

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



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Yaśodā Finds And Catches Kṛṣṇa

An excerpt from
Śrī Dāmodara-janānī
by Śivarāma Swami

ALSO:

Elevating Our
Emotions

Patisserie Divine

The Power
Of Intent

The Krishna Book
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Self-Realization
In Bhakti

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BACK to GODHEAD

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COVER Lord Kṛṣṇa in the loving arms of Yaśodā, His eternal mother. Please see the article beginning on page 22. (Painting by Nitya-sakhī Devī Dāsī.)

“So this spiritual knowledge is the greatest science. But sadly, these great educators and leaders do not know it. Instead of understanding that their way of life is a fallacy, they are asking whether God and the soul and the next life are a fallacy. This is their intelligence. What rascaldom!” – p. 32

WELCOME



This issue coincides with the sacred month of Dāmodara, during which Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees commemorate His being tied to a grinding mortar by His mother, Yaśodā. Though

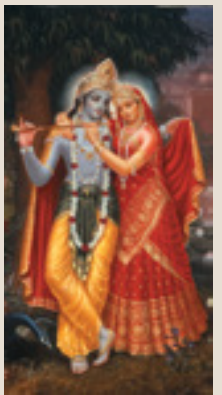
every Kṛṣṇa devotee is familiar with this enchanting pastime, Śivarāma Swami enhances our understanding of it – and our spiritual pleasure in hearing it again – by narrating it with embellishments gained from the realization of pure devotees in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The article in this issue titled “Yaśodā Finds and Catches Kṛṣṇa” is an excerpt from his book *Śrī Dāmodara-jananī*.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual family grows, his followers are writing more and more books, something he had wanted. So this issue contains a second book excerpt, this one from an early disciple of Prabhupāda's who served as his secretary and spent much time with him, often alone. Shyamasundar Das's *Chasing Rhinos with the Swami*, Vol.1, is an entertaining inside look at ISKCON's earliest days in San Francisco and London. Shyamasundar was one of a handful of devotees who opened ISKCON's first temples in both cities. In our excerpt, “The Krishna Book Miracle,” he relates how George Harrison's sponsoring of Prabhupāda's first printing of the book *Kṛṣṇa* came to be.

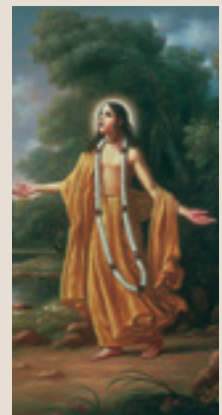
Hare Kṛṣṇa. – Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

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

Where's Lakṣmī's Help?

Why does Lakṣmī help demons and make them materially opulent and not help people who desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Rohan Singh
Via the Internet

Our reply: Although material wealth is important and desirable to get things done in this world, it is not necessarily a good thing for a spiritualist. For a spiritual movement, Lord Kṛṣṇa will give enough wealth to keep His devotees going but not cause them to become distracted and overwhelmed by materialism. Detachment and satisfaction with whatever one has are essential ingredients for a devotee to stay fixed on the spiritual path. Only those who are detached will be peaceful if they have wealth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master noted that even in spiritual circles, as soon as there are big buildings or material opulence people become distracted and may give up their spiritual practices. In some spiritual organizations wealth has been counter-productive, as when leaders fight over the organization's assets and become enemies.

So although people may get money or power by karmic destiny, that very same "good karma" will cause their downfall if their consciousness is not fixed on obtaining happiness from their connection with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

We receive material opulence according to our previous karma, but Lord Kṛṣṇa sometimes takes away the wealth of His devotee to help that person grow in devotional service. And He may test the determination of His devotees to stay fixed in loving service despite the presence or absence of material facilities.

From Contemplation To Downfall

The *Gītā* states that from contemplation of sense objects, lust and anger

develop. As devotees, should we avoid material desires and contemplation even in the mind? How does contemplation cause our falldown even though we may not physically do the thing we are thinking about?

H.K. Vinayanam
Via the Internet

Our reply: Contemplating a sense object starts pushing us toward that thing. That is the beginning of a progression: thinking, feeling, and then willing or doing.

Advertising is based on this progression. First the desire is planted in the mind and heart. One begins to contemplate the enjoyment that will come from doing or having something. That contemplation must be stopped there, and sometimes it is, because we have some understanding that it won't really satisfy us, or we can't afford it, or it will be too complicated to acquire, or it will cause us suffering in the long run. Stopping at contemplation is almost impossible for materialistic people, and difficult even for devotees.

But if we contemplate an object, we get attached to it, and that can cause us to pursue it, or to become angry that we cannot have it. Then we make decisions clouded by attachment. Because of intense desire, we try to get that thing, and sometimes we even lose our intelligence and pursue things that are illegal or painful to ourselves or harmful to others. Then we commit sinful acts, or foolish acts that lead to other foolish acts and unwanted consequences. That is how the contemplation eventually causes sinful reaction.

Even if we don't act on the attachment immediately, if we maintain that attachment then eventually it will push us to satisfy material desire, and that will cause bewilderment of our memory, which will lead to foolish action. And during the entire process, we are not think-

ing of Kṛṣṇa. So that in itself has ramifications.

That is why the *Bhagavad-gītā* tells us to curb this tendency "from the very beginning." Don't let the attachment grow. By understanding how the material world works, and by knowing the ultimate spiritual source of the happiness we seek, we can curb lust and desire and remember Kṛṣṇa. We must become detached from the false idea that happiness can come from material things or relationships. With determination, we can fix our mind on Kṛṣṇa. That pleases Him and will make us happy. Ultimately that is the only way to solve the problem permanently. The Lord tells us that it is possible (although perhaps difficult) by constant practice.

Who Is the Real Guru?

I am not happy with this materialistic life. I want to make my life mean-

ingful. I am very curious to know the real path to meet Paramātmā. I know there has to be one way, but I see people following different gurus and methods. I am confused in understanding who is the real guru now.

Ravi Ranjan
New Delhi

Our reply: Know that this is a special time in your life. Take your time to search deeply for the Absolute Truth. Kṛṣṇa is in everyone's heart and is waiting for you to turn to Him. He will surely send you a representative of His to help in your spiritual progress.

Yes, we do need a guru, for guidance and strength. Please read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. That will help you understand the truth. He was sent by Kṛṣṇa to spread the mission of Lord Caitanya, the chanting of the holy names, all over the world. Chanting has changed the lives of millions. Many disciples and grand-disciples of Śrīla

Prabhupāda are helping with Lord Caitanya's mission, and that is bringing them and those they meet closer to Kṛṣṇa.

The most important questions are What is the goal of life? and What guru can take me there? The topmost goal is to revive our loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa through devotional service, our real eternal engagement. Kṛṣṇa, our eternal friend, is anxious to have us back. We can become purified and qualified to return to Him by following the orders of the spiritual master.

You can visit one of our Delhi temples and speak to anyone there to help you. You can also attend the morning services and experience this purifying process firsthand. 🌍

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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The Real Religion of the Living Entity

What Lord Kṛṣṇa descends to teach is beyond the ordinary sense of the word "religion."

by His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham*

“Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion – at that time I descend Myself.”

– *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.7

LAST NIGHT we discussed how the Supreme Personality of Godhead descends to this material platform. Although He is the supreme authority of all energies, although He is unborn, although He is the Lord of all creation, material and spiritual, He comes.



*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā
bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya
sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā*

“Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all living entities, by My internal energy I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form.” (*Gītā*

4.6) He comes not by being forced by the laws of material nature, but He comes out of His own energy. This point we discussed last night.

Now the next point is, why does He come? That is explained in the next verse:

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati. As soon as there is discrepancy in the matter of discharging occupational duty, He comes. I purposely translate the word *dharmā* as “occupational duty.” Everyone has an occupational duty. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.13) confirms it:

*ataḥ pumbhir dvija-śreṣṭhā
varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśaḥ
svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya
sāmsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam*

“O best among the twice-born, it is therefore concluded that the highest perfection one can achieve by discharging the duties prescribed for one’s own occupation according to caste divisions and orders of

word *faith*, it is something that we can change. Today I am Hindu. Tomorrow I can become a Christian. You are a Christian today. You can become a Hindu or Muslim tomorrow. So faith can be changed, but dharma means natural occupation or natural intimate connection.

That fire is heat and light cannot be changed. Whether the fire is in America or India or Russia, the heat and light are there. That is the dharma of fire.

Now here Kṛṣṇa says, *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glāniḥ*: “As soon as there is discrepancy in the discharge of the natural function of the living entity . . .” *Abhyutthānam adharma-sya* means the uprising of unnatural activities or unnatural occupations.

Bhāgavatam (1.2.6) also clarifies the word *dharmā*: *sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*. That by which one is trained to surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the best dharma.

Now, you can select your own religion. Be a Hindu or a Muslim or a Buddhist – whatever you like. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* does not stop you, but it gives you the hint about the purpose of religion. The purpose of religion is to develop your love of Godhead. That is real religion.

Here Kṛṣṇa says *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati*. At least some people remember that there is God. But generally in this age they are forgetful. That is *dharmasya glāniḥ*. And by forgetting God, people cannot be happy.

That is the cause of their unhappiness. People are thinking, “God is dead. We have no obligation to God. There is no God.” This sort of thinking will never make people happy.

And actually, it is happening. They have become atheistic. The modern civilization is godless, but people are not happy. Therefore God or His representative comes when people forget their relationship with God.

Real religion is to understand our relationship with God as it is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and confirmed by great *ācāryas* like Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya enunciated the constitutional position of the living entity.

Sanātana Gosvāmī inquired from Him, “Who am I? Why am I always in a miserable condition?”

In answer to the question “Who am I?” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu immediately replied, *jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya — kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’*: The real identity of the living entity is that he is eternally a servant of God. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 20.108) We should not understand the word *servant* to mean a materi-

alistic servant. To become the servant of God is a great position, not an ordinary position. People try to get some government service. Why? Or people try to get some service in some established, well-reputed business firm. Why? Because that service is comfortable, and there is great profit in such service. So if people are satisfied by getting service in the government or in some good establishment, then just think of your position if you become a servant of God? God is the government of all governments.

Thinking We’re the Controller

We are servants of God constitutionally. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya — kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa.’* But at the present moment I am thinking that I am the master, not the servant. This is called *māyā*. Actually I am the servant, but I am thinking I am the master. Everyone is trying to lord over the material nature according to his capacity. He’s trying to be the controller, the master, but actually his position is to be the servant. Forgetting his servitorship is called *dharmasya glāniḥ*, discrepancy of his natural position.

Now, there is an ordinary sense of religion. The Hindus have the Vedic scriptures. The Muslims have the Koran. The Christians have the Bible, with its Old Testament and New Testament. Similarly, many other religious sects have their own scripture. So dharma can mean the rules and regulations prescribed in the scriptures.

For example, there are rules and regulations in the law book or statute book of each particular state. Similarly, another meaning of dharma is that it is the law of God. It may be differently described in different countries according to different climatic conditions or different situations. But in every religious scripture obedience to God is instructed. That is a fact. No scripture says that there is no God and you are independent – whether it is the Bible or the Koran

or the *Vedas* or even Buddhist literature, Buddhist scripture.

Generally, according to Buddha philosophy there is no soul and no God. But Buddhists have to obey Lord Buddha. So there is also God because Lord Buddha is accepted by the Vedic literature as an incarnation of God. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there is a list of incarnations, and Lord Buddha is accepted as one of the incarnations who will appear. The verse about Lord Buddha is in the future tense. *Bhaviṣyati* means “He will appear in the future.” The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was compiled by Vyāsadeva five thousand years ago, and Lord Buddha appeared about two thousand six hundred years ago. Therefore the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was written before the appearance of Lord Buddha. Because the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is *śāstra*, it has given an accurate prediction. Everything is there. *Buddho nāmnāñjana-sutaḥ kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.24). The mother’s name is given there: Añjana. And *kīkaṭeṣu* means Gaya-pradesh. In India there is a province called Bihar. In that province there is a district called Gaya. In that district Lord Buddha appeared. He was a *kṣatriya*, He was a Hindu, and He propagated the religion of nonviolence, Buddhism.

His specific propaganda was to stop animal killing. Animal killing is recommended in the Vedic literature. Therefore people wanted to give him Vedic evidences. “In the Vedic literature animal sacrifice is recommended under certain conditions. So why do you preach against it? You are a Hindu and a follower of the *Vedas*. Why are you preaching nonviolence?”

Therefore Buddha had to give up the Hindu religion.

He said, “I do not care for your *Vedas*. It is my propaganda to stop animal killing. So if you follow me, then you must stop animal killing.”

He taught *ahiṁsā paramo dharmaḥ*: nonviolence is the highest religion. Later on, of course, Lord Buddha was patronized by a great emperor,

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.”

People are thinking, “God is dead. We have no obligation to God. There is no God.” This sort of thinking will never make people happy.

life is to please the Personality of Godhead.” *Svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya sāmsiddhiḥ*: “the perfection of prescribed duty.” Your occupational duty will be perfect when you satisfy the Supreme Lord by it. That is dharma.

Now let us consider what is our occupational duty. I purposely do not translate this word *dharmā* as “religion.” Religion is an imperfect conception of the word *dharmā*. In the dictionary we find that *religion* means a particular type of faith. But dharma does not mean that. Dharma means natural occupation. That is called dharma.

I have several times explained the word *dharmā* in this class, using the example of the heat of fire. Without heat, fire has no meaning. Wherever there is fire, there is heat and light. Therefore heat and light are the dharma or religion of fire. That means fire cannot change its dharma. As we generally understand the

Tadā: “at that time”; *ātmānam*, “self”; *srjāmy aham*, “I descend or appear.”

Just Surrender

Now, dharma is explained in the sixty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter. The Lord says, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*: “Just give up all kinds of occupational duty or religiosity.” We have created all kinds of religious formulas. So Kṛṣṇa says, “Give up all kinds of religious formulas.” But what is to be done? *Mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: “Just surrender unto Me.”

That means that surrendering unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the real religion of the living entity. Not that I like a particular type of faith and that is my religion. Religion means that one is trained in how to surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is called religion. And the *Śrīmad-*

Ashoka, and therefore practically all the Indian population turned to become Buddhist, with few exceptions.

Then Śaṅkarācārya came and preached a philosophy that is almost Buddhism. Lord Buddha preached that there is no God and no soul. This body is a combination of matter, and if we dissolve this material combination then there is no more perception of misery or happiness. That is *nirvāṇa*. That is his philosophy. But later on, Ācārya Śaṅkara appeared and preached *brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā*. This bodily combination is temporary, or *mithyā*. He said flatly that it is false. Of course, in Vaiṣṇava philosophy we say it is temporary. Temporary or false, you can

Buddha or Guru Nanak, but acceptance of authority is there everywhere. Now, we have to see who is the highest authority from the Vedic literature, by our arguments, by our understanding. But acceptance of authority is there.

Defying Authority

Dharmasya glāniḥ means to defy authority. That is a discrepancy in the discharge of religiosity or occupational duty. Even in your office, even in the government, if you do not accept authority there is chaos, revolution. This sort of mentality is very dangerous. When one does not accept any authority, that is a chaotic condition.

a discrepancy in the matter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, at that time Kṛṣṇa comes, Kṛṣṇa descends.

Kṛṣṇa's Sound Incarnation

Sometimes He personally descends, sometimes He descends as His incarnation, sometimes He descends as a sound vibration, and sometimes He descends as a devotee. There are many different categories of His descent. And at the present moment Kṛṣṇa has descended in His holy name. You should understand that. *Kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra*. This is the statement of Lord Caitanya. He says that in this Age of Kali, Kṛṣṇa has descended in the sound-vibration form. Sound is also

one of the forms of Kṛṣṇa's descent.

For example, *om* is a form of Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa has now descended in the form of His holy name. There is no difference between Him and His name. People

are now forgetting their relationship with God, but the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa in the form of His holy name – this chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa – will deliver all people of the world from their forgetfulness.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu says,

kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra

“In this Age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 17.22) If you chant or associate with the chanting of holy name of Kṛṣṇa, then you will get the highest perfectional stage of life. We should accept that Kṛṣṇa has descended at the present moment in the form of His holy name.

Thank you very much. 🙏

The real constitutional position of the living entity, especially of the human being, is to accept our position as servant of Kṛṣṇa.

take to be in the same category. But Śaṅkarācārya said *brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā*: spirit soul, Brahman, is reality, and the external feature of Brahman, or the body, is false.

So anyway, here the point is that in any religion there is a conception of worshiping God or a symbol of God. Even in Jain philosophy they worship Mahāvīra. In India there is Jainism. That is almost like Buddhism. They have the same process of worship, in big, nice, costly temples. And they come to visit the temple to offer their worshipful offerings, flowers, fruits, everything.

Similarly, in the Gurudwara, the Sikhs worship like the Hindus. They also offer flowers, fruits, and sweetmeats, and they read their *Grantha-sahib*. As we are reading *Bhagavad-gītā*, they read *Granthasahib*, enunciated by Guru Nanak.

According to different kinds of faith, people accept Kṛṣṇa or Lord Jesus Christ or Jehovah or Lord

Our present position is in three statuses. In the gross status of our understanding, we take this gross body as the self. At that time we have a certain dharma or occupational duty. When I accept my mind as myself, then my occupational duty changes. And when I understand that I am a spirit soul, then my occupational duty is again different.

Here Kṛṣṇa, because He is the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is speaking of dharma as occupational duty on the spiritual platform. He does not mean dharma or occupational duty on the gross bodily platform or the subtle mental platform. He means dharma as the occupational duty on the spiritual platform. And that is confirmed by Lord Caitanya: *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya — kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa*. The real constitutional position of the living entity, especially of the human being, is to accept our position as servant of Kṛṣṇa. And when there is

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.vaisnava-calendar.com.

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

Month of Hṛṣīkeśa (August 8–September 6)

SEPTEMBER

2 – Parśvā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today; feast tomorrow.)

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

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

5 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

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

Month of Padmanābha (September 7–October 5)

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

16 – Indirā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans.

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

OCTOBER

1 – Pāśāṅkuṣā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

Month of Dāmodara (October 6–November 4)

10 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of

Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

13 – Appearance of Radhakunda, the sacred pond of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Vrindavan.

15 – Ramā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

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

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

31 – Utthānā Ekādaśī

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

Elevating Our Emotions



David Crick



David Crick

“Human culture is meant to provide an environment wherein higher emotions can be nourished and lower emotions countered. Unfortunately, contemporary culture is increasingly doing the opposite.”

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

OUR HEART IS capable of both noble and ignoble emotions. How we can cultivate higher emotions and curb lower emotions is demonstrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* through the interactions between the two pairs of inseparable brothers: Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa, who are together in exile, and Bharata-Śatruḡhna, who are together in Ayodhya. Of course, these brothers are divine and beyond lower emotions. Still, during their pastimes, for intensifying their loving reciprocations they sometimes exhibit various emotions, some of which might seem like lower emotions. While remembering the transcendental position of such characters, we can also learn from their pastimes how we can channel our emotions.

Anger Triggered by Suspicion

When Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are living in the forest of Chitrakuta, they hear the sounds of an approaching army. At Rāma’s behest, Lakṣmaṇa

climbs atop a tree to identify the visitors and recognizes Bharata at their forefront. Lakṣmaṇa, while serving Rāma in the forest, is angry to see that his brother, who should have been enjoying royal opulence, is instead enduring Spartan austerity in the forest. So when he sees Bharata coming with a huge army, he feels that his suspicion is confirmed: Bharata is in cahoots with his mother and has brought the army to eliminate Rāma so that he can get the kingdom for not just fourteen years but for life. Enraged, he declares that he will singlehandedly kill Bharata and the whole army – everyone who dares threaten Rāma.

But Rāma remains calm and speaks of Bharata’s affection for Him, which equals that of Lakṣmaṇa. Rāma correctly surmises that Bharata, being mortified at his mother’s intrigues, has come to return the kingdom. Underscoring the unwarrantedness of Lakṣmaṇa’s anger, Rāma asks him whether the forest austerities have made him irritable towards others, such as Bharata, who were enjoying the royal luxuries he was missing. If that were the case, Rāma assures that he will ask Bharata to exchange places with Lakṣmaṇa – Bharata will stay in the forest, while Lakṣmaṇa can enjoy Ayodhya’s royal comforts.

Thoroughly embarrassed on being so strongly reproached, Lakṣmaṇa falls silent. And his mortification at his misjudgment increases manifold when he sees how fervently Bharata beseeches Rāma to take the kingdom and finally carries Rāma’s sandals on his head.

Later, after the departure of the visitors, Lakṣmaṇa introspectively asks Rāma, “Why am I so short-tempered?” Rāma attributes Lakṣmaṇa’s temper to his emotionality. Perplexed, Lakṣmaṇa

asks whether emotions are undesirable. Rāma answers in the negative, but cautions that we need to choose the emotions that bring out our higher side, not our lower side.

Anger Triggered by Cruelty

How to choose emotions thus is illustrated in an interaction between the other two brothers, Bharata and Śatruḡhna. This incident occurs before they go to the forest to meet Rāma. The two brothers are returning to their palace after having performed the funeral rites for their deceased father. Bharata, being the de facto head of state, is accosted by a city official about some administrative work. Śatruḡhna moves on towards the palace and catches sight of Mantharā. This scheming maid of Kaikeyī is the root of the conspiracy that led to Rāma’s exile and their father’s death. When Śatruḡhna sees her dressed in finery – evidently the reward for successfully masterminding the conspiracy – his blood boils, and he rushes forward to catch her. On seeing Śatruḡhna and his expression, Mantharā turns pale and flees towards Kaikeyī’s palace. But the doorkeeper, who like most residents of Ayodhya is incensed at the conspiracy, grabs Mantharā and hands her to Śatruḡhna, who shakes her violently in fury. The wicked maid shrieks in mortal fear, calling for her mistress. Kaikeyī rushes out and asks Śatruḡhna to release Mantharā. But the infuriated prince pays her no attention – the anger that has been burning within him for days now rushes forth unchecked.

Fearful of her stepson’s uncontrollable wrath, Kaikeyī looks around for help and sees her son, Bharata, approaching. She rushes to him, asking



David Chick

him to tell Śatrugna to stop. Turning coldly away from her, Bharata asks his brother to desist, saying that he too has felt the impulse to do what Śatrugna was doing – and do it not just with the maid, but also his mother. While Kaikeyī hears aghast, Bharata says that he has restrained that impulse by remembering that giving in to it will displease the very person whose cause they wanted to protect: Rāma. Struck by this thought, Śatrugna releases Mantharā, who flees to Kaikeyī’s arms. And the two brothers walk on towards their palaces, discussing how they can best persuade Rāma to return.

Thus, for Bharata and Śatrugna, whom they were angry at was not as important as whom they were angry for. They countered the lower emotion of anger by holding on to the higher emotion of love for Rāma. For all of us too, cultivating such higher emotions is vital for freeing ourselves from our lower emotions.

Indeed, human culture is meant to provide an environment wherein higher emotions can be nourished and lower emotions countered. Unfortunately, contemporary culture is increasingly doing the opposite, as can be seen, for example, in the advertising industry.

Freudian Triggering Of Lower Emotions

Advertisements are so ubiquitous today that we may not realize that for millennia human society lived without them. No doubt, people have always promoted their products, but such promotion was never a whole industry – and certainly not a multi-billion-dollar industry. The advertising behemoth took birth soon after the industrial revolution spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Once goods started becoming mass-produced, promoting them became a big part of the economy and the culture. Advertisements can conceivably help us by informing us

about useful products. But that’s not the intent behind most advertising nowadays. Until the end of the nineteenth century, advertisements usually focused on the qualities of the products, thereby appealing to customers’ intelligence. But then came Sigmund Freud with his ideas about the human psyche.

One of Freud’s insights was that our rational intelligence is like a small raft atop a vast turbulent ocean whose waves are our irrational emotions. People can be exhorted to do the right thing by appealing to their rationality. But something triggering their irrational emotions can easily overpower their intelligence, as waves can overturn a raft. Being driven by such emotions, people end up doing terrible things, against their

intelligence; they subordinate and misappropriate it for their own purposes. Consequently, those under the grip of such emotions often exhibit intelligence, but that intelligence, instead of restraining irrational emotions, is misdirected by them. Recent history demonstrated this in Nazi Germany’s misusing cutting-edge scientific advances in fields such as eugenics to irrationally victimize Jews and others in the Holocaust.

This theme of lower emotions hijacking our rational intelligence is seen in the *Bhagavad-gītā*’s description of intelligence in the modes of passion and ignorance. We might be inclined to assume that intelligence would correlate with the mode of goodness. Our assumption would be correct, but not complete. The lower

Advertisers started using all their intelligence to design ads that capitalized on people’s irrational emotions.

own better intelligence.

Persons trained in the *bhakti* tradition will see here rough parallels with the concept of the three modes of material nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance. These modes constitute a framework for analyzing the nature of things, especially in terms of their psychological effects on us. What Freud calls the rational faculty correlates with the higher mode of goodness. This mode, the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.30) states, illumines us with the intelligence to discern what should be done and what shouldn’t be. What Freud calls the irrational emotions correlates with the lower modes of passion and ignorance. These modes impel us to act on the spur of the moment, neglecting others’ and our own intelligence’s warnings that such actions are counterproductive.

Actually, the irrational emotions don’t exactly destroy the rational

modes too feature intelligence, but intelligence abused for unintelligent purposes, being driven by irrational emotions.

Significantly, the *Gītā*’s wisdom also describes a stable state of existence beyond both the ocean and the raft: the state of transcendence. Beyond the three material modes is our pure existence as spiritual beings. We as souls have pure emotions centered on selfless love for God and all living beings in relationship with Him. But as the light coming from a white bulb becomes colored if that bulb is placed in a colored case, so too the original pure emotions of the soul become distorted due to the coverings of the modes.

When Rāma tells Lakṣmaṇa to cultivate elevating emotions and avoid degrading emotions, he is essentially telling us to cultivate goodness and transcendence, and avoid passion and ignorance. But the

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advertising industry, using Freud's ideas, does the opposite – or, more precisely, makes us do the opposite.

Advertisers recognized that people could be more forcefully persuaded to purchase products by appealing to their emotions than to their intelligence. So they started using all their intelligence to design advertisements that capitalized on people's irrational emotions.

Torches of Freedom Light the Path to Self-Injury

Few things illustrate the deluding power of such advertising as graphically as the "Torches of Freedom" campaign to get women to smoke. This campaign's high point – or rather low point – was the Easter Sunday Parade of 1929 in New York City, when a group of women, hired by a tobacco company, lit up and smoked their "torches of freedom." As the women's liberation movement was then increasingly capturing the female imagination, the idea of brandishing a "torch of freedom"

resonated so strongly with their emotions that the rational question how smoking signified freedom was just swept away. Millions of women started smoking, not just in America, but also in much of the Western world. Only decades later were brought to light the harms of smoking, especially for women, all the more for pregnant women. Thus, the "torches of freedom" ended up lighting for millions the road to self-injury.

While most advertising campaigns may not be that insidious, still they operate on the same principle of exploiting our emotions. They use human intelligence to trigger human irrationality. Advertisers use their best intelligence based on meticulous research into human psychology to make customers crave and slave for their products. Most advertisements focus not on how good the product is, but on how good the product will make us feel. Thus, advertising becomes pop psychology, which comes streaming into our living rooms through our devices. By their clever (cunning?) design, advertisements

catch our emotions and thereby our wallets.

And advertisements are just one of the many things in today's society that exploit us by triggering our lower emotions. To protect ourselves from such emotional manipulation, we need to understand how we can activate and strengthen our higher emotions.

Devotion Brings Out Our Best

Relationships often help us bring out our higher side. Our desire to please the person we love inspires us to act properly, thus expressing our higher emotions. And our desire to not displease our loved one empowers us to avoid acting improperly, thus restraining our lower emotions. Of course, this happens only when the other person is of basically good character. Otherwise, when we are in bad association, the desire to please others brings out our lower side, as happened in the *Mahābhārata* with Karna because of his desire to please the evil Duryodhana.

In general, when we commit ourselves to a relationship with a good person, we challenge our lower emotions' hold on us. To the extent that we avoid committed relationships, our commitment remains only to one person: me. And since our desires are often shaped by our mind, so commitment to me essentially boils down to commitment to our mind, which frequently drags us down to self-defeating actions.

While any committed relationship can help us restrain our lower emotions, the higher emotions thus awakened aren't necessarily spiritual. Why? Because we may not be seeing ourselves or our loved ones spiritually – as souls, as spiritual parts of God. And without activating our spiritual side, we severely limit our access to higher emotions. Our highest, purest emotions come from our essential self: the soul. And the soul is the reservoir of pure emotions, for it is, as the *Gītā* (15.7) states, a part of God, the supreme reservoir of pure emotions. As parts, we are meant to live in loving harmony with the Whole, God. *Bhakti-yoga* enables us to lovingly link with Him and thereby activate our latent spiritual potential with its gamut of higher emotions.

There's another reason why, for bringing out our higher emotions, we need not just any committed relationship, but a committed relationship with God. That reason is His omnipotence. No matter how committed we may be to someone and no matter how good that person may be, ultimately that person doesn't have the power of God. Consider, for example, the purifying potency of chanting the names of God. This potency is demonstrated in the *Rāmāyana* itself. Its composer, Vālmiki, was a bandit who, by chanting the names of Rāma, became a saint. Chanting the names of others can't bring about this kind of transformation – only God's names can.

A note of caution is warranted here. *Bhakti* is not about a relationship with God alone at the expense

of our relationships with everyone else. The *bhakti* tradition reveals a vision of God who is not aloof from everyone, but is present in everyone and is the greatest benefactor of everyone. So, when our aspiration to love God is philosophically informed, we strive to love Him by spiritually loving those He loves, which means everyone. We, being finite, can't practically express our love to everyone, but we can at least be sensitive and affectionate towards those with whom we relate regularly. Such an inclusive devotional vision can transmute our various relationships into crucibles for elevating our emotions.

To summarize, committing ourselves to a relationship with God elevates our emotions in three ways:

1. Directing our emotion upwards, as happens whenever we love someone.
2. Uncovering the pure emotional power of the soul.
3. Accessing the omnipotent grace of God.

Thus, while relationships in general can bring out the good within us, a relationship with God can bring out the best within us. 🌍

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

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HARE KRṢṂA PEOPLE

Patisserie Divine

*A devotee in Mauritius with a successful prasādam
pastry shop teaches his secrets to others.*

by Gita Beeharry Poonyth



Rajeshwar Seshohal

*Students of
Navakiśora
Dāsa's pastry
class (left)
focus on a
demonstration.
At right, the
teacher puts the
finishing touches
on his latest
creation.*



NAVAKIŚORA DĀSA, from Mauritius, joined ISKCON in 1985. Before coming to ISKCON, but inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, he became a vegetarian at the age of thirteen. While learning to cook, he used to visit ISKCON Phoenix regularly and spend most of his time in the kitchen with his notebook, collecting a variety of recipes. In 1996, during the Śrīla Prabhupāda

Centennial, Navakiśora was offered the opportunity to serve his spiritual master, His Holiness Girirāja Swami. That meant staying in Mumbai at ISKCON's temples in Juhu and Chowpatty on and off until 2001, when his health declined and he returned to Mauritius to recuperate.

In 2002, inspired by his family's business, Navakiśora decided to start one of his own. His idea was to open a store to sell



Krishna Raj Gooljar

prasādam near his village. He set himself to the task, bearing in mind that he was just a humble servant at the Lord's mercy. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.27), "O son of Kuntī, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me." This is indeed a high principle, and it was Navakiśora's guiding light and motivation. He met obstacles in developing his *prasādam* business, but he saw them as opportunities to grow and improve in his Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The small store was successful, and in 2007, seeing the obvious need to expand, Navakiśora moved the business to a hotspot on the island. There he applied his tenacity and ability to the maximum, driven by an intense desire to serve *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* to as many people as possible.

Navakiśora likes to innovate,



Krishna Raj Gooljar

so he decided to add variety to his menu. He advertised on the Internet:

Adding to the already rich variety of palatable Indian dishes, La Marmite Divine (The Divine Pot) introduces flaky faratas with a choice of seven delicately seasoned curries ranging from dry to wet, squashy to sticky, and munchy to crunchy!

The flavor of the pudding is in the eating.

Come to be served.

(Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority) financed half of it. Navakiśora wisely chose to invest SMEDA'S cash gift in the latest bakery equipment so that he could be competitive. Soon *prasādam* in the form of pure vegetarian pastries and cakes was going out to shops and supermarkets around Mauritius.

As Navakiśora zealously carried out his service with faith and perseverance, a new opportunity opened up: customers began asking him

pastry school in Mauritius. There was a lot to do, including obtaining the approval of the Mauritius Qualification Authority (MQA); registering the school's program officer, manager, and trainer; setting up the premises for official visits; and getting ready to start the course.

The opening ceremony of The Divine Pastry Shop took place in 2013 in the presence of the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, Mr. Jim Seetaram, along with other distinguished guests, devotees, friends, and acquaintances. It has since welcomed over one hundred students from all religious and ethnic backgrounds in Mauritius.

Entrepreneurship With a Different Vision

From his own experience, Navakiśora has gathered that entrepreneurship inspired by Kṛṣṇa consciousness allows one to view business through a different lens. Specifically, it helps one develop an attitude of service to God, which raises one beyond mundane life.

It is said that all work and no play makes you burn out very fast, but in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because the service is performed for the pleasure of the Lord, one's occupation becomes sublime, and thus one naturally derives great satisfaction.

Few people will give away the fruits of their hard-earned experience. But devotees, friends, and colleagues inspired Navakiśora Dāsa to share what he learned. More than ever he wishes to continue his service to Śrīla Prabhupāda with enthusiasm and dedication and in this way increase the flow of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by making *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* available to one and all.

Gita Beeharry Poonyth met Navakiśora Dāsa at ISKCON Juhu (Mumbai) in 1997. She and her husband are state-registered entrepreneurs in Mauritius, where they attend the local ISKCON temple. She recently earned a master's degree in English.



Rasika Sindhu Dasa

Under a watchful eye (left, above), Mrs. Nusrat applies what she has learned. At left, pastries are offered to the Lord on the school's altar. Above, Navakiśora Dāsa speaks on Kṛṣṇa consciousness at the ISKCON Phoenix temple.

This is how Navakiśora chose to attract lost souls to the magic of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. He showed how varied, healthy, colorful, and purifying *prasādam* can be. He soon won appreciation, and the business flourished.

More Expansion

Success instilled even more determination in him, and soon he came up with a business plan for vegetarian pastry distribution around the island. The project was viable, and SMEDA

to hold vegetarian pastry-making classes. At first he declined, thinking that his students might become competitors, a common practice in Mauritius. But after reflection and advice from friends, he concluded that because teaching is noble, he would incur no loss. In teaching others he would not only promote vegetarian cuisine, but would simultaneously bring an awareness of the purity and power of *prasādam*.

With more zeal than ever, he applied himself to launching his new project: the very first pure-vegetarian

Yaśodā Finds And Catches Kṛṣṇa

Challenging the intellects of great philosophers, the Supreme Lord runs in fear of His mother – and He’s not pretending.

by Śivarāma Swami

YAŚODĀ WIPED her hands in the folds of her sari, and, creeping like a detective on the tips of her toes, she followed the path left by her son, step by buttery step.

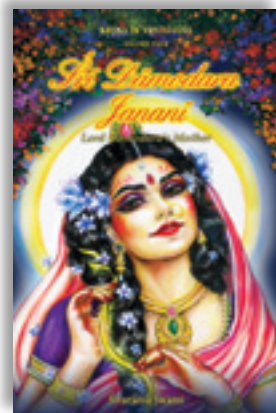
O great sages! O demigods! O perfected devotees! Meditate upon the ruby glow of the lotus feet of the universal mother as she balances on her soft petal toes!

At the top of the stairway leading to the back garden was a latticed window. Stealthily approaching it, Yaśodā peeked out, and lo and behold, in the courtyard below she saw Him whom *yogīs* fail to see in their hearts even after many years of penance.

Standing on a large, upturned wooden mortar, His lotus eyes rolling in agitation, Kṛṣṇa was silently clapping His hands to catch the attention of nearby monkeys.

“I cannot believe it,” she whispered.

Balancing on the mortar, Kṛṣṇa looked like a *gopa*-conductor bringing monkey-musicians to



attention. Yaśodā watched the monkeys fearlessly approach as Kṛṣṇa sat down on the mortar, crossed His chubby legs in a *svastikāsana*, and placed the pot in His lap.

“Where did He learn to sit like a *yogī*?”

The wind answered, “Mother! He is the *guru* of all *yogīs*.”

Seeing all the monkeys heeding Kṛṣṇa’s call, she added, “But it is all for naught. He is now transformed from the prince of *yogīs* into the king

of monkeys!”

Kṛṣṇa kept the monkeys in order with clicking sounds while systematically handing yogurt to one after the other. Unable to suppress her joy, Yaśodā covered her mouth to keep from laughing.

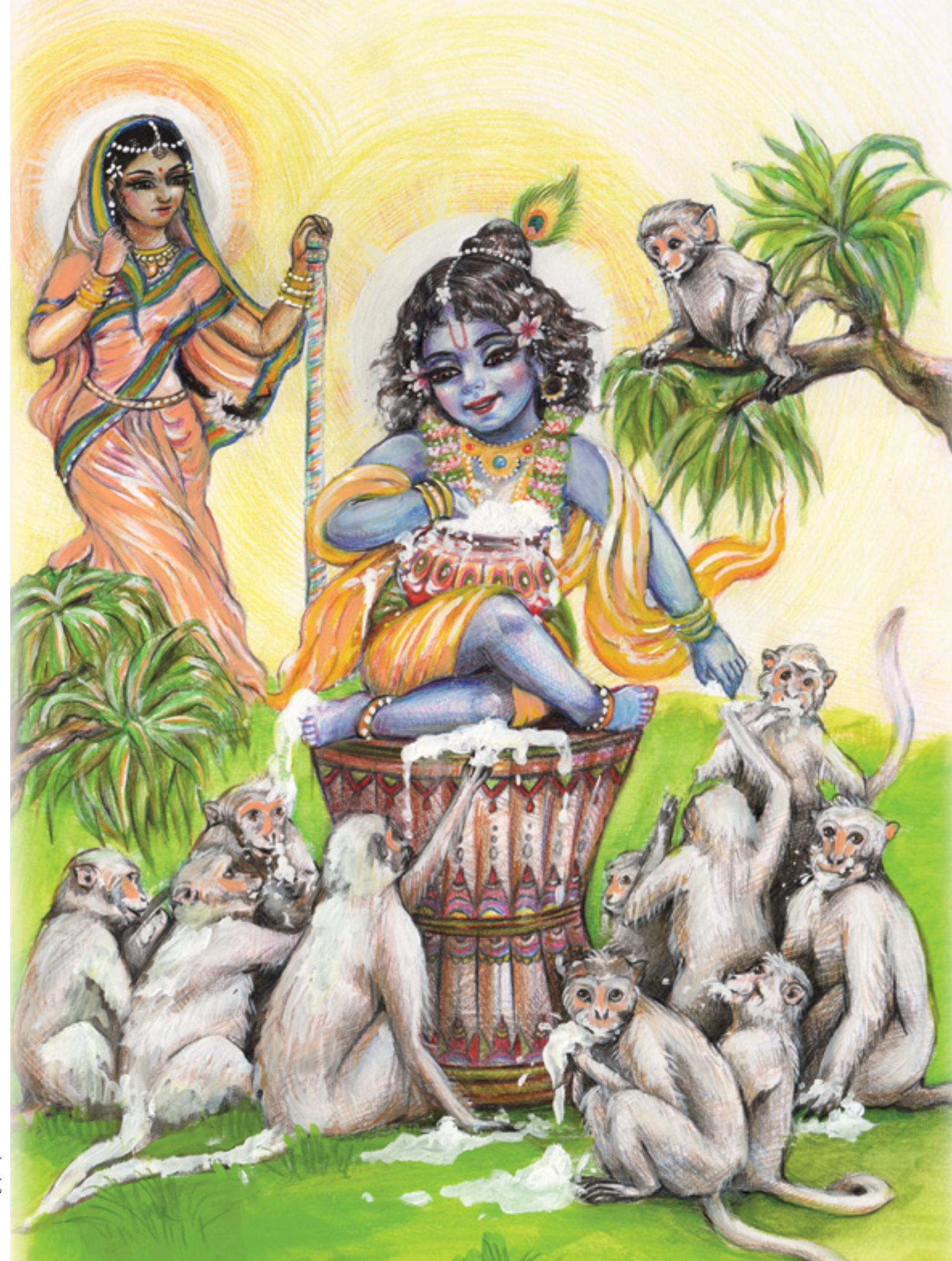
“No doubt they have a natural affinity for each other.”

As He fed the monkeys, Kṛṣṇa repeatedly looked to the left and to the right. His lotus eyes dancing nervously on the stage of transcendental emotion, His mind echoed the cries of His every limb:

“When is she coming? From which direction will she come?”

Kṛṣṇa’s plan was to disappear.

He thought, “*Yogīs* who worship Me in My atomic form, pervading all subtle elements, fixing



Painting by Nitya-sakhī Devī Dāśī

Excerpted from *Śrī Dāmodara-janānī*, Chapter 4. Available at srsbooks.com. The details presented here about this well-known pastime are drawn from the commentaries of Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This excerpt retains the book’s style (e.g., British spellings, such as “colour”).

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their minds on that alone, attain the mystic perfection of *aṇimā*.”

Yet try as He might, Kṛṣṇa was unable to accomplish His desire.

Some invisible force restrained Him. Some force greater than His own kept Him from disappearing.

But what power was superior to Kṛṣṇa's mysticism?

The power of Mother Yaśodā's love!

And the wielder of that power was now tip-toeing down the palace stairs, planning to catch her thieving son unawares as He pondered how He, of all beings, had fallen from the yogic path.

• • •

Yaśodā-devī had been looking through the latticed window into the courtyard below. Eager to play the role that Fate had scripted for her, she craned her neck, turning sideways to better see without being seen. Then, slowly, with measured steps, she cautiously followed Kṛṣṇa's footprints down the stairs, halting inside the doorway to have another peek.

Kṛṣṇa mistakenly sat with His back to the house, giving His mother the added advantage of sneaking up on Him. Yet the monkeys were His sentinels, and facing her, they would react to her approach.

Queen Yaśodā waited for the opportune moment, and when it came, careful not to step on fallen leaves or twigs, she moved forward.

As she took her first step, excitement so stirred Yaśodā's being as to challenge her balance. However, the birds on the balcony thought that restraining her laughter was an even greater challenge still.

Taking her next step, Mother Yaśodā noticed her husband's jewelled walking stick against the wall. “He must have forgotten it in the flurry of his departure. For unprecedented mischief, unprecedented discipline is required.”

She grasped the stick.

As she did, the earth seemed to

shake. What would happen to the creation and its residents if their shelter and support was beaten?

“I will not hit Him,” she thought, “but I will give Him a good scare.”

Mountains, rivers, and demigods sighed in relief.

Unable to stand by idly, a breeze asked, “What will you do when you reach your son?”

Yaśodā's heart replied, “I will catch Him. What else?”

“Do you think you can catch me?”

“Why are you causing a disturbance?”

“Because what you are undertaking may be far more difficult than you anticipate, O Queen!”

“Hush!”

Unable to follow her order, the wind whispered softly in Kṛṣṇa's ear, “O Lord! She whom You cannot see or hear, but fear most, is near. Flee!”

Kṛṣṇa spun around!

He who enchants the demigods with His monsoon-hued limbs saw Yaśodā approaching. In fear He leapt to His feet. Standing atop the mortar, Kṛṣṇa caught His mother's intent gaze, and for a moment their eyes locked.

Mother Yaśodā was like a *yogī* in trance. In the way that a mystic is fully absorbed on his Lord, she was fully fixed on her son. But unlike a *yogī*, the queen held a stick.

Kṛṣṇa's gaze went from hers to the cane.

He knew that punishment was inevitable,

“But a stick! Is she actually holding a stick?”

He who sees everything everywhere doubted what He now saw. To clear His vision, He blinked.

She was holding a stick.

Kṛṣṇa had seen His mother raise a stick to chase monkeys and to herd cows, but never to discipline Him. He was incredulous.

“Is she really threatening Me with a stick?”

The jewels on the stick flashed in the morning sun: “O Lord! You are the supreme chastiser and I Your instrument. Yet I am helpless in the

hands of Your mother. Please do not take offence.”

But Kṛṣṇa had no time for pardons.

Jumping from the mortar, He was like Prahlāda thrown from a cliff into an abyss unknown. But who would catch Him? How would this escapade end? How was this happening?

Landing on His chubby feet, Kṛṣṇa stole another look at His mother. Was this all real?

“Is she really coming at Me with a stick?”

The wind answered, “Run! Run!”

The cane added, “If the queen can raise a stick, she can also use it.”

Kṛṣṇa needed no further advice. He ran.

As Kṛṣṇa ran at full speed, His newly-fitted earrings swung wildly, shooting coloured rays across His cheeks. Being in such close proximity to Him, the earrings attained a good fortune that had heretofore been Yaśodā's: the bliss of kissing His lotus face. By this blessing Kṛṣṇa's earrings would become famous as the chief of His ornaments.

Yet even this chief adornment, the *kuṇḍala*, failed to beautify Kṛṣṇa as well as He beautified Himself, He whose divine form was, indeed, the ornament of all ornaments.

The demigods observed this fountainhead of beauty, and were enchanted. Nothing could compare to the charm of this child. They concluded that this was due to the distinctiveness of Gokula: only here could the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's beauty be fully manifested, and only in Gokula could His extraordinary feature as a cowherd be revealed.

Fascinated, one demigod said to the other, “How extraordinary! For the crime of stealing fresh yogurt, the Supreme Lord is being threatened by a stick-wielding *gopī*. Moreover, He who is feared by demons and us demigods alike is running away in fear of her.”

Overhearing this conversation – similar to one that they had had earlier – the birds nodded their heads

in agreement and listened to the demigods converse.

“Is He really afraid, or just running as if He were afraid?”

“Of course Kṛṣṇa knows how much she loves Him; therefore He is also confident that she cannot be angry for long.”

“But is that really the case? Look at His face.”

“In this land of Gokula there is no chance of pretense for even the Supreme Lord. The law of sweetness dictates that He behaves like an ordinary child.”

“We must therefore conclude that He is full of fear.”

“Yes! Such a display of emotion may be bewildering even to the

Slowing somewhat, but still keeping His distance, He turned to call over His shoulder, “I will stop if you drop your stick.”

learned, but the Lord's associates say *bhaya-bhāvanayā*, Kṛṣṇa is possessed ‘by thoughts of fear.’”

That was the demigods' conclusion. Kṛṣṇa was afraid.

In the meantime, reasoning that there would be many people on the road, Kṛṣṇa ran towards the front gates. Surely the queen would not strike Him in the presence of her subjects. And even if she tried, He could hide among the crowds or find a guardian amongst them.

Once again, He who is the wisdom of the wise erred in judgement. It was Dīpāvalī day, and almost everyone had left for the festival. The customary gathering for a royal audience was absent. Knowing this, all-wise Yaśodā-devī ran after Kṛṣṇa without hesitation.

Kṛṣṇa was perplexed at His own conduct: “Why am I running away?”

Panting, Kṛṣṇa answered His own question: “Because she holds the secret of unconditional love. And that love can control, catch, and punish Me.”

Using her superior intelligence, beautiful Yaśodā applied psychological intimidation to compensate for her weariness.

“Stop! Stop You thief and liar! How dare You run from Your mother! Stop where You are and stop carrying on so!”

Yaśodā's order did not fall on deaf ears. Kṛṣṇa had never disobeyed His mother. But then neither had she ever threatened Him with a stick. Slowing somewhat, but still keeping His distance, He turned to call over His shoulder, “I will stop if you drop your stick.”

“If You are afraid of punishment, then why did You break my butter churn and ransack my storehouse?”

Still looking at His mother from the corner of His eyes, Kṛṣṇa's voice wavered, “I will never do it again.”

Then, looking at the stick, He added, “Please drop the stick.”

This contest was not just between mother and son. There was a third participant: Yogamāyā. And Yogamāyā decided that it was time to offer oblations into the fire of Yaśodā's aspiration.

The brief respite had refreshed Yaśodā, but like *yogīs* and *jñānīs*, she was unable to capture Him. Yet, driven by love, she continued to try! And as she did, the momentum of her movements caused her garlanded hair-knot to come undone and its flowers to fall at her feet. Trying to atone for having tattled on her, the wind made the flowers fall before and behind the queen, offering *puṣpāñjali*.

In truth the demigods had orchestrated this shower of flowers in an effort to worship the Lord's mother. Although there was only a handful

of flowers in her hair, by the demigods' desire a continuous stream of petals softened the ground where she stepped and another stream worshipped her footprints, the most sacred of sacred places.

Although thoughts of Yaśodā's stick distressed Kṛṣṇa to the extreme, He could not help but smile at the demigods' worship. "They have done well!"

Running as fast as she could, Yaśodā tried to close the distance between her and Kṛṣṇa, but no matter how she tried she could not quite reach Him. Sometimes it appeared as if they were a gust of wind, sometimes that they were a blur of monsoon blue, sometimes that they were a small cloud followed by a larger cloud. Yet always they were a picture

of beauty, and a treat for the eyes.

"O Mother! O sinless one! Please drop that stick. Do not punish Me with it. If you drop it, I will come to you."

Weighing in balance His plea and her own fatigue, Yaśodā made as if to throw away the stick, while actually hiding it behind her.

"I have thrown it away."

Deceived, Kṛṣṇa slowed. With Yaśodā still running at full speed, the mystical arm's distance vanished and she wrapped her right hand around His right wrist.

"Now You are caught, rascal!"

And He was!

Unattainable by the prayers of *brāhmaṇas*, the speculation of *jñānīs*, or the meditation of *yogīs*, Kṛṣṇa was now arrested by the love of

Mother Yaśodā.

After all, He was just a plaything in the drama of her motherly affection. 🌸

His Holiness Śivarāma Swami, born in Budapest, Hungary, became a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1973 and entered sannyāsa in 1979. He has written many books on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇav-ism, including the Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana series and, more recently, Nava-vraja-mahimā, a nine-volume treatise on the sacred land of India through the Vaiṣṇava perspective of pastime, pilgrimage, and philosophy. He has served as a member of ISKCON's Governing Body Commission for thirty-five years and is responsible for projects in Hungary, Turkey, and Romania.

A Pause for Prayer



Painting by Bharadājia Dāsa

O master and enjoyer of all sacrificial ceremonies, O infallible and most famous person, whose name, when chanted, spreads all good fortune! O original Supreme Personality of Godhead, supreme controller, shelter of all holy places, You are the shelter of all poor, suffering living entities, and You have appeared to diminish their suffering. Please be kind to us and spread our good fortune.

My Lord, You are the all-pervading universal form, the fully independent creator, maintainer and destroyer of this universe. Although You engage Your energy in matter, You are always situated in Your original form and never fall from that position, for Your knowledge is infallible and always suitable to any situation. You are never bewildered by illusion. O my Lord, let me offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

— Goddess Aditi to Lord Viṣṇu, who will assume His form as Lord Vāmana *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.17.8–9

BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

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

KING INDRA STEALS THE SACRIFICIAL HORSE

Afraid of losing his position as the ruler of the heavenly planets, Indra disguises himself to thwart King Pṛthu's sacrifice.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 19

12 तमत्रिर्भगवानैक्षत्त्वरमाणं विहायसा ।
आमुक्तमिव पाखण्डं योऽधर्मे धर्मविभ्रमः

*tam atrir bhagavān aikṣat
tvaramāṇam vihāyasā
āmuktam iva pākhaṇḍam
yo 'dharme dharmavibhramah*

tam – King Indra; *atriḥ* – the sage Atri; *bhagavān* – most powerful; *aikṣat* – could see; *tvaramāṇam* – moving very hastily; *vihāyasā* – in outer space; *āmuktam iva* – like a liberated person; *pākhaṇḍam* – imposter; *yaḥ* – one who; *adharme* – in irreligion; *dharmā* – religion; *vibhramah* – mistaking.

When King Indra was taking away the horse, he dressed himself to appear as a liberated person. Actually this dress was a form of cheating, for it falsely created an impression of religion. When Indra went into outer space in this way, the great sage Atri saw him and understood the whole situation.

PURPORT: The word *pākhaṇḍa* used in this verse is sometimes pronounced *pāṣaṇḍa*. Both of these words indicate an imposter who presents himself as a very religious person but in actuality is sinful. Indra took up the saffron-colored dress as a way of cheating others. This saffron

dress has been misused by many imposters who present themselves as liberated persons or incarnations of God. In this way people are cheated. As we have mentioned many times, the conditioned soul has a tendency to cheat; therefore this quality is also visible in a person like King Indra. It is understood that even King Indra is not liberated from the clutches of material contamination. Thus the words *āmuktam iva*, meaning "as if he were liberated," are used. 1 The saffron dress worn by a *sannyāsī* announces to the world that he has renounced all worldly affairs and is simply engaged in the service of the Lord. Such a devotee is actually a *sannyāsī*, or liberated person. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.1) it is said:

*anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṁ
kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ
sa sannyāsī ca yogī ca
na niragnir na cākriyaḥ*

"One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and who works as he is obligated is in the renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic, not he who lights no fire and performs no work."

2 In other words, one who offers the results of his activities to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is actually a

- 1) What is the significance of the saffron-colored dress worn by *sannyāsīs*?
- 2) According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, who is actually a *sannyāsī* and yogī?

sannyāsī and yogi. Cheating *sannyāsīs* and yogis have existed since the time of Pṛthu Mahārāja's sacrifice. This cheating was very foolishly introduced by King Indra. In some ages such cheating is very prominent, and in other ages not so prominent. ³ It is the duty of a *sannyāsī* to be very cautious because, as stated by Lord Caitanya, *sannyāsīra alpa chidra sarva-loke gāya*: a little spot in a *sannyāsī's* character will be magnified by the public (*Cc. Madhya* 12.51). Therefore, unless one is very sincere and serious, he should not take up the order of *sannyāsa*. One should not use this order as a means to cheat the public. ⁴ It is better not to take up *sannyāsa* in this age of Kali because provocations are very strong in this age. Only a very exalted person advanced in spiritual understanding should attempt to take up *sannyāsa*. One should not adopt this order as a means of livelihood or for some material purpose.

13 अत्रिणा चोदितो हन्तुं पृथुपुत्रो महारथः अन्वधावत सङ्क्रुद्धस्तिष्ठ तिष्ठेति चाब्रवीत्

*atrinā codīto hantum
pṛthu-putro mahā-rathaḥ
anvadhāvata saṅkrudhas
tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti cābravīt*

atrinā – by the great sage Atri; *coditah* – being encouraged; *hantum* – to kill; *pṛthu-putraḥ* – the son of King Pṛthu; *mahā-rathaḥ* – a great hero; *anvadhāvata* – followed; *saṅkrudhas* – being very angry; *tiṣṭha tiṣṭha* – just wait, just wait; *iti* – thus; *ca* – also; *abravīt* – he said.

When the son of King Pṛthu was informed by Atri of King Indra's trick, he immediately became very angry and followed Indra to kill him, calling, "Wait! Wait!"

PURPORT: The words *tiṣṭha tiṣṭha* are used by a *kṣatriya* when he challenges his enemy. When fighting, a *kṣatriya* cannot flee from the battlefield. ⁵ However, when a *kṣatriya* out of cowardice flees from the battlefield, showing his back to his enemy, he is challenged with the words *tiṣṭha tiṣṭha*. A real *kṣatriya* does not kill his enemy from

- 3) Why does Lord Caitanya say that a *sannyāsī* must be very careful about how he acts?
- 4) Why is it better not to take up *sannyāsa* in this age of Kali?
- 5) What is the significance of the words *tiṣṭha tiṣṭha*, used by King Pṛthu's son to call out to King Indra?
- 6) Why did Atri Muni instruct King Pṛthu's son to kill Indra?

behind, nor does a real *kṣatriya* turn his back on the battlefield. According to *kṣatriya* principle and spirit, one either attains victory or dies on the battlefield. Although King Indra was very exalted, being the King of heaven, he became degraded due to his stealing the horse intended for sacrifice. Therefore he fled without observing the *kṣatriya* principles, and the son of Pṛthu had to challenge him with the words *tiṣṭha tiṣṭha*.

14 तं तादृशकृतिं वीक्ष्य मेने धर्म शरीरिणम् जटिलं भस्मनाच्छन्नं तस्मै बाणं न मुञ्चति

*taṁ tādrśākṛtiṁ vīkṣya
mene dharmam śarīriṇam
jaṭilam bhasmanācchannam
tasmai bāṇam na muñcati*

taṁ – him; *tādrśa-ākṛtiṁ* – in such dress; *vīkṣya* – after seeing; *mene* – considered; *dharmam* – pious or religious; *śarīriṇam* – having a body; *jaṭilam* – having knotted hair; *bhasmanā* – by ashes; *acchannam* – smeared all over the body; *tasmai* – unto him; *bāṇam* – arrow; *na* – not; *muñcati* – he did release.

King Indra was fraudulently dressed as a *sannyāsī*, having knotted his hair on his head and smeared ashes all over his body. Upon seeing such dress, the son of King Pṛthu considered Indra a religious man and pious *sannyāsī*. Therefore he did not release his arrows.

15 वधान्निवृत्तं तं भूयो हन्तवेऽत्रिरचोदयत् जहि यज्ञहनं तात महेन्द्रं विबुधाधमम्

*vadhān nivṛttam taṁ bhūyo
hantave 'trir acodayat
jahi yajña-hanam tāta
mahendram vibudhādhamam*

vadhāt – from killing; *nivṛttam* – stopped; *taṁ* – the son of Pṛthu; *bhūyah* – again; *hantave* – for the purpose of killing; *atrin* – the great sage Atri; *acodayat* – encouraged; *jahi* – kill; *yajña-hanam* – one who impeded the performance of a *yajña*; *tāta* – my dear son; *mahā-indram* – the great heavenly King Indra; *vibudha-adhamam* – the lowest of all demigods.

When Atri Muni saw that the son of King Pṛthu did not kill Indra but returned deceived by him, ⁶ Atri Muni again instructed him to kill the heavenly King because he thought that Indra had become the lowest of all demigods due to his impeding the execution of King Pṛthu's sacrifice.

16 एवं वैन्यसुतः प्रोक्तस्त्वरमाणं विहायसा अन्वद्रवदभिक्रुद्धो रावणं गृध्रराडिव

*evam vainya-sutaḥ proktaḥ
tvaramāṇam vihāyasā
anvadravad abhikruddho
rāvaṇam gṛdhra-rāḍ iva*

evam – thus; *vainya-sutaḥ* – the son of King Pṛthu; *proktaḥ* – being ordered; *tvaramāṇam* – Indra, who was moving hastily; *vihāyasā* – in the sky; *anvadravat* – began to chase; *abhikruddhaḥ* – being very angry; *rāvaṇam* – Rāvaṇa; *gṛdhra-rāḍ* – the king of vultures; *iva* – like.

Being thus informed, the grandson of King Vena immediately began to follow Indra, who was fleeing through the sky in great haste. He was very angry with him, and he chased him just as the king of the vultures chased Rāvaṇa.

17 सोऽश्वं रूपं च तद्वित्वा तस्मा अन्तर्हितः स्वराट् वीरः स्वपशुमादाय पितुर्यज्ञमुपेयिवान्

*so 'śvaṁ rūpaṁ ca tad dhitvā
tasmā antarhitah svarāt
vīraḥ sva-paśum ādāya
pitur yajñam upeyivān*

saḥ – King Indra; *aśvam* – the horse; *rūpam* – the false dress of a saintly person; *ca* – also; *tad* – that; *dhitvā* – giving up; *tasmai* – for him; *antarhitah* – disappeared; *sva-rāt* – Indra; *vīraḥ* – the great hero; *sva-paśum* – his animal; *ādāya* – having taken; *pituḥ* – of his father; *yajñam* – to the sacrifice; *upeyivān* – he came back.

⁷ When Indra saw that the son of Pṛthu was chasing him, he immediately abandoned his false dress and left the horse. Indeed, he disappeared from that very spot, and the great hero, the son of Mahārāja Pṛthu, returned the horse to his father's sacrificial arena.

18 तत्तस्य चाद्भुतं कर्म विचक्ष्य परमर्षयः नामधेयं ददुस्तस्मै विजिताश्व इति प्रभो

*tat tasya cādbhutam karma
vicakṣya paramarṣayaḥ
nāmadheyam dadus tasmai
vijitāśva iti prabho*

tat – that; *tasya* – his; *ca* – also; *adbhutam* – wonderful; *karma* – activity; *vicakṣya* – after observing; *paramarṣayaḥ* – the great sages; *nāmadheyam* – the name; *daduh*

– they offered; *tasmai* – to him; *vijita-aśvaḥ* – Vijitāśva (he who has won the horse); *iti* – thus; *prabho* – my dear Lord Vidura.

My dear Lord Vidura, ⁸ when the great sages observed the wonderful prowess of the son of King Pṛthu, they all agreed to give him the name Vijitāśva.

19 उपसृज्य तमस्तीव्रं जहाराश्वं पुनर्हरिः चषालयूपतश्छन्नो हिरण्यरशनं विभुः

*upasṛjya tamas tīvram
jahārāśvaṁ punar hariḥ
caṣālayūpataś channo
hiraṇya-raśanam vibhuḥ*

upasṛjya – creating; *tamaḥ* – darkness; *tīvram* – dense; *jahāra* – took away; *aśvam* – the horse; *punar* – again; *hariḥ* – King Indra; *caṣāla-yūpataḥ* – from the wooden instrument where the animals were sacrificed; *channaḥ* – being covered; *hiraṇya-raśanam* – tied with a gold chain; *vibhuḥ* – very powerful.

My dear Vidura, Indra, being the King of heaven and very powerful, immediately brought a dense darkness upon the sacrificial arena. Covering the whole scene in this way, he again took away the horse, which was chained with golden shackles near the wooden instrument where animals were sacrificed.

20 अत्रिः सन्दर्शयामास त्वरमाणं विहायसा कपालखट्वाङ्गधरं वीरो नैनमबाधत

*atrin sandarśayām āsa
tvaramāṇam vihāyasā
kapāla-khaṭvāṅga-dharam
vīro nainam abādhata*

atrin – the great sage Atri; *sandarśayām āsa* – caused to see; *tvaramāṇam* – going very hastily; *vihāyasā* – in the sky; *kapāla-khaṭvāṅga* – a staff with a skull at the top; *dharam* – who carried; *vīraḥ* – the hero (King Pṛthu's son); *na* – not; *enam* – the King of heaven, Indra; *abādhata* – killed.

The great sage Atri again pointed out to the son of King Pṛthu that Indra was fleeing through the sky. The great

- 7) What did Indra do when being chased by King Pṛthu's son?
- 8) What name did the sages give to King Pṛthu's son?

hero, the son of Pṛthu, chased him again. But when he saw that Indra was carrying in his hand a staff with a skull at the top and was again wearing the dress of a sannyāsī, he still chose not to kill him.

21 अत्रिणा चोदितस्तस्मै सन्दधे विशिखं रुषा
सोऽश्वं रूपं च तद्वित्त्वा तस्थावन्तर्हितः स्वराट्

*atriṇā coditas tasmai
sandadhe viśikhaṁ ruṣā
so 'śvaṁ rūpaṁ ca tad dhitvā
tasthāv antarhitah svarāt*

atriṇā – by the great sage Atri; *coditaḥ* – inspired; *tasmai* – for Lord Indra; *sandadhe* – fixed; *viśikham* – his arrow; *ruṣā* – out of great anger; *saḥ* – King Indra; *aśvam* – horse; *rūpaṁ* – the dress of a sannyāsī; *ca* – also; *tat* – that; *hitvā* – giving up; *tasthau* – he remained there; *antarhitah* – invisible; *sva-rāt* – the independent Indra.

When the great sage Atri again gave directions, the son of King Pṛthu became very angry and placed an arrow on his bow. Upon seeing this, King Indra immediately abandoned the false dress of a sannyāsī and, giving up the horse, made himself invisible.

22 वीरश्चाश्वमुपादाय पितृयज्ञमथाव्रजत्
तदवद्यं हरे रूपं जगृहृन्नानदुर्बलाः

*vīraś cāśvam upādāya
pitṛ-yajñam athāvrajaḥ
tad avadyaṁ hare rūpaṁ
jagrḥhur jñāna-durbalāḥ*

vīraḥ – the son of King Pṛthu; *ca* – also; *aśvam* – the horse; *upādāya* – taking; *pitṛ-yajñam* – to the sacrificial arena of his father; *atha* – thereafter; *avrajat* – went; *tat* – that; *avadyam* – abominable; *hareḥ* – of Indra; *rūpaṁ* – dress; *jagrḥhuḥ* – adopted; *jñāna-durbalāḥ* – those with a poor fund of knowledge.

Then the great hero, Vijitāśva, the son of King Pṛthu, again took the horse and returned to his father's sacrificial arena. Since that time, certain men with a poor fund of knowledge have adopted the dress of a false sannyāsī. It was King Indra who introduced this.

9) What is the difference between a *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsī* and an *ekadaṇḍī-sannyāsī*?

PURPORT: Since time immemorial, the *sannyāsa* order has carried the *tridaṇḍa*. Later Śaṅkarācārya introduced the *ekadaṇḍī-sannyāsa*. 9) A *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsī* is a Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī, and an *ekadaṇḍī-sannyāsī* is a Māyāvādī sannyāsī. There are many other types of sannyāsīs, who are not approved by Vedic rituals. A type of pseudo-sannyāsa was introduced by Indra when he tried to hide himself from the attack of Vijitāśva, the great son of King Pṛthu. Now there are many different types of sannyāsīs. Some of them go naked, and some of them, generally known as *kāpālīka*, carry a skull and trident. All of them were introduced under some meaningless circumstances, and those who have a poor fund of knowledge accept these false sannyāsīs and their pretenses, although they are not bona fide guides to spiritual advancement. At the present moment some missionary institutions, without referring to the Vedic rituals, have introduced some sannyāsīs who engage in sinful activities. The sinful activities forbidden by the *śāstras* are illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating, and gambling. These so-called sannyāsīs indulge in all these activities. They eat meat and flesh, fish, eggs, and just about everything. They sometimes drink with the excuse that without alcohol, fish, and meat, it is impossible to remain in the cold countries near the Arctic zone. These sannyāsīs introduce all these sinful activities in the name of serving the poor, and consequently poor animals are cut to pieces and go into the bellies of these sannyāsīs. As described in the following verses, such sannyāsīs are *pākhaṇḍīs*. Vedic literature states that a person who puts Lord Nārāyaṇa on the level with Lord Śiva or Lord Brahmā immediately becomes a *pākhaṇḍī*. As stated in the *Purāṇas*:

*yas tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ
brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vīkṣeta
sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam*

In Kali-yuga the *pākhaṇḍīs* are very prominent. However, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has tried to [figuratively] kill all these *pākhaṇḍīs* by introducing His *saṅkīrtana* movement. Those who take advantage of this *saṅkīrtana* movement of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness will be able to save themselves from the influence of these *pākhaṇḍīs*.

23 यानि रूपाणि जगृहे इन्द्रो हयजिहीर्षया
तानि पापस्य खण्डानि लिङ्गं खण्डमिहोच्यते

*yāni rūpāṇi jagṛhe
indro haya-jihīrṣayā
tāni pāpasya khaṇḍāni
liṅgaṁ khaṇḍam ihocyate*

[Continued in the next issue.]

Barking About Bodily Concerns

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples took place on April 17, 1977, in Bombay.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Today there is no full-brained man. All restless dogs and hogs. In fact, they have taken this as their first business – to become restless dogs and hogs. They are living like dogs and hogs while claiming they are highly civilized.

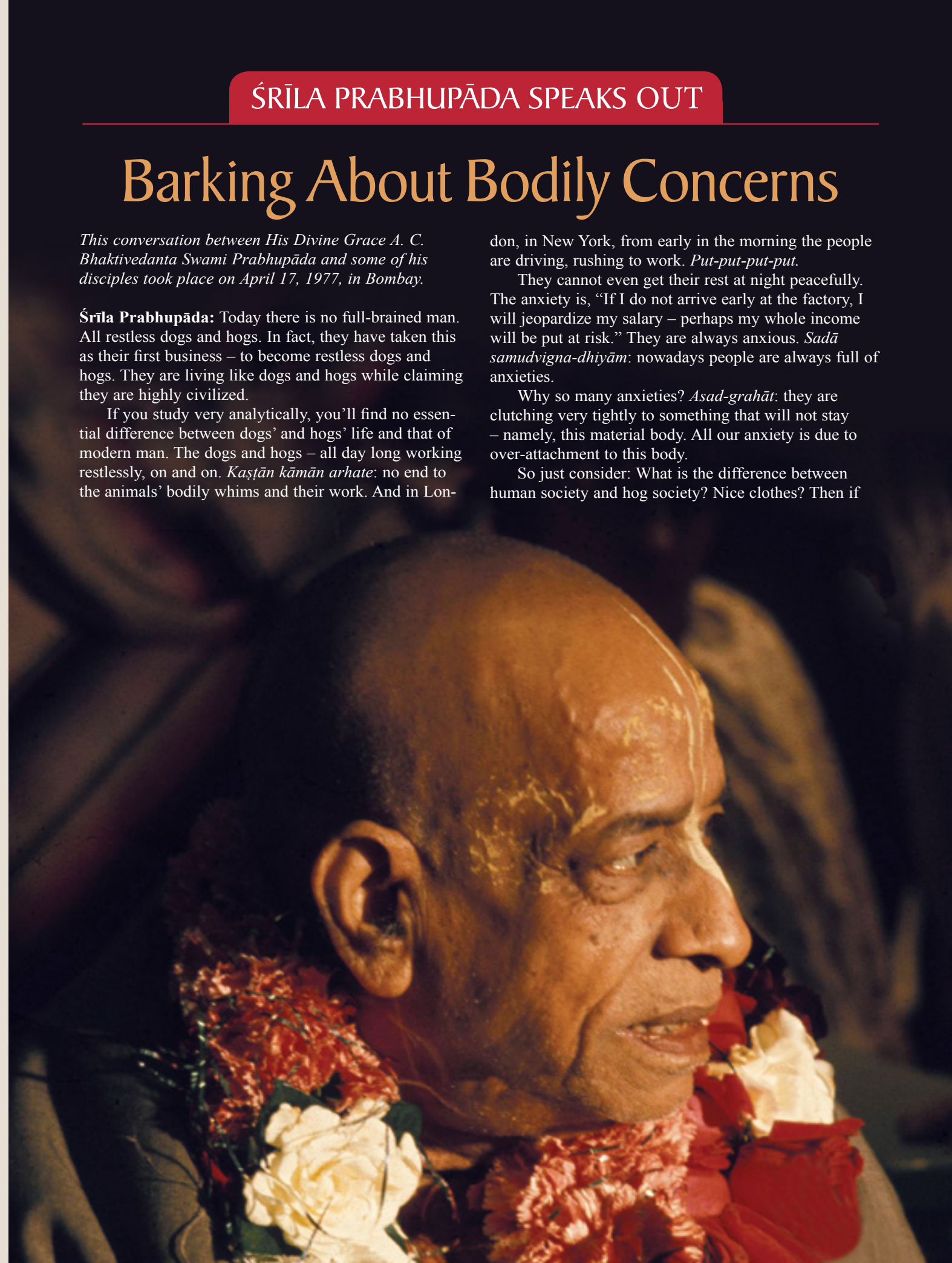
If you study very analytically, you'll find no essential difference between dogs' and hogs' life and that of modern man. The dogs and hogs – all day long working restlessly, on and on. *Kaṣṭhān kāmān arhate*: no end to the animals' bodily whims and their work. And in Lon-

don, in New York, from early in the morning the people are driving, rushing to work. *Put-put-put-put*.

They cannot even get their rest at night peacefully. The anxiety is, "If I do not arrive early at the factory, I will jeopardize my salary – perhaps my whole income will be put at risk." They are always anxious. *Sadā samudvigna-dhiyām*: nowadays people are always full of anxieties.

Why so many anxieties? *Asad-grahāt*: they are clutching very tightly to something that will not stay – namely, this material body. All our anxiety is due to over-attachment to this body.

So just consider: What is the difference between human society and hog society? Nice clothes? Then if



you dress a hog in nice clothes, he becomes a human being? Unfortunately, people nowadays are after the outward dress, the outward appearance of being human beings. They do not know what is real civilization, what is real life. They do not know anything.

And when you go to give spiritual knowledge to them, they say, “Oh, we have to take knowledge from poverty-stricken India?” They do not know that this spiritual knowledge does not come from that India – that Westernized, industrially despoiled India. Rather it comes from old, Kṛṣṇa conscious, full-of-knowledge, farm-and-village, prosperous India.

Those who have forsaken this spiritual knowledge – they are

dogs. And they are always surprised to hear such a strong statement.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. But actually, it is a fact. People today are no different from some dogs barking. “I am a bulldog,” “I am a terrier,” “I am a collie,” “I am a Greek,” “I am a Frenchman,” “I am a Swede.” And with this misunderstanding of who they are, they waste so much energy and money and time, simply for barking about this or that bodily concern.

The result of all this barking is nothing. No United Nations. Rather, every other day sees the appearance of some new national flag. *Bharam udvahato vimūḍhān:* they have made a big bombastic arrangement for unity, but the result is nothing.

countrymen will kill them.

“No, friends, please don’t kill me. I am your countryman. I am your countryman. I belong to the same nation.”

“Who cares about you flies and cockroaches? We shall kill you. ‘American cockroach’? Who cares about you?”

“No, you don’t understand. In my past life I was a staunch nationalist. Yes, due to this material misconception and over-attachment I have now received the body of a cockroach. But please don’t kill me.”

If you become a cockroach, even an American cockroach, who will care about you? Will anyone show special consideration to you? But *dehāntara-prāptiḥ:* after this body,

you must accept another body. That you cannot avoid. Then what good will your nationalism do you? Now you are a great nationalist. But when you have to accept another body, how can you save yourself and not become a cockroach?

Unfortunately, your next body is not your choice. It is in another’s hands. *Karmaṇā daiva-netreṇa:* according to your actions in this body, you’ll get a suitable next body by the arrangement of nature. That is under nature’s supervision.

You cannot say, “Give me a beautiful body in a very wealthy American family.”

“No, no,” Mother Nature will say. “You no longer have that discretionary power. You had it; you had a human life. Now you have to accept my discretion. I will now give you your new body according to your past actions, just according to how you are infected by the material modes.”

So this spiritual knowledge is the greatest science. But sadly, these great educators and leaders do not know it. No one knows it. Instead of understanding that their way of life is a fallacy, they are asking whether God and the soul and the next life are a fallacy. This is their intelligence. What rascaldom! 🌿

This spiritual knowledge is the greatest science. But sadly, these great educators and leaders do not know it. No one knows it.

poverty-stricken. We who are cultivating this spiritual knowledge are not poverty-stricken.

Even from the standpoint of everyday affairs, this knowledge is so very important. Let people understand, “I am not this body – I am not Nigerian or American or Albanian or Iranian or this or that. I am pure spirit soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Soul.” Then you will have, at last, your real United Nations.

Otherwise, what do you have? These restless rascals in bodily consciousness – “I am Indian,” “I am Irish,” “I am Lebanese” – simply barking for the last thirty years. Calling themselves “united,” but blind to the real basis of unity, their spiritual identity. Blind to the simple, peaceful life. Just barking about their various bodily misconceptions.

Disciple: Several times, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have told people connected with the U.N. that theirs is simply an association of barking

Bharam udvahato vimūḍhān: these rascals are simply making a big, big arrangement. The result is nothing.

And despite their obvious failure, they are determined to remain rascals. “Oh, the United Nations. What a gorgeous attempt we are making toward unity. Of course, we have no unity, but our building is adorned by 300,000 flags.”

The problem is, they are offering their obeisances to their flag, not to God. Kṛṣṇa says, *mām namaskuru:* “All of you are in fact spiritual beings, so be happy by offering your obeisances to Me.” But they are thinking, “No. ‘Flag namaskuru.’ We must offer our obeisances to a flag.” Just see what rascals they are! What will they gain by offering obeisances to some flag?

Disciple: In their next life, instead of going back to the spiritual world, they may be born as a cockroach in that same country.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: And then their

Self-Realization In Bhakti

Why the process of bhakti-yoga leads to the most complete answer to the question “Who am I?”

by Hari Parāyaṇa Dāsa

FOR A THOUGHTFUL person, the following question may occur: “Am I only matter, or am I something more?”

According to modern science, the answer is that each of us is a molecular machine, a three-dimensional collection of molecules, which have the properties of life owing to special three-dimensional structures (DNA, RNA, and proteins). If we pause to think about this answer, we may find it problematic.

We like to think that our experiences are real, not just molecular events, that our relationships are real, that there is such a thing as truth. Otherwise what is the meaning of words like objective or rational or right and wrong? If our experiences are just molecular events, then the printed words in front of your eyes at this moment or the mathematical formulae in Einstein’s papers have no intrinsic meaning. The obsession of scientific minds for their own ideas, the sacredness of rational analysis, the objective truth – all this is meaningless.

The atheist, the moralist, the religionist, and anyone else with an opinion assume that their opinion matters. They speak passionately about right and wrong, about progress and dogma, but they rarely ask, “Why all the fuss?” Why do electron waves need to care about the truth, about right or wrong, about faith

and rationality?

Accepting the current scientific understanding of life on earth means we must also accept the pointlessness of all material things, which makes the act of living rather superfluous.

Someone may therefore ask, “Am I nonmatter?” With this question, the person expresses a desire for “self-realization.” Such a desire to inquire into the self is laudable, and people who act on this desire by taking up the *Bhagavad-gītā*’s methods of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* (the yoga of detached action) and, later, *jñāna-yoga* (the yoga of knowledge) for self-realization can directly confirm the *Gītā*’s teaching that they are spiritual beings.

The Path of Sādhana-bhakti

By some good fortune, persons interested in realizing the self may come in contact with Kṛṣṇa’s devotees and start out on the path of *sādhana-bhakti* (*sādhana* means “practice”). The “self-realization” in *sādhana-bhakti* refers to realizing not only that we are spiritual beings (which is as far as *jñāna-yoga* goes), but also that we are Kṛṣṇa’s servants, and that we can be happy only when we achieve *prema*, pure love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, for persons interested in getting a complete understanding of themselves, it is critically important to take up *sādhana-bhakti*.

The methods of *sādhana-bhakti* include five key limbs:

*sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana,
bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira
śraddhāya sevana*

“One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, reside at Mathurā, and worship the deity with faith and veneration.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 22.128) These methods are so powerful that by performing them one gets promoted to the stage of *bhāva*, the preliminary stage of *prema*. The word *bhāva* (or *rati*) refers to a mixture of Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual *śaktis* (potencies) – the *saṁvit śakti* (knowledge potency) and the *hlādinī śakti* (pleasure potency). At present, our perception is controlled by our mind, which is part of Kṛṣṇa’s material energy and therefore incapable of perceiving Him because He is purely spiritual. When the *saṁvit* and *hlādinī śaktis* descend upon the devotee, they function in place of the material mind. The *saṁvit śakti* reveals the devotee’s form and Kṛṣṇa in a form suitable to the devotee’s relationship with Him. The *hlādinī śakti* functions to confer spiritual bliss upon the devotee. Gradually, *bhāva* becomes thickened into *prema*, at which point the devotee becomes a citizen of the spiritual world eternally.

Offenseless Chanting

A pre-condition for this quick promotion to *bhāva* is the absence of offenses (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.238). Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.9–10, explains that chanters devoid of offenses to Kṛṣṇa’s names have only two stages: (1) they chant Kṛṣṇa’s names, and (2) they are quickly promoted to the spiritual world. Offenseless chanting is so spiritually effective that faith in Kṛṣṇa’s names is not

always necessary to attain amazing results. The Sixth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* relates the history of Ajāmila, who chanted the Lord’s name Nārāyaṇa only to call his own son of the same name but was delivered from the reactions of all his past sins. This claim cannot be made for the rather difficult process of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and then *jñāna-yoga* described in the *Gītā*.

The *Padma Purāṇa* lists ten offenses against Kṛṣṇa’s names. For example, a pious and morally upright person, nominally much superior to the sinful Ajāmila, may chant Kṛṣṇa’s names but commit the offense of *dharma-vrata-tyāga-hutādi-sarva-śubha-kriyā-sāmyam*: considering the name equivalent to a moral, religious, or ritualistic activity. Another may chant Kṛṣṇa’s names but consider the name’s glories – such as the protection of sinful Ajāmila from hell by his simply chanting of the word Nārāyaṇa – an exaggeration (*tathārtha-vādo hari-nāmnī kalpanam*).

Vaiṣṇavas are those who accept a spiritual master and take shelter of hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names as their primary *sādhana*. Unlike offenseless chanters and their two stages – chanting, then attaining the spiritual world – other Vaiṣṇavas can become purified of offenses in nine stages, as discussed by Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Gradually, they reach the *bhāva* stage, and finally *prema*. They then become situated in the spiritual world with Kṛṣṇa, engaged in blissful service to Him eternally.

Thus, complete understanding of who we are, what our relationship is with Kṛṣṇa, what will make us happy, and how we can realize these truths – all of this is available uniquely on the path of *bhakti-yoga*. 🌸

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

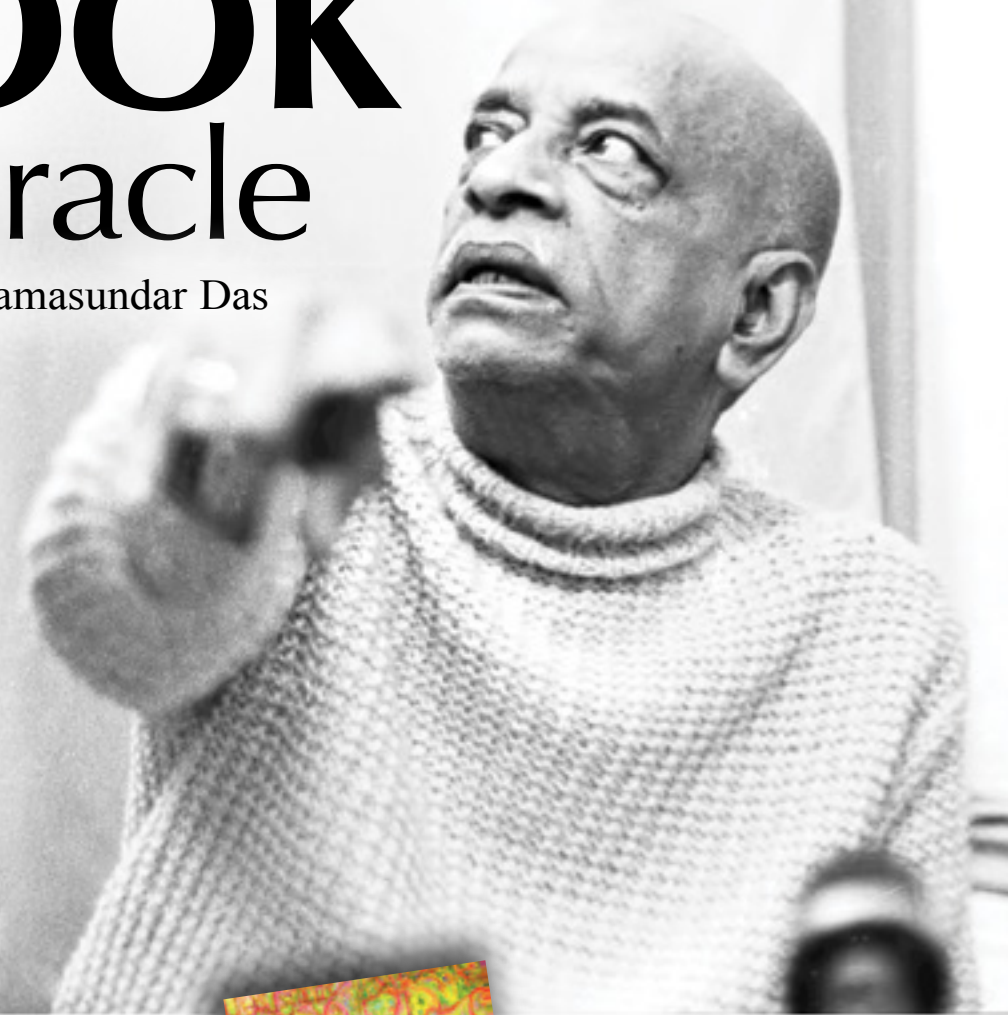
“I didn’t have a clue whether George would print this book or not. I just liked to please the Swami, tell him big things that might or might not come true, almost daring myself – and Krishna – to do the impossible and make them happen.”



The author talks with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Prabhupāda’s room at the Bury Place temple in London, around the time the events described in this excerpt took place. Inset: a reproduction of the original printing of “the Krishna book.”

The KRISHNA BOOK Miracle

by Shyamasundar Das



DURING THE spring of 1969, we kind of knew that Swamiji was writing a book called *Krishna* because he’d mentioned it in a letter to Gurudas, but we didn’t know much about it. Nor, I must admit, did we much care. It was the job of other godbrothers – devotees like Satsvarupa, Brahmananda, Rayarama, Adwaita – to print books. Our job was overwhelmingly clear: build a world-class center for the Swami in London.

But on July 15, 1969, Prabhupada had sent me a letter: “I have prepared a nice book, *Krishna*, and I want to print it in a deluxe edition. If some of your friends finance this publication, it will be a unique presentation to the world. This will contain Krishna’s life from the beginning of His Appearance to His Disappearance from this mortal world. It will contain all of His activities throughout. It is full of philosophy, instructions, transcendental pastimes and artistic

pictures.” OK, sounds great – and I promptly forgot about it. Preparing for Ratha-yatra and building Bury Place consumed every waking moment.

As for Prabhupada’s reference to my “friends” financing his new book, I had made a strict policy never to ask George for anything. One of the main reasons we were accepted by George and the Beatles was that we never asked them for anything, separating us from



Excerpted from *Chasing Rhinos with the Swami*, Volume 1. Copyright 2017 Shyamasundar Das (Sam Speerstra). Available from the Krishna.com Store and the author’s website, www.chasingrhinos.com. This excerpt retains the book’s style for dealing with Sanskrit words and other considerations.

the thousands of outstretched hands around them.

I wrote back to Prabhupada that George had recently offered to put up \$3,000 to buy marble for the new altar at Bury Place. But I must have also written that I thought George would probably print this *Krishna Book* (he seemed to be in the mood these days), because in his next letter to me, dated July 31, Prabhupada wrote: "I am very pleased to note that you have made such a nice recording of Hare Krishna, which may be released by the Beatle's Company. Also, it is very encouraging to learn that you think Mr. George Harrison will be happy to print our *Krishna Book*. This will be a very great service to the mankind at large, if he can be of assistance in this connection. We are giving a unique contribution with this book; a book which tells of the activities of God. *There is no other book that has been authoritatively presented to the Western World up till this time which has given so high a contribution.*" [emphasis mine]

Wow, a pretty heavy statement. Knowing my penchant for flowery propaganda, Prabhupada often sold his ideas to me by using a kind of showbiz language. But I was always doing stuff like this, sticking my foot in my mouth. I didn't have a clue whether George would print this book or not. I just liked to please the Swami, tell him big things that might or might not come true, almost daring myself – and Krishna – to do the impossible and make them happen.

August 1969 was an intense month of work at Bury Place. Prabhupada even sent detailed plans for the throne, down to the color of the marble, months before the throne would actually be built. So the whole subject of the *Krishna Book* appeared to have died down – but not for the Swami. Again, on August 31, he wrote: "In your last letter you informed me that George Harrison may be interested to publish my book, *Krishna*, so I am carrying with me the manuscript. I want to print this book with many pictures, and the pictures are also ready in Los Angeles and Boston. So if possible,

Chasing Rhinos

The phrase "chasing rhinos" in the title *Chasing Rhinos with the Swami* alludes to a saying Prabhupāda used when he spoke of trying to do something big in Kṛṣṇa's service. In a 1971 letter, Prabhupāda wrote, "We should always be enthusiastic to try for capturing the rhinoceros. That way, if we fail, everyone will say, 'Never mind, nobody can catch a rhinoceros anyway,' and if we succeed, then everyone will say, 'Just see what a wonderful thing they have done!'"

you can talk further with him about this publication, and if he does so, it will be very nice for him as well as for us."

This one flew completely over my head. I didn't even consider asking George to print this book. Jeez, the record just came out, he's just done an all-day press conference with us to create major publicity, and he's promised the marble for Bury Place – how can I even think of asking him for something more?

Two and a half months go by. Srila Prabhupada has since come to the UK and is now living at Farley Court. He comes to Bury Place every day to work in his room above the construction site, despite muffled, sporadic hammering and Skil saws buzzing beneath his feet.

One day, Prabhupada sends down word that he wants to see me upstairs. I lay down my tools and run up to see him, arriving out of breath. "Are we making too much noise, Srila Prabhupada?"

"No, no, noise means there is progress." I start to relax.

"Achaa, one thing. You will be seeing George Harrison today, regarding marble?"

"Yes, I'm meeting George and his friend David Wynne at the place where

they sell the marble. Mr. Wynne is what they call the Sculptor Laureate of England. He's designing the new British coins, and right now he's carving a bust of Prince Charles."

"Oh, so he is very expert. When you will be back?"

"So he will help us pick out the best marble, and they will give a good price to him. You said in your letter, white or golden, right? After we select the marble, we're going over to David Wynne's house in Wimbledon for dinner – that's pretty far from here, so I don't know. It may be very late."

Prabhupada has this big pile of pages, prints of full-color paintings, on his desk, and he starts rustling through them. He holds up a page – the picture of Vasudeva carrying newborn Krishna across the river while lightning bolts streak in the sky. (OK, I remember hearing the story.) Then he holds up others, one by one, telling me briefly the story behind each painting. (My mind's still on the work downstairs, the deadline – and the paintings are nice, brightly colored, but seem rather amateurish to me.) "And this is the Kaliya demon," he says.



"This demon lived in Yamuna River and has threatened Krishna, and He has defeated, just see, dancing on the heads." (I'm thinking back to Bible-school summers in Salem, Oregon, and the pictures of Jesus making one loaf into many, Moses parting the Red Sea. This is fairytale stuff. I don't get it.) "And this one," he says. (Ahh, there's Krishna and Balarama jumping off a mountain. I kinda dig that one, like, we have nothing to fear in Krishna's hands.)

Prabhupada goes on and on, showing me the illustrations, explaining what's happening in each. I'm thinking: Prabhupada is so into this. He's blissed out looking at Krishna's childhood adventures. Adventures, yes, that's what these paintings are about – we hadn't heard much of this stuff before. I'm starting to get it. Look at him – he looks like a child reading *Alice in Wonderland*. He's smiling, laughing, sometimes in awe as his eyebrows lift: "Just see!" he says, and he holds up the picture of a fight scene where Krishna is slaying some demon – the guy's head is flying off! – and I'm starting to think this is pretty cool stuff.

"So long it is sitting there and we cannot publish," Prabhupada says.

By now I kind of expect what he will say next: "We have got quote from Dai Nippon, \$19,000. I want you to ask George to print this *Krishna Book* for me."

I'm quiet. He can read the perplexed look on my face, the hesitancy.

"But Prabhupada, up to now we have good relations with George because we never ask him for anything. Hundreds of people are after him every day, saying, 'Give me this, give me that.' Because we never ask him, he is always willing to give us something. How can I do this? It may spoil everything – that is my worry."

Prabhupada chuckles. "You do not worry. You just ask. That will be a favor for me. I shall take the – how you say? – blame. You tell him like this: 'My spiritual master has requested you,' like that. Krishna will help you, you will see." He hands me a sheaf of paintings, "Just show these to Mr. Harrison."

I bow and head back downstairs, my head spinning – and lose myself in work until the hour approaches and I must head out to meet George. It's an

hour-and-a-half drive out to Gerald Culliford Ltd., Britain's prestigious purveyor of fine marble, in Kingston-Upon-Thames in Surrey, where I'm meeting George and David at three o'clock. The whole way I'm trying to block out what Prabhupada has asked me to do. Surely Krishna will take control – there's really nothing to worry about – but my stomach is in butterflies and I'm worried almost sick.

George is in London a lot these days, helping Ringo with his new album, so he's not under a lot of pressure. In fact, today George seems to be in very fine spirits. We don't get to do stuff together often, just the two of us, George free of the restraints of being a Beatle and me out of my work clothes and in devotee mode, feeling lighter in a dhoti and flip-flops. David Wynne impresses me as a groovy guy, very aristocratic (hey, he patters with the Prince while he sits for him hours at a time). David has that quick, subtle English wit, and he and George are throwing one-liners back and forth that have me in stitches. David says he is the man who introduced George to the Maharishi a couple of years back. He strikes me as a very spiritual person, and I take to him immediately and we start having fun.

I hand him a little sketch I've made, the general temple layout, with altar design and dimensions, and I describe the temple room: mostly reddish-brown wood with probably a blue or purple carpet. "The Deities will be dressed in intricate, bright colors, so the marble shouldn't be too busy – our eyes should focus on the deities' faces. And the Swami wants the altar dimensions to be something like 40" by 50", and the color of the marble should be white or golden." George is running around the place like a little boy.

George could buy this whole place with a snap of his fingers, so

George Harrison and the London devotees sing the chorus of "Govinda," a best-selling record in the UK.

his cautious bargaining with the salesman impresses me. We all kind of agree on gold as the main color, so when we see the travertine marble from Siena, Italy, we know. These are such expensive slabs – and this marble so rare – that we have to modify my sketches to fit what is available. Finally, we choose two pieces of three-inch-thick Siena. We are knocked out by the Norwegian blue marble too – actually a kind of feldspathic granite called labradorite – blackish-blue with fluorescent blue flashes as the light moves over it, sort of like opal. So we choose this material for the stairs leading up to the altar. The pieces are bigger than what Prabhupada had suggested, but

task before me: asking George to fund *Krishna Book*. After several courses, we were still yakking away while a storm blustered outside. Heavy rain was sluicing past dark dining room windows, and thunder rumbled in the distance. A *Brandenburg Concerto* played softly on a phonograph somewhere. Then dessert and coffee came and I knew it was about time.

As Gillian started clearing the dishes – it’s now or never, the party’s over, it’s a long drive back through the night – I looked across the table to George, and said, “George, Prabhupada wanted me to ask you something.” I hand the pictures to him across the table. “He’s been working for a year or so on this big book called

I look at George, expecting the worst – but a husky laugh and he’s got this huge grin on his face. “Well, uh, how much is it, then?”

I am swept by waves of relief – we’re all laughing and buzzing: we’ve seen Krishna’s magic together.

“Well, about \$19,000.”

George says he has to be in London tomorrow – at Abbey Road studios, working with Ringo – so he’ll stop by Bury Place and talk it over with Prabhupada.

I drive my rented car back to London through the late-night storm – driving anywhere in London at night is a venture into the unknown – but tonight wheels find the path without effort. I’m on top of the world. I’ve just pleased my spiritual master in a very big way. Another rhinoceros. It doesn’t get any better than this. But will George really do it? Shortly after midnight I pull in front of Bury Place and see that the light’s still on behind the blue curtains in Prabhupada’s room upstairs. He’s still here; he hasn’t gone back to Farley Court. I park, unlock the door, quietly go up the stairs, and timidly knock on Prabhupada’s door.

“Yes, come in,” he says.

“So, what is the news?” I bow, and before I can even sit up I’m blurting out, “He says he’ll print *Krishna Book!*” As I give my excited report about both marble and book, I’m beaming all over, but Prabhupada is just smiling and calm, even after I tell him about the lightning hitting the house. Still, there’s that special gleam in his eye I’m beginning to recognize: he’s especially happy. “And George says he’ll be in London tomorrow, and he’ll stop by to see you about it.”

As I head out the door, Prabhupada says to my back, “You see, I told you Krishna would help you.” 🌟

Shyamasundar Das, one of Srila Prabhupada’s earliest disciples, helped open ISKCON’s second temple, in San Francisco (1967), and the London temple (1968). In 1971 he served as Prabhupada’s secretary, staying by his side day and night.

“So what is the news?” I bow, and before I can even sit up I’m blurting out, “He says he’ll print *Krishna Book!*”

we have been struck by the incredible beauty of these stones.

Wow. Dark blue and gold, a perfect combo. Culliford’s tells us they will cut and edge the pieces, polish them, and deliver them to 7 Bury Place in a few days. As we’re leaving, George sees a big one-and-a-half-ton block of white South African marble and buys it for David as a gift. Wynne will later carve it into a sculpture called Gaia, which now sits in Abbey Gardens in the Isles of Scilly.

As we cross the parking lot to our cars, the skies begin to darken, heavy clouds roll in, and the wind blows dust in our eyes. We are ecstatic.

David lived at “Rushmere,” a converted farmhouse on Wimbledon Common in South London. He had a warm and welcoming home, and his wife, Gillian, and two young sons, Ed and Roly, were super people. The lightness of the occasion, and the delicious aromas of a fine vegetarian dinner, took my mind completely away from the

Krishna – you’ve seen all those nice paintings by devotees in his other books? Well, this book has dozens of paintings like these, and it’s all about Krishna, His birth, His childhood, all the demons He kills, all that. Anyway, he wanted me to ask you if you’d print it for him.”

There, it’s out. As I’m explaining all this, I see his face start to change from happy-go-lucky dinnertime friends and patter about football, to serious, then to angry, and I think, “Oh, I’ve screwed this thing up forever now.”

A brilliant white-blue flash comes through the windows – KABBOOOOOOOOOOMMM!!!

The huge house shudders – and the lights go out.

A lightning bolt hit the house! Total dark and silence for maybe ten seconds. I can hear everyone breathing.

Suddenly, the lights come back on. Bach starts up again in the living room. Everyone’s oohing and ahing.

Words from George



George Harrison was invited to write something for the opening pages of the Krishna book. His “Words from Apple” appeared in the first edition and has continued to appear in all subsequent editions.

Words from Apple

Everybody is looking for Kṛṣṇa.

Some don’t realize that they are, but they are.

KṚṢṆA is GOD, the source of all that exists, the Cause of all that is, was, or ever will be.

As GOD is unlimited, HE has many Names.

Allah-Buddha-Jehova-Rama: ALL are KṚṢṆA, all are ONE.

God is not abstract; He has both the impersonal and the personal aspects to His personality, which is SUPREME, ETERNAL, BLISSFUL, and full of KNOWLEDGE. As a single drop of water has the same qualities as an ocean of water, so has our consciousness the qualities of GOD’S consciousness . . . but through our identification and attachment with material energy (physical body, sense pleasures, material possessions, ego, etc.) our true TRANSCENDENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS has been polluted, and like a dirty mirror it is unable to reflect a pure image.

With many lives our association with the TEMPORARY has grown. This impermanent body, a bag of bones and flesh, is mistaken for our true self, and we have accepted this temporary condition to be final.

Through all ages, great SAINTS have remained as living proof that this non-temporary, permanent state of GOD CON-

SCIOUSNESS can be revived in all living Souls. Each soul is potentially divine.

Kṛṣṇa says in Bhagavad Gita: “Steady in the Self, being freed from all material contamination, the yogi achieves the highest perfectional stage of happiness in touch with the Supreme Consciousness.” (VI, 28)

YOGA (a scientific method for GOD (SELF) realization) is the process by which we purify our consciousness, stop further pollution, and arrive at the state of Perfection, full KNOWLEDGE, full BLISS.

If there’s a God, I want to see Him. It’s pointless to believe in something without proof, and Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and meditation are methods where you can actually obtain GOD perception. You can actually see God, and hear Him, play with Him. It might sound crazy, but He is actually there, actually with you.

There are many yogic Paths—Raja, Jnana, Hatha, Kriya, Karma, Bhakti—which are all acclaimed

by the MASTERS of each method.

SWAMI BHAKTI-VEDANTA is, as his title says, a BHAKTI Yogi following the path of DEVOTION. By serving GOD through each thought, word and DEED, and by chanting HIS Holy Names, the devotee quickly develops God-consciousness. By chanting

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare
one inevitably arrives at KṚṢṆA Consciousness. (The proof of the pudding is in the eating!)

I request that you take advantage of this book, KṚṢṆA, and enter into its understanding. I also request that you make an appointment to meet your God now, through the self-liberating process of YOGA (UNION) and GIVE PEACE A CHANCE.

[hand written:]
All you need is Love
(Krishna) Hari Bol.
George Harrison 31/3/70

Apple Corps Ltd 3 Savile Row
London W1 Gerrard 2771/3993
Telex Apcore London

• • •

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in his Preface:

My grateful acknowledgement is due to Śrīmān George Harrison, now chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, for his liberal contribution of \$19,000 to meet the entire cost of printing this volume. May Kṛṣṇa bestow upon this nice boy further advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

HARE KṚṢṂA, HARE KṚṢṂA, KṚṢṂA KṚṢṂA, 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.

Śrīla Prabhupāda addresses
disciples, life members, and
supporters on his arrival in
Durban in 1975.

FROM OSMOSIS TO PERFECTION

The Importance of Sādhu-Saṅga

*Devotion to Kṛṣṇa begins with the association of
advanced devotees, an essential ingredient of bhakti
that nourishes one's progress to perfection.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

“When the material life of a wandering soul has ceased, O Acyuta [Kṛṣṇa], he may attain the association of Your devotees. And when he associates with them, there awakens in him devotion unto You, who are the goal of the devotees and the Lord of all causes and their effects.”
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.51.53)

IN THE seventeenth-century text *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 22.83), Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the author, highlights the importance of associating with mature Vaiṣṇavas (sādhu-saṅga):

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya
'sādhu-saṅga'*

*kṛṣṇa-prema janme, teṅho punaḥ
mukhya aṅga*

“The root cause of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is association with advanced devotees. Even when one's dormant love for Kṛṣṇa awakens, association with devotees is still most essential.” High praise, indeed. Association with advanced devotees is here glorified as the *janma-mūla* – the root cause – of loving devotion, and such association is considered so potent, so crucial, that even those who have achieved perfection on the path find it to be of great value.

Devotion As Osmosis

Sometimes the fruits of this association seem automatic, like osmosis. Indeed, just as we adopt bad qualities from unsavory association without even trying, so too can we benefit from merely being near advanced Vaiṣṇavas. As Satsvarūpa Dāsa Gosvāmī writes in his book *Obstacles on the Path of Devotional Service*, “Because devotees live in the world, they sometimes feel influenced by it. This happens by a process of osmosis, whereby one gradually, and often unconsciously, assimilates his environment.

“In order to protect the devotees from being absorbed into the ‘pop’

[popular] consciousness of mundane society,” continues Satsvarūpa Mahārāja, “Śrīla Prabhupāda created a subculture. Included in the charter of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, as written by Śrīla Prabhupāda, are several references to a society of devotees.” This society (ISKCON) was meant to not only reverse the osmosis of imbibing bad qualities from people without God consciousness, but to establish positive osmosis by associating with people who keep God in the center of their lives.

The osmosis analogy has merit, but the analogy falls short if we consider the scientific definition of osmosis. Osmosis occurs when water molecules move across a semi-

figurative use of the word, in which one imbibes knowledge or other qualities merely by being present. Osmosis, in this sense, is the ability to naturally absorb something without extraneous endeavor.

In *Bhakti-sandarbha* (Anuccheda 179) Vaiṣṇava theologian Jīva Gosvāmī, a contemporary of Kṛṣṇadāśa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, writes about the effect of proximity to a great devotee. He says that spiritual advancement begins from “the moment one attains such association,” without any other effort, and he quotes the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.10.41): “When one is face to face with a *sādhu*, a devotee, who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead,

when the interior of the *sādhu* deeply interacts with the interior of the recipient. This generally occurs via the transmission of sound, which is why the chanting of the holy name and receiving spiritual instruction are at the heart of true *sādhu-saṅga*. In the end, *sādhu-saṅga* is when two hearts unite for a higher spiritual purpose.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī notes three ways to facilitate such transcendental harmony. One should search out devotees who are of the same mindset as oneself (*sajātīya*), more advanced than oneself (*āśaya*), and affectionately predisposed to oneself (*snigdha*). (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.228: *sa-jātīyāśaya-snigdha śrī-bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgo*)

That being said, the mere presence of a holy person creates a revolution in consciousness, enabling one to quickly go beyond simple proximity. According to Jīva Gosvāmī (*Bhakti-sandarbha*, Anuccheda 11), association with devotees leads to a taste for hearing

transcendental topics and affords an opportunity to serve them (and thus Kṛṣṇa). Śrī Jīva again quotes the *Bhāgavatam* (1.2.16) to augment his view: “O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa].” Jīva then goes on to explain the progression from basic faith to love of God.

Sādhu-Saṅga: Forerunner And Sustainer of Devotion

The standard progression on the path of *bhakti* – from simple faith to profound spiritual love, in nine steps – is found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 23.14–15), quoting the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15–16):

In the beginning there must be faith [*śraddhā*], which leads to the association of pure devotees

[*sādhu-saṅga*]. Thereafter, one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles of devotional service under his orders [*bhajana-kriyā*]. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits [*anartha-nivṛttiḥ*] and becomes firmly fixed [*niṣṭhā*] in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thereafter, one develops taste [*ruçī*] and attachment for the Lord [*āsakti*]. This is the way of *sādhana-bhakti*, the execution of devotional service according to standard regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify [*bhāva*], and finally there is an awakening of love [*prema*]. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

What is often left unsaid is that *sādhu-saṅga* both anticipates and facilitates the entire process of spiritual advancement, harkening to the “root cause” verse cited at the beginning of this essay. What this means is that *sādhu-saṅga* is actually the first catalyst of devotional life, even before *śraddhā*. Jīva Gosvāmī mentions this in his commentary on Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.4.15–16: “In the beginning, at first there is *sādhu-saṅga*, through which one hears *śāstra* and gets faith in its meaning. Then, after the first *sādhu-saṅga*, one gets the second, in which one gets basic support [instruction] in the teachings of *bhajana* [worship].” He specifically writes, *prathamānantaram dvitīyaḥ sādhu-saṅga*: “After the first *sādhu-saṅga*, there is a second *sādhu-saṅga*.” This rings true with our experience. Someone receives a book about Kṛṣṇa, or meets a devotee, or hears a *kīrtana* – all forms of association – and then faith arises as a result.

Another relevant passage appears in Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s commentary to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.21, in which he discusses fourteen steps rather than the standard nine: “The fourteen steps are as follows: mercy of devotees, service to devotees, faith, surrender to guru, desire to worship (or hear), devo-

tion, clearance of unwanted bad habits, steadiness, faith, attachment, the dawning of love, love proper, seeing the Lord as a result, and experiencing His sweetness.” Here, again, the progression of *bhakti* does not begin with faith but with two preliminary steps: *satām-kṛpā*, or the mercy of devotees, and *mahat-sevā*, or rendering service to them – both lead to *śraddhā*, which in turn brings the process of *bhakti* to life for sincere practitioners.

These early forms of *sādhu-saṅga* are considered acts of “unknowing spiritual activity” (*ajñāta-sukṛti*). They give rise to transcendental faith (*paramārthika-śraddhā*), which is the first stage mentioned above. Therefore, as stated, contact with devotees (*sādhu-saṅga*) precedes the first stage of *bhakti*, and so one may thus wonder why Rūpa Gosvāmī’s standard list begins with faith. The answer: earlier forms of *sādhu-saṅga* are devoid of volition; the conscious pursuit of devotional life truly begins only when we have the requisite faith.

The Glories of Sādhu-Saṅga

On the path of *bhakti* there are many favorable activities or preferred

courses of action meant to help practitioners reach the goal. Some of these are considered *mukhya-vidhis*, or primary rules, while most are maidservants of those rules, assisting devotees along the way. Traditionally, the most important of these are referred to as *pañcāṅga-bhakti*, the five limbs of devotion, described by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.128):

sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana

“One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, reside at Mathurā, and worship the deity with faith and veneration.”

The next verse (*Madhya* 22.129) tells us that these five limbs of devotional service are the best of all. Even a slight performance of these five awakens love for Kṛṣṇa. It may be noted that the first of these is *sādhu-saṅga*.

Still, *nāma-kīrtana*, or the chanting of God’s names, is described as the primary practice (*vidhi*) for

The mere presence of a holy person creates a revolution in consciousness, enabling one to quickly go beyond simple proximity.

permeable membrane from an area of high concentration to one of low concentration until both solutions have the same concentration of water. So, if we compare *sādhu-saṅga* to osmosis, the *sādhus* (advanced devotees) end up having less devotion and fewer good qualities after *saṅga* (giving their association to others). But in fact it is just the opposite: by sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness one enhances one’s own love for God.

Other analogies from science might be more appropriate. Induced magnetism, for example, occurs when a magnetic field from one agent permanently magnetizes a piece of nearby metal without the original agent losing its magnetic properties. Like the *sādhu*, it extends its qualities without diminishing itself in any way.

Nonetheless, osmosis is still an apt analogy for *sādhu-saṅga* if we think in terms of the more common,

one will no longer be subject to material bondage.”

Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in this regard, “The quartz crystal assumes the color of any object in its proximity, regardless of the hue of that object.” (From his essay, “A Deliberation on the Methodology of Sādhu-saṅga”) “Fire is always fire,” concurs Śrīla Prabhupāda, “and thus if someone touches the fire, knowingly or unknowingly, the fire will act in its own way without discrimination.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.36, Purport)

True *saṅga*, the tradition teaches, is *sa-aṅga* – “to become a part of the other person, attached as if a limb (*aṅga*) on the body.” The word *saṅga* derives from the root *sañj*, which means “adhesion, dedication, or devotion.” In the ultimate analysis, then, *saṅga* goes beyond just seeing or being in the presence of someone. It refers to *intimate* exchange, which, in the current context, takes place

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Vaiṣṇavas, while the other four exist to support it. Practically speaking, the primary purpose of *sādhu-saṅga* is to hear how the *sādhu* sings the sacred names of Kṛṣṇa with a loving heart, how he or she feelingly, knowledgeably, engages in *nāma-kīrtana*. This is what brings the practitioner to the stage of pure love. In fact, *nāma-kīrtana* should be considered an implicit part of engaging in *sādhu-saṅga*. This is among the central components that make the holy person's association so important.

The scriptures are replete with numerous verses supporting the value of devotional association, usually declaring that this association is significant because the *sādhu* is focused on God. The present article was prompted by one such verse (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.10.18), along with its purport by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

TRANSLATION: Sainly persons [*sādhus*] think of Kṛṣṇa twenty-

four hours a day. They have no other interest. Why should people neglect the association of such exalted spiritual personalities and try to associate with materialists, taking shelter of nondevotees, most of whom are proud and rich?

PURPORT: A *sādhu* is one who is engaged in devotional service to the Lord without deviation (*bhajate mām ananya-bhāk*).

*titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-satravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṅāḥ*

“The symptoms of a *sādhu* are that he is tolerant, merciful, and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.” (*Bhāg.* 3.25.21) A *sādhu* is *suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām*, the friend of everyone. Why then should the rich, instead of associating

with *sādhus*, waste their valuable time in association with other rich men who are averse to spiritual life? Both the poor man and the rich man can take advantage of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and here it is advised that everyone do so. There is no profit in avoiding the association of the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has said:

*sat-saṅga chāḍi' kainu
asate vilāsa
te-kāraṇe lāgiḷa ye
karma-bandha-phāṅsa*

If we give up the association of *sādhus*, saintly persons engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and associate with persons seeking sense gratification and accumulating wealth for this purpose, our life is spoiled. The word *asat* refers to an *avaiṣṇava*, one who is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and *sat* refers to a Vaiṣṇava, Kṛṣṇa's devotee. One should always seek the association of Vaiṣṇavas and not spoil one's life by mixing with *avaiṣṇavas*. . . . Therefore one should not avoid the association of Vaiṣṇavas, which is now available all over the world in the form of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Among other inspirational verses on *sādhu-saṅga* we find a particularly famous one from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.54):

*'sādhu-saṅga' 'sādhu-saṅga' –
sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhu-saṅge, sarva-
siddhi haya*

“The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all [spiritual] perfection.” The term *lava-mātra* informs us that all perfection can be gained by associating with a devotee even if it's just for “an eleventh of a second.” So highly regarded is proximity to a pure soul, however briefly it may occur.

Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals an ultimate secret of *bhakti* to His great devotee

Uddhava in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.1–2):

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Uddhava, by associating with My pure devotees one can destroy one's attachment for all objects of material sense gratification. Such purifying association brings Me under the control of My devotee. One may perform the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system, engage in philosophical analysis of the elements of material nature, practice nonviolence and other ordinary principles of piety, chant the *Vedas*, perform penances, take to the renounced order of life, execute sacrificial performances and dig wells, plant trees and perform other public welfare activities, give in charity, carry out severe vows, worship the demigods, chant confidential mantras, visit holy places, or accept major and minor disciplinary injunctions, but even by performing such activities one does not bring Me under his control.

Only associating with pure devotees, the Lord tells Uddhava, can relieve one from the pangs of material existence – and also make Kṛṣṇa feel He is indebted to such a person.

Elsewhere in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.68), Lord Viṣṇu instructs Durvāsā Muni: “*Sādhus* are My heart and I alone am their heart. They do not know anyone other than Me, and I do not know anyone other than them.” The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.51) states: “Without the mercy of a great devotee, none of one's actions are to be considered devotion. For such a person, devotion for Kṛṣṇa remains far away, and one's worldly conditioning is not destroyed.” And in *Śrī Prema-vivarta* (6.13), Caitanya Mahāprabhu says: “To chant the name of Kṛṣṇa in the association of *sādhus* – this is all I desire. There is no other way to rise beyond material existence.”

Only *sādhu-saṅga* can remove all attachments and bring Kṛṣṇa under its control. Therefore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.10.7) says, “After

all, association with saintly devotees is man's highest achievement.”

Drawing Out Our Natural Love

Sādhu-saṅga does not create something artificial or insert into our hearts something extraneous to the soul. Rather, it brings out our inherent love of God, which was there all along, covered by conditioning. As the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.107) tells us:

*nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhyā'
kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-suddha-citte karaye
udaya*

“Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of living

sincere at heart to realize their spiritual potential as a devotee.

We conclude with the wisdom of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

When one comes in contact with a Vaiṣṇava, whose heart has been melted by *hari-bhakti-rasa*, it is then that he loves to imbibe the sweet principle of *bhakti*, devotion, by following his holy footsteps. By constant study of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* he slowly washes off his *māyik* condition, and in the end obtaining his true nature, he enjoys the sweetest unalloyed *rasa*, which is the ultimate status of the soul. . . . *Sat-saṅga*, or the company of spiritual people, is the only means to obtain the ultimate object of man. *Bhakti* is a principle which comes from soul

Like the copper wire that carries electricity, devotees are a conduit for the delivery of selfless, loving devotion.

entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, the living entity naturally awakens.” Śrīla Prabhupāda explains (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.32, Purport): “As fire is kindled from wood by another fire, the divine consciousness of man can similarly be kindled by another divine grace. His Divine Grace the spiritual master can kindle the spiritual fire from the woodlike living entity by imparting proper spiritual messages injected through the receptive ear.” Here Prabhupāda draws on a traditional example: Wood, we learn from Purāṇic texts, includes fire in the sense that it has the potential to burn. Still, a piece of wood, even if dry and highly inflammable, will remain only wood if it doesn't come in contact with fire. Similarly, each living soul requires contact with someone who is “in the fire” of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and this contact enables the

to soul, and like electricity or magnetism in gross matter, it conducts itself from one congenial soul to another.” (*Shree Chaitanya Mahāprabhu His Life and Precepts*, 6th point)

Thus, *sādhu-saṅga* is the forerunner and sustainer of loving devotion. As Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura suggests, *bhakti* might effectively be compared to an electric current. The devotees (*sādhus*) are therefore like the copper wire that carries electricity – they are a conduit for the delivery of selfless, loving devotion. Having received it themselves, the devotees desire only to give it to others. 🌟

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Vṛtrāsura

The Godly Demon

Lessons from the history of a fierce being created to challenge Indra, the ruler of the heavenly planets.

by Akshay Gupta

THE VEDIC literature contains many histories meant to enlighten us with transcendental knowledge and teach us valuable lessons so that we can progress on the spiritual path. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in particular is filled with such stories.

One deals with a demon named Vṛtrāsura. Despite playing the

role of a demon, Vṛtrāsura was actually a very elevated *bhakti-yogi*. He was created in a sacrificial fire to fight Indra, the king of heaven. Vṛtrāsura was so powerful that he struck fear everywhere and was able to fight an army of demigods by himself. What makes Vṛtrāsura so glorious, however, is not his immense

Struck by Vṛtrāsura with Indra's own club, Airāvata falls with Indra on his back.

strength as a fighter, but rather his level of spiritual elevation.

During their battle, Vṛtrāsura strikes Indra with an iron mace and disarms him, and Indra loses the courage to fight. Vṛtrāsura then begins a philosophical discourse with Indra and encourages him to keep fighting. During their discussion, Vṛtrāsura reveals his status as an advanced *bhakti-yogi*:

Just as a person not inclined to die must nonetheless give up his longevity, opulence, fame, and everything else at the time of death, so, at the appointed time of victory, one can gain all these when the Supreme Lord awards them by His mercy. Since everything is

things serves as an impetus for one to search for higher meaning and eternal life. The soul is eternal, and thus it needs greater fulfillment than basic bodily pleasures.

Admitting Our Dependence

Vṛtrāsura also recognizes that everything depends on the will of God. Acknowledging one's dependence on God is a crucial element of *bhakti-yoga*. For some, the idea of being dependent on God is frightening. After all, being dependent on others means you are at their mercy and they are free to do whatever they want with you. God, however, is very kind and merciful to

us, and He will ensure that those who surrender to Him face no difficulties. Kṛṣṇa, or God, says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.22),

*ananyāś cintayanto mām
ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṃ nityābhīyuktānām
yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham*

“But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form – to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.” Thus Kṛṣṇa encourages us to depend on Him, worship Him, and meditate on Him. When we rely on our own strength or abilities, we are held back by our shortcomings. When we depend on God, however, He enables us to overcome any obstacles we may face in our life and to retain whatever we have.

Moreover, Kṛṣṇa assures us that He is our friend. He states,

*samo 'haṃ sarva-bhūteṣu
na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ
ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā
mayi te teṣu cāpy aham*

“I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.” (*Gītā* 9.29) When we depend on God and worship Him, He becomes our friend and always looks after us. Therefore, Vṛtrāsura also says that when the time comes for victory, God can bestow upon us longevity, fame, and opulence.

Moreover, Vṛtrāsura also understands the need to tolerate life's onslaughts with equanimity. As he mentions, we should be equally poised in happiness and distress, since they are both temporary conditions ultimately orchestrated by God. As Kṛṣṇa states in the *Gītā* (2.14–15),

*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās
tāṃs titikṣasva bhārata*

*yaṃ hi na vyathayanty ete
puruṣaṃ puruṣarābha
sama-duḥkha-sukhaṃ dhīraṃ
so 'mr̥tatvāya kalpate*

“O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed. O best among men [Arjuna], the person who is not disturbed by happiness and distress and is steady in both is certainly eligible for liberation.” Since happiness and distress come and go like winter and summer, we should respond to them with equanimity. Such composure enables us to carry out our duties and break free from material bondage.

Controlled by the Modes

Vṛtrāsura also mentions the three modes of nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance. As he says, these are not the qualities of the soul, but of material nature. The modes are elaborately described in the fourteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Essentially, these three modes condition us to act in certain ways.

The mode of goodness is illuminating and frees one from sinful actions. Someone in the mode of goodness experiences a sense of happiness and knowledge. An example might be a scientist or a poet, someone concerned with acquiring knowledge. Unfortunately, the problem with the mode of goodness is that one can get attached to the sense of happiness and become proud, thinking oneself more advanced in knowledge than others.

Unlimited desires and longings characterize the mode of passion. Someone in this mode always hankers for more and more material wealth and opulence. A person heavily influenced by the mode of passion won't be satisfied with a nice house and two cars, but will want a bigger house and a nicer car. If he gets them, he still won't be satisfied and will want an even bigger house and an even nicer car. Essentially, one in the mode of passion becomes greedy. An example would be an overzealous businessman working intense hours just to accumulate more and more wealth, far beyond what he requires for his maintenance.

Lastly, the mode of ignorance is characterized by madness, laziness, and sleep. A prime example is the drunkard.

As Vṛtrāsura mentions, we can avoid being bound by these qualities. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, “The living being, the pure soul, has nothing to do with these modes. In the midst of the hurricane of the material world, everything changes very quickly, but if one remains silent and simply observes the actions and reactions of the hurricane, he is un-

derstood to be liberated.” (*Bhāg.* 6.12.15) One who understands that the modes of nature are acting and the self does nothing directly is considered liberated. In such a liberated state, one can remain jubilant even in the midst of difficulty, seeing everything as God's mercy.

The Back Story

One might question how Vṛtrāsura, despite being a demon, was able to attain the status of an elevated *bhakti-yogi*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that Vṛtrāsura was a king named Citraketu in his previous life.

After his infant son died, King Citraketu, in extreme despair, was enlightened with spiritual knowledge by the two sages Nārada and Aṅgirā. Citraketu then took to the process of *bhakti-yoga*. Shortly afterwards, he became overwhelmed with spiritual ecstasy and saw God face to face. Awarded the power to travel throughout the universe, he once spoke about Lord Śiva in a way that Pārvatī, Śiva's wife, considered offensive. She cursed Citraketu to become a demon in his next life. But even though born a demon, he did not lose any of his spiritual knowledge or progress. (please turn to page 59)

Understanding the transient nature of things serves as an impetus to search for higher meaning and eternal life.

dependent on the supreme will of the Personality of Godhead, one should be equipoised in fame and defamation, victory and defeat, life and death. In their effects, represented as happiness and distress, one should maintain oneself in equilibrium, without anxiety. One who knows that the three qualities – goodness, passion, and ignorance – are not qualities of the soul but qualities of material nature, and who knows that the pure soul is simply an observer of the actions and reactions of these qualities, should be understood to be a liberated person. He is not bound by these qualities. (*Bhāg.* 6.12.13–15)

Vṛtrāsura has deep insight for a demon. Despite fighting for his life, he speaks on various principles of *bhakti-yoga*. The first is to recognize the fleeting nature of all opulence, fame, relative longevity, and everything else in this world. Understanding the transient nature of such



Indra cuts off Vṛtrāsura's head with his thunderbolt weapon.

The Power Of Intent

Karma is a subtle law of nature that takes into account our mentality at the time we perform an act.

by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

ONE MORNING I was listening to a few devotees discuss a point of philosophy when one of them emphatically said, “The reaction [karma] we receive for our activity depends entirely on the activity and not on our intent while doing it. Regardless of our intent, we’ll get a reaction based on what we do. For example, if a person knowingly kills someone, he receives the same reaction as a person who unintentionally kills.” For evidence, he read from a small book by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

We must understand that our suffering is due to our sinful activity, and sinful activity is due to our ignorance. Sins, or transgressions, are committed by those who do not know what is what. A child, for instance, will naively put his hand in a fire because of ignorance. He is thus burned immediately, for the fire is impartial and does not allow any special consideration for the innocent child. It will simply act as fire. Similarly, we do not know how this material world is functioning, who its controller is, nor how it is controlled, and due to our ignorance we act in foolish ways,

Two men perform the same act – lighting a fire – but their intentions will reap vastly different consequences for themselves and others.



Left: Yamañjī Dāsa. Right: iStock.com | RonTech2000.



but nature is so stringent that she does not allow us to escape the reactions to our actions. Whether we commit an act knowingly or unknowingly, the reactions and consequent sufferings are there. (*Rāja-vidyā: The King of Knowledge*)

In other words, when children put their hands in fire, they get burned as much as the knowing adults.

While others accepted this understanding with thanks, I thought, “Wait a minute. That doesn’t sound right!” I didn’t speak up though, because I didn’t have any scriptural evidence to support my dissension. Later I looked into it.

by killing such aggressors. (*Gītā* 1.36, Purport)

It is possible to kill and incur no sinful reaction for that killing.

Along those same lines, the judge or king who gives a murderer the death sentence is not implicated in the sin of killing a person.

Violence also has its utility, and how to apply violence rests with the person in knowledge. Although the justice of the peace awards capital punishment to a person condemned for murder, the justice of the peace cannot be blamed, because he orders violence to another person according to the codes of justice. In *Manu-*

gious principles involved. The animal sacrificed gets a human life immediately without undergoing the gradual evolutionary process from one form to another, and the *kṣatriyas* killed on the battlefield also attain the heavenly planets, as do the *brāhmaṇas* who attain them by offering sacrifice. (*Gītā* 2.31, Purport)

Overt Activity and Covert Mentality

Karmically, the intention behind an act makes an enormous difference. The person who intentionally kills an innocent victim has sinned and will suffer karmically. But the person who kills an attacker in self-defense has not sinned and receives no karmic reaction. This principle is also recognized in modern-day courts. Someone who killed in self-defense is not held accountable; someone who killed for self-aggrandizement is.

In addition, the more we’re involved in an illegal action, the more we’re implicated by it. “Not only the performer of the theft but also anyone who assists him, instigates the crime, or simply approves of it must also share the reaction in the next life. According to their degree of participation, they each must suffer a proportionate consequence.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.27.55)

Overtly, it may appear that two people are doing the same activity. But the result they achieve from their activity differs according to their intent. “One who is attached to the result of his work is also the enjoyer or sufferer of the result of such actions.” (*Gītā* 2.47, Purport) On the other hand, one who is unattached to the result of his work does not enjoy or suffer the result. That’s why Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna, “You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the

results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty.” (*Gītā* 2.47)

In Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words,

What is the difference between *bhakti* and karma? Karma means you do something and whatever you do there is result. So you take the result also. Suppose you do some business. So the result is one million dollars profit. So you take it. And the result is one million dollars loss. You take it. This is karma. You act on your own account and you take the result. Is it clear? This is called karma. But our activity is for Kṛṣṇa. So we act. If there is profit it is Kṛṣṇa’s. If there is loss it is Kṛṣṇa’s. We are unaffected. (Interview, March 9, 1968, San Francisco)

In materialism one works for sense gratification and receives the karmic reaction for one’s work. The same work, however, performed for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa is spiritual and free of karma.

Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna to bring Arjuna to the point of acting with transcendental knowledge, for such action is performed with detachment and doesn’t produce adverse reactions. Kṛṣṇa said, “The doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. Armed with yoga, O Arjuna, stand and fight.” (*Gītā* 4.42) Fighting with knowledge would free Arjuna from the sinful reactions he feared. But if Arjuna chose to withdraw from the battle to avoid fighting, he would receive sinful reactions for not doing his duty.

What’s more, even if we can’t overtly do what’s right, if we have faith in God and our consciousness is properly situated, we will be released from the reactions of our work. “An ordinary man with firm faith in the eternal injunctions of the Lord, even though unable to execute such orders, becomes liberated from the bondage of the law of karma.” (*Gītā* 3.31, Purport)

The distinction between spiritual

and material can be simply the knowledge with which an act is performed: “. . . without attainment of knowledge, sacrifices remain on the material platform and bestow no spiritual benefit.” (*Gītā* 4.33, Purport)

The Transcendental Platform

When it comes to activities like chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, intent takes a different flavor.

At the moment of his death, Ajāmīla, who had committed serious crimes throughout his adult life, called for his son Nārāyaṇa. Because Nārāyaṇa is a name for Kṛṣṇa, Ajāmīla benefited by saying that name. “Although calling for his son, he was unknowingly chanting the name of Nārāyaṇa, and the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is so transcendently powerful that his chanting was being counted and recorded.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.26, Purport)

On the spiritual platform, our intent may not be what it should be, but out of His unlimited kindness, Kṛṣṇa overlooks that: “One who chants the holy name of the Lord is immediately freed from the reactions of unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly [to indicate something else], jokingly, for musical

entertainment, or even neglectfully. This is accepted by all the learned scholars of the scriptures.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.14)

The *Bhāgavatam* does not waver on this point: “If a person unaware of the effective potency of a certain medicine takes that medicine or is forced to take it, it will act even without his knowledge because its potency does not depend on the patient’s understanding. Similarly, even though one does not know the value of chanting the holy name of the Lord, if one chants knowingly or unknowingly, the chanting will be very effective.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.19)

There is, however, something more to be considered in this regard. Namely, that Kṛṣṇa knows our heart. We cannot cheat Him. If we act immorally and then chant the holy names to nullify the reactions due us, it won’t work. “One who continues to act sinfully and tries to neutralize his sins by chanting the holy name of the Lord is a *nāma-aparādhī*, an offender to the holy name.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2, Supplementary Notes)

Ajāmīla’s chanting was inoffensive because he didn’t chant the name of Nārāyaṇa to counteract his sins. Ajāmīla did not know that he

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “If a person comes with an intent to kill, one can immediately take action and kill in self-defense.”

While it’s true that as long as we have a material body it will react in a predictable way with the material elements – fire will burn us whether or not we are aware that fire burns – it’s not true that motivation is irrelevant to karma (the reaction we receive for our actions). Karma is a subtle law of nature that takes into account our mentality at the time we perform an act. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “If a person comes with an intent to kill, one can immediately take action and kill in self-defense.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.9.17, Purport)

More explicitly, he writes,

According to Vedic injunctions there are six kinds of aggressors: (1) a poison giver, (2) one who sets fire to the house, (3) one who attacks with deadly weapons, (4) one who plunders riches, (5) one who occupies another’s land, and (6) one who kidnaps a wife. Such aggressors are at once to be killed, and no sin is incurred

sāṁhitā, the lawbook for mankind, it is supported that a murderer should be condemned to death so that in his next life he will not have to suffer for the great sin he has committed. Therefore, the king’s punishment of hanging a murderer is actually beneficial. (*Gītā* 2.21, Purport)

Similarly, soldiers killing their enemies and *brāhmaṇas* sacrificing animals are also not implicated in sin:

In the religious law books it is stated: *āhaveṣu mitho ’nyonyam . . .* “In the battlefield, a king or *kṣatriya*, while fighting another king envious of him, is eligible for achieving the heavenly planets after death, as the *brāhmaṇas* also attain the heavenly planets by sacrificing animals in the sacrificial fire.” Therefore, killing on the battlefield on religious principles and killing animals in the sacrificial fire are not at all considered to be acts of violence, because everyone is benefited by the reli-



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was addicted to sinful actions, nor did he know that his chanting the name of Nārāyaṇa was neutralizing them. Thus, his chanting the holy name of Nārāyaṇa while calling his son was innocent and potent.

Chanting while scheming to benefit ourselves is in a different category. “Nondevotees may make a show of religion, but it is not very effective because although they ostentatiously attend a temple or church, they are thinking of something else. Such persons are neglecting their religious duty and are punishable by Yamarāja.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.26, Purport) Such a mentality is completely different from the mentality of a devotee who unwillingly or accidentally commits

Śrīla Prabhupāda summarizes this point:

The chanting of the holy name is so auspicious that it can free everyone from the reactions of sinful activities. One should not conclude that one may continue to sin with the intention of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa to neutralize the reactions. Rather, one should be very careful to be free from all sins and never think of counteracting sinful activities by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, for this is another offense. If by chance a devotee accidentally performs some sinful activity, the Lord will excuse him, but one should not intentionally perform sinful acts. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.31, Purport)

plete love and affection. (Śrīla Prabhupāda Letter, May 25, 1969)

On the other hand, spiritually we may be doing all the proper activities externally, but if our heart is not in the right place, that is, if we’re materially motivated, we will not attain our spiritual goal. This principle is illustrated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. When the son of Tapana Mīśra, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭācārya, left his home in Varanasi to go to Jagannātha Puri to meet Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he met Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa, who was scripturally learned and an advanced devotee and worshiper of Lord Rāmacandra. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes,

Rāmadāsa had renounced everything and was going to see Lord Jagannātha. While traveling, he chanted the holy name of Lord Rāma twenty-four hours a day. When he met Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā on the way, he took Raghunātha’s baggage on his head and carried it. Rāmadāsa served Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā in various ways, even massaging his legs. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā felt some hesitation in accepting all this service.

“You are a respectable gentleman, a learned scholar and a great devotee,” Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā said. “Please do not try to serve me. Just come with me in a happy mood.”

Rāmadāsa replied, “I am a *sūdra*, a fallen soul. To serve a *brāhmaṇa* is my duty and religious principle. Therefore please do not be hesitant. I am your servant, and when I serve you my heart becomes jubilant.”

Thus Rāmadāsa carried the baggage of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā and served him sincerely. He constantly chanted the holy name of Lord Rāmacandra day and night. Traveling in this way, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā soon arrived at Jagannātha Purī. There he met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with great delight and fell at His lotus feet. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā fell straight as a rod at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Then the Lord embraced him, knowing well who he

was. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 13.93–101)

Śrī Caitanya accepted Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā and had a close relationship with him. But “When Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Lord did not show him any special mercy, although this was their first meeting. Within his heart, Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa was an impersonalist who desired to merge into the existence of the Lord, and he was very proud of his learning. Since Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the omniscient Supreme Personality of Godhead, He can understand the heart of everyone, and thus He knew all these things.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya* 13.109–110)

Rāmadāsa’s intent was not to please the Lord and His devotees by serving them, but to become one in identity with the Lord. Therefore the result he received was completely different from the result Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī received.

Materially and spiritually, intent matters. 🙏

Viśākhā Devī Dāsī has been writing for BTG since 1973. Visit her website at our-spiritual-journey.com.

VRTRĀSURA

(continued from page 53)

The Need to Look Below the Surface

We can learn many lessons from the story of Vṛtrāsura. There’s the old saying “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” From Vṛtrāsura’s story we can learn not to judge a person by his or her external features. Even though Vṛtrāsura was a demon, he was still an exalted *bhakti-yogi* able to propound deep transcendental knowledge even in the midst of a fight for his life. A person born in a low family may be spiritually advanced, and someone born in a respectable family may be spiritually blind.

Another lesson is that spiritual

progress carries on from life to life. Though King Citraketu became the demon Vṛtrāsura in his next life, he carried his spiritual advancement with him. Kṛṣṇa states in the *Gītā* (2.40) that our progress on the path of *bhakti-yoga* is never lost or diminished and even a little progress can save us from the greatest danger, securing for us a greater opportunity for spiritual advancement in our next life.

Lastly, Vṛtrāsura’s story illustrates how anyone is eligible to take up *bhakti-yoga*. It doesn’t matter whether one is born in a demonic family or a saintly one; anyone can practice *bhakti-yoga*. One famous *bhakti-yogi* was Haridāsa Thākura, a close associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Though born in a Muslim family, he was promoted to the status of *nāmācārya*, “the spiritual

teacher of the holy name.” Practitioners of *bhakti-yoga* commonly chant the holy names of God in the *mahā-mantra*, or the great chant for deliverance: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This mantra purifies the heart and removes distress from the chanter’s life. In fact, one can achieve perfection in God realization simply by chanting this mantra. The perfectly God-realized soul feels great ecstasy when chanting the *mahā-mantra*. Moreover, by becoming fully God-realized, one is eligible to enter the spiritual world and thereby attain freedom from all material miseries. 🙏

Akshay Gupta is a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A devotee may unwillingly or accidentally commit sinful acts because of former habits. Such a devotee is excused.

sinful acts because of former habits. Such a devotee is excused.

In other words, Ajāmila’s chanting was effective because he was not chanting to neutralize the criminal activities he had committed. If that had been his intent, his chanting the same name, Nārāyaṇa, would not have brought the result it did.

Ajāmila’s chanting was inoffensive because he did not chant the name of Nārāyaṇa with the purpose of counteracting his sins. He did not know that he was addicted to sinful actions, nor did he know that his chanting of the name of Nārāyaṇa was neutralizing them. Thus he did not commit a *nāma-aparādha*, and his repeated chanting of the holy name of Nārāyaṇa while calling his son may be called pure chanting. Because of this pure chanting, Ajāmila unconsciously accumulated the results of *bhakti*. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2, Supplementary Note)

Kṛṣṇa’s Kindness

Kṛṣṇa was watching Ajāmila and inspired Ajāmila to name his son Nārāyaṇa and, out of affection for his son, to call out “Nārāyaṇa” repeatedly during his son’s childhood and especially when he was dying. The extent of Kṛṣṇa’s kindness to Ajāmila and to each one of us is beyond our comprehension.

But in everything we do, devotion and sincerity are the real things. There is a word in Sanskrit: *bhāva-grāhī-janārdana*. This means the Lord accepts service in devotional emotion. If we are sincere in offering something to the Lord in devotional love, He will accept it. The procedure may not be very right, but the desire being sincere, He accepts our offering. This is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, that He accepts foodstuffs from devotees because they are offered to Him in com-

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“FRUITIVE ACTIVITY”

Telling Terminology in The Science of Self-Realization

*Śrīla Prabhupāda artfully enlists a rare
English word for our spiritual benefit.*

by Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī

IN HIS TRANSLATIONS of Vedic scripture, Śrīla Prabhupāda put the old, nearly retired word *fruitive* back to work, with new purpose. “Fruitive activity” is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s useful way to translate the Sanskrit word *karma*. While he more commonly translates *karma* simply as “action,” his use of “fruitive activity” serves to highlight karma as action not dedicated to the service of the Lord, resulting in bondage under the material energy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda readily employed “fruitive.” For example, from his *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*: “Bound by a network of fruitive activity,” “men of small knowledge engage in fruitive activity,” “devotees become free from the hard-knotted desires for fruitive activity.” And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we hear the sages of Naimisharanya disclose their predicament: “We have just begun the performance of this fruitive activity, a sacrificial fire, without certainty of its result. . . .”

Fruitive does not appear in many dictionaries (and it’s not in my Microsoft Word spell check). Dictionary.com (based on the Random House Diction-

ary) defines it thus: 1. adj., able to produce fruit or fruition; fruitful. 2. able to enjoy or produce enjoyment. 1625-35 < Medieval Latin: *fruitivus*.

While the old *fruitive* means to be able to produce fruit or enjoy, *fruitive* as adapted in the vocabulary of the science of *bhakti-yoga* is a term of crucial distinction. To what end should a thing be fruitful? Enjoyment in ignorance of one’s real self-interest is not actual enjoyment. It may begin in pleasure, but invariably it ends in some concomitant suffering. Fruitive enjoyment conditions us to the temporary body, while self-realization involves offering all the fruits of our activities to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is thus the natural pleasurable activity of the soul.

As Kṛṣṇa teaches in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, actions without at least some service to God are material karma and keep us bound to the continuous cycle of birth and death. Such self-serving actions cannot yield the pure fruit of love of God. Only pure, sincere activity can. Though our conditioned nature impels us to stay in this world committing one karmic action after another, creating for



ourselves an endless succession of material bodies, we shall get instant relief simply by serving Kṛṣṇa, acting for His satisfaction.

To illustrate the condition of the classic materialistic fruitive worker, Śrīla Prabhupāda often used the example of the poor ass, or donkey. Standing in a field next to his mother, the young ass drinks her milk and is then weaned on the grass. Yet to train him, his owner denies him even grass until he surrenders to carrying loads on his back, loads that are wider, higher, and sometimes heavier than his own body. To get grass again, he staggers down the long roads with the huge loads. Mean-

if You think that intelligence is better than fruitive work?" (*Gītā* 3.1)

Arjuna denounces and renounces the impending war as mere fruitive material work. Then Kṛṣṇa chides him in a chivalrous spirit. "You are a great hero, Arjuna. And you can't refrain from doing something, not even for a moment." And: "After all, everyone has to do some work; how else will you maintain yourself?"

But Arjuna wants out. He wants his ill-intentioned but beloved friends and relatives, hell-bent on violence, to remain unscathed by him. This is his fruitive desire. He is full of his own desire, apart from Kṛṣṇa's desire. The very thing he

acting on behalf of the supreme cause, the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, will relieve Arjuna from his suffering. Not doing so will bind and condition him to his human worldly karma.

Kṛṣṇa Karma

Sacrificing the fruitive tendency to act for our own gratification is the beginning of pleasing the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. It is usually at the urging of devotees who want to help us, who understand the many benefits in store for us. Devotees well know there is great relief from suffering when we take up devotional service. Our attachment for illusory material things is like a thick painful knot that grips our heart, but when we do some selfless act of love for God that knot is pierced. We begin to see ourselves as masters of our own fate instead of puppets of the material energy. We begin to develop gratitude and love for the spiritual master and the Lord.

One day, to work in pure devotion for Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas becomes our most cherished treasure.

But to begin we must become clear about this science of the sacrifice of actions. Three terms in the *Bhagavad-gītā* describe types of action: karma, *vikarma*, and *akarma*. Karma is activity prescribed (traditionally, by the *Vedas* or one's guru) according to one's psychophysical nature. *Vikarma* is forbidden action; it is considered sinful and results in suffering. *Akarma* (or *naiṣkarma*) is action that produces no karmic reaction, good or bad. *Akarma* is thus ideal activity. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

No work should be done by any man except in relationship to Kṛṣṇa. This is called *kṛṣṇa-karma*. One may be engaged in various activities, but one should not be attached to the result of his work; the result should be done only for Him. For example, one may be engaged in business, but to transform that activity into Kṛṣṇa con-

sciousness, one has to do business for Kṛṣṇa. If Kṛṣṇa is the proprietor of the business, then Kṛṣṇa should enjoy the profit of the business. If a businessman is in possession of thousands and thousands of dollars, and if he has to offer all this to Kṛṣṇa, he can do it. This is work for Kṛṣṇa. Instead of constructing a big building for his sense gratification, he can construct a nice temple for Kṛṣṇa, and he can install the Deity of Kṛṣṇa and arrange for the Deity's service, as is outlined in the authorized books of devotional service. This is all *kṛṣṇa-karma*. One should not be attached to the result of his work, but the result should be offered to Kṛṣṇa, and one should accept as *prasādam* the remnants of offerings to Kṛṣṇa. If one constructs a very big building for Kṛṣṇa and installs the Deity of Kṛṣṇa, one is not prohibited from living there, but it is understood that the proprietor of the building is Kṛṣṇa. That is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If, however, one is not able to construct a temple for Kṛṣṇa, one can engage himself in cleansing the temple of Kṛṣṇa; that is also *kṛṣṇa-karma*. (*Gītā* 11.55, Purport)

Cleansing the Dirt From the Heart

Until we become pure devotees, to overcome the tendency for fruitive activity remains one of our greatest challenges. This tendency has been with us for many lifetimes. As devotees of Kṛṣṇa, though we may strive for the highest values in life in our service to the Lord, subtle contamination of self-aggrandizement can surface in a variety of ways, all of which are compared to dirt in the heart.

My favorite way to deal with my strong fruitive nature is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Being accustomed to the practice, as soon as I chant on my beads I feel hope, no matter how complicated I have let my life become. I know that Kṛṣṇa doesn't want me to go on fooling myself. Whatever conflicting, fruitive motive has gelled

in my mind, sincere chanting is a direct connection to Him who fights our battles for us, as Kṛṣṇa helped Arjuna. He personally cleanses the heart of His devotee. Beyond this, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is a call to the Lord: "Please engage me in Your devotional service." In this way we pray to do the desired, ideal action, not the fruitive one.

Great devotees throughout the ages have offered beautiful prayers to the Lord to ask Him to remove from their hearts the blinding dust of fruitive activity. The following prayer to Lord Nṛsimhadeva asks Him to overpower the tendency for fruitive karma: "I offer my respectful

obeisances to Lord Nṛsimhadeva, the source of all power. O my Lord who possesses nails and teeth just like thunderbolts, kindly vanquish our demonlike desires for fruitive activity in this material world. Please appear in our hearts and drive away the ignorance so that by Your mercy we may become fearless in the struggle for existence in this material world. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.8) 🙏

Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Grace Vīrabāhu Dāsa, serves the deities at ISKCON Los Angeles, where she joined ISKCON in 1979. She lives with her husband and daughter.

Sacrificing the fruitive tendency to act for our own gratification is the beginning of pleasing the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa.

while, soft grass is growing everywhere, on all sides of him.

Our human plight of working hard for fruitive results is compared to that of the ass. Only a rare person becomes embarrassed by the hard struggle for material existence and wants to find a permanent solution to the problem. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* concludes that, indeed, most people are satisfied to continue to struggle very hard for sense gratification, just like the ass. For those of us dissatisfied with spending our lives in this way, Kṛṣṇa gives specific instructions on how to overcome the tendency for material fruitive activity.

Arjuna's Question

The topic of fruitive activity comes up in many chapters in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, where Arjuna has delayed combat to consult Kṛṣṇa. Here's an example from chapter three: "O Keśava, why do You want me to engage in this ghastly warfare

does not want to do, to defeat them, is motivated by false ego. Personal sentiment has swayed him to want to spare people who already have death written on their foreheads.

Meanwhile Kṛṣṇa's will is for Arjuna to do battle for the sake of what is right. Executing Kṛṣṇa's will is devotional service. For a soldier, violence, which is necessary to protect the weak, is the highest dharma. What a golden opportunity awaits Arjuna!

To simply and clearly state the best answer to Arjuna's query, Lord Kṛṣṇa gives a succinct formula: "Work done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu must be performed; otherwise work causes bondage in this material world. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain free from bondage." (*Gītā* 3.9)

The bondage Kṛṣṇa refers to here is what results when we act on our own behalf, not allowing the higher purpose of Kṛṣṇa to direct us. Only

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The Good Thief

WHEN I FIRST discovered Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I gave a coworker a copy of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s translation and commentary for *Śrī Iṣopaniṣad*. The next day, my coworker let me know that he objected to the idea that God could be immoral.

Here’s what he’d read in Prabhupāda’s commentary on Mantra 15: “When He played the role of a naughty butter thief, all His associates enjoyed celestial bliss by His stealing. The Lord’s fame as a butter thief is not reproachable, for by stealing butter the Lord gave pleasure to His pure devotees.”

Apparently, Prabhupāda’s justification for Kṛṣṇa’s thievery wasn’t enough to satisfy my coworker. But I find it persuasive. Stealing is immoral for us because we make someone else a victim. But no one is hurt when Kṛṣṇa steals butter. Rather, the residents of Vrindavan feel great ecstasy by witnessing Kṛṣṇa’s pranks. Adults often delight in catching a child innocently doing mischief. When that child is God, the joy is boundless.

Besides, God can’t really steal anyway – everything belongs to Him because He created it all.

Kṛṣṇa can’t do anything immoral either, because He’s the Absolute Truth. The word *absolute* is common in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books and teachings, and we followers of his use it, for example, to explain why Kṛṣṇa and His names are identical: It’s because Kṛṣṇa is absolute, we say. An astute listener might ask, “What do you mean by *absolute*?” The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives quite a few meanings of the word, including these, which I find relevant to our purposes: “disengaged or free from imperfection or qualification; from interference, connexion, relation, comparison, dependence.”

The implication of all of this is that because Kṛṣṇa is absolute – as the Vedic literature confirms

– His actions are beyond the scrutiny of our relative perspective. Whatever He does is good by definition; He is the Supreme Good, or goodness itself.

Prabhupāda presented another perspective on this idea when He would quote a proverb that says that the king is above the law. Why is that? Because he makes the laws and can simply exempt himself from following them. In the memorable words of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Kṛṣṇa is “the transcendental autocrat.” He’s beyond judgment.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja raised the question of Kṛṣṇa’s seeming immorality after he’d heard Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s narration of the *rāsa-līlā*, during which Kṛṣṇa dances with other men’s wives.

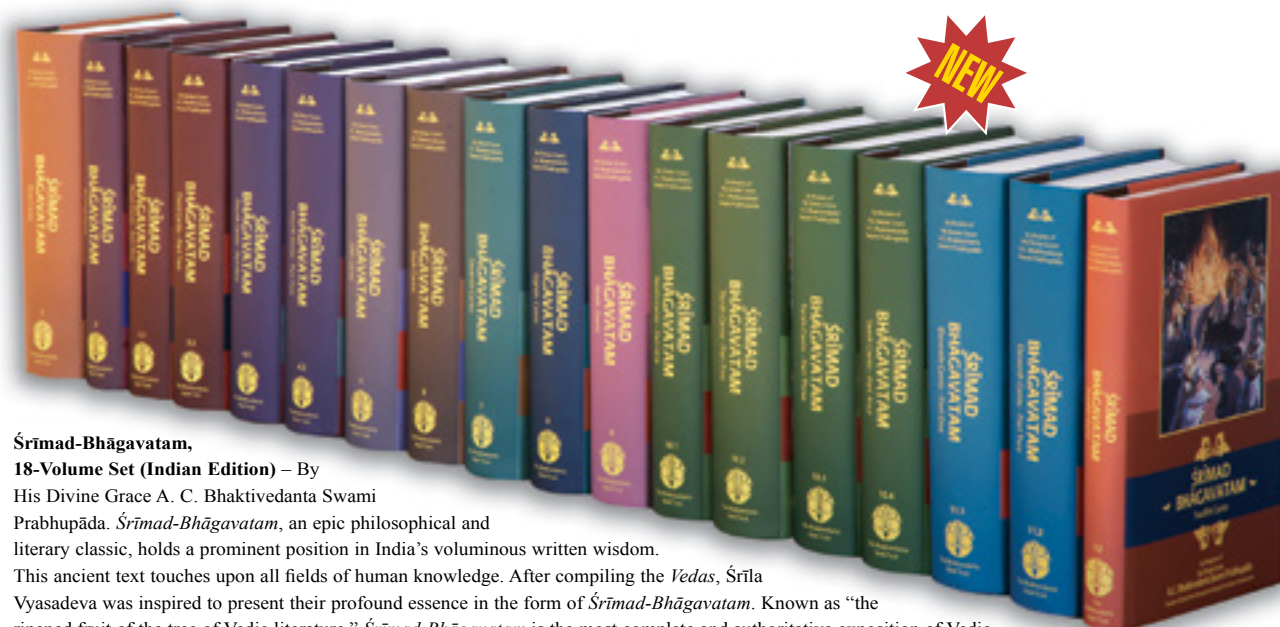
King Parīkṣit asked, “O faithful upholder of vows, please destroy our doubt by explaining to us what purpose the self-satisfied Lord of the Yadus had in mind when He behaved so contemptibly.”

Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied, “The status of powerful controllers is not harmed by any apparently audacious transgression of morality we may see in them, for they are just like fire, which devours everything fed into it and remains unpolluted.” (*Bhāg.* 10.33.28–29)

Kṛṣṇa is not just one of many “powerful controllers”; He’s the source of everyone else’s power, His own being limitless.

As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, one reason He descends to this world is to establish religious principles. So He is certainly concerned about morality. But He also descends to show that He is God. And one way He does that is by doing extraordinary things, including extraordinary acts of “immorality” that attest to His omnipotence.

– Nāgarāja Dāsa



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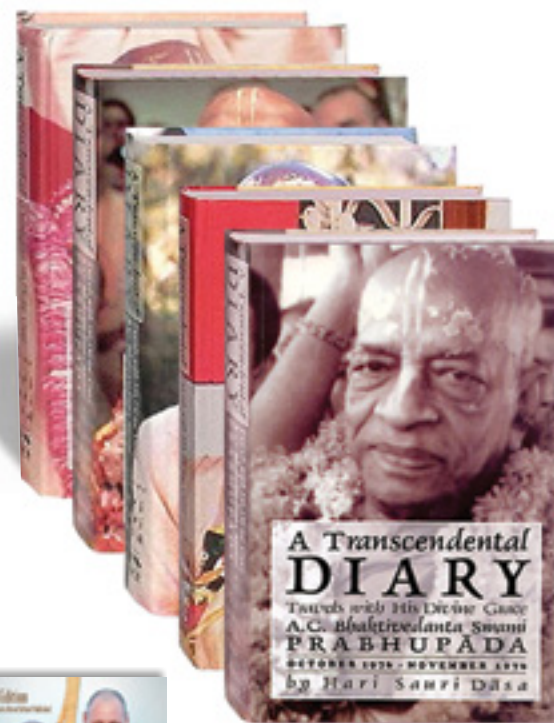
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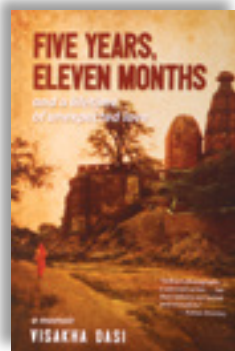


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her skepticism, and over the next several years, she traveled with and photographed Prabhupāda in India, Europe, and the United States.

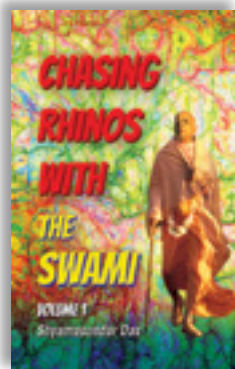
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– Śrīla Prabhupāda

Shyamasundar Das was one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s earliest disciples, helping him shape the Krishna consciousness movement in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco and in London. Then, as his personal secretary, he traveled with Prabhupāda in India, Russia, and all over the globe. *Chasing Rhinos with the Swami* is the intimate account of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s amazing adventures, describing in loving detail the seven years Shyamasundar spent at the side of the perfect person. Nothing was impossible for Śrīla Prabhupāda, and he instilled this idea in the hearts of his first disciples.

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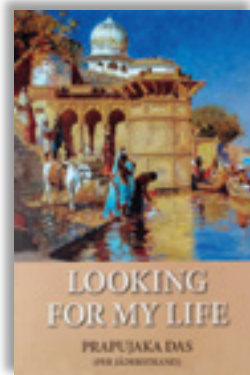
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These books explain the process of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa through two fascinating stories. The first tells of Nārada Muni’s quest to find the greatest recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, and the second relates the spiritual search of Gopa-kumāra, a young Vrindavan cowherd who travels throughout the universe and beyond before finally reuniting with Lord Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana. Written by Sanātana Gosvāmī, a leading disciple of Lord Caitanya, and translated, with commentary based on the commentary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciple Gopīparādhana Dāsa.

Hardbound, dust-jackets, 2,787 total pages, 5¼" x 8¾". **\$54.95** BLBM518



Looking for My Life
By Prapujaka Das (Per Jäderstrand).

A disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Prapujaka Das describes himself as “just an ordinary guy” who joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in 1973 in Sweden. This book is a reflection about his life and his many years of searching for a deeper understanding of reality.

The book is a fascinating piece of history that gives us an insight into what it was like to grow up in a tumultuous political time when radical leftist ideas mixed with influences of the hippie culture. He hopes that his story will inspire other ordinary people to set their goals on achieving the extraordinary.

In his previous book, *A Spiritual Journey*, he wrote about his experiences on the Radha Damodara Traveling Sankirtana Party, 1974–1977.

Softbound, 265 pages, 10 color drawings, 5½" x 8¼". **\$12.95** PJBS217

VEDIC THOUGHTS

When we raise our unmixed faith to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, everything is revealed.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.15.58, Purport

Our senses act like a mother, and the visible objects act like a father. When the mother and father combine – that is, when the senses and their sense objects combine – children, in the form of material knowledge, are produced. These children are all mundane. This is empiricism. With the help of this incomplete knowledge, one cannot possibly search after the complete whole, the prime cause, the cause of all causes.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Uncommon Conversations, Conversation 7

My dear Uddhava, I am personally the ultimate shelter and way of life for saintly liberated persons, and thus if one does not engage in My loving devotional service, which is made possible by associating with My devotees, then for all practical purposes, one possesses no effective means for escaping from material existence.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.11.48

The liberated *jīva* transcends the confines of his gross and subtle material bodies and acquires a spiritual form luminescent with transcendental luster. This is his intrinsic, supramundane identity. He is a perfect being and resides in the spiritual world relishing sublime activities and divine bliss at every moment.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.12.3

My Lord, even when all difference is gone, I am still Yours, though You are not mine. A wave belongs to the ocean, but surely the ocean does not belong to the wave.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya
Prārthanā-ṣaṭpadi 3

Those fortunate pure souls dwelling in the secluded forests of the Himalayas may have their hearts overflowing with unparalleled joy from complete absorption in the Supersoul; but as far as I am concerned, I only desire to see within my heart the frolics of a cowherd boy whose complexion is more brilliant than a flash of blue sapphire, who embodies the love of the *gopīs*, and who sports in Vṛndāvana with nary a care.

Śrīla Īśvara Purī
Quoted in Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Padyāvalī* (35)

The Supreme Lord has no favorite and no dearest friend, nor does He consider anyone undesirable, despicable, or fit to be neglected. All the same, He lovingly reciprocates with His devotees in whatever manner they worship Him, just as the trees of heaven fulfill the desires of whoever approaches them.

Śrī Akrūra
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.38.22

Who can describe the greatness of the mature perfection of love of God, which makes the Supreme Lord act as if an ordinary good friend?

Śrīla Nārada Muni
Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 3.5.75



2017

Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival of India

Remaining Schedule for North America

Photos of 2016 Los Angeles Rathayātrā and Festival of India by Dvārakāraṇī Devī Dāśī



Seattle – September 2–3:

Flavors of India Festival
and Rathayātrā

Boulder – September 6–7:

University of Colorado
Campus Program

Phoenix – September 9–10:

Rathayātrā

Chicago – September 13–14:

Illinois Institute of Technology
Campus Program

Fairfax, VA – September 19:

George Mason University
Campus Program

Philadelphia – September 23:

Rathayātrā

Charlotte, NC – October 1:

Rathayātrā

Morrisville, NC – October 8:

Rathayātrā



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