

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



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Kulimela

The Next Generation



On the tenth anniversary of the first Kulimela, Kulis explore how to create a new and better world for future generations.



Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

BACK to GODHEAD

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COVER Three generations of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees met in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, last summer on the tenth anniversary of the previous youth-centered festival there. Please see the article beginning on page 46. (Photo by Abhaya Sofsky and Halavah Sofsky.)

"Genuine love requires that we center our love on God, on Kṛṣṇa. That love can make this world as blissful as the spiritual world, where the human beings love Kṛṣṇa, the animals love Kṛṣṇa, the trees love Kṛṣṇa, everyone loves Kṛṣṇa – where everyone loves everyone, because Kṛṣṇa is the central point. That is the perfection of civilization, the perfection of love." – p. 38

WELCOME



Last year was the fiftieth anniversary of ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which means that Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees in the form of followers of His Divine

Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda are now in their third generation. Devotees from all three generations met for a four-day Kulimela festival in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, last June. There was plenty of Kṛṣṇa conscious activity for all ages, including serious adult discussions about ensuring a positive experience of spiritual life for the movement's children today and for generations to come.

At the other end of life's spectrum, we honor the passing of His Holiness Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami. We ran a short "In Memoriam" about him in the last issue, and when Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī, inspired by his example, proposed to write a feature article on his life, we encouraged her to do so.

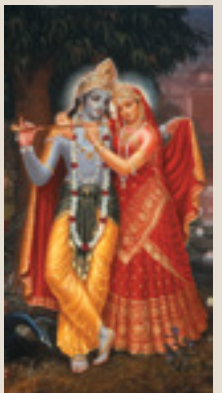
This issue corresponds with the festival of Gaura Pūrṇimā, celebrating the divine appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu 531 years ago. To commemorate this holy event, Satyarāja Dāsa discusses the significance of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, eight verses of deep spiritual lessons.

Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa's "Fatalism or Pragmatism?" deals with the interplay of destiny and human initiative.

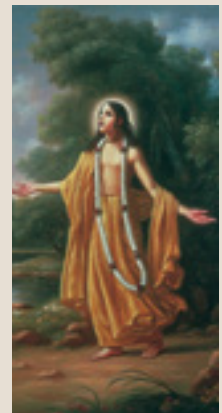
Hare Kṛṣṇa. – Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

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

From Voidist to Personalist

I read "Spiritual Exchange: A Correspondence Leading to Kṛṣṇa" in the September/October issue with great interest. The author's transition from Donna Lee, voidist and impersonalist, to Dānakelī Devī Dāsī, enthusiastic devotee of Kṛṣṇa, brings to mind a similar transition that Bhakta Dan (Daniel Cooper Clark, aka Dāmodara Dāsa) made in the early days of our movement. This is recorded in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*. Dan was an out-and-out voidist, and our wonderful Śrīla Prabhupāda worked his magic on him, going around his mind and influencing his heart directly.

Su-gītā Vāṇī Devī Dāsī
Via the Internet

Getting Rid of Problems

I am facing a lot of problems in my personal life and want to get rid of them. I have no materialistic desires. Can you please help me?

Rajender
Via the Internet

Our reply: The scriptures teach us that a person free of material desire should be happy, with no anxiety. You are recognizing the material miseries that come from the soul's being within a material body. What to do? Become more conscious of Kṛṣṇa and keep busy in His business and service. Any anxieties in Kṛṣṇa's service become pleasure because He is pleased.

In the material world no one is ever fully satisfied. You are not alone. It is a miserable place, and not our real home.

We should finish up our material business and take to the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa. That will keep us happy and minimize the negative things that prove that this world is not a nice place. By perfecting our Kṛṣṇa

consciousness, we will not take another material birth. Try to remind yourself that all difficulties are only temporary. Try not to dwell on them, and recognize them as a sign from Kṛṣṇa that we need to get serious about our spiritual life.

Devotees and Nondevotees

I am finding difficulty in identifying who are devotees and who are nondevotees. If someone is good in character, is he a devotee? Or is only a Vaiṣṇava a devotee?

Amal Kṛṣṇa Dāsa
Via the Internet

Our reply: "Vaiṣṇava" means a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. And a Vaiṣṇava is someone who by words and actions reminds others of Kṛṣṇa. We should keep the company of such a person. From Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Nectar of Instruction* you can learn about different levels of devotees and how you should relate to each of them. A Vaiṣṇava always talks about Kṛṣṇa and has many ideal qualities. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī lists twenty-six prominent ones in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Knowing these can help you to identify the pure devotee.

If at all possible, a devotee should try to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to everyone. That is the best way to associate with nondevotees. Like all souls, they are eternal lovers of the Lord, but they have forgotten.

Anger Problem

I become angry at small things. I have a big ego problem. I can't take things that aren't going my way. I do regret and apologize, but in spite of understanding this fact, I don't change my behavior. I feel helpless and have stopped seeing myself as

a good and sympathetic person. What should I do?

Maggi
Via the Internet

Our reply: You have honestly identified the problem: the false ego. As souls in material bodies, we all have this misidentification problem; we think we are the body. We must discover our real ego buried in the misconceptions of our mind and intelligence.

Our real ego is that we are each an eternal spirit soul, part of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, or God. He Himself recommends that we purify our consciousness by hearing spiritual sound and performing devotional service. These activities will reconnect us with Him.

Read the *Bhagavad-gītā*, take up the glorification of the Lord, and get

your senses busy in Kṛṣṇa's service. We have to change some things to get out of our bad habits, like anger, jealousy, greed, and all-around selfishness. We have to start thinking of someone else – God – and our relationship with Him.

It is natural in the material world to be unhappy, angry, and dissatisfied. Our soul hankers for the eternal satisfaction of a spiritual life, full of service to God and others. With proper association and engagement in the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in time you will experience a higher pleasure and peace of mind.

Engaging in Service

I would love to engage in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but I do not know what the conditions and rules are.

Sorry to say, but I'm ashamed that, for example, I may not be able to stop eating onions.

Himanshi
Via the Internet

Our reply: Serve Kṛṣṇa with all your heart and soul, mind and deeds, and He will be happy. As your taste for that service increases, He will help you give up your bad habits. Don't let them get in your way. Just serve Kṛṣṇa, and you will see them go away gradually. Many devotees were formerly victims of bad habits, but by engaging in the Lord's service even for one day, they were able to give them up. Devotional service is very powerful and can rid the conditioned soul of its deeply ingrained sinful desires.

Women and Tulasī Mālā

I would like to know the rules regarding women wearing Tulasī mālā.

Deepika
Via the Internet

Our reply: Śrīla Prabhupāda, ISKCON's founder-ācārya, wanted all his disciples, both men and women, to wear Tulasī mālā (neck beads) all the time. Once, when a group of women visiting the temple were rolling chapatis in the kitchen, he insisted that they all immediately put on Tulasī mālā. For his disciples, he said the mālā should never be removed. If necessary for working outside, they could be worn lower so they didn't show. Tulasī mālā are protective and identify us as Vaiṣṇavas, reminding others of Kṛṣṇa. Other groups may have different traditions, but ISKCON has no restrictions for women in this regard. 🙏

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

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TRY TO UNDERSTAND KṚṢṆA

To truly benefit, we have to go beyond a superficial view of Kṛṣṇa and learn how great He really is.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu
kaścid yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānām
kaścin mām vetti tattvataḥ*

“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.”— *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.3

WE HAVE TO understand Kṛṣṇa in truth – not superficially, but in fact. Kṛṣṇa says in the beginning of this chapter,

*mayy āsakta-manāḥ pārtha
yogaṃ yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ
asamśayaṃ samagraṃ mām
yathā jñāsyasi tac chr̥ṇu*

“Now hear, O son of Pṛthā, how by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt.” (*Gītā* 7.1) We

have to understand how Kṛṣṇa is truth, the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth is described in three phases in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11):

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṃ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramāmeti
bhagavān iti śabdyate*

“Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā, or Bhagavān.”

In today’s verse it is said, *tattvataḥ* – “in truth.” The Absolute Truth is called *tattva*. One who has complete knowledge is called *tattva-vid*. Knowledge of the truth is nondual, *advaya-jñāna*. The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding, namely Brahman, or the impersonal all-pervasive spirit; Paramātmā, or the localized aspect of the Supreme within the heart of all living entities; and Bhagavān, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eyes are like perfect lotus petals, His bodily color is that of a monsoon cloud, and His garments are the color of lightning. He has two arms, and His hand is held in the jñāna-mudrā. He wears a garland of forest flowers.” (Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad 1.9)



Generally, those who inquire about the Absolute Truth come to the point of *brahma-jñāna*. Then, if one makes further advancement, he can understand *paramātmā-jñāna*, then *bhagavad-jñāna*. *Bhagavān iti śabdyate*. That *bhagavān* is Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28). *Bhagavān* means “opulent”:

*aiśvaryasya samagrasya
vīryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ
jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva
saññāṃ bhāgam itīṅganā
(Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.47)*

This verse says that Bhagavān is one who possesses complete wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation. Nowadays there are so many so-called Bhagavāns, but this is the first question: *aiśvarya-samagrasya* – do you possess all the wealth? Who can say so? A person is living by begging, and he’s claiming to be Bhagavān. That is not the definition of Bhagavān. Bhagavān must possess all the wealth. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29), *bhoktāraṃ yajña-tapasām sarva-loka-maheśvaram*: “I am the proprietor of all the planetary systems, all the universes.” One who is begging for his livelihood and claiming “I am Bhagavān” does not know what Bhagavān is. These rascals who unnecessarily, unceremoniously claim to be Bhagavān do not know what Bhagavān is.

Kṛṣṇa, the Cause Of All Causes

Bhagavān is described in the *Brahma-saṃhitā* (5.48):

*yasyaika-niśvasita-kālam
athāvalambya
jīvanti loma-vilajā
jagad-aṇḍa-nāthāḥ
viṣṇur mahān sa iha
yasya kalā-viśeṣo
govindam ādi-puruṣaṃ
tam ahaṃ bhajāmi*

“Mahā-Viṣṇu, into whom all the innumerable universes enter and from whom they come forth again simply by His breathing process, is a plenary expansion of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore I worship Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, the cause of all causes.” This is one of the descriptions of Bhagavān, Govinda. Kṛṣṇa is Govinda. *Govindam ādi-puruṣam*: He’s the original, primeval Lord.

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

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa, who has a body of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He has no beginning, for He is the beginning of everything. He is the cause of all causes.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1)

Bhagavān has an unlimited number of expansions. It is stated, “Just as you cannot count how many waves are flowing in a river, similarly you cannot count how many expansions there are of Bhagavān.”

One of the expansions of Bhagavān is Mahā-Viṣṇu. *Kalā-viśeṣaḥ*. *Kalā* means part of the expansion – not a direct expansion, but part of the expansion. That is called *kalā*. *Aṁśa-kalā*. *Aṁśa* means direct expansion, and *kalā* means expansion of the *aṁśa*. Mahā-Viṣṇu is described as *kalā-viśeṣaḥ*, an expansion of the *aṁśa*, or a secondary expansion. And who is Mahā-Viṣṇu? He is the source of millions of universes. *Jagad-aṅḍa* means this universe. There are millions and millions of universes. This universe that you are seeing is only one. There are millions. This information we get from the Vedic literature:

*yasya prabhā prabhavato
jagad-aṅḍa-koṭi-
koṭiśvaśeṣa-vasudhādi-
vibhūti-bhinnaṁ
tad brahma niṣkalam
anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam
govindam ādi-puruṣam
tam aham bhajāmi
(Brahma-saṁhitā 5.40)*

The *brahma-jyotir*, or *brahma-jñāna*, is just like the rays of God. As the sunshine is the rays of the sun globe, similarly the rays of the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are the *brahma-jyotir*. And within that *brahma-jyotir* there are innumerable universes. We have given the picture of this on the cover of our *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In each universe there are innumerable planets, and all of this is a partial exhibition of Kṛṣṇa’s potency. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42):

*athavā bahunaitena
kim jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idam kṛtsnam
ekāṁśena sthito jagat*

“But what need is there, Arjuna, for all this detailed knowledge? With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.” All the universes are simply a partial exhibition of a partial expansion of Kṛṣṇa.

Not for Superficial Study

In this way you have to study Kṛṣṇa. Not that “Kṛṣṇa was born in His maternal uncle’s house at Mathura, and He played with the *gopīs* or the cowherd boys.” That is actual fact, but one should understand how great Kṛṣṇa is. That is called *tattvataḥ*.

People simply superficially study Kṛṣṇa. Therefore they cannot understand how great Kṛṣṇa is. In the Western world they say, “God is great.” But one should understand how great He is. That is *tattvataḥ*. Otherwise, we shall be misled.

Avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīṅ tanum āśritam (Gītā. 9.11). The ras-

cal, fools, asses – *mūḍhāḥ* means asses – deride Kṛṣṇa. “Oh, Kṛṣṇa I understand. What is that Kṛṣṇa?” Not like that. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, *manuṣyāṅām sahasreṣu kaścid yatati siddhaye*: “Out of many, many millions of persons, one may attain perfection.” First of all let someone become *siddha*. *Siddha* means perfect. Everyone is imperfect. Everyone commits mistakes, everyone becomes illusioned, everyone’s senses are imperfect, and everyone is a cheater. These are the deficiencies of the conditioned soul. One does not know what Kṛṣṇa is, and he wants to become Kṛṣṇa: “I am God. I am Kṛṣṇa.”

This is cheating. One should understand what Kṛṣṇa is. There are so many Vedic literatures to help you understand. Kṛṣṇa says, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah (Gītā 15.15)*. If you are studying the *Vedas*, if you are a Vedāntist, then your ultimate knowledge will be that you have understood Kṛṣṇa. If you do not understand Kṛṣṇa, what is the use of your studying Vedānta and the *Vedas*? It is useless.

Those who are called *sahajiyās* think they have understood Kṛṣṇa very easily: “Kṛṣṇa was a young boy, and He was joking with the *gopīs* and dancing with the *gopīs*. That is Kṛṣṇa. We can imitate Him. We can do what He was doing.” This kind of understanding means he’s a rascal; he’s a fool. Kṛṣṇa’s dancing with the *gopīs* is, of course, one of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. But that is not the same as the pastime of an ordinary young boy and young girl. No. That is *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*, pure spiritual bliss.

Real Ānanda

We have no understanding of *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*. We are accustomed to taste this material *ānanda*, sense gratification. Here, in this material world, the *ānanda* is sexual intercourse. This is the most abominable *ānanda*. It is not really *ānanda*. In the Western world we have seen

that even old men, seventy-five years old, eighty years old, are going to the naked dance club for sex *ānanda*. Because in the material world there is no *ānanda* except this. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.21) you’ll find, *sukham ātyantikam yat tad buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam*. Real *ānanda* you have to taste with your transcendental senses, not these blunt senses, these covered senses. There is no question of tasting *ānanda* with these senses. Those who are transcendentalists, above this material world, are seeking *ānanda*. That is *satyānanda*, real *ānanda*. There is no end of that *ānanda*.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu has described, *ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam*. *Ambudhi* means “ocean,” and *varḍhanam* means “increasing.” Real *ānanda* is an ocean that is ever increasing. We have no experience that the sea or the ocean is increasing. It is decreasing. Similarly, the so-called *ānanda* of this world is *jaḍa*, dull.

This is the way of understanding Kṛṣṇa. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 2.117)* it is said,

*siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa
ihā haite kṛṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha mānasa*

“To understand Kṛṣṇa in truth, do not be lazy.” “Oh, now I have understood Kṛṣṇa.” What have you understood? To understand Kṛṣṇa in truth one has to devote time to studying the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

First of all become fit to understand Kṛṣṇa. Try to understand Kṛṣṇa in truth, not superficially. Of course, the ultimate goal is to understand Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana. But first of all become *siddha*, perfect. Without becoming *siddha* you cannot understand. As long as you are *asiddha*, imperfect, you cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. You have to associate with the *siddhas*. You have to understand Kṛṣṇa in the association of *mahātmās*. And who is a *mahātmā*? A *mahātmā*, though apparently in this world, is not in this material world. He is in the spiritual world.

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.”

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And the result is that he is always engaged in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa.

India's Business

Kṛṣṇa says that it is not very easy to understand Him. People who think they understand Kṛṣṇa very easily are called *sahajiyās*.

Kṛṣṇa says that out of thousands of *manuṣyas*, or human beings, one may become perfect. Out of 8,400,000 forms and species, there are 400,000 species of *manuṣya*. Out of them, one who is born in India is a first-class *manuṣya*. That is a fact. Unfortunately, we Indians are missing the chance. Caitanya Mahāprabhu said,

*bhārata-bhūmite haila
manuṣya-janma yāra*

*janma sarthaka kari'
kara para-upakāra*

“One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India [Bhārata-varṣa] should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 9.41) Those who are Indians present here should know that after many pious activities one gets birth in India, *bhārata-bhūmite*. They should try to understand Kṛṣṇa. There is facility for that: There are *śāstras*, scriptures; Kṛṣṇa personally speaks *Bhagavad-gītā*; Vyāsadeva speaks about Kṛṣṇa in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We are neglecting because we have become rascals and fools. This is not India's business – to imitate economic development: “Money, money, money, money, money.” This is not India's business. India's

business is to understand Kṛṣṇa.

These Americans and Europeans have come here not to see how much you are economically developed, industrially developed. They have had enough of this, more than enough. They don't care for it. The modern young men do not like it. They are fed up. They have come here to understand Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore we are trying to construct this center. Let everyone come, from all over the world. And it is India's business to understand Kṛṣṇa and help them. That is India's business. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is a very serious movement. On this platform the whole world can be united. It is not an ordinary movement. It is based only on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Try to understand Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you very much. 🙏

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 Govinda (February 11–March 12)

MARCH

8 – Amalākī-vrata Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

9 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

12 – Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise.

Month of Viṣṇu (March 13–April 11)

21 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

24 – Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

APRIL

1 – Appearance anniversary

of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the eleventh century.

5 – Śrī Rāma Navamī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till sunset, followed by feasting.

7 – Kāmadā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

11 – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's springtime rāsa dance. Balarāma Rāsa Yātrā, Lord Balarāma's rāsa dance. Appearance anniversary of Hanumānjī, eternal servant of Lord Rāma. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

Month of Madhusūdana (April 12–May 10)

21 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

23 – Varūthinī Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

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Fatalism or Pragmatism?

Understanding the concept of destiny disempowers passivity and empowers a focus on duty.

by Caitanya Carana Dāsa

INDIAN THOUGHT is sometimes deemed fatalistic, holding that everything is destiny, predetermined by our past actions, and thus leaving little room for human initiative. While Indian literature is filled with diverse thoughts, some of which may be fatalistic, the *bhakti* literature, which is among the most influential Indian literature, offers a far more nuanced and empowering outlook on life.

Ancient Echoes Of Modern Concerns

The *Rāmāyana* features an emotionally and intellectually riveting conversation about the interplay of destiny and human initiative. This conversation occurred at one of the epic's defining moments: the moment when Rāma, about to be crowned prince regent, was instead sentenced to forest exile for fourteen years.

While Rāma gracefully accepted the exile as the will of destiny, His

faithful younger brother Lakṣmaṇa was outraged by the injustice and called for rebellion. Rāma calmly responded that He considered His exile the will of destiny and so intended to accept it. He said that nothing else could explain how His stepmother Kaikeyī, who had loved Him like her own son and whom He had served like His own mother, had suddenly become so malevolent towards Him. Rāma hadn't done anything to offend Kaikeyī and certainly didn't deserve to be exiled. Yet His exile was the boon that Kaikeyī had extorted from her husband, the monarch Daśaratha. Rāma deemed obedience to His father His duty, one He intended to follow unflinchingly.

If some of us find Rāma's deference to destiny too docile, we may be intrigued to know that so did Lakṣmaṇa. Rather than ascribe Rāma's exile to destiny, he sought to lay the blame on the human actors involved: the scheming Kaikeyī and, more importantly, the complicit king. He

*Lord Rāma accepts His exile as the will of destiny, but outraged
Lakṣmaṇa sees injustice and argues for resistance.*

alleged that the king had become infatuated with his beautiful wife and so had abandoned his duty of protecting his own son. To Rāma's deference to destiny, the incensed Lakṣmaṇa countered that only the impotent accept injustice passively as the will of destiny; the strong fight injustice to protect their rights – and the kingdom was Rāma's right. Lakṣmaṇa's arguments may make us feel that his is an intriguingly modern voice railing against the fatalism prevailing in those times.

Seeing Through the Stereotype of Fatalism

Significantly, Rāma was not fatalistic, as was evident from His dynamic response to other adversities, such as the abduction of His wife, Sītā. He didn't passively accept her abduction as an act of destiny. When she was abducted, He had no guards, servants, or royal resources to find her. He could well have seen His desti-

tute condition as the arrangement of destiny and passively accepted Sītā's abduction. But the thought of such passivity didn't even cross His mind.

To the contrary, He always actively, even proactively, discharged His duty of protecting her. Throughout their stay in the forest, He always ensured that either He or His brother was at hand to protect Sītā. And the moment He discovered she was missing and found signs of a scuffle that pointed to her abduction, He immediately started searching for her. To rescue her, He formed an unlikely alliance with monkey forces, marched hundreds of miles through difficult terrain, and fought against a formidable foe who had bested even the gods.

If Rāma responded to Sītā's abduction so resourcefully, then why did He accept His own exile so passively? If He didn't ascribe Sītā's abduction to destiny, why did He ascribe His own banishment to destiny? Because the defining decider

of His responses was the consideration of not destiny, but duty. For Rāma as a husband, protecting His wife was His prime duty, and He didn't even consider abandoning that duty in the name of destiny, no matter how difficult it was. For Rāma as a son, obedience to His father was His prime duty, one He did even when it required renouncing His right to the kingdom.

So the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s message is not that we passively give in to destiny, but that we gallantly stick to duty. And if in the course of duty some inconceivable calamity strikes, we can attribute it to destiny and continue to do our duty.

Throughout the *bhakti* literature, this subtle relationship between right, duty, and destiny plays out fascinatingly. Let's analyze events from two other jewels of Indian literature: the *Mahābhārata* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Destiny Doesn't Justify Passivity

The *Mahābhārata* depicts and decries an attempt to abuse the concept of destiny to rationalize one's own passivity. Before the fratricidal Kurukshetra war, Vidura urged his brother, the blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra, to correct the evil Duryodhana, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son. The stubborn prince refused to grant his cousins, the Pāṇḍavas, their half of the kingdom. Vidura warned that Duryodhana's obstinacy would cause the extermination of the entire Kuru dynasty.

In response, Dhṛtarāṣṭra invoked destiny to justify his passivity. He argued that if destiny willed that their dynasty be destroyed, who was he, a tiny mortal, to stop the workings of almighty destiny?

Vidura responded by reminding the king that destiny determines the results of our actions, not our actions themselves. We all need to do our duty – that will bring auspiciousness in our life in all circumstances. If our destiny is favorable, then the auspiciousness will manifest imme-

diately. If our destiny is unfavorable, then we will have to undergo some unavoidable reversals, but our dutifulness will create positive karmic credits that will shape a brighter future for us.

An agrarian analogy can illumine this point. For farmers, plowing the field is the duty, whereas the occurrence of timely rains is destiny. Both are needed for a good harvest. Destiny determines whether the plowing will yield a harvest, but it doesn't determine whether the farmers plow or not. If they don't plow, then even if the destiny is favorable, rains will cause the growth of weeds, not crops. Significantly, this understanding of the dynamics of duty and destiny is empowering: It offers impetus to do duty even when destiny is unfavorable. Though the farmers may get no harvest when destiny is unfavorable, still their diligent performance of duty will create positive karmic credits that will contribute to their benign future destiny. After all, our destiny is formed not by some unknown arbitrary force, but by our own actions – the accumulated karmic reactions to our past actions make up our present destiny. So, our present execution of duty, even when it doesn't produce any result immediately, doesn't go in vain – it is good karma (action that produces favorable results) and thereby contributes to the congenial destiny that will bring auspiciousness.

Given this pivotal role of duty in shaping destiny, the question Dhṛtarāṣṭra should have asked was not whether or not the war was destined but whether or not he was doing his duty. As the king, it was his duty to ensure that justice was done for all his citizens, especially his own nephews, and even more so because they were fatherless and he was expected to act like a surrogate father to them. To let his son continue the atrocious exploitation of his nephews was a grievous dereliction of duty on Dhṛtarāṣṭra's part. Vidura rightly reproached his brother not only for abandoning his duty but

also for falsely invoking destiny to whitewash that abandonment.

Destiny As a Check Against Unrighteousness

An episode from the devotional classic *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* depicts the right use of destiny in an argument. When Vasudeva and Devakī, Kṛṣṇa's future parents, got married, their wedding procession threatened to become a funeral procession. Devakī's cousin Kaṁsa was driving the newlywed's chariot. On hearing a celestial prophecy that Devakī's eighth son would kill him, the benevolent-seeming Kaṁsa turned violent – he grabbed his sister by the hair and raised his sword to decapitate her.

Destiny determines whether the plowing will yield a harvest, but it doesn't determine whether the farmers plow or not.

Vasudeva tried to check the vicious Kaṁsa by reasoning with him. One of the arguments he used centered on destiny: If destiny had decreed Kaṁsa's death, then nothing, not even killing Devakī, would stop destiny from taking its course. Why then should Kaṁsa accrue bad karma by committing a triple sin: killing a woman, killing on the sacred occasion of marriage, and killing his own sister?

Vasudeva could well have applied the destiny argument to Devakī's situation. He could have asked himself: "If she is destined to die, why should I strive to prevent it?" Why didn't Vasudeva argue thus? Because his focus was not on destiny but on duty. It was his duty to protect his wife, and he was going to do his best to protect her, while knowing that destiny would determine whether his effort would be successful or not. But destiny didn't decide whether or not he would do his duty

– that was in his hands, and he did it resourcefully and fearlessly.

Kaṁsa, on the other hand, was giving up his duty by trying to kill his sister. So Vasudeva reminded him about destiny to get him back on the path of duty or to at least stop him from doing the opposite of his duty – killing the very sister he was dutybound to protect.

Duty Is the Best Response to Destiny

While the relationship between free will and destiny is complex, it can be summed up in a broad principle: what happens to us is destiny, how we respond to it is our free will. And we can choose the best response by

sticking to our duty, as given in scripture and guided by the *bhakti* tradition.

Here it's important to note the different connotations of the word *duty*. Nowadays, the word is often used in the sense of a burden, something one is expected to do or that has to be done. So if someone exhibits stellar qualities and does something extraordinary, we laud the action as "going beyond the call of duty." In the *bhakti* tradition, duty is often the translation of the Sanskrit word *dharma*, which refers to activities that help us achieve our latent potential. By acting according to *dharma*, we help bring out the best within us: our godly, spiritual side. Doing one's duty, in this sense, is not about stoically carrying a burden allotted by externals, but about resourcefully bringing out one's inner potential by making scripturally guided choices.

Continuing with this burden-free



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connotation of duty, the highest duty, the *para-dharma*, is that of pure love: *kevala-bhakti*. The various interactions among *Rāmāyaṇa* characters can at one level be seen as reciprocations of such spiritual love. But at another level, for our own edification their actions can be seen as demonstrating principles for choosing the right course of action. When seen in this sense, the *Rāmāyaṇa* demonstrates that the best way to use our free will is not resignation to destiny, but is dedication to duty.

To further understand how destiny relates with free will, consider, as an analogy, a card game: Destiny determines the hand we get, but we determine how we use it. Claiming there's no such thing as destiny is like claiming we have full control over the hand we get – patently untrue. In the game of life, we all get different hands; we are all born with different sets of talents and resources, and throughout our life we face different challenges. Duty as understood in the sense of dharma enables us to make the best use of this hand.

For Rāma as an obedient son, His duty was to serve His father. He would normally have done so by accepting the post of prince regent and eventually king. But when extraordinary circumstances conspired to have Him banished, He stuck to His duty, although in a drastically different form – not as a prince, but as an ascetic. And He attributed those extraordinary factors that changed His circumstances to destiny; inconceivable, inexorable destiny had moved His stepmother to express an uncharacteristic greed for power.

Rāma rejected Lakṣmaṇa's call for rebellion not because He was fatalistic and feeble, but because He was resourceful and courageous enough to do His duty even when it was exceptionally difficult. To Lakṣmaṇa's charge about King Daśaratha's motivation, Rāma pointed out that the king had acted not because of infatuation but because of obligation: he had long ago promised Kaikeyī two boons

Destiny Defined

THE CONCEPT of destiny is almost universal in human thought. It may be accepted or rejected, but it is hardly ever neglected.

While some thought systems consider destiny an arbitrary force that compels events to unfold in a particular way, the *bhakti* tradition explains destiny to be the accumulated reactions to our own past actions, either in this or past lives. Known in Sanskrit as *daiva*, destiny is understood to be the determiner of our circumstances, but not our actions. By choosing to act dutifully with scriptural guidance, we can grow through adverse destiny and create for ourselves an auspicious future destiny.

and was honor-bound to grant them, even when doing so caused him heartbreaking agony. Rāma stressed that the king's readiness to keep his word demonstrated not his weakness but his truthfulness.

Rights Don't Trump Responsibilities

Rāma's refusal to seize His right to the kingdom meant sacrificing His responsibility as a son. This is instructive. Though something may be our right, it may not always be right for us to claim it. We need to balance considerations of our rights with deliberations on our responsibilities. We live in a culture that frequently champions rights and downplays responsibilities. Parents often find it extremely difficult to raise children when the children feel entitled to lots of things without feeling they need to do anything to get them.

John F. Kennedy's exhortation "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country" was a call to shift the

focus from rights to responsibilities. Such a shift comes much easier when we have a spiritual conception of life, when we understand ourselves to be souls and see life from a multi-life perspective wherein results for dutifulness are guaranteed, but not always in this life.

When we are faced with problems, we can deal with them better if we approach them with a positive attitude. Illustrating how spiritual wisdom engenders positive outlook, Rāma responded to His banishment by stating that He didn't see any cause for distress: He had the satisfaction of ensuring that His father's word was honored; He had the joy of ensuring the enthronement of His younger brother, who was like a son to Him; and He had the opportunity for spiritual growth by the association of sages in the forest, an opportunity He would otherwise have gotten only towards the end of His life when He retired to the forest. Thus, Rāma's spiritual vision grants Him extraordinary positivity. He accepts the adversity of banishment not with hand-wringing and teeth-grinding, but with dignity and determination, looking to make the best of the situation.

That Rāma ascribed to destiny the adversity that befell Him is significant because He, being God Himself, is the Lord of destiny. But He had descended as an avatar not so much to demonstrate His supremacy as to demonstrate the life of an ideal human being. And He did so by exemplifying how to maturely respond to adversity. If we focus too much on our rights, we may end up beating our head against a wall, trying in vain to get things we think are our right but have been taken away by unchangeable circumstances – by the will of destiny. On the other hand, if we focus too much on destiny, we may end up doing nothing at all, thereby depriving ourselves of our authentic rights and letting the world walk all over us. Acceptance of destiny is not a recipe for sentencing oneself to weakness and helplessness; it is the

pathway for the most constructive channeling of our energies.

The sense of dutifulness can help us in our spiritual life too. In our devotional practices, if we focus too much on our rights – especially if we imagine and expect that higher spiritual happiness is our right because we are practicing *bhakti-yoga* – then, during the dry phases of our spiritual life, we will sentence ourselves to dissatisfaction and doubt, worrying unnecessarily whether or not *bhakti* works. By cultivating dutifulness, we can practice *bhakti* steadily until we eventually relish the higher happiness that comes from purification and the mercy of the Lord, who is pleased by our selflessness.

The *bhakti* literatures teach not fatalism but pragmatism: the sound practical intelligence that refuses to buy the lie that everything is in our control. By remembering that there is much we cannot control, pragmatism urges us to focus our energy on those things that we can control.

Nowadays many people suffer from such psychological problems as depression, an inferiority complex, and suicidal urges. A major reason is underlying misconceptions about controllership: they are led to believe they can control everything, and when they can't control things, they think something is intrinsically wrong with them and sink into self-flagellating thought patterns. That's why a proper understanding of destiny can be salutary; it can prevent dissipation of our energy in fruitless fantasies or lamentations, and can channel it towards growth-inducing choices. 🌸

Caitanya Carāṇa 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 sixteen 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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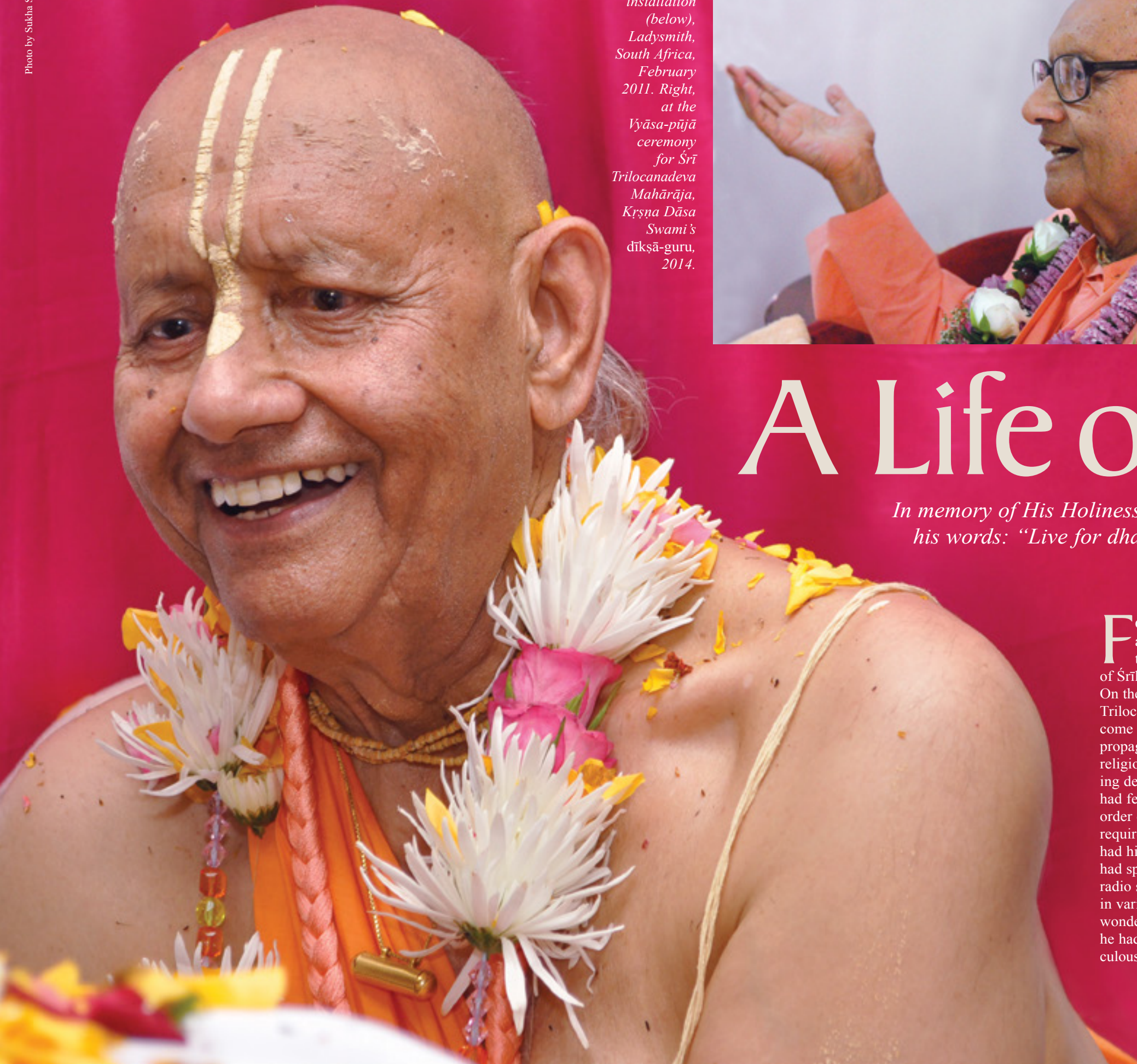


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At deity installation (below), Ladysmith, South Africa, February 2011. Right, at the Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony for Śrī Trilocanadeva Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami's dīkṣā-guru, 2014.



Dvānakāma Dāsa

parade before him. He watched from a distance as the chariots maneuvered through Hyde Park towards Trafalgar Square, surrounded by curious Londoners and dancing devotees of Lord Jagannātha.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa had met these disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda seven months before. How could he forget the knock on his door in November 1972 that had brought him bliss and the hope that *sanātana-dharma* would be reestablished in the world? It was hard to believe that the young orange-robed Vaiṣṇava monk who had come to his door was an Englishman and that there were many more like him. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa had heard about how Śrīla Prabhupāda, the person he was anxiously waiting to see, had brought Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message to the West, how he had opened temples of Lord Kṛṣṇa in America and other parts of the world, how he had

A Life of Dharma

In memory of His Holiness Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami, whose life and passing exemplify his words: "Live for dharma, die for dharma; live for Kṛṣṇa, die for Kṛṣṇa."

by Nikuñja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī

FORTY-ONE-year-old Kṛṣṇa Dāsa was already feeling elated as he stood in the crowd waiting to catch a glimpse of Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was July 7, 1973. On the order of his spiritual master, Śrīla Trilocanadeva Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa had come to England from India in 1966 to propagate *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal religion of the soul's relationship of loving devotion with the Supreme Lord. He had felt alone in his quest to follow the order of his guru. A foreign culture had required a different kind of austerity than had his simple village life in Punjab. He had spoken about *sanātana-dharma* on radio shows and to the Indian community in various venues in London. Now he wondered how the culture and philosophy he had been trying to propagate had miraculously taken form in the dazzling chariot

spread the glories of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vaiṣṇava scriptures without discrimination, and how he had won the hearts of these young English boys and girls who had left everything to help him spread his mission.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa saw Śrīla Prabhupāda emerge like a golden light from the crowd. Prabhupāda's jubilant dancing throughout the parade captivated him. How was it that there were no signs of fatigue in Śrīla Prabhupāda's frail, sick body? The young devotees could not even keep up with him. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa was then convinced that Śrīla Prabhupāda could not be ordinary.

Meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda

Days passed, and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa's mind was bursting with thoughts of Śrīla Prabhupāda

and how to meet him. He rushed to Śrīla Prabhupāda's door at Bhaktivedanta Manor only to be turned away by two strict disciple-guards.

"You look as if you are the guards at the doors of Vaikuṅṭha. Are you Jaya and Vijaya?" teased Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, referring to a story in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. "But you are very fortunate that I am not one of the Kumāras. I won't curse you!"

Feeling dejected and heartbroken, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa wrote a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda telling him how he had come to meet the devotees, how he had been giving classes at the Bury Place temple, how he had seen Śrīla Prabhupāda dance at Rathayātrā, and how since he had read the *Guardian's* front-page headlines "Challenge to Nelson," which glorified the Rathayātrā festival, his desire to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda was increasing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote back and humbly apologized for his disciples' behavior, welcoming him to visit at any time. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa eagerly returned to Śrīla Prabhupāda's door only to again be confronted by guards. This time Śrīla Prabhupāda himself inter-

vened and invited him into his room.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa did not know that meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda face to face would alter his life forever. Referring to the places of his and Śrīla Prabhupāda's birth, he said, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, as you are uniting the East and the West of this world, I think our meeting is between the east and west of Bhārata." When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard about Kṛṣṇa Dāsa's life and activities to propagate God consciousness and his desire to revive Bhārata's glorious spiritual heritage, his face lit up. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa told of how as a young boy he had been trained by his maternal grandfather in Vaiṣṇava culture and traditions. When he was only eleven years old, he had learned the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and by the time he was initiated at the age of seventeen, he had memorized the *Bhagavad-gītā* and then studied *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *Purāṇas*. Even while working as a school-teacher and headmaster in Punjab, he had tried to spread the message of these great Vedic literatures.

Prabhupāda was silent and then said, "Join this movement and preach!"



Śrī Nityānī Dāsa

Speaking about vegetarianism (above) to President Nelson Mandela at Durban's Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhānātha Temple Diwali festival in November 1994. At right: Lecturing on Janmāṣṭamī, ISKCON South London, 2008.



Bhupendra Solanki

Śrīla Prabhupāda's penetrating gaze and serious expression caused Kṛṣṇa Dāsa's heart to leap. He had come only to offer his respects and to congratulate Śrīla Prabhupāda for his achievements, but now he felt challenged.

"But I am already initiated and preaching," Kṛṣṇa Dāsa replied. "I have been brought up as a missionary of *sanātana-dharma*, so how can I join you and give that up?"

"We are both preaching *sanātana-dharma*," Śrīla Prabhupāda answered, "and we both belong to the Brahṁā *sampradāya*, so why are we doing this separately? Here you will have all facility to preach. You simply come and join us."

"But how can I give up my Guru Mahārāja?" Kṛṣṇa Dāsa exclaimed.

"When did I ask you to do that? Can a Vaiṣṇava ask another Vaiṣṇava to give up his Vaiṣṇava guru? I only asked you to please join me in spreading *sanātana-dharma*, which you are already doing."

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa was drawn to this dynamic personality. He surrendered to Śrīla Prabhupāda's request.

A serious discussion followed, and eventually Śrīla Prabhupāda suggested that Kṛṣṇa Dāsa leave his family and other responsibilities, and in time he would give him *sannyāsa* initiation.

As Kṛṣṇa Dāsa was leaving, he

said to Śrīla Prabhupāda, "I accept you as my *sannyāsa* guru."

"I accept you as my *sannyāsa* disciple," Śrīla Prabhupāda replied.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa reminded Śrīla Prabhupāda that he would need to seek permission from his *dīkṣā* guru. Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed and asked him to write to his guru straight away.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa felt that he had come as a householder with a different intention but was leaving as a *sannyāsī* ready to give his life to his new guru.

He later recalled, "In 1966, one year after Prabhupāda left for the United States, I left for the UK as a missionary of *sanātana-dharma* and did not know about Śrīla

Prabhupāda's activities."

He said that he marveled at how the Lord wonderfully makes arrangements to fulfill His desire. He knew that his meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda was not by chance; it was part of a divine plan.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa received permission from his guru, who supported his joining Śrīla Prabhupāda. With the combined blessings of two powerful souls, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa felt ready to execute their mission with renewed zeal. He quickly arranged for his family's care and moved into the Bury Place temple in April 1974. What followed was four decades of selfless service.



Lokesvara Dāsa

Sacrifice and Surrender

“We had a queuing system for the shower in the *brahmacārī* ashram, and there were about fifty of us, but he patiently waited his turn with the other, much younger men,” writes Bhakti Caitanya Swami.

Vicitravīrya Dāsa, the temple president, would tell us how Kṛṣṇa Dāsa would sometimes preach very strongly to the Indian people around London and insist they become life members and donors. I saw him in action during festivals at Bhaktivedanta Manor. He was like a transcendental lion, roaring at the people and power-

fully arousing their sense of responsibility as people from Indian backgrounds. He glorified Śrīla Prabhupāda very nicely, sometimes referring to him as the thirteenth *mahājana*, and would tell the people that Prabhupāda was the real representative of their culture and tradition. . . .

His older family members in Punjab were deeply disturbed that he had left his family and joined ISKCON full time, and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa was to meet them and try to make amends and pacify them. Vicitravīrya went with him, and later told us that it had been a hair-raising experience. The family had tried to force Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

to go back to his wife and children in London, but Kṛṣṇa Dāsa would not hear of it at all. They then wanted to physically attack Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, but somehow he and Vicitravīrya managed to escape.

This greatly impressed us. We were all from hippie-type backgrounds, and leaving our families had been no problem for us, but here we saw someone from a completely different social environment, a cultured person who had been brought up as a devotee. And when he had been put under severe pressure to give up his dedication to Lord Kṛṣṇa, he had adamantly refused. His resolve in Kṛṣṇa consciousness struck us deeply.

Akhaṇḍadhī Dāsa recalls:

When Kṛṣṇa Dāsa joined, it was a huge thing for us to have a senior Indian devotee living with us who had the skill of rhetoric and oration, the depth of knowledge, and the absolute fire for preaching. It must have been very hard for him living among Westerners who didn’t share the same background and culture of Vaiṣṇava behavior, manners, and tendencies. But I never saw any sort of frustration or disappointment in him. He was always encouraging and supportive and established us in a way that the rest of our preaching efforts could never have done.

Śivarāma Swami remembers:

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami was extraordinary; he was a “Prabhupāda man.” He bravely left everything to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s request, often preaching in austere circumstances.

He was learned in many aspects of *śāstra* and philosophy and knew the life and philosophy of prominent spiritual leaders and saints. Once he related to me the entire life and philoso-

phy of Śaṅkarācārya and recalled how when he was only six years old, he had learned Śaṅkarācārya’s *Bhaja Govindam* prayers while hearing his grandfather reciting them during his bath.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Punjabi Tiger

After Mahārāja’s initial adventures in England, he traveled to various



Sahadeva Dāsa

First anniversary of the installation of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā (left) at the Estcourt, South Africa, temple, 2012. Above: Initiation ceremony at ISKCON Coventry, England, 1998.



Sukha Sāgara Dāsa



Śaunaka Rāṣī Dāsa

Navala Kişora Dāsa gets initiated (above), Durban Mahā Gītā-yajña, December 2015. Left: Presenting Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to the teaching staff of Zeerust Secondary School in Botswana after a program at the school, 1993. Below: Estcourt temple, 2012.



Lokeśvara Dāsa

continents, spreading Kṛṣṇa's message. Thousands of people were attracted to his dynamic presentation of eternal truths and were inspired by his uncompromising standards of spiritual discipline and practice. Many came forward to take his shelter and guidance, and in 1987 he became an initiating spiritual master. Girirāja Swami, the GBC for Mauritius and

South Africa then, saw a need for a spiritual figure of Mahārāja's stature to grace the African continent and stabilize the Mauritian and South African centers during a turbulent time. Sure enough, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami succeeded in winning the hearts of many people who later became his disciples.

Poor health and a quadruple bypass

heart surgery did not discourage Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami's efforts. He continued to travel and speak strongly against the hypocrisies and sins of Kali-yuga, many times singling out treacherous leaders and politicians.

B. B. Govinda Swami affectionately called him "Śrīla Prabhupāda's Punjabi Tiger" because he was impressed by Mahārāja's powerful preaching spirit, staunch spiritual ideals, and ability to instill God consciousness in people from all parts of the world. Mahārāja inspired the opening of temples in South Africa and Botswana. He persuaded the local city councilors in Mauritius to rename streets Vrindavan Road and Hare Krishna Road. The rural village of Beau Bois became Vrindavan.

Back in England, he visited the mosque of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and addressed the members with familiar Urdu phrases, presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness with parallels from the Koran. They were impressed with his knowledge of other world religions and languages. Wherever he went, he struck people with his fearlessness and straightforwardness. He wouldn't compromise just to please. But his words exuded

compassion – and that was how people grew to love him.

Embodiment of Compassion

"Your stomach is a graveyard and your fridge is a mortuary," he would remind those who were nonvegetarians. His description of meat-eating would inspire many in his audiences to become vegetarians overnight. He did not make people feel guilty or deride their behavior, but he made them understand that to grasp the intricacies of spiritual knowledge and the spiritual way of life, one has to come to the human platform of goodness, compassion, and concern for other living beings. He understood that human society would have to suffer the consequences of cruel actions, and he feared for its welfare.

His compassion for animals, especially the cow, was evident in the goshala he developed in his hometown in Punjab. His ashram, in an idyllic rural setting, houses more than seventy cows. It became known as Mahādhāma (great abode), because the greatness of a place can be ascertained by how well its people take care of its animals. Mahādhāma,

or Kalkidhāma, as some would call it, became a sanctuary for disciples and followers, and there he installed deities of Gaura-Nitāi, Gopāla, and Lord Kalki, the future incarnation for Kali-yuga. He took refuge in the fact that the Lord would come again to establish the principles of religion and save His devotees from Kali's fierce grip. Until the Lord's advent, he firmly believed that cow protection would grant prosperity and harmony to human society and that eternal spiritual values

can be achieved through devotion and surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

Emmissary of The Bhagavad-gītā

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami's devotion was seen during the annual Mahā Gītā-yajña festival, which he inaugurated in South Africa. Around 150 devotees from all over the province would come to recite the verses of the *Bhagavad-gītā* while offering oblations into the fire. For at least ten hours on a scorching summer day, usually on Christmas Day, Mahārāja would recite and extol the glories of the *Bhagavad-gītā* with the vigor of a young man. He trained his disciples in every aspect of the auspicious event – organization, *yajña* arrangements, proper Sanskrit pronunciation of the *ślokas*, meticulous priestly conduct, and etiquette. He said he wanted the devotees to perform some kind of austerity so that their hearts would become purified and thus they would experience the bliss of full immersion in Kṛṣṇa. And this is what happened. Anyone who attended these *yajñas* would describe it as one of the most memorable times in their lives, for they had experienced the potency of the *Bhagavad-gītā's* divine presence and message.

A Glorious Passing

Mahārāja's aphorism "Live for dharma, die for dharma; live for Kṛṣṇa, die for Kṛṣṇa" resonates with all those who heard him speak. After living his life by this aphorism, at the age of 84 he left this world like a general on *dharma-kṣetra*, the battlefield of dharma. In the twilight of his life, he had transcended bodily pain and discomfort, including a severe heart condition, to travel and inspire his disciples in England, Mauritius, and especially South Africa.

He would tell them, "If you remember Kṛṣṇa, you are healthy."

Quoting a Hindi maxim, he would say, "With a rock, crush the forehead of that happiness which causes the

remembrance of the holy name to disappear from your heart. Be grateful to the suffering that forces you to surrender and chant the holy name at every moment.”

His words were tested. In December 2015, on the day of the twenty-first Gītā-yajña in South Africa, the last he would attend, Mahārāja’s health was precarious. He could barely walk or speak, so no one expected him to attend. But there he was, on the *vyāsāsana* – taking on new life, speaking like he’d never spoken before, and completing all seven hundred verses of the *Bhagavad-gītā* with wonderful explanations.

Months later, back in India, his devoted disciples rushed him to a New Delhi hospital only to find out that his end was near. On July

21, 2016, they decided to take him to Vrindavan, the most auspicious place to leave this world. The journey was challenging and risky, but as they reached the outer precincts of Vraja, Mahārāja breathed his last while hearing the holy names in perfect Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Devotees from all over the world gathered in Vrindavan for his cremation and memorial service. Some witnessed the cows gathering to lick Mahārāja’s feet before he was taken on procession to the Yamuna. A few disciples, who waited till the last minute of the cremation, witnessed a colorful rainbow of sparks spurting up from the center of the funeral pyre and lighting the sky – an indication to them that their guru had returned to the spiritual world.

Leaving a Legacy

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami’s disciples realized they now had a tremendous responsibility – to carry the torch of dharma their guru had passed on to them. Therefore, they strive to carry on aspects of his glory: observance of Vedic culture and conduct, affectionate and compassionate dealings with others, strict adherence to Vedic principles, loyalty to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission, and absorption in devotional service. This proves Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura’s words true: “He reasons ill who tells that Vaiṣṇavas die, when thou art living still in sound. The Vaiṣṇavas die to live, and living try to spread the holy name around.” Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami’s legacy lives on. 🌸



Sruadhama Dasa

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami was part of a ten-year campaign to save the Bhaktivedanta Manor from closing down. He celebrated the victory in June 1996 with George Harrison (the donor of the Manor) and Mukunda Goswami.

Determination Amid Struggle in England

IN 1978 Śivarāma Swami awarded Kṛṣṇa Dāsa formal *sannyāsa* initiation on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Now with the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami, his tenacity to spread Kṛṣṇa’s glories and *sanātana-dharma* blazed like a brilliant fire.

Along with Jayatīrtha Dāsa (the GBC at the time) and Vicitravīrya Dāsa, he devised ways to attract the large Indian community in London and surrounding areas. He started holding well-attended *Rāmāyaṇa* recitals. He then thought that if Sītā-Rāma deities were installed at Bhaktivedanta Manor, where he had come to live and serve, that would attract even more people. Generally Hindus held Lord Rāma in awe. Surely they would participate more and progress in their devotion if Lord Rāma resided at the Manor.

But not everyone in the temple administration had the same conviction, and he was told that if he could collect the funds for the deities and make all the arrangements, then the deities could be installed. With the support of Jayatīrtha, Vicitravīrya, and a few other devotees, he took up the challenge. He reasoned that if Sītā-Rāma, who are Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, were meant to come, then why wouldn’t Lakṣmī-devī send *lakṣmī* (money)? With firm faith he approached Mr. Maganbhai Bhimjiyani, a wealthy devotee and ISKCON life member from the Gujarati community. To



Sruadhama Dasa

On behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śivarāma Swami awarded Kṛṣṇa Dāsa formal *sannyāsa* initiation in 1978.

his surprise, Mr. Bhimjiyani handed him a blank check. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami organized the sculpture of the deities in Jaipur, but the sculptors were trying to cheat the devotees, demanding more and more money to complete the work. Eventually Mahārāja went to Jaipur and warned the sculptors, “I have sent this order from London, and I am from Punjab, and you know the nature of Punjabis! I am not leaving without the deities.” With great haste they completed the deities, but the shipping got delayed. In the meantime, devotees at the Manor were enthusiastically preparing for the installation and publicizing the event throughout

the country. But only nine days before the installation date, the deities had yet to arrive. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Swami spoke to the Indian government officials.

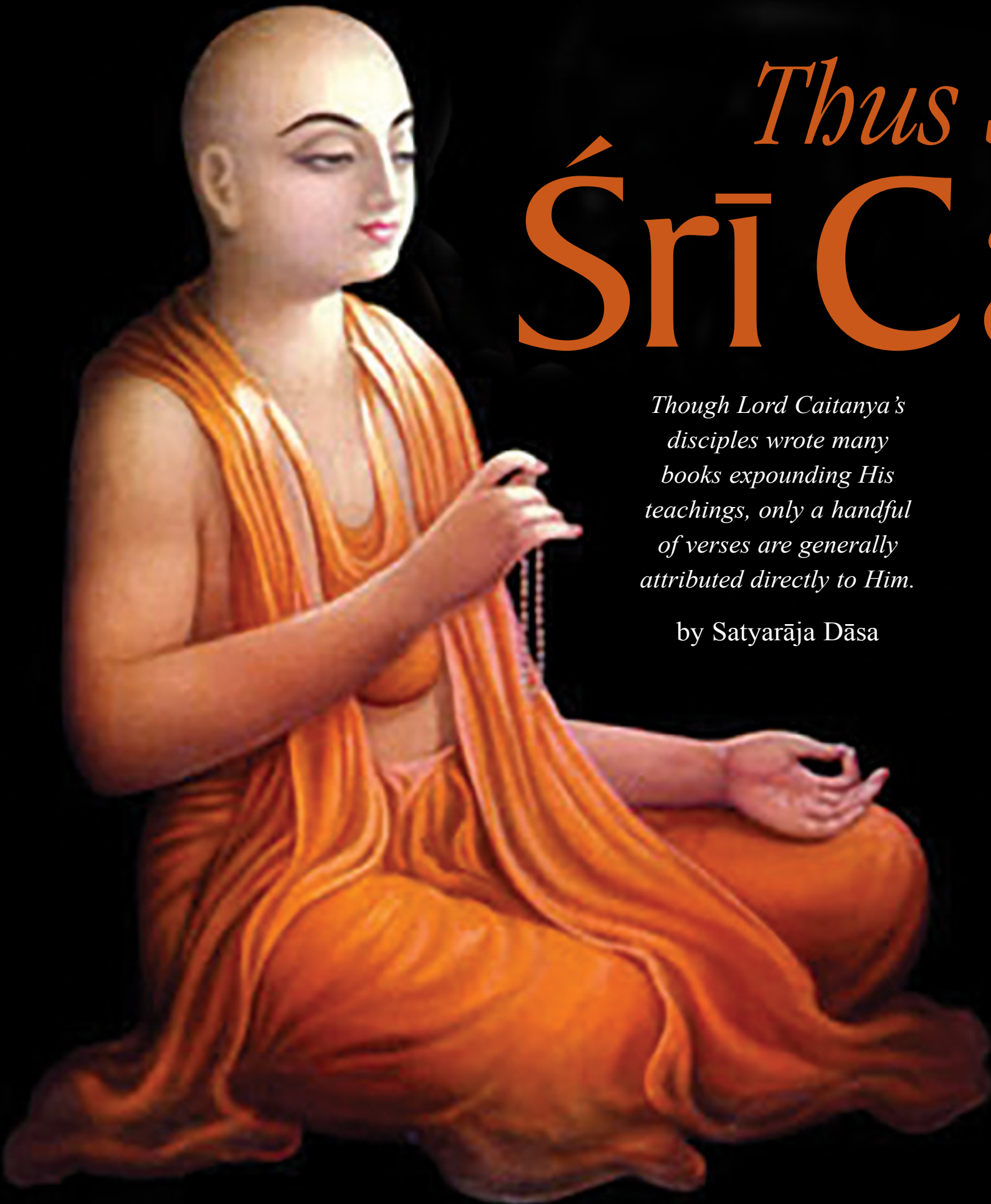
“Sītā-Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Hanumān are not being exiled. Rāma is going to England, an advanced country, so do you think He will walk on foot? Forget about your ships; He won’t travel for thirty-five days. He’s Rājārāma, and He is coming to the capital of the British Empire. Lord Rāma came back from Sri Lanka in a *puṣpavimāna*, a flower airplane, so He will come to England in a *vimāna*; He will

come by plane!” Soon, with the help of the government officials, the deities were on their way to England by plane. But when they arrived at the airport, a strike prevented their release. Mahārāja encouraged the devotees to pray, to cleanse their hearts to receive Lord Rāma. With Jayatīrtha and Vicitravīrya, he persuaded the airport officials to give clearance. In answer to their prayers, and just twenty-four hours before the installation, the deities were carried out of the airport amid a roaring *kīrtana*. Ten thousand people from all over the country celebrated the installation on Rāma Navamī 1981—the day Sītā-Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Hanumān made their home among them.

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Thus Spake Śrī Caitanya

*Though Lord Caitanya's
disciples wrote many
books expounding His
teachings, only a handful
of verses are generally
attributed directly to Him.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

*śrīmān mahāprabhura viracita āṭṭi śloka
ihate prema-prāptira upāyādi varṇanā
karā hoiāche*

“Śrīmān [Caitanya] Mahāprabhu composed eight verses. The ways of attaining love of God are described therein.”

– *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, Haridāsa Dāsa,
Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna, Vol. 2

WHEN I WAS younger, I was intrigued by a *Thus Spake* . . . series of books published in India. These gems were square, uniform in design, and miniature, about twice the size of a large postage stamp. Each volume gathered quotes from a particular religious personality or holy text. I remember *Thus Spake the Vedas*, *Thus Spake Lord Krishna*, and *Thus Spake Gandhi*. And there were more. I collected some of them. By the time I bought *Thus Spake Sri Chaitanya*, I had already become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and I noticed that much of the “spaking” in this book did not belong to Caitanya at all. Rather, the book used the words of others, usually well-known Indian philosophers, and misattributed them to Śrī Caitanya. In one sense I couldn't

blame the publishers for doing this. After all, He didn't leave the world much in terms of His own writing.

The Lord's Writing

Śrī Caitanya appeared in Bengal some five hundred years ago. An esoteric incarnation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined, He emphasized chanting the holy name as a yogic science. While not much writing is legitimately attributed to Him, He did instruct His followers – the renowned six Gosvāmīs and others – to compile His teachings for posterity. This they did by writing numerous Sanskrit volumes, expressing His mood and thought with sophisticated philosophy, drama, and poetry.

Kavi Karṇapura states in his *Śrī-Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka* (1.13–14) that Śrī Caitanya didn't compose any books. He did, however, write the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* (see sidebar), His famous eight Sanskrit prayers that glorify the chanting of the holy name and succinctly explain the profundity of love for Kṛṣṇa. They are lauded as His “only written work.”

In order to understand the teachings of Lord Caitanya, we must refer to the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Lord Caitanya Himself did not

leave any written works, except the eight verses of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. . . . From the many works which the [six] Gosvāmīs wrote we can thoroughly understand Lord Caitanya’s teachings, but they do not mention any works written by Lord Caitanya Himself. (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, 1.2)

The Lord left only eight *ślokas* of His instructions in writing, and they are known as the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. All other literatures . . . were extensively written by the Lord’s principal followers, the six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan, and their followers. (Śrīla Prabhupāda’s introduction to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, last paragraph)

Modern scholars tend to concur. S. K. De wrote: “The only work that can be ascribed to him with certainty consists of the eight verses which are attributed to him in Rupa Gosvamin’s *Padyavali*.” In Edward C. Dimock’s translation of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, a footnote for *Antya* 20.3 tells us, “The *Śikṣāṣṭaka* is traditionally said to be the only piece of writing left by Caitanya himself.”

And yet one must wonder what “writing” means in this context. Does it mean that He wrote these verses out Himself, or perhaps that He merely composed them, conceptually, singing them out loud, and that others did the writing? Perhaps the task of writing fell to His secretary, Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. “Writing,” after all, can mean various things. Vyāsadeva is said to have written the *Mahābhārata*, but, as the story goes, he recited the text and Gaṇeśa wrote it down.

Even in recent times, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda always referred to the “writing” of his books, but he mostly dictated them, and his disciples transcribed the recordings. So, whether or not Śrī Caitanya actually sat down and wrote these eight verses, He most definitely was considered their author, as we will soon see.

In Śrī Caitanya’s India, writing

meant palm leaf and stylus or sometimes a sharp-pointed piece of bamboo. Copper plates were also used, as was the bark of specific trees, such as birch. But whatever the medium, there are today no manuscripts of the Lord’s *Śikṣāṣṭaka*,

though a handwritten *Bhagavad-gītā* attributed to Him can be found at the Gauridas Pandit Mandir in Ambika Kalna, Bengal, an artifact mentioned in Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s *Bhakti-ratnākara* (7.338–341). Writings of the six Gosvāmīs

Śikṣāṣṭaka

(1) Glory to the *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This *saṅkīrtana* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.

(2) O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names, like Kṛṣṇa and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.

(3) One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.

(4) O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service, birth after birth.

(5) O son of Mahārāja Nanda [Kṛṣṇa], I am Your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from this ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms at Your lotus feet.

(6) O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your name?

(7) O Govinda! Feeling Your separation, I am considering a moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and I am feeling all vacant in the world in Your absence.

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

from that period also exist and are available for viewing at the Vrindavan Research Institute, the Bhaktivedanta Research Centre in Kolkata, and elsewhere.

But how do we know about these particular *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verses, which have the special feature of being composed by the Lord Himself? How were they passed down over the centuries?

Śikṣāṣṭaka: A Brief History

Significantly, the entire text of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* appears at the end of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as a kind of summary and essence of Mahāprabhu’s life and teachings.

In their earliest manifestation, we find these verses individually in Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Padyāvalī*, a compilation of Śrī Rūpa’s favorite verses. Interestingly, he scatters them throughout his text (verses 22, 31, 32, 71, 94, 95, 328, and 341), without referring to them as an *aṣṭaka* (a composition of eight stanzas). It was Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, in his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, who first positioned them as eight consecutive prayers, separated only by Bengali verses of explanation and elaboration. In *Antya* 20.63–65, he writes: “Thus overwhelmed by ecstatic love, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke like a madman and recited suitable verses. The Lord had formerly composed these eight verses to teach people in general. Now He personally tasted the meaning of these verses If anyone recites or hears these eight verses of instruction [*śikṣā-aṣṭaka*] by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, his ecstatic love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa increase day by day.”

Kavirāja Gosvāmī puts to rest the question of their composition. In *Antya* 20.64 he uses the phrase *aṣṭa-śloka kari* – literally, Mahāprabhu “created” these eight verses,” and, even more to the point, in verse 62 he uses the words *prabhu kailā*, which Prabhupāda translates as “Mahāprabhu has written.” Depend-

ing on context, *kailā* can have various meanings, but Prabhupāda’s translating it here as “has written” is especially significant. This is so because Kavirāja Gosvāmī repeatedly tells us that these verses are Mahāprabhu’s “own words.” He says this in 20.6 (*nija-śloka paḍiyā*, “His own verses”), and again in *Antya* 20.15 (*paḍe āpana-śloka*, “reciting His own verses”). Here possession clearly indicates authorship, distinguishing the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* from the many other verses the Lord uttered or recited during His earthly pastimes.

The eight verses correspond with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism’s traditional nine steps leading to perfection in *bhajana* (worship).

Śikṣāṣṭaka Commentaries

Oddly, as important as this text is for the tradition, the first real elaboration on the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* didn’t appear until the nineteenth century. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838–1914), the great Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava reformer, wrote the first comprehensive Sanskrit commentary, known as the *Sammodana-bhāṣya* (1886). After that he addressed Śrī Caitanya’s prayers yet again in his Bengali poem *Gītāvalī* (1893) and, finally, explained them more fully in his esoteric work *Bhajana-rahasya* (1902), a supplement to his earlier *Harināma Cintāmaṇi* (1900).

In *Bhajana-rahasya*, the Ṭhākura’s culminating text on the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, he explains how the eight verses correspond with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism’s traditional nine steps leading to per-

fection in *bhajana* (worship), slowly moving from initial faith (*śraddhā*) to love of God (*prema*).^{*} In this same work, he also analyzes how each *Śikṣāṣṭaka* verse corresponds with the highest Gauḍīya vision of the divine – Kṛṣṇa’s *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā*, His pastimes during the eight periods of His day in the spiritual world.

Overall, Bhaktivinoda explains the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* as systematic theology, engaging the Vaiṣṇava philosophical categories of relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha*), the methods of acting according to that rela-

tionship (*abhidheya*), and the truths of the ultimate goal to be attained (*prayojana*).

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda’s son Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (1874–1937), the highly regarded spiritual preceptor of Śrīla Prabhupāda, composed a *vivṛtti* (subcommentary) on his father’s work, elaborating even further on the glorious nature of these eight verses. Toward the end of that commentary, he briefly summarizes the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*’s depth:

In a general sense, the first *śloka* teaches the process of congregational chanting; the second, how one can realize his ineptitude to take up this chanting; the third, the procedure of chanting the holy name; the fourth, how to rid oneself of deception and detrimental mundane desires; the fifth, the

^{*}The nine stages of *bhakti-yoga*: (1) *śraddhā* (faith), (2) *sādhu-saṅga* (association with devotees), (3) *bhajana-kriyā* (performance of devotional service), (4) *anartha-nivṛtīh* (decreasing of unwanted attachments), (5) *niṣṭhā* (steadiness), (6) *ruci* (taste), (7) *āsakti* (attachment), (8) *bhāva* (ecstatic love), and (9) *prema* (pure love for Kṛṣṇa). In Bhaktivinoda’s analysis, the first verse of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* corresponds to *śraddhā*, the second to *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*, and *anartha-nivṛtīh*, the third to *niṣṭhā*, the fourth to *ruci*, the fifth to *āsakti*, the sixth to *bhāva*, and the seventh and eighth to *prema* (in union and separation, respectively).

soul's original spiritual identity; the sixth, how one experiences his good fortune of coming closer to the Lord; the seventh, the mood of separation after one obtains the required spiritual elevation; the eighth, how to obtain the highest perfection in the matter of finding one's absolute necessity or goal. . . . The first five *ślokas* describe *sādhana-bhakti* [devotional service in practice], and the next two *bhāva-bhakti* [the dawning of true love]. The sixth to the eighth *ślokas*, and especially the seventh and eighth, deal with *prema-bhakti* [fully developed love of Godhead].

Śrīla Prabhupāda, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, translated the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* as part of his presentation of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and, taking advantage of the commentaries of his predecessors, explained its contents for the Western world.

Additional “Spaking”

The tradition attributes many verses to Śrī Caitanya, but unlike the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, these were not necessarily “composed” by Him. Rather, He is

said to have “uttered” these verses in a state of spiritual ecstasy, and that in itself makes them special. For example, another famous *śloka* in Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvalī* is also quoted in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: “I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, or *śūdra*. I am not a *brahma-cārī*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha*, or *san-nyāsī*. What am I? I am the eternal servant of the servant of the servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” (*Padyāvalī* 74; *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 13.80)

In Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's commentary on this verse, he writes that it was “uttered” or “spoken” by Śrī Caitanya (*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanyokta-ślokaḥ*). He says the same for *Madhya* 2.45 and *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Antya* 6.124, among others.

A *Śivāṣṭaka* – eight prayers glorifying Lord Śiva – is also sometimes attributed to Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This poem has the virtue of being preserved in the very first biography of Mahāprabhu (*Śrī Caitanya-carita Mahākāvya*), written by Murāri Gupta, a firsthand witness to the Lord's pastimes. The prayers occur in a moving scene during Mahāprabhu's South Indian tour: He enters a Śiva temple and spontaneously sings these lauda-

tory verses in praise of Śiva. However, the verses are reminiscent of a similar *aṣṭaka* written by Śaṅkarācārya many centuries earlier, and is probably just a variation on that theme from a Vaiṣṇava perspective. The same is true of the famous *Jagannāthāṣṭaka*.

And there are others as well. Some of these poems are alluded to in Haridāsa Dāsa's *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna*, a voluminous encyclopedia focusing on the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition. In the entry “Kṛṣṇa Caitanya” (Vol. 2, p. 1,183), the author notes, “The commentator Viṭṭhaleśvara considers ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa-premāmṛta-stotra’ as having manifested from the moonlike mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. There are other small *aṣṭakams* and other works that are ascribed to Him, too, but their authenticity is not free from doubt.” Haridāsa Dāsa then says that although it is unlikely that Mahāprabhu wrote any work other than the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, He infused His energy into Rūpa, Sanātana, and the other Gosvāmīs to write on His behalf. This is the general conclusion within the tradition.

(please turn to page 63)

Upcoming offerings from

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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.

SATISFYING THE UNIVERSE

In the form of a calf, Mother Earth mystically fulfills the desires of beings from all over the universe.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 18

16 दैतेया दानवा वत्सं प्रह्लादमसुरर्षभम् विधायदूदुहन् क्षीरमयःपात्रे सुरासवम्

*daiteyā dānavā vatsam
prahlādam asurarṣabham
vidhāyādūduhan kṣīram
ayaḥ-pātre surāsavam*

daiteyāḥ – the sons of Diti; *dānavāḥ* – demons; *vatsam* – the calf; *prahlādam* – Prahlāda Mahārāja; *asura* – demon; *ṛṣabham* – the chief; *vidhāya* – making; *adūduhan* – they milked out; *kṣīram* – milk; *ayaḥ* – iron; *pātre* – in a pot; *surā* – liquor; *āsavam* – fermented liquids like beer.

The sons of Diti and the demons transformed Prahlāda Mahārāja, who was born in an asura family, into a calf, and they extracted various kinds of liquor and beer, which they put into a pot made of iron.

PURPORT: 1 The demons also have their own types of beverages in the form of liquors and beers, just as the demigods use *soma-rasa* for their drinking purposes [previous verse]. The demons born of Diti take great pleasure in drinking wine and beer. Even today people of demoniac nature are very much addicted to liquor and beer. The name of Prahlāda Mahārāja is very significant in this con-

nection. Because Prahlāda Mahārāja was born in a family of demons, as the son of Hiranyakaśipu, by his mercy the demons were and still are able to have their drinks in the form of wine and beer. The word *ayaḥ* (iron) is very significant. 2 Whereas the nectarean *soma* was put in a golden pot, the liquors and beers were put in an iron pot. Because the liquor and beer are inferior, they are placed in an iron pot, and because *soma-rasa* is superior, it is placed in a golden pot.

17 गन्धर्वाप्सरसोऽधुक्षन् पात्रे पद्ममये पयः वत्सं विश्वावसुं कृत्वा गान्धर्वं मधु सौभगम्

*gandharvāpsaraso 'dhukṣan
pātre padmamaye payah
vatsam viśvāvasuṁ kṛtvā
gāndharvaṁ madhu saubhagam*

gandharva – inhabitants of the Gandharva planet; *apsarasah* – the inhabitants of the Apsarā planet; *adhukṣan* – milked out; *pātre* – in a pot; *padma-maye* – made of a lotus; *payah* – milk; *vatsam* – calf; *viśvāvasuṁ* – of the name Viśvāvasu;

- 1) Which beverages, respectively, do the demons and the demigods favor?
- 2) Of what metals were their respective pots made?

kṛtvā – making; *gāndharvam* – songs; *madhu* – sweet; *saubhagam* – beauty.

The inhabitants of Gandharvaloka and Apsaroloka made Viśvāvasu into a calf, and they drew the milk into a lotus-flower pot. 3 The milk took the shape of sweet musical art and beauty.

18 वत्सेन पितरोऽर्यम्णा कव्यं क्षीरमधुक्षत आमपात्रे महाभागाः श्रद्धया श्राद्धदेवताः

*vatsena pitaro 'ryamṇā
kavyam kṣīram adhuḥṣata
āma-pātre mahā-bhāgāḥ
śrāddhayā śrāddha-devatāḥ*

vatsena – by the calf; *pitaraḥ* – the inhabitants of Pitṛloka; *aryamṇā* – by the god of Pitṛloka, Aryamā; *kavyam* – offerings of food to ancestors; *kṣīram* – milk; *adhuḥṣata* – took out; *āma-pātre* – into an unbaked earthen pot; *mahā-bhāgāḥ* – the greatly fortunate; *śrāddhayā* – with great faith; *śrāddha-devatāḥ* – the demigods presiding over *śrāddha* ceremonies in honor of deceased relatives.

The fortunate inhabitants of Pitṛloka, who preside over the funeral ceremonies, made Aryamā into a calf. With great faith they milked kavya, food offered to the ancestors, into an unbaked earthen pot.

PURPORT: In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.25) it is said, *pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ*. Those who are interested in family welfare are called *pitṛ-vratāḥ*. 4 There is a planet called Pitṛloka, and the predominating deity of that planet is called Aryamā. He is somewhat of a demigod, and by satisfying him one can help ghostly family members develop a gross body. Those who are very sinful and attached to their family, house, village, or country do not receive a gross body made of material elements but remain in a subtle body, composed of mind, ego, and intelligence. Those who live in such subtle bodies are called ghosts. 5 This ghostly position is very painful because a ghost has intelligence, mind, and ego and wants to enjoy material life, but because he doesn't have a gross material body, he can only create disturbances for want of material satisfaction.

- 3) What was the form of the milk the Gandharvas received?
- 4) Who is the predominating deity of Pitṛloka?
- 5) Why is being a ghost a position of suffering?
- 6) How can one be assured of not becoming a ghost?
- 7) What did the inhabitants of Siddhaloka and Vidyādhara-loka receive?

It is the duty of family members, especially the son, to offer oblations to the demigod Aryamā or to Lord Viṣṇu. From time immemorial in India the son of a dead man goes to Gayā and, at a Viṣṇu temple there, offers oblations for the benefit of his ghostly father. It is not that everyone's father becomes a ghost, but the oblations of *piṇḍa* are offered to the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu so that if a family member happens to become a ghost, he will be favored with a gross body. 6 However, if one is habituated to taking the *prasāda* of Lord Viṣṇu, there is no chance of his becoming a ghost or anything lower than a human being. In Vedic civilization there is a performance called *śrāddha* by which food is offered with faith and devotion. If one offers oblations with faith and devotion – either to the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu or to His representative in Pitṛloka, Aryamā – one's forefathers will attain material bodies to enjoy whatever material enjoyment is due them. In other words, they do not have to become ghosts.

19 प्रकल्प्य वत्सं कपिलं सिद्धाः सङ्कल्पनामयीम् सिद्धिं नभसि विद्यां च ये च विद्याधरादयः

*prakalpya vatsam kapilam
siddhāḥ saṅkalpanāmayīm
siddhim nabhasi vidyām ca
ye ca vidyādharaḍayaḥ*

prakalpya – appointing; *vatsam* – calf; *kapilam* – the great sage Kapila; *siddhāḥ* – the inhabitants of Siddhaloka; *saṅkalpanā-mayīm* – proceeding from will; *siddhim* – yogic perfection; *nabhasi* – in the sky; *vidyām* – knowledge; *ca* – also; *ye* – those who; *ca* – also; *vidyādhara-ādayaḥ* – the inhabitants of Vidyādhara-loka, and so on.

After this, the inhabitants of Siddhaloka, as well as the inhabitants of Vidyādhara-loka, transformed the great sage Kapila into a calf, and making the whole sky into a pot, 7 they milked out specific yogic mystic powers, beginning with aṇimā. Indeed, the inhabitants of Vidyādhara-loka acquired the art of flying in the sky.

PURPORT: The inhabitants of both Siddhaloka and Vidyādhara-loka are naturally endowed with mystic yogic powers by which they not only can fly in outer space without a vehicle but can also fly from one planet to another simply by exerting their will. Just as fish can swim within water, the residents of Vidyādhara-loka can swim in the ocean of air. As far as the inhabitants of Siddhaloka are concerned, they are endowed with all mystic powers. The yogis in this planet practice the eightfold yogic mysticism – namely *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*. By regularly practicing the yogic processes one after another, the yogis attain various perfections; they can become smaller than the smallest, heavier

than the heaviest, etc. They can even manufacture a planet, get whatever they like and control whatever man they want. All the residents of Siddhaloka are naturally endowed with these mystic yogic powers. It is certainly a very wonderful thing if we see a person on this planet flying in the sky without a vehicle, but in Vidyādhara-loka such flying is as commonplace as a bird's flying in the sky. Similarly, in Siddhaloka all the inhabitants are great yogis, perfect in mystic powers.

The name of Kapila Muni is significant in this verse because He was the expounder of the Sāṅkhya philosophical system, and His father, Kardama Muni, was a great yogi and mystic. 8 Indeed, Kardama Muni prepared a great airplane, which was as large as a small town and had various gardens, palatial buildings, servants, and maidservants. With all this paraphernalia, Kapiladeva's mother, Devahūti, and His father, Kardama Muni, traveled all over the universes and visited different planets.

20 अन्ये च मायिनो मायामन्तर्धानाद्भुतात्मनाम् मयं प्रकल्प्य वत्सं ते दुदुहूर्धारणामयीम्

*anye ca māyino māyām
antardhānādbhutātmanām
mayam prakalpya vatsam te
duduhur dhāraṇāmayīm*

anye – others; *ca* – also; *māyinaḥ* – mystic magicians; *māyām* – mystic powers; *antardhāna* – disappearing; *adbhuta* – wonderful; *ātmanām* – of the body; *mayam* – the demon named Maya; *prakalpya* – making; *vatsam* – the calf; *te* – they; *duduhur* – milked out; *dhāraṇāmayīm* – proceeding from will.

Others also, the inhabitants of planets known as Kimpuruṣa-loka, made the demon Maya into a calf, and they milked out mystic powers by which one can disappear immediately from another's vision and appear again in a different form.

PURPORT: It is said that the inhabitants of Kimpuruṣa-loka can perform many wonderful mystic demonstrations. In other words, they can exhibit as many wonderful things as one can imagine. The inhabitants of this planet can do whatever they like, or whatever they imagine. Such powers are also mystic powers. 9 The possession of such mystic power is called *īśitā*.

The demons generally learn such mystic powers by the practice of yoga. In the *Daśama-skandha*, the Tenth Canto, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there is a vivid description of how the demons appear before Kṛṣṇa in various wonderful forms. For instance, Bakāsura appeared before Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boyfriends as a gigantic crane. While present on this planet, Lord Kṛṣṇa had to fight with many demons who could exhibit the wonderful mystic powers of

Kimpuruṣa-loka. Although the inhabitants of Kimpuruṣa-loka are naturally endowed with such powers, one can attain these powers on this planet by performing different yogic practices.

21 यक्षरक्षांसि भूतानि पिशाचाः पिशिताशनाः भूतेशवत्सा दुदुहुः कपाले क्षतजासवम्

*yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi bhūtāni
piśācāḥ piśitāśanāḥ
bhūteśa-vatsā duduhur
kapāle kṣatajāsavam*

yakṣa – the Yakṣas (the descendants of Kuvera); *rakṣāṁsi* – the Rākṣasas (meat-eaters); *bhūtāni* – ghosts; *piśācāḥ* – witches; *piśita-āśanāḥ* – who are all habituated to eating flesh; *bhūteśa* – Lord Śiva's incarnation Rudra; *vatsāḥ* – whose calf; *duduhur* – milked out; *kapāle* – in a pot of skulls; *kṣata-ja* – blood; *āsavam* – a fermented beverage.

Then the Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, ghosts, and witches, who are habituated to eating flesh, transformed Lord Śiva's incarnation Rudra [Bhūtanātha] into a calf and milked out beverages made of blood and put them in a pot made of skulls.

PURPORT: There are some types of living entities in the form of human beings whose living conditions and eatables are most abominable. Generally they eat flesh and fermented blood, which is mentioned in this verse as *kṣatajāsavam*. The leaders of such degraded men known as Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, *bhūtas*, and *piśācas*, are all in the mode of ignorance. They have been placed under the control of Rudra. 10 Rudra is the incarnation of Lord Śiva and is in charge of the mode of ignorance in material nature. Another name of Lord Śiva is Bhūtanātha, meaning "master of ghosts." Rudra was born from between Brahmā's eyes when Brahmā was very angry at the four Kumāras.

22 तथाहयो दन्दशूकाः सर्पा नागाश्च तक्षकम् विधाय वत्सं दुदुहूर्बिलपात्रे विषं पयः

*tathāhaya dandaśūkāḥ
sarpā nāgāś ca takṣakam
vidhāya vatsam duduhur
bila-pātre viṣam payaḥ*

- 8) What did Kardama Muni create with his mystic power?
- 9) What is the mystic power called *īśitā*?
- 10) Who is Rudra?

tathā – similarly; *ahayaḥ* – snakes without hoods; *dandaśūkāḥ* – scorpions; *sarpāḥ* – cobras; *nāgāḥ* – big snakes; *ca* – and; *takṣakam* – Takṣaka, chief of the snakes; *vidhāya* – making; *vatsam* – calf; *duduhuh* – milked out; *bila-pātre* – in the pot of snake holes; *viṣam* – poison; *payah* – as milk.

Thereafter cobras and snakes without hoods, large snakes, scorpions, and many other poisonous animals took poison out of the planet earth as their milk and kept this poison in snake holes. They made a calf out of Takṣaka.

PURPORT: Within this material world there are various types of living entities, and the different types of reptiles and scorpions mentioned in this verse are also provided with their sustenance by the arrangement of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The point is that everyone is taking his eatables from the planet earth. According to one's association with the material qualities, one develops a certain type of character. *Payah-pānam bhujāṅgānām*: if one feeds a serpent milk, the snake will simply increase his venom. However, if one supplies milk to a talented sage or saint, the sage will develop finer brain tissues by which he can contemplate higher, spiritual life. Thus the Lord is supplying everyone food, but according to the living entity's association with the modes of material nature, the living entity develops his specific character.

23 पशवो यवसं क्षीरं वत्सं कृत्वा च गोवृषम्
अरण्यपात्रे चाधुक्षन्मृगेन्द्रेण च दंष्ट्रिणः

24 क्रव्यादाः प्राणिनः क्रव्यं दुदुहुः स्वे कलेवरे
सुपर्णवत्सा विहगाश्चरं चाचरमेव च

paśavo yavasam kṣīram
vatsam kṛtvā ca go-vṛṣam
araṇya-pātre cādhuḥṣan
mṛgendreṇa ca daṁṣṭriṇaḥ

kravyādāḥ prāṇinaḥ kravyam
duduhuh sve kalevare
suparṇa-vatsā vihagāś
caram cācaram eva ca

paśavaḥ – cattle; *yavasam* – green grasses; *kṣīram* – milk; *vatsam* – the calf; *kṛtvā* – making; *ca* – also; *go-vṛṣam* – the bull carrier of Lord Śiva; *araṇya-pātre* – in the pot of the forest; *ca* – also; *adhuḥṣan* – milked out; *mṛga-indreṇa* – by the lion; *ca* – and; *daṁṣṭriṇaḥ* – animals with sharp teeth; *kravya-adāḥ* – animals who eat raw flesh; *prāṇinaḥ* – living entities; *kravyam* – flesh; *duduhuh* – took out; *sve* – own; *kalevare* – in the pot of their body; *suparṇa* – Garuda; *vatsāḥ* – whose calf; *vihagāḥ* – the birds; *caram* – moving living entities; *ca* – also; *acaram* – nonmoving living entities; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – also.

The four-legged animals like the cows made a calf out of the bull who carries Lord Śiva and made a milking pot out of the forest. Thus they got fresh green grasses to eat. Ferocious animals like tigers transformed a lion into a calf, and thus they were able to get flesh for milk. The birds made a calf out of Garuda and took milk from the planet earth in the form of moving insects and non-moving plants and grasses.

PURPORT: There are many carnivorous birds descended from Garuda, the winged carrier of Lord Viṣṇu. Indeed, there is a particular type of bird that is very fond of eating monkeys. Eagles are fond of eating goats, and of course many birds eat only fruits and berries. Therefore the words *caram*, referring to moving animals, and *acaram*, referring to grasses, fruits, and vegetables, are mentioned in this verse.

25 वटवत्सा वनस्पतयः पृथग्रसमयं पयः
गिरयो हिमवद्वत्सा नानाधातून् स्वसानुषु

vaṭa-vatsā vanaspatayaḥ
prthag rasamayam payah
girayo himavad-vatsā
nānā-dhātūn sva-sānuṣu

vaṭa-vatsāḥ – making the banyan tree a calf; *vanah-patayaḥ* – the trees; *prthag* – different; *rasa-mayam* – in the form of juices; *payah* – milk; *girayaḥ* – the hills and mountains; *himavat-vatsāḥ* – making the Himalayas the calf; *nānā* – various; *dhātūn* – minerals; *sva* – own; *sānuṣu* – on their peaks.

The trees made a calf out of the banyan tree, and thus they derived milk in the form of many delicious juices. The mountains transformed the Himalayas into a calf, and they milked a variety of minerals into a pot made of the peaks of hills.

26 सर्वे स्वमुख्यवत्सेन स्वे स्वे पात्रे पृथक्पयः
सर्वकामदुघां पृथ्वीं दुदुहुः पृथुभाविताम्

sarve sva-mukhya-vatsena
sve sve pātre prthag payah
sarva-kāma-dughām pṛthvīm
duduhuh pṛthu-bhāvītām

sarve – all; *sva-mukhya* – by their own chiefs; *vatsena* – as the calf; *sve sve* – in their own; *pātre* – pots; *prthag* – different; *payah* – milk; *sarva-kāma* – all desirables; *dughām* – supplying as milk; *pṛthvīm* – the planet earth; *duduhuh* – milked out; *pṛthu-bhāvītām* – controlled by King Pṛthu.

[Continued in the next issue.]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

Our System of Civilization: EVERYONE SATISFIED

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: This is our traditional system: to live simply, treat all the Lord's creatures kindly, and then, at life's end, go back to the spiritual world. And what is the modern rascals' system? To live lavishly, treat animals and unborn babies cruelly, and then go to hell. Their system is not practical for us. We cannot follow their system.

But anyway, if you can maintain a perfect community based on simple living and high thinking, that will be sufficient. There is no need to canvass. People will see gradually for themselves that this traditional way of life really is convenient, most practical.

Now you have received this jewel: spiritual, peaceful life. So utilize it properly. Make your life perfect. *Brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*: "After wandering through many universes for many lifetimes, the fortunate soul gets the mercy of a bona fide spiritual master and of Kṛṣṇa – and the seed of the

Lord's eternal devotional service.”

Now, we don't tell people, “Spiritual civilization means that you starve – you unnecessarily give trouble to your body.” No. “Eat nicely. Live nicely. But live simply, so that you save time for advancing in God consciousness.” That is our program. And anyone can learn it if he at all desires.

After all, even these modern rascals are human beings, endowed with human intelligence. They can learn. So we'll go on speaking the truth. But practicing it personally – that is our main business. Whether or not one of my students has a propensity for preaching, let him preach by the way he lives. Let his personal life be perfect. Let him teach by his life.

The secret is to make the Lord the center of all that you do. Become preoccupied with Kṛṣṇa. Then naturally you'll not be preoccupied with your material body. Lavish your affection upon Kṛṣṇa. Then you'll not lavish excessive affection upon the material body, which is, after all, temporary and not your real self.

Because people today are caught up in this misconception that the material body is the self, they're mispending so much time and effort and money. Isn't that so? All on something that cannot last. Why not transfer your love to your real, spir-

itual self and to the Supreme Self – make Him your beloved and enjoy life with Him forever. That is our system of civilization.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, you've said that if you glorify Kṛṣṇa, then your heart will become glorious and you'll feel satisfied.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. This system of civilization is not simply a fashion or a whim. It is for our benefit. By seeing and hearing Kṛṣṇa glorified, you'll be satisfied. That is natural: You'll feel satisfied because factually you are a spiritual being, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa.

So show people how they can serve and glorify the Lord in their everyday life. Then they will be rid of the propensity, “Let me go to the market and find some nice new gadget or some nice new rag to glorify myself.” Finished. Millions and billions of people – by glorifying the Lord, they'll feel satisfied. This is our system of civilization: everyone satisfied.

These animals who live with us on our farms – even they are satisfied. They are not afraid. If they are resting and some of my students come near, they do not stir and become fearful. They have come to know, “These people love us. They'll not harm us. We are safe. We are at home.” Any animal, be he bird or beast, can be taught this sense of

safety and friendship.

Take these cows. They know all of you are their friends. Animals can understand this. You can make friends even with lions and tigers. Yes. I have seen it. At the World's Fair in New York, a man was embracing a lion, and the lion was playing with him the way a dog plays with his master. I've seen it.

Disciple: Often you see that kind of thing at the circus, as well – a man putting his head in a lion's mouth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Disciple: If you haven't fed him, then it is dangerous. But as long as you keep him well fed, you can even put your head into his mouth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Naturally. Animal means “living being, spiritual being,” not some dead stone. So he can understand, “This man is giving me food – he's my friend.” The feeling of love, friendship – everything is there, even in the animals.

Disciple: Everything is there except God consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Generally the soul can come to God consciousness only in the human form of life. But even in an animal form he can become God conscious, by associating with someone who is God conscious.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, I thought you'd once said love is impossible between humans and animals, because they belong to different species.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Being in the same species is very conducive to love. But love is possible between any living entity and any other – because every living entity is a spirit, part and parcel of God, the Supreme Spirit.

So genuine love requires that we center our love on God, on Kṛṣṇa. That love can make this world as blissful as Vṛndāvana, as blissful as the spiritual world, where the human beings love Kṛṣṇa, the animals love Kṛṣṇa, the trees love Kṛṣṇa, everyone loves Kṛṣṇa – where everyone loves everyone, because Kṛṣṇa is the central point. That is the perfection of civilization, the perfection of love. 🌸

GLOSSARY with AUDIO

For help with the meaning and pronunciation of Sanskrit words, visit our online Glossary of more than 1,200 words.



Krishna.com/glossary

**HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE**

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

My Only Problem

... And Maybe Yours Too!

The author discovers that all our problems are the manifestation of one single problem. If you know it you can solve it, and make your life successful.

by Indra Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

IT'S 7:00 A.M., AND I'M standing on the balcony of my flat looking at the busy street below. A school bus comes and picks up children. Seeing their children off to school, the mothers are waving to them, happy that the school will train them to face the problems in their future life. Some fathers, having seen their children off at the bus stop, are rushing home to get ready for work. I see cars, buses, pedestrians, and cyclists rushing here and there as people try to solve the problems confronting them every day. I take a moment to reflect on my life, also a constant struggle between my problems and my efforts to solve them.

Problems Remain, the Types Change

As a child growing up in a small town in India, my major problem was the streetlights in the evening. I dreaded their glow, signifying the end of my playtime. When I reached home, washed my hands and legs, and gulped down some snacks, I faced a bigger problem – studies. I looked at the people who did not have to study, such as the older boys who had more freedom. I believed that when I grew older, my problems would be solved. I wanted to grow up fast; that would solve my problems.

In Dubai, UAE, home to the author, a double-decker bus stops to pick up passengers in the working-class neighborhood of Deira, where – like everywhere else in the world – residents embark for another day of facing life's problems.



As I grew older I got some freedom from the strict routine given by my parents. I could stay out longer in the evenings, but I had a new set of problems – getting good marks and getting into a good college. Gone were the innocence of a child and the freedom of thinking like a child. In came a more complicated mentality brought about by my attempt to understand the world around me.

I entered college, the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, a dream come true. I thought all my difficulties were behind me. It would be smooth sailing now. But college life brought new challenges. I lost the shelter of my home and moved into a hostel and had to do every-

soon my money was not enough. So I believed more money would solve all my problems. I worked harder to make more money.

I read books by various authors on different subjects. I explored the world through their writings, laughed and cried with them, judged the world through their eyes. I speculated, forming my ideas of good and bad. I read books on religion, philosophy, self-help. Television, movies, magazines, chatting, and endless gossiping filled a major portion of my life. I wanted to learn as much as possible about the world around me. I worked hard to improve my job skills to rise up the job ladder, and looked for better job openings.

Soon my money was not enough. So I believed more money would solve all my problems. I worked harder to make more money.

thing on my own. Though I was now free to sleep or get up when I wanted, and no one was closely monitoring me, I was not totally free. I had to attend classes. I had to self-discipline. I had to study for exams. Money was scarce. These were my problems. I told myself that my graduation would solve all my problems. I would not have to depend on my parents. I could be self-sufficient. And I would not have to study.

I graduated from college and landed in a decent job. I was looking forward to this chapter in my life with the hope of fulfilling all my desires and solving all my problems. I could spend my money as I liked. The initial period was good. I found new freedom in my new position. I bought things I had long desired. I could now buy gifts for family and friends. I could give some money to my parents. I was enjoying the power of money in my hands. But it was too short-lived. I noted that my needs and desires also grew, and

Life moved on. Everyone was searching for happiness, but the search basically translated to nothing but sense enjoyment and more sense enjoyment. I was also naturally attracted to women, and that caused a great deal of trouble and heartache. Constantly kicked around by the world, I was sometimes successful, sometimes a failure, happy and sad, elated and depressed, lonely and sociable. The more I tried to be happy, the more the carrot at the end of the stick moved away. Though tormented by these dualities, I accepted them because this is what everybody calls life – something to be endured – and I was no different.

Eventually I got married and was blessed with two sons. We are a loving and caring family, and yet there are many problems. As the age-old proverb says, marriage is like a Delhi laddoo – whether you eat it or not, you regret. The problems popped in and out. Solutions also came, but the problems only mutated, just as

a virus mutates when hit with medicines. I thought there must be some way to solve all my problems, but was always frustrated.

The Quest to Find a Solution

In looking for a solution, I was a little like Einstein; he was looking for one theory to explain all the forces of nature – electromagnetic, strong, weak, and gravitational. This would demystify the world and make physics so much easier. He coined the term “Unified Field Theory” and spent the latter part of his life searching for it, but was unsuccessful. Many physicists today devote their lives, careers, and reputations to finding such a theory. Einstein’s expectation of finding it may have come from understanding that there is one God and everything comes from Him.

At some point I was exposed to the Hare Kṛṣṇas. I started reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, chanting, and attending Hare Kṛṣṇa programs. These activities brought about a marked change in my consciousness. I wanted to find the root cause of all our problems through the very promising path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It took me a little time before I landed on this beautiful verse from the *Padma Purāṇa*, quoted in *Caitanya--caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.113)*:

*smartavyaḥ satatam viṣṇur
vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

“Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the *śāstras* should be servants of these two principles.”

And there it struck me – the root cause of all my problems is forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, and remembering Kṛṣṇa is the solution I had long been looking

for. I really have only one problem: how to always remember Kṛṣṇa.

Unlike Archimedes, I did not shout “Eureka!” It took some time to absorb the significance of the truth that everything else is subservient to remembering the Lord. The dictionary defines *remember* as “recall something to mind, or become aware of something that had been forgotten.” For all of us, “the something that had been forgotten” is Kṛṣṇa. Forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa is not our original position. We have only to bring Kṛṣṇa back to our mind. Forgetful of Kṛṣṇa, a living entity wants to lord over the material nature, whereas his true identity is that he is an eternal servant of the Lord. He tries to usurp the property of the Lord, declaring that he owns the land, the air, and the water, and he will slay anyone who challenges that. This has created boundaries between people, nations, and faiths. People on this side of the boundary are our friends, and those on the other side are our enemies. Human energy has been wrongly directed to the concept of “I and mine.”

Suffering the Threefold Miseries

Conditioned souls become servants of lusty desires, and when these are not fulfilled, they become angry, lose all intelligence, and suffer the threefold miseries of life – miseries from our own body and mind, from other living entities, and from nature. I realized that not only was I suffering but everybody was. For a sincere seeker of truth honestly trying to solve all problems, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave perfect answers. And he had to begin by defining the problems. We do not even know what our real problems are, so how can we solve them? Under the influence of *māyā*, we are trying to solve our self-created and self-inflicted problems, with no endeavor to permanently solve our real problems of birth, death, old age, and disease.

Would I like to wish away all my

problems? No, because even problems have benefits. Every problem encourages us to find answers; every difficulty is a hidden opportunity. Driving on a busy road in slow traffic, I take the opportunity to chant or listen to *kīrtanas*, lectures, and conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Whereas everybody else is stressed out trying to somehow squeeze through traffic, I am more composed because unlike others my time is fruitfully used. As a beautiful butterfly comes out of the larva after its successful struggle to break the covering, we come out better through our difficulties and travails. Unfortunately are those who pass through life without tackling their problems.

I considered that I was exploited by my bosses, by the organizations where I worked, by the people

around me. I soon understood that my bosses thought they were exploited by their bosses and all the people around me thought they were exploited by another person or persons. This knowledge helped me stay calm at work. Many of my colleagues are stressed and suffer stress-related diseases, but I am much less affected. My spiritual life is a great stress-reliever and enables me to retain a healthy detachment. As an engineer, I can tackle design problems objectively and look at them from a different angle of vision, allowing me to give solutions that others could not.

Difficulty Remembering Kṛṣṇa

Though I understand that remembering Kṛṣṇa is important, it is difficult.



Prahlāda Mahārāja, who was protected from his father’s repeated attempts to kill him, exemplifies the devotional practice of remembering the Lord.

He is *adhokṣaja*, transcendental, beyond the reach of our material senses. For us, conditioned to understand the world through our senses, this transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not come easily, especially when the whole world considers pandering to the senses the aim of life. As I chant, my mind often drifts and my ears do not always hear the mantra. Chanting without remembering the Lord is like idling a car's engine without the gears engaged. It may make a lot of sound, but the car does not move an inch. Remembrance of the Lord is the lever that connects the mind to the chanting engine that can take us to the transcendental realm.

ple around them, including near and dear ones. In my early days of chanting at home, I had to hide my beads. One day my wife caught me chanting on the balcony. She feared I would become a renunciant and leave home or lose all interest in caring for the family. It took a huge effort to explain everything not only to my wife but to everybody around me. Due to my perseverance and patience, my wife's understanding, and the mercy of the Lord and my devotee friends, matters improved with time, and today my wife and children are engaged in sincerely serving the Lord. Some of the people around us are trying to follow our path, but for others, our transformation is nothing

even know existed in my heart, and the deep love that flows from my heart, like the tears that flow from my eyes at such moments, cleanses and cools everything. The love of my Lord is my greatest wealth, and no one can take it away. It is wealth that can be tasted, relished, and shared with others, yet becomes richer every day. The whole world is longing for such love but can't find it.

In appreciation, Kṛṣṇa weeds out the desire for illusory material enjoyment from within the hearts of the faithful. Then we become immune to the pains inflicted by the world around us. Remembrance of the Lord is the greatest balm. It makes us internally unaffected by the trials and tribulations, the onslaughts of various agents of *māyā*. We experience peace where others are subject to stress. We are the fortunate ones who have been released from the grasp of *māyā*. The rest of the world is hopelessly pursuing money, power, and position, going in the wrong direction. Their endeavors are like beating a husk devoid of rice.

The Lord provides for everybody – their food, water, air, life breath, everything – and He protects everybody. Nobody else does, and nobody else can. A chaste wife depends on the provisions and protection of her husband and naturally always remembers him. Our relationship with the Lord should be similar. He does not demand anything for His mercy, but for our own sake we can remember Him in gratitude.

Remember Kṛṣṇa At the End of Life

As we remember the Lord when we chant, His holy name tastes sweeter and our meditation on the holy name goes deeper. When we no longer depend on the external world – where *māyā* tantalizes and deceives – for happiness and solutions to our problems, we are more in control of ourselves. When we depend on Kṛṣṇa only, we save ourselves from harass-

ment by others. The constant practice of chanting the holy names while remembering the Lord absorbs us day and night even though outwardly we carry on with our duties.

Lord Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to remember Him while fighting, as that will protect him (*mām anusmara yudhya ca, Gītā 8.7*). Similarly, remembrance of the Lord will protect us in our day-to-day struggles and battles. It purifies our activities and constantly guides us in the right direction. Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Lord Himself in the incarnation of a devotee, declares in *Śikṣāṣṭaka, niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālah*: for remembrance, there are no rules or consideration of time, making it easier for us.

Finally, are we prepared for the ultimate test of our life – to remember Kṛṣṇa at the end? We should be prepared at every moment, as death may come anytime without warning. If we pass the test, we become entitled to enter Kṛṣṇa's spiritual world, where there is no anxiety. Will we be able to remember Kṛṣṇa when our throats are choked, when the pain is like the biting of millions of scorpions, when we are fighting for every breath? We invest in a lifetime of chanting His names and pray that we remember Him at the end. The all-loving Lord will help us. We are not such exalted souls as Bhīṣma, for whom God personally came. But we pray, "Please send Your ambassadors to take me back to You, and not the horrible assistants of Yamarāja. Then I will have conquered the greatest fear – the fear of death. I pray that I will not have to come back to this mortal world, but will enter into Your eternal pastimes, where there is no fear of forgetting You." 🙏

Indra Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami Mahārāja, has been a practicing structural engineer for thirty-two years. He has worked in various capacities in a public sector company in India and with multinational companies in various parts of the world. He lives in Dubai.

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 last in a series of eight meditations.

Loss of a Loved One

Of the many pieces of wisdom that struck me when I read the ancient epic the *Mahābhārata*, one that particularly stuck out was the statement of a sage who said, "All happiness must end in distress, all union in separation, and all life in death. Seek then the eternal."

Simple and undeniable truths, I suppose, but not ones we often contemplate. Caught up in the rush of everyday life, we tend to be more concerned with the minutiae and often lose sight of the bigger picture. Questions like why am I here, what is the goal of my life, and what happens when I die are not always forefront in our minds. But some events have the power to bring them into stark focus, none more so than the loss of a loved one. All of life's certainties are suddenly not so certain.

It is very difficult to come to terms with bereavements. Vedic teachings tell me that this is so because I am an eternal being who has wrongly identified with the temporary. We try to create secu-

urity and permanence in life and relationships because permanence is our true spiritual nature. Yet no matter how hard we try, everything we hold dear in this world inevitably passes away. But it doesn't have to be a painful process if, as the *Mahābhārata* sage suggested, we reach for the eternal. Instead of always looking to the externals of this world for security and happiness, we are advised to look instead to the unchanging spiritual essence, to our own soul and to God.

Many spiritual teachings say that we are undying souls, parts of God. This being the case, death means only the death of the body – like a change of clothing, as the *Mahābhārata* puts it. In fact the people I've known and loved have not died. They have simply moved on but are still safely in God's hands. And that, says the *Mahābhārata*, is where we truly belong, and where I can enjoy my loving relationships forever.

We have to beg for the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the science of remembering Kṛṣṇa always.

For the ever-liberated devotees there is no forgetfulness of the Lord. But for conditioned souls like me, remembrance is extremely difficult. Thus we are perpetually in this material world and subjected to material tribulations brought about by different bodily forms life after life in different hellish conditions. We have to beg for the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the science of remembering Kṛṣṇa always and never forgetting Him. Even a moment's forgetfulness is a great loss. Although remembrance is difficult, anybody can learn it by practice. One does not need great capability or education; one needs only sincerity and humility.

Remembrance: The Pain and the Balm

Those who take to remembering Kṛṣṇa may have to go through a period of opposition, stiff resistance, and humiliation from the peo-

short of a miracle – an easy excuse for them to not follow our example.

As devotees' remembrance of Kṛṣṇa goes deeper, the so-called pleasures of the world taste more and more bitter. In the lives of the faithful, remembrance has often caused havoc, such as physical torture by governments or psychological torture by friends, relatives, and colleagues. On the other hand, advanced devotees may undergo a different type of torment, one given by the Lord, whose remembrance may cause intense yearning. Such a sentiment was prominently displayed in Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the *gopīs* of Vrindavan, but even in the stage of devotion in practice, devotees may taste the pain of separation from the Lord minutely or sporadically.

In this pain is the greatest pleasure. Only a devotee can experience it, and it is difficult to explain. Sometimes remembrance of the Lord evokes in me emotions I did not



Kulimela

The Next Generation

On the tenth anniversary of the first Kulimela, Kulis explore how to create a new and better world for future generations.

by Madhava Smullen

IN A LEAFY YARD in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, a large group of children is leaning forward, riveted, as award-winning storyteller Saṅkīrtana Dāsa does what he does best. “Please help me!” he squeaks, impersonating the mouse in one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s favorite parables. Then he cycles through an impressive library of animal noises, as a sage turns the mouse into predator after predator so he’ll no longer be prey.

The kids are on the edge of their seats. Who

will he turn into next? Finally, Saṅkīrtana mimics a ferocious tiger and tries to eat the sage, who promptly orders, “Again become a mouse!” And the children all fall about in helpless laughter.

Over the four days of Kulimela’s tenth anniversary festival, from June 15 to 19, 2016, Vraja Johnson and her volunteers care for nearly a hundred children of gurukulis in this kids’ camp. They visit Prabhupāda’s Palace, get unique Jagannātha deities made by a balloon artist,





Vrajapriya Johnson



Lakshman Poddar



Lakshman Poddar

A crowd gathers in front of the main stage at the start of the evening entertainment (above). Delicious dinner prasādam prepared by a skilled kitchen crew led by Radha Dainton and Nityananda Prins is served out to a hungry crowd (left). Above right, the Festival of India and Kulimela entertainment crews volunteer their time to set up tents at the start of the festival.

do arts and crafts, and model outfits they've made themselves in their own fashion show.

Meanwhile teenagers, some of them also the children of "kulis," are staffing the Mela's jam-packed all-day Bhajan Kutir. Beaming from ear to ear, roaring out the holy names, and completely absorbed, they clearly wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

Even the youngest kids are engaged. On the first day of the Mela, I sit with my two-year-old, Ambika, in the temple as other kulis do *bhajan*s. She rocks back and forth eagerly on my lap, grooving to the mantra with a huge grin on her face,

What Is a "Kuli"?



Dallas gurukula, July 1975.

GURUKULIS WERE students in ISKCON's early spiritual boarding schools, or *gurukulas*. When they graduated, they remained bonded through their shared experiences and kept the moniker. The name was later shortened to "Kuli," and broadened to include anyone who grew up in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, even if they hadn't attended *gurukula*.

Today, Kulimela organizers have further broadened the term Kuli to mean "a member of a particular family, tribe, or community," which is closer to its literal Sanskrit meaning. This also accommodates the needs of their complex, expanding group. Kulimela, meanwhile, means "Family Festival," or as organizers like to say, a chance to "Celebrate Community!"



As night sets in, the Mayapuris, DJ Bala, and DJ Bijoy Krishna entertain the crowd from the main stage.

until the leader stops. “Noooo!” she cries, throwing a fit until they start up again, and then she’s back to grinning and rocking.
“Back in 2006 at the first Mela, few of us organizers had kids,” says Govinda Syer, a charter member of the nonprofit behind the festival. “Now, each of us has at least one. That completely changes how we think about the event. Because now we’re thinking, how does each element work with children? How do we give *them* a good experience?”
Kulis who attended ISKCON’s early *gurukulas*, or boarding schools, did of course have some

good experiences. But they also suffered from the mistakes and abuse of an immature educational system and staff. So today, they’re determined to give their own children a more positive experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
And that’s what lead organizer Bhima Walker is focusing on at Kulimela 2016. Sometimes it’s through making sure the next generation has a good time at the festival. And sometimes, it’s through discussing the Mela’s two main themes – Celebrating Family and Building Community – in seminars that may just help shape the future of ISKCON.

Investing in Our Future

By lunchtime on Wednesday, June 15, participants are lining up on the temple grounds to register and get their wristbands and T-shirts, tightly embracing old friends in emotional reunions, and getting excited about what’s to come.
Throughout the Mela around seven hundred kulis from North America, South America, Europe, and Australia will participate, as well as their children, and many first generation devotees too – all part of organizers’ efforts to bridge divides and broaden the meaning of the word “kuli” to its literal definition of “community.”

What’s more, the second generation attendees themselves are no longer just “youth,” as kulis are still often known throughout ISKCON. An erroneous and dated perception, it minimizes what they’re able to contribute. The kulis here range from their teens to their late forties, and many are working professionals – I chat to an Ernst & Young manager, an Android app developer, and an X-ray tech – as well as active contributors to their communities and, of course, parents.
These passions come out in the Mela’s two central plenary sessions. As a parent and a kuli myself, I’m hoping for some inspiration as I walk



Ananda-tilā Devī Dāśī (8)



Ananda-Īlā Devī Dāśī



Ananda-Īlā Devī Dāśī

into a packed and buzzing community hall on Thursday for the first of these, “Celebrating Family.” And I’m not shortchanged.

Presentations by a mixed panel of first- and second-generation experts in their fields lead to a lively discussion with the audience and rousing calls to action.

There’s a consensus that focusing on healthy marriages and happy families will make for a stronger ISKCON. Kulis are encouraged to invest in the future by teaming together on projects that positively affect children in

their local communities. They also discuss making lots of small specialized groups in their communities to encourage members’ interests and make them feel like they belong.

The conversation is always empowering. “We are the community, we are the temple, we are ISKCON,” says audience member Śyāmasundarī Dāśī from Alachua. “So if something needs to be done, we must step up and do it ourselves.”

And Chaitanya Maṅgala Dāsa, one of Kulimela’s organizers, points out what a practical difference these



Bhakti-latā Dāśī (upper left) gives the morning Bhāgavatam class in Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvana-Candra’s temple. Upper right, Kṛṣṇa Kiśora Dāsa plays harmonium and leads the chanting during the 24-hour kīrtana while devotees (left) chant before the deities.

Ananda-Īlā Devī Dāśī



“Who knows where he’s going to go from here?”

“Building Community,” the other main plenary session of the Mela, is no less inspiring. Pioneer kulis marvel at how far our community has come, and how wonderful it is to see the younger generations coming up. They also implore everyone to bridge the designations that divide us.

Others give practical reports on their community-building efforts. Gopinath Bloch talks about the Sanga Initiative, which keeps North

Beyond the two plenary sessions, festivalgoers further arm themselves to make a difference with the Mela’s nearly thirty seminars on parenting, homesechooling, child protection, finding the right marriage partner, permaculture, and arts like cooking, music, and drama. With multiple seminars taking place side by side, there’s a palpable uplifting energy as kulis buzz from class to class, laughing and chatting about what they’ve learned.

One of the most popular sessions is on Friday, when Karṇāmṛta Dāsī

Ananda-Iti Devi Dāsī



Award-winning storyteller Saṅkīrtana Dāsa (above) entertains the children during the three-day kids’ camp. At right, the Bhaktivedanta Players, from the UK, perform “Sanātana Gosvāmī and the Touchstone.” (Jaya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa on left, Radhe Sivyer on right.) At far right, Prāṇa Rūpa Dāsī and daughter Harilila enjoy the entertainment on the main stage.



Ananda-Iti Devi Dāsī

efforts can make.

“I met Bhakta Vatsala Prabhu’s teenage son Kapila Baba today,” he shares. “Kapila had been in the kids’ camp I organized at the first Kulimela in 2006. He said, ‘I don’t know if you remember me, but I want you to know I had a great time.’ Now, he’s blissfully chanting at the Bhajan Kutir, and enthusiastically serving on the Festival of India tour.” Chaitanya Maṅgala’s voice cracks, and he fights back tears.

American youth connected and active in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And Gopī Gītā Dāsī gives an enlivening report from Dallas, once infamous for the abuse early *gurukula* students suffered there. Today, its kuli-run TKG Academy dayschool has forty students, who are getting a fun, positive experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that focuses on the dos rather than the don’ts, and who are in the top ninetieth percentile for academics in the state of Texas.

and Ananta Vṛndāvana Dāsa, both alumni of Dallas and New Vrindaban *gurukulas*, are honored for their unique contributions and sacrifices as pioneer kulis. As they share memories of good times and challenges, there’s uproarious laughter and tears, with not a dry eye left in the house.

The appreciation ceremony is a feature that organizers want to continue at every Kulimela, inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statement in a *Nectar of Instruction* purport that

“The International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness has been established to facilitate these six kinds of loving exchanges between devotees.” The hope is that the devotee appreciation will continue between Melas, too.

Unity Through Kṛṣṇa Culture

Dusk has fallen. Kulis are crowded onto a green New Vrindaban hill, on an open end of the lush Commu-

nity Garden, for a different kind of appreciation event. Bass is pounding and multicolored lights are flashing on a huge stage topped with Lord Jagannātha’s smiling face. A hyped-up audience is dancing in sync, fists pumping to the funky reggaeton beats.

On the stage Arjuna Moreira, aka Krishna Tone, shouts, “Who we thinkin’ of?” and the crowd roars back in one voice, “Kṛṣṇa!!!”

Kulimela might look like a regu-

lar music festival, but there’s a difference: both performers and audience are constantly expressing their love for the Lord.

This Kulimela has one marked difference from the first one in 2006, too: the family atmosphere. The adults are having fun, but there are also special stageside tents for children who need to take a nap. And best of all, Krishna Tone has invited a huge crowd of young kids onstage



Ananda-līlā Devī Dāsī

Pioneer Kulis Ananta Vṛndāvana Dāsa (above, with microphone) and Karṇāmṛita Dāsī (to his left) are honored at a group appreciation led by Chaitanya Maṅgala Dāsa (to Ananta Vṛndāvana’s right). At right, Ekendra Dāsa performs a comedy skit as the character Yama Niyama Dāsa Brahmaçārī.

Opposite page: Early-morning balloon rides offer festival participants a bird’s-eye view of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Palace and other parts of New Vrindaban.



Ananda Monet

to dance with him. They strike Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa poses, do cartwheels, and take bows, looking hugely pleased with themselves and delighting their parents' hearts.

This mood of supportive community stretches out to every part of the nightly entertainment. As always, Kulimela champions new talent, like fifteen-year-old Pishima Callo-way from Gita Nagari, who blows everyone away with her huge voice. Singing soulful lyrics like “He is my savior, my everything, I sing for Him,” she hits high notes that elicit a spontaneous roar of applause from the crowd.

The seasoned performers dazzle too – Ananda Monet with her operatic *Mahābhārata* songs, Anapayini Jakupko and Ganga Sheth with their

evocative dance, and Dattātreya Yogeśvara Dāsa with his magic – all thrill and touch hearts.

Meanwhile with her runway show “Forest of Vrindavana: Fashion Revolution,” Krishna Devata McComb showcases the new world of kuli designers. They display incredible handloomed dhotis and kurtas, outfits inspired by the Rajasthani tribes-women of India, and *gopī* dresses

Viśāhkā Devī Dāsī models her latest clothing designs during the “Forest of Vrindavan” fashion show. Below, a kids’ camp participant models her fun fashion statement for fellow campers and their parents, her creation designed during a craft activity.



Ananda-Ilā Devī Dāsī

with elaborate accessories like beaded umbrellas and decorated waterpots. The show also honors its theme by donating wool shawls to the widows of Vrindavan, India, and funds to New Vrindaban’s cow protection program.

The grand finale comes with fifty lanterns being released into the night sky for fifty years of ISKCON, sent off with individual and group prayers. As the golden splashes of fire float above the crowds, the Mayapuris burst onstage with their unique brand of rocking *kīrtana*.

“How many of you had a Quaker Oats oatmeal box for your first *mṛdaṅga*?” Visvambhar Sheth asks as the amplified *mṛdaṅga* thunders into earshot. Kulis go wild, moshing, spinning, and busting their best tem-



Ananda Monet



Chris Bryant

The Kulimela Effect

New Vrindaban, 2006

THE FIRST KULIMELA, held in New Vrindaban in 2006, was an attempt to bring kulis from all over the world together to support each other and explore what they could achieve.

The result – “The Kulimela Effect” – has been expanding out in waves of collaborative service ever since.

Ten follow-up Melas were held in France, Germany, Belgium, Russia, Siberia, Australia, New Zealand, and, in the U.S., Los Angeles, Alachua, and once again New Vrindaban.

Kulis were inspired to form local networks to contribute to their own communities, and many started major annual *kīrtana* festivals: New Vrindaban’s 24-Hour Kirtan, Alachua’s Festival of the Holy Name, Belgium’s Radhadesh Mellows, Italy’s Sra-vanam Kirtanam Festival, and Spain’s Holy Name Festival all sprouted from Kulimela.

There were also worldwide events to raise consciousness – Global Kirtan for the Yamuna

River, and Golden Age Global Kirtan. And in Alachua, Florida, Kulimela inspired second-generation devotees to build an annual “Village of Vrindavan” experience every Janmāṣṭamī at their local temple.

In addition, Kulimela Association, the nonprofit behind the Melas, has backed spiritually motivated philanthropic efforts. It is the record label for the Grammy-nominated album *Bhakti Without Borders*, which donates all its profits to clothe, feed, and educate underprivileged girls in Vrindavan, India. It also partners with Krishna Devata to distribute saris and shawls to Vrindavana’s widows and sadhus.

Looking to the future, Kulis see that the possibilities are endless. But whatever comes next, it’s sure to incorporate Kulimela’s four essential themes: Building Community (Saṅga), Serving Together (Sevā), Empowering Each Other (Śakti), and Transforming Hearts (Bhakti).

ple dance moves to songs like “Jai Śrī Kṛṣṇa” and “Sītā Rāma.” Holding his “whompers” to his ears, hype man Kṛṣṇa Kiśora Dāsa invites everyone to chant louder and louder.

As the blistering set reaches its conclusion, and everyone is left grinning, panting, and sweating, Balārāma Tīrtha Dāsa leaves us with a heartwarming thought: “We may all be such varied people spread across all corners of the world,” he calls

Service for the Soul

There’s much to remember about Kulimela 2016 – the seminars, the performers, the ecstatic 24-hour *kīrtana* closer. But perhaps most defining of all is the service – as organizer Kapila Monet comments, “A vital aspect of kuli culture is service, and that’s what we want it to be all about.”

Over the five days, hundreds of volunteers cook delicious *prasādam*

meals, wash mountains of dishes, battle through weather challenges and lack of sleep to organize the entertainment and seminars, practice for hours to share their talents, staff the kids’ camp, and much more.

“The people who have the best experiences in a Kulimela are the ones who experience the pleasure and fun that goes into serving others,” says organizer Baladeva Keilman. “They get to meet new people and build a



Gaurangi Ahringhoff

out. “But we all have one thing in common: we love Kṛṣṇa, and we love Śrīla Prabhupāda!”

This intrinsic unity in kulis, and the stunning cultural talent on display, recalls a letter Prabhupāda sent to Śyāmasundara Dāsa when his daughter Sarasvatī was two. “I am very glad to learn about the activities of your nice daughter,” he wrote. “I am sure she will be a great devotee and great preacher also in future. I want that on this Kṛṣṇa culture the whole world can be united.”

Festival participants releasing fifty sky lanterns at twilight (above), accompanied by chanting and prayers from the main stage, to celebrate and commemorate ISKCON’s fiftieth and Kulimela’s tenth anniversaries. At right, Chandra Ferry and Erin Mahamantra Detamore are about to release a lantern. Opposite page (left to right): Anjali, Kapila, and Ananda Monet.



Erin Mahamantra Detamore



Ananda Monet



Ananda-Jita Devi Dasi (2)



Visvambhar Sheth, of the Mayapuris, encourages the crowd to dance (left). Mallika Chacon (above) dances at the front of the crowd during evening entertainment. Below, the enthusiastic crowd dances late into the night.



personal connection with them that they remember for years to come. It's very special and rewarding."

Baladeva hopes that putting on festivals such as Kulimelas will inspire kulis to serve their communities more and more from their hearts.

"They're already doing it all around the world, and that's something to be really proud of," he says. "Despite everything that the first generation of kulis went through, that link, that desire to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa, is there. And it's becoming stronger as we share it with our children. That's why we put such a strong focus on giving them wonderful positive experiences in relation to Kṛṣṇa. Because then their link to

Prabhupāda's mission will be that much stronger. As Prabhupāda famously said, it will be these future generations that will take his movement forward."

I believe him. I'm just about to take Ambika to another *kīrtana*, and I'm warning you – if it stops, she'll scream.

After all, she already loves Kṛṣṇa – all we have to do is surround her with reasons to keep loving Him. 🙏

For more information, visit <http://kulimela.org/> or <https://www.facebook.com/kulimela>.

Madhava Smullen writes for *iskconnews.org*. He lives with his wife, Manjari, and their daughter, Ambika, in Alachua, Florida.

A Pause for Prayer



Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

We pray for Your Lordship to favor us by instructing us how to engage in the transcendental loving service of Your lotus feet so that we may never forget our eternal relationship with Your Lordship. We do not want liberation from the entanglement of material existence. By Your will we may take birth in any species of life; it does not matter. We simply pray that we never forget Your lotus feet under any circumstances. Dear Lord, we now surrender unto Your lotus feet by offering our respectful obeisances unto You because You are the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva. You are the Supersoul in everyone's heart, and You are Lord Hari, who can take away all miserable conditions of material existence. Dear Lord, Your name is Govinda, the reservoir of all pleasure, because one who is engaged in satisfying Your senses satisfies his own senses automatically. Dear Lord, You are ever famous, for You can put an end to all the miseries of Your devotees. Please, therefore, accept us as Your surrendered servants.

— Rescued kings to Lord Kṛṣṇa, from *Kṛṣṇa*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Chapter 73.

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THUS SPAKE ŚRĪ CAITANYA (continued from page 32)

In the end, there is no dearth of verses said to have emanated from the lotuslike mouth of Lord Caitanya, and devotees relish every last one of them. But it cannot be claimed with any certainty that these are His original compositions. That is an honor reserved for the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*.

Postscript

The Bengali Vaiṣṇava author Manindranath Guha has written eloquently about why the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* is all Mahāprabhu needed to write: “The reason Śrī Caitanya wrote nothing besides these eight verses is that he had no need to: they above all and in a nutshell perfectly summarize his entire

teachings, identified as *nāma-prema* – the holy name and love of Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, too, confirms that Mahāprabhu's vast philosophy is summed up in these eight verses: “Lord Caitanya gave us eight stanzas of His mission, what He wanted to do. They are explained in eight stanzas, and they are known as *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. *Śikṣā* means instruction, and *aṣṭaka* means eight. So in eight stanzas He has finished his instruction, and His next disciples, the six Gosvāmīs, have explained them in volumes of books.” (Lecture, Bombay, November 7, 1970)

It must therefore be concluded that the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* occupies a special position among the various verses attributed to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. After all, as we have

seen, the tradition highlights the fact that He actually wrote these verses, and as Bhaktivinoda Thākura has shown us, they alone offer a systematic theology that lies at the heart of Śrī Caitanya's teachings. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, for his part, has shown that the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* embodies the gamut of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his unending compassion, made it available and accessible to the English-speaking world. 🌍

Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla 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.

IN MEMORIAM

Śrī Nāthjī Dāsa

(May 22, 1940 – October 17, 2016)

“I FIRST MET Śrīla Prabhupāda, my spiritual teacher, in March 1971, and this changed my life,” Śrī Nāthjī once said. “Meeting a pure devotee has that effect – it brings one to another stage of existence.”

A very successful businessman, Śrī Nāthjī often unexpectedly met Śrīla Prabhupāda on Juhu Beach, Mumbai, while each was taking his daily morning walk. They would stop and chat. Śrī Nāthjī (N. D. Desai) was grounded in the *advaita* philosophy of impersonalism and would argue in its favor. Prabhupāda, a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, would assert God's personhood as Kṛṣṇa, countering Śrī Nāthjī's point of view. In time, with gentle argument and heated debate, Prabhupāda systematically took Śrī Nāthjī from *advaita* philosophy to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And Śrī Nāthjī was happy for the transformation.

Narendra Dharmsinh Desai, born in Baroda, Gujarat, succeeded in the fields of electrical, metallurgical, and chemical engineering. His business life was important to him, as was his family – his wife, Maithili, and his three children, Kushal, Vineeta Srivastava, and Chaitanya. But the foundation of it all was his spiritual life, and meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda, as he often said, was “the anchor of my ship.” It gave him purpose and meaning and allowed him to engage his considerable intelligence and wealth in the Lord's service. He helped build



the Juhu temple in Mumbai, and later the Chowpatty temple, which he continued to serve and support throughout his life.

Śrī Nāthjī was also instrumental in the ongoing Food for Life program in Mumbai, which feeds 700,000 children every school day. He was a prominent supporter of the Bhaktivedanta Hospital and its outreach programs, such as the Varshana Eye Camp, which provides free cataract surgery

for residents of 120 villages in the Vrindavan area. And he helped finance Gopal's Garden School in Mumbai.

His inspirational, managerial, and financial input is felt in the Govardhan Eco-Village, a seventy-acre sustainable farming community and retreat center in the foothills of the Sahyadri Mountains. His contributions to the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium in Mayapur, West Bengal, were significant as well.

These are just a few examples of his reach in the devotional community and beyond. Śrī Nāthjī was a perfect example of how to use one's material station and wealth in the service of the Lord.

— Satyarāja Dāsa

For more on Śrī Nāthjī Dāsa's life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, please see *Satyarāja Dāsa's* book *Bhakti-Yoga in Business: The Spiritual Journey of Dr. N. D. Desai*. Available from the Krishna.com Store.

Loving a Loving God

MOST PEOPLE VALUE love as an ideal. The religiously inclined like to say, “God is love.” Śrīla Prabhupāda would point out that love is part of our essential nature as spiritual beings and that even ferocious animals show love in raising their offspring.

I find it interesting that people who champion love as the solution to all the world’s problems often hold philosophical views that preclude the reality of love. For the philosophical materialist, only matter and laws controlling matter exist. In that view, love does not really exist, and neither do we. It’s all illusion.

The perspective of those who hold that the Truth is ultimately impersonal is similar to that of the materialists. They speak lovingly about love, but they aspire to dissolve into the one all-pervading spiritual reality, leaving no chance for exchanges of love.

Materialism and impersonalism are both monistic philosophies, in which reality is either only matter or only spirit, both ultimately without variety. The more nuanced philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, on the other hand, allows for love. Against the philosophy of materialism, it argues that consciousness is irreducible and outside of matter; we and our love actually exist – eternally. Against the philosophy of impersonalism, Kṛṣṇa consciousness argues that to conclude that spirit must lack variety is shortsighted. The Vedic literature consistently teaches that the individuality of both God, the supreme spiritual person, and the innumerable minute *jīva* souls is eternal.

Not only do Kṛṣṇa and the *jīvas* always exist, but their loving relationships are the essence of reality. We devotees of Kṛṣṇa may feel uncomfortable with the phrase “God is love,” because love is a thing and God is a per-

son: Kṛṣṇa. But we can soften our objection to the phrase by remembering that Kṛṣṇa is identical to His qualities, love arguably being the most important and the most defining of His personality.

Our spiritual process, *bhakti-yoga*, is all about love. We Hare Kṛṣṇa people know more about love than anyone else in the world. Or at least we have access to more information about it than anyone else, received most notably from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda presented as *The Nectar of Devotion*. That book – in fact all of Prabhupāda’s books – teaches us pretty much all there is to know about love.

I recently typed “love of God” into my Internet search engine, and although I didn’t spend much time looking at the results, my impression was that those who used the phrase were mostly talking about God’s love for us. There didn’t seem to be much about us loving God. But love, of course, has to go both ways.

Nurturing appreciation for Kṛṣṇa’s love for us is part of the process of awakening our love for Him. And we have access to a wealth of information about Kṛṣṇa’s loving dealings with His devotees. As we immerse ourselves in these topics, our hearts become purified and we can understand and relish the richness of Kṛṣṇa’s intimate relationships with His devotees.

One thing we learn is that Kṛṣṇa – God Himself – is completely controlled by the love of His purest devotees, because of His infinite love for them. Amazingly, Kṛṣṇa does all the things God does, such as creating, maintaining, and destroying innumerable universes, while at the same time running in fear from His mother after He’s caught doing mischief. Who couldn’t love such a God?

– Nāgarāja Dāsa

VEDIC THOUGHTS

To follow the instructions of the Lord is to associate with the Lord. *The Lord is not a material object whose presence one has to feel*

for such association. The Lord is present everywhere and at all times. It is quite possible to have His association simply by following His instruction because the Lord and His instruction and the Lord and His name, fame, attributes, and paraphernalia are all identical with Him, being absolute knowledge.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.12.24, Purport

With their words, they offer prayers to the Lord. With their minds, they always remember the Lord. With their bodies, they offer obeisances to the Lord. Despite all these activities, they are still not satisfied. This is the nature of pure devotees. Shedding tears from their eyes, they dedicate their whole lives to the Lord’s service.

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (from *Nārada Purāṇa*)
Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 23.23

O Lord, I do not pray for heavenly happiness. I do not even aspire for liberation. Simply let the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes flood my ears day after day.

Śrī Kaviratna
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Padyāvalī* (40)

Best of kings, one who is faithful, who is always hearing the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is always engaged in the culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and in hearing of the Lord’s activities, very soon becomes

eligible to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face.

Śrī Nārada Muni
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.29.38

By refraining from a particular sinful or materialistic activity, one becomes freed from its bondage. Such renunciation is the basis of religious and auspicious life for human beings and drives away all suffering, illusion, and fear.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.21.18

Without devotional service, all other methods for spiritual self-realization are weak and insignificant. Unless one comes to the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, *jñāna* and *yoga* cannot give the desired results.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.18

When the spirit soul (*jīva*) gives up the illusory relationship with matter and cultivates its eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, a boundless joy that is characteristic of its own pure consciousness arises in its being. That is the natural happiness of the *jīva*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā, Chapter 6

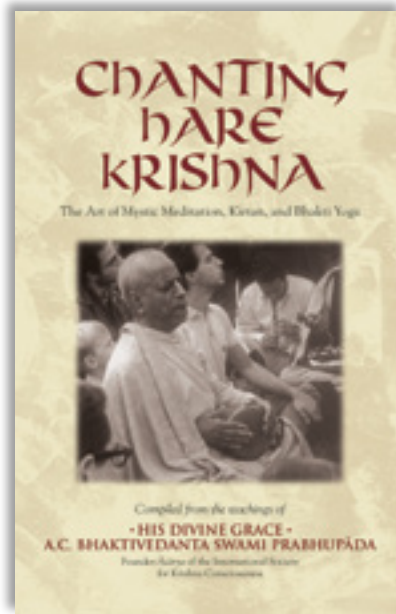
As soon as we learn about the truth, we should become fixed in it. We should not waste even a moment of the time we have left in our lives on sense gratification. Rather, we should use all our time to worship Hari [Kṛṣṇa].

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
108 Essential Instructions (No. 33)

“The holy name ‘Kṛṣṇa’ is spiritual. You can get the same benefit by chanting the name as you get personally talking with Kṛṣṇa.”

– Śrīla Prabhupāda

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