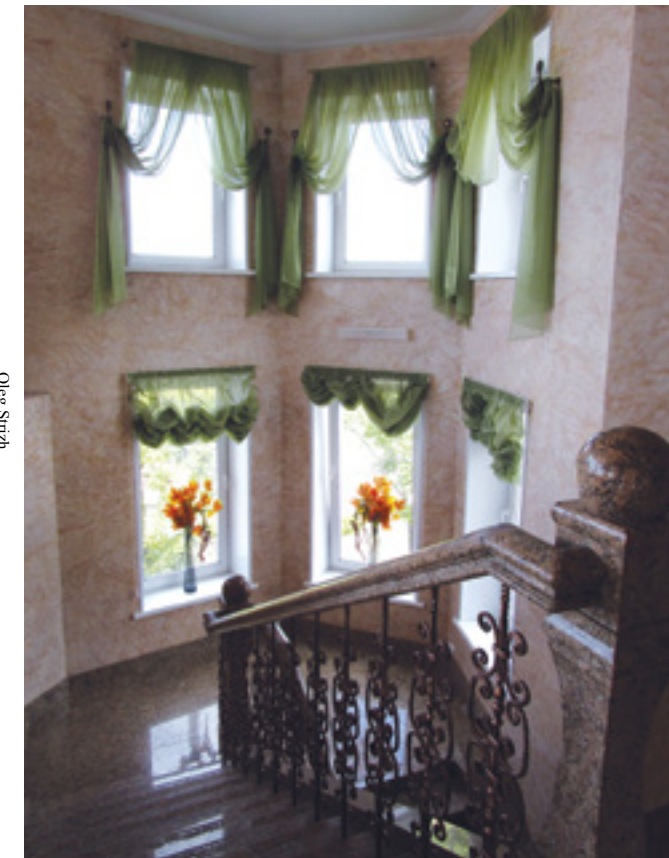
The head of the construction team was Dvārakādhīśa Dāsa. A young, energetic, courageous Russian, he soon found his task difficult. Money was in short supply, and the Russian

The deities on their new altar (above). Right: a stairway to the third-floor temple room.

Below: Abhimanyu Dāsa leads the chanting.



Oleg Strizh



Danu Mani DevDās

climate complicated the work. In addition, the land is on a steep slope overlooking the bay. While laying the foundation for the temple, the contractors gave up, saying it was impossible. But Dvāarakādhīśa stuck it out and kept trying. Finally he

was able to get the basic structure up. But then it was winter, so he had to stop and wait for summer to return.

To minimize building expenses, the devotees showed their own technical skills by building a goods



Sergei Lisin



Olge Suriah

Dāru Mūrti Devī Dāsi



Caitanya Candra Caraṇa Dāsa initiates a disciple (top). Above: preparing garlands and vases for the deities with flowers grown on the temple property (right).



Sumedha Gopāla Dāsa

A comical character in a play (above) elicits laughter from the audience (below). Bottom: Lord Kṛṣṇa at the side of His dying devotee.



Sumedha Gopāla Dāsa



Sumedha Gopāla Dāsa



Pavel Sabouznitskiy



Danu Mari DeviDas

The author (above) bathes Śrīla Prabhupāda during the installation ceremony. At right, devotees offer flowers during the event. Above right, Śrīla Prabhupāda installed on his beautiful vyāsāsana. Far right: pūjārī Digvijaya Dāsa (left) and temple president Acintya Acyuta Dāsa.



Oleg Strzh

elevator running from the warehouse in the basement to the kitchen on the second floor and on to the *pūjārī* and deity rooms on the third floor. They bought standard mechanical parts and assembled them, drastically reducing the cost.

The year 2012 was special for the people of Vladivostok because the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) summit was held there, bringing political leaders from twenty-one Pacific Rim countries. To prepare, the Russian government made massive improvements to the



Sergei Lisin

city, which became a construction site. A new airport, new roads and bridges, new hotels, and a new university were all under construction. This only made building the temple even more difficult, as the prices of building materials increased and the traffic became even more intolerable.

Finally the construction neared completion, and the devotees prepared for the grand opening. They had been holding daily programs at Ganga, with morning and evening classes. They had rented an apartment



Dhanu Murti Dev-Dāsi



Yudhishtira Dāsa



to continue the deity worship, and they had had to find their own accommodations. Still, they kept in high spirits and continued their daily *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, which has become well known to the residents of Vladivostok.

The devotees chant outside in public places throughout the year, even when temperatures drop to -30° F. The leader of the chanting

party is Candrabhānu Dāsa, who served as the temple's head cook before becoming the current head cook for the Ganga restaurant.

For Prabhupāda's Pleasure

In November 2014 the temple construction was completed and the opening took place. Many senior devotees gathered and spoke, praising

Devotees prepare offerings for the temple deities (left, top and bottom). Above: an offering on the altar of the Ganga restaurant (right).

Far right: Devakī Mayī Devī Dāśī, head of the deity kitchen and wife of the temple president; Candrabhānu Dāsa, saṅkīrtana leader and Ganga head cook.



Pavel Shtubuzinskiy



Sergei Lisin



Oleg Strizh

Oleg Strizh



Oleg Suzh

the efforts of those who worked together to build ISKCON's largest center in Russia. GBC representative Bhakti Vaibhava Swami spoke of the pleasure Śrīla Prabhupāda would certainly have in knowing that the devotees had built a temple in far-eastern Russia, and he mentioned scriptural statements about how devotees involved in such efforts will be raised to the eternal abode of the Lord. Prabhaviṣṇu Dāsa, who has been teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Russia for many years, described how ISKCON Vladivostok has always been successful in recruiting new devotees but over the years many have left the region for milder climates. He appreciated that despite their departure, the number of devotees in Vladivostok is still growing and it is to their credit that they could build such a wonderful center, at a cost of over a million dollars. 🙏

B.V.V. Narasimha Swami, initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in London in 1971, has been teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Far East since 1984.

The Vladivostok climate affords many opportunities for cold-weather chanting parties (above). The bearded character in the center is Ded Moroz, Russia's Santa Claus. Below: a devotee family at a summer festival.



Pavel Sabudžinskij

Sumedha Gopāla Dāsa



Yudhiṣṭhira Dāsa



The colorful Rathayātrā festival fills a Vladivostok street (above). At left, Bhakti Vaibhava Swami speaks on the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the city's skyline visible through the rear windows.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Arrival and The 1965 World's Fair

*During Prabhupāda's earliest days in America,
his host took him for a little-known outing.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa



LAST YEAR MARKED the Golden Anniversary of the 1965 World's Fair,* held in New York City. It also marked fifty years since His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda stepped foot on Western soil. A lesser-known fact, however, is that there is a connection between these two events: Prabhupāda, then known simply as Swamiji, attended the World's Fair shortly after he arrived in New York. Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master had given him his life's mission in the 1920s:

Take Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world. "I reached Boston on 17th September, 1965," Prabhupāda wrote in his diary. "I was thinking, while on board the ship 'Jaladuta,' why Kṛṣṇa has brought me to this country." By September 19 he was in Butler, Pennsylvania, staying with Gopal and Sally Agarwal for three weeks. Gopal's father, Mathura Prasad Agarwal, a businessman from Agra, had offered to sponsor Prabhupāda's trip abroad, leading to his stay in Butler.

Soon he was in the Big Apple, an apple he would eventually offer to his beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The Doctor's Hospitality

Prabhupāda knew only one person in New York City: Dr. Ramamurti Mishra (aka Shri Brahmananda Sarasvati), a medical doctor, neurosurgeon, psychiatrist, and professor of medicine. Besides being a resident physician at leading university hospitals in the United States and Canada, he was a swami. He had adapted to Western culture and often wore tailored Nehru jackets and white slacks, rather than the usual *sannyāsī* dress that swamis wear in India. He had created a yoga community in the greater New York area and was attracting a following of seekers fascinated by Eastern mysticism.

Prabhupāda had corresponded with him from Butler, explaining how a gentleman in Bombay, Paramananda Mehra, was eager to make introductions, convinced that Prabhupāda and Mishra could serve each other's purpose in conveying spiritual life to Westerners.

Joan Suval, a young disciple of Dr. Mishra, was deputed to meet Prabhupāda at the Port



* Though generally known as "The 1964 World's Fair," it ran for equal periods in 1964 and 1965, and its official title was "The 1964/1965 New York World's Fair."

Inset (clockwise from top): Śrīla Prabhupāda, Joan Suval, Shri Brahmananda Sarasvati (?–1993).

Authority Bus Terminal, where he would be coming in from Philadelphia, and escort him to an Indian festival in the heart of the city. At the festival, Prabhupāda was introduced to Dr. Mishra, and also to Ravi Shankar and his brother, the dancer Uday Shankar, who were there as well.

After the Indian festival, Joan drove Prabhupāda and Dr. Mishra to Mishra's apartment at 33 Riverside Drive. Overlooking the Hudson River, it had large windows that highlighted the scenic view. Prabhupāda was given his own room. The two swamis became quite close and could talk for hours on end, not just about Indian philosophy and culture but on just about every other subject as well.

Because Prabhupāda insisted that having a place of his own would be

made regular trips to the World's Fair, which was popular throughout the New York tri-state area, with reverberations extending around the world; he wanted to take Prabhupāda to see it, too. The fair ran for two six-month seasons, April 22–October 18, 1964 and April 21–October 17, 1965, with extensions well into 1966.

The World's Fair

Prabhupāda would have gone toward the last days of the fair. Indeed, the last day drew more than 446,000 visitors. With lavish pavilions and special effects, compliments of Walt Disney, the fair was supposed to be a portent of things to come – scientific progress, modernistic aspirations, and futuristic accomplishment.

– wanting to see every pavilion, every exhibit. I watched him listening attentively when Shri Brahmananda [Mishra] pointed out and remarked about a small sculpture from an ancient civilization – a man, legs crossed, meditating.

If my memory serves me, both he and Shri Brahmananda liked the Science Pavilion the best. They spent a lot of time in there – and again Swamiji listened to Shri Brahmananda as he explained the special exhibits that represented the future as we would come to know it.

Swamiji even purchased an item from one of the vendors – and I remember him showing it to me, obviously delighted that he had found something he needed. (I believe it was a small handmade tote bag that he could use for carrying items such as keys, etc.)

In short, the World's Fair of 1965 was a happy experience for Swamiji. I'm convinced he actually had fun that day!

Yaduvara Dāsa, who interviewed Joan in 2006 for the *Following Śrīla Prabhupāda* DVD series, became privy to her close exchanges with Prabhupāda in those early days. She told Yaduvara that she had asked Prabhupāda if she could hug him, and, despite being a renounced monk, in his kindness he said, "Why not?" So she embraced him as one would one's grandfather. Knowing the codes of his *sannyāsa* order, she was touched by his willingness to accommodate her unusual request.

In addition to this story, among others, Joan offered Yaduvara a special surprise: she showed him a rare film clip, played on a portable TV through an old VHS player, of Prabhupāda and Dr. Misra at the 1965 World's Fair.

"It was maybe two or three minutes long in full color," says Yaduvara. "It showed Prabhupāda and Dr. Mishra posing at different spots in front of various exhibits, obviously enjoying the atmosphere among friends."

"That day, at the Fair, it was wonderful to just watch Swamiji – full of energy, smiling, even laughing at times."

essential for pushing forward his mission, Dr. Mishra soon shifted him to a hatha-yoga studio on the fifth floor of 100 West 72nd Street, near Central Park. Although the space was a large room for practicing yogis, it included an adjoining private area where Prabhupāda stayed for some time. Unlike the Riverside Drive apartment, this one had no windows and little else.

Whether at Riverside Drive or on 72nd Street, Joan loved listening to them talk, although sometimes it was in Hindi, which she couldn't understand. Still, she would watch their animated conversations nonetheless. Their talks were often full of serious back and forth, if also peppered with hearty laughter. Through it all, they became intimate friends, and Joan was happy to be at their beck and call.

One such call came in soon after Prabhupāda's arrival: Dr. Mishra had

It took place in Queens, New York, with much to see covering the over 640 acres of Flushing Meadows–Corona Park. An observant visitor could be educated and inspired by the many visionary displays of the colorful fairgrounds.

Four special guests had driven in from Manhattan: Prabhupāda (then Swamiji), Mishra, Joan, and Rita Dombroff, another of Mishra's early students. Says Joan Suval in an email to me:

That day, at the Fair, I remember watching Swamiji as I would a child. I liked him very much and I worried sometimes because he seemed to be carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders. Seriousness appeared to be his constant companion. But that day, at the Fair, it was wonderful to just watch him – full of energy, smiling, even laughing at times. He seemed to be an excited child

Leaving the Studio

By winter 1966, Prabhupāda began to feel cramped at the yoga studio on 72nd Street. It was, after all, just a small office space without furniture or telephone. As Joan tells it, the office was not a proper living space, but since Prabhupāda insisted on a private place to stay, they made an exception just for him. Austerely sleeping on the floor on blankets while planning the future of a movement that was yet to be, he would chant and read and entertain guests whenever possible.

Sometimes he would journey upstate to Ananda Ashram, a yoga establishment of sixty peaceful acres in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains. Dr. Mishra had founded the Ashram in 1964, and while there, Prabhupāda would engage in his usual activities of *kīrtana* and lecturing; by so doing, he naturally endeared himself to many of the retreat's residents and visitors.

Mishra advised Prabhupāda to go downtown to Greenwich Village, where a host of young people would be interested in his message. Mishra had even predicted, says Joan, that "one day Swamiji would be followed by many devotees – who would owe their lives to him." When one of the young visitors at Mishra's yoga studio confirmed that there was a hip, ready, willing, and able youth culture just waiting for him on the Lower East Side, he was ready to go.

Prabhupāda's typewriter and tape recorder were stolen while he lived on 72nd Street, and he knew for certain that it was time to move on. So he relocated to the Bowery, to be where the "young people" were, and where he was offered accommodation in a loft. Eventually he moved to his own place, a storefront at 26 Second Avenue. 🌍

Satyaṛāja Dāsa, a disciple of Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor and founding editor of the Journal of Vaishnava Studies. He has written more than thirty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lives near New York City.

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 fifth in a series of eight meditations.

My Favorite Gift

When my children were small, they pooled their resources one year to purchase for my birthday a fine-looking tiepin in the shape of a golf bag and clubs. I've never played golf in my life, and as far as ties go, since my school days when they were obligatory I have made a point of avoiding them. Anyway, although the tiepin was of little use to me, I was thrilled to receive it, as it was given with love. I still have it safely stored in my very small jewelry box, where it takes pride of place.

Even an insignificant gift given with love is surely greater than anything given without love. In the Kṛṣṇa faith, which I follow, Kṛṣṇa is God, and He tells us that the only gift He wants is our love.

There is a story about how, when He appeared five thousand years ago, He went on a diplomatic visit to see a great king. This particular monarch had no affection for Kṛṣṇa or His followers, but nevertheless, in an

attempt to win Kṛṣṇa's favour, he offered Him the hospitality of a vast and beautiful palace filled with all kinds of luxuries. Knowing of the king's antipathy toward Him, Kṛṣṇa refused the offer and went instead to the small cottage of one His devotees.

When He arrived, He was received by the lady of the house, who offered Him a little fruit as refreshment. Overwhelmed with affection to see her beloved Lord, she carefully peeled Him a banana; but, unable to take her eyes away from Kṛṣṇa's face, she absentmindedly threw the banana in the bin and gave Him the peel. Kṛṣṇa in turn was looking affectionately at her, and He simply accepted the peel and began to eat it without any sign of distaste.

As with me and my never-used tiepin, Kṛṣṇa accepted the love rather than the thing being offered. Love then is surely the greatest gift we can give or receive. And as the song goes, it's the only thing that there's just too little of.



ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: OUR FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA

To Love Is to Cooperate

More than a farewell request, Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire that his followers cooperate to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere remains a perennial call to action.

by Sureśvara Dāsa

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

BY MAY 1977 Śrīla Prabhupāda's health had been declining for months. It was time to return to Vrindavan, India, his "home," as he called it, to recover or depart. When his secretary suggested he make a will, Prabhupāda agreed. For seven years he had been training the members of ISKCON's Governing Body Commission¹

(GBC) to manage the Society after his departure. To help them realize the gravity of their responsibility, Prabhupāda requested they all come to Vrindavan to witness the will. "Because they love you," said his secretary, "I am sure they will all want to come and be with you."

Prabhupāda was grave: "Your love for me will be shown by how much you cooperate to keep this institution together after I am gone." (*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, Chapter 52: "I Have Done My Part") Notwithstanding Prabhupāda's request, cooperation can be elusive in our Age of Quarrel.² To see why, as well as what we can do to foster cooperation, we will sample Prabhupāda's words on the subject, which reveal a simple yet challenging dialectic.³

Thesis: Cooperate

Despite Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's order that his leading disciples "work conjointly" and "without any quarrel" after his demise, their non-cooperation fragmented the Gauḍīya Mission and later disqualified most of them from helping Prabhupāda revive it in the West. Determined that noncooperation not similarly spoil ISKCON, Prabhupāda defined and tested his disciples' devotion in terms of their willingness to work together.

When you do something in cooperation with the Lord, that is called *bhakti*. (Lecture, Seattle, October 9, 1968)

It is not so much that because there may be some faults in our godbrothers and godsisters, or because there may be some mismanagement or lack of cooperation, that this is due to being impersonalists, no. It is the nature of the living condition to always have some fault.

Even in spiritual life?

Even in the Spiritual World there is some fault and envy. . . . But it is not the same as material fault or material envy, it is transcendental because it is all based on Krishna. Sometimes when one [devotee] would serve Krishna very nicely, the others would say, "Oh, she has done so nicely, now let me do bet-

them, so we should always remember that and, like the bumblebee, always look for the nectar or the best qualities of a person. Not like the utopians, who are like the flies who always go to the open sores or find the faults in a person, and because they cannot find any utopia, or because they cannot find anyone without faults, they want to become void, merge, nothing – they think that is utopia, to become void of personality. So if there are sometimes slight disagreements between devotees, it is not due to impersonalism, but it is because they are persons, and such disagreements should not be taken very seriously. (Letter, February 4, 1972)

If Prabhupāda's thesis is to cooperate and his antithesis not to expect utopia, then what is his synthesis, his resolution? As we might expect, it's easier said than done.

Synthesis: Find Unity in Diversity

When another GBC man wrote to inform Prabhupāda of more dissension in the ranks, Prabhupāda was philosophical:

Material nature means dissension and disagreement. . . . But, for this Krishna consciousness movement its success will depend on agreement, even though there are varieties of engagements. In the material world there are varieties, but there is no agreement. In the spiritual world there are varieties, but there is agreement.

Different individuals have different ways of engaging material nature in devotional service. The agreement that harmonizes the "varieties of engagements" is their shared purpose, to please Kṛṣṇa.

The materialist . . . cannot come into agreement with varieties, but if we keep Krishna in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity.

If Prabhupāda's thesis is to cooperate and his antithesis not to expect utopia, then what is his synthesis, his resolution?

The test of our actual dedication and sincerity to serve the Spiritual Master will be in this mutual cooperative spirit to push on this Movement and not make factions and deviate. (Letter, December 9, 1973)

The day he signed his will Prabhupāda echoed his previous observation about cooperation: "Your love for me will be tested by how after my departure you maintain this institution. We have glamour and people are feeling our weight. This should be maintained." (*TKG's Diary: Prabhupāda's Final Days*, May 23, 1977)

Antithesis: Don't Expect Utopia

A couple of years after Prabhupāda had formed the GBC, one of its members wrote to complain that impersonal dealings were dividing the devotees. Prabhupāda disagreed.

ter for pleasing Krishna." That is envy, but it is transcendental, without malice.

Envy without malice. How wonderful.

So we shall not expect that anywhere there is any Utopia. Rather, that is impersonalism. People should not expect that even in the Krishna Consciousness Society there will be Utopia. Because devotees are persons, therefore there will always be some lacking – but the difference is that their . . . lackings have become transcendental because, despite everything they may do, their topmost intention is to serve Krishna. . . .

Like a judo master using negative energy to his advantage, Prabhupāda then finished his point, challenging his man to see the positive:

The devotees of Krishna are the most exalted persons on this planet, better than kings, all of

To illustrate, Prabhupāda sometimes gave the example of concentric circles. No matter how many circles we draw, if they all share the same center, they never clash. In the same way, if pleasing Kṛṣṇa is at the center of our intentions, we'll be able to "agree to disagree" and continue working cooperatively to serve the Lord even when differences arise. Prabhupāda knew this would be an ongoing challenge:

I am therefore suggesting that all our men meet in Mayapur every year during the birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. With all GBC and senior men present we should discuss how to make unity in diversity. But, if we fight on account of diversity, then it is simply the material platform. Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful. (Letter, October 18, 1973)

Unity in Principle: Diversity in Application

Since finding unity in diversity is the key to cooperation – Prabhupāda's

measure of our love for him – we need to dig deeper to understand how to achieve it. However diverse we may be, if we trust our mutual intentions to please Kṛṣṇa, we'll be able to work together to identify timeless, universal principles whose applications will vary according to "time, candidate, and country." Prabhupāda explains:

The teacher (*ācārya*) has to consider time, candidate, and country. . . . What is possible in one country may not be possible in another. The *ācārya's* duty is to accept the essence of devotional service. . . . It is not necessary that the rules and regulations followed in India be exactly the same as those in Europe, America, and other Western countries. . . . We should not follow regulative principles without an effect, nor should we fail to accept the regulative principles. What is required is a special technique according to country, time, and candidate. (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 23.105, Purport)

Even if the *ācārya's* "special technique" proves effective for spread-

ing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, advanced devotees may still disagree about its application. For example, while receiving a massage from his assistant one day, Prabhupāda remarked, "My godbrothers criticize me, that I have allowed women to live in our temples. This is not done in India. . . . But I have become successful because I made this adjustment."

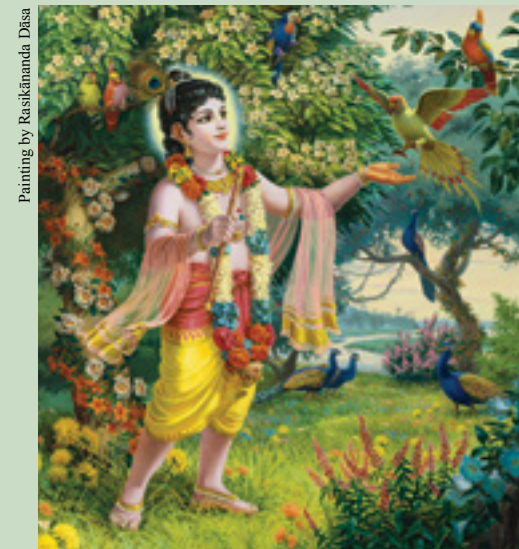
In the silence that followed, the assistant decided to ask a question: "Prabhupāda, how can we tell the difference between making an adjustment and changing a principle?"

Prabhupāda closed his eyes as his assistant continued to rub his body.

Finally, he opened his eyes and responded, "That requires a little intelligence." (*Śrutakīrti Dāsa*, *What is the Difficulty?*)

A little intelligence and a lot of heart. In his commentary to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, Chapter 7, text 37, Prabhupāda describes the compassionate intent of such intelligence: "An *ācārya* should devise a means by which people may somehow or other come to

A Pause for Prayer



Painting by Rasikānanda Dāsa

Please abide in the temple of my heart both day and night, O Kṛṣṇa Murāri, O Śrī Kṛṣṇa Murāri! Devotion, love, flower garlands, and sandalwood – please accept, O please accept them, delighter of the heart! In life or in death I worship You with these offerings, beautiful one, O enchanter of the heart!

Come, son of Nanda. And then, O son of Nanda, I will offer Your *ārati* ceremony with the lamplight of my love.

The waters of the Yamuna River cascade incessantly from my eyes in separation from You, O holder of Govardhana Hill!

May I pass my life absorbed only in songs of Your praise, O Kṛṣṇa Murāri, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Murāri!

— *Mama Mana Mandire* ("In the Temple of My Heart"), by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. First they should become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and all the prescribed rules and regulations may later gradually be introduced. . . . For example, since boys and girls in the Western countries freely intermingle, special concessions regarding their customs and habits are necessary to bring them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The *ācārya* must devise a means to bring them to devotional service.”

For Prabhupāda, bringing someone to devotional service was the highest principle, requiring fresh applications for changing times. For example, in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta’s Gauḍīya Mission, many devotees used to chant sixty-four rounds⁴ of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra on their beads. Despite Prabhupāda’s sug-

the nature of a *sādhu* to inquire. Although he knows these things, the *sādhu* inquires for the sake of strictness.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 20.105)

Prabhupāda wrote no commentary to this text but later spoke about it: “A *sādhu*, a saintly person, although he knows everything, still he remains very humble and tries to confirm from the higher authorities, ‘I think this is right. Is it not right?’ He knows it is all right, but still, he waits for the higher authority to confirm it.” (Lecture, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 20.105, July 11, 1976, New York City)

Strict in remembering his absolute smallness, strict in never presuming he knows everything, the humble devotee is always glad to

filled his prophecy by returning to his master alone.

“I’m sorry, Guru Mahārāja, I could not find anyone greater than me.”

Droṇa raised his eyebrows but kept silent.

Twilight came and still no Yudhiṣṭhira. Finally at dusk he returned, alone and disappointed.

“I’m sorry, Guru Mahārāja, I looked high and low. Finally I saw a man with some grain on Ekādaśī. I thought he was going to eat it, but then he fed it to his animal, so I gave up. How will I ever find anyone less than me?”

Droṇa smiled, as we might too, but am I more like Yudhiṣṭhira or Duryodhana? Sanātana or Satan? If I think there’s no one with whom I

need to check my understanding, no authority higher than myself, then I need to abandon the arrogance of Duryodhana and embrace

the humility of Yudhiṣṭhira. Genuine humility enables us to appreciate and learn from all devotees, and cooperate with them to please Śrīla Prabhupāda, guru, and Kṛṣṇa.

A Last Word

On March 16, 1976, in the holy land of Sridham Mayapur,⁷ along the Ganges’s green expanse, dozens of young Americans have crowded into Prabhupāda’s room at ISKCON’s international headquarters. He thanks them for cooperating to profusely distribute his books for the benefit of suffering humanity.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu – He is God Himself, Kṛṣṇa Himself – He felt, alone, unable to do this task. He felt. So this is the position. You are cooperating; therefore I am getting the credit. Otherwise, alone what could I

(please turn to page 63)

Because a devotee trusts other devotees’ intentions, they trust his, and everyone is happy to cooperate with him, even if they sometimes disagree.

gesting fewer rounds to his first followers – thirty-two, twenty-five – they still looked perplexed: that would take hours! He then declared sixteen rounds the rock-bottom minimum for his initiated disciples.⁵

When one of those early initiates later asked Prabhupāda why he had asked them to chant so many rounds, then reduced the number, Prabhupāda replied that he was “experimenting,” to see what the devotees could do.⁶ To determine a principle’s practical application, sometimes Prabhupāda would try something out and then “judge by the result.”

Humility Helps

At one point while instructing Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stopped to marvel at his humble disciple: “Since you possess Lord Kṛṣṇa’s potency, you certainly know these things. However, it is

hear deeper realizations from sincere devotees, whom he regards as his *prabhus*, or masters. Because he trusts the devotees’ intentions, they trust his, and everyone is happy to cooperate with him, even if they sometimes disagree.

In the *Mahābhārata* the model of the humble hero is King Yudhiṣṭhira, and the arrogant fool, King Duryodhana. When they were adolescents, their martial arts guru, Droṇācārya, gave them each an assignment to test their character. To Yudhiṣṭhira he commanded, “Bring me someone less than you,” and to Duryodhana, “Bring me someone more than you.”

Even as the assignments were spoken, Duryodhana’s mind was complaining: “Why did Yudhiṣṭhira receive the easy task? How will I ever find anyone greater than me?”

Later that day Duryodhana ful-

BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

THE EARTH PLEADS FOR PROTECTION

Threatened by the angry King Pṛthu, the earth planet, who has assumed the form of a cow, praises Him as the Supreme Lord.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 17

30 येनाहमात्मायतनं विनिर्मिता

धात्रा यतोऽयं गुणसर्गसङ्ग्रहः
स एव मां हन्तुमुदायुधः स्वरा-
दुपस्थितोऽन्यं शरणं कमाश्रये

*yenāham ātmāyatanam vinirmitā
dhātrā yato 'yaṁ guṇa-sarga-saṅgrahaḥ
sa eva māṁ hantum udāyudhaḥ svarād
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; *svarāt* – 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. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66) the Lord instructs:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.” Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sings: “My dear Lord, whatever I have – even my mind, the center of all material necessities, namely my home, my body, and whatever I have in connection with this body – I now surrender unto You. You are now completely independent to act however You like. If You like, You can kill me, and if You like, You can save me. In any case, I am Your eternal servant, and You have every right to do whatever You like.”

31 य एतदादावसृजच्चराचरं
स्वमाययात्माश्रययावितर्क्यया
तयैव सोऽयं किल गोसुमुद्यतः
कथं नु मां धर्मपरो जिघांसति

ya etad ādāv asrjat carācaram
sva-māyayātmāśrayayāvitarkeyā
tayaiva so 'yam kila goptum udyataḥ
katham nu mām dharmā-paro jighāmsati

yaḥ – one who; etad – these; ādau – in the beginning of creation; asrjat – created; cara-acaram – moving and non-moving living entities; sva-māyayā – by His own potency; ātma-āśrayayā – sheltered under His own protection; avitarkeyā – inconceivable; tayā – by that same māyā; eva – certainly; saḥ – he; ayam – this King; kila – certainly; goptum udyataḥ – prepared to give protection; katham – how; nu – then; mām – me; dharmā-paro – one who is strictly following religious principles; jighāmsati – desires to kill.

In the beginning of creation You created all these moving and nonmoving living entities by Your inconceivable energy. Through this very same energy You are now prepared to protect the living entities. Indeed, You are the supreme protector of religious principles. Why are You so anxious to kill me, even though I am in the form of a cow?

PURPORT: The planet earth argues that there is no doubt that one who creates can also annihilate by his sweet will. ① The planet earth questions why she should be killed when the Lord is prepared to give protection to everyone. After all, it is the earth that is the resting place for all other living entities, and it is the earth that produces grains for them.

32 नूनं बतेशस्य समीहितं जनै-
स्तन्मायया दुर्जययाकृतात्मभिः
न लक्ष्यते यस्त्वकरोदकारयद्
योऽनेक एकः परतश्च ईश्वरः

- 1) Why does the earth planet ask King Pṛthu why he thinks she should be killed?
- 2) What is required for one to understand how the Supreme Personality of Godhead acts through His different energies?
- 3) To what category of the Lord's energy do the living entities belong?
- 4) To what category of the Lord's energy does Brahmā belong?

nūnam bateśasya samīhitam janais
tan-māyayā durjayayākrīṭātmabhiḥ
na lakṣyate yas tv akarod akārayad
yo 'neka ekaḥ parataś ca īśvaraḥ

nūnam – surely; bata – certainly; īśasya – of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; samīhitam – activities, plan; janaiḥ – by people; tat-māyayā – by His potency; durjayayā – which is unconquerable; akṛta-ātmabhiḥ – who are not sufficiently experienced; na – never; lakṣyate – are seen; yaḥ – he who; tu – then; akarot – created; akārayat – caused to create; yaḥ – one who; anekāḥ – many; ekaḥ – one; parataḥ – by His inconceivable potencies; ca – and; īśvaraḥ – controller.

My dear Lord, although You are one, by Your inconceivable potencies You have expanded Yourself in many forms. Through the agency of Brahmā, You have created this universe. You are therefore directly the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Those who are not sufficiently experienced cannot understand Your transcendental activities because these persons are covered by Your illusory energy.

PURPORT: God is one, but He expands Himself in a variety of energies – the material energy, the spiritual energy, the marginal energy, and so forth. ② Unless one is favored and especially endowed with grace, he cannot understand how the one Supreme Personality of Godhead acts through His different energies. ③ The living entities are also the marginal energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Brahmā is also one of these living entities, but he is especially empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although Brahmā is supposed to be the creator of this universe, actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead is its ultimate creator.

In this verse the word māyayā is significant. Māyā means “energy.” ④ Lord Brahmā is not the energetic but is one of the manifestations of the Lord's marginal energy. In other words, Lord Brahmā is only an instrument. Although sometimes plans appear contradictory, there is a definite plan behind all action. One who is experienced and is favored by the Lord can understand that everything is being done according to the Lord's supreme plan.

33 सर्गादि योऽस्यानुरुणद्धि शक्तिभि-
द्रव्यक्रियाकारकचेतनात्मभिः
तस्मै समुन्नद्धनिरुद्धशक्तये
नमः परस्मै पुरुषाय वेधसे

sargādi yo 'syānuruṇaddhi śaktibhir
dravya-kriyā-kāraka-cetanātmabhiḥ
tasmai samunnaddha-niruddha-śaktaye
namaḥ parasmai puruṣāya vedhase

sarga-ādi – creation, maintenance and dissolution; yaḥ – one who; asya – of this material world; anuruṇaddhi – causes; śaktibhiḥ – by His own potencies; dravya – physical elements; kriyā – senses; kāraka – controlling demigods; cetanā – intelligence; ātmabhiḥ – consisting of false ego; tasmai – unto Him; samunnaddha – manifest; niruddha – potential; śaktaye – one who possesses these energies; namaḥ – obeisances; parasmai – unto the transcendental; puruṣāya – Supreme Personality of Godhead; vedhase – unto the cause of all causes.

My dear Lord, by Your own potencies You are the original cause of the material elements, as well as the performing instruments (the senses), the workers of the senses (the controlling demigods), the intelligence, and the ego, as well as everything else. By Your energy You manifest this entire cosmic creation, maintain it, and dissolve it. Through Your energy alone everything is sometimes manifest and sometimes not manifest. You are therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

PURPORT: ⑤ All activities begin with the creation of the total energy, the mahat-tattva. Then, by the agitation of the three guṇas, the physical elements are created, as well as the mind, ego, and the controllers of the senses. All of these are created one after another by the inconceivable energy of the Lord. ⑥ In modern electronics, a mechanic may, by pushing only one button, set off an electronic chain-reaction, by which so many actions are carried out one after another. Similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead pushes the button of creation, and different energies create the material elements and various controllers of the physical elements, and their subsequent interactions follow the inconceivable plan of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

34 स वै भवानात्मविनिर्मितं जगद्
भूतेन्द्रियान्तःकरणात्मकं विभो
संस्थापयिष्यन्नज मां रसातला-
दभ्युज्जहाराम्भस आदिसूकरः

sa vai bhavān ātma-vinirmitam jagad
bhūteṅdriyāntaḥ-karaṇātmakam vibho
samsthāpayiṣyann aja mām rasātalād
abhyujjahārāmbhasa ādi-sūkaraḥ

saḥ – He; vai – certainly; bhavān – Yourself; ātma – by Yourself; vinirmitam – manufactured; jagat – this world; bhūta – the physical elements; indriya – senses; antaḥ-karaṇa – mind, heart; ātmakam – consisting of; vibho – O Lord; samsthāpayiṣyan – maintaining; aja – O unborn; mām

– me; rasātalāt – from the Plutonic region; abhyujjahāra – took out; ambhasaḥ – from the water; ādi – original; sūkaraḥ – the boar.

My dear Lord, You are always unborn. ⑦ Once, in the form of the original boar, You rescued me from the waters in the bottom of the universe. Through Your own energy You created all the physical elements, the senses, and the heart, for the maintenance of the world.

PURPORT: This refers to the time when Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared as the supreme boar, Varāha, and rescued the earth, which had been merged in water. The asura Hiraṇyākṣa had dislocated the earth from its orbit and thrown it beneath the waters of the Garbhodaka Ocean. Then the Lord, in the shape of the original boar, rescued the earth.

35 अपामुपस्थे मयि नाव्यवस्थिताः
प्रजा भवानद्य रिरक्षिषुः किल
स वीरमूर्तिः समभूद्धराधरो
यो मां पयस्युग्रशरो जिघांसति

apām upasthe mayi nāvya avasthitāḥ
prajā bhavān adya rirakṣiṣuḥ kila
sa vīra-mūrtiḥ samabhūd dharā-dharo
yo mām payasy ugra-śaro jighāmsati

apām – of the water; upasthe – situated on the surface; mayi – in me; nāvi – in a boat; avasthitāḥ – standing; prajāḥ – living entities; bhavān – Yourself; adya – now; rirakṣiṣuḥ – desiring to protect; kila – indeed; saḥ – He; vīra-mūrtiḥ – in the form of a great hero; samabhūt – became; dharā-dharo – the protector of the planet earth; yaḥ – one who; mām – me; payasi – for the sake of milk; ugra-śaroḥ – with sharpened arrows; jighāmsati – you desire to kill.

My dear Lord, in this way You once protected me by rescuing me from the water, and consequently Your name has been famous as Dharādharma – He who holds the planet earth. Yet at the present moment, in the form of a great hero, You are about to kill me with sharpened arrows. I am, however, just like a boat on the water, keeping everything afloat.

- 5) What is the Sanskrit term for the total material energy?
- 6) How is the Lord's act of creation similar to modern electronics?
- 7) Which incarnation of the Lord formerly rescued the earth?

PURPORT: The Lord is known as Dharādharma, meaning, “He who keeps the planet earth on His tusks as the boar incarnation.” Thus the planet earth in the shape of a cow is accounting the contradictory acts of the Lord. 8 Although He once saved the earth, He now wants to upset the earth, which is like a boat on water. No one can understand the activities of the Lord. Due to a poor fund of knowledge, human beings sometimes think the Lord’s activities contradictory.

36 नूनं जनैरीहितमीश्वराणा-
मस्मद्विधैस्तद्गुणसर्गमायया
न ज्ञायते मोहितचित्तवर्त्मभि-
स्तेभ्यो नमो वीरयशस्करेभ्यः

*nūnam janair īhitam īśvarāṇām
asmad-vidhais tad-guṇa-sarga-māyayā
na jñāyate mohita-citta-vartmabhis
tebhyo namo vīra-yaśas-karebhyaḥ*

nūnam – surely; *janaiḥ* – by the people in general; *īhitam* – activities; *īśvarāṇām* – of the controllers; *asmad-vidhaiḥ* – like me; *tad* – of the Personality of Godhead; *guṇa* – of the modes of material nature; *sarga* – which brings forth creation; *māyayā* – by Your energy; *na* – never; *jñāyate* – are understood; *mohita* – bewildered; *citta* – whose minds; *vartmabhiḥ* – way; *tebhyaḥ* – unto them; *namaḥ* – obeisances; *vīra-yaśas-karebhyaḥ* – who bring renown to heroes themselves.

My dear Lord, I am also the creation of one of Your energies, composed of the three modes of material nature. Consequently I am bewildered by Your activities. Even the activities of Your devotees cannot be understood, and what to speak of Your pastimes. Thus everything appears to us to be contradictory and wonderful.

PURPORT: The activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His various forms and incarnations are always uncommon and wonderful. It is not possible for a tiny human being to estimate the purpose and plans of such activities; therefore Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has said that unless the Lord’s activities are accepted as inconceivable, they cannot be explained. The Lord is eternally existing as Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Goloka Vṛndāvana. He has also simultaneously expanded Himself in innumer-

- 8) Why does the earth think the Lord is acting in a contradictory way?
9) Who is Kṛṣṇa’s first manifestation?

able forms, beginning with Lord Rāma, Lord Nṛsiṃha, Lord Varāha, and all the incarnations coming directly from Saṅkarṣaṇa. Saṅkarṣaṇa is the expansion of Baladeva, and 9 Baladeva is the first manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore all these incarnations are known as *kalā*.

The word *īśvarāṇām* refers to all the Personalities of Godhead. As stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.39): *rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan*. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is confirmed that all the incarnations are partial expansions, or *kalā*, of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should not take the plural number of the word *īśvarāṇām* to mean that there are many Godheads. The fact is that God is one, but He exists eternally and expands Himself in innumerable forms and acts in various ways. Sometimes the common man is bewildered by all this and considers such activities contradictory, but they are not contradictory. There is a great plan behind all the Lord’s activities.

For our understanding it is sometimes said that the Lord is situated in the heart of the thief as well as in the heart of the householder, but the Supersoul in the heart of the thief dictates, “Go and steal things from that particular house,” and at the same time the Lord tells the householder, “Now be careful of thieves and burglars.” These instructions to different persons appear contradictory, yet we should know that the Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has some plan, and we should not consider such activities contradictory. The best course is to surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead wholeheartedly, and, being protected by Him, remain peaceful.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 18

मैत्रेय उवाच

1 इत्थं पृथुमभिष्टूय रुषा प्रस्फुरिताधरम्
पुनराहावनिर्भीता संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना

*maitreya uvāca
ittham pṛthum abhiṣṭūya
ruṣā prasphuritādharam
punar āhāvanir bhītā
saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā*

maitreyaḥ uvāca – the great saint Maitreya continued to speak; *ittham* – thus; *pṛthum* – unto King Pṛthu; *abhiṣṭūya* – after offering prayers; *ruṣā* – in anger; *prasphurita* – trembling; *adharam* – his lips; *punaḥ* – again; *āha* – she said; *avaniḥ* – the planet earth; *bhītā* – in fear; *saṁstabhya* – after settling; *ātmānam* – the mind; *ātmanā* – by the intelligence.

[Continued in the next issue.]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Fictitious Happiness

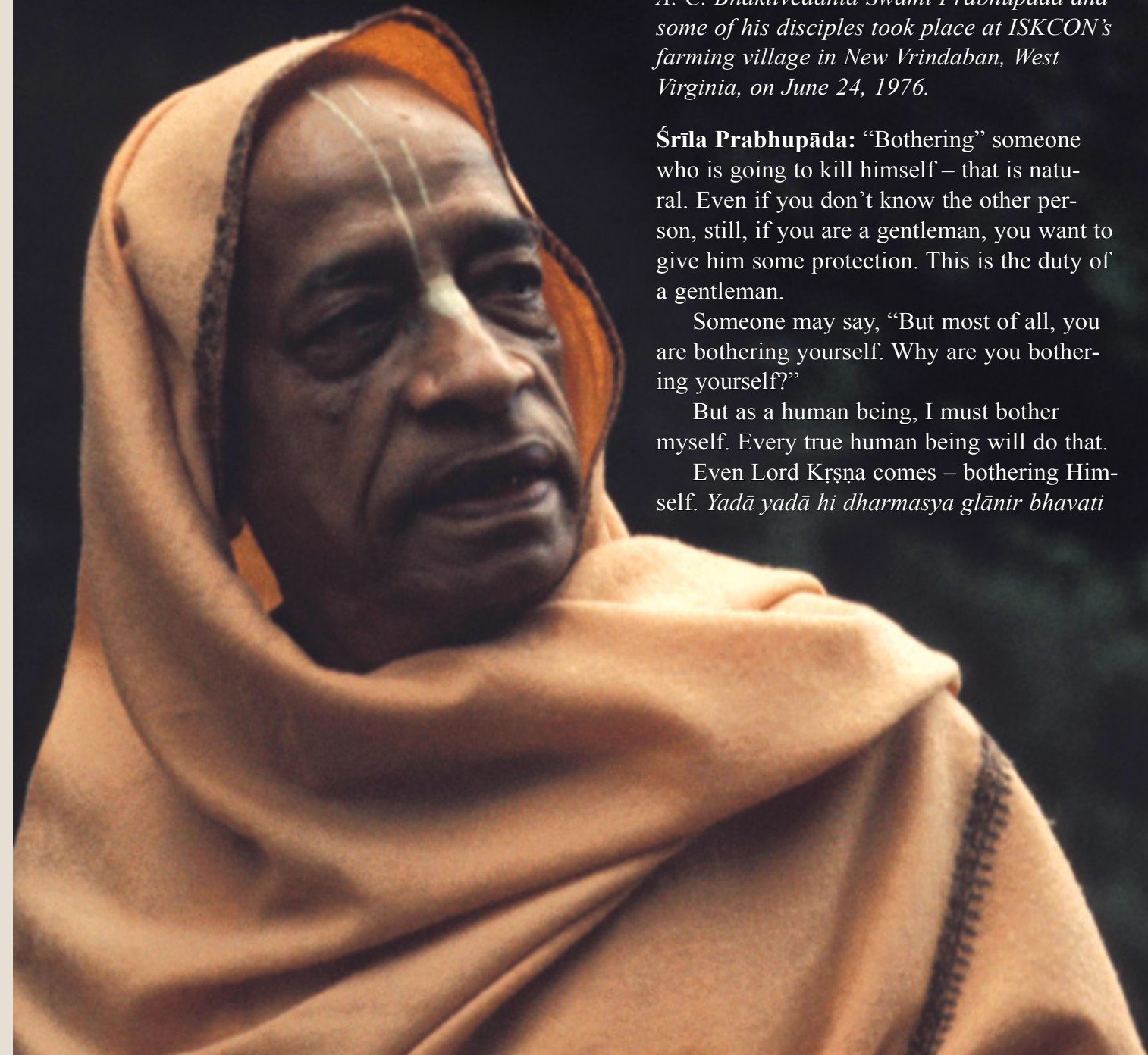
This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place at ISKCON’s farming village in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, on June 24, 1976.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Bothering” someone who is going to kill himself – that is natural. Even if you don’t know the other person, still, if you are a gentleman, you want to give him some protection. This is the duty of a gentleman.

Someone may say, “But most of all, you are bothering yourself. Why are you bothering yourself?”

But as a human being, I must bother myself. Every true human being will do that.

Even Lord Kṛṣṇa comes – bothering Himself. *Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati*



bhārata: “Whenever these people on earth become rascals and fools, I descend again and deliver them.”

So those who are servants of God – they are doing the very same thing, on behalf of God. And so they are exalted, because they are doing the work of God. They’re not cheating the public.

Therefore, for the sake of the people in general, I am requesting you to pursue this farming life with great enthusiasm. Help people to see this traditional, natural way of living. You must help them see how they can become happy, how they can go back to Godhead.

So advance this project – plain living, high thinking. This modern civilization is so nasty. A nasty civi-

leum supply stops, everything stops.

Just consider. All you need to do is grow some castor seed, press out the oil, put it in any pot, add a wick, and the light is there. The light is there. So even allowing that you may have somewhat improved the lighting system, still, lighting is not the main necessity of your life. And to stay artificially advanced – beyond the castor-oil lamp to this modern electric lamp – you have to work so horribly hard. You have to go to the middle of the ocean and bore into the ocean floor. In this way your real, spiritual business in life is forgotten. Finished.

God gave you so much energy and intelligence for attaining self-realization. First you must realize

or later, you have to give up this material body. All right, you may make a very nice arrangement for living here in comfort. But nature will not allow you to live here in comfort. You must die.

And after death you are going to get yet another material body. Perhaps in this life you are working to maintain a house with high-grade electrical lamps and so forth. You are working so hard – you have got your own business. But if next life, by the laws of nature, you get the body of a dog, then what is the benefit? You cannot check the laws of nature. So if nature rewards your business efforts with the body of a dog, what is the benefit? Hmm? What is the answer?

Disciple: Simple living, high thinking.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, but here is the charge. Now, what is your answer? In this life you may be living very comfortably. But if, due to neglecting God and your soul, in your next life you are going to be a dog, then what is the benefit?

This is the charge. Now, how will this “modern man” answer this charge? Can he deny he is going to be a dog?

Disciple: He’ll say he doesn’t believe it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He may believe or not believe. Take this little child. He is just a little boy, so he does not know anything about his future. But his mother knows, his father knows, and I know that some day he’s going to be a young man.

If he says, “No, I’m not going to be a young man,” it is childish. His father and mother know that this boy is going to grow into a young man, and so he should be properly educated. That is the guardians’ business.

Admittedly, a child – or one who is childish – doesn’t know what he is going to become in the future. He doesn’t know about his future life. But does that mean his future life is not a fact? 🙏

this precarious position you are in – repeatedly dying, life after life, and taking birth repeatedly in various species for more and more suffering. This is your problem, and this problem you are to solve now that you have received the human form. In human life, after all, you possess advanced intelligence. But instead of using this advanced intelligence for self-realization, modern man has used it to go from the castor-oil lamp to the electric lamp. That’s all.

Just try to understand. Modern civilization – what is the improvement? And by advancing from the castor-oil lamp to the electric lamp, you have forgotten your real business. You have lost your real self.

And yet this so-called civilization goes on and on. This is called *māyā*, illusion. For some fictitious happiness, you lose out on your real business, your whole purpose in life.

You may not admit it, but you are under the control of nature: sooner

lization, artificially increasing the so-called necessities of life. *Anartha* – unwanted, unbeneficial “improvements.”

Disciple: We would not have understood you if you had said that eight, ten years ago. Now we understand a little bit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Take this electric light, for example. Now, to get light we simply grow same castor seed and take the oil. As with everything else, we get light from the earth. The modern civilization gets light from complicated electric generators. But really, they get the power from petroleum. Which means they too get their power from the earth.

The difference is this: We get our power so very simply and easily. But to search out petroleum they have to dig deeply into the earth and even bore into the ocean floor. Therefore it is called *ugra-karma*, horrible work. And as soon as their petro-

You may not admit it, but you are under the control of nature: sooner or later, you have to give up this material body.

HOW I CAME TO KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

SPIRITUAL EXCHANGE

A Correspondence Leading to Kṛṣṇa

“I spent many years thinking that voidism and impersonalism were desirable concepts and that the goals of pursuing truth in those ways were noble aspirations.”

by Donna Lee

MY JOURNEY to Kṛṣṇa consciousness has been a long one, but it began to take formal shape through a correspondence with Satyarāja Dāsa, a devotee scholar whose writings have helped me along the path. That exchange of emails occurred a year ago, and since then I have relished the most glorious twelve months of my life. Since then, I have asked Girirāja Swami to allow me the outstanding privilege of becoming his disciple, and I am happy to say that I am now moving in that direction.

When I first wrote to Satyarāja, I thanked him for his considerate article on Buddhists and Vaiṣṇavas, clarifying ideas and misconceived notions I had carried with me for decades. I spent many years thinking that voidism (the idea that everything is nothing) and impersonalism (the notion that God is formless) were desirable concepts and that the goals of pursuing truth in those ways were noble aspirations.

When a close relationship went badly, I realized how adept I had become at wanting to block things out, at numbing myself to the very real feelings and perceptions



of interpersonal relationship and things that mattered. The calamitous end of the relationship in my life made me cautious of acknowledging any others, including one with God. So I leaned toward the impersonal. But more, the pain of my break-up exposed me to the harsh truth that after years of meditation practice, I was nowhere. I pondered the nature of love and also realized that at an advanced age, in spite of a long-term marriage (which ended after twenty-five years) and four children, I essentially knew very little about love.

All for the Love of Kṛṣṇa

The year before, a mere facsimile of the Gāyatrī mantra awakened me to Kṛṣṇa’s loving mercy. After hearing an appealing version of this mantra from a popular recording artist, I began to chant it 108 times each morning. After a few months had passed, I awoke with the following thought: IT’S ALL FOR THE LOVE OF KṚṢṆA, even if I didn’t know what that meant.

But the thought kept crossing my mind throughout the days to come. I believe it was chanting the mantra that

helped me recognize, at least on a theoretical level, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Paramātmā within my heart, accompanying me wherever I go. So there I was, abandoning Buddhist aspirations and sitting in the emptiness I had been successfully trained to tolerate when Kṛṣṇa’s far-reaching arms wrapped themselves around me and led me down the road to Govinda’s restaurant and temple in Tucson. There I met many delightful devotees, but especially Kṛṣṇa Kumārī, who has become a great friend, ally, educator, and mentor. And when she told me she was a friend of Satyarāja’s, well, I knew I was on the right path.

As part of this story I should say that I have a tiny yoga center in a tiny remote desert town. During my classes I began to interject: IT’S ALL FOR THE LOVE OF KṚṢṆA! Around this time, I began ordering art books, because Kṛṣṇa’s form became more and more alluring to me. Because I’m a visual artist, B. G. Sharma’s renditions of Kṛṣṇa and the book *Gods in Print* pulled me further along. In one of my exchanges with Satyarāja, I sent him one of my favorite Kṛṣṇa prints. He replied, “Regarding the picture you sent me of Kṛṣṇa with the blind bard, I wrote an article about this for BTG, and it ended up in my book *The Agni and the Ecstasy*. The article is enti-

tled, “Blind Visionaries: The Twin Lives of Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura and Sūrdās.”

Visually I began to embrace Kṛṣṇa’s beauty more and more. I then began to chant the *mahā-mantra*, appreciating not only the pop recordings by Krishna Das and George Harrison, but also genuine *kīrtanas* by ISKCON devotees. All of this further awakened me to the Paramātmā within my heart.

A Visit to Govinda’s

My home and yoga center is seventy miles from Tucson. After a session with an acupuncturist in the city, I realized that Govinda’s Vegetarian Buffet was just around the corner. Pulling into the temple grounds, I felt reassured that my life was moving ever consistently in the right direction. Though I still suffered from a feeling of separateness and isolation, I wrote to Satyarāja again, and it was at that time that he replied to one of my letters saying, “You’re one of us now.” He said it with such confidence. Those five words were cause for deep rejoicing. I knew it was true. I was ready. The stage had been set; all the experiences I needed to realize the truth and miracles of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission had occurred. I had finished my lessons in material living. Therefore,

everything I read and heard went off in my head like rockets to the Vaikuṅṭha planets.

But my heart was still down-trodden by the dissolution of my relationship; I knew I had to be proactive and come to understand my shortcomings, and that I needed to resolve certain things even as I progressed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Somehow I understood that happiness is the condition of true spiritual life, and I wasn’t yet happy in the way I am now. I knew that spiritual life in itself can make one happy, but I also knew that my unresolved issues could be obstacles, preventing me from pursuing my path with the needed enthusiasm.

Planning a Trip to Vrindavan

I had been in India a few years prior with a Tibetan Rinpoche, and many years before that I had traveled with Bikram Choudhury, founder of Bikram Yoga, to Agra, Delhi, and Pune. My desire to return – but this time with some Kṛṣṇa conscious background – fueled my life. I thought I would go back in a few years. But I began to feel a nudge to go to India very soon. I pushed it aside, saying, this is not the time to go, but the feeling wouldn’t go away. When I thought I had gotten it out of my system, the prodding would grow stronger.

So I began to investigate a trip to Vrindavan, the holy land of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The inner push, guidance, or voice told me to go for my sixty-sixth birthday, which would occur on November 9. I knew nothing of Kārttika, which occurs at that time. I was just listening to inner directives. After considerable soul-searching, I booked a five-week trip. In researching Vrindavan, I came across the Jiva Institute and thought I might stay there and view ISKCON from afar, wary of false teachers. I had no reason to think ISKCON teachers false, but because of my experience outside of ISKCON, I didn’t want to take any

chances. Following the Buddhist and impersonalist paths for so long, where I found many sincere people but just as many frauds and charlatans, caused me to realize that I had built my house on the wrong street, and I didn’t want to do that again. That’s why I was cautious.

I contacted Jaya Devī, the assistant to Jiva Institute’s guru, Satyanārāyaṇa. She replied that lodging would be available for me. I saw she had written a small book, *From Taj to Vraj*, and I also noticed that Satyarāja had endorsed her book. My world was getting smaller, and I felt certain I was on the right track. I made the arrangements.

Shortly afterward, however, His Holiness Girirāja Swami came to Govinda’s in Arizona to give brahminical initiation to Ananta Dāsa. There were only a few of us around, as the summer heat there can be intolerable. Sandāminī Dāsī, the temple founder and president, was in India, and the evening program was sparsely attended. When I finished dinner, I saw that Girirāja Swami was in the temple room with only one other person. I took the opportunity to introduce myself, and I benefited from a delightful conversation with him. I told him I would be going to Vrindavan, and he asked me questions about the nature of my visit. Looking back, I am embarrassed by my ignorance, but we have to begin somewhere, yes?

The evening drive home through the high Sonoran Desert is often exhilaratingly beautiful. That night the drive home was particularly wondrous. I had a happy heart! I knew Girirāja Swami was the real deal. I loved his sincerity and humor, and his quiet demeanor. Later on, when I began to read the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* I also knew that if I were to go further within Prabhupāda’s mission, I would have to have a spiritual master. At first I didn’t understand the term *spiritual master* because I was not ready to understand the relevance and importance of disciplic succession, or the all-important lin-

eage that bona fide gurus come in. But again, I believe surrender comes in different ways, at different times, to different people. For me, the time seemed right.

Request to Become a Disciple

I emailed Girirāja Swami with my awareness and request to become his disciple. Guru Mahārāja replied that if I were serious about my request, I would have to change my plans for India and associate with him before leaving. I will never forget that moment when the world as I had previously known it ceased. I knew I had to respond appropriately. I knew I had stepped into an accel-

I believe surrender comes in different ways, at different times, to different people. For me, the time seemed right.

erated time and a true spiritual relationship. Since my divorce so many years ago, I had been on my own. Now, I was required to put my life, once again, in someone else’s hands – but this time it was someone who was spiritually evolved and fully trustworthy.

Standing outside on the doorstep, I realized that moment of exchange with Girirāja Swami was the most serious moment to date. My travel plans were already made, house sitters lined up, tickets purchased, but upon realizing the impact of this decision and saying yes to His Holiness, my true spiritual life began and I made an about-face. The physical sensation of spiritually aligning myself correctly was visceral.

I was to meet with him in Dallas for three days before leaving for Vrindavan. Guru Mahārāja then arranged for me to attend the retreats sponsored by VIHE (Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education). Not only was I able to attend these amaz-

ing sessions, but I also stayed at the Kirtan Ashram for women and associated with the brilliant Viśākhā Prabhū. The Jiva Institute was no longer in my future.

But I can honestly say that my journey down the Vaiṣṇava path all began with Satyarāja, whose association was so valuable to me. He helped me to understand why Buddhist and impersonalist practices may have some merit regarding detachment and discipline but fall short in terms of true spiritual realization. Once I became aware of my relational situation with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, my life went into overdrive, and miracles continue to occur daily. Satyarāja’s

encouraging letters led me to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lotus feet. And I thank him forever for his kind, intelligent, and compassionate sincerity. In fact, I hope to return his service by this retelling of my story here in BTG, which I hope, in turn, will help others put aside impersonal voidism and know the glory of a relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

I also wish to thank *everyone* who has encouraged me and helped me along the way, especially Sandāminī Dāsī. As time passed and another year went by before my little story found its way into BTG, I also finished writing a book entitled *Up the Ladder*, now in editing. The book details the journey a bit more, taking me up to my impending initiation by His Holiness Girirāja Swami, and proves it is never too late to come to the lotus feet of the Supreme. Hare Kṛṣṇa. 🙏

The author has now been initiated as Dānakelī Devī Dāsī.

How to Put BTG in Your Will

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

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

A Riverbed Of Desire

A film on the plight of the Yamunā River fulfills a dancer's wish to portray the goddess Yamunā Devī.

by Shatakshi Goyal

ADREAM VISION: The curtains open slowly as if hesitating to reveal the concealed beauty of a moonlit forest. The gentle rays of the moon softly illuminate the leaves. The refreshing sound of splashing water from a scintillating waterfall combines with a soft, mournful drone that seems to shape the foggy mist dancing over the waterfall's lake. A gentle breeze makes the moon quiver in the river's palmlike ripples.

The sound of tinkling ankle bells enhances the aural beauty of the forest. A sudden breeze reveals in the mist a beautiful dancing female form that seems to emerge from the water, her

long blue cloth rippling behind her in the breeze. Long black hair curls around the goddess's moonlike face.

On awakening, enchanted by the beauty of the scene painted so vividly in my heart, I pray with tears in my sleepless eyes that one day I can materialize this vision by portraying the river Yamunā in her goddess form. That same day, I discuss with a fellow producer the possibility of a video shoot. He likes the concept and agrees to do whatever he can to help.

I'm thrilled. "Yamunā Devī" . . . "water goddess" . . . "cloth swirling" . . . "mist" – the words keep resonat-

ing in my heart. Despite several tries, I can't set my mind to anything else. In a dazed meditation on the mood and activities of Yamunā Devī, I finally settle myself into bed. "It's not going to happen overnight."

A Cherished Opportunity

The next day I receive a phone call from my father.

"Haribol?" I answer, holding breakfast in my right hand.

"Kṛṣṇa-līlā Devī Dāsī, director of Karuna Productions, is looking for a dancer in Vrindavan to enact the role of Yamunā Devī for her upcoming



The author strikes a pose (left) beside the Yamunā River north of Delhi, where the river is still clean. Above: an interview at a canal in Karnal, Haryana District. At left, director Kṛṣṇa-līlā Dāsī directs an interviewee.



Essentially no Yamunā water gets past the Okhla Barrage in Delhi (above and right), where sewage and industrial waste flood the riverbed, creating a horrible stench. Vṛndāvana Vinoda Dāsa (above right) helped coordinate interviews for the film.



Divine Arrangements in Mayapur

I was taken onboard the project, and the safari started. I reached Mayapur, West Bengal, where I was to meet Kṛṣṇa-līlā Devī; Suravarya Dāsa, the sound operator; and Gaura Govinda Dāsa, the cameraman for the first shoot. For the desired music-video effect, the dance was to be recorded in three locations: an auditorium setup with focused lights, in a “forest of Vrindavan” along the banks of Yamunā with another dancer



enacting Kṛṣṇa, and finally at the Hathni Kund Barrage (dam) in the north Indian state of Haryana where the Yamunā River is being diverted from her natural course.

Everything was happening so spontaneously I felt like a spectator watching a film unravel in front of my eyes. My thoughts drifted through the sequence of what was happening in my life: my desire to do a dance choreography for Yamunā Devī, then Kṛṣṇa-līlā’s search for a dancer in Vrindavan, then choreographing an Odissi dance on English lyrics, then arranging a blue Odissi costume that would fit me only days before the shoot, and now the booking of the auditorium. Despite many obstacles, the auditorium shoot in Mayapur, from booking to filming, fell together quickly. It felt like everything was already orchestrated, and we were just the pegs blissfully being pushed into place. Really it’s true, I thought, the bliss one feels in performing devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is unmatched by any other form of pleasure. It’s full of excitement,

adventure, and freshness at every step, and with each realization, the nectar increases.

Blessings Bestowed

As we drove to the next filming location, Vrindavan, a town of great spiritual significance and a historic place of worship of the Yamunā River, I thought about how eight months earlier, on a very beautiful spot on the Yamunā bank, I had tried to film the pastime of Yamunā Devī surrendering to Lord Balarāma. I recalled the

struggle due to lack of resources, and praying with tears in my eyes for a qualified team to do a shoot someday.

Wow! I pondered, frozen in disbelief and awe. Here I am today, part of the crew for the *Rescuing the Stolen River* film on Śrī Yamunā Devī.

Did Yamunā Devī actually hear my prayers? Is this really her blessing in reply?

I felt incredibly insignificant and undeserving to enact her pain. I repeatedly prayed to Yamunā Devī. With my material limitations, only by her blessings would I be able to emote and convey her pain.

A Dead River

After a few days in Vrindavan, we set off for Okhla Barrage in Delhi. This time we had six new members of our party: Madayantī Devī Dāsī, ISKCON’s Save Yamuna Campaign coordinator; Vṛndāvana Vinoda Dāsa, who helped with the local interviews and arrangements; Ravi Monga, who informed us about the details of the Yamunā’s pollution at each point in the tour; Muralika, a young celebrity who gives spiritual discourses all over India; her younger sister Sriji; and their aunt.

As we passed over the bridge at Okhla Barrage, we noticed a floppy,

film *Rescuing the Stolen River.*”

“She is *what?*”

“... a dance for a film on Yamunā Devī.”

How, I wonder, have I received this opportunity to work on the very subject of my meditation from yesterday, with an experienced film producer who has made feature films on art, science, spirituality, religion, vegetarianism, and the environment?

My father’s voice breaks my reverie.

“Check the emails she sent you.”

Still holding breakfast, I hurriedly navigate to my email with my left hand. There it is: “To give the film an artistic depth, I am looking for a girl in Vrindavan who could ‘impersonate’ Yamunā Devī.”

bubbly hill of foam about six feet tall covering the river beneath us. We opened the car doors, and were greeted with a gust of warm, salty, strong, disgusting odor. Mild winds caressed the whitish foam as bits of it occasionally flew by us. The stench was so unbearable I was unsure I would survive the next hour of filming. My stomach writhed as if disgusted from the smell. Worried that I might vomit, I was forced to breathe through my mouth.

Here was our very own dear Yamunā Devī, whom we worship

daily as our mother and whose water is used by residents along her banks to purify themselves.

I felt like my hair, clothes, mouth – everything – had absorbed a good dose of sewage scent. I felt so incredibly ashamed. How was this possible? An untreated river of household waste and poisonous industrial waste was flowing toward the ocean, and along its course the people using it were dying.

Ravi informed us that according to UNICEF, 23% of the children consuming this water were dying

of arsenic poisoning. Who could believe that less than 2% of the river's course – from Wazirabad north of New Delhi, to Okhla in South Delhi – was contributing to 70% of the pollution? I realized firsthand why the United Nations declared the Yamunā “a dead river.” Industrialists are not cleaning up their waste, nor is the government, where corrupt bureaucrats allow industrialists to pollute at will. Despite having 25% of India's sewage-treatment capacity, Delhi treats only 61% of its sewage.

Helpless Government

We were now ready to confront R. M. Bharadwaj, the leading scientist of India's Central Pollution Control Board. We met Mr. Bharadwaj at his office in New Delhi, and he managed to speak at great lengths on other challenges: the unforeseen increase in population, the outdated and inadequate water-treatment procedures to process modern industrial wastes, the impossibility of stopping agriculture, which sustains the country.

We interrupted, pointing out that

the Karnal district of Haryana, north of Delhi, is the biggest rice exporter in Asia, exporting more than 80% of the rice grown there. It is not using the Yamunā's water for feeding the people of India.

Attempting to cover his misleading statement, he diverted the topic to more effective irrigation methods, like sprinklers or drip systems and crop rotation. Up to 80% of the water evaporates because of flood irrigation during the eight months of summer.

Once again I was shocked. Ninety-

seven percent of the water is being diverted for irrigation, out of which 80% dries up because of carelessness (flood irrigation), threatening the lives of children. Yet there were no concrete plans to stop careless irrigation, and no mention of treating the sewage, returning the Yamunā to her natural course, or preventing the death of children.

The Stolen River

The water rights of a small group of farmers in Haryana had been



Kṛṣṇa-līlā Dāsī (left) collects clean water from the Yamunā River north of Delhi. At right: an interview with Sriji (at right in the photo), who is involved in the campaign to restore the river.



increased to such an extent that they completely overruled every other person's most basic human right to share this natural resource. The river was not only polluted, but it was actually *stolen*. When man makes a massive decision to divert 97% of the freshwater flow of a river and replace it with sewage, the consequences will be similarly massive. Death from arsenic poisoning, death of aquatic life, pollution of the riverbed, chemical wastes going untreated into the ocean, and the great loss of an ancient culture and tradition of worship associated with this holy river are just a few of the tragic

Pilgrims take part in the traditional worship of the sacred Yamunā (right). Below, a cameraman for "Stolen River" films a sadhu at a protest march for the river. Bottom: the author as Yamunā Devī dances with Kṛṣṇa.



results we can see today.

"It's a democracy," Mr. Bharadwaj concluded. "It's very hard. We're not China."

We came out of the office convinced the government was not at all interested in fixing the problem. But our visit was a necessary step of the journey, and we were now ready to move to the next one.

Questions

Exhausted both emotionally and physically from the disagreeable sights and conversations of the day, I felt unsettled. I decided to Skype my father, a technical hydrologist by profession, hoping he would have

some answers to my questions.

What does it technically mean for a river to be declared dead?

His response sounded so morbid: A river is dead when it cannot sustain aquatic life. That reminded me of my childhood readings of Prabhupāda's book *Kṛṣṇa*, when the residents of Vrindavan could not use the water of the Yamunā River, poisoned by the great serpent Kāliya.

I told my father how disappointing it was to speak to the head of India's Central Pollution Control Board and how he barely spoke about treating the sewage, and said nothing about allowing the freshwater to flow.

I asked my father, "Does the river need any freshwater flow, or is it

ecologically safe for the riverbed to receive only treated sewage water?"

My father's response was strong and clear: Aquatic life needs a certain amount of oxygen content in the aqueous solution. The amount of oxygen content as the river passes through Delhi is zero. Hence, to sustain life we must add at least some percentage of freshwater flow to the treated sewage in Delhi.

Our Imprisoned Mother

The next day we drove to the Karnal district of Haryana to see freshwater canals irrigating the rice fields. The fragrance of the freshwater and tender plants on the banks of the

canals was a stark contrast to the stench at Okhla Barrage. Later that day we met brokers and exporters and visited a mill to see how rice is processed. The stream of white rice grains pouring out of machines into jute bags looked as if Yamunā water falling from the Kalinda Mountain was being packaged and exported.

The next morning we set out for Hathni Kund Barrage, where Yamunā Devī was being torn into two canals, both diverting her waters to Haryana, leaving her original riverbed dry. I sat there motionless, hearing her waters pound against the prisonlike walls of the dam. As my thoughts silenced, I could hear her cry grow louder.

Tormented by emotions and painful feelings, we started walking towards the other side of the dam. There she was, scintillating like a mine of crystals, holding the reflection of the sun in her watery hands. The most beautiful pure waters flowed unchecked from the Kalinda Mountain.

Yamunā Devī's natural beauty reminded me of His Holiness Śivarāma Swami's enchanting descriptions in his book *Veṅu-gītā*. When Kṛṣṇa played His flute, Yamunā Devī's waters would swim in circles to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's song. Her wave-like arms longed to embrace her Śyāma in the land of Vraja. Desiring

to drink every drop of nectar emanating from Śyāma's flute, even the water that had already passed by would return, reversing the current's flow. Such is the glory of this transcendental personality, Yamunā Devī.

The scene looked divinely painted. The reddish sky held the glowing orange globe just inches above the horizon, as if frozen to serve as a gorgeous backdrop for the film. A beautiful reflection scintillated on the waves in the majestic river, providing a yellow-orange lighting effect on my "dance stage." The sounds of her waters splashing against rocks rejuvenated my being. I hurried to a small island of rocks

in the river and started to enact the heartrending lyrics of "Shyam" by Pia Richardson. I prayed for grace as I tried to keep from tumbling on the rocks. Meditating on *Veṅu-gītā*'s beautiful description of how Yamunā Devī responds to hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute-song, I opened up my heart and offered the dance.

A Bed of Longing

As we drove back to Keshi Ghat, I recalled a conversation with Śivarāma Swami. Yamunā Devī is always flowing in Vraja in *aprakaṭa*, or unmanifested, form, he said, but her disappearance in *dr̥ṣṭvā* form, or that

which we can see, shows that she is offended by how Vrindavan is being exploited – dirt and filth everywhere, rampant corruption, lack of building codes. Śivarāma Swami reminded us that our Save Yamuna Campaign is not just about moving politicians, courts, and policy makers; it's also meant to create a bed of desire and welcome to show Yamunā Devī that we want her to return to Vrindavan. If she wants to come, she can just burst that dam in Delhi and come straight through. So it's not the dam that's going to keep her there.

Having reached Keshi Ghat, we looked at the dark water flowing by. If only we could offer Yamunā Devī

a riverbed of desire to draw her back to Vraja. To this end, the film crew vowed to stop eating rice grown with Yamunā water until she is revived. With heavy hearts and a tinge of satisfaction for having completed our first step in this mission, we offered Yamunā Devī her own crystal-clear water from Hathni Kund as a symbol of offering our desire for her to return. The transcendental journey had now truly begun. 🙏

For more information about the film, visit www.stolenriverfilm.com.

For more information on the Save Yamuna Campaign, visit <http://saveyamuna.org/>.

Shatakshi Goyal was born near Haridwar, India, and raised in the ISKCON community of Boise, Idaho, where her parents home-schooled her. She completed her education in electrical and computer engineering from Boise State University at age eighteen. After working for two years as an engineer, she decided to pursue a cherished childhood dream to study the Indian classical arts. She moved to Vrindavan, where she lives with her parents. She often travels around India, organizing dances based on Sanskrit dramas written by the Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs and ācāryas.



CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to www.vaisnavacalendar.com.

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

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa (August 19–September 16)

SEPTEMBER

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

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

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

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

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

15 – Disappearance anniversary

of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

16 – Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

Month of Padmanābha (September 17–October 16)



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

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

27 – **Pakṣa-vardinī Mahā-dvādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans for Indirā Ekādaśī.

OCTOBER

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

12 – **Pāśāṅkuśā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

Month of Dāmodara (October 17–November 14)

23 – Appearance of Radha-kunda.

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

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

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

NOVEMBER

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

COOPERATE (continued from page 42)

do? Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself wanted our cooperation. He is God, Kṛṣṇa. And therefore cooperation is a very important thing . . . Nobody should think that, "I have got so great ability. I can do." No. It is simply by cooperation we can do a very big thing. "United we stand, divided we fall." *Saṅkīrtana*. *Saṅkīrtana* means many men combined together, chanting. That is *saṅkīrtana*. Otherwise *kīrtana*. *Saṅkīrtana* means many, many combined together. That is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. 🌟

NOTES

1. In his will Prabhupāda identifies his Governing Body Commission (GBC) as ISKCON's "ultimate managing authority," not to replace him but to organize ISKCON's preaching

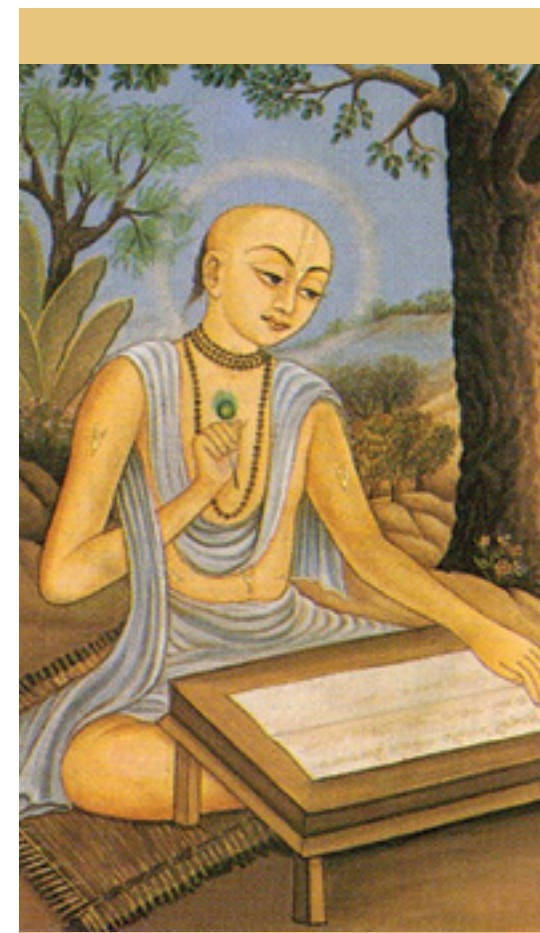
so that it is in line with his instructions. For more on this subject go to http://gbc.iskcon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/FINAL-LINES-OF-AUTHORITY_TIRUPATI_Nov-20th-2012.pdf.

2. The name Vedic cosmographers give to our contentious times.
3. The kind of dialectic that juxtaposes opposing points then seeks their resolution through thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.
4. Chanting the sixteen-word Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra around a strand of 108 beads equals one round.
5. *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, Vol. 2, Planting the Seed, Chapter 19: "Planting the Seed."
6. Brahmānanda Dāsa in *Swamiji*, by Steven J. Rosen, p. 30.
7. Located about seventy miles north of Kolkata, Mayapur is the hometown of Lord Caitanya, Kṛṣṇa's

"Golden Avatar," who popularized the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa over five hundred years ago.

In the next issue: Before we look at different ways to access and develop a personal, loving relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, in Part 9 we'll examine and clear up some misunderstandings about him.

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.



FREE ONLINE COURSE

The Thematic Essence of Jīva Gosvāmī's Six Sandarbhas

This course, taught by Cārucandra Dāsa under the auspices of ISKCON Baltimore, is being presented online via video teleconferencing. It consists of six modules, each covering one of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Six Sandarbhas*. Each module is 24 weekly classes. Following completion of Modules 1 & 2, *Śrī Tattva- & Bhagavat-sandarbha*, respectively, Module 3, on *Śrī Paramātmā-sandarbha*, begins in January 2017. This is a treatise on Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's localized expansion, the Supersoul, who is situated in every living entity's heart and in every atom of the universe. He is both the source and the ingredients of the creation. This *Sandarbha* also discusses the ontology of the living entities and material nature as distinct potencies of Paramātmā, or the Supersoul.

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda the Healer

AMONG THE MANY ways in which Śrīla Prabhupāda differed from other gurus who arrived in America in the sixties was his insistence that his disciples follow certain rules, or “regulative principles,” the four main ones being no gambling, no illicit sex, no intoxication, and no meat-eating. “Disciple,” he would say, “means discipline.”

Prabhupāda would often quote a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.1) where Lord Rṣabhadeva instructs his sons to not waste their lives chasing the pleasures available to hogs and dogs, but to undertake “penance and austerity” to attain unending happiness.

Prabhupāda often compared our condition in material existence to being sick. We’re spiritual beings, and in our healthy state we taste full satisfaction and bliss at every moment. But now the poison of desires hostile to our natural position as servants of Kṛṣṇa has infected us. To recover our health and live happily again in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we need to get rid of the poison.

Ordinary medical treatment usually requires sacrifice on the part of the patient, such as taking medicine and adjusting one’s daily activities. Similarly, to cure our spiritual illness, we need to follow the healing regimen prescribed by Lord Kṛṣṇa and His representative, the authorized spiritual master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would point to two main components of many cures: medicine and diet. The medicine for returning us to healthy Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and the diet is *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. Their power to act effectively requires a supportive way of life. And that’s the role of the four regulative principles and other rules of behavior. We accept them because we want to get rid of the disease infecting our consciousness.

The first step in any cure is the diagnosis; unless we know we’re sick, we won’t do anything about it. The symptom of our spiritual disease is our inability to acquire the happiness we work so hard for. The urge for happiness powers everything we do.

Once, when a reporter asked Śrīla Prabhupāda what the purpose of life is, he replied, “To enjoy.” The answer surprised his disciples, who had often heard him say that human life is not meant for enjoyment but for austerity. Prabhupāda explained that, as pure spirit souls and eternal parts of Kṛṣṇa, our true nature (our true life) is to enjoy but we’re not enjoying now because we’re caught up in material bodies, which can never deliver real enjoyment. Our very bodies are a symptom of our diseased state.

In former ages, yogis would perform severe *tapa*, or penance, to raise their consciousness from the material plane to the spiritual. The most effective *tapa*, however, and perhaps the most difficult, is to give up one’s challenging spirit and agree to follow the direction of Kṛṣṇa’s pure representative. As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.24), “The order is received from the Lord, either directly or through the bona fide spiritual master, and to execute that order, however painstaking, is the severe type of penance. One who follows the principle rigidly is sure to achieve success in attaining the Lord’s mercy.”

The desire for happiness is natural for all living beings. But, as the fourteenth-century poet Vidyāpati wrote, the little happiness we manage to eke out by material means is like a drop of water in a desert. It’s nowhere near enough to satisfy us. Though we legitimately long for lasting happiness, we’re not getting it – because we’re spiritually sick. Fortunately for us, Śrīla Prabhupāda has brought the cure.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

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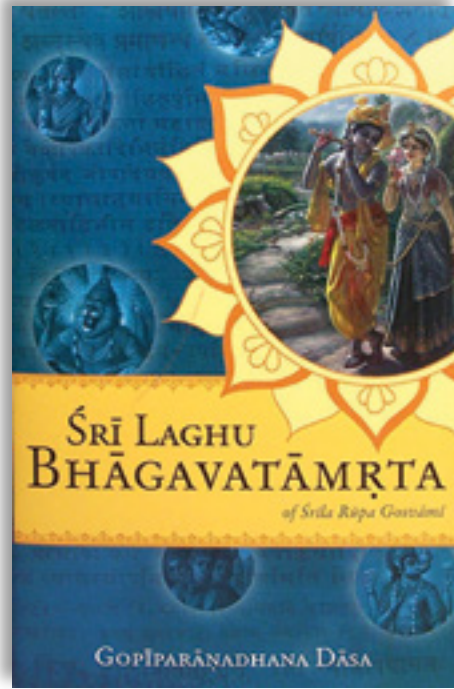
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VEDIC THOUGHTS

The ambition to corroborate the existence of the transcendental Absolute Truth by limited conjec-tural endeavors cannot be fulfilled, because He is beyond the scope of our limited speculative minds. In an honest search for truth, we must admit that His powers are inconceivable to our tiny brains.

His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 2.96, Purport

Sing the glories of Kṛṣṇa. Glorify Kṛṣṇa, worship Kṛṣṇa, and chant the name of Kṛṣṇa. Do not think of anything other than Kṛṣṇa. If you have any affection for Me, then don't speak about any topics other than Kṛṣṇa. Whether you are sleeping, eating, or waking, day and night think of Kṛṣṇa and chant His name.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya-khaṇḍa 28.25–28

One who does not desire anything within this world, who has achieved peace by controlling his senses, whose consciousness is equal in all conditions, and whose mind is completely satisfied in Me finds only happiness wherever he goes.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.13

By constant truthfulness, transcendental knowledge, and austerity, one becomes eligible to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.5

Those who are less intelligent accept the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies as all in all. They do not know that the purpose of the *Vedas* is to understand one's own home, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead lives. Not being interested in their real home, they are illusioned and search after other homes.

Śrī Nārada Muni
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.29.48

How much power does the name of Kṛṣṇa possess? My heart constantly burns in the fire of worldly desires, like a desert scorched by the sun. The holy name, entering within my heart through the holes of my ears, showers unparalleled nectar upon my soul.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Kṛṣṇa Nāma Dhare Kota Bal, Verse 1

Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Your dear associates You are splendidly manifested in Your eternally blissful abode, which bears the name Vraja. How merciful are You? We cannot understand how merciful. We cannot understand. Rejecting everything else, we choose only You. In this way we will become pure in heart.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī
Yam Śrīmān Vraja Rāja Sindhuja, Verse 9

In the Vedic literature, including the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Purāṇas*, and *Mahābhārata*, from the very beginning to the end, as well as within the middle, only Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is explained.

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September 24: Philadelphia Rathayātrā

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November 19–21: New Talavan, Mississippi, 50th Anniversary of ISKCON Festival

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Remaining 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.



Śrīla Prabhupāda at San Francisco Rathayātrā, 1974