

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



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Ṣad-bhuja- mūrti LORD CAITANYA'S SIX-ARMED FORM

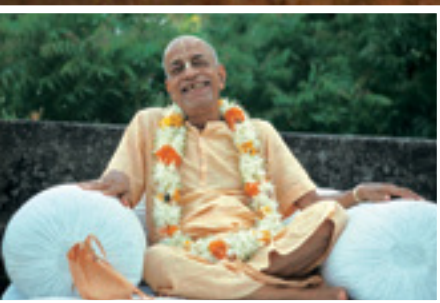
ALSO:

**See Criticism
With a Critical Eye**

**The Right Source
Of Knowledge**

**Lord Buddha: Making
The Faithless Faithful**

**ISKCON's Presence
In Greater Mumbai**



BOOK EXCERPT:

**Śrīla Prabhupāda's
Bombay Office**



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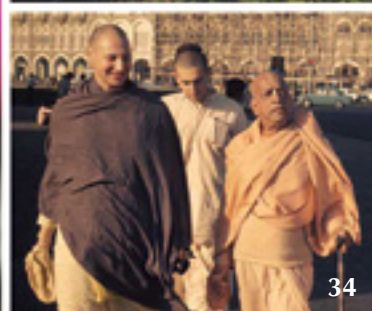
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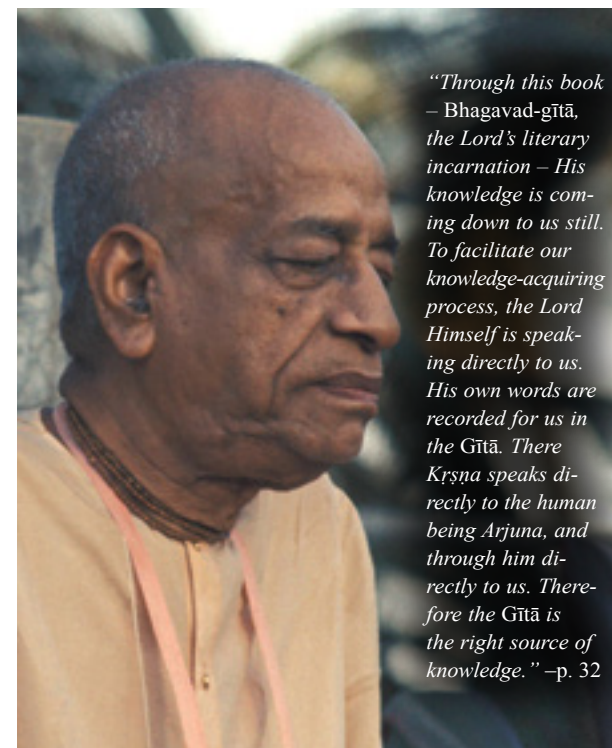
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COVER In Jagannath Puri, Odisha, a priest worships a bas-relief deity of Ṣaḍ-bhuja, the six-armed form revealed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Please see the article beginning on page 16. (Photo courtesy of Rādhē Govinda Dāsa.)



"Through this book – Bhagavad-gītā, the Lord's literary incarnation – His knowledge is coming down to us still. To facilitate our knowledge-acquiring process, the Lord Himself is speaking directly to us. His own words are recorded for us in the Gītā. There Kṛṣṇa speaks directly to the human being Arjuna, and through him directly to us. Therefore the Gītā is the right source of knowledge." –p. 32

WELCOME



This issue coincides with the annual celebration of the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who, 532 years ago in Bengal, introduced the chanting

of the holy names of God as the religion for the current age. The five-thousand-year-old *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* predicted Lord Caitanya's appearance, and books about His life and teachings, drawn from eyewitness accounts by His closest associates, grace us with unparalleled information about God and His extraordinary love for His devotees.

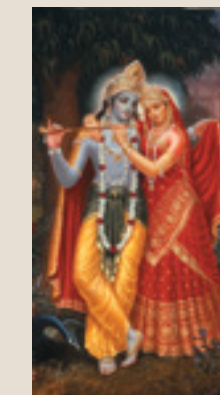
In this issue Satyarāja Dāsa writes about Ṣaḍ-bhuja, a six-armed form displayed by Lord Caitanya that shows that He, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Rāmacandra are all the same Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Also in this issue we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the opening of ISKCON's grand temple at Hare Krishna Land in Mumbai. Lokanāth Swami was there in the early days of ISKCON in that city, and he witnessed Śrīla Prabhupāda's determined struggle to make the temple, for which he formally laid the cornerstone, a reality. We present an excerpt from Lokanāth Swami's just-published book *Bombay Is My Office*, as well as an overview by Parijāta Devī Dāsī of ISKCON's other temples and projects in greater Mumbai.

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

Life Balance

How should I maintain balance between my work life and spiritual life?

Shivam Khanna
Via the Internet

Our reply: This is a very relevant and common question. In material life we are generally driven to accumulate many things, thinking they will make us happy, or at least happier. Because we are looking for many things, we work very hard. In the end we realize that we have many things but have neglected our relationships and, most important, our relationship with God. We are not able to take even one thing with us to our next destination; therefore our entire life has been wasted.

Finding the balance will be much easier if we keep these points in mind and consciously simplify our lives. It is easier to find time to do spiritual things and keep things in proper perspective if we keep our material wants to a minimum.

So the first thing in life balance is to understand what is most important to us and make sure that goes into our day first, if at all possible. We never forget to eat or sleep, and even if we do, that forgetfulness will not last long because eating and sleeping mean so much to our health and happiness. If our spiritual life is important to our happiness and we are aware of the limitations of material life, then we will not neglect the spiritual part of our lives. It will go into our day at the very beginning so that there will be less chance of leaving it out.

Also, we can consider that spiritual life is like spicing in cooking. A relatively small amount of spicing, if done nicely, can change a bland preparation into something wonderful. Even a small amount of spiritual practice can change a materialistic

day into a transcendental endeavor. If we sharpen our consciousness by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and reading literature about Kṛṣṇa at the beginning of our day, the rest of the day will be more focused and happier. Besides that, your work can and should be devotional. Don't separate the two as if they had nothing to do with each other. Everything a devotee does should be done for Kṛṣṇa. The fruits of work, either in money or skills, can be offered in Kṛṣṇa's service. Also, taking care of your family, especially if they are devotees, is a very important service, and so using the fruit of your work for that purpose is a valuable offering to God.

Mostly it is the consciousness that turns something from being material to being spiritual. We want to focus our consciousness on Lord Kṛṣṇa, thanking Him for whatever we have, and accepting His plan in our lives. So no matter what we are doing, we can make it an offering to Him.

Happy Sinful Celebrities

It has been seen in this world that people who do not believe in God and never bow down to God live a happy, well-settled life compared to devotees. They keep on doing sinful activities like animal killing, and nothing happens to them. There are many such examples in today's society, like all the famous TV superstars. How can we understand why God is doing nothing to them?

JSK
Via the Internet

Our reply: First you should understand that you are only seeing the outer shell of these people. Actors, movie stars, those in the limelight – they have a very high suicide rate, they are often drunkards and drug addicts due to severe depres-

sion, and they have one divorce after another. These are certainly not the symptoms of someone living a happy life. Everyone in the material world puts on a happy face, but you can't really understand their suffering. If you read the news you will see how vicious and miserable people really are.

There is more to happiness than wealth, beauty, and fame. Inner satisfaction and freedom from fear are the real marks of a peaceful person. The material world tricks us into thinking that happiness can be measured in things or situations that make others envy us. But beneath the facade of someone who has these is a person fearful of losing his or her position, always trying to please others, always trying to maintain a false appearance of satisfaction, while in reality striving constantly for more and more, fearing loss, and ultimately fearing death. There is never satisfaction.

To find real happiness one must seek the eternal. The soul is eternal and cannot find real happiness in anything temporary. Since the body itself is temporary, anything connected with it will be destroyed, either now or later. Old age and death will rob these foolish people of their wealth, beauty, and fame, and their illusion of fearlessness and pride will disappear as soon as old age and disease appear and they have no ability to stop them.

When you want to consider true happiness, you should know that it must come from the eternal – that which goes on when the body is finished. It can only be from the soul's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or God. That loving relationship is the only true source of pleasure and the only eternal thing.

People get wealth or fame or beauty due to past good deeds, but if these are not used wisely and lead to sinful activities like meat-eating and

intoxication, then eventually suffering increases and material assets disappear. The bank robber seems rich until the police catch him and put him in jail. No one can escape the laws of material nature. Everyone gets his karma.

Some karma looks good, and some looks bad, but "bad" karma often helps one understand that the material world is not our source of happiness. Poor people are often humble, kind, caring, and God conscious, while rich and famous people are often angry, spoiled, vindictive, arrogant, and self-centered. All the decorations of the body are temporary, and people who have them live in fear that they will be taken away. Good and bad karma is all bad because ultimately it will cause one to take birth again in another temporary body, and a human birth is not guaranteed.

So don't be fooled. Look to your

loving connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, accept what is eternal as your source of true pleasure, and you will never be disappointed.

In Touch with Kṛṣṇa

How can I feel Kṛṣṇa?

Parth Panchal
Via the Internet

Our reply: Lord Kṛṣṇa is a person, so to get to know Him you will have to make the effort to chant His name and listen to the sound vibration. He is also present in the form of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and you can get to know Him by reading as well. As for feeling Him, that too is possible, because one can sense His presence in many ways even in the material world. The vastness of the sky, the tremendous power of nature, and the

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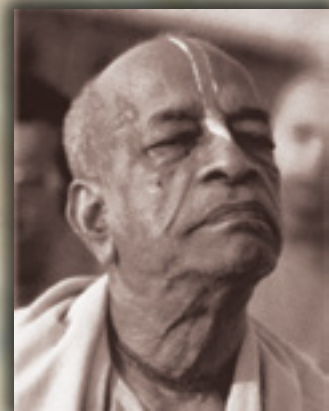
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The Supreme Yogi

*A yogi may be able
to walk on water,
but God can float planets
in space.*

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

Founder-Ācārya of
the International Society for
Krishna Consciousness



*na hy asya varṣmaṇaḥ puṁsām
varimṇaḥ sarva-yoginām
viśrutau śruta-devasya
bhūri tṛpyanti me 'savaḥ*

Śaunaka continued: There is no one who knows more than the Lord Himself. No one is more worshipable or more mature a yogi than He. He is therefore the master of the *Vedas*, and to hear about Him always is the actual pleasure of the senses.

– *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.2

IN THE PREVIOUS verse the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Devahūti-putra Kapiladeva has been explained as *bhagavān ātma-māyayā*. The word *bhaga* means “opulence,” and *vān* means “one who possesses.” All the opulences of the creation are present in Bhagavān. As stated in the *Vedas* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13):

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*

“Both the Supreme Lord and the individual living entities are eternal (*nitya*) and cognizant (*cetana*), but the Supreme Lord is maintaining all the living entities.” *Nitya* – Bhagavān – is the singular, and *nityānām* are the plural *jīvas*, or living beings. *Nityo nityānām*: we are many, but God is one. There is no limit to the *jīvas*; no one can count them. The word *ananta* means that they are without limit.

All these *jīvas*, living entities, are being maintained by the Supreme One. We cannot conceive how many living entities are being maintained by the Supreme Lord. All the great

The unlimited spiritual and material worlds display a fraction of the power of God, whose original form is that of a simple cowherd boy, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

elephants, all the small ants, all the 8,400,000 species of life are maintained by Bhagavān. Why do we worry that He will not maintain us?

Those who are devotees of the Lord and have taken shelter at His lotus feet, leaving everything aside simply to render service unto Him, will certainly be cared for. In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we have over a hundred centers, and Kṛṣṇa is maintaining them all. None of our devotees are employed for independent incomes, yet they are all being maintained. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa never says, “Do this or that, and I will then maintain you.” Rather, He states that not only will He maintain us, but He will also protect us from the results of sin, from sinful karma (*Gītā* 18.66). All of this assurance is there.

say that we should not do this, that we should endeavor to understand Kṛṣṇa. We should not worry about eating and sleeping, for the needs of the body are already arranged. We do not have to work independently to maintain the body.

Our actual endeavor should be to attain happiness; that is our real struggle for existence. *Tal labhyate duḥkhavat*. The word *duḥkhavat* indicates that although we do not want misery, misery comes anyway. We don’t have to endeavor separately for misery. No one says, “Let there be a fire in my house” or “Let my child die.” No one aspires after these things, yet they happen. Everyone is thinking, “May my child live happily” or “May I get so much money.” We do not ask or pray for catastrophes, yet they come without invita-

(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 19.151) The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is an attempt to make people fortunate. In this age everyone is unfortunate (*manda-bhāgyāh*), but now we are trying to reverse the situation.

Throughout the world there are problems everywhere. One country has one type of problem, and another country has another. There is strife within governments themselves, and even presidents are fraught with problems. Sometimes we may think we are very fortunate, just as President Nixon was thinking, “I am very fortunate. I have become the president of the United States.” Then he soon realized that he was most unfortunate. Actually this is the situation for everyone. We should not think that the only apprehended culprit is President Nixon and that we are safe.

Wet Dung, Dry Dung

There is a Bengali proverb: Dry cow dung is used for fuel, and it is said that when the dry cow dung is being burned, the soft cow dung is laughing, saying, “Oh, you are being burned, but I am safe.” It does not know that when it dries out, it will be thrown into the fire too.

We may laugh because President Nixon is in trouble, and we may think ourselves very safe because we have a big bank balance, but actually no one is safe. Eventually everyone will dry up and be thrown in the fire. That is a fact. We may survive for a few years, but we cannot avoid death. In fact, it is said, “As sure as death.” And what is the result of death? One loses everything – all honor, money, position, and material life itself. Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.34), *mṛtyuḥ sarva-harāś cāham*: “I am all-devouring death.” Kṛṣṇa comes as death and plunders everything – bank balance, skyscrapers, wife, children, and whatever. One cannot say, “My dear death, please give me some time to adjust.” There is no adjustment; one

must immediately get out.

Foolish people are unaware of the miserable conditions of material life. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.9), *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*. Real knowledge means knowing that however great one may be, the four principles of material life are present: birth, old age, disease, and death. These exist in the highest planetary system (Brahmaloka) and in the lowest (Pātālaloka).

*tasyaiva hetoḥ
prayateta kovido
na labhyate yad
bhramatām upary adhaḥ
tal labhyate duḥkhavad
anyataḥ sukham
kālena sarvatra
gabhīra-ramhasā*

“Persons who are actually intelligent and philosophically inclined should endeavor only for that purposeful end which is not obtainable even by wandering from the topmost planet down to the lowest planet. As far as

happiness derived from sense enjoyment is concerned, it can be obtained automatically in course of time, just as in course of time we obtain miseries even though we do not desire them.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.5.18)

When Dharmarāja asked Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira what the most wonderful thing in the world was, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira replied: *ahany ahani bhūtāni gacchantīha yamālayam*. “Every moment people are dying, but those who are living are thinking, ‘My friend has died, but I shall live forever.’” (*Mahābhārata, Vana-parva* 313.116) Soft cow dung thinks the same way. This is typical of conditioned beings.

Bhagavān’s Unique Position

Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord, is not in this position. It is therefore said: *bhagavān ātma-māyayā*. We come onto this planet to enjoy or suffer life for a few days – fifty or a hundred years – but Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, does not come for that pur-

pose (*na mām karmāṇi limpanti [Gītā 4.14]*). It is stated in today’s verse, *na hy asya varṣmaṇaḥ*: “No one is greater than Him.” No one is greater than Bhagavān or equal to Him. Everyone is inferior. According to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi* 5.142), *ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya*. There is only one master – Kṛṣṇa. All others are subservient, beginning with Lord Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Indra, Candra, and all the demigods (there are thirty-three million demigods) and the middle and lower species. Everyone is *bhṛtya*, or servant. When Kṛṣṇa orders, “My dear Mr. So-and-So, now please give up your place and leave,” one must go.

Therefore everyone is a servant. This is the position of Lord Brahmā and the ant as well. *Yas tv indragopam athavendram aho sva-karma (Brahma-samhitā 5.54)*. From Lord Indra to *indragopa*, an insignificant insect, everyone is reaping the consequences of his karma. We are creating our own karma, our next body, in this life. In this life we enjoy or

Kṛṣṇa states that not only will He maintain us, but He will also protect us from the results of sin, from sinful karma.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.18) it is said, *tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovidaḥ* . . . The word *kovidaḥ* means “intelligent.” An intelligent person should try to attain shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Human life is actually meant for getting in touch with the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. That should be our only business. The word *upari*, in this same verse, indicates the higher planetary systems. There are seven higher planetary systems, and we are in the middle system, in Bhūloka. Within this one universe there are fourteen planetary systems, and the living entities are wandering in different bodily forms on different planets. According to karma, the living entity sometimes goes up and sometimes goes down. He wanders in this way, thinking how he can become materially happy and satisfy his senses. The *śāstras*, or Vedic scriptures,

tion. Similarly, whatever happiness is there for our enjoyment will also come without our asking for it. The conclusion is that we should not endeavor for so-called happiness or distress, but should try to attain that position whereby we can understand Kṛṣṇa and get shelter at His lotus feet. This should be the real human endeavor.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu said to Rūpa Gosvāmī,

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona
bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya
bhakti-latā-bīja*

“The living entity is wandering up and down, from one planet to another, and he is very fortunate if by the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa Himself he can get the seed of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.”

LOOKING FOR NEWS OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MOVEMENT?

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suffer the results of our past karma, and in the same way we are creating further karma for our next body. Actually we should work in such a way that we will not get another material body. How can this be done? We simply have to try to understand Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9):

*janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

“One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.”

This sounds very simple, but actually understanding Kṛṣṇa is very difficult. If we become devotees of Kṛṣṇa, understanding Kṛṣṇa is easy. However, if we try to understand Him by *jñāna*, karma, or yoga, we will be frustrated. There are

many types of yogis, but he who is devoted to Kṛṣṇa is the topmost yogi. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is far above all yogic processes. In India there are many yogis who can display some magical feats. They can walk on water, make themselves very light or very heavy, and so forth. But what is this compared to Kṛṣṇa’s yogic mystic powers? By His potencies great planets are floating in space. Who can manage to float even a small stone in the air? Sometimes a yogi may show a little mystic power by manufacturing some gold, and we are so foolish that we accept him as God. However, we forget that the real yogi, the Supreme Lord Himself, has created millions of gold mines and is floating them in space.

Don’t Be Fooled

Those who are Kṛṣṇa conscious are not befooled by yogis who claim to be Bhagavān. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person wants only to serve the foremost yogi, Yogeśvara (*varimṇaḥ*

sarva-yoginām). Because we are trying to become His devotees, we accept the Supreme Lord, Yogeśvara, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa Himself states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55):

*bhaktiā mām abhijānāti
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā
viśate tad-anantaram*

“One can understand the Supreme Personality as He is only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of the Supreme Lord by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.”

This process is actually very simple. One must first of all realize that the first problem is the conquest of death. Presently we consider death compulsory, but actually it is not. One may be put into prison, but actually prison is not compulsory. It is due to one’s work that one becomes a criminal and is therefore put in jail. It is not compulsory for everyone to go to jail. As living entities, we have our proper place in Vaikuṅṭhaloka.

*paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo
'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu
naśyatsu na vinaśyati*

*avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas
tam āhuḥ paramām gatim
yam prāpya na nivartante
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama*

“There is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is. That supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode.” (*Gītā* 8.20–21)

Everything is present in Vaikuṅṭhaloka. There we can have an eternal, blissful life full of knowledge (*please turn to page 63*)

LUST BLINDS, LOVE LIBERATES

While we must not imitate this great devotee’s extreme measure in the battle against lust, we can learn from his determination.

by Puruṣottama Nitāi Dāsa

DURING our devotional journey, we spiritual practitioners encounter many challenges that may make us believe that attaining love of God is an impossible feat. But studying the lives of great devotees fills our life with hope by assuring us that determined devotion always attracts Kṛṣṇa’s attention. Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura is one celebrated devotee whose life teaches us that Kṛṣṇa’s love for us is unconditional; He overlooks all our past transgressions and is ever ready to shower His affection on us.

Bilvamaṅgala’s Deadly Lust

Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura was a wealthy South Indian *brāhmaṇa* from a cultured family, but he got attracted to a prostitute named Cintāmaṇi. The attraction soon became attachment. When we get attached to worldly enjoyment, we lose our intelligence and subsequently our dignity. For Bilvamaṅgala the fire of lust was so intense that he was not at all moved when his father died; in fact, standing near the funeral pyre, he was engrossed in thought



The blind devotee Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura sings of his devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who pays him personal visits.

of Cintāmaṇi. The body of his dead father did not bring tears to his eyes, but his eyes were eager to see Cintāmaṇi’s beauty.

Overwhelmed with the desire to be with her, he ran from the funeral pyre towards her house. Cintāmaṇi lived on the other side of a river, and thunder, lightning, and heavy rain had created chaos and flooding. Unable to find a boat to

ferry him across, Bilvamaṅgala jumped into the deadly river, risking his life. Struggling to survive, he desperately grabbed on to a floating object – which happened to be a human corpse. Using it as a support, he crossed the river.

Cintāmaṇi Rebukes Bilvamaṅgala

Cintāmaṇi’s gate was locked, so he decided to climb over the wall. He saw what seemed to be a rope hanging on the wall, but it turned out to be a snake. Still, blinded by lust, he grabbed it, made it over the wall, and knocked at Cintāmaṇi’s door.



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Seeing the uninvited guest arriving at that late hour, Cintāmaṇi was surprised. Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura had hoped she would be happy to see him, but she was disgusted.

Rebuking him, Cintāmaṇi said, “What a shame that you have so much attraction for my body of flesh, bones, blood, mucus, stool, and other obnoxious substances. This body rots every day and ultimately becomes food for worms. Your attraction to this temporary body is not going to do you any good. But if you could get the same attachment to Kṛṣṇa, then your life would be successful. That attachment would deliver you from all the miseries of material existence and give you

Cintāmaṇi to make him realize the ultimate truth.

Blind Bilvamaṅgala

Sometime after his transformation, Bilvamaṅgala decided to go to Vrindavan. Old habits die hard, and sinful tendencies are not so easy to give up. Bilvamaṅgala’s weakness was lust, and so *māyā*, the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord, attacked him again in the form of a woman.

On his way to Vrindavan, he was captivated by the beauty of a woman he saw. Impelled by lust, he followed her to her house. When he knocked at the door, the woman’s husband, a wealthy merchant, answered. Having learned from his wife that a

are very strong and unless controlled they can destroy our devotional life, just as a mad elephant destroys a beautiful garden.

We are all afflicted with the disease of material consciousness, and the scriptures prescribe treatment for our ailment. To get the right vision, a person suffering from a cataract does not have to get his eyes plucked out but just has to remove the cataract. Similarly, our senses are currently afflicted with material disease, and the best solution is to treat the disease and spiritualize the senses through the medicine of the holy name.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “If one wants to enjoy real sense enjoyment, then one must get free of the entanglement of material existence. In spiritual life we can enjoy sense enjoyment which has no end. The difference between material and spiritual enjoyment is that material enjoyment is limited. Even if a man engages in material sex enjoyment, he cannot enjoy it for long. But when the sex enjoyment is given up, then one can enter spiritual life, which is unending.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.20.35, Purport)

In Vrindavan with Kṛṣṇa

Although physically blind, Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura was now spiritually awakened. Life’s experience had taught him that lust can never be satiated. Rather, this disease worsens as soon as one gives in to lusty desires and thoughts.

Bilvamaṅgala then proceeded to Vrindavan without delay. He was so sincere in his devotion that he used every moment in worshiping the Supreme Lord. His genuine devotion attracted Kṛṣṇa, who as a cowherd boy would come to meet him regularly, carrying a glass of milk for him. Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura did not know that the Supreme Lord was personally coming to see him. They would speak with each other for hours. Once when Kṛṣṇa played His flute, Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura was captivated by it

man had been following her, the merchant still invited him in and asked what service he could offer. Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura asked to be left alone with his wife, and the merchant obliged.

Alone with her in the room, Bilvamaṅgala asked, “Mother, can I have your hairpin?”

He took the hairpin and, to the woman’s utter shock, gouged both his eyes. Falling at the feet of the couple, he begged for forgiveness.

Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura blinded himself to make sure that for the rest of his life he would avoid enticement by never seeing a woman. He took an extreme step, but we can learn from this extraordinary and frightful incident the necessity of reining in our senses. The example is not to be emulated; neither the scriptures nor the *ācāryas* recommend that anyone take such an extreme step. But the holy books and the holy sages continuously remind us that the senses

an opportunity to join Kṛṣṇa in His eternal abode. You would achieve eternal happiness.”

Love for Kṛṣṇa Awakens

Cintāmaṇi’s rebuke made Bilvamaṅgala realize he was wasting his precious human birth by pursuing the ephemeral pleasure of this world. He was grateful to Cintāmaṇi for the sage advice, and he decided to devote his life to serving Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura in his previous life had been elevated to *bhāva*, the stage of devotion just prior to *prema-bhakti*, the highest platform of devotional service, but he fell down from that exalted state. Because of his devotion to the Supreme Lord, however, in his next life he was born into a rich *brāhmaṇa* family, but sadly he became attached to a prostitute. Then, at the right moment, his spiritual master spoke through

The Heart of Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura

Some expressions of bhakti by Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books.

O my Lord, if one engages in Your pure devotional service with determination, You become visible in Your original transcendental youthful form as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As far as liberation is concerned, she stands before the devotee with folded hands waiting to render service. Religion, economic development, and sense gratification are all automatically attained without separate endeavor.

Kṛṣṇa-karnāmrta 107
Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Madhya 22.21, Purport

O My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, O friend of the helpless! You are the only ocean of mercy! Because I have not met You, My inauspicious days and nights have become unbearable. I do not know how I shall pass the time.

Kṛṣṇa-karnāmrta 41
Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Madhya 2.58 (Śrī Caitanya
Mahāprabhu is quoting Śrīmatī
Rādhārāṇī)

O Kṛṣṇa, O flute-player, the sweetness of Your early age is wonderful within these three worlds. You know my unsteadiness, and I know Yours. No one else knows about this. I want to see Your beautiful attractive face somewhere in a solitary place, but how can this be accomplished?

Kṛṣṇa-karnāmrta 32
Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Madhya 2.61

Although I was worshiped by those on the path of monism and initiated into self-realization through the yoga system, I have nonetheless been forcibly turned into a maidservant by some cunning boy who is always joking with the *gopīs*.

Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Madhya 10.178

The anklets on the damsels of Vraja-bhūmi are made of *cintāmaṇi* stone. The trees are wish-fulfilling trees, and they produce flowers with which the *gopīs* decorate themselves. There are also wish-fulfilling cows [*kāmadhenus*], which deliver unlimited quantities of milk. These cows constitute the wealth of Vṛndāvana. Thus Vṛndāvana’s opulence is blissfully exhibited.

Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Madhya 14.228

There may be many all-auspicious incarnations of the Personality of Godhead, but who other than Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa can bestow love of God upon the surrendered souls?

Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Antya 7.15

O my Lord, the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa is very sweet, and His face is even sweeter than His body. But His soft smile, which has the fragrance of honey, is sweeter still.

Kṛṣṇa-karnāmrta 92
Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*,
Madhya 21.136

I am eagerly waiting to see that boy of Vṛndāvana whose bodily beauty is captivating the whole universe, whose eyes are always bounded by black eyebrows and expanded like lotus petals, and who is always eagerly glancing over His devotees and therefore moving slightly here and there. His eyes are always moist, His lips are colored like copper, and through those lips there comes a sound vibration which drives one madder than a mad elephant. I want so much to see Him at Vṛndāvana!

The Nectar of Devotion,
Chapter 18

My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are leaving me, forcibly getting out of my clutches. But I shall be impressed by Your strength only when You can go forcibly from the core of my heart.

The Nectar of Devotion,
Chapter 29

My dear Lord, Your naughtiness in boyhood is the most wonderful thing in the three worlds. And You Yourself know what this naughtiness is. As such, You can very easily understand my flickering mind. This is known to You and me. Therefore, I am simply yearning to know how I can fix my mind on Your lotus feet.

The Nectar of Devotion,
Chapter 38

and wanted to embrace Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa playfully escaped his embrace.

The great devotee of the Lord said, “You can escape from my hold but not from my heart.”

Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura’s heart had previously been flooded with lusty desires, but with determined devotion he had cleansed his heart and enthroned Kṛṣṇa there. He wrote

Kṛṣṇa-karnāmrta, which glorifies Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and beautifully reveals the esoteric relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Lord Caitanya found this book during His

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South India trip and loved to hear its recitation regularly.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "He [Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura] intensely desired to enter into the eternal pastimes of the Lord, and he lived at Vṛndāvana for seven hundred years in the vicinity of Brahma-kuṇḍa, a still-existing bathing tank in Vṛndāvana. The history of Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura is given in a book called *Śrī-vallabha-digvijaya*. He appeared in the eighth century of the Śaka Era in the province of Draviḍa and was the chief disciple of Viṣṇu Svāmī. In a list of temples and monasteries kept in Śaṅkarācārya's monastery in Dvārakā, Bilvamaṅgala is mentioned as the founder of the Dvārakādhīśa temple there." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi* 1.57, Purport)

The Supreme Destination

Although Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura's past wasn't glorious, Kṛṣṇa wasn't bothered by that. Often a person caught doing something abominable is condemned and abandoned. But Kṛṣṇa is magnanimous, forgiving, and uninterested in unearthing our previous sins. As soon as He sees that our intentions are pure and we are genuinely striving to purify our life, He is eager to accept us and take us back to the spiritual world.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* 16.21–22, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that lust is a gateway to hell and those who can escape from it attain the supreme destination. Lust binds us to this material world, but love for the Lord liberates us. Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura was able to achieve Kṛṣṇa only after his heart was thoroughly cleansed of all lusty desires. To attain love of Kṛṣṇa, therefore, we must guard ourselves against the onslaught of lust and not succumb to its allure. 🙏

Puruṣottama Nitāi Dāsa, a member of the congregation of ISKCON Kolkata, is an advisory consultant at IBM. He blogs at <http://krishna-magic.blogspot.in/>.

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

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



Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa

Ṣad-bhuja-mūrti

Śrī Caitanya's Six-Armed Form

*Anthropomorphism
fails as an explanation for
the many-armed divine
forms described in the
Vedic literature.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

WHEN I JOINED the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, something in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books intrigued me: God's unlimited nature went beyond merely having innumerable forms; these forms, I was amazed to learn, often have numerous arms as well. India's wisdom texts, in fact, describe a wonderland of beatific multiarmed beings. There is four-armed Viṣṇu and His consort, eight-armed Lakṣmī; the ten-armed Goddess Kālī; and an astoundingly ferocious, breathtakingly beautiful, thousand-armed, lion-headed Deity named Nṛsiṃha. All these and many more reside in a multidimensional transcendent realm that the tradition

says is our real home, the realm of Godhead, the abode of our heart's delight.

Why, I wondered, do God or His expansions need multiple hands? Won't two do the trick? I thought of the old song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." Yes, I thought, He's got the whole world in His hands – and maybe, as this tradition says, He's got more than two.

After all, why should God conform to human anatomy? If He does, might He not also then conform to human limitation? Why try to make God like us?

The Greek philosopher Xenophanes spoke of religion's Deities as a form of projection. He said we envision God in human terms because *we* are human. Had we been plants or animals and able to think deeply about the nature of God, we would likely have envisioned Him as a plant or an animal.

The Vedic conception can't be accused of that. There we find the supreme divinity manifesting Himself in all species of life – as a boar, as a fish, as a tortoise, even as a man-lion. So Vedic conceptions of God are not simply a projection of our own form. Thus we can



(For a description of the pictures above, please see the sidebar on page 19.)

counter Xenophanes as follows: The Vedic conception of God is not man-made, or at least it can't be accused as such for the usual reasons, for it's a conception that is not constricted or defined by the human form.

The way I see it, an extension of this idea is found in the multiplicity of arms under discussion – the Vedic conception of Deity is not limited to our usual two-armed anatomy.

But, Still, Why All the Hands?

Usually, each form of God holds in His hands some objects that symbolize or represent the various qualities of that particular Deity. The same is often true of other divine personalities as well. Sometimes their hands

(b) the pursuit of material goods, wealth, and success (*artha*); (c) pleasure, sexuality, and sense enjoyment (*kāma*); and (d) liberation (*mokṣa*), the chief form of which is not simply going to heaven but developing love for God. This is the real goal of human existence.

Most importantly, Lord Viṣṇu holds implements in His hands that tell us much about His person: a conchshell, a discus, a lotus, and a mace. I remembered from my earlier studies in Eastern philosophy that the conch symbolizes creativity and victory; the *cakra* (or discus) symbolizes the powers of the mind (it is also a weapon with which Viṣṇu kills demons and slays misconceptions and doubts); the mace, with

I was a bit taken aback by the awe-inspiring thousand-armed universal form, which Kṛṣṇa showed Arjuna, and the ferocious ten-armed Nṛsiṃha-deva, I found Mahāprabhu's six-armed form alluring, and I continue to have a special affection for it to this day. In fact, I collect paintings and photographs of the *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti*, some of which accompany this article.

I remember my initial reading of Prabhupāda's description of this form: "Ṣaḍ-bhuja, the six-armed Lord Gaurasundara [Caitanya], is a representation of three incarnations. The form of Śrī Rāmacandra is symbolized by a bow in one hand and an arrow in another, the form of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is symbolized by a stick and a flute like those generally held by a cowherd boy, and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is symbolized by a *sannyāsa-daṇḍa* and a *kamaṇḍalu*, or water pot." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 17.12, Purport) "Wow," I thought, "all the most important incarnations of Kṛṣṇa in one form!"

I loved the idea, and as I learned more, I noticed that Prabhupāda also saw this form as special:

Lord Śrī Rāmacandra is so kind and merciful to His devotees that He is very easily satisfied by a little service rendered by anyone, human or not. This is the special advantage of worshiping Lord Rāmacandra, and there is the same advantage in worshiping Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāmacandra, in the manner of *kṣatriyas*, sometimes showed Their mercy by killing *asuras* [demons], but Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu awarded love of God without difficulty even to the *asuras*. All the incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – but especially Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Kṛṣṇa and, later, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu – delivered many of the living entities present before Them, indeed almost all of them. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is

therefore represented in the six-armed form of *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti*, which is a combination of Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The best purpose of human life can be fulfilled by worshiping the *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti*, the form of the Lord with six arms – two arms of Rāmacandra, two arms of Kṛṣṇa, and two arms of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.19.8, Purport)

I found that the earliest artistic depiction of this form seems to be in the Oriyan style, painted on the walls of the Jagannātha temple and the Gangamata Math in Jagannath Puri, Orissa.

On the southeastern side of the main temple building in Puri, one can see a deity of Śrī Caitanya in His six-armed form. This is because Mahāprabhu revealed this form to both King Pratāparudra and his court *paṇḍita*, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, both of whom resided in Puri. Thus the King had this form painted on the outside of the temple tower and on the ceiling of the Nat Mandir, as well as in a room near the southern gate.

Śrī Caitanya also showed this form to His intimate associate Nityānanda Prabhu, as described in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Over the centuries, many artists have depicted this form, but my favorite renderings are the ones done by ISKCON artists that have appeared in *Back to Godhead*.

Historical Revelation And Hidden Meaning

According to Śrī Caitanya's authorized biographies, then, *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti* was revealed three times, in the following order:

1. To Nityānanda Prabhu in Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's house in Mayapur. This occurred during the Vyāsa-pūjā celebration (worship of Vyāsadeva), the day after Mahā-

Śrī Ṣaḍ-bhuja East and West

A guide to the pictures on the previous spread.

TOP ROW (left to right):

1. Worshiped by the Mukherjee family in the only private Ṣaḍ-bhuja temple in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Installed during the mid-twentieth century by the current worshipers' grandfather, Nibadan Chandra Mukherjee.
2. Typical Kalighat-style painting from old Kolkata. 1890–1910. The British Museum acquired the original painting in 1993.
3. Kalighat-style painting. Made in Calcutta Art Studio circa 1880.
4. More recent rendition of a painting from the Chore Bagan Art Studio, Kolkata, 1885–1890.
5. Typical *patachitra* painting from Odisha. Popular Odishan folk art.
6. In the house of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya (Jagannath Puri). In Mahāprabhu's time, the house was known as Mārkaṇḍeya-sarastaṭa, but since the Ṣaḍ-bhuja deity was installed by Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmiṇī, the residence is today also known as Gaṅgāmātā Maṭha. This bas-relief is at the exact spot where Lord Caitanya sat hearing *Vedānta* from Sārvabhauma for seven days, and where He showed him His six-armed form.
7. Unknown.
8. Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Worshiped by Harināmānanda Dāsa from Mumbai, India.
9. Butler, Pennsylvania, Worshiped by Mahā Lakṣmī Devī Dāsī.
10. New Jersey. Worshiped by Kiśorī Rādhā Devī Dāsī.
11. Bengal, circa 1900.
12. Unknown.

MIDDLE ROW (left to right):

1. Amritsar, Punjab. Installed within the last decade by Pundrik Goswami from the Rādhā Ramaṇa temple in Vrindavan and worshiped by his followers.
2. Traditional Kalighat-style painting done by modern young Indian artist Bhaskar Chitrakar from Kolkata, 2014. Visit www.tejasgallery.com.
3. Three-hundred-year-old deity in Ekachakra, West Bengal, the

- birthplace of Lord Nityānanda. He's in a small temple at Kadam Khandi ghat, where Lord Nityānanda discovered Baṅkima Rāya, the deity of Kṛṣṇa into whom He entered at the end of His manifest pastimes.
4. Hadal Narayanpur, West Bengal. A panel at an old terracotta temple.
5. Śrī Gaurāṅga Gauḍīya Maṭha temple, Hular Ghat, Mayapur.
6. Wall panel in Vrindavan.
7. Amritsar, Gujarat. (Same as p. 16, middle row, 1.)
8. New Vrindaban, West Virginia. Worshiped by Harināma Devī Dāsī.
9. ISKCON Mayapur. Small deity of Mādhava in His Ṣaḍ-bhuja dress, worn every year on the fifteenth day of Candana-yātra in April–May.
10. ISKCON Sofia, Bulgaria. Brought by the late Suhotra Swami in the 1980s. The first Vaiṣṇava deity ever worshiped in Bulgaria.

BOTTOM ROW (left to right):

1. Butler, Pennsylvania. Worshiped by Mahā Lakṣmī Devī Dāsī.
2. ISKCON temple in Hamburg, Germany.
3. BBT painting by artist Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsī.
4. Kaligha-style painting, late nineteenth century. Indian Museum, Kolkata.
5. Odishan folk *patachitra* painting.
6. ISKCON's Harināma Mandir in Czech Republic.
7. Vrindavan, in a small temple across from Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's *samādhi*, twenty meters down the street from the entrance to the Rādhā Ramaṇa temple.
8. Jagannath Puri, Odisha. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya's house.
9. A painting by modern artist Alimpan from Kolkata.
10. Unknown.
11. BBT painting by ISKCON artist Puṣkara Dāsa.
12. Popular Bengali folk painting sold in the streets of Nabadwip.

Lord Viṣṇu holds implements in His hands that tell us much about His person: a conchshell, a discus, a lotus, and a mace.

are empty, but the position of the fingers and the palms signify their mood and character. For example, traditional Bharata Natyam hand gestures, derived from the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, often give information: If the dancer's fingers point toward the ground, it means this particular divinity is of a charitable disposition; if they point upward, it means this deity is in the mood of a protector. These gestures, also known as *mudras*, indicate a given deity's individual powers and differentiate one from the other.

Among all deities, the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa* tells us, Viṣṇu is supreme, and His four hands express dominion over the four directions of space. This harkens back to what His name means: "the all-pervading one."

The same *Purāṇa* also explains that Viṣṇu's arms symbolize the four aims (*puruṣārthas*) of human life: (a) duty and virtue (dharma);

which He evokes fear in the unrighteous, symbolizes strength; and the lotus symbolizes liberation and the ability to rise beyond the material world.

There are innumerable Viṣṇu expansions of Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual and material worlds. In His instructions to Sanātana Gosvāmī in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Lord Caitanya quotes descriptions from *Siddhārtha-saṁhitā* of twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu distinguished by the placement of the four symbols in Their four hands. He also lists other Viṣṇu forms, mentioned in the *Hayaśīrṣa Pañcarātra*.

The Six-Armed Form

When I think back to my initial interest in God's having multiple arms, I remember that I was particularly attracted to a form called the *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti*, or the six-armed form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. While

prabhu and Nityānanda met for the first time. (See *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Madhya* 5.92; *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya*, Act II, text 75; and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi* 17.12.) Incidentally, according to both the *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya*, Act II, text 77, and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* reference cited above, Nityānanda saw a different version of the six-armed form, with hands holding conch, disc, club, lotus, bow, and flute.

2. To Sārvabhauma Bhāṭṭācārya in his house in Puri, soon after the Lord first arrived there. (See *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Antya* 3.100–105, and Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi* 10.130, as well as his *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, chapter 26.)

3. To Mahārāja Pratāparudra,

āmi se sakala chāḍi karinu sannyāsa tumi nā chāḍile more janme janme vāṁśa

rāma avatāre tumi dhanuka haiyā rahile āmāra hāthe duṣṭera lāgiyā

kṛṣṇa avatāre vāṁśī hañā mora kare mohita karile saba akhila samsāre

ibe daṇḍa hañā mora āilā karete kali-yuge pāṣaṇḍa-dalana hetu rūpe

“O My *daṇḍa*! Although I have given up everything by becoming a *sannyāsī*, still you have not given Me up. You stay by My side, accompanying Me life after life. When I was traveling in the forest as Rāma, you were always in My hand as My bow and arrow. During My pastimes as Kṛṣṇa, you were always there in My hand as My flute, captivating the

energies. “The *prakāśa*, or expansion, the *avatāra*, or incarnation, the *śaktīs*, or energies, and the *bhaktas*, or devotees, are not separate from the *svayam-rūpa*, or original Personality of Godhead,” writes Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. “Within Kṛṣṇa Caitanya all of them are individually included with simultaneously distinct characteristics. To exhibit this *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy in His Gaura-līlā, the Lord displayed His six-armed form to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.” (Commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Madhya* 5.105)

In conventional Vaiṣṇava discourse, the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda* pertains to the Lord’s essential nature in relation to His energy – it explains how He is both one with and different from everything that emanates from Him. However, in this instance, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta extends its meaning to include the Lord’s many direct manifestations as well. That is to say, He is both one with and different from His incarnations and expansions. The *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta tells us, is an exhibition of this truth.

According to Rādhē Govinda Dāsa, who is writing a book about *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti*, the threefold form represents *maryāda-puruṣottama*, *līlā-puruṣottama*, and *prema-puruṣottama*. *Puruṣottama* means “Supreme Person.”

“Rāma is the supreme,” Rādhē Govinda writes, “in terms of formality, or rules and regulations (*maryāda*), allowing us to reach the concept of God Almighty. Now, Kṛṣṇa is Lord of play (*līlā*), or the Supreme who manifests beautiful pastimes for the pleasure of His devotees. And Mahāprabhu gives us divine love (*prema*) in an unprecedented way. Together, these three aspects of Godhead are seen in *ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti*, a very special manifestation of the Supreme.”

Indradyumna Swami, a leading ISKCON preacher, has summarized this as follows: “*ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti* means dharma, *ānanda*, and *prema*

– Rāma represents proper action in the material world (dharma), Kṛṣṇa’s divine pastimes give bliss (*ānanda*), and Mahāprabhu brought us divine love (*prema*).”

Hands and Heart

The conclusion is that God can have innumerable hands, one hand, or even no hands. The Vedic literature is replete with descriptions of God’s many divine forms – and their hands. But the important part of God, those same sacred texts tell us, is not His hands at all, but His heart, His love. While His hands may exist in an infinite variety of forms, with diverse symbolism and attributes based on His purpose and meaning, His heart is one. His love for us is single-minded. That is certain.

For me, Prabhupāda sums it up best, showing how God’s many arms basically serve two functions, which can especially be seen in the four-armed Viṣṇu: He has two hands to address the negativity of the demoniac, and two for the pleasure of the devotees:

So when Kṛṣṇa comes, He has got two businesses: *paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām* – for giving protection to the devotees, to the faithful, and for killing the demons. So Kṛṣṇa, when He was present, He exhibited these two things. Perhaps you have seen our picture of Nārāyaṇa, or Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu has got four hands. In two hands He has got a lotus flower and a conchshell, and in the other two hands He has got a club and a disc. The disc and club are meant for *vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*, for killing the demons and the miscreants. And the conchshell and the lotus flower are meant for giving benediction and blessings to the devotees. (Lecture at a Christian Monastery, Melbourne, April 6, 1972)

In Kavi Karṇapura’s classic sixteenth-century work, the *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya* (Act II, text 82), the author expresses a similar idea, specifically in terms of the *ṣaḍ-*

bhuja-mūrti: “Some say that with these six arms You kill the six enemies of the world. O fulfiller of desires, I say that with these arms You give devotional service, love of God, and the four goals of life.”*

Indeed, Lord Rāma’s bow and arrow bring fear to the hearts of the demoniac, while Kṛṣṇa’s two flute-holding hands inspire devotion in those so inclined. And Śrī Caitanya’s arms? They provide the highest love, *prema*, for all who adopt the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Mahāprabhu’s two arms take the devotees beyond

*The six enemies of the world are lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion, and envy. The four goals of life are religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation.

all dimensions of the material world and situate them in the embrace of transcendence. 🌟

My special thanks to Mahā Lakṣmī Devī Dāsī and Rādhē Govinda Dāsa for the use of their photos and the fruits of their research. Their Facebook page dedicated to ṣaḍ-bhuja, “Sadbhujā – The 6-armed Form of Lord Caitanya” (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1811067715804556/>) was extremely helpful.

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Lord Caitanya offered a prayer to His *daṇḍa*, saying that it is essentially identical to His bow and arrow and flute.

two years after the Sārvabhauma revelation, when the Lord returned from His South Indian tour. (See Murāri Gupta’s *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritā-mahākāvya* 4.16.14–20 and Locana Dāsa’s *Caitanya-maṅgala*, *Śeṣa-kāṇḍa*, Song 12, Texts 113–115.)

In Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura’s *Caitanya-maṅgala* we find the following verses, which give us a deeper understanding of the six-armed form.* They depict a scene that occurs just after Śrī Caitanya takes *sannyāsa*, the renounced order of life. At that time, the Lord offers a prayer to His *daṇḍa* (renunciant’s staff), saying that it is essentially identical to His bow and arrow and flute:

*Among the various Bengali versions of *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, some omit these verses. I’ve chosen to include them because they pertain to our understanding of the Lord’s six-armed feature.

entire world with divine love. And now after I have abandoned everything as a *sannyāsī*, still you remain with Me as My *daṇḍa* in order to vanquish the nonbelievers in Kali-yuga.” (*Śrī Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* [in *Śrī Locana dāsa kṛta padāvalī saha*], 2nd edition, edited by Śrī Mṛṇāla-kānti Ghoṣa, Gaurābda 444 [1930 or 1931 CE], *Madhya-khaṇḍa*, p. 66)

This prayer brings to light a little-known dimension of the six-armed form, showing a spiritual connection between the items the Lord holds in His hands, particularly when He descends as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Caitanya.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, gives us yet another inner meaning of this form: By showing His associates this divine manifestation, Lord Caitanya is bringing to light His teaching of *acintya-bhedābheda*, or the inconceivable and simultaneous oneness and difference between the Lord and His various forms and

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LORD BUDDHA

Making the Faithless Faithful

Reflections on an article written by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1956 and on how we as Vaiṣṇavas should think of Lord Buddha today.

by Māyāpur-śaśi Dāsa

IN THE MAY 5, 1956, issue of *Back to Godhead*, Śrīla Prabhupāda published his article “Lord Buddha: The Emblem of Theism.” The opening paragraph informs us of the transcendental poet Śrī Jayadeva Acārya’s worship of Lord Buddha. Śrīla Prabhupāda then quotes the poet’s Sanskrit prayer to the ten incarnations of the Personality of Godhead Keśava (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), and then gives this translation: “O my Lord, the Personality of Godhead Keśava! All glory unto You because You have accepted the body of Lord Buddha, who spoke ill constantly of the animal sacrifices in pursuance of the rites of the Vedic literature.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the purport to the verse that animal sacrifices are sometimes recommended in the *Vedas* under specific religious rites. He illustrates this point with the story of Lord Caitanya Mahā-

prabhu’s discussion with Maulana Chand Kazi, the city magistrate of Nabadwip (in Bengal). This occurred in the sixteenth century, two thousand years after Shakyamuni Buddha’s earthly existence. Mahāprabhu asked the Kazi why Muslims kill cows. The learned Kazi replied that cow sacrifice is recommended even in the *Vedas*, to which Lord Caitanya responded that the recommendations in the *Vedas* were not for killing, but for giving an elderly cow a new lease on life with perfect health. This was done to demonstrate the powerful Vedic mantras, which when perfectly chanted could perform such wonders. Lord Caitanya then explained that in Kali-yuga this was impossible and therefore cow and horse sacrifices must be avoided.

Before Lord Buddha arrived 2,500 years ago, the sections of the *Vedas* in which animal

sacrifice is discussed were grossly misused, and their performers, Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, “were indulged in an unrestricted extravagance.”

Incarnation Foretold

As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead incarnates when He sees that false teaching needs to be rectified, or when irreligious behavior becomes intolerable. Lord Kṛṣṇa therefore appeared as Shakyamuni Buddha to correct the *brāhmaṇas’* fallacious teachings about sacrifice.

The Buddha’s incarnation is foretold in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.24):

and animal-killing was indulged in unrestrictedly. Lord Buddha preached nonviolence, taking pity on the poor animals. He preached that he did not believe in the tenets of the *Vedas* and stressed the adverse psychological effects incurred by animal-killing.

According to Buddhist scriptures, Añjanā was a king of the Koliya dynasty. He had two sons and two daughters. One of the daughters was called Maya, and Maya gave birth to Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni) Buddha in Lumbini, in present-day Nepal. His father’s name was Sudhodana. Gautama Buddha achieved enlightenment at Bodh Gaya in the state of Bihar.

“At the time when Lord Buddha appeared, the people in general were atheistic and preferred animal flesh to anything else.”

*ataḥ kalau sampravṛtte
sammohāya sura-dviṣām
buddho nāmnāñjana-sutaḥ
kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati*

“Then, in the beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Añjanā, in the province of Gayā, just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful theists.” In the first part of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport to this verse, he explains:

Lord Buddha, a powerful incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, appeared in the province of Gayā (Bihar) as the son of Añjanā, and he preached his own conception of nonviolence and deprecated even the animal sacrifices sanctioned in the *Vedas*. At the time when Lord Buddha appeared, the people in general were atheistic and preferred animal flesh to anything else. On the plea of Vedic sacrifice, every place was practically turned into a slaughterhouse,

Śrīla Prabhupāda continues:

Less intelligent men of the age of Kali, who had no faith in God, followed his principle, and for the time being they were trained in moral discipline and nonviolence, the preliminary steps for proceeding further on the path of God realization. He deluded the atheists because such atheists who followed his principles did not believe in God, but they kept their absolute faith in Lord Buddha, who himself was the incarnation of God. Thus the faithless people were made to believe in God in the form of Lord Buddha. That was the mercy of Lord Buddha: he made the faithless faithful to him.

Buddhist philosophy appears to be atheistic because there is no acceptance of the Supreme Lord. And yet, as discussed above, Shakyamuni Buddha was in fact an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this dichotomy later in his purport to this verse (and in his 1956 article):

Technically Lord Buddha’s philosophy is called atheistic because there is no acceptance of the Supreme Lord and because that system of philosophy denied the authority of the *Vedas*. But that is an act of camouflage by the Lord. Lord Buddha is the incarnation of Godhead. As such, he is the original propounder of Vedic knowledge. He therefore cannot reject Vedic philosophy. But he rejected it outwardly because the *sura-dviṣa*, or the demons who are always envious of the devotees of Godhead, try to support cow-killing or animal-killing from the pages of the *Vedas*, and this is now being done by the modernized *sannyāsīs*. Lord Buddha had to reject the authority of the *Vedas* altogether. This is simply technical, and had it not been so he would not have been so accepted as the incarnation of Godhead. Nor would he have been worshiped in the transcendental songs of the poet Jayadeva, who is a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*. Lord Buddha preached the preliminary principles of the *Vedas* in a manner suitable for the time, and so also did Śaṅkarācārya to establish the authority of the *Vedas*. Therefore both Lord Buddha and Ācārya Śaṅkara paved the path of theism, and Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, specifically Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, led the people on the path towards a realization of going back to Godhead.

Interestingly, Śrīla Prabhupāda adds in the same purport:

We are glad that people are taking interest in the nonviolent movement of Lord Buddha. But will they take the matter very seriously and close the animal slaughterhouses altogether? If not, there is no meaning to the *ahimsā* cult.

There are of course different schools of Buddhism. The three main ones are Mahayana (Great Vehicle), Theravada (or Hinayana), Vajrayana (Tibetan/Himalayan, part of the wider Mahayana group). Within those three main groups are many subsects, and

the Buddhist cannon is complex, vast, and beyond the scope of this short article.

Buddhists and Meat-Eating

Different schools of Buddhism have different views about meat-eating, with pure Mahayana Buddhists being the strictest and completely in line with Vaiṣṇava principles. While slaughterhouses exist in countries with large Buddhist populations, it would be disingenuous to suggest that Buddhists are to blame, as no slaughterhouses exist specifically for Buddhists – because no practicing Buddhist may cause an animal’s death. This is clear in Buddha’s teaching. It may be fairly argued, however, that those Buddhists who do eat meat are unjustifiably and inexcusably hiding under the various regulations about not being “directly” responsible for animals’ deaths, as surely they are still creating the demand for animals to be killed, and this cannot be justified in any form of Buddhism.

Slaughter in the Name of Religion

Tragically we must remember that some countries have persisted in animal slaughter in the name of religious practice – even Nepal, the country of Buddha’s birth. When I lived in Nepal (2008–2011), reportedly five million Hindus from both India and Nepal attended the barbaric slaughter at the Gadhimai festival in 2009. This is held every five years in Bariyarpur, near the border with India. More than twenty thousand buffaloes were sacrificed on the first day alone, and the reader can imagine what a heartbreaking, horrifying, hell-like scene that was.

An estimated 250,000 animals were sacrificed during the Gadhimai festival that year, in the most horrific circumstances. Animal-rights campaigners (some Hindus from India, but others not necessarily connected to any religion, and from all over the

world) have strenuously campaigned against this atrocity, but still it continued in 2014 with five thousand buffaloes and a hundred thousand birds and other animals slaughtered, and with hundreds of thousands of Hindus, if not millions, supporting it from both sides of the border. In 2015 the authority overseeing the festival said that these animal sacrifices would cease in the future. We can only hope and pray that this will be so, as these atrocities are exactly what Shakyamuni Buddha was attempting to stamp out.

There is therefore still a great and ongoing need for Buddhists and Vaiṣṇavas alike to continue to preach nonviolence, including towards animals, and to maintain a strictly vegetarian diet.

Other Contributions

It is hard, if not impossible, not to agree that the Buddha contributed greatly to religious practice throughout the world, even to this day. It was primarily due to him that animal sacrifices were greatly reduced, and in many places abolished altogether. Nonviolence, charity, and love and care for other sentient beings were inculcated into the belief of the peo-

ple, and selfish desires were greatly reduced.

Also, Lord Buddha’s establishment of celibate orders of monks was echoed across Indian religion. Fifty to a hundred years before Shakyamuni Buddha’s time there were already groups of hermits in India living together in what might be called ashrams, but evidence suggests that many more groups did not necessarily follow any unifying communal (monastic) law. It would be true to claim that the Jains had the first true monastic communities, such as the followers of Mahavira in the sixth century. Nevertheless, it seems the flourishing of such communities, with strict monastic laws and common practices, occurred after the establishment of Buddhist monasteries.

In closing, it is also worth noting a few sentences from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.7.37:

Lord Buddha incarnates at a time when the people are most materialistic and preaches common-sense religious principles. Such *ahimsā* is not a religious principle itself, but it is an important quality for persons who are actually religious. It is a common-sense

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

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religion because one is advised to do no harm to any other animal or living being because such harmful actions are equally harmful to he who does the harm. But before learning these principles of non-violence one has to learn two other principles, namely to be humble and to be prideless. Unless one is humble and prideless, one cannot be harmless and nonviolent.

It is beholden on us all therefore to be honest in our reflections about ourselves, and to be genuinely and deeply humble and prideless, no matter what our position in life may be – certainly key qualities that Buddhists and Vaiṣṇavas should share. As Vaiṣṇavas we would say that

these are but stepping stones to the great bliss of knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the amazing and wonderful personal relationship we can find with Him as we turn our lives to His service, wholeheartedly, humbly, without ego or pride.

The subject of Lord Buddha and how we as Vaiṣṇavas should consider him is a deep, highly complex subject, and the very complexity and depth of Buddhist teaching makes it impossible to discuss in detail in an article of this length. Suffice to say that Lord Buddha, as an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, played a major part in the reformation of religious thought in India 2,500 years ago, and there-

after across the world. When we view him in the light of his being an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, working in mysterious and complex ways to restore the Vedic teaching while seeming to refute it, we can only be left in wonder and awe at the Lord's incredibly wondrous ways. 🙏

Māyāpur-śaṣī Dāsa, a retired British Army officer, was a Buddhist for thirty-three years. He was the highest ranking member of the British Armed Forces who was a Buddhist. A disciple of His Holiness Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami, he lives in Taiwan, painting and writing. He is writing three books, two of which are directly in service to his spiritual master.

A Pause for Prayer

Your power of illusion has totally bewildered us, the most exalted knowers of the truth and leaders among the universal creators. Ah, how amazing is the behavior of the Supreme Lord! He covers Himself with His humanlike activities and pretends to be subject to superior control.

Indeed, the humanlike pastimes of the Almighty are simply a pretense! Effortlessly, He alone sends forth from His Self this variegated creation, maintains it and then swallows it up again, all without becoming entangled, just as the element earth takes on many names and forms in its various transformations.

Nonetheless, at suitable times You assume the pure mode of goodness to protect Your devotees and punish the wicked. Thus You, the Soul of the *varṇāśrama* social order, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, maintain the eternal path of the *Vedas* by enjoying Your pleasure pastimes.

The *Vedas* are Your spotless heart, and through them one can perceive – by means of austerity, study and self-control – the manifest, the unmanifest, and the pure existence transcendental to both.

Therefore, O Supreme Brahman, You honor the members of the brahminical community, for they are the perfect agents by which one can realize You through the evidence of the *Vedas*. For that very reason You are the foremost worshiper of the *brāhmaṇas*.

Today our birth, education, austerity and vision have all become perfect because we have been able to associate with You, the goal of all saintly persons. Indeed, You Yourself are the ultimate, supreme blessing.”

– Sages to Lord Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra on the occasion of the solar eclipse, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.84.16–21



Painting by Dhriti Devi Das

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.

LORD VIṢṆU INSTRUCTS KING PṚTHU

After King Pṛthu completes a Vedic sacrifice, Lord Viṣṇu Himself arrives, accompanied by Indra.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 19

40 कृतावभृथस्नानाय पृथवे भूरिकर्मणे वरान्ददुस्ते वरदा ये तद्वर्हिषि तर्पिताः

*kṛtāvabhṛtha-snānāya
pṛthave bhūri-karmaṇe
varān dadus te varadā
ye tad-barhiṣi tarpitāḥ*

kṛta – having performed; *avabhṛtha-snānāya* – taking a bath after the sacrifice; *pṛthave* – unto King Pṛthu; *bhūri-karmaṇe* – famous for performing many virtuous acts; *varān* – benedictions; *daduḥ* – gave; *te* – all of them; *vara-dāḥ* – the demigods, bestowers of benedictions; *ye* – who; *tad-barhiṣi* – in the performance of such a *yajña*; *tarpitāḥ* – became pleased.

After this, Pṛthu Mahārāja took his bath, which is customarily taken after the performance of a *yajña*, and received the benedictions and due blessings of the demigods, who were very pleased by his glorious activities.

PURPORT: 1) *Yajña* means Lord Viṣṇu, for all *yajña* is meant to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu.

Since the demigods automatically become very pleased with the performance of sacrifice, they bestow benediction upon the executors of *yajñas*. When one pours water on the root of a tree, the branches, trunk, twigs, flowers, and leaves are all satisfied. Similarly, when one gives food to the stomach, all parts of the body are rejuvenated. In the same way, if one simply satisfies Lord Viṣṇu by the performance of *yajña*, one satisfies all the demigods automatically. In turn, the demigods offer their benedictions to such a devotee. 2) A pure devotee therefore does not ask benedictions directly from the demigods. His only business is to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus he is never in need of those things supplied by the demigods.

41 विप्राः सत्याशिषस्तुष्टाः श्रद्धया लब्धदक्षिणाः आशिषो युयुजुः क्षत्रादिराजाय सत्कृताः

*viprāḥ satyāśiṣas tuṣṭāḥ
śraddhayā labdha-dakṣiṇāḥ*

- 1) Why does *yajña* mean Lord Viṣṇu?
- 2) Why does a pure devotee not ask benedictions directly from the demigods?

āśiṣo yuyujuh kṣattar
ādi-rājāya sat-kṛtāh

viprāh – all the *brāhmaṇas*; *satya* – true; *āśiṣah* – whose benedictions; *tuṣṭāh* – being very satisfied; *śraddhayā* – with great respect; *labdha-dakṣiṇāh* – who obtained rewards; *āśiṣah* – benedictions; *yuyujuh* – offered; *kṣattah* – O Vidura; *ādi-rājāya* – upon the original king; *sat-kṛtāh* – being honored.

With great respect, the original king, Pṛthu, offered all kinds of rewards to the brāhmaṇas present at the sacrifice. Since all these brāhmaṇas were very much satisfied, they gave their heartfelt blessings to the King.

42 त्वयाहूता महाबाहो सर्व एव समागताः पूजिता दानमानाभ्यां पितृदेवर्षिमानवाः

tvayāhūtā mahā-bāho
sarva eva samāgatāh
pūjitā dāna-mānābhyām
pitṛ-devarṣi-mānavāh

tvayā – by you; *āhūtāh* – were invited; *mahā-bāho* – O great mighty-armed one; *sarve* – all; *eva* – certainly; *samāgatāh* – assembled; *pūjitāh* – were honored; *dāna* – by charity; *mānābhyām* – and by respect; *pitṛ* – the inhabitants of Pitṛloka; *deva* – demigods; *ṛṣi* – great sages; *mānavāh* – as well as common men.

All the great sages and brāhmaṇas said: O mighty King, by your invitation all classes of living entities have attended this assembly. They have come from Pitṛloka and the heavenly planets, and great sages as well as common men have attended this meeting. Now all of them are very much satisfied by your dealings and your charity towards them.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 20

मैत्रेय उवाच

1 भगवानपि वैकुण्ठः साकं मघवता विभुः यज्ञैर्यज्ञपतिस्तुष्टो यज्ञभुक्तमभाषत

maitreya uvāca
bhagavān api vaikuṇṭhaḥ
sākam maghavatā vibhuḥ

3) How many horse sacrifices did King Pṛthu perform?

yajñair yajña-patis tuṣṭo
yajña-bhuk tam abhāṣata

maitreyaḥ uvāca – the great sage Maitreya continued to speak; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu; *api* – also; *vaikuṇṭhaḥ* – the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha; *sākam* – along with; *maghavatā* – King Indra; *vibhuḥ* – the Lord; *yajñaiḥ* – by the sacrifices; *yajña-patiḥ* – the Lord of all *yajñas*; *tuṣṭah* – satisfied; *yajña-bhuk* – the enjoyer of the *yajña*; *tam* – unto King Pṛthu; *abhāṣata* – said.

The great sage Maitreya continued: 3 My dear Vidura, being very much satisfied by the performance of ninety-nine horse sacrifices, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, appeared on the scene. Accompanying Him was King Indra. Lord Viṣṇu then began to speak.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

2 एष तेऽकार्षीद्भङ्गं ह्यमेधशतस्य ह क्षमापयत आत्मानममुष्य क्षन्तुमर्हसि

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
eṣa te 'kāṛṣīd bhaṅgam
haya-medha-śatasya ha
kṣamāpayata ātmānam
amuṣya kṣantum arhasi

śrī-bhagavān uvāca – the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, spoke; *eṣah* – this Lord Indra; *te* – your; *akāṛṣīt* – performed; *bhaṅgam* – disturbance; *haya* – horse; *medha* – sacrifice; *śatasya* – of the one-hundredth; *ha* – indeed; *kṣamāpayataḥ* – who is asking pardon; *ātmānam* – unto yourself; *amuṣya* – him; *kṣantum* – to forgive; *arhasi* – you ought.

Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, said: My dear King Pṛthu, Indra, the King of heaven, has disturbed your execution of one hundred sacrifices. Now he has come with Me to be forgiven by you. Therefore excuse him.

PURPORT: In this verse the word *ātmānam* is very significant. It is a custom among *yogīs* and *jñānīs* to address one another (or even an ordinary man) as one's self, for a transcendentalist never accepts a living being to be the body. Since the individual self is part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the self and the Super-self are qualitatively nondifferent. As the next verse will explain, the body is only a superficial covering, and consequently an advanced transcendentalist will not make a distinction between one self and another.

3 सुधियः साधवो लोके नरदेव नरोत्तमाः नाभिद्रुह्यन्ति भूतेभ्यो यर्हि नात्मा कलेवरम्

sudhiyaḥ sādhave loke
naradeva narottamāḥ
nābhidruhyanti bhūtebhyo
yarhi nātmā kalevaram

su-dhiyaḥ – the most intelligent persons; *sādhavaḥ* – who are inclined to perform welfare activities; *loke* – in this world; *nara-deva* – O King; *nara-uttamāḥ* – the best of human beings; *na abhidruhyanti* – never become malicious; *bhūtebhyah* – toward other living beings; *yarhi* – because; *na* – never; *ātmā* – the self or soul; *kalevaram* – this body.

O King, one who is advanced in intelligence and eager to perform welfare activities for others is considered best amongst human beings. An advanced human being is never malicious to others. Those with advanced intelligence are always conscious that this material body is different from the soul.

PURPORT: In daily life we find that when a madman commits murder, he is excused even by a high-court judge. The idea is that a living entity is always pure because he is part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When he falls into the clutches of material energy, he becomes a victim of the three modes of material nature. Indeed, whatever he does, he does under the influence of material nature. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.14):

na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi
lokasya sṛjati prabhuh
na karma-phala-samyogaṁ
svabhāvas tu pravartate

“The embodied spirit, master of the city of his body, does not create activities, nor does he induce people to act, nor does he create the fruits of action. All this is enacted by the modes of material nature.”

4 Actually the living entity, or soul, does not do anything; everything is done under the influence of the modes of material nature. When a man is diseased, the symptoms of the disease become a source of all kinds of pain. Those who are advanced in transcendental consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, are never envious, neither of the soul nor of the activities of the soul under the influence of material nature.

Advanced transcendentalists are called *sudhiyaḥ*. *Sudhī* means “intelligence,” *sudhī* means “highly advanced,” and *sudhī* means “devotee.” One who is both devoted and highly advanced in intelligence does not take action against the soul or the body. If there is any discrepancy, he forgives. It is said that forgiveness is a quality of those who are advancing in spiritual knowledge.

4 पुरुषा यदि मुह्यन्ति त्वादृशा देवमायया श्रम एव परं जातो दीर्घया वृद्धसेवया

puruṣā yadi muhyanti
tvādrśā deva-māyayā
śrama eva paraṁ jāto
dīrghayā vṛddha-sevayā

puruṣāḥ – persons; *yadi* – if; *muhyanti* – become bewildered; *tvādrśāḥ* – like you; *deva* – of the Supreme Lord; *māyayā* – by the energy; *śramaḥ* – exertion; *eva* – certainly; *paraṁ* – only; *jātaḥ* – produced; *dīrghayā* – for a long time; *vṛddha-sevayā* – by serving the superiors.

If a personality like you, who are so much advanced because of executing the instructions of the previous ācāryas, is carried away by the influence of My material energy, then all your advancement may be considered simply a waste of time.

PURPORT: In this verse the word *vṛddha-sevayā* is very significant. *Vṛddha* means “old.” *Sevayā* means “by service.”

5 Perfect knowledge is acquired from the *ācāryas*, or liberated souls. No one can be perfect in knowledge without being trained by the *paramparā* system. Pṛthu Mahārāja was completely trained in that line; therefore he did not deserve to be considered an ordinary man. An ordinary man, who has only a conception of bodily existence, is always bewildered by the modes of material nature.

5 अतः कायमिमं विद्वानविद्याकामकर्मभिः आरब्ध इति नैवास्मिन् प्रतिबुद्धोऽनुषज्जते

ataḥ kāyam imam vidvān
avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ
ārabdha iti naivāsmiṁ
pratibuddho 'nuṣajjate

ataḥ – therefore; *kāyam* – body; *imam* – this; *vidvān* – he who has knowledge; *avidyā* – by nescience; *kāma* – desires; *karmabhiḥ* – and by activities; *ārabdhaḥ* – created; *iti* – thus; *na* – never; *eva* – certainly; *asmiṁ* – to this body; *pratibuddhaḥ* – one who knows; *anuṣajjate* – becomes addicted.

Those who are in full knowledge of the bodily conception of life, who know that this body is composed of nescience, desires, and activities resulting from illusion, do not become addicted to the body.

PURPORT: As stated in a previous verse, those with good intellect (*sudhiyaḥ*) do not accept themselves to be the body.

4) How is it that the living entity, or soul, does not do anything?

5) How do we acquire perfect knowledge?

Being a creation of nescience, the body has two types of activities. In the bodily conception, when we think that sense gratification will help us, we are in illusion. Another kind of illusion is to think that one will become happy by trying to satisfy the desires that arise from the illusory body or by attaining elevation to the higher planetary systems or by performing various types of Vedic rituals. This is all illusion. Similarly, material activities performed for political emancipation and social and humanitarian activities performed with an idea that people of the world will be happy are also illusory because the basic principle is the bodily conception, which is illusory. Whatever we desire or perform under the bodily conception is all illusion. In other words, Lord Viṣṇu informed Pṛthu Mahārāja that although the sacrificial performances set an example for ordinary people, there was no need for such sacrificial performances as far as his personal self was concerned. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.45):

*traī-guṇya-viṣayā vedā
nistrai-guṇyo bhavāṛjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho
niryoga-kṣema ātmavān*

“The *Vedas* mainly deal with the subject of the three modes of material nature. Rise above these modes, O Arjuna. Be transcendental to all of them. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the self.”

The ritualistic performances recommended in the *Vedas* mainly depend on the three modes of material nature. Consequently Arjuna was advised to transcend the Vedic activities. 6 The activities Arjuna was advised to perform were the transcendental activities of devotional service.

6 असंसक्तः शरीरेऽस्मिन्नमुनोत्पादिते गृहे
अपत्ये द्रविणे वापि कः कुर्यान्ममतां बुधः

*asamsaktaḥ śarīre 'sminn
amunotpādite gr̥he
apatye draviṇe vāpi
kaḥ kuryān mamatām budhaḥ*

- 6) Rather than Vedic ritualistic performances, what activities was Lord Viṣṇu advising King Pṛthu to perform?
7) Why does one not factually satisfy the Lord through Vedic ritualistic ceremonies?

asamsaktaḥ – being unattached; *śarīre* – to the body; *asmin* – this; *amunā* – by such a bodily conception; *utpādite* – produced; *gr̥he* – house; *apatye* – children; *draviṇe* – wealth; *vā* – or; *api* – also; *kaḥ* – who; *kuryāt* – would do; *mamatām* – affinity; *budhaḥ* – learned person.

How can a highly learned person who has absolutely no affinity for the bodily conception of life be affected by the bodily conception in regard to house, children, wealth, and similar other bodily productions?

PURPORT: The Vedic ritualistic ceremonies are certainly meant to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu. 7 However, by such activities one does not factually satisfy the Lord. Rather, with the sanction of the Lord, one tries to satisfy one's own senses. In other words, materialists, who are especially interested in sense gratification, are given permission or license to enjoy sense gratification by executing the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies. That is called *traī-guṇya-viṣayā vedāḥ*. The Vedic performances are based on the three modes of material nature. Those who are elevated above the material condition are not at all interested in such Vedic performances. Rather, they are interested in the higher duties of transcendental loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such devotional service is called *nistraiguṇya*. Devotional service to the Lord has nothing to do with the material conception of bodily comfort.

7 एकः शुद्धः स्वयंज्योतिर्निर्गुणोऽसौ गुणाश्रयः
सर्वगोऽनावृतः साक्षी निरात्मात्मात्मनः परः

*ekaḥ śuddhaḥ svayam-jyotir
nirguṇo 'sau guṇāśrayaḥ
sarva-go 'nāvṛtaḥ sāksī
nirātmātmāmanaḥ paraḥ*

ekaḥ – one; *śuddhaḥ* – pure; *svayam* – self; *jyotiḥ* – effulgent; *nirguṇaḥ* – without material qualifications; *asau* – that; *guṇa-āśrayaḥ* – the reservoir of good qualities; *sarva-gaḥ* – able to go everywhere; *anāvṛtaḥ* – without being covered by matter; *sāksī* – witness; *nirātmā* – without another self; *ātma-ātmanaḥ* – to the body and mind; *paraḥ* – transcendental.

The individual soul is one, pure, self-effulgent, and, though devoid of material qualities, the reservoir of all good qualities. All-pervading, not covered by matter, that witness of all activities is completely distinct from other living entities and transcendental to all embodied souls.

[Continued in the next issue.]

The Right Source of Knowledge

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and biochemist Thoudam Singh, PhD, took place in Bhubaneswar, India, on February 3, 1977.

Dr. Singh: Śrīla Prabhupāda, many people would probably agree with what you say about getting knowledge. The ascending path – pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps, if you will – has to be always uncertain and incomplete. But when you can get your knowledge from a genuine authority who already possesses higher knowledge and experience – that path, the descending path, is much better. The preferable path for acquiring knowledge is the descending one.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. *Avaroha panthā*, the descending path, is naturally superior. Why? Because *aham ādir hi devānām* – this path of knowledge starts from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself,

the origin of all knowledge. And it descends from the Lord through His bona fide representatives, godly personalities such as Brahmā, Nārada, and Vyāsa. They're all *devas*, godly personalities. And Kṛṣṇa says, *aham ādir hi devānām*: "I am the very origin of all these godly personalities." Therefore, this Vedic knowledge is coming directly from Kṛṣṇa through the system of *paramparā*, or disciplic succession.

And the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa's book, is the same thing. Through this book – the Lord's literary incarnation – His knowledge is coming down to us still. To facilitate our knowledge-acquiring process, the Lord Himself is speaking

chemical, nonphysical.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is correct. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: life is nonchemical, nonphysical.

Dr. Singh: Yes, and we want to prove it on a purely experimental basis. It's a very simple experiment. We germinate some seeds, like barley or rice, and we calculate the amount of, let's say, calcium. Now, as a place to germinate the seed on, we use a piece of ashless, pure-cellulose filter paper, completely devoid of calcium. First, we calculate the amount of calcium present before the seed germinates. Then we germinate the seed with deionized water, again completely devoid of calcium. Once the seed

and help shed light on the spiritual dimension.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: In essence, these experiments prove that life produces matter. Spirit produces matter.

Dr. Singh: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not that matter produces life – no. This is established: matter does not produce life. It is quite the opposite. Life – spirit – produces matter. Only when there is spirit can these increased quantities of calcium or iron come forth.

Dr. Singh: There's another nice experiment that was done by a German scientist named Hauschka. He was studying the interaction of moonlight and plants. So he measured the amount of a particular element in, say, a flower. I don't exactly remember. And he measured the amount of that element present in the plant according to the waxing and the waning of the moon. As it turns out the element increases in the light of the full moon.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa confirms that He supplies the succulence, the "juice of life," to vegetables – through the light of the moon.

Dr. Singh: Surely. And Hauschka's experiment demonstrates this whole phenomenon very graphically. You understand – a curve showing this element rising and falling with the waxing and waning of the moon. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, by the Lord's natural arrangement the moonlight is full of living entities who interact most beneficially with the vegetation. And similarly, the *brahmajyotir*, or universal effulgence, is full of living entities.

Dr. Singh: So these phenomena are beyond science.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not beyond. You do not know that science.

Dr. Singh: By "beyond science," I meant beyond our present science, our present scientific knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Your present science is imperfect. But this additional dimension we are discussing is within the realm of science. This is spiritual science. 🌐

Not that matter produces life – no. This is established. It is quite the opposite. Life – spirit – produces matter.

directly to us. His own words are recorded for us in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. There Kṛṣṇa speaks directly to the human being Arjuna, and through him directly to us. Therefore the *Bhagavad-gītā* is the right source of knowledge.

Dr. Singh: Yesterday a doctor of agricultural science visited me. He has his PhD from the University of Missouri, and we talked together for a long time. In fact, we were talking about doing some experiments together. One experiment would be to prove that the chemical reactions within the living body are different from the normal chemical reactions that we know.

In fact some famous experiments have already touched on this very point. A French scientist named Kervran says his findings are beyond our present knowledge of chemistry. In other words, the chemical reactions within the living body are so vastly different from ordinary reactions; they prove that life is non-

germinates, we analyze the calcium content.

What Kervran found is this: The amount of calcium is much increased. So we do not know where that calcium is coming from. And this phenomenon is beyond our present knowledge of chemistry.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The soul has entered and has germinated the seed – and this has produced the increased calcium.

Dr. Singh: Yes. This increased calcium has to be coming from somewhere. There has to be a cause.

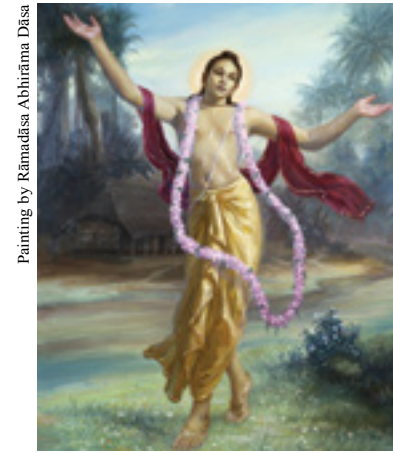
Śrīla Prabhupāda: That cause is the soul.

Dr. Singh: There's another nice experiment that uses Spanish moss, a plant common in Florida, where it grows on many kinds of trees. We found that this Spanish moss also grows on copper wire – and when it does, amazingly it produces iron. So there are many intriguing experiments. The U.S. Department of Agriculture can perform these

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.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.



Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

Month of Govinda

(February 1 – March 2)

MARCH

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

Month of Viṣṇu

(March 3–31)

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

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

22 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the 11th century.

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

27 – Kāmadā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans.

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

Month of Madhusūdana

(April 1–30)

APRIL

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

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

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

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

24 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance

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

26 – Mohinī Ekādaśī

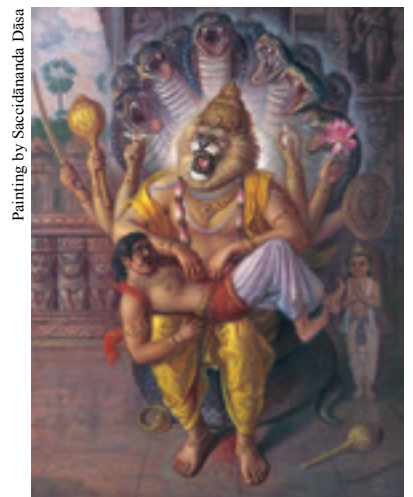
Fasting from grains and beans.

27 – Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

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

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

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



Lord Nṛsimhadeva

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S BOMBAY OFFICE

Disciples' memories of the first seven years in Bombay with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

by Lokanāth Swami



THE question generally arises why Śrīla Prabhupāda chose Bombay as his office. An office is a business organization's headquarters, and unarguably the best place for a business is a big city. In this regard, he followed his predecessor's precedent: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta said that temples should be in the cities as bases for preaching to the mass of people. A beautiful temple in this metropolis, Prabhupāda hoped, would interest the Bombayites in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and give them the opportunity to make their lives successful. In the

Excerpted from *Bombay Is My Office: Memorable Days with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Bombay*, a memoir. Copyright 2018 by Padayatra Press. Available from Amazon.in.

course of opening more than a hundred centers and temples worldwide, he wanted a fine temple in Bombay.

Strategically, it was in Bombay that Prabhupāda arranged to go to New York to start the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. He booked his passage there, and there he shipped his books to Cochin during the summer of 1965, for pickup by the ship he would travel on. In early August, he started his long journey from Bombay, by taking a train to Calcutta to board the *Jaladuta*. His *Jaladuta Diary* mentions the date and train number. He was in transit in Calcutta for ten days and visited Mayapur.

Prabhupāda went to New York, the most populated American city, which exerts considerable influence on media, commerce, research, technology, education, entertainment, and many other fields. After starting his movement there, Prabhupāda, with a similar motive, returned to Bombay, in 1970–71, to launch it in India. Bombay is India's largest city. Being a port, it has at times experienced unconstrained economic growth, with much foreign influence, and has been most susceptible to



Śrīla Prabhupāda greets Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī (above) in their temporary temple on Hare Krishna Land in Juhu. At left, he walks with disciples in Bombay during the same time period (early to mid-1970s).

change. The population in the early 1970s was six million, and by 2015, twenty-two million.

In Śrīla Prabhupāda's twelve years of worldwide traveling and preaching, nowhere else did he spend as much time as Bombay, though he passed large amounts of time in Vrindavan, Mayapur, New York, and Los Angeles. Bombay was his Indian headquarters. He was heard to say, "What Bombay does, the rest of India follows." Prabhupāda's main motive was preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India and the rest of the world. In the business of

preaching worldwide and across India, Prabhupāda excelled as much as an astute businessman, not forgetting for a moment that his business was for Kṛṣṇa. He carefully planned that Bombay become his office.

When Prabhupāda was in Juhu in the early 1960s to see his patron Srimati Sumati Morarji, the director of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, about two blocks away from her home he noticed a large plot of land and prayed to Kṛṣṇa, "If you ever give me this land, I will build a wonderful temple for You." He devoted time and made deter-

mined efforts to secure this land in Juhu and build a temple for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. On Prabhupāda's behalf, Kṛṣṇa tolerated staying in a crude shack just to fulfill His pure devotee's promise. It was as though Kṛṣṇa had signed a contract with Prabhupāda to let his dream become a reality. The Juhu temple will always remain the symbol of struggle and triumph – in many respects, a Prabhupāda institution in and of itself.

The land acquisition in Juhu was for the purpose of allowing Bombayites to engage in a Kṛṣṇa conscious

Earlier in Bombay

As early as 1935, Śrīla Prabhupāda had a presence in Bombay. Three years earlier, he had been initiated and given his spiritual name, Abhay Charanaravinda. *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* describes how he then moved to Bombay on business and met his godbrothers there and assisted them in finding a better center. In July of 1935 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī arrived in Bombay to establish the Deity worship. While expressing pleasure at the



Vaiṣṇava Devī Dāsi



way of life. In his epic struggle for the land, Prabhupāda demonstrated his leadership as a businessman. He was undaunted, uncompromising, and perseverant to the end. As a businessman fighting for Kṛṣṇa and not himself, he stood firm always. To get the Juhu property for Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda displayed a warlike, defiant mood after atrocities perpetrated by Mr. Nair, the property owner, and his wife. Yet when Mrs. Nair came to surrender the land to him after her husband's fatal heart attack, Prabhupāda accepted her as a daughter. Politeness, humility, tolerance, and determination were Śrīla Prabhupāda's leadership trademarks. He was a perfect gentleman, a true friend, and everyone's well-wisher.

work done by his disciples, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta was informed that Abhay had tirelessly raised funds and done much of the work. Abhay was not present at this moment. He was very involved as a householder and did not live at the center, but someone suggested that he become the president of the temple.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "It is better that he is living outside your company. He will do. When the time comes, he will do everything himself. You do not have to recommend him."

Bombay was home to many important industrialists, some of whom Prabhupāda met before going to America. He sold his *Bhāgavatams* to them, confident that if he suc-

ceeded in America, then they would willingly give him more substantial support. This was his plan all along: to bring Western Vaiṣṇavas to India to inspire the Indians to take the movement of Lord Caitanya more seriously.

How and why Śrīla Prabhupāda successfully established Bombay as his office is perfectly captured by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami in his biography of Prabhupāda: "He had incorporated ISKCON in India with the main branch in Bombay. All other branches of ISKCON in India, therefore, were legally part of the Bombay incorporation. In Bombay, Prabhupāda had cultivated more lawyers and businessmen as life members and earned more friends of



Śrīla Prabhupāda ladles ghee into the sacred fire (above) during the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Juhu temple. At far left, Śrīmatī Devī Dāsi helps Prabhupāda lower substances into the pit. At left, Prabhupāda has just unveiled the plaque commemorating the event.

his Society than in any other city in India. So whenever he was in Bombay, he often sought legal advice, not just about the Bombay center but also about his other affairs in India. Since Bombay was a modern city with professional and office facilities on a level with many Western cities, Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to locate the Indian division of his Bhaktivedanta Book Trust there, for printing Hindi translations of his books as well as English versions for the Indian market. Bombay, unlike Vrindavan and Mayapur, was not a holy place but a bustling, wealthy city. ISKCON's



lot of energy and the reassurance to develop as a leader. He made a lot of life members and eventually became the temple president.

In his 1972 homage to Prabhupāda, Girirāja wrote, "I sometimes experienced chastisement by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and sometimes my mind and senses revolted, but he would pacify me with his clear explanations, such as in this letter to me: 'It is the duty of the spiritual master to find fault with his students so that they may make progress, not that he should always be praising them. So if you find some criticism, kindly accept

it in that spirit. I am only interested in that you, along with all my other students, should become Kṛṣṇa conscious.'"

Śrīdhara Swami, from Canada, recalled his own attachment to Bombay: "I think I was in Bombay longer than anyone. Even after becoming a *sannyāsī*, I came here every year for at least three or four months. It was Śrīla Prabhupāda's office, and I was an office boy. It was also my office, and I could do things. In the 1980s, I set up the Food for Life program and the Bhīṣma donor program. Although I visited several cit-

ies in India, in Bombay I was in my element."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Bombay office in its earliest years was not an architectural wonder for managerial and administrative work. There was no suitable structure at the beginning, yet he referred to that place, with the bare minimum of modern equipment, as his office. Prabhupāda was a spiritual ambassador, and his office was a spiritual embassy set up for his mission. From the sacred space he called his office, he was devoted to directing and coordinating its activities.



VISHVA DAVI DAST

biggest donors lived there. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda's demeanor was entirely transcendental in Bombay, and his activities were often the same as elsewhere – speaking on *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and worshipping the Deity – nevertheless, Prabhupāda called it his office. And although it was his office, he wanted a temple there."

Setting Up the Office

Madhudviṣa, a devotee from America, was the temple president in the beginning. He recalled, "Prabhupāda

was right into the negotiations for the buildings, telling me how much to offer the builders. When you saw him lecture, you would just see a saint on the platform, but he was much more than that. He showed us how to deal with business matters and practical things. One thing in Bombay was the importance of steady management. Girirāja was a steady manager who would do anything."

Śrīla Prabhupāda definitely saw Girirāja, also from America, as a committed disciple and appreciated him, and that really gave Girirāja a

Śrīla Prabhupāda on the phone (top) is a fitting depiction of his time in Bombay. Above, Prabhupāda leads a kīrtana while visiting Surat with his disciples in December 1970. Right: the temple under construction, with the temporary temple at the lower left.





One of many rooftop gatherings in Bombay (above left). At left, Prabhupāda lectures in the temporary temple. Above: a morning walk on Juhu Beach. At right, the author assists as Prabhupāda passes out prasāda to guests.



Āditya Dāsī, a disciple from Bombay, served as his typist, and she recalled: “The electricity was unreliable and poorly wired. Sometimes we got a shock when plugging in the typewriter, and sometimes the typewriter short-circuited. At

first, we had several offices at a flat in the Chand Society building. One room was for both the typist (me) and the accountant; one room was for the president; and the third room was for Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, our Governing Body Commis-

sioner in India. Later, at Hare Krishna Land, the *brahmacārī* accountant and I shared an office in the middle of the *brahmacārī āśrama* on the roof. Within India, Bombay was the legal office for all the temples. It worked with the Income Tax Depart-

ment and handled the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) transactions. It was both the legal headquarters for ISKCON India and the BBT headquarters.”

When the mother of seventeen-year-old Kṣudhi Dāsa came to Bombay to take Kṣudhi back to America, Prabhupāda heard that she was a big corporate lawyer. He got her involved in assisting him with the legalities pertaining especially to BBT matters.

Gurudāsa described how Śrīla Prabhupāda had him register ISKCON in Bombay, because he had done that in London: “We got a lawyer. I went to the clerk to register the deed and later told him we needed



to make one change. He requested a bribe, but I threatened to have him declared incompetent, so he adjusted the deed.”

Once Prabhupāda had ISKCON registered and was committed to the land, he began to unfold his vision for a grand project in Bombay. He was determined to establish Hare Krishna Land in Bombay and did not adopt a mendicant’s withdrawn attitude. He was taking responsibility for thousands of disciples

across the world. And while devotees around the world were attracted to hear of Prabhupāda’s plan for the Bombay center, devotees who had already been experiencing the austerities and challenges in Juhu received the news with mixed feelings. For some, to envision a temple and a hotel emerging from the bush strip was inconceivable.

I recall that when I endeavored to collect rice for the *prasāda*-distribution program by going from

door to door, I carried a drawing of a fourteen-story building in my preaching kit. I showed this drawing whenever someone would welcome or listen to me. I said that we were planning to build a tall hotel and guesthouse. This seemed an extremely ambitious plan even to the more enthusiastic listeners. Of course, it turned out that the twin towers of ISKCON’s guesthouse ended up being five stories high.

It was from Bombay that

Prabhupāda envisioned spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India during the first years the Western devotees were there, even though precise and exact details were yet to be arranged. It was in or through Bombay that invitations were received and accepted and Prabhupāda subsequently sent or accompanied his devotees to specific destinations.

Mālatī, a devotee from America, recalled: “It was not like he said, ‘OK, you are going here.’ We didn’t know where we were going to go, and I don’t think Prabhupāda knew. We depended on invitations. Once

there was an invitation from Surat, and it turned out to be a fantastic experience. We were going to Surat, and we only vaguely knew the name of the town. Of course, after we were there, we never forgot Surat. At the time, we were going somewhere every so often, and we didn’t even know where the places were. We would just get on a train, and when it was time to get off, we got off.”

Yadubara, from America, remembered doing a lot of service for Prabhupāda’s sake: “I was making life members, cooking, doing Deity worship. I was doing many,



A large banner in downtown Bombay (above) advertises the 1971 Hare Kṛṣṇa festival at Cross Maidan (right), a former parade ground. Above right, another Hare Kṛṣṇa program draws a large audience.



Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters at Hare Krishna Land, Juhu (left). Above, the temple spires form the backdrop for a recent function. At right, in 1977 residents who still lived at Hare Krishna Land join the devotees for a Sunday kīrtana at Juhu Beach.



many different things. I was totally engaged – that is probably my strongest memory. I was sleeping only four or five hours a night. When all the devotees went to Vrindavan for the *Nectar of Devotion* lectures, I had to stay back and keep the temple together. I lamented that I didn't get to go, but I was actually happy to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda in separation. I sacrificed to stay in Bombay, and he expressed his appreciation later, when I met him in Calcutta."

A devotee who often conversed

with Prabhupāda about the Bombay project was Surabhi. Originally from Holland, where he saw Prabhupāda on a Dutch TV show, he recalled searching for the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in Bombay the first time he went to India. He was an inexperienced architect, but Prabhupāda told him that Kṛṣṇa had sent him to design temples and he could start right now. Prabhupāda provided a pencil and paper, and Surabhi sat down in the next room and began to draw.

Surabhi said, "Every so often

Śrīla Prabhupāda would come out of his room, look over my shoulders, and nod. He would say, 'That is nice. Nice.' For me, this was the beginning of the Juhu Beach temple."

Although the Rādhā-Rāsabihārī temple opened in January of 1978, two months after Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world, he did spend time living in his spacious rooms atop one of the two hotel towers. Seeing the progress, he felt happy that the truly palatial temple was almost ready.

Bombay Office Activities

With the help of others, I've compiled a timeline of the recorded activities that took place at the Bombay office. Alongside his ongoing translation of books, Śrīla Prabhupāda delivered or took part in 433 lectures, morning walks, and conversations. Prabhupāda spent some 477 days in Bombay. It is usual for the CEO of an organization to be in his office. As an astute transcendental businessman, he



The deities of Hare Krishna Land: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī, Lalitā, and Viśākhā (left); Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (bottom left); Sītā-Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Hanumān (below).

oversaw considerable numbers of national and international affairs from his office.

“Holding all of this activity together is Prabhupāda,” wrote Professor Thomas J. Hopkins in a Foreword to Hari Sauri’s *Transcendental Diary*, “an 80-year-old Indian guru but declining physical strength and unbounded spiritual and intellectual energy, summoning his resources – or, as he would say, Kṛṣṇa’s resources – to meet the daily needs of his disciples and, more broadly, the needs of a world in spiritual crisis. He deals with his disciples, with correspondence from abroad, with curious and mainly uninformed reporters, with visiting scholars, with fellow Indians, and with a succession of issues and problems that emerge from day to day.”

Lokanāth Swami is ISKCON’s Padayātrā Minister, the author of ten books, and a longtime contributor to Back to Godhead. He was one of the first young Indians in Bombay to respond to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s call to India’s youth to join ISKCON.



ISKCON's Presence In Greater Mumbai

*A brief look at temples and other projects
by which devotees are spreading Kṛṣṇa
consciousness in this leading metropolis.*

by Pārijāta Devī Dāsī

The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī Temple

In the 1970s, Śrīla Prabhupāda struggled against all odds to build a temple near Juhu Beach, firmly believing it would provide wonderful opportunities for the citizens of Mumbai to develop their Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Forty years later, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī daily attract thousands to Their magnificent marble temple, a spiritual oasis for the city's residents and tourists alike.

The initial project included a temple, restaurant, and guesthouse. Since 2005, it has included the Heaven on Earth building, with multipurpose halls for spiritual education and Vedic ceremonies, a library, a larger restaurant, and an underground parking area. Nowadays, at least a million people a year attend the temple's splendid festivals, take seminars on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and relish free *prasāda* meals. There are now more than 38,000 life patrons, 115 celibate priests living at the temple, and over 8,000 youth and congregation members who regularly visit and offer services.

Nilachal Dham

ISKCON Juhu manages the Nilachal Dham farm, seventy-five miles north of Mumbai. It is a spiritual retreat and a source of fresh cow's milk, fruits, vegetables, and flowers for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Mission School

With more than nine hundred children, the Bhaktivedanta Swami Mission School, founded in 1988 at ISKCON Juhu, is now located in a nearby huge housing complex. Its quality education system offers the future generation a unique opportunity for social, intellectual, and spiritual development.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī Temple complex (Heaven on Earth building, foreground)



Nilachal Dham

The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha Temple

The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement over the years has flourished in other parts of Mumbai. The development of ISKCON Chowpatty in south Bombay was a fulfillment of a prophecy Śrīla Prabhupāda made. On October 18, 1973, he attended a conference at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and gave the keynote address. His secretary at the time, Śyāmasundara Dāsa, recalls: “After the lecture, Prabhupāda stood on the steps of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, pointed down the street, and said, ‘We should have a temple here.’ By the inconceivable power

of his merciful glance and desire, at that spot there is now the splendid sandstone temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha, with its thousands of guests and members.”

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha were installed there on July 18, 1988, and the temple has grown to house 200 resident college-educated monks, who serve a congregation of 3,000 people. ISKCON Chowpatty manages Tulasi Books; Bhaktivedanta Hospital, which opened in 1998 on Mira Road; and Govardhan Eco-village, an award-winning eighty-acre model farm community and retreat center seventy miles north of Mumbai.



The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī Temple

On September 14, 1986, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī were installed by a group of congregation devotees in an apartment in Bhayander, a northern suburb, and later moved to a tempo-



Ranjan Ghosh (Jagannātha Dāsa)



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī Temple

rary temple on nearby Mira Road. Almost exactly twenty-nine years later, thanks to the sincere endeavors of more than 1,500 congregation devotees, a large new marble temple on the property opened for the deities on September 26, 2015. The temple is a short walk from Bhaktivedanta Hospital.

include a college, a guesthouse, an auditorium, an Ayurveda center, and a home for the elderly. 🙏

Pārijāta Devī Dāsī is the director of communications for the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī Temple.



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha Temple

The Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanmohanjī Temple

Since 2009, in Navi Mumbai (north-east of Mumbai), ISKCON Khar-gar has been developing the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanmohanjī Temple and The Glory of Maharashtra project. Spread over nine acres, this will



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanmohanjī Temple (artist's conception)

*How to deal
with a cynic,
including the one
who resides
within us.*

SEE CRITICISM WITH A CRITICAL EYE

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

*jāḍyam hrīmati gaṇyate vrata-rucau dambhaḥ śucau kaitavam
śūre nirghṛṇatā munau vimatitā dainyam priyālāpini
tejasviny avaliptatā mukharatā vaktary aśaktiḥ sthire
tat ko nāma guṇo bhavet sa guṇinām yo durjanair nāṅkitāḥ*

jāḍyam – dullness; *hrīmati* – in a gentle person; *gaṇyate* – is perceived; *vrata-rucau* – in a strict follower of vows; *dambhaḥ* – pride; *śucau* – in an honest person; *kaitavam* – pretense; *śūre* – in a brave person; *nirghṛṇatā* – cruelty; *munau* – in a reticent person; *vimatitā* – foolishness; *dainyam* – bootlicking; *priyālāpini* – in a soft-spoken person; *tejasvini* – in an influential person; *avaliptatā* – haughtiness; *mukharatā* – talkativeness; *vaktari* – in an expert speaker; *aśaktiḥ* – apathy; *sthire* – in a steady person; *tat* – now; *ko nāma* – is there any; *guṇo* – virtue; *bhavet* – existing; *sa* – that; *guṇinām* – of the virtuous; *yaḥ* – which; *durjanaiḥ* – by the miscreants; *na-aṅkitāḥ* – has not been maligned.

“Some people perceive the gentle as dull, the strict as pretentious, the honest as hypocritical, the brave as cruel, the reticent as foolish, the soft-spoken as bootlickers, the influential as haughty, the eloquent as talkative, and the steady as unambitious. Is there even one virtue of the virtuous that these faultfinders have not maligned?”

– *Nīti-śataka* of Bhartṛhari, Verse 54

CRITICISM IS among the most powerful influencers in our life. It can guide us to become better, but it can also wound our will to become better. When we receive criticism delivered insensitively or immoderately, it can damage our foundational sense of self-worth. If that sense is destroyed, we lose the confidence and the will to improve, just as a building collapses when its foundation is destroyed. Even when people criticize us for faults we actually have, still it can demoralize us. But when people criticize us for faults we don't have, it can infuriate or even devastate us. And critics sometimes indulge in such unjustified criticism by giving a negative spin to our good qualities. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.28) states that expertise in insulting others characterizes those working in the lowest of the three modes of nature – ignorance. Illustrating such perverse expertise, this verse from Bhartṛhari, one of the greatest Sanskrit grammarians in Indian history, gives several examples of how critics perceive good qualities negatively.

jāḍyam hrīmati (The gentle are called dull): Gentleness is a virtue, but habitual critics deride it as lethargy that prevents people from being assertive. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto One, describes how the gentle sage

Śukadeva Gosvāmī wandered about through towns and villages in a spiritual trance, indifferent to his surroundings. Not understanding his transcendental absorption, common people pursued him till he entered an assembly of sages. When that illustrious assembly offered him a seat of honor, the common people shrank back in surprise.

vrata-rucau dambhaḥ (The strict are called pretentious): Strictness in honoring one's vows is laudable, but critics deride it as pretentiousness, wherein one wants to attract adulation and praise. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Eleven, narrates the story of a *brāhmaṇa* from a place called Avanti. He had led a distressingly miserly life, and had lost everything in a chain of adversities. That misfortune had inspired within him realization and renunciation. Resolving to focus on spiritual reality, he had taken a vow of silence (*mauna-vrata*). But common people, obsessed with his past stinginess, refused to acknowledge his spiritually evolved state and its concomitant firm determination. They derided his avowed silence as being like that of a crane. According to a traditional parable, a crane that couldn't catch fish pretended to be a renouncer and stood motionless on the bank of a lake. When some fish, laying down their guard, came near it, the crane immediately devoured them.



Painting by Prasanna Das

King Rahūgaṇa criticizes the transcendentalist Jaḍa Bharata, who, forced to carry the King's palanquin, is walking hesitatingly to avoid stepping on ants.

ing as blinkered peaceniks, condemn such valor as cruelty. When Kṛṣṇa, despite being a teenage boy, killed the tyrannical demon Kaṁsa after overpowering an array of murderous wrestlers, His achievement was stupendously heroic. But the demon Jarāsandha, a relative of Kaṁsa, saw His action as cruel. He labeled Kṛṣṇa as the killer of his own maternal uncle. Jarāsandha conveniently neglected the reality that Kaṁsa had not once acted affectionately towards Kṛṣṇa, as behooved a maternal uncle. He had killed Kṛṣṇa's six brothers, arrested His parents, and sent several demons to murder Him. Surviving all these attacks, Kṛṣṇa had heroically turned the tables on Kaṁsa. Labeling such heroism as barbarism was an insult to the truth.

munau vimatitā (The reticent are called foolish): Choosing one's words carefully and speaking sparingly is a good quality, but such reticence is often criticized as foolishness. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Five, describes the story of the great sage Jaḍa Bharata, who habitually remained silent to avoid getting entangled with materialistic people. When he was conscripted into carrying the palanquin of the king Rahūgaṇa, he still maintained his silence. The king, seeing his unresponsiveness, thought him an ignorant fool. When the sage, not wanting to step on ants, walked haltingly and his jerky movements jolted the palanquin, the king castigated him. Only when Jaḍa Bharata opened his mouth and spoke profound philosophy did the king realize that he had been hugely mistaken in his assessment of the sage.

dainyam priyālāpini (The soft-spoken are called fawners): When considerate people, desiring to avoid confrontation, speak conciliatorily, critics see such overtures as expressions of powerlessness. The *Mahābhārata*, *Udyoga-parva*, describes how Kṛṣṇa acted as a peace envoy on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas. He went

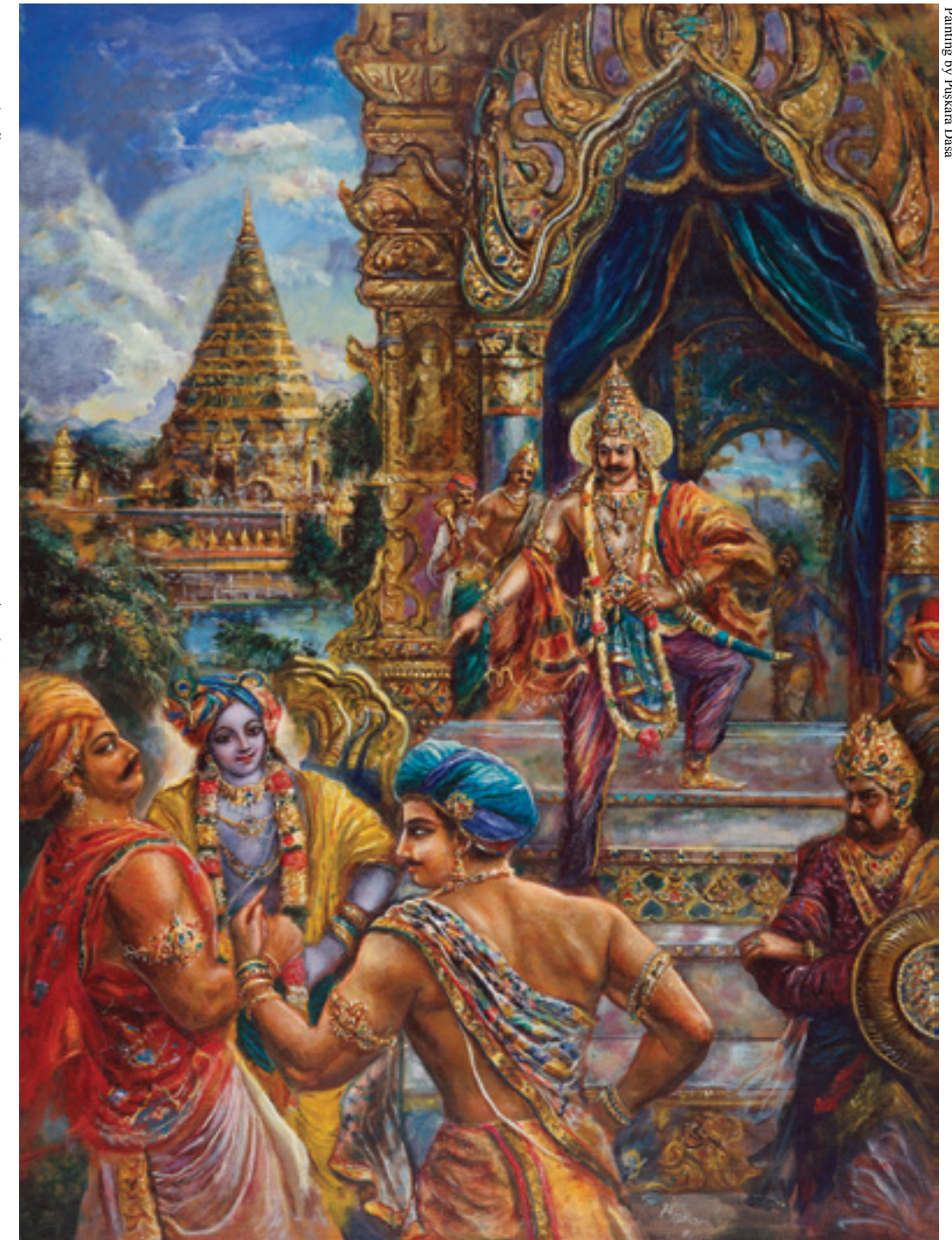
to the Kauravas to offer them peace on the most accommodating terms. But the Kaurava prince Duryodhana saw Kṛṣṇa's sweet words of conciliation as signs of weakness and became increasingly adamant and arrogant till finally he tried to arrest Kṛṣṇa. Of course, Kṛṣṇa was more than equal to such tricks – He foiled Duryodhana's plan by exhibiting His insuperable universal form.

tejasviny avaliptatā (The influential are called haughty): Some people are celebrated because they are talented and dedicated – they have earned their laurels. But instead of giving credit where it is due, critics condemn such luminaries as showoffs. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, describes how Rāma accepted as his ally Rāvaṇa's brother Vibhīṣaṇa. To seal their alliance, Rāma, using seawater, coronated Vibhīṣaṇa as the king of Lanka, which was currently ruled by Rāvaṇa. Instead of seeing the coronation as a warning of things to come, the proud Rāvaṇa mocked it as a haughty show by Rāma, dismissing it as one pauper installing another pauper as a king. He conveniently neglected the facts: This so-called pauper had singlehandedly annihilated his fourteen-thousand-strong demon army led by some of his

most formidable commanders; and this pauper's one monkey-messenger had singlehandedly burnt half of Lanka.

mukharatā vaktary (The eloquent are called talkative): Some people

can speak fluently and brilliantly, but critics deride them as egotists. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Ten, describes how Indra, the head of the gods, labeled Kṛṣṇa as talkative when He eruditely instructed the residents of Vrindavan to stop



Painting by Puskar Das

King Jarāsandha (on the steps) criticizes Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Arjuna and Bhīma, by saying that Kṛṣṇa is a coward who has fled Mathura, His capital, to take shelter of the sea.

worshipping Indra and instead worship Govardhan Hill.

aśaktiḥ sthira (The steady are called unambitious): People who are steady and content are deemed powerless and apathetic by critics. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Five, presents the narrative of Kṛṣṇa who in the later stages of His life renounced His kingdom and lived in utter penury, not even attending to basic bodily needs. Some people mistook Him to be a good-for-nothing, not knowing that just a short while earlier He had competently ruled a huge kingdom.

No Escape from Critics

How critics spare no one is conveyed in this verse by stating that people at both ends of the spectrum are criticized. Those who talk less are criticized, as are those who talk more. Those who are conciliatory are criticized, as are those who are assertive. Those who are content are criticized, as are those who are enterprising. The verse therefore concludes with the rhetorical question: What quality hasn't been panned by critics?

While dealing with such unsparing, unreasonable critics, we need to know that people don't see the world as it is; they see it as they are. Based on their natures, some people get along with others and some don't – that's just the way people are. Accordingly, some people may not like us, no matter what we do. Such people will see negatively even the good we do. The only way to deal with them, as implied in the verse's rhetorical conclusion, is to neglect them.

And while we are discussing how to deal with cynics, we need to be aware that one such cynic resides inside us too. That is, we ourselves may, based on our nature, find certain behaviors among others intolerable and criticize others unwarrantedly. The *Gītā* (16.2) cautions us against pandering to this inner cynic by reminding us that the godly are characterized



Lord Rṣabhadeva, roaming the world as an avadhūta, a great saintly person without material cares, is mistreated by ordinary people wherever He goes.

by an aversion to faultfinding.

Returning to our discussion about outer cynics, neglecting them entirely is difficult because we are social beings. We need a supportive circle that encourages and appreciates us. Our social needs remain even when we start practicing spiritual life. Materialists are usually critical of spiritualists. So, if we are to persevere on the devotional path, we need the association of devotees. When we get a sense of belonging in devotee circles, we can develop the

necessary thick skin to endure the inevitable criticisms of materialists.

Different Definitions Of Success in Devotion

Soberingly, however, not all devotee association will thicken our skin – some may tear it. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.228) states that we need to associate with likeminded devotees, or more specifically with devotees who have the same purpose

as us (*śajātyāśaya-snigdha-śrī-bhagavad-bhakta-sangah*). Put in contemporary idiom, we need the association of devotees who share our definitions of success.

If we feel inspired to study scripture deeply but are surrounded by devotees who are inspired to build a temple for Kṛṣṇa, we may find ourselves covertly and overtly criticized for not having a service attitude, for being overly intellectual *jñānīs* who don't do anything practical for Kṛṣṇa. Conversely, if we feel inspired to build a temple for Kṛṣṇa but are surrounded by devotees inspired to study scripture, we may find ourselves criticized for having no appreciation for scripture, for thinking more of the structure of the temple than of the Lord who resides at its heart. These examples are probably extremes, but they illustrate what can happen when neophyte devotees see *bhakti* only in terms of their particular definitions of success. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.47: *na tad bhakteṣu cānyeṣu*) indicates that neophyte devotees regard only devotees belonging to their group as successful.

Bhakti is so inclusive that it allows us to serve Kṛṣṇa in various ways, thus accommodating multiple definitions of success. In fact, it doesn't just accommodate multiple definitions; it endorses them. The *Gītā* (18.46) urges us to worship Kṛṣṇa through our own work, and then (18.47) insists that serving according to our own nature is far better than serving according to another's nature. Despite *bhakti's* inclusiveness, neophyte devotees sometimes hold that their definition of success in devotion is the only definition of success. Claiming that one's way is the only way is the doorway to fanaticism. To steer clear of such fanaticism, we need to recognize that amidst differences in the practice of devotion, the pertinent question is not what is right or wrong, but what is right for me.

To understand what definition of

devotional success is right for us, we need guidance and introspection: guidance of our venerable spiritual mentors, and introspection for understanding our nature. And once we have dedicated ourselves to pursuing a particular form of devotional service, to sustain our commitment we absolutely need the association of likeminded devotees. In such association, both encouragement and criticism spur us to improve. Encouragement inspires us to move ahead faster, and criticism inspires us to do the necessary course correction. When we feel accepted, valued, and loved by our spiritual friends and guides, then criticism coming

too have the responsibility to offer criticism judiciously. For the scalpel to heal, it needs to be operated by an expert – and be expertly operated. Just because one is a surgeon doesn't mean that any cut will be therapeutic. Similarly, for criticism to do good, it needs to be offered by spiritual experts who accurately perceive the problem and the solution. And they need to deliver it sensitively so that those corrected feel valued and encouraged, not devalued and disheartened.

The biggest danger from criticism is that it may extinguish our inner fire, our drive to do something worthwhile in Kṛṣṇa's service. When crit-

The biggest danger from criticism is that it may extinguish our inner fire, our drive to do something worthwhile in Kṛṣṇa's service.

from them, far from disheartening us, inspires us to improve.

Constructive Criticism From Caring Guides

And criticism is sometimes necessary. Even Bhartṛhari's examples of criticism can be true. That is, some aggressive people may be cruel, for example. But he refers here to unjustified critics, or cynics. Far different from such cynicism is constructive criticism.

The *bhakti* tradition compares the cutting words of sages to a surgeon's scalpel. Just as the scalpel cuts off unhealthy tissue, so too do the corrective words of our trustworthy spiritual guides destroy our misconceptions. Just as avoiding surgery can worsen the disease, so too can fleeing from corrections aggravate our illusions. Therefore, when we get constructive criticism from our well-wishing mentors, we need to humbly and honestly introspect and improve.

At the same time, the mentors

icism starts extinguishing our devotional desire, we need to step away from its source physically and turn away from it emotionally.

Ultimately, to sustain our devotion amidst criticism, we need to connect spiritually with the one who has given us our gifts and for whom we are striving to develop them. Our relationship with Kṛṣṇa established through prayer, meditation, and worship provides us an inner sanctuary beyond the reach of critics. By finding affirmation and inspiration in His loving remembrance, we access inexhaustible inner empowerment for persevering despite the world's criticism. 🌸

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A TALE OF TWO DISCIPLES

*An example of what to do in the service
of one's guru, and of what not to do.*

by Kṛṣṇanandinī Devī Dāsī



Painting by Puṣkara Dāsa



ON THE SPIRITUAL path, initiation by a qualified guru is of paramount importance. From the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other authorized scriptures we learn that accepting a guru is necessary for getting an advanced connection with the Lord and going beyond the limitations of material nature.

Lord Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna (and all of us), “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.” (*Gītā* 4.34) A serious student should carefully and prayerfully choose a spiritual master and then serve that person with dedication. Just how one serves the guru and becomes eligible to see the truth is reflected in the story of Īśvara Purī. And how one's service to the guru can be problematic, keeping one from the truth, is seen in the story of his godbrother Rāmacandra Purī.

Of the Same Master

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the illustrious multi-volume study of the life, precepts, and followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we find the tale of two distinctly different disciples, both initiated into the science of *bhakti-yoga* by Mādhavendra Purī, a self-realized spiritual master and the *parama-guru* (grand-guru) of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The stories of the two disciples Īśvara Purī and Rāmacandra Purī are instructive for anyone who wants to progress in spiritual life. One is an example of what to do in the service of one's guru, and the other an example of what not to do.

The deity of Śrī Īśvara Purī at the house of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura in Hali-sahara, West Bengal (left). At far left, Rāmacandra Purī, on seeing ants at Caitanya Mahāprabhu's residence, accuses the Lord, a renunciant, of eating sweets.

Since Rāmacandra Purī was a disciple of Mādhavendra Purī, Lord Caitanya regarded Rāmacandra Purī as an elder, His spiritual uncle, almost on the level of His own guru, Īśvara Purī. Although Īśvara Purī and Rāmacandra Purī had the same guru, Rāmacandra Purī associated closely with persons cultivating *jñāna*, or dry speculative knowledge, and was attracted to doctrines that oppose pure devotional service, whereas Īśvara Purī was always enamored by devotional topics.

By the arrangement of providence, Mādhavendra Purī became incapacitated in his old age, unable to move or even to attend to the call of nature. With great humility

But Not of the Same Mind

On his deathbed, Mādhavendra Purī felt intense separation from Kṛṣṇa, crying in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī after Kṛṣṇa left Vrindavan. He kept repeating this verse:

*ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvad-aloka-kātarām
dayita bhrāmyati kim karomy
aham*

“O My Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathurā! When shall I see You again? Because of My not seeing You, My agitated heart has become unsteady. O most

head is realized in three phases: as Brahman, all-pervading spirit; as Paramātmā, the localized form of the Lord as the Supersoul in the heart of every living being and in every atom; and finally as Kṛṣṇa, the unique Supreme Person. The highest realization is of God as the supreme pure, beautiful, unlimited person. Mādhavendra Purī had the highest realization of the Lord as the ultimate blissful person, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. So Brahman realization was not at all appealing to him.

Two things were wrong with Rāmacandra Purī’s behavior here: he corrected his guru, and he recommended that his guru focus on Brahman instead of his beloved Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Because of this offensive behavior, Rāmacandra Purī’s devotional mood diminished and he later even criticized Lord Caitanya. This caused him to lose all good material and spiritual fortune. On the other hand, Īśvara Purī, due to his humble service attitude, could understand his guru’s heart and so was able to console him and go deeper in spiritual realization. “Īśvara Purī received the blessing of Mādhavendra Purī, whereas Rāmacandra Purī received a rebuke from him. Therefore these two persons, Īśvara Purī and Rāmacandra Purī, are examples of the objects of a great personality’s benediction and punishment. Mādhavendra Purī instructed the entire world by presenting these two examples.” (*Antya* 8.32)

As a consequence of offending his guru, Rāmacandra Purī acquired the tendency to criticize and find fault with others. He lost his taste for devotional ecstasy and would instruct people in dry philosophical speculation. This is the unfortunate terrible result of guru *aparādha* (offense to the guru) and Vaiṣṇava *aparādha* (offense to devotees).

Rāmacandra Purī, A Fault-Finder

Later at Jagannātha Purī, where Caitanya Mahāprabhu was resid-

ing, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, an associate of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, saw the Lord with two other devotees, Paramānanda Purī and Rāmacandra Purī, talking, embracing, and offering obeisances. Jagadānanda invited them all to eat at his home, arranging for sumptuous Jagannātha *prasāda* to be brought. After they had eaten, Rāmacandra Purī requested Jagadānanda to eat, and served him himself.

After Jagadānanda had finished his meal, however, Rāmacandra Purī criticized Lord Caitanya and his followers.

“I have heard,” he said, “that the followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu eat more than necessary. Now I have directly seen that this is true. Feeding a *sannyāsī* too much breaks his regulative principles, for when a *sannyāsī* eats too much, his renunciation is destroyed.” (*Antya* 8.15–16).

Because of Rāmacandra Purī’s criticism, Lord Caitanya reduced His eating, much to the dismay of His devotees. Rāmacandra’s faultfinding increased, and although the devotees condemned him, Caitanya Mahāprabhu restrained them, and later Rāmacandra Purī suffered immensely both materially and spiritually for his offenses.

Lessons from Rāmacandra Purī’s Example

What important lessons do we learn from Rāmacandra Purī’s interactions with his highly advanced guru?

First, a sincere aspiring devotee should avoid finding fault with devotees and criticizing them, particularly the guru. This is a poisonous action. Finding fault with Kṛṣṇa and His dedicated servants is extremely detrimental to one’s spiritual advancement. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s guru, advised that aspiring devotees consider and work on their own faults rather than those of others. The following verse from Mahāprabhu’s teachings to Rūpa Gosvāmī highlights the results of the “mad-elephant offense”:

*yadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hātī mātā
upāde va chinḍe, tāra śukhi’ yāya pātā*

“If the devotee commits an offense at the feet of a Vaiṣṇava while cultivating the creeper of devotional service in the material world, his offense is compared to a mad elephant that uproots the creeper and breaks it. In this way the leaves of the creeper are dried up.” (*Madhya* 19.156) Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this further:

If a person derides a pure devotee, he is never recognized by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, the Supreme Lord never excuses one who offends a pure devotee. There are many examples of this in history. A great mystic yogi, Durvāsā Muni, offended the great devotee Ambārīṣa Mahārāja. The great sage Durvāsā was to be chastised by the Sudarśana *cakra* of the Lord. Even though the great mystic directly approached the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he was never excused. Those on the path of liberation should be very careful not to offend a pure devotee. (*Bhāgavatam* 4.31.21, Purport)

Disrespecting one’s spiritual master and other Vaiṣṇavas has a pernicious effect on one’s spiritual life. Unfortunately, sometimes some disciples, influenced by *māyā*, the illusory energy, become proud of their so-called spiritual status and knowledge and try to correct or instruct their guru or other advanced Vaiṣṇavas. *Māyā* tricks such offensive disciples into thinking that they are more spiritually advanced than they actually are and that they are acting with proper knowledge, when the opposite is true.

Second, all disciples are not equal. They may take initiation at the same time, but their levels of sincerity, surrender, obedience, desire, and respect differ. As the representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the guru is the instrument of both blessings and rebukes. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pṛthā.” (*Gītā* 4.11) So a disciple receives the guru’s mercy according to his or her degree of sincerity and seriousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “It is said that by the grace of Kṛṣṇa one gets a guru, or a spiritual master, and by the

As a consequence of offending his guru, Rāmacandra Purī acquired the tendency to criticize and find fault with others.

and gratitude, Īśvara Purī devotedly and patiently cared for his beloved guru, bathing him and cleaning the wastes from his body. Īśvara Purī saturated the environment around his guru with the chanting of the holy names of God and enlivened his guru by speaking about the pastimes and divine qualities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Later, Īśvara Purī showed humility when he met another great devotee, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, one of Lord Caitanya’s closest associates. Despite being a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* himself, Īśvara Purī introduced himself to Śrī Advaita by saying, “I am a *śūdra*, a member of the lowest class.”

If we contrast this with the arrogance of his godbrother Rāmacandra Purī, we see a vast difference between the two disciples. Because of Īśvara Purī’s dedication to his guru and his exemplary humility, the Supreme Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted Īśvara Purī as His own guru as an example to the world.

beloved one, what shall I do now?” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 4.197)

Both Īśvara Purī and Rāmacandra Purī were with him at the end. The latter chided his guru.

“If you are in full transcendental bliss,” he said, “you should now remember only Brahman. Why are you crying?” (*Antya* 8.21)

Exasperated, Mādhavendra Purī responded, “Get out, you sinful rascal! O my Lord Kṛṣṇa, I could not reach You, nor could I reach Your abode, Mathurā. I am dying in my unhappiness, and now this rascal has come to give me more pain. Don’t show your face to me! Go anywhere else you like. If I die seeing your face, I shall not achieve the destination of my life. I am dying without achieving the shelter of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore I am greatly unhappy. Now this condemned foolish rascal has come to instruct me about Brahman.” (*Antya* 8.22–25)

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grace of the spiritual master, one gets Kṛṣṇa.” (*Matchless Gifts*, chapter 6) When disciples serve their guru with love, respect, and humility, the guru rewards them with spiritual insight and deeper connection to the Lord. When they disrespect or neglect the guru, however, considering the guru an ordinary person and acting with disdain or arrogance, neglecting the spiritual master’s instructions, then they don’t make any real spiritual progress and may even lose their material status.

Third, the tender plant of devotion can be destroyed quickly by offending one’s guru. Such an offense offends the Supreme Lord. “If one’s spiritual master rejects him,

ple should show Vaiṣṇava etiquette and not criticize them. Lord Caitanya emphasized this point by His tolerant and carefully considered response to the obnoxious behavior of his spiritual uncle, Rāmacandra Purī. A disciple who finds that instructions from the guru’s godsiblings are improper should respectfully and confidentially inquire about what to do from the guru or other mature, caring, practical devotees.

Lessons from Īśvara Purī’s Example

What blessed lessons are to be learned from the example of Īśvara Purī?

First, the disciple should care for

Fourth, only to one who has complete faith in both Kṛṣṇa and guru, like Īśvara Purī, are the true imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.

All of these lessons are true if one’s guru remains qualified; however, if a guru repeatedly acts contrary to *śāstra* and the previous spiritual masters in the line, the disciple can disconnect from such an unqualified person. This must be done according to Vaiṣṇava etiquette. More information on this topic can be found in the *Kṛṣṇa Bhajanāmṛta*, by Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura, a dear associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Additionally, disciples in ISKCON who have concerns about the behavior or conduct of their guru may contact the Guru Services Committee of the Governing Body Commission. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “According to *śāstra*, the duty of the guru is to take the disciple back home, back to Godhead. If he is unable to do so and

instead hinders the disciple in going back to Godhead, he should not be a guru. *Gurur na sa syāt* (*Bhāg. 5.5.18*). One should not become a guru if he cannot enable his disciple to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (*Bhāgavatam* 8.20.1, Purport)

The Guru As Kṛṣṇa’s Grace

To get the opportunity to take initiation from a qualified spiritual preceptor is a great fortune, a wonderful expression of God’s grace. Dr. Graham Schweig (Garuḍa Dāsa) puts it this way:

God and the soul combine in their own ways within the archetype of the spiritual guide. For both, the spiritual master is a type of extraordinary confluence of divinity and humanity, as each tradition exalts ways in which the guide becomes directly and effectively the grace of God in the flesh. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati explains that the ceremony of diksha (initiation) in Gaudiya Vaishnavism, is that

“by which the spiritual preceptor admits one to the status of a neophyte on the path of spiritual endeavor.”*

What initiates do after the initiation – the quality of service they render

*“Vishvanātha’s Gurushtaka and the Understanding of Guru in Caitanyaite Vaishnavism,” *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 / Fall 2003, pp. 124–125.

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LETTERS

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regularity of the cycles of life are all ways to feel Kṛṣṇa’s presence. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* He lists many ways to sense His presence – through the taste of water, the fragrance of the

to their guru – is a barometer of their spiritual progress. For one who disrespects the guru, considers the guru an ordinary human being, or neglects the guru’s instructions, the result is very dangerous. For those who follow the Lord’s instructions by serving the guru submissively and asking relevant questions humbly, the path to success is guaranteed. 🌍

earth, and the light of the sun, for example.

If you are looking for Kṛṣṇa, you will come to sense His presence all around you; if you are not looking for Him, He will remain unnoticed.

Your eyes need to be trained to see the spiritual energy behind and within everything in the material

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world. It is the driving force of everything, and it is coming from Lord Kṛṣṇa. By chanting and learning more about Kṛṣṇa, you can see and sense Him everywhere.

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Only to one who has complete faith in both Kṛṣṇa and guru are the true imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.

one becomes so fallen that he, like Rāmacandra Purī, commits offenses even to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not consider the offenses of Rāmacandra Purī, for the Lord considered him His spiritual master. However, his character instructed everyone about the result of offending the spiritual master.” (*Antya* 8.99–100)

Fourth, when a devotee offends another devotee, especially his or her guru, and doesn’t repent or rectify the offense, the door is opened for more and greater offenses.

Fifth, we should associate with persons dedicated to Kṛṣṇa and devotional service. Such persons try to serve others with humility and kindness, and their company is beneficial, drawing out similar qualities in us.

Sixth, a disciple should thoughtfully and carefully respect his or her guru’s godbrothers and godsisters, who are as venerable as the guru. Even if a disciple thinks that their instructions are improper, the disci-

ple the guru like a menial servant. This attitude guarantees success in spiritual life. The disciple should carefully serve the guru’s *vāṇī* (instructions) and, if the opportunity arises, the guru’s *vapu* (body).

Second, the full blessings of the Lord come to a fully surrendered disciple. That is, whatever sincere service one performs for the guru (whether *dīkṣā-guru* or *śikṣā-guru*) gives personal satisfaction to the Supreme Lord because the guru is His representative.

Third, humility is the key to achieving pure, uninterrupted love for Kṛṣṇa. As Lord Caitanya wrote, “One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.” (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3)

THE SUPREME YOGI

(continued from page 10)

(*sac-cid-ānanda*). It is not compulsory for us to rot in this material world. The easiest way to go to the *Vai-kunṭhalokas* is *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ* (*Gītā* 4.9). Simply try to understand Kṛṣṇa. Why does He come? What are His activities? Where does He come from? Why does He come in the form of a human being? We only have to try to understand this and study Kṛṣṇa as He explains Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

What is the difficulty? God personally explains Himself as He is, and if we accept the *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, we shall no longer have to transmigrate. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti*. We shall no longer have to endure birth and death, for we can attain our spiritual bodies (*sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*) and live happily in Kṛṣṇa’s family. Kṛṣṇa is providing for us here, and He will also provide for us there.

So we should know that our happiness is in returning home, back to Godhead, where we can eat, drink, and be merry in Kṛṣṇa’s company.

Thank you very much. 🌍

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Being with God to Be with God

BECAUSE THE philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a comprehensive worldview, it naturally covers a wide range of topics. I often mention to others how difficult it is to describe in a brief exchange what Hare Kṛṣṇa is all about. Despite that challenge, one concept, among many other possible ones, I'm sure, goes to the heart of what we're up to: Kṛṣṇa consciousness means becoming godly by absorbing one's mind in God.

There's a lot packed into those eleven words. First are the assumptions that there is a God and that it's a good idea to become godly ("conforming to the laws and wishes of God," the dictionary says). Many of us now practicing *bhakti-yoga* (Kṛṣṇa consciousness) didn't have these assumptions before Śrīla Prabhupāda and his representatives came into our lives.

Prabhupāda spoke and wrote hundreds of thousands of words to convince us that God is real – and that He is Kṛṣṇa. Equally important, he convinced us that we have an eternal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa that's now essentially lost to us. The loss of our connection with Kṛṣṇa has caused all our suffering, and regaining that connection is the key to the boundless happiness that defines our natural, pure state as spirit souls. In its truest sense, to become godly means to become qualified to be with God.

What I've just stated is the philosophy in which the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is rooted. Once we're convinced that we must revive our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, how do we go about it? The answer, as a scientist might say, is elegant: We do everything we can to keep ourselves in Kṛṣṇa's company right now.

Fortunately for us, that's easy to do, in theory at least, because everything *about* Kṛṣṇa *is* Kṛṣṇa. When we chant Kṛṣṇa's name, read books about Kṛṣṇa, hear classes about Kṛṣṇa, and so on, we're with Kṛṣṇa directly because, being absolute, He's identical to everything related to Him. We're trying to live with God – Kṛṣṇa – constantly so that we become qualified to be with Him eternally. That's what Hare Kṛṣṇa is all about.

As Prabhupāda would put it, we need to try to keep our mind absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. We have many ways of doing that because "Kṛṣṇa" here includes everything about Him – His name, His teachings, His friends and family, His mission in this world, His guidance passed down to us through His representatives, and so on.

Besides regularly reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, I like to listen to recordings of his lectures. One of his persistent entreaties, spoken with a deep sense of urgency, is that those who have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness should not waste a moment doing something disconnected from Kṛṣṇa. If you have a spare moment, he would say, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa or read the *Bhagavad-gītā* – always be engaged in some Kṛṣṇa conscious activity.

Granted, for most of you reading this, your occupation and other responsibilities make "all Kṛṣṇa all the time" a seemingly impossible proposal. Still, it's important to understand that the more we take the medicine of Kṛṣṇa's association in various forms, the quicker we'll be cured of the disease of separation from Him. That point explains everything we do as practicing Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees.

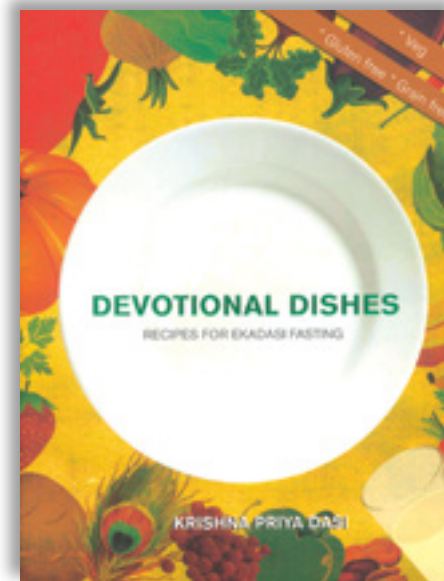
– Nāgarāja Dāsa

Books

Devotional Dishes: Recipes for Ekadasi Fasting

– By Krishna Priya Dasi

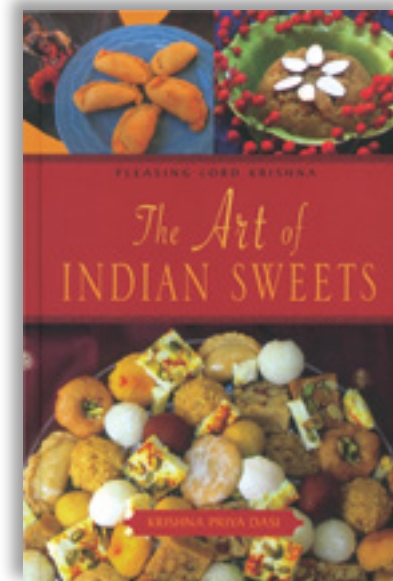
A unique cookbook that features more than 260 Ekadasi recipes, beautifully illustrated with full-color photographs. These delicious recipes use only Ekadasi-prescribed ingredients, and readers will experience for themselves the many spiritual and health benefits that naturally follow as a result of observing Ekadasi. Descriptions are also included for how to further enhance the efficacy of the Ekadasi fast by chanting or reading about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. All recipes are gluten- and grain-free – for soups, breads, salads, appetizers, main courses, accompaniments, desserts, and beverages. Softbound, 454 pages, 7¼" x 9½". **\$15.95** BLBS805



Searching for Vedic India

– By Devamrita Swami

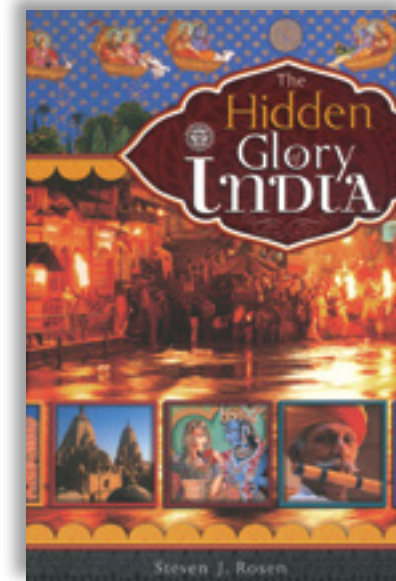
A new look into civilization as we thought we knew it. Examine our contemporary perception of an ancient culture and see the world as it actually was thousands of years ago. Devamrita Swami's wit and wisdom combine to make our search for Vedic India not only illuminating but entertaining. He tells us not only the truths of Vedic India, but how they are again coming to be. *Searching for Vedic India* thus takes us not only into the past, but into the future. Softbound, 620 pages, 15 black and white pictures, index, 5" x 7½". Printed on butter-yellow paper. First published in 2002; revised in 2007. **\$11.95 SALE \$7.99** NEBS420



When the Sun Shines: The Dawn of Hare Krishna in Britain

– By Ranchor Prime

The story begins in the 1960s in San Francisco, where the founder of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement gathers young people around him and teaches them about Kṛṣṇa. A group of Prabhupāda's American disciples leave for London, and there they gain national attention by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in public and befriending the Beatles. In 1969 Prabhupāda arrives in England and is hosted by John Lennon at Tittenhurst Park, where he mentors George Harrison. Exciting days follow for Prabhupāda and his dedicated band of young followers – their recording on the Apple label makes "Top of the Pops"; they open Britain's first Hare Kṛṣṇa Temple in Bloomsbury; London, and with George's backing, they establish Bhaktivedanta Manor, a major temple in the countryside of Hertfordshire. Ranchor Prime, one of the early members of the British Hare Kṛṣṇa community, writes with feeling and sensitivity. His carefully researched account weaves together the personal experiences of more than seventy of those who were there, bringing to life this extraordinary story. Hardbound, 496 pages, index, numerous photographs, dust-jacket, 6" x 9½". First published in 2009. **\$39.95 SALE \$24.99** NEBH835



The Hidden Glory of India

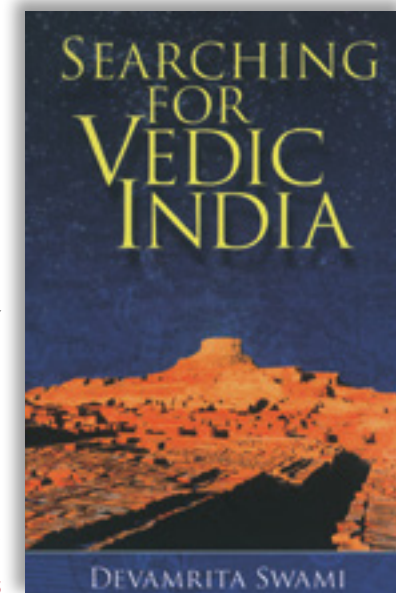
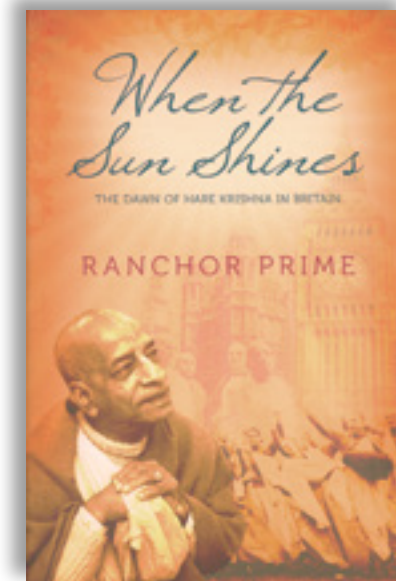
– By Satyarāja Dāsa

A concise, colorful overview of the philosophy and culture of Vaiṣṇavism, or *bhakti-yoga* – the hidden glory of India. *The Hidden Glory of India* is the first full-color overview of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, with easy-to-read sections on such subjects as Kṛṣṇa and His incarnations, Rādhā and the *gopīs*, the significance of *om*, the meaning of mantras, the nature of the demigods, Kṛṣṇa conscious perspectives on women, dance, music, and art, and how all this relates to contemporary Hinduism. A perfect gift for family members and friends, *The Hidden Glory of India* is as beautiful to look at as it is rich in philosophy and wisdom. Softbound, 192 pages, 5¼" x 8¼". **\$49.95 SALE \$15.99** BLBS238

The Art of Indian Sweets: Pleasing Lord Kṛṣṇa

– By Krishna Priya Dasi

Learn the culinary art of making Indian sweets with these easy-to-follow recipes. Native to Jaipur, India, Krishna Priya Dasi has prepared thousands of delicate sweets for the Śrī Rādhā-Golokānanda Temple, the worship center for one of the largest Vaiṣṇava communities of North America. In this collection of traditional Indian sweets, Krishna Priya Dasi shows how to make 56 delicious sweets, including several variations of halva, laddu, sandesh, jamun, pera, and more. Hardbound, 117 pages, numerous color photos, 6" x 9". Printed in India. **\$19.95** T3BH731



Books by Richard L. Thompson (Sadāpūta Dāsa)

Mysteries of the Sacred Universe: Cosmology of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa
– By Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D.

Traditional spiritual texts often seem wedded to outmoded cosmologies that show, at best, the scientific limitations of their authors. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* seems, at first glance, to be no exception. However, a closer examination reveals unexpected depths of knowledge in ancient cosmology. *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe* shows that the cosmology of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is a sophisticated system, with multiple levels of meaning that encode at least four astronomical, geographical, and spiritual world models. By viewing the text in the light of modern astronomy, Richard Thompson shows how ancient scientists expressed exact knowledge in apparently mythological terms. But quantitative science is only part of the picture. *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe* also offers a clear understanding of how the spiritual dimension was integrated into ancient Indian cosmology. Softbound, 361 pages, 6" x 9". **\$24.95** VSBS829

Consciousness: The Missing Link – By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, T. D. Singh, Ph.D., and Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D.

What is consciousness? Consciousness is perhaps the most puzzling problem we humans face in trying to understand ourselves. In this thought-provoking book, scientists of the Bhaktivedanta Institute examine key underlying concepts of the modern life sciences in light of India's age-old Vedic knowledge, offering an enlightening view of consciousness through the lenses of science and philosophy. Paperback, 101 pages, 7" x 4½". **\$4.95** VSBS834

Maya: The World as Virtual Reality – By Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D.

This book explores the metaphor that the soul in *māyā* is comparable to a person linked through a sensory interface to a computer-generated virtual reality. By exploring this theme from the standpoint of modern science, we can better understand the relation between the soul and matter. Includes discussions on paranormal phenomena and cosmic and terrestrial evolution. Softbound, 282 pages, index, 6" x 9". **\$21.95** VSBS831

Mechanistic and Nonmechanistic Science: An Investigation into the Nature of Consciousness and Form – By Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D.

This work shows that the prevailing theories of physics and biology have grave shortcomings which can be traced to their reliance on an underlying mechanistic framework. Dr. Thompson shows how physics is incapable of dealing with the phenomenon of consciousness and how biology is unable to account for the existence of complex living forms. He outlines a nonmechanistic science that would complement mechanistic science and round out the human quest for understanding. Softbound, 254 pages, 6" x 9". **\$19.95** VSBS833

Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy – By Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D.

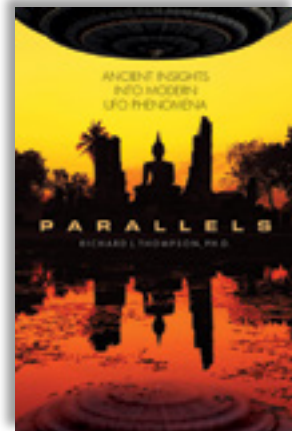
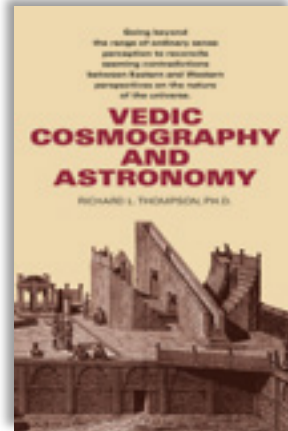
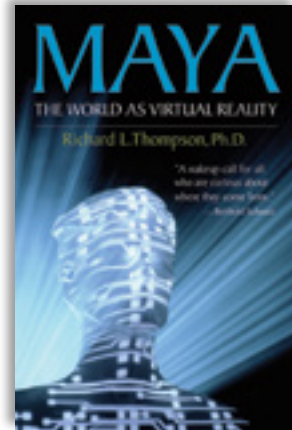
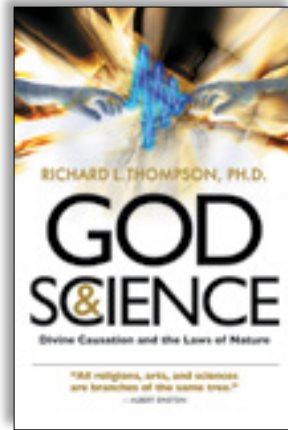
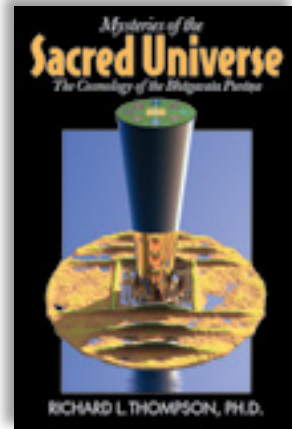
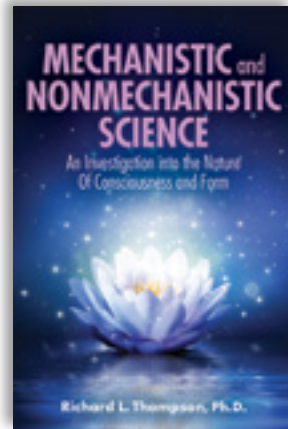
The universe as described in such Indian texts as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* seems strikingly different from the universe of modern astronomy. This book addresses this apparent conflict in detail, and outlines a systematic approach to understanding the ancient viewpoint. Topics include the celestial geometry of Bhū-maṇḍala, mystic powers, higher-dimensional realms, Vedic mathematical astronomy, the dating of Kali-yuga, space travel, the moon flight, astrophysical anomalies, and more. Softbound, 242 pages, 6" x 9". **\$19.95** VSBS830

Parallels: Ancient Insights into Modern UFO Phenomena – By Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D.

For decades, researchers have exhaustively documented modern UFO phenomena, but questions remain about the origins of these strange objects and the intentions of the beings associated with them. In *Parallels*, Richard L. Thompson shows that answers may lie in the records of ancient civilizations claiming thousands of years of contact with races appearing to have an unearthly origin. Startling parallels between modern UFO accounts and events described in the ancient Sanskrit writings of India offer fresh insight into the nature of exotic incidents reported throughout human history. Originally published as *Alien Identities*. Softbound, 447 pages, index, 6" x 9". **\$24.95** VSBS901

God & Science: Divine Causation and the Laws of Nature – By Richard L. Thompson, Ph.D.

A collection of essays from *Back to Godhead* that examine the relationship between modern science and the Vaiṣṇava tradition. When brought into contact with modern science, Vaiṣṇavism generates some of the same questions that arise from the confrontation of science and Christianity. At the same time, there are significant differences. These essays contain novel insights that provide new perspectives on the relation between science and religion. Softbound, 232 pages, 6" x 9". **\$12.95** SALE **\$6.99**



VEDIC THOUGHTS

Modern men want to see everything with their eyes, although they are not sufficiently qualified.

Consequently, they disbelieve in the existence of the demigods or of the Supreme God. They should see through the pages of authentic scriptures and should not simply believe their unqualified eyes. Even in these days, God can also be seen by qualified eyes tinged with the ointment of love of God.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.29, Purport

Actions performed only out of a sense of duty have their effect only on the mind, intelligence, and false ego, whereas actions done in love and devotion, with attachment to the Supreme, have their effect on the soul. Pure attachment, devotional service, emanates from the soul.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Uncommon Conversations, Conversation 7

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

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.12

Association with a devotee, the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and the nature of devotional service help one to give up all undesirable association and gradually attain elevation to the platform of love of Godhead.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 24.104

In an assembly of pure devotees, there is no question of discussing material subjects like politics and sociology. In an assembly

of pure devotees, there is discussion only of the qualities, forms, and pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is praised and worshiped with full attention. In the association of pure devotees, by constantly hearing such topics respectfully, even a person who wants to merge into the existence of the Absolute Truth abandons this idea and gradually becomes attached to the service of Vāsudeva.

Jaḍa Bharata
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.12.13

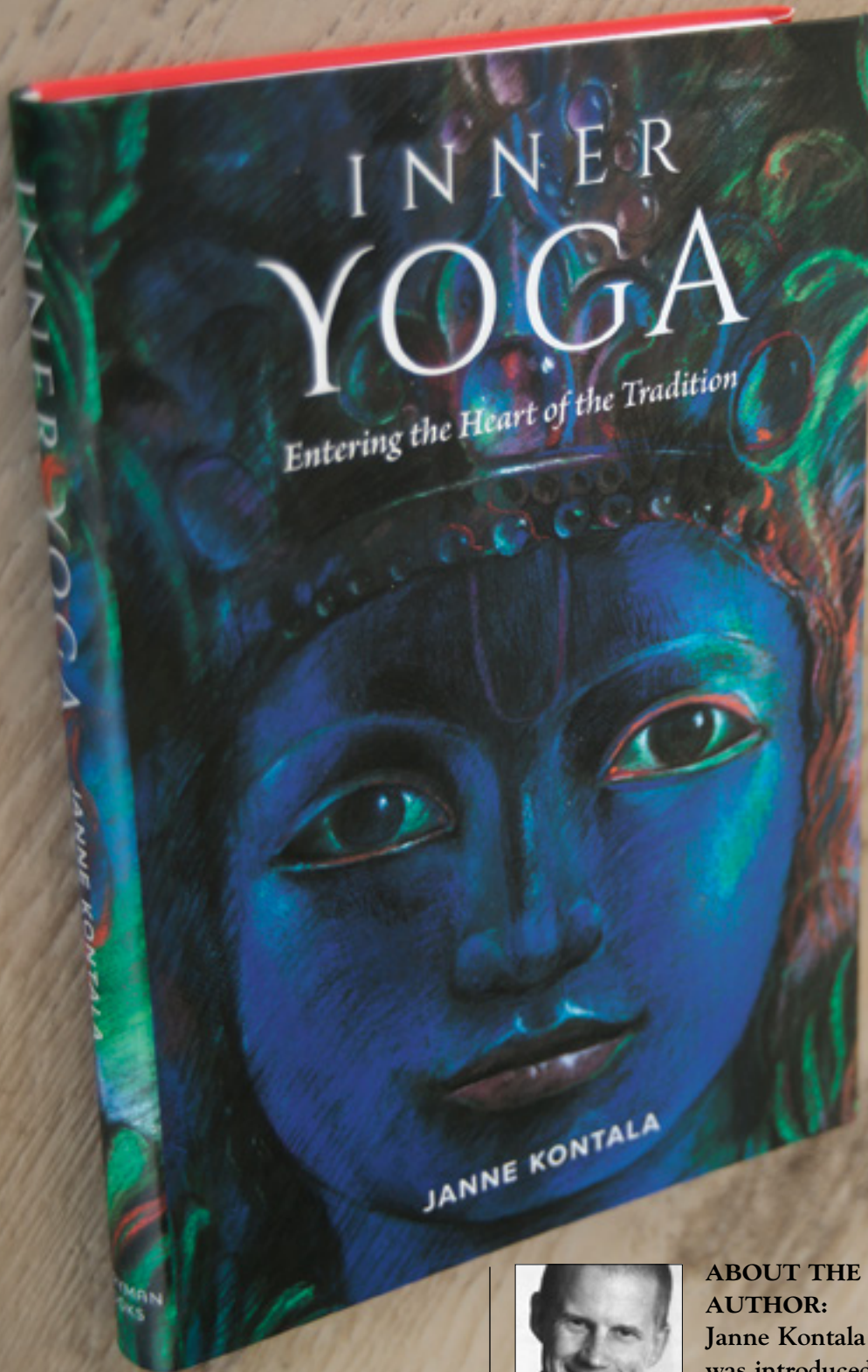
Let the poets continue to rave about poetry, and let the Vedic scholars incessantly praise the nectar derived from Brahman realization. I myself will take shelter of a beautiful youth who is decorated with a garland made of wildflowers, holding a flute to His blossoming lips.

Śrīla Īśvara Purī
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvalī*

He is neither large nor infinitesimal; yet He is larger and smaller than everything else. He is said to be devoid of color; yet He is dark blue, and the corners of His eyes are reddish. By the play of His personal powers, the Supreme Lord is known by contradictory designations. Yet He is the Supreme, and faults should never be ascribed to Him. In Him all contrary qualities combine.

Kūrma Purāṇa
Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.179,
Commentary

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**ABOUT THE
AUTHOR:**

Janne Kontala was introduced to the ashtanga-vinyasa yoga tradition in 1992. During five years training in India and Finland, he developed an interest in yoga philosophy and mantra meditation. He currently teaches yoga in Helsinki and Stockholm.