

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



# BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Sept/Oct 2018 • \$4.50



# Bound by Love

*Unique insights into  
one of God's most  
endearing qualities*



Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

# BACK to GODHEAD

Founded 1944 • Vol. 52, No. 5 • September / October, 2018



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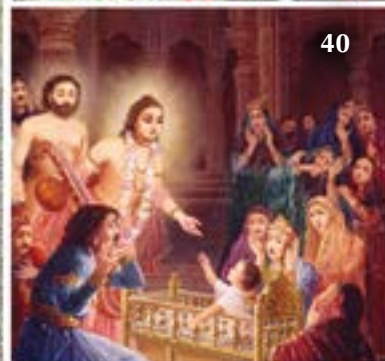
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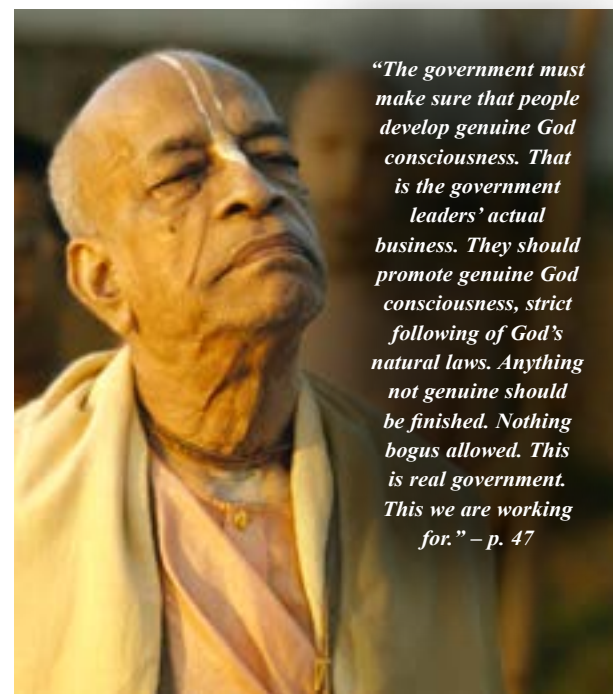
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**COVER** Lord Kṛṣṇa and His foster mother, Yaśodā. Though "born" of Devakī in Mathura, Kṛṣṇa was quickly transferred to Vrindavan, where Yaśodā and her husband, Nanda Mahārāja, raised Him as their own son. (Painting by Dhṛtī Devī Dāsī.)



*"The government must make sure that people develop genuine God consciousness. That is the government leaders' actual business. They should promote genuine God consciousness, strict following of God's natural laws. Anything not genuine should be finished. Nothing bogus allowed. This is real government. This we are working for." – p. 47*

## WELCOME



This issue corresponds with the sacred month of Dāmodara and a two-day celebration: Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī and the appearance day of His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In "Bhakta-vaśyatā: Bound by Love," Gaurāṅga Darśana Dāsa explains how Kṛṣṇa delights in being controlled by His most intimate devotees. To illustrate this theme, the author draws on the episode in Lord Kṛṣṇa's life in which His mother bound His waist (*udara*) with a rope (*dāma*). That's why Kṛṣṇa is known as Dāmodara.

Another much-loved name for Kṛṣṇa is Govinda. In "O Govinda Within My Heart": Kṛṣṇa's Long Journey from Braj to Brooklyn," Satyarāja Dāsa, who came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Brooklyn, where the presiding deities in the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple are named Rādhā-Govinda, shows how Govinda has revealed Himself in His deity form at various times in history, beginning shortly after Lord Kṛṣṇa's departure from this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's goal in life was to inform as many people as possible about Lord Kṛṣṇa and His teachings. One of his many disciples who have earnestly taken up his mission is Bhaktimārga Swami, who recently completed a walk across the USA, delivering Kṛṣṇa to all who met him or heard about his journey in various media reports.

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

### The Mind's Desires

Why does the mind always go toward fulfilling its desires?

Parth Singh  
Via the Internet

*Reply:* Thank you for this age-old question. It certainly is not just your problem, but rather a universal concern.

Actually the mind works hard to fulfill the desires of the senses. The senses become attracted to something, and then the mind begins to contemplate how to fulfill that desire. The natural position of the living being is to be happy, and in the material world the common mistake is to think that sense objects will yield happiness. Therefore we are always in hot pursuit of material relationships and material objects, thinking they will offer relief from suffering. When we get some relief, we call it happiness.

You can do various things to break this cycle. Keep the senses quiet by giving them what they need. Eat enough, but not too much, of the right foods – those that can be offered to Kṛṣṇa. Sleep enough, but not too much. Find good association. If necessary, get married and have some intimacy. In general, satisfy the senses in moderation and according to mode-of-goodness standards. Make choices that support spiritual strength and minimize material ramifications.

Strengthen the intelligence by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and hearing and reading about Kṛṣṇa and the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Understand how the modes of nature work and how they keep you hankering (especially with the help of the media), and then with knowledge control your mind even though it is eager for unbeneficial things.

Don't put the senses in dangerous places. If you are trying to give up drinking, for example, don't go to

a bar. If you are trying to give up smoking, stay away from people who smoke. Stay out of places where the senses will be attracted to undesirable things. That might mean limiting your time on your phone or computer.

Some discipline is required. Especially in the beginning, habits will be difficult to break. You have to be determined to bring your mind and senses under control. Again, good association can be very helpful in this regard.

Lastly, and most important, develop a higher taste. When you get something beneficial that is satisfying, you can be peaceful and more easily train your senses to avoid bad things. If you chant regularly, learn about Kṛṣṇa, do things for Him with like-minded people, and participate in His worship, you will find it easier to control the mind.

### Why the Creation?

What according to ISKCON is the reason for creation? Why would Kṛṣṇa need such an establishment?

Subilesh K.  
Via the Internet

*Reply:* Many people wonder why God created this place of suffering. Atheists challenge: if there is a God who is all-powerful, why does He allow such a place of suffering to exist? And even people sincerely seeking the truth ask this question.

The material world is created for the same reason a government creates a prison. The living entities (souls) are meant to be in the spiritual world happily serving Kṛṣṇa, but they want to be independent enjoyers and therefore cannot live in the spiritual realm, Vaikuṅṭha. There Kṛṣṇa is the center, and everyone focuses on pleasing Him, thereby becoming free from anxiety and eternally happy by serving the source of all happiness.

But when we envy God's superior

position, we want to play by our own rules, and we see ourselves as the center of everything. Because of these desires, we are always trying to enjoy the material energy beyond what we have earned by our karma. We are never satisfied. This tendency causes many problems, like global warming, shortages of fresh water and clear air, and envy between persons, nations, and even family members, which in turn leads to quarreling and wars in the hard struggle for an unattainable state of eternal happiness. Although this fruitless quest leads to bad karmic reactions, still we continue to desire to exploit matter. It is like a donkey chasing a carrot tied to a stick fastened to its head.

These independent desires cannot be accommodated in the spiritual world, so for us to experience the consequences of seeking material happiness and eventually come to the realization that the spiritual being can never get real pleasure from matter, this universe is created.

The situation is like that of a child who wants to cook but is too young to use a flame. He is given a toy kitchen where he can do as he wishes. Or, in a more severe example, the government builds a prison, where those who break the laws and cause trouble are offered an opportunity to learn their lesson. Some living entities learn by experience and so progress spiritually, ultimately being reinstated in their spiritual position. Now wiser, they are satisfied in knowing that they are in the perfect position of serving Kṛṣṇa with love. Others stay longer, determined to find some way to enjoy power, wealth, fame, beauty, and so on, independent of any boundaries. Eventually they will learn, but it is a slow, painful process.

### Defining "Religion"

I am writing an essay about your movement, and to get a fair and

extensive picture of the movement, I have a question: How does Hare Kṛṣṇa and its members define the word *religion*?

Julia  
Via the Internet

*Reply:* We generally do not use the word *religion* to refer to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One's religion can change. One can be born Jewish and change his religion to become a Christian, for example. We use the term *sanātana-dharma* to define Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

*Sanātana-dharma* ("eternal occupation") refers to the eternal, inherent nature of the soul, which is to serve. And the perfection of that eternal nature is to serve the eternal, God. This can be done within any religious faith. The focus must be on serving a personal God with loving devotion. "Personal God" because it is not possible to have loving reciprocation in service with something impersonal,

such as energy; one must find and serve the source of that energy.

If you look at any living being, you will see that he or she is serving someone or something: spouse or children or boss or society or country or political party. Or we are simply serving our mind and senses. The quality of serving is always present. Just as water is characterized by wetness, the soul is characterized by the propensity to serve. Putting that propensity into serving God is its true purpose. Therefore we call Kṛṣṇa consciousness *sanātana-dharma* – the perfection of service in serving God. This principle can be applied to any religion as long as the intention is to make God happy by trying to please Him with one's service. 🙏

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

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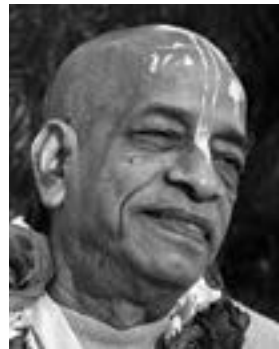
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# The Only Way to See God



Quoting Lord Kṛṣṇa's words from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu authoritatively answers the question "How can I see God?"

by His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society  
for Krishna Consciousness

*na sādhayati mām yogo  
na sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava  
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo  
yathā bhaktir mamorjitā*

[The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, said:] My dear Uddhava, neither through *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* [the mystic yoga system to control the senses],

nor through impersonal monism or an analytical study of the Absolute Truth, nor through study of the *Vedas*, nor through austerities, charity, or acceptance of *sannyāsa* can one satisfy Me as much as by developing unalloyed devotional service unto Me. – Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya* 20.137, quoting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.20

IF YOU WANT GOD, Kṛṣṇa, then there is no way except this devotional service. Not yoga, not philosophical speculation, not ritualistic performances, not study of the Vedic literature, not penance, austerities. All these formulas recommended for transcendental realization may help us advance to a certain extent, but if you want personal touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then you have to adopt this devotional service, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is no other way.

In this verse, Lord Caitanya is giving evidence from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. And in next verse as well:

Bhakti-yoga involves nine kinds of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, each exemplified by a particular pure devotee (below, from left): Parīkṣit Mahārāja (hearing), Śukadeva Gosvāmī (chanting), Prahlāda Mahārāja (remembering), Lakṣmī Devī (serving the Lord's feet), Pṛthu Mahārāja (worshiping), Akrūra (praying), Hanumān (rendering service), Arjuna (becoming the Lord's friend), and Bali Mahārāja (surrendering everything to the Lord).





*bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ  
śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām  
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā  
śva-pākān api sambhavāt*

“Being very dear to the devotees and *sādhus*, I am attained through unflinching faith and devotional service. This *bhakti-yoga* system, which gradually increases attachment for Me, purifies even a human being born among dog-eaters. That is to say, everyone can be elevated to the spiritual platform by the process of *bhakti-yoga*.” (Cc. *Madhya* 20.138) This is another verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, from the same chapter. Lord Kṛṣṇa is instructing Uddhava, one of His cousins.

ever path you may adopt, you will go to God.” Certain rascals say like that. But this is misleading, completely misleading. You cannot reach God by any means except this – *bhaktyā aham ekayā*. It is clearly stated, *ekayā*. *Ekayā* means “only one.” There is no second process.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, also, it is stated in the eighteenth chapter, *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*: “One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service.” (*Gītā* 18.55) *Tattvataḥ* means “in fact.”

The impersonal conception of Godhead, the localized conception of Godhead, the universal form of

**The foolish person says, “Whatever path you may adopt, you will go to God.” But this is misleading, completely misleading.**

He was a great devotee, even more advanced than Arjuna.

There are different grades of devotees. The first-class devotees were the *gopīs*, the damsels of Vrindavan. Nobody could be compared to them in their devotional service. Next was Uddhava, then Arjuna. Uddhava was a great devotee of the Lord, and he was also instructed by the Lord, just as Arjuna was.

The Lord says to Uddhava, *bhaktyā aham ekayā grāhyaḥ*. *Ekayā*: simply by devotional service, by this one method. God is one, and to achieve Him the process is also one. For example, in your body there are nine holes: two nostrils, two ears, two eyes, one mouth, the genitals, and the anus. If you want to supply food to your body, there is one way – through the mouth. There is no other way. You cannot push the food through the ears or eyes or genitals. No. That is not possible. Therefore, similarly, if you want God, then there is one way, *bhaktyā aham ekayā*.

The foolish person says, “What-

God, pantheism, monism – they are not perfect. If you want to know perfectly, then *bhakti* is necessary. This is stated everywhere, in all Vedic literatures, evidentially – in *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is present before us, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Everywhere you will find that devotional service is the only way. *Bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*. *Tattvataḥ* means “in fact.” You can know God partially by some other method. But if you want to know Him completely . . . Of course, God cannot be known completely, but the only process to reach the highest point of knowledge of God possible for a human being or any living entity is *bhakti*.

*Priyaḥ satām*: that *bhakti*, that process of devotional service, is very dear to the actual transcendentalist. *Man-niṣṭhā* means “fixed only on Me.” To know simply “I believe in God” is not sufficient. The ultimate goal is to attain a very intimate relationship with God, or love of Godhead. That is required.

## Belief in God Is Not Enough

Of course, to believe in God, to accept God, is all right. It is better than being an atheist. But that is not the end. You must develop yourself. You should not simply make God your order-supplier; you should be His order-supplier. To become God’s order-supplier is my perfection. And as long as I keep God as my order-supplier, that is not *bhakti*.

Generally people keep God as their order-supplier: “O God, give us our daily bread,” “O God, I am in distress,” “O God, I am in difficulty,” “O God, I am . . .” God supplies them. God is supplying. *Eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*: “The One is supplying the needs of the many.” (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13) But simply recognizing that fact is not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is that you should supply God, that God becomes dependent on you. That is *bhakti*.

For example, take Yaśodāmayī, Kṛṣṇa’s foster mother. She was so advanced in devotion that God became dependent on her. God appeared as her child. As the child always remains dependent on the mercy of the mother, Kṛṣṇa remained dependent on His foster mother, Yaśodāmayī. Mother Yaśodā said, “My dear child, if You become more naughty, then I shall chastise You.” And God is crying. You see? This the nature of the relationships between God and the devotee. The one who chastises the whole universe, the whole creation, is afraid of His mother.

He becomes dependent as He likes. He says in the *śāstra*, the Vedic scriptures, “When My devotee thinks that I am dependent on him, oh, I like that. I like that.” People always worship God as the sublime, but the greatest devotees do not worship Him that way. They want to serve God when He acts as their dependent, just as a mother serves her dependent child. She has no other purpose. She is satisfied simply to keep the child in perfect order. Yes. She has no other purpose.

Similarly, when you are inclined to see that God is always satisfied, that is devotion. Then you can have God in your grip. God is so kind; Kṛṣṇa is so kind. Nobody can conquer Him, but He becomes conquered by this kind of devotional service. This is the process of conquering Him. What is the use of becoming one with God? You can conquer Him. You can have Him within your grip. Such is the process of devotional service.

Therefore Lord Caitanya concludes,

*ataeva ‘bhakti’—  
kṛṣṇa-prāptyera upāya  
‘abhidheya’ bali’ tāre  
sarva-śāstre gāya*

“The conclusion is that devotional service is the only means for approaching the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This system is therefore called *abhidheya*. This is the verdict of all revealed scriptures.” (Cc. *Madhya* 20.139) Therefore, if you want Kṛṣṇa, then *bhakti*, devotional service, is the only way. *Abhidheya* means that is the transaction required.

## An Apprenticeship In Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

In this life, while we are in the material world, we have our material body. So this devotional service – Kṛṣṇa consciousness, doing everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness – is just like an apprenticeship to reach the highest stage. The same thing will be there in your liberated stage in the spiritual kingdom. But here, by the order of the *śāstra*, by the guidance of the spiritual master, you are being trained as an apprentice. This is called *abhidheya*, practice. But even in practice you will feel, “I am making progress.”

*dhana pāile yaiche sukha-  
bhoga phala pāya  
sukha-bhoga haite duḥkha  
āpani palāya*

*taiche bhakti-phale kṛṣṇe  
prema upajaya*

*prema kṛṣṇāsvāda haile  
bhava nāśa pāya*

“When one actually becomes rich, he naturally enjoys all kinds of happiness. When one is actually in a happy mood, all distressful conditions go away by themselves. No extraneous endeavor is needed. Similarly, as a result of *bhakti*, one’s dormant love for Kṛṣṇa awakens. When one is so situated that he can taste the association of Lord Kṛṣṇa, material existence, the repetition of birth and death, comes to an end.” (Cc. *Madhya* 20.140–141)

This is a very important passage. Just note it carefully. Now, by apprenticeship, by practice, if one sincerely follows this practice, then what is the result? *Dhana pāile yaiche sukha-bhoga phala pāya*. If a poor man gets sufficient money, then at once all his distress is over, immediately. As soon as the sun is in the sky, at once the darkness is gone. In the morning, even before we see the sun directly, immediately the darkness goes away. Suppose I am in distress, poverty-stricken, and I get some large amount of money. Immediately my distress is gone. Similarly, as soon as we have a little taste of this devotional service, our miserable life becomes happy. *Sukha-bhoga haite duḥkha āpani palāya*. And if there is happiness, where is the question of misery? If there is light, where is the question of darkness?

A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be in the distress of material miseries. This takes place automatically. Similarly, *taiche bhakti-phale kṛṣṇe prema upajaya*: by execution of this devotional service, gradually you develop love of God. *Prema kṛṣṇāsvāda haile bhava nāśa*: and as soon as you get a taste for Kṛṣṇa, you at once lose all the nonsense tastes, culminating in sex life. The material taste means wanting to gratify our senses in so many ways, and the supermost point is sex life.

As soon as you get into touch with Kṛṣṇa and develop Kṛṣṇa love,

## What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

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

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

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

## Pronunciation

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

## Spiritual Names

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



all this nonsense is finished. Then you are liberated. And as long as you are attached even to a pinch of material taste, there is no question of liberation from material miseries; you have to continue the transmigration from one body to another. And having a material body means material miseries. You may get the body of a king, or you may get the body of Brahmā or Indra or Candra or an ant or an insignificant animal. Any material body is meant for miseries – *tāpa-traya*, threefold material miseries. And besides the threefold miseries, ultimately there is birth, death, old age, and diseases.

### Real Liberation

To develop love of Kṛṣṇa is real liberation. And that love of Kṛṣṇa begins after many, many births of cultured life. When one surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa, that is the beginning of his real life. The first thing is “I must get myself out of this material contamination.” That is called *śraddhā*. “In this very life I shall realize the truth.” As you make this *śraddhā*, this belief and determination, more

on. *Tato anartha-nivṛtīḥ syāt*: and as soon as your prescribed duties in devotional service are discharged, you become free from all material contamination. That is the test. *Tato niṣṭhā*: then you become firmly convinced. *Tato ruci*: then you get a taste for devotional service. *Athāsakti*: then you cannot give it up. In any circumstances you cannot give it up. *Tato bhāvaḥ*: then you become fully in *samādhi*, in trance. *Sādhakānām ayaṁ premaṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*: these are the steps for attaining love of God.

You cannot immediately go and purchase love of God from the market. You have to practice it. The love is there within you. It is not artificial, nor is it an imposition by some person. No. It is already there. If you submissively hear such topics as we are discussing, and if you practice, it will be very nice, and you will quickly develop in love of God.

Hearing and practicing are required. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*: the tongue, *jihvā*, should be engaged. How? The tongue should be engaged in glorifying Kṛṣṇa. That is one of its businesses. And the tongue should

the tongue in this process, God will reveal Himself to you. You cannot order God, “Please come and stand here. I shall see You.” He is not your servant. You have to please Him by your service attitude. Then He will reveal to you what He is. And that is *bhakti*, that service attitude.

*Taiḥ bhakti-phale kṛṣṇe prema upajaya*: if you execute devotional service, then you develop your love. And *kṛṣṇa-prema āsvāda haile, bhava nāśa pāya*: the more you develop your love of Kṛṣṇa, love of God, the more you are free from material contamination. When you are perfectly in Kṛṣṇa love, you are perfectly free from material contamination. This is the way of liberation.

*dāridrya-nāśa, bhava-kṣaya,—  
premera ‘phala’ naya  
prema-sukha-bhoga—  
mukhya prayojana haya*

“The goal of love of Godhead is not to become materially rich or free from material bondage. The real goal is to be situated in devotional service to the Lord and to enjoy transcendental bliss.” (Cc. *Madhya* 20.142)

One should not think, “Now I am materially happy. All my distress, all my poverty, has gone by devotional service of Kṛṣṇa,” or “I have become liberated.” No. These are by-products. To become liberated and to become materially happy by prosecution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness are by-products. You have to try for something further. And what is that? *Prema-sukha-bhoga*: to be absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa. That is recorded here, that this should be your ultimate goal of life.

We should not stop: “Oh, now I am very happy. Now I have no material miseries,” or “I am liberated. Now this material contamination does not affect me.” No. Lord Caitanya showed the result of being fully absorbed in love of God. He prayed, *caḅṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitam śūnyāyitam jagat sarvaṁ govindaviraheṇa me*: “Oh, I am crying. Tears (please turn to page 51)

be engaged in eating *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. These two things – chanting and eating. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*.

Just see the technique. No other body part – the tongue has been especially mentioned. And what is the business of the tongue? I am speaking with the help of the tongue. If I had no tongue, I could not talk with you. And I taste with the tongue. So engage the tasting capacity of your tongue in *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, and engage your tongue in talking about Kṛṣṇa. This is the process.

*Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*: as you engage

and more perfect, then you make advancement. It cannot be just something official, a make-show.

*Tato sādhu-saṅgaḥ*: then, as you become determined, your taste for associating with devotees increases. Now we are associating with Lord Caitanya’s teaching. He is a great devotee. This type of association is called *sādhu-saṅga*. Then comes *bhajana-kriyā*, learning how to execute devotional service. Now Caitanya Mahāprabhu is teaching. You will gradually know what is *bhajana-kriyā*, how to execute devotional service. That we shall come to later

## A Pause for Prayer



*Nalakūvara and Maṅigrīva, sons of the demigod Kuvera, pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who has released them from their curse to live as trees.*

“O Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Your opulent mysticism is inconceivable. You are the supreme, original person, the cause of all causes, immediate and remote, and You are beyond this material creation. Learned *brāhmaṇas* know [on the basis of the Vedic statement *sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma*] that You are everything and that this cosmic manifestation, in its gross and subtle aspects, is Your form.

You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of everything. The body, life, ego, and senses of every living entity are Your own self. You are the Supreme Person, Viṣṇu, the imperishable controller. You are the time factor, the immediate cause, and You are material nature, consisting of the three modes passion, goodness, and ignorance. You are the original cause of this material manifestation. You are the Supersoul, and therefore You know everything within the core of the heart of every living entity.

O Lord, You exist before the creation. Therefore, who, trapped by a body of material qualities in this material world, can understand You?

O Lord, whose glories are covered by Your

own energy, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are Saṅkarṣaṇa, the origin of creation, and You are Vāsudeva, the origin of the *caturvūha*. Because You are everything and are therefore the Supreme Brahman, we simply offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

Appearing in bodies like those of an ordinary fish, tortoise, and hog, You exhibit activities impossible for such creatures to perform – extraordinary, incomparable, transcendental activities of unlimited power and strength. These bodies of Yours, therefore, are not made of material elements, but are incarnations of Your Supreme Personality. You are the same Supreme Personality of Godhead, who have now appeared, with full potency, for the benefit of all living entities within this material world.

O supremely auspicious, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You, who are the supreme good. O most famous descendant and controller of the Yadu dynasty, O son of Vasudeva, O most peaceful, let us offer our obeisances unto Your lotus feet.

– *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.10.29–36



Lord Kṛṣṇa  
(Govinda) in  
Vṛndāvana, His  
eternal home.



# “O Govinda Within My Heart” Kṛṣṇa’s Long Journey from Braj to Brooklyn

*The story of one of the first deities of Kṛṣṇa  
to be installed after His time on earth.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

I HAVE ALWAYS had a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the form of Govinda. Though I’m not sure why, the very utterance of His name makes me happy. For me, there is something beautiful about its simple sound: “Go-vinda.”

From my earliest days in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement I was mesmerized by Rādhā-Govinda, the deities in Brooklyn, the first forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa I had ever seen. Likewise, from early on I was fascinated by the ancient Sanskrit text *Brahma-saṁhitā*, with its evocative refrain, *govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi* (“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord”). I am still transported by the melodious prayers from the text chanted congregationally each dawn in ISKCON’s global network of temples. And even at home or in the car, the recording of Maṅgalānanda Dāsa (Michael Cassidy) still arouses my deepest emotions as he sings his original heart-changing contemporary rendition of the song: “O Govinda within my heart – celestial herdsman, lotus-eyed one.”<sup>1</sup>



Śrīla Prabhupāda, my spiritual master, initially worshiped Rādhā-Govinda too, small deities at his ancestral dwelling in Kolkata:

**Prabhupāda:** This Rādhā-Govinda deity is a very old deity of the Mullik family. . . . And we had the opportunity of seeing this Rādhā-Govinda from our very childhood. When I was three or four years old I used to visit this Rādhā-Govinda daily. . . . And that is the inspiration of my devotional life. Then I asked my father, “Give me Rādhā-Govinda deities; I shall worship Them.” So my father was also a Vaiṣṇava. He gave me small Rādhā-Govinda deities. I was worshipping Them in my house. Whatever I was eating I was offering to Them, and I was following the ceremonies of this Rādhā-Govinda with my small deities.<sup>2</sup>

### Govinda Defined

*Govinda* is a Sanskrit name for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Prabhupāda tells us that *go* can indicate cows, senses, or land. Thus the name Govinda conjures images of Kṛṣṇa in His orig-

inal form as a rustic cowherd who gives the highest pleasure to the transcendental senses of His devotees as He tends the cows in the land of Vrindavan.

Additionally, *vinda* means “finding,”<sup>3</sup> which has subtle implications that speak to the most profound aspects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. This is so because Govinda is the deity who embodies “the path” – *abhidheya tattva* – to divine love (*prema*), or the techniques used to “find” the ultimate goal of life. This contrasts with Madana-mohana and Gopīnātha, the other two prominent Vrindavan deities in the Gauḍīya tradition, who respectively represent *sambandha tattva* (the truth that initially establishes one’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa) and *prayojana tattva* (the goal of that relationship).

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

By the practice of devotional service, beginning with hearing and chanting, the impure heart of a conditioned soul is purified, and thus he can understand his eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That eternal relationship is described by

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya—kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa.*” “The living entity is an eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” When one is convinced about this relationship, which is called *sambandha*, he then acts accordingly. That is called *abhidheya*. The next step is *prayojana-siddhi*, or fulfillment of the ultimate goal of one’s life. If one can understand his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and act accordingly, automatically his mission in life is fulfilled. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 7.142*, Purport)

The mechanics of that action, or the “path” of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is overseen by Govinda. He is thus the presiding deity of *abhidheya tattva*.

In more common parlance, throughout the Indian subcontinent Govinda is simply and directly a name for Kṛṣṇa, who is also known as Gopāla, protector of cows. The names Govinda and Gopāla, in fact, appear respectively as the 187th and the 539th names of the Lord in the *Mahābhārata’s Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* (“The Thousand Names of Viṣṇu”) and are often used interchangeably.

Finally, scholars say that the word *govinda* can also refer to one who finds Vedic truth, since the prefix *go* can mean *veda* in addition to the already mentioned land, cow, and senses. This correlates with Kṛṣṇa’s statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15): “By all the *Vedas*, I am to be known.” In other words, when used as a name for Kṛṣṇa the word *govinda* can mean the Supreme Person in whom one can “find” the import of Vedic knowledge. And when used generically it can mean that through ardent study of the *Vedas* one will “find” Kṛṣṇa.

### Govinda’s Unveiling, Part I

Kṛṣṇa in the form of Govinda is eternal, but He has revealed Himself in the course of history, thus creating an interesting story. In the *Garga Saṁhitā (Aśvamedha-khaṇḍa*, 62.26–30) and in Prabhupāda’s book

*Kṛṣṇa* (chapter 90), we learn about Kṛṣṇa’s son Pradyumna, who had a son named Aniruddha, who in turn had a son named Vajranābha (Vajra), Kṛṣṇa’s great-grandson. When the entire Yadu dynasty destroyed itself just before the beginning of Kali-yuga, Vajra survived and became king of Mathura. He wanted the world to remember his great-grandfather, so in Kṛṣṇa’s own kingdom Vajra installed the first Kṛṣṇa deities after Kṛṣṇa’s departure. To this end, he searched out the sites in Vrindavan (also known as Braj) where Kṛṣṇa had enjoyed pastimes with His beloved cowherd friends. After ascertaining various pastime sites, he named each one according to the pastime performed there.

The *Garga Saṁhitā* tells us that, having located these sites, Vajra had Viśvakarmā, architect of the demigods, carve eight deities: in Mathura, Dīrgha-Viṣṇu (Keśava); in Vrindavan, Govindadeva; in Govardhana, Harideva; in Gokula, Baladeva. These were the first four. Additionally he carved two “Nāthas” – Śrī Nāthajī, originally at Govardhana and now in Nathdwara, Rajasthan, and Śrī Gopīnātha, now in Jaipur.

Add to this the two “Gopālas” known as Śrī Madana Gopāla, renamed Śrī Madana-mohana, now in Karoli, Rajasthan, and Sākṣi Gopāla, now in Orissa, near Puri, and we have the eight. Vajra also commissioned the carving of four Śiva deities and four deities of the goddess, Śiva’s consort, totaling sixteen.

Vajra never saw Kṛṣṇa when He walked the earth, so he had the Kṛṣṇa deities modeled after descriptions given by Uttarā, the mother of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, and by the great devotee Uddhava. With their guidance he began with three different images, but none of them, it is said, perfectly represented what Kṛṣṇa actually looked like.

1. Govindajī’s face resembled the Lord’s<sup>4</sup>

2. Madana-mohana resembled Kṛṣṇa from the navel down to the lotus feet, and



Govindajī in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

3. Gopīnātha resembled the trunk of the body, from the navel to the neck.

The main point is that these three deities together reveal the entire truth of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism – *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* – with Śrī Govinda as the Lord’s smiling face. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 1.19)* says,

*ei tina ṭhākura gauḍīyāke  
kariyāchena ātmasāt  
e tinera caraṇa vandoṅ,  
tine mora nātha*

“These three deities [Madana-mohana, Govinda, and Gopīnātha] have absorbed the heart and soul of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. I worship Their lotus feet, for They are the Lords of my heart.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to this verse:

Worship of Madana-mohana is on the platform of reestablishing our forgotten relationship with the Supreme Lord. In the material world we are presently in utter ignorance of our eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord. *Pāṅgoḥ* refers to one who cannot move independently by his own strength, and *manda-mateḥ* is one who is less intelligent because he is too absorbed in materialistic activities. It is best for such persons not to aspire for success in fruitive activities or mental speculation but instead simply to surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The perfection of

life is simply to surrender to the Supreme. In the beginning of our spiritual life we must therefore worship Madana-mohana so that He may attract us and nullify our attachment for material sense gratification. This relationship with Madana-mohana is necessary for neophyte devotees. When one wishes to render service to the Lord with strong attachment, one worships Govinda on the platform of transcendental service. Govinda is the reservoir of all pleasures. When by the grace of Kṛṣṇa and the devotees one reaches perfection in devotional service, he can appreciate Kṛṣṇa as Gopījanavallabha, the pleasure Deity of the damsels of Vraja.

The same truths are reflected in one of the sacred Vaiṣṇava Gāyatrī mantras chanted three times a day by ISKCON *brāhmaṇas* worldwide: Madana-mohana, Govinda, and Gopīnātha are referred to in this mantra, though in slightly veiled form. Traditionally, the word *kṛṣṇāya* (“unto Kṛṣṇa”) in the mantra is taken to refer to Madana-mohana, *govindāya* to Govindadeva, and *gopījana vallabhāya* to Gopīnātha. These three deities, according to the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, represent the full embodiment of the Absolute Truth.

After generations of worship, these deities were lost until, some five hundred years ago, They were again unearthed by the Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan.



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## Govinda's Unveiling, Part II

In the sixteenth century Lord Caitanya sent Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs to Vrindavan, where they were given the loving charge of writing books on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and, like Vajranābha, finding the lost places of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. They learned that Vajranābha had installed the beautiful deity of Govinda at a place known as Yogapīṭha, the seat of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's union. The two

That occurred in the 1530s, and the local residents worshiped Govindadeva in a simple temple on that exact spot for more than half a century. Then, in 1590, decades after Śrī Rūpa had left our mortal world, the Lord was installed in the most elaborate temple ever built in North India – also in the same spot – sponsored by King Man Singh I (1550–1614) from Amber, Rajasthan. The king was a disciple of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.

The temple was distinguished by its massive seven-story red-sandstone structure, decorated with ornately carved images. The altar was made of marble, silver, and gold. The deity of Govindajī was later to be accompanied by His consort Rādhā, sent by the king of Orissa.<sup>5</sup>

Vṛndādevī, the goddess of Vrindavan, and Yogamāyā, the Lord's internal energy, were also prominent in attached shrines. A huge engraved lotus

embellished the highest dome, in the center of the temple, intricately rendered with care and love. The stone panels on the outside of the temple informed visitors of the structure's history and purpose. One states that Man Singh built the temple with stone donated by Emperor Akbar. Another informs us of the completion date and the names of those involved in the structure's creation and glorifies Govinda with scriptural verses.

Less than one hundred years after its construction, Aurangzeb (1618–1707), a Mogul ruler who didn't share the interreligious perspective of his predecessors, vowed to disrupt the worship of all non-Muslims in his domain. Aurangzeb was the most feared political figure of his time for

his numerous campaigns against religious diversity. An unprecedented iconoclast, he engaged in widespread execution of his opponents.

In or near the year 1670, while standing on the ramparts of his fort at Agra, Aurangzeb noticed a bright light shining in the distance many miles away. When his constables informed him that the spectacle came from a large *ghee* lamp burning in the tower of the Govindajī temple, he was enraged, envious that a Kṛṣṇaite shrine was more glorious than any Muslim structure of the period. He quickly ordered its destruction.

The devotees in Vrindavan, however, were apprised of Aurangzeb's imminent invasion. So by the time his soldiers arrived, Govindajī – and all the other major deities of Vrindavan – had been moved to safer regions. But this did not stop the emperor's militant forces from devastating the area. All the sacred Vaiṣṇava temples were desecrated, and Vrindavan temporarily became a shadow of its former self. Even Govindajī's magnificent structure was not spared. Much to his delight, Aurangzeb demolished the deity chamber and mutilated all the stone carvings on the walls of the temple, his handiwork still visible today. Where there were once seven glorious stories, there are now only three.

## Govinda's Unveiling, Part III

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda were moved some six times before arriving at Their permanent home in Jaipur, Rajasthan, with temporary temples built along the way at Radha-kunda, Kaman (today called Kamyavan), Govindapura, and elsewhere. Under the protection of Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II (1688–1743), the deities were finally placed in the garden temple behind the City Palace. They reached this destination in about 1728, which means that the Lord and His consort had to wait some sixty years to get there. But in many ways, history now shows, the wait was not without purpose – thousands



The deities on the altar of the Govindajī temple in Vrindavan (above left). Above right: the deity of Yogamāyā worshiped underground below these deities.

of devotees now daily worship the deities with full regalia, more than ever before.

On the altar, in addition to Rādhā-Govinda, is a small golden deity of Kṛṣṇa named Gaura-Govinda, once worshiped by Kāśīśvara Paṇḍita, an intimate devotee of Śrī Caitanya. To the left of the deities is a popular *mahā-prasādam* booth. But the chief attraction, the devotees all know, is the *darśana*, or viewing, of Lord Govinda Himself. This is evident from the main prayer of the temple, recited before the deity every day. In translation: "We hunger for the sight of Your face, which consistently places You in our thoughts. This life may be an ocean of material responsibilities, and we ourselves are in the middle of that ocean. But with Your blessings we can be relieved of life's burdens and serve Your lotus feet in an ongoing way."

Meanwhile in Braj: Sometime in the second decade of the nineteenth century, a local Brajbasi (inhabitant of Braj) named Nanda Kumar Basu opened a new Rādhā-Govinda temple in Vrindavan. This temple stands behind the original Govindajī temple and looks like a natural extension of it. In 1873, nearly two hundred years after the Moguls dismantled the original Govindajī structure, Mathura district magistrate F. S.

Growse, who founded the Mathura Museum, supplemented Nanda Kumar Basu's work, renovating the temple complex and establishing it as a historical monument protected by the Indian government.

On the altar we now find a replica deity (*pratibhū*) of Govindadeva, as well as smaller Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities. Additionally, there are forms of Gaura-Nitāi, Giridhārī-śilā, Laḍḍu Gopāla (infant Kṛṣṇa carrying a traditional confection), and Lord Jagannātha. A deity of Yogamāyā, said to have been one of Rūpa Gosvāmī's deities, is worshiped in an underground temple beneath the main structure, where she was hidden from invading Moguls in the seventeenth century. The deity of Vṛndādevī worshiped by Śrī Rūpa was brought to Kamyavan just before Aurangzeb ransacked the area, and can still be found there, revered by visiting pilgrims daily.

## Govinda Comes West

As we can see from the above, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda are unique deities with a rich history – but there is another component to Their story, one that involves the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the Lord's desire to spread His message beyond the borders of India.



Rādhā-Govindajī in Jaipur.

Gosvāmīs were eager to find the area and the lost deity.

"O Govinda! O Govinda!" they cried as they wandered throughout the Braj region.

One day a *brāhmaṇa* boy told Śrī Rūpa that the Yogapīṭha was now in an area called Goma-tila. Every day, he said, an extraordinary cow emptied her udder into a hole at the very top of this hill (*tila*). Realizing why this cow was special – and what Goma-tila actually represented – Rūpa Gosvāmī asked the residents of Braj to perform massive excavations in the area. After extensive digging, they unearthed an exquisite black deity of Kṛṣṇa, whereupon the devotees gleefully chanted, "Govinda-deva *ki jaya!* Govindadeva *ki jaya!*" ("All glories to Lord Govinda!")

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*Śrīmatī Devī Dāsī (at left in the photo at left) and Kauśalyā Devī Dāsī with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Jaipur, 1972. Opposite page: Rādhā-Govinda at the Henry Street temple in Brooklyn, Their earliest New York dwelling.*

In February 1972, ISKCON founder-*ācārya* Śrīla Prabhupāda brought some of his Western followers to Jaipur. Kauśalyā Devī Dāsī, one of his early American disciples who happened to be staying there, saw to her spiritual master's accommodations: "I arranged for his stay on the City Palace grounds with the *pūjārī* of the temple. None of the other devotees were allowed to stay on the grounds except Prabhupāda's direct servants. The others had to stay in nearby rooms."

Kauśalyā almost single-handedly arranged elaborate tent programs for Prabhupāda, with his presence generating excitement throughout Jaipur.

"We organized and paid for the *pandal* programs with donations from several prominent citizens," writes Kauśalyā. "As a result, we were invited to Gayatri Devi's home – she was keenly interested in meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda."

Rajamata Gayatri Devi (1919–2009) was the Queen of Jaipur at the time, and she was fully supportive of Prabhupāda's stay at the City Palace. While there, Prabhupāda regularly lectured from a stage set up for him. Taken by his presence, purity, and the profundity of his words, Queen Gayatri Devi offered him a special gift: an elegant and stately residence on the grounds of the City Palace. Prabhupāda wanted to use the building for his mission in India, but for various reasons the transaction was never completed.

Around this same time, Śrīmatī Devī Dāsī, another of Prabhupāda's early female disciples, arrived, and with Kauśalyā searched in Jaipur for

deities on behalf of the New York temple, which was then in Brooklyn (439 Henry Street).

Kauśalyā writes, "Srimati visited the finest *murti walla* [deity sculptor] and then she saw Them – a beautiful black marble Krishna and white marble Radharani with conch shell eyes. When Srila Prabhupada and the devotees arrived, there was great jubilation. . . . He was very pleased with the deities and conducted the installation ceremony as part of the *pandal* program, and since the ceremony was to take place next to Govindaji, he named Them Radha-Govinda."

Sometimes it is said that Gayatri Devi donated these deities, but They actually appeared by the grace of Prabhupāda's two disciples Kauśalyā and Śrīmatī.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda arrived in New York on March 1, 1972, and Their appearance was celebrated two days later on Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance day of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The western devotees vowed to learn the science of worshipping Them properly, and they did.

Rādhā-Govinda's international journey has been colorful and interesting: Govinda is installed by Vajra-nābha not long after Kṛṣṇa's time on earth and rediscovered by the Vrindavan Gosvāmīs in the sixteenth century. Rādhā joins Govinda, and They are moved to Jaipur nearly two hundred years later. In new forms, they travel from Jaipur to Henry Street, Brooklyn, in 1972, then on to 340 West 55th Street, Manhattan, in 1975, and to Seventh Avenue in Manhattan five years later. Finally, on November 1, 1982, They

move to Their current temple at 305 Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn, where They have given Their abundant mercy to committed devotees and temple visitors ever since.

It was in Brooklyn, at the Henry Street temple, that I had the good fortune to see Them for the first time, and after that I journeyed to India to see Their original manifestation in Jaipur and Their facsimile expansions in Vrindavan.

I conclude with the words of Rūpa Gosvāmī, who discovered the original deity and who is the original *ācārya* of the "path" (*abhidheya*) of Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

My dear friend, if you are indeed attached to worldly relationships, do not look at the smiling face of Lord Govinda as He stands on the bank of the Yamuna at Keśī-ghāṭa. Casting sidelong glances, He places His flute to His lips, which seem like newly blossomed twigs. His transcendental body, bending in three places, appears very bright in the moonlight. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.239) 🕉

#### NOTES

- 1 You can hear it here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSFVgHVXUlk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSFVgHVXUlk)
- 2 Talk at Rādhā-Govinda Mandir, Calcutta, March 24, 1976.
- 3 [www.sanskritdictionary.com/vinda/28907/4](http://www.sanskritdictionary.com/vinda/28907/4)
- 4 According to some versions, it is Gopinātha's face that perfectly depicts the Lord's face.
- 5 It is said that King Purushottama Jana, the son of Gajapati Emperor Prataparudra, sent Rādhā deities for both Madana-mohana and Govinda-deva. Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, consort of Nityānanda Prabhu, sent the Rādhā deity that now accompanies Gopinātha in Jaipur.

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# Out Walking in the USA

*The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement's "Walking Monk" completes another long journey – this time across America.*

by Bhaktimārga Swami

**W**HEN ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA arrived in America in 1965, he first stayed at the home of Gopal and Sally Agarwal in Butler, Pennsylvania. After a month he traveled to New York, where he opened the first storefront temple. Then he went on to establish a temple in San Francisco.

The route of my two-year, 3,550-mile trek through seventeen states touched these three places and others Śrīla Prabhupāda visited. It was divided into three legs: Boston to Butler to New York (950 miles in 45 days); Butler to Seward, Nebraska (985 miles in 60 days); and Seward to the Pacific Ocean at San Francisco (1,615 miles in 90 days).

*Aug. 25, 2017,  
near the salt  
flats in Austin,  
Nevada.*







Clockwise from top: (1) Sept. 19, 2015, Boston, Massachusetts, at Commonwealth Pier, where Śrīla Prabhupāda landed on Sept. 19, 1965, fifty years earlier. (2) October 24, 2015, Butler, Pennsylvania, at the McKean Street Boys Club. The author and an international group of devotees toured the building, formerly the YMCA where Prabhupāda stayed upon his arrival. (3) Oct. 13, 2015, near Woodward, PA. (4) Oct. 23, 2015, on the way to Butler.



I also conceived the trek as an opportunity to meet souls in an American setting, and as much as possible, along the Old Lincoln Road, the nation's first highway.

Now that the undertaking is complete, the memories of the pilgrimage across the United States are endearing for me and, I hope, for some hearts I and my team connected with. The following are some journal entries about the walk.

*Boston, Massachusetts – Monday, Sept. 21, 2015*

There is nothing more auspicious than initiating a project spearheaded by way of *saṅkīrtana* (sharing sacred sound with the world). It was the Harinama Ruci party, a group of young men who chant to please the Lord and the crowds, who became my send-off party. Two Canadian young men – Karuṇā Sindhu Dāsa and Pradyumna Dāsa – accompanied

me for some initial steps on the long road.

*Hartford, Connecticut – Friday, Sept. 25*  
Tre'von Stapleton, 19, is an African-American and resembles Bob Marley with his dreadlocks

and tall lankiness. He came to visit the ISKCON center in Hartford and heard my talk about Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa's consort, on Her "birthday," during which I mentioned our cross-U.S. walk.  
"I wanna go with you guys!"  
An obstacle to his joining us was his mother, with whom he was living and who might not concur with the idea. He also had a steady girlfriend



Photos by Vivasvān Dāsa



and a good job as top salesman for three consecutive months at a men's clothing store. Hurdles perhaps.  
"I'll take care of it all and get a leave of absence from work," he said.

On the power of conviction, he became a team member along with Vivasvān Dāsa and me. Tre'von and I got on well together as walkers. We even shared the same birthday.

Tre'von was listening to what I had to say regarding Prabhupāda's teachings.

"We are not these bodies. I'm not white. You're not black. We're spirits. That's the fundamental wisdom of the *Vedas* as taught by Prabhupāda."

"What's his name again?" asked Tre'von.

*Woodward, Pennsylvania – October 13*

Tre'von was learning Sanskrit mantras, and among them is the great mantra, the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Some commuters spotted us as we ambled along. Some recognized me from

the news-media attention, while others, unaware of our cause, found us a bit odd. In this conservative neighborhood, I could easily be mistaken as an escaped prisoner in an orange jumpsuit.

Police were called to investigate after receiving several calls. They dashed to our location in front of a farmhouse, and went through the regular formalities of questioning. All was fine.

I was frank with the officers.

"You know, people are rather paranoid. They watch too many horror movies and too much TV and news."

They agreed with me.

"We're just walking to promote peace – the walking culture. It's really needed right now."

Once again they agreed.



As the three of us – Tre'von and I and now Mandala – strode along in a quiet residential area, brilliant autumn leaves were descending, and the sun (the eye of God) cast its rays to create streaks of light through the trees. It was Sunday, when people tend to be more holy, or at least relaxed.

The three of us clutched our meditational *japa* beads. As we softly chanted on them, we came upon another group of pilgrims – much to our surprise, a dozen or more people across the street were also on foot with beads in their hands. On inquiring, we learned that they are a group of Catholics who routinely saunter from one church to another on Sundays. With their rosaries, they are praying to alleviate the suffering of humanity.

Our mutual objective became clear when one of the pilgrims said,



Photos by Vivasvān Dāsa



*Early November 2015 (top), near Jonestown, PA, with Mandala McAllister (left in photo) from Canada and Tre'von Stapleton from Connecticut. Center: Oct. 7, 2015 near Berwick, PA. Above: a friendly visit from a policeman in Woodward, PA, Oct. 13, 2017. Right: with Tre'von near Altoona, PA, October 27, 2015.*







Clockwise from top left: (1) Nov. 6, 2015, Bethlehem, PA. Chaz from News 69 TV interviewing and on the camera; Mandala holding the microphone. (2) Nov. 10, 2015, Manhattan, NY. (3) Oct. 28, 2015, being interviewed by WRTA 1240 radio, in Altoona, PA. (4) Nov. 15, 2015, with Tre'veon and Mandala on the Brooklyn Bridge.



Photos by Virasvini Dasa

“Oh well, we all accept the same God, right?”

Manhattan, New York – Tuesday, Nov. 10

New York had been a gateway to the New World for immigrants for centuries. When Prabhupāda arrived in 1965, his very motive in coming was a different spin on the meaning of exploring the land of freedom and opportunity.

We stopped at the Irish Hunger Memorial and then Ground Zero, where a sad, eerie emotion momentarily consumed us (our walking party had grown to ten). We finally arrived at Tompkins Square Park and the “Prabhupāda tree.” It is a majestic elm and a milestone. It was here that Prabhupāda chanted to the beat of a tom-tom drum.

To celebrate this milestone for the first leg of the journey – a 950-mile walk from Boston to Butler to New York City – my good friend Abhirāma Dāsa and I, along with our walking group, joined hands and walked clockwise around the tree, the traditional Vedic way of offering respect. This is the tree under which much chanting took place when the



launch of *kīrtana* was casually ushered in. Half a century ago, a mix of people, including members of the Beat Generation, were a curious crowd to see “Swamiji” and his young students singing and dancing to the sound of God’s name.

Toledo, Ohio – Thursday, June 2, 2016

The restart point for the U.S. walk was Butler, Pennsylvania. A new crew consisting of Gopal from West Virginia and Uttamananda from Canada made up my support team. A very large section of America, the Midwest, began once we left Pennsylvania and entered the state of



Ohio, with its fields, factories, picturesque countryside, and Amish.

When people see a walking monk set against this landscape, they are prone to react in their own ways. Some are quite helpful, offering water, food, lodging, or just encouragement. I try to reciprocate in some way.

Two young men were crossing the bridge arched over the interstate. They saw me coming, noted my robes, and took me for a Kung Fu master.

“Can you teach us how da fat?” (“to fight”)

I admitted to not being a martial artist.

“I can teach you the lifestyle of gentleness. Learning defense can be good, but try to defend with words. Use wisdom. That failing, use the weapon.”

With that, I took a defensive stance with my hands.

“Hey man, that’s so cool!”

Morenci, Michigan – Friday, June 3

As I walked through town, a jogging high school teacher slowed down and came to my side.

“Buddhist?”

“No. Hare Kṛṣṇa monk!”

“Oh yes, let me see – George Harrison, the airports. What else?”

I told the jogger that we follow the ancient teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “The Song of the Divine,” and that it addresses our dharma, or obligation – our ultimate purpose in life, which is to love the Creator.

“Good stuff!” he said and moved on, now with a mantra card in his hand.



October 2015, in the Pennsylvania countryside (above). Left: October 2015, in Amish country, Pennsylvania. Below: May 14, 2016, Youngstown, Ohio, being interviewed by Bruce Walton of the Youngstown Vindicator newspaper.



My aim is to inspire, but I also need encouragement. I received an email message from Jayādvaita Swami, a monastic brother.

“Well, you’re doing the healthiest thing in the world – and making a valuable spiritual contribution by your example.”

Bristol, Indiana – Wednesday, June 8

I came upon a walker, a short and sweet middle-aged woman. She told me why she walks regularly.

“I walk every day to be fit to serve my Lord and others.”

Good, I thought. She hit the nail on the head.

Williamsburg, Iowa – Tuesday, July 12

Clearly this is corn country. Rains come down profusely, allowing for happy plants. I had prepared myself after hearing the forecast for the day. I felt it called for my normal rainwear – sweat pants and T-shirt. I learned from my Ireland trek that the traditional dhoti can tear when drenched, as it wraps around the leg too tightly when I’m striding out.

The rain subsided. An officer came. “I got a call that someone’s walking.”

With slight sarcasm I replied, “Is it a crime to walk, officer?”

“No, but I do have to answer peo-



ple’s concerns. You’re the Walking Monk, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I am.”

“You see, yesterday, in the last county, you were suspected of being an escaped convict because of the orange. You were near a prison. Today you’re near a mental institution, and so anyone walking around here is in potential danger.”

We spoke as friends.

“Well, if you ask me,” I said, “the motorists are committing the crimes. Worldwide, over a million people die from auto accidents each year,” I said.



And with that, I considered what Prabhupāda said: “Simple living and high thinking.” He championed rural life, with dependence on land, animals, and God – the eco-friendly, agrarian culture.

*Sidney, Nebraska –  
June 2, 2017*

For the third leg of the walk I have with me a team of two *brahmācārīs*, Hayagriva and Marshall, who are backing my every effort through a drier countryside. With cornfields behind us and deserts ahead, we still come upon the occasional town, and in this one, Sidney, we have lined up a program at the North Elementary Summer Camp.



*Principal Colleen and the students of the North Elementary Summer Camp (above), Sidney, Nebraska, June 2, 2017. Far left: Taking a break (location unknown). Left: three teens on the highway, May 23, 2017, Elm Creek, Nebraska. Below: John's Diner, Lakewood, Ohio, May 19, 2016.*



I told the children of our road adventures, and then we led them in yoga stretches and chanting. The students, teachers, and parents took incredible delight in the spontaneous dance contest as they moved to the chant and the beat of the drum.

The students (ages 6 to 10) worked up quite a sweat as they exerted their energy, knowingly or unknowingly, in honor of the Creator.

*Denver, Colorado –  
Sunday, June 11*

One of the primary features of my walks is visiting temples that Prabhupāda established. Denver, although off the beaten path, was not to be missed.

Keeping contact with spiritual association becomes the top priority



*Photo by Bob Solys. Used with permission.*



*August 17, 2017 (left), with Annabella Younger's two grandchildren Tommy and Serenity in the desert near Rawhide, Nevada. Below: Dinosaur, Colorado, June 21, 2017.*



for anyone on the path of *bhakti*. In fact, Prabhupāda aptly taught that spiritual culture and values lie in four principal relationships with people: (1) revere superiors, (2) befriend equals, (3) guide the young, and (4) avoid antagonists.

*Vernal, Utah –  
June 28*

The desert intensifies with fewer trees in view, while salt flats and salt lakes become more prominent, along with sage and rabbit brush. The human population grows sparse. Utah is the seat of Mormonism, and with its more concerted effort toward a God-centric culture, it makes our trek somewhat less stressful.

Yesterday I was interviewed by Amy Richards on KLCY 105.5 Eagle Country Radio station, which features country & western music.





June 28, 2017, with Marshall on Summit Hwy 181, Utah.

Today I'm featured on Radio Channel X94 with host Jennifer. Our talk before going on air was casual, and it basically stayed that way throughout, even when I showed her a copy of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Her eyes widened, and she said, "I've got that book!"

"Okay, we're on live. Put on the headphones and go to the mic."

She introduced me to her listeners as a spiritual guest, "The Walking Monk," and proceeded to say my name quite well. She mentioned that we'd had a discussion and that "Swami describes that the pop music we play has a definition in the . . . what language was that again?" she asked lightheartedly.

"Sanskrit," I said.

"He said 'pop' means 'sin,' and so that's why we have the monk with us – to deal with our sins."

We had a good laugh, a laugh that traveled over the desert plains and mountains and reached the ears of listeners before they heard about the virtues of walking and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Carson City, Nevada – Sept. 1

A high-court judge from the city of Ely had spotted Hayagriva, Marshall, and me chanting on the



Above: October 30, 2015, namaste from the class of Professor Susan Prill of the religion department, Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

Below: August 23, 2017, Ely, Nevada, where the author spoke at a Lion's Club meeting in the Jailhouse Casino.

grass in the park and invited us over to speak before members of the local Lion's Club. The meeting was held in the Jailhouse Motel Casino.

Doors for venues were opening up to us in places we wouldn't have imagined in the past, such as summer camps, seniors' centers, and yoga studios. Now it's casinos!

In Carson City we conducted a Dog Blessing in Fuji Park. Loraine is a member of Dog Rescue, and she



## What's on My Mind?

WHEN WALKING FOR long hours, I naturally step mentally into the three phases of time.

I step back into the past – my childhood, adolescence, and all those experiences that led me to my current Kṛṣṇa conscious practice. With such contemplation, my gratitude is enhanced as I pay mental tribute to the people who contributed to my faith in something so sublime as Kṛṣṇa.

I fast-forward and step into the future, where there are projected dreams and plans on how to help the human condition. People are suffering – are they ever! Unemployment, the drug and drink epidemic, the irresponsible sex, dysfunctional families, homelessness, the harsh realities of today. *Bhakti* (devotion) can help. I pray that I can be a better instrument in helping that cause.

I also spend considerable time being in the present with a firm footing on the ground. My actual walking day starts in the dark. With little distraction, it is just me and the *mahā-mantra* as I clutch my *japa* beads and move with a careful watch to where I'm putting my next step. At sunrise, which is so well viewed from a walker's perspective, the dawn opens up a world of sights, sounds, smells, and textures that trigger acknowledgement of my smallness in a much greater world. I am humbled and awed, ready for service on Prabhupāda's behalf – in meeting the elements, which increases my stamina, and in meeting the people, which softens my heart.

I break out into a devotional song at times when there's no one around and only coyotes can hear and see me.



had arranged for dog owners of formerly abused canines to witness an ancient rite – *ārati*.

Compliments of my godsis-ter Anavadyāṅgī Dāsī, I offered the traditional *ārati* paraphernalia before a picture of Prabhupāda, performing this act of devotion using incense, flame, water, and flowers. The pet owners noticed how docile their dogs were, and then I spoke on *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.18: “The humble

sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision the gentle *brāhmaṇa*, the elephant, the cow, the dog, and the man who eats the dog.” They loved the message.

*Jackson, California –  
Sept. 6*

The *brahmacārīs* and I had never encountered such dryness in our lives; it seemed an endless desert. I used an umbrella to deal with the

merciless sun and, if need be, began the day’s twenty-mile trek at 3:00 a.m. Anything to beat the heat.

Finally we came upon the Sierra Nevada Mountains and were amid shady coniferous trees. It was a relief. A biker pulled over. Thrilled to see a monk, he offered me the only thing he had on him that he could offer as a gift. He asked if I smoked weed (marijuana).

“That’s kind of you,” I said, “but

our guru, Prabhupāda, placed some self-discipline on us. You know, it helps to build character.”

“Gotcha!”

“You’re a good man. You stopped to talk. It shows you’re human; you’re kind.”

I also met Rachel Norris, a journalist with the *Amador Ledger*. She went on to write a great article about the walk, an article that in many ways sums up our purposes. She

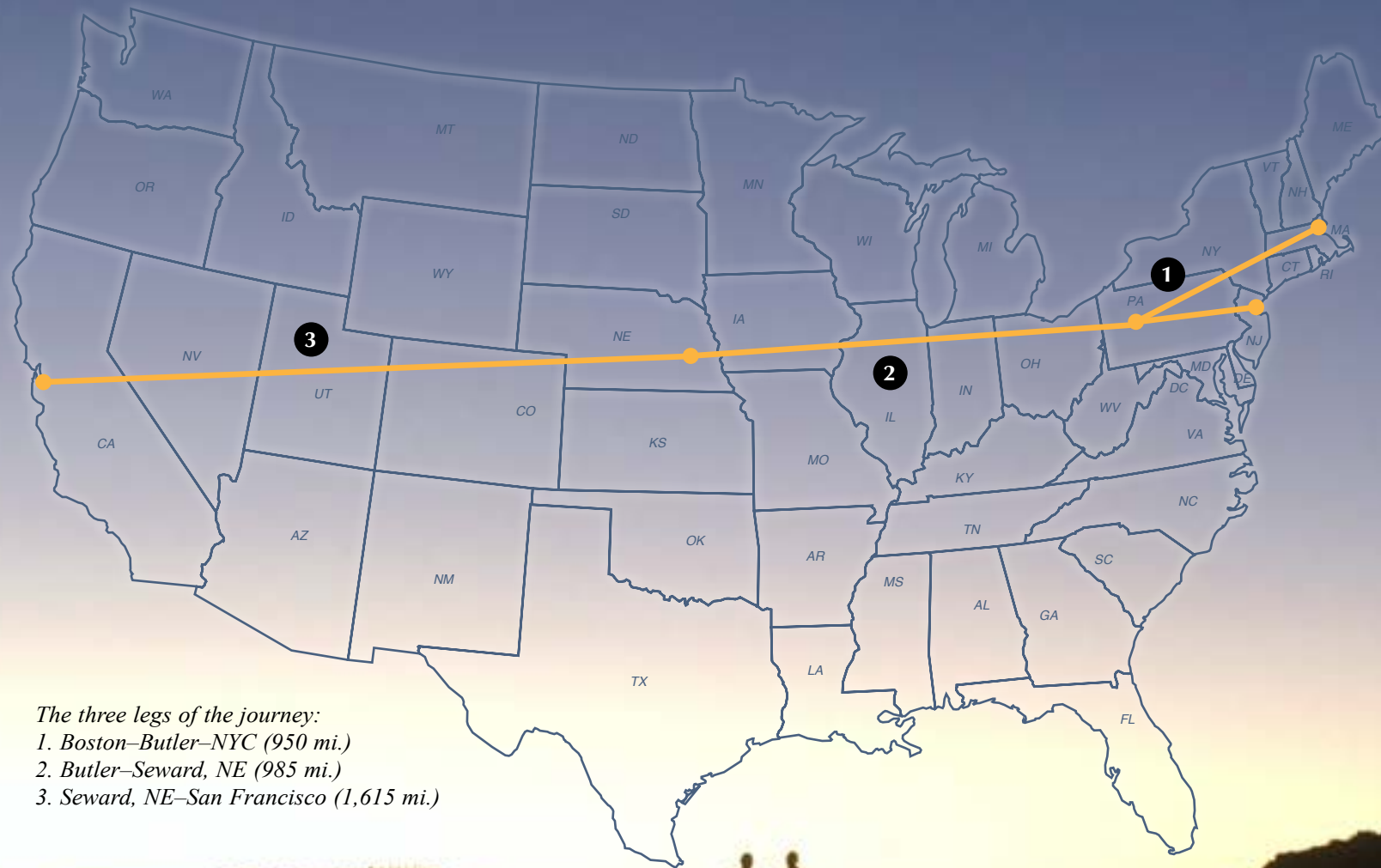
extended herself, and even invited Hayagriva, Marshall, and me to spend the night in her home. Here’s an excerpt from her article, “Walking With Purpose”:

“Something very special and rare has come to our attention in the last couple of days, and it’s something that will make you walk the walk, literally. Bhaktimarga Swami, also known as The Walking Monk, has walked across Can-

ada (Earth’s second largest country) from coast to coast, four times to be exact. . . . Starting in November of 2015, Swami began a trek from Boston, Massachusetts all of the way to San Francisco, California to honor the 50th anniversary of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), founded by his guru, Srila Prabhupada, who passed away in 1977 at the age of 81 years.”

*June 29, 2017,  
outside Salt  
Lake City.*





*The three legs of the journey:*  
 1. Boston–Butler–NYC (950 mi.)  
 2. Butler–Seward, NE (985 mi.)  
 3. Seward, NE–San Francisco (1,615 mi.)

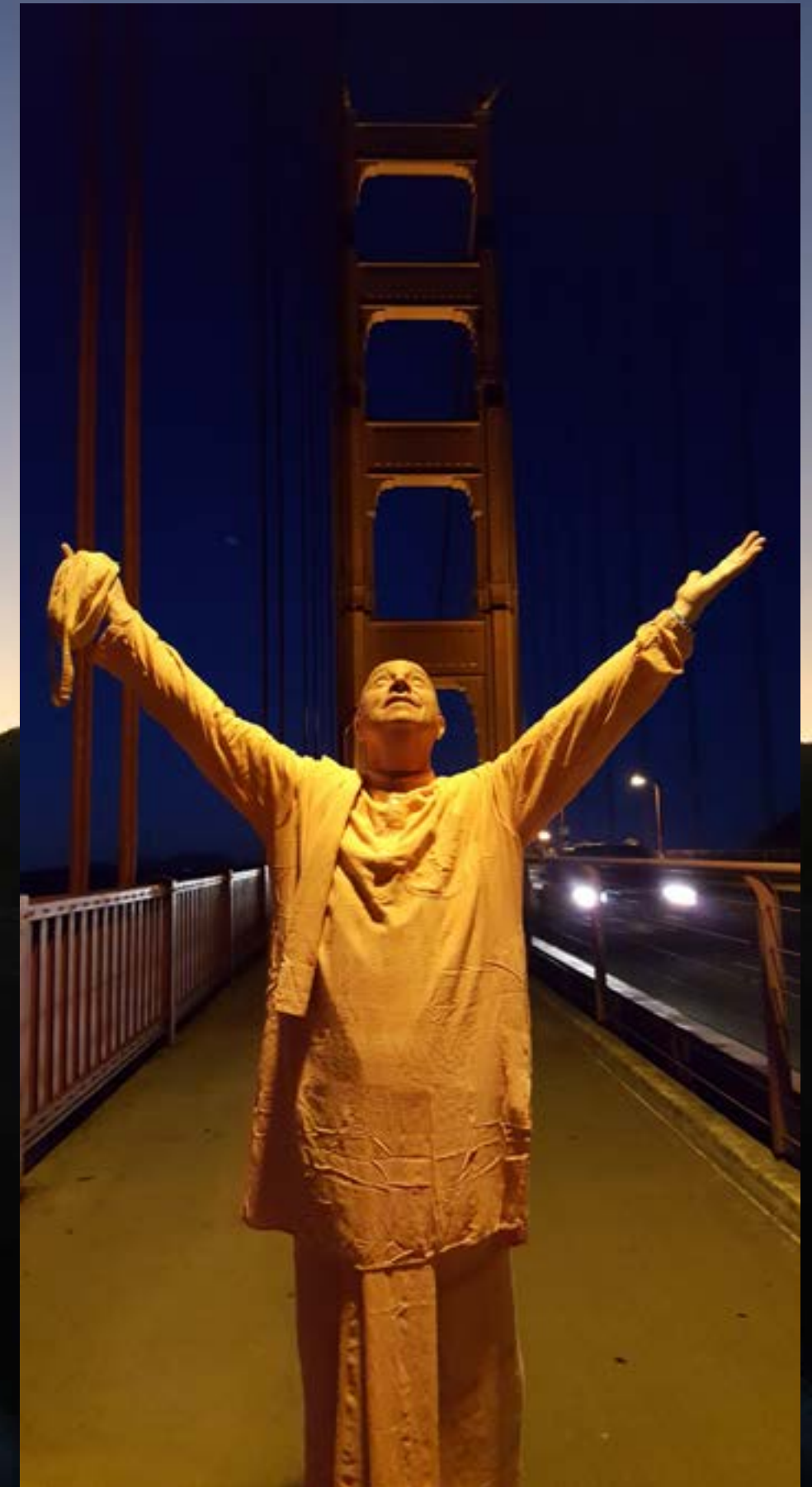
*San Francisco, California –  
 Sept. 15*

As the sun rose, it was a sensational brisk walk over the Golden Gate Bridge, then four miles from Masonic and Page streets to Irving and the last few steps, which ended at the Pacific Ocean. Our dear friends Vaiśeṣika Dāsa and his wife, Nirākulā Dāsī, had come to join us on the path that half a century earlier had hosted the procession of the first Jagannātha Rathayātrā on western soil.

The sun was shining, and the ocean

as well. Maybe Uncle Sam cracked a smile as we somewhat clumsily trudged through the sand before I cupped some water in my hand and sprinkled it over my head. An offering of love, via legs, feet, and heart, to the perfect teacher, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was complete – a pilgrimage through America. 🌸

*Bhaktimārga Swami, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, began marathon walking in 1996. He is based in Toronto.*



*June 19, 2017, with Hayagriva at sunrise in Elk Springs, Colorado. Inset: September 14, 2017, Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco.*



# Barnyard Karma

*For those who practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness, even ordinary material objects like manure rakes are potential instruments for profound spiritual lessons.*



Triloka Mohini Devi Dasi

by Yogīnātha Dāsa

I'M LOOKING OUT my window at rounded mounds of snow piled against the tool shed. The winter British Columbia sky is gray, and pointy icicles are hanging from the edge of the roof. I'm warm and cozy inside our log cabin, and quite comfortable except for the swollen black eye I'm nursing. Let me tell you about the eye.

For several years it has been our family custom to perform a *go-pūjā* (cow-worshipping ceremony) at noon on January 1. For us it's a way to express gratitude and invoke good fortune for the upcoming year. We think of the cow as the universal mother. Her dung makes our strawberries large and juicy, her urine relieves my friend's high blood pressure, and her milk (taken after she feeds her calf) makes excitingly delicious yogurt. According to a number of Vedic scriptures, she is a medium for delivering spiritual benefits to humans. She is not God, but she is a beautiful and important part of God's creation. We are happy to honor such a gentle and generous creature.

We have a small *goshala* (shelter for cows), with six cows. We try to be very attentive to their needs for good food and fresh water. We also provide them with a clean barn where they can lounge during the winter months. In addition to the regular daily care, on a few occasions we formally worship them. New Year's Day is one such time.

Our friend Pravin, who grew up in Gujarat, taught us a system of cow worship. We bring Surabhi (our largest and friendliest cow) to the hitching post and tie her up. She is docile, but animals can be unpredictable. We don't want her wandering off in the middle of a ceremony in which she is the chief object of veneration, so we fasten her to the post with her braided purple rope. We wash her four hooves (lotus feet) with rose water, we decorate her body with turmeric and vermil-

ion, we offer her a new sari and a flower garland, and then we perform *pūjā* with incense, ghee lamp, and fan. After all of that, we feed her (and the other five cows) special cow treats. While all of this is going on, mantras are being chanted, especially the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. At the end, all the participants circumambulate Surabhi and receive her blessings by having their heads brushed with the fluffy end of her tail.

## The Treat-Tray Tragedy

The air was cold on this particular New Year's Day. The sky was clear blue, and the angled winter sun caused the snow to sparkle like millions of tiny red and green jewels. The atmosphere in the barnyard was magical. After collecting all of the articles for worship and placing them on a shiny yellow cloth that covered a bench near the hitching post, I returned down the driveway to our home to prepare the cow-treat tray.

The treat tray is large, more than two feet across. When full it looks like an oversized banquet tray prepared for an indulgent king. We take pride in this tray. We bring up the best of the organic carrots, beets, and apples from the root cellar. These are all grown in our private garden with the intention of having special food for the cows during the winter. The vegetables and apples are cut and sliced and artistically arranged on the tray. We also load the tray with the most preferred of all treats, ground flax seeds mixed with *gur* (raw date sugar) and formed into balls. The *gur* balls are piled in the center of the tray. They look like a mountain arising from a swirling sea of red, orange, and white.

I carried the treat-laden platter up the incline of a snowy hundred-foot driveway, my body shifting into a heavy-breathing gear. The tray had to be kept separate from the other



items of worship – away from the cows for now – so I brought it into a separate section of the barn. As I stepped from the snowy driveway onto the cement floor of the barn, my foot slipped, I lost my balance, and I threw the tray into the air. Simultaneously I lunged forward, stepping onto the teeth of a rake and forcing its handle to fly straight into my face. This is a special heavy-duty barn rake I ordered online as a birthday present for myself so I could improve my service to the cows. The oversized handle, propelled by the full force of my body weight, flew from the ground to my face in a fraction of a second. The blow knocked my glasses to

neighbors were coming for *go-pūjā* in just a few minutes.

I began to reassemble the treat tray. But this time, as an act of defiance, I threw everything together in a nondescript pile. Here I was, about to honor God’s own cow, and in return for my piety I was whacked in the face by a professional-grade road rake. I was not in the mood to recreate the swirling pattern of fruits and vegetables on the treat tray. I was feeling betrayed and resentful.

### As the Fan Turns

I stoically completed the entire thirty minutes of worship, thanked the participants, cleaned up, and returned

was black. Not green and blue like generic body bruises, but solid black. It looked like something from a Hollywood horror film, a combination zombie/vampire. When I showed the eye to my wife, her jaw slackened as she stared in silent disbelief. When my daughter looked at it, she gasped for air. “Oh my God, Dad, that’s SCARY!”

### An Eye for an Eye

Later in the day my wife asked me to look at the calendar to find out the date of the next full moon. The calendar hangs at eye level on a kitchen wall. When I flicked the calendar page, something impossible happened. The corner of January slipped past my glasses and poked me with full force directly on the sole remaining white spot of my injured eye. The pain was sharp and penetrating. In fact, it hurt more than the previous day’s smack by the rake.

I was stunned and shocked, but my reaction was quite different than it had been on the day before. The sheer impossibility of the event inspired in me a sense of wonder. I had flipped thousands of calendar pages in my life, all without even a hint of incident. I had no reason to be cautious or to think it could be dangerous. How was it possible for a common calendar page to poke me like a pencil directly on the final remaining speck of white of my bright-red eye? Rather than feeling angry or resentful, I was so utterly amazed that the pain seemed incidental. It was as if the laws of physics had been momentarily suspended just for my tutelage.

The purpose of karma, the power and genius of karma, the precise and exact fairness of karma, and the gentle hand of karma were all revealed to me in that moment. It was simple and self-evident. A brilliant and loving God allows the material energy to reward us with the very least possible amount of appropriate discomfort in order to bring about the greatest pos-

sible amount of good. An hour in the dentist’s chair spares the child days of tooth pain in the future. It was for my benefit! I really did deserve it! I was getting free from the sins of the past!

I felt joyful to be chastened by the agents of a concerned and affectionate God. Yes please, take my whole eye if that is Your desire. It’s Your eye, and Your power of vision causes it to work in the first place. Take both eyes if You wish! I trust You.

The stream of such thoughts liberated me from any inclination to curse. Cursing in that moment was unthinkable. Quite the opposite, I was grateful if not elated to receive the pain.

The Vaiṣṇava teleology of karma asserts certain truths. There is a God. We have free will. We are responsible for our choices. The cause and effect of our deeds extends beyond one life, and in the end God desires nothing more than our happiness. Although karma is an irresistible force in this mortal world, in Vaikuṅṭha (the kingdom of God) the laws of karma do

not operate. Vaikuṅṭha is a realm of absolute freedom. Karma would serve no purpose there since the inhabitants, motivated by a profound love for God, have no need of moral correction. In time, *bhakti-yoga* virtually eliminates the karmic load of the serious practitioner, thus preparing him or her for transfer to Vaikuṅṭha. A rake in the face is a small price to pay for receiving a glimpse into this eternal sacred reality.

### Endnote

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that although a person engaged in devotional service does not incur karmic reactions, a reduced version of previous activities continue to play out in some way, just as a fan keeps turning for a while after it has been unplugged.

I have used the word *karma* in the popular sense of the term – a divine justice system that delivers rewards and punishments corresponding directly to our actions. More accurately, karma refers not only to the

results of our actions (*karma phala*) but also to the work or action itself. The two following verses from the *Bhagavad-gītā* are favorites of mine, and both illustrate this broader understanding of the word.

“Work done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu has to be performed; otherwise work causes bondage in this material world. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain free from bondage.” (3.9)

“The work of a man who is unattached to the modes of material nature and who is fully situated in transcendental knowledge merges entirely into transcendence.” (4.23) 🌍

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**The oversized handle, propelled by the full force of my body weight, flew from the ground to my face in a fraction of a second.**

the ground and hit me square in my right eye.

I have always found it curious that even though I am well schooled in Vaiṣṇava philosophy, in moments of relatively minor body trauma I spontaneously resort to expressing my feelings by way of the lowest mode of nature. As I tumbled and reeled in pain, I began cursing. The worst words I knew. Words I would never utter in public. Was I cursing God? Was I cursing my fate? And in what way could cursing help relieve the pain or remedy the situation? I cannot answer these questions. I can only say that I felt angry and humiliated and that the cursing came forth in a flurry.

After a few moments of sputtering around in a circle, I pulled my hand away from my eye. There was no blood. I could open the eyelid, but it hurt and my vision was blurry, so I kept it closed. With one eye I looked at the scattered pile of beets and carrots and apples and *gur*. The

to the comfort of my ashram to sulk. I could understand that after many millions of lifetimes in the material world there may be some residual karma that a devotee must patiently endure. But after forty-plus years of relatively steady devotional practices, shouldn’t the “unplugged fan” of karma have slowed down? (See Endnote.) OK, somehow I may have deserved it. Who knows what sins I might have committed in past lives. But why a rake handle to the face? It was so undignified. And why did it happen mere moments before conducting a religious ceremony? Emotional reconciliation eluded me.

When I woke up the following day and looked in the mirror, I saw a glowing bright-red eyeball with a small circle of white remaining on one side. Was the tiny white moon in a sea of red some kind of smug cosmic joke intended to let me know it could have been worse? The eye could be entirely red. I wasn’t humored. The skin around the eye

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**HARE KṚṢṂA, HARE KṚṢṂA, KṚṢṂA KṚṢṂA, HARE HARE  
HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA, RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE**



PRONUNCIATION:

ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”).

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# The Right to Lament



*Although Lord Kṛṣṇa rebukes Arjuna for lamenting, lamentation can play a significant role in our spiritual life.*

by Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī

**I**T IS DIFFICULT to tolerate separation from a beloved. The loss of a friend or relative can affect us for months or years. Chaplains and psychologists have special counseling for people who suddenly find themselves grieving for a loved one.

I lost my mother two years ago, and feelings of “someone very important is missing” still come over me unexpectedly. I once knew a woman who never failed to shed tears whenever she recalled a death in her family that happened thirty years before.

It’s no wonder that “loving memory” bouquets, garlands, balloons, pinwheels, statues, and even toys are placed at hundreds of thousands of burial or cremation sites everywhere, dedicated to the deceased.

A devotee friend who worked for some years as receptionist at a crematorium spoke of clients in her office crying and demanding, “What did you do with my mother?” or “Where is my husband? What have you



done with him?” Grief can trigger desperate behavior and depression. Some grievors feel haunted or possessed by the ghost of the missing person they hanker for.

These descriptions may sound odd while we have the luxury of a rational point of view, but someday lamentation and grief over the loss of a loved one may hit us with its full force. We know that the loss of a loved one may happen, so why are we not emotionally ready for it?

This is a difficult topic. To deal with it effectively, it is critical that we truly understand the lives of our loved ones and everyone around us. When we invest our consciousness in only the temporary body and mind of another person as if these

ously he heard you and replied to you, but now, not finding him, you are lamenting. This is contradictory behavior, for you have never actually seen the person within the body who heard you and replied. There is no need for your lamentation, for the body you have always seen is lying there.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.2.44)

Yamarāja’s advice to the queens is a striking paradox. He says, “You think you saw him, but you never did. What you ‘lost’ is here; you never lost it.”

Had they ever seen the inner spirit self of the person they revered as husband and king? If not, how can they claim they lost him? Was their attachment based on their bodily relationship with him? Well,

**“You think you saw him, but you never did. What you ‘lost’ is here; you never lost it.”**

are the essence of his or her existence, we miss the truth. Escaping our perception is the amazing spirit soul, the servant of Kṛṣṇa.

“Some look on the soul as amazing, some describe him as amazing, and some hear of him as amazing, while others, even after hearing about him, cannot understand him at all.” (*Gītā* 2.29)

### Contradictory Behavior

Perhaps no one comprehends the symptoms of the soul, as well as the laws of death, better than Yamarāja, the lord of death. He once took the form of a young boy to disguise his real identity in order to approach the grieving queens of the king Suyajña. His instructions interrupted their wailing.

Yamarāja said: “O lamenters, you are all fools! The person named Suyajña, for whom you lament, is still lying before you and has not gone anywhere. Then what is the cause for your lamentation? Previ-

ously he heard you and replied to you, but now, not finding him, you are lamenting. This is contradictory behavior, for you have never actually seen the person within the body who heard you and replied. There is no need for your lamentation, for the body you have always seen is lying there.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.2.44)

### Don’t Lament

The *Bhagavad-gītā* addresses the problem of material lamentation when the soldier Arjuna is forced to encounter opponents on the battlefield, some of whom are relatives and teachers. They are hell-bent on destroying him, but the thought of their deaths at his hands has set his mind reeling.

Arjuna uses the word *śoka* (lamentation) to describe his condition. He says he is so affected by *śoka* that his senses are drying up. He turns pale, trembles, and drops his famous bow, called Gāṇḍīva. His *śoka* for his loved ones decides everything, even if it means forfeiting a kingdom and taking to the life

of a beggar. This brings us to the reason Kṛṣṇa speaks the *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains: “*Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna to dissipate the lamentation of the common man.”

What is this lamentation of Arjuna and also of the common man? It is the ignorance of the transitory nature of this lifetime – ours and others’. We put implicit faith in a temporary, yet complicated, arrangement. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “You are speaking like a very knowledgeable man, Arjuna. You speak of dharma, morality, ethics, military codes, family traditions. Still, you don’t see what is about to happen. By their karma these soldiers are as good as dead. Your lamentation is of no consequence.”

Yamarāja told the queens they were fools, and Kṛṣṇa is telling Arjuna that “mourning for what is not worthy of grief” is the business of fools. It is the *kṛpana*, or miserly person, who refuses to understand his real duty in life. A *kṛpana* invests his energy in temporary, illusory attachment for his own body and the bodies of his dear ones without any sacrificing for knowledge and higher values.

### The Anti-Lamentation Verses

Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks a series of verses in the *Gītā* to carefully respond to Arjuna’s doubts, five of which include the words *na*, never, and *socitum*, lament:

“Those who are wise do not lament for the body” (2.11); “You should not grieve for the body” (2.25); “Still you have no reason to lament” (2.26); “In the unavoidable discharge of your duty you should not lament” (2.27); “What need is there for lamentation” (2.28); and “You should not grieve for any living being” (2.30).

Kṛṣṇa also repeatedly uses the words *na arhasi*: “You do not deserve [to lament].” It may seem

inappropriate to tell a grieving person that he or she doesn’t deserve to lament. Yet the Supreme Personality of Godhead says it, and He explains why, giving the superior information regarding our indestructible nature.

“This individual soul is unbreakable and insoluble, and can be neither burned nor dried. He is everlasting, present everywhere, unchangeable, immovable, and eternally the same. It is said that the soul is invisible, inconceivable, and immutable. Knowing this, you should not grieve for the body.” (2.24–25)

To take the material body of our loved one as the only representation of that person is like looking at a jewel with all but one facet covered, allowing but a little light to come in. We allow only one facet, one dimension, of our loved one’s self to be revealed, and only according to our limited ability to see it.

With the four defects of human frailty – imperfect senses and the tendency to cheat, make mistakes, and be in illusion – we do not deserve to claim we know another person accurately. The confines of the bodily relationship do not allow for it.

### The Right to Lament

Arjuna especially lamented for two persons, Droṇa and Bhīṣma, who are fully described in the pages of the *Mahābhārata*. Droṇa was the kingdom’s military guru. Arjuna highly revered Droṇa, and Droṇa regarded Arjuna as his brightest, most skilled archery student. When conflicts led to war, however, Droṇa was allied with the side of Arjuna’s ill-fated opponents, including cousins and elders. Arjuna worried for the fate of Droṇa.

Additionally, Arjuna’s lamentation was due to his relationship with Bhīṣma, a beloved elder of his family. Bhīṣma was the best of the *kṣatriya* commanders. He always pursued dharma and loved and served Lord Kṛṣṇa. He helped raise the Pāṇḍava brothers when they were orphaned. He held young Arjuna on



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his lap and was like a grandfather to him. Anxious to protect both sides, the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus, Bhīṣma supported the message of peace Kṛṣṇa brought to the Kuru’s court on behalf of Yudhiṣṭhira.

Long before, however, Bhīṣma had vowed to remain a celibate warrior for life and always protect the Kuru king. Even when the Kurus became unjust and treacherous, he kept his promise to defend the Kuru kingdom. To Arjuna’s sorrow, the great affectionate Bhīṣma was thus obliged to fight against Arjuna, his brothers, and their allies.

The drama of this intrigue is showcased in the pages of the *Bhagavad-gītā* for a specific purpose. A war of smaller import, fought for trivial reasons by ordinary opponents with no profound, intimate relationships

with one another, would not serve to bring us the *Gītā*’s transcendent lesson. Arjuna’s dilemma, however, brought a war waged on the very terms life forces upon everyone, the potential loss of every dear friend, relative, brother, or sister we have ever known – a surety, for none of us escapes our own death and the loss of everything and everyone around us.

Thus Arjuna’s fine sentiments and his right to lament are sorely tested.

### Spiritual Lamentation

A devotee may accept lamentation when it is a matter of hankering for the association of a great devotee of the Lord. Arjuna had to fight Bhīṣma for taking the side of *adhharma*, and Kṛṣṇa required Arjuna to let go of



his lamentation to challenge Bhīṣma. When the wounded Bhīṣma was on his deathbed, however, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna shared strong lamentation for the stalwart warrior, who had served as a great devotee of the Lord.

Whether great devotees travel away from us or leave this world altogether, lamentation for their loss carries every hope for progress in spiritual life. Whereas material lamentation is a dead-end road in which we absorb ourselves in entangling thoughts of our loved one's mortal condition, lamentation in separation from a devotee is an integral part of the shining path of progress to pure devotional service.

Kṛṣṇa's devotees possess the right to useful and genuine lamentation because it is based on missing the actual person who has left, a pure soul whose association reveals Kṛṣṇa consciousness to us. We strongly, deeply miss a soul whose memory only enthralls our love of God. To remember that great soul is the most precious link to the beauty, grace, and moods of love present in the spiritual world in exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His dear confidential loved ones.

Feeling separation from Śrīla Prabhupāda, the greatest teacher of Kṛṣṇa conscious practice, is the very basis of the lives of the hundreds of thousands of Kṛṣṇa conscious practitioners he left behind. Amazingly, in the feelings of lamentation in separation from His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda there is no separation, for remembering him and serving him only renews and intensifies the relationship.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was Kṛṣṇa playing the role of a devotee, displayed one very prominent sentiment – the mood of intense longing for Kṛṣṇa, called *vipra-lambha sevā*, or “service in separation.” Lord Caitanya showed in His own life how lamentation can fuel the most powerful and profound emotional flavors in the devotional service of the Lord.

He prayed, “O My Lord, in Your

separation I am feeling one moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are falling from My eyes like torrents of rain, and the whole world appears vacant in Your absence. I know no one but Kṛṣṇa as My Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles Me roughly by His embrace, or makes Me broken hearted by not being present before Me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is my most worshipable Lord, unconditionally.” (*Śikṣāṣṭāka* 7–8)

### When Lamentation Is Purification

The strong emotion found in grief and lamentation is a natural part of the human condition, seen in even the great souls. The great souls' lamentation, however, is tempered and qualified by great spiritual wisdom. That same wisdom is always available to us in the pages of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, no matter how dark our hour of suffering.

The reality of repeated birth and

death in the material world is surely lamentable, whether we lament for the loss of another or for our own failing body.

Furthermore, Śrīla Prabhupāda once said that “lamentation means purification.” He was commenting on a song by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura in which the author laments not having absorbed himself in Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Realizing that we are not these material minds and bodies and being sorry that we are not fully Kṛṣṇa conscious is the beginning of our journey home, back to Godhead.

Lamentation that inspires us, once and for all, to let go of our attachments to this world and to only hanker for the supreme goal of love of God is the perfection of lamentation. It is the worthy exercise of the right to lament. 🌸

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## 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 INDRA AND PRṠTHU MAHĀRĀJA RECONCILE

*Lord Viṣṇu having completed His instructions, Indra seeks King Pṛthu's forgiveness.*

### CANTO 4: CHAPTER 20

मैत्रेय उवाच

17 स इत्थं लोकगुरुणा विष्वक्सेनेन विश्वजित्  
अनुशासित आदेशं शिरसा जगृहे हरेः

*maitreya uvāca  
sa ittham loka-guruṇā  
viṣvaksenena viśva-jit  
anuśāsita ādeśam  
śirasā jagṛhe hareḥ*

*maitreyaḥ uvāca* – Maitreya said; *saḥ* – he; *ittham* – thus; *loka-guruṇā* – by the supreme master of all people; *viṣvaksenena* – by the Personality of Godhead; *viśva-jit* – the conqueror of the world (Mahārāja Pṛthu); *anuśāsitaḥ* – being ordered; *ādeśam* – instructions; *śirasā* – on the head; *jagṛhe* – accepted; *hareḥ* – of the Personality of Godhead.

**The great saint Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, in this way Mahārāja Pṛthu, the conqueror of the entire world, accepted the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead on his head.**

PURPORT: 1 One should accept the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by bowing down at the

lotus feet of the Lord. This means that anything spoken by the Personality of Godhead should be taken as it is, with great care and attention and with great respect. It is not our business to amend the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or make additions or alterations, as it has become a custom for many so-called scholars and *svāmīs* who comment on the words of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Here the practical example of how to accept the instruction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is shown by Pṛthu Mahārāja. This is the way to receive knowledge through the *paramparā* system.

18 स्पृशन्तं पादयोः प्रेम्णा व्रीडितं स्वेन कर्मणा  
शतक्रतुं परिष्वज्य विद्वेषं विससर्ज ह

*sprśantaṁ pādayoḥ preṁṇā  
vrīḍitaṁ svena karmaṇā  
śata-kratuṁ pariṣvajya  
vidveṣaṁ visasarja ha*

*sprśantam* – touching; *pādayoḥ* – the feet; *preṁṇā* – in ecstasy; *vrīḍitam* – ashamed; *svena* – his own; *karmaṇā* – by

1) How should one accept the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead?



activities; *śata-kratum* – King Indra; *pariṣvajya* – embracing; *vidveṣam* – envy; *visasarja* – gave up; *ha* – of course.

**As King Indra was standing by, he became ashamed of his own activities and fell down before King Pṛthu to touch his lotus feet. But Pṛthu Mahārāja immediately embraced him in great ecstasy and gave up all envy against him for his having stolen the horse meant for the sacrifice.**

PURPORT: There are many cases in which a person becomes an offender to the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava and later becomes repentant. Here also we find that although the King of heaven, Indra, was so powerful that he accompanied Lord Viṣṇu, he felt himself a great offender for stealing Pṛthu Mahārāja's horse that was meant for sacrifice. An offender at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava is never excused by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are many instances illustrating this fact. Ambarīṣa Mahārāja was offended by Durvāsā Muni, a great sage and mystic yogi, and Durvāsā also had to fall down at the lotus feet of Ambarīṣa Mahārāja. ② Indra decided to fall down at the lotus feet of King Pṛthu, but the King was so magnanimous a Vaiṣṇava that he did not want Mahārāja Indra to fall down at his feet. Instead, King Pṛthu immediately picked him up and embraced him, and both of them forgot all the past incidents.

Both King Indra and Mahārāja Pṛthu were envious and angry with each other, but since both of them were Vaiṣṇavas, or servants of Lord Viṣṇu, it was their duty to adjust the cause of their envy. This is also a first-class example of cooperative behavior between Vaiṣṇavas. ③ In the present days, however, because people are not Vaiṣṇavas, they fight perpetually among one another and are vanquished without finishing the mission of human life. There is a great need to propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the world so that even though people sometimes become angry and malicious toward one another, because of their being Kṛṣṇa conscious such rivalry, competition, and envy can be adjusted without difficulty.

## 19 भगवानथ विश्वात्मा पृथुनोपहृताहर्णः समुज्झिहानया भक्त्या गृहीतचरणाम्बुजः

- 2) How did King Pṛthu respond when King Indra fell at his feet to seek forgiveness?
- 3) Why do people today fight perpetually among one another?
- 4) What is the term for the devotees' transcendental ecstasies?
- 5) What does the phrase *bhakta-vatsala* mean?

*bhagavān atha viśvātmā  
pṛthunopahṛtārhaṇaḥ  
samujjihānaya bhaktyā  
gṛhīta-caraṇāmbujaḥ*

*bhagavān* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *atha* – thereupon; *viśva-ātmā* – the Supersoul; *pṛthunā* – by King Pṛthu; *upahṛta* – being offered; *arhaṇaḥ* – all the paraphernalia for worship; *samujjihānaya* – gradually increased; *bhaktyā* – whose devotional service; *gṛhīta* – taken; *caraṇa-ambujaḥ* – His lotus feet.

**King Pṛthu abundantly worshiped the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was so merciful to him. While worshiping the lotus feet of the Lord, Pṛthu Mahārāja gradually increased his ecstasy in devotional service.**

PURPORT: When various ecstasies appear in the body of a devotee, it is to be understood that his devotional service has become perfect. There are many types of transcendental ecstasies in the forms of crying, laughing, perspiring, falling down, and crying like a madman. ④ All these symptoms are sometimes visible on the body of a devotee. They are called *aṣṭa-sātvika-vikāra*, which means “eight kinds of transcendental transformations.” They are never to be imitated, but when a devotee actually becomes perfect, these symptoms are visible on his body. ⑤ The Lord is *bhakta-vatsala*, which means that He is inclined toward His pure devotee (*bhakta*). Therefore the transcendental ecstatic transaction between the Supreme Lord and His devotee is never like the activities of this material world.

## 20 प्रस्थानाभिमुखोऽप्येनमनुग्रहविलम्बितः पश्यन् पद्मपलाशाक्षो न प्रतस्थे सुहृत्सताम्

*prasthānābhimukho 'py enam  
anugraha-vilambitaḥ  
paśyan padma-palāśākṣo  
na pratasthe suhṛt satām*

*prasthāna* – to leave; *abhimukhaḥ* – ready; *api* – although; *enam* – him (Pṛthu); *anugraha* – by kindness; *vilambitaḥ* – detained; *paśyan* – seeing; *padma-palāśa-akṣaḥ* – the Lord, whose eyes are like the petals of a lotus flower; *na* – not; *pratasthe* – departed; *suhṛt* – the well-wisher; *satām* – of the devotees.

**The Lord was just about to leave, but because He was so greatly inclined toward the behavior of King Pṛthu, He did not depart. Seeing the behavior of Mahārāja Pṛthu with His lotus eyes, He was detained because He is always the well-wisher of His devotees.**

PURPORT: Here the words *suhṛt satām* are very significant. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is always very inclined toward His devotee and is always thinking of the devotee's well-being. This is not partiality. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord is equal to everyone (*samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu*), but to one who particularly engages in His service, He is very much inclined. In another place, the Lord says that a devotee always exists in His heart, and He also exists always in the heart of the devotee.

The special inclination of the Supreme Personality of Godhead for His pure devotee is not unnatural, nor is it partiality. For example, sometimes a father has several children, but he has special affection for one child who is very much inclined toward him. This is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10):

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām  
bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam  
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ  
yena mām upayānti te*

Those who constantly engage in the devotional service of the Lord in love and affection are directly in contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead sitting as the Supersoul in everyone's heart. The Lord is not far away from the devotee. ⑥ He is always in everyone's heart, but only the devotee can realize the Lord's presence, and thus he is directly connected, and he takes instruction from the Lord at every moment. Therefore, there is no chance of a devotee's being in error, nor is there any partiality on the part of the Lord for His pure devotees.

## 21 स आदिराजो रचिताञ्जलिर्हरिं विलोकितुं नाशकदश्रुलोचनः न किञ्चनोवाच स बाष्पविक्रवो हृदोपगुह्यामुमधादवस्थितः

*sa ādi-rājo racitāñjalir harim  
vilokitum nāśakad aśru-locanaḥ  
na kiñcanovāca sa bāṣpa-vikravo  
hṛdopaguhyāmum adhād avasthitaḥ*

*saḥ* – he; *ādi-rājaḥ* – the original king; *racita-añjalih* – with folded hands; *harim* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *vilokitum* – to look upon; *na* – not; *aśakat* – was able; *aśru-locanaḥ* – his eyes full of tears; *na* – not; *kiñcana* – anything; *uvāca* – spoke; *saḥ* – he; *bāṣpa-viklavah* – his voice being choked up; *hṛdā* – with his heart; *upaguhya* – embracing; *amum* – the Lord; *adhāt* – he remained; *avasthitaḥ* – standing.

**The original king, Mahārāja Pṛthu, his eyes full of tears and his voice faltering and choked up, could nei-**

**ther see the Lord very distinctly nor speak to address the Lord in any way. He simply embraced the Lord within his heart and remained standing in that way with folded hands.**

PURPORT: Just as Kṛṣṇa is addressed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as *ādi-puruṣa*, the original personality, so King Pṛthu, being an empowered incarnation of the Lord, is referred to in this verse as *ādi-rājaḥ*, the original or ideal king. He was a great devotee and at the same time a great hero who conquered over all undesirable elements in his kingdom. He was so powerful that he was equal in fighting to Indra, the King of heaven. He gave protection to his citizens, keeping them engaged in pious activities and devotion to the Lord. He did not collect a single cent of taxes from the citizens without being able to give them protection from all calamities.

The greatest calamity in life is to become godless and therefore sinful. ⑦ If the state head or king allows the citizens to become sinful by indulging in illicit sex life, intoxication, meat-eating, and gambling, then the king is responsible, and he has to suffer the resultant sequence of reactions for the sinful lives of the citizens because he levies taxes on them unnecessarily. These are the principles for a ruling power, and because Mahārāja Pṛthu observed all the principles for a ruling chief, he is referred to here as *ādi-rājaḥ*.

Even a responsible king like Mahārāja Pṛthu can become a pure devotee of the first order. We can distinctly see from King Pṛthu's behavior how he became ecstatic, both externally and internally, in pure devotional service.

Just today we have seen in the newspapers of Bombay that the government is going to repeal its prohibition laws. Ever since Gandhi's noncooperation movement, Bombay has been kept dry and has not allowed its citizens to drink. But unfortunately the citizens are so clever that they have increased illicit distillation of liquor, and although not being sold publicly in shops, liquor is being sold in public lavatories and similar abnormal places. Unable to check such illicit smuggling, the government has decided to manufacture the liquor at cheaper prices so that people can have their supply of intoxication directly from the government instead of purchasing it in public lavatories. The government failed to change the hearts of the citizens from indulging in sinful life, so instead of losing the taxes they collect to inflate the treasury, they have decided to manufacture liquor to supply to the citizens who hanker after it.

- 6) The Lord is in everyone's heart, but why is the devotee directly connected to Him?
- 7) Why does the king or head of state have to suffer the reactions for the sinful lives of the citizens?



This kind of government cannot check the resultant actions of sinful life, namely war, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, and similar other disturbances. 8 Nature's law is that as soon as there are discrepancies in regard to the law of God (which are described in *Bhagavad-gītā* as *dharma-sya glāniḥ*, or disobedience to the laws of nature or God), at once there will be heavy punishment in the form of sudden outbreaks of war. We have recently experienced a war between India and Pakistan. Within fourteen days there have been immense losses of men and money, and there have been disturbances to the entire world. These are the reactions of sinful life. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to make people pure and perfect. 9 If we become even partially pure, as described in the *Bhāgavatam* (*naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu*), by development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then lust and greed, the material diseases of the citizens, will be reduced. This can be made possible simply by broadcasting the pure message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Big commercial and industrial firms have contributed many thousands of rupees to a defense fund that burns the money in the form of gunpowder, but unfortunately, if they are asked to contribute liberally to advance the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, they are reluctant. Under the circumstances, the world will periodically suffer from such upsurges and outbreaks of war, which are the consequences of not being Kṛṣṇa conscious.

22 अथावमृज्याश्रुकला विलोकयन्-  
नतृसदृग्गोचरमाह पूरुषम्  
पदा स्पृशन्तं क्षितिमंस उच्यते  
विन्यस्तहस्ताग्रमुरङ्गविद्विषः

*athāvamṛjyāśru-kalā vilokayann  
atrpta-dṛg-gocaram āha pūruṣam  
padā sprśantam kṣitim aṁsa unnate  
vinyasta-hastāgram uraṅga-vidviṣaḥ*

*atha* – thereupon; *avamṛjya* – wiping; *śru-kalāḥ* – the tears in his eyes; *vilokayan* – observing; *atrpta* – not satisfied; *dṛk-gocaram* – visible to his naked eyes; *āha* – he said; *pūruṣam* – unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *padā* – with His lotus feet; *sprśantam* – just touch-

8) What does Śrīla Prabhupāda cite as a cause of war?

9) How can lust and greed, “the material diseases of the citizens,” be reduced?

10) What was the significance of Lord Viṣṇu's placing His hand on the shoulder of Garuḍa while standing on the ground?

ing; *kṣitim* – the ground; *aṁse* – on the shoulder; *unnate* – raised; *vinyasta* – rested; *hasta* – of His hand; *agram* – the front part; *uraṅga-vidviṣaḥ* – of Garuḍa, the enemy of the snakes.

**The Supreme Personality of Godhead stood with His lotus feet almost touching the ground while He rested the front of His hand on the raised shoulder of Garuḍa, the enemy of the snakes. Mahārāja Pṛthu, wiping the tears from his eyes, tried to look upon the Lord, but it appeared that the King was not fully satisfied by looking at Him. Thus the King offered the following prayers.**

PURPORT: The significant point in this verse is that the Lord was standing above the ground, almost touching it. The residents of the upper planetary systems, beginning from Brahmāloka (the planet where Lord Brahmā lives) down to Svargaloka (the heavenly planet of Indra), are so advanced in spiritual life that when they come to visit this or similar other lower planetary systems, they keep their weightlessness. This means that they can stand without touching the ground. Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but because He lives in one of the planetary systems within this universe, He sometimes plays as if one of the demigods of this universe. When He first appeared before Pṛthu Mahārāja, He was not touching the ground of this earth, but when He was fully satisfied with the behavior and character of Mahārāja Pṛthu, He immediately acted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa from Vaikuṅṭha. 10 Out of affection for Pṛthu Mahārāja, He touched the earth, but He rested the front of His hand on the raised shoulder of Garuḍa, His carrier, as if to prevent Himself from falling down, since the Lord is not accustomed to stand on earthly ground. These are all symptoms of His great affection for Pṛthu Mahārāja. Perceiving his fortunate position, Pṛthu Mahārāja could not fully look upon the Lord due to ecstasy, but still, in a faltering voice, he began to offer prayers.

पृथुरुवाच

23 वरान् विभो त्वद्वरदेश्वराद् बुधः  
कथं वृणीते गुणविक्रियात्मनाम्  
ये नारकाणामपि सन्ति देहिनां  
तानीश कैवल्यपते वृणे न च

*prthur uvāca  
varān vibho tvad varadeśvarād budhaḥ  
katham vṛṇīte guṇa-vikriyātmanām  
ye narakāṇām api santi dehinām  
tān īśa kaivalya-pate vṛṇe na ca*

[Continued in the next issue.]

# Nothing Bogus Allowed

*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.*

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Why is the government fostering this godless “evolution” science – this dishonesty? Because the government leaders are themselves dishonest. They want simply to accumulate money by inducing people to work in their big industries. So they are cheating the people out of their birthright: to live the simple, natural life, to become God conscious, and at life's end, to go back home to God.

The government must make sure that people develop genuine God consciousness. That is the government leaders' actual business. They should promote genuine God consciousness, strict following of God's natural laws. Anything not genuine should be finished. Nothing bogus allowed. This is real government. This we are working for.

The government leaders' business is to see that the scientific or intellectual group is giving the students a sense of the transcendent Personality of Godhead, a sense of the divine.



**Dr. Singh:** Nowadays, the government leaders are seeing that the intellectuals impart a sense of all-pervasive matter, with no soul and no Supreme Soul. A sense of the demoniac, one might say. It's hard to imagine these demoniac types being convinced by godly arguments.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Never mind. We must push forward. Gradually the whole world will see that here are first-class gentlemen and here is first-class culture. Vedic, godly culture. Real culture. We must always remember, people are inclined to this God conscious culture. It is natural. And Lord Kṛṣṇa wants it.

Why should we care about some rascal's objections? Do something to spread God conscious culture. It is

Scientific data and the *Gītā* agree.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Well, that is natural. *Bhagavad-gītā* means "The Song of God," the Supreme Lord personally speaking. Who can be a greater authority? Hmm? Others may say whatever they like, but we know He is the greatest authority.

**Dr. Singh:** Another scientist and I gave a presentation at the University of Florida, to a class in physics. During our presentation, my colleague made a mathematical calculation demonstrating the probability of life arising from matter. The calculation showed that even if life were able to arise from dead matter – which of course is an absurdity – it would take something like ten to the 167 billion years.

*phalam:* these descriptions of the Lord are the real, ripened fruit of science.

**Dr. Singh:** My colleagues and I joke at the way so-called scientists call God consciousness anti-science or brainwashing. Actually, we're washing their dusty brains with genuine science.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, brainwashing in the best sense. Clearing away the godless dust and grime. These so-called scientists should be grateful. "Brainwashing"? If Kṛṣṇa were present, He would have been brain-cutting. Such rascals.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord speaks very definitely: *Jñānam te 'ham sa-vijñānam . . . jñātavyam avaśiṣyate*. "I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge, both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know." Science means to comprehend and convey knowledge of the supreme scientist. That's all. Apart from that, who cares about your so-called scientific "view"?

**Dr. Singh:** Should we avoid the word *view*?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. In real science, everything is absolutely certain, because we receive our knowledge from the Absolute. And in our experimentation we corroborate and amplify this knowledge that we have received from the Absolute. So we're not speaking of some "view." As soon as you say "view," this or that puny-minded rascal will come forward to give his "view." Simply confusion.

Another name for the Lord is Brahman – the supreme, all-embracing mind. Through the scriptures He has already given us all information. So how can there be some other "view"?

**Dr. Singh:** Still, the scientists want to have their own "view."

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But we say, "You do not know. Here is the Lord's knowledge, the real knowledge. Your so-called knowledge is simply speculation. Your 'view' has no value." ❁

So the physics professor – once he saw the calculation written out, he said, "That's completely wrong." And he went on like that for a while.

Then my colleague said, "Let's see how this whole calculation works, step by step." And he showed, step by step, how the calculation makes sense mathematically – how, mathematically speaking, the theory that mere matter can produce life is rubbish; it completely falls apart.

My colleague went through the calculation very methodically, and finally the physics professor admitted to being wrong about life coming from matter.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This is a great success. *Idam hi pumsas tapasah śrutasya vā . . . yad-uttamaśloka-guṇānuvarṇanam*: "Greatly learned scholars have positively concluded that knowledge culminates in the transcendental descriptions of the Lord." *Nigama-kalpa-taror galitam*

Kṛṣṇa's business. Print books. Travel all over the world. Challenge this godless government policy.

Challenge their intellectual hirelings. "Come on, rascal scientists. You have given yourself to spreading materialism and godlessness. We shall scientifically establish the existence of the spiritual self – the soul – and God." It doesn't matter whether they have a change of heart or not. We shall go on with our duty.

**Dr. Singh:** One scientist remarked what an astonishing wealth of information on the soul we can gain from just the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It's unlimited.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Very good. He's understanding these things.

**Dr. Singh:** For instance, we've taken this one sentence from the *Gītā*: *nainam chindanti śastrāṇi* – "The soul cannot be cut to pieces by any weapon." And we can very easily corroborate this statement from many modern scientific findings.

**We must always remember, people are inclined to this God conscious culture. It is natural. And Lord Kṛṣṇa wants it.**

# CALENDAR

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

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

**Month of Hṛṣīkeśa**  
(August 27–September 25)

## SEPTEMBER

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

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

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

**14 – Appearance anniversary of**

Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Month of Padmanābha**  
(September 26–October 24)

## OCTOBER

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

**5 – Indirā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

**20 – Paśāṅkuśā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans.

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

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

**Month of Dāmodara**  
(October 25–November 23)

**29 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.**

## NOVEMBER

**1 – Appearance of Radha-kunda, the sacred pond of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Vrindavan.**

**4 – Dvādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans for Ramā Ekādaśī.

**THE ONLY WAY TO SEE GOD**  
(continued from page 10)

are coming just like torrents of rain from My eyes." *Śūnyāyitam jagat sarvam*: "I am seeing everything as vacant." Why? *Govinda-virahaṇa me*: "I am in separation from Govinda." That is the highest stage of life.

*Govinda-virahaṇa me.* In this material world, if you love somebody and if he is dead and passed and gone, you see everything as vacant. So the test of being fully absorbed in love of God is *govinda viraha*, feeling separation from Govinda, Kṛṣṇa. But we are foolish and don't know that.

Still, we know that everything will be finished here. We should think, "Why should I give so much attachment to this nonsense?" Give your attachment to Kṛṣṇa. He will never be finished. That is love of Kṛṣṇa. We have to attain that stage. That is the perfection of life.

Thank you very much. ❁





# Jatāyu

## VICTORIOUS IN DEFEAT

*A Rāmāyaṇa narrative reveals how devotion transforms material destruction into spiritual liberation.*

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

**N**O ONE LIKES to lose. When we find ourselves losing, we often try to team up with someone stronger to emerge victorious. When people start worshiping God, they hope that He will help them win their battles. And the world's scriptures contain celebrated narratives of how the devoted overcame herculean odds by divine grace.

Still, scriptures also contain alternative narratives wherein the devoted are defeated. How are such narratives to be understood? By expanding our conceptions beyond the material to the spiritual.

Such narratives compel us to recognize how our own existence and God's protection extend beyond the material level of reality. If we expect that God will ensure our constant success at this level, then our faith will be shaken, even shattered, by worldly reversals. More importantly, we will deprive ourselves of the many eternal blessings available at the spiritual level of reality.

### **Doomed Yet Determined**

To understand how spiritual vision can change our perception of reversals, let's look at the *Rāmāyaṇa* story of the vulture Jatāyu. He is best known for having attained martyrdom while trying to stop Rāvaṇa from abducting Sītā. That lecherous demon had conspired to abduct Sītā by sidetracking her protectors. As he was carrying Sītā through the airways in his mystic



chariot, Sītā desperately called for help. Though Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa couldn't hear, being too far away, someone else heard and acted.

Sītā saw the vulture Jatāyu rising from a tree. This elderly bird had been a friend of Daśaratha, Sītā's late father-in-law, and was residing in the Dandaka Forest. When Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa had come to the Dandaka Forest, Jatāyu had welcomed them with paternal affection. He had assured Rāma that he would help protect Sītā in the dangerous, demon-infested forest. True to his word, Jatāyu was now flying to her rescue.

Being the wife of a warrior, Sītā quickly assessed the comparative strengths of Rāvaṇa and Jatāyu. She

his talons, caught his hair in his beak, and pulled him around. Rāvaṇa roared in fury, feeling humiliated at being dragged thus by a mere vulture – that too in front of the woman he wanted to impress and have as his new chief queen. Initially, he had neglected the vulture, thinking him to be a powerless interferer. But when Jatāyu attacked him so fiercely, he decided to fight and kill him.

Rāvaṇa soon found that Jatāyu, far from being an easy prey, was a seasoned fighter. Jatāyu's plan was to first immobilize the demon, then attack and kill him. If Rāvaṇa managed to fly off in his chariot, Jatāyu would have no chance of saving Sītā. Accordingly, he forcefully tar-

arms. But to his consternation, that arm grew back right away. Rāvaṇa had received a benediction from Brahmā that whenever his limbs would be cut, they would grow back. Though Jatāyu dismembered Rāvaṇa repeatedly, the cut limbs grew back within moments.

Over time, Jatāyu started tiring and his movements became slower. Soon, Rāvaṇa, while parrying the bird's attack, sensed his opportunity. As Jatāyu flew away from him, Rāvaṇa moved with lightning speed, caught up with him, and lopped off one wing with his sword. In no time, he had lopped off the other wing too. Bleeding profusely, Jatāyu fell to the ground. Crying in dismay, Sītā, who had shrunk away from the gruesome fight, ran towards Jatāyu to comfort him. With a victorious roar, Rāvaṇa dragged her by her hair. By his mystic power, he rose into the sky and flew away, leaving Jatāyu writhing in helpless agony.

### The Last Service With the Last Breath

Though mortally wounded, Jatāyu grittily maintained his life. Sītā had asked him to inform Rāma about her abduction. He had tried to do more, but had failed. Nonetheless, he was determined to fulfill Sītā's request. Despite being in severe pain, he waited, calling out the name of Rāma and finding solace in that sacred chant.

Meanwhile, Rāma, along with Lakṣmaṇa, was frantically searching for Sītā. In time, He came to a forest clearing that had evidently been the arena of a brutal battle. With upraised bow, He looked around grimly, dreading that Sītā might have met her end here. Noticing a creature lying on the ground nearby, Rāma thought that it was Sītā's demonic abductor in bird form and prepared to shoot it with His bow. Jatāyu was so badly mutilated that Rāma couldn't recognize him.

What a test of faith it must have been for Jatāyu when he saw Rāma's arrow pointed at him – the very same

person for whom he had risked his life was about to take his life! Yet he faithfully continued chanting Rāma's name, his voice faint due to his diminishing strength. Rāma heard that faint chant. Intrigued, He lowered His bow and observed carefully. When He recognized the bird to be Jatāyu, He ran forward and embraced him. With his last few breaths, Jatāyu explained what had happened. Having performed his final service of informing Rāma about Sītā's abduction, he fell silent forever.

Grief-struck, Rāma personally performed the last rites for Jatāyu – an unprecedented act of divine grace that trumped social convention and guaranteed Jatāyu life's supreme success.

### Auspiciousness and Inauspiciousness

Spiritual wisdom helps us understand that we are indestructible souls on a multilife transmigratory journey towards eternal liberation, where we reciprocate spiritual love with our Lord in His supreme abode. We are all fighting a war against the illusions of worldly existence that allure us with temporary pleasures and deprive us of everlasting happiness.

In this war, more important than succeeding in avoiding death – an avoidance that can't be continued forever anyway – is succeeding in remembering God, the highest reality beyond the world of death. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.5–6) explains that our mentality at death determines our postmortem destiny. If our consciousness is fixed on God at the time of death, we attain His eternal abode. Therefore, remembering God at death is life's crowning success. This success gives a reward far greater than the reward from many victories in life's various battles, which will be undone with the final defeat at death. Though Jatāyu lost his battle with Rāvaṇa, he achieved the supremely rewarding success by dying in Rāma's presence, absorbed in remembering Him.

And that he achieved such sterling

success while in a vulture body is all the more remarkable. In the Vedic tradition, vultures often symbolize ignorance, for they feast on corpses, which are considered extremely impure.

But Jatāyu, despite being in a vulture body, achieved the supreme fortune of dying in the presence of the Lord. In the *bhakti* tradition, the grandsire of the Kuru dynasty, Bhīṣma, is celebrated for having achieved the ideal death because Kṛṣṇa was right next to him during his final moments. Long before Bhīṣma, Jatāyu too achieved a similar ideal departure by leaving his mortal shell not just in the Lord's presence, but on His lap.

And Jatāyu's fortune didn't end there. After he departed, Rāma, performing his last rites, offered him the same honor that a son offers his father.

### The Ambit of the Gambit

War strategists know that accepting defeat in a small battle to win a big battle is no loss. Spiritual vision helps us see defeat at the physical level to be like losing one battle in a war. But if that defeat impels us to increase our remembrance of God, then that increased remembrance is a significant spiritual gain. And if it inspires us to remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death, then losing the battle

of survival in this life to win the war for attaining eternal life is a winning gambit.

Of course, it's unlikely we will be asked to make such extreme sacrifices, but whatever challenges we need to face or losses we need to sustain in our service to the Lord, we can be assured that we will ultimately be the supreme gainers.

However, if victories at the physical level make us believe that we can be successful and happy in this world, and that we don't need to raise our consciousness to the spiritual level, then worldly illusion has scored a major victory over us, for we are now proudly situated in her clutches. Though we may have won the battle in this world, we have sustained one more defeat in our multi-life war against illusion.

In contrast, Jatāyu lost the battle against Rāvaṇa, but he won the war against worldly illusion. He was victorious in defeat. 🌟

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## Jatāyu found heeding Sītā's warning impossible. How could he live with himself if he did nothing to stop her abduction?

realized that the aged bird would be no match for the younger and stronger demon. So she called out to him, asking him to inform Rāma about her abduction and cautioning him against intervening, lest Rāvaṇa kill him.

But Jatāyu found heeding Sītā's warning impossible. How could he live with himself if he did nothing to stop her abduction? Despite knowing that he would be hard-pressed to match Rāvaṇa, he felt driven to protect her by doing everything within his power. Determinedly, he flew by the side of Rāvaṇa, rebuking his irreligiousness in abducting a married woman. As expected, that lecture on virtue didn't deter the vile demon. Jatāyu promptly changed tack and challenged him to a fight. When the demon kept flying on, Jatāyu goaded him by calling him a coward who had kidnapped Sītā behind Rāma's back. When Rāvaṇa still didn't respond, Jatāyu resorted to the only option left for him: attack.

He pierced Rāvaṇa's arms with

geted and finished the mules moving Rāvaṇa's chariot. With just one hit of his bill, he felled the charioteer. Then, with repeated blows, he shattered the chariot.

Meanwhile, Rāvaṇa had been counterattacking Jatāyu with arrows discharged from his gigantic bow. But the bird had shrugged off the arrows and continued his attack. As his chariot fell to pieces, Rāvaṇa was forced to descend to the ground, holding Sītā in one hand and his bow in the other. From the ground, the infuriated demon showered so many arrows on Jatāyu that they covered him like a nest covering a bird. Flapping his wings vigorously, Jatāyu shrugged off the arrows. Though wounded, he kept attacking Rāvaṇa, eventually breaking his bowstring. But Rāvaṇa quickly strung another bow and counterattacked.

Evading some arrows and enduring others, Jatāyu swooped down on Rāvaṇa. With astonishing strength, he ripped off one of the demon's



# BHAKTA-VAŚYATĀ Bound by Love

*The greatest servants of the all-powerful  
supreme controller please Him by putting  
Him under their control.*

by Gaurāṅga Darśana Dāsa

**G**OD IS DEFINED as the Supreme Being and understood to be the source, master, and controller of everything that be. Thus many people worship Him in reverence and depend on Him for protection. Even God, however, sometimes desires to be controlled by someone else. That controller can only be His pure devotee, who conquers Him by the power of his or her loving devotional service. Various devotees and poets like Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī describe this quality of the Supreme Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, with words like *bhakta-vaśyatā* (controlled by devotees), *bhṛtya-vaśyatā* (controlled by servitors), *bhaktair-jitatvam* (conquered by devotees), *bhakti-baddham* (bound by loving devotion), and

*bhakta-parādhīna* (dependent on devotees).

The entire universe, with its great, exalted demigods like Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Indra, is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Yet one of His transcendental attributes is that He comes under the control of His servitors (*bhṛtya-vaśyatā*). Kṛṣṇa reveals this quality vividly in His various dealings with the Vrajavāsīs, the residents of Vṛndāvana, who consider Him their life and soul, and who dedicate their bodies, minds, and words for His pleasure alone. Kṛṣṇa takes great pleasure in being bound by their loving service through moods like friendship, parental affection, and romantic love.

## **The Supreme Proprietor Steals**

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme unrivalled proprietor and master of all the material and spiritual worlds, and He is served by thousands of goddesses of fortune. Nonetheless, He steals butter in the houses of the ladies of Vṛndāvana, the *vraja-gopīs*, as if He were poverty-stricken. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa steals butter in their houses, the *gopīs* invent various means to hide the butter from Him, such as hanging the butter pots from the ceiling or keeping them in dark rooms. But Kṛṣṇa cleverly reaches them by inventing new methods of stealing (*steya-yogaiḥ*). The *gopīs* relish these activities of Kṛṣṇa, but externally they rebuke



Painting by Dhriti Dās (artist: wix.com/dhritram)



Him. These simple *gopīs* are very much appreciative of Yaśodā's fortune in being Kṛṣṇa's mother. But they think she must be bereft of the pleasure of witnessing Kṛṣṇa's stealing pastimes, for He wouldn't steal butter in her house.

To give the same pleasure to Yaśodā, the *gopīs* go to her house to narrate Kṛṣṇa's stealing acts by criti-

"Who distributed butter to the monkeys?" Kṛṣṇa cleverly replied, "The one who created them!"

### The Cause Behind the Contradictions

The "lies" of the Absolute Truth are a special ornament of His character that charms His devotees. By act-

tion between Yaśodā's love in the form of her milk and Kṛṣṇa's hunger for it started. Both knew no bounds, yet the milk sometimes overflowed from His mouth, forming small rivulets. This feeding went on for a good while, and He lost all sense of time.

### Peace Personified Becomes Angry

Suddenly, the milk of the special Padma-gandhā cows boiling in the kitchen started overflowing, and to save it, Yaśodā immediately set Kṛṣṇa down and ran there. Upon being deprived of His mother's milk, greedy Kṛṣṇa became very dissatisfied. He is known as *viśuddha-sattva-vigraha*, or one in pure goodness devoid of any tinges of passion and ignorance. Yet He shed tears and now manifested anger, breaking a pot and stealing the butter in it. He started distributing the butter to monkeys, restlessly looking around, anxious that His mother might come and punish Him at any time.

### Time Personified Flees in Fear

As it is common for a thief to leave some clue, Kṛṣṇa left a clue for Mother Yaśodā to catch Him – His buttery footprints. Following them, Yaśodā, desiring to teach a lesson to her naughty child Kṛṣṇa, the all-knowledgeable, reached there calmly, with a stick in her hand. Kṛṣṇa was shocked. Although fear personified and even Yamarāja, the lord of death, fear Kṛṣṇa, He was now fearful of Yaśodā's stick. He ran towards the main gate, hoping that Yaśodā wouldn't punish Him in public.

### The Fastest Gets Caught

Despite her fatigue, Mother Yaśodā chased Kṛṣṇa with great determination, but He looked behind often and always kept Himself at a safe distance, at least a hand's-length away from her. At times she almost caught Him, but just missed. Yogis cannot

ing in many contradictory ways, Kṛṣṇa relishes the love of His devotees and expresses His love for them. To manifest this quality of *bhakta-vaśyatā*, Kṛṣṇa sometimes relinquishes His other opulences and attributes and proudly declares to everyone the glories of His devotees who have full control over Him (*darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām, Bhāgavatam* 10.11.9). The *dāmodara-līlā*, the episode in which Kṛṣṇa's mother ties Him up, is an unparalleled example of Kṛṣṇa's behaving in such contradictory ways to exhibit His quality of *bhakta-vaśyatā*.

### The Self-Satisfied Becomes Hungry

One early Dīpāvalī (Diwali) morning, after assigning her maidservants various activities, Mother Yaśodā started churning butter for Kṛṣṇa. She engaged her body in churning, her mind in thinking of her beloved son, and her words in singing about His activities. Her complete absorption attracted Kṛṣṇa, who is all-attractive and self-satisfied in all respects (*ātmārāma*). Kṛṣṇa got up from sleep and eagerly came to her, hungry for her milk (*stanya-kāma*). He climbed on her lap, His own property, and she started to breast-feed Him. A transcendental compe-

capture Kṛṣṇa within their hearts, and the *Upaniṣads* declare that He can run faster than the mind, but now a simple *gopī* of Vṛndāvana, Yaśodā, finally captured Him, although He wanted to avoid being arrested by her. This is the greatness of her pure love.

### The Condensed Bliss Cries

Although she did not intend to beat Him, Yaśodā threatened Kṛṣṇa by raising her stick. He became more afraid, and He cried, His genuine tears mixing with the black ointment around His eyes. Usually when Kṛṣṇa cried, Yaśodā would wipe His tears with her cloth, but now He rubbed His eyes with His own hands, and thus smeared the ointment all over His face. He trembled in fear and breathed heavily as He cried. Although His soothing smile dries up the ocean of tears created by the lamentation of the conditioned souls, He was now crying in fear of His mother. And although the breathing of His expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu generates millions of universes, He was Himself now breathing heavily in anxiety.

### The Object of Prayers Gets Scolded

Yaśodā scolded Kṛṣṇa for all His offenses – breaking a pot, stealing butter, distributing it to the monkeys, and fleeing away while making her run behind Him. Considering Him her son out of intense maternal affection, she was eager to discipline Him and train Him as a good human being. She rebuked Him by calling Him a restless, greedy, hot-tempered boy, a monkey-lover, and a house-plunderer. She threatened Him, saying that she wouldn't feed Him milk products or give Him toys or allow Him to play with His playmates.

### The Supreme Judge Awaits Judgment

Kṛṣṇa was guilty. His fate was completely in His mother's hands. She might punish Him, bind Him, or

release Him at her will. He bent His head low in front of Yaśodā and promised her that He wouldn't do such mischief anymore and anxiously pleaded for her to drop the stick. Because of her intense affection, Yaśodā became worried to see His distress and suspected that He might run away due to fear, anger, and fickleness. Unaware of His prowess, she thought it wise to bind Him and keep Him home while she was busy with her household chores. Thus she ordered her servants to get some soft ropes.

### An Attempt to Bind the All-Pervading

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa pervades all time and space. He has no beginning or end, no exterior or interior, no front or rear, and is beyond sense perception (*adhokṣaja*). Mother Yaśodā, considering Him her own child, tried to bind Him to a wooden grinding mortar with a rope. In other words, she tried to tie up with her cords of strong *prema* the all-pervading Lord of all, who binds up with the ropes of *māyā* everyone from Brahmā to the blade of grass.

Kṛṣṇa didn't want to be bound. He wanted to do His daily routine of

stealing yogurt and playing with His friends. So His *satya-sankalpa-śakti* (power to fulfill His every desire) inspired His *vibhūti-śakti* (power to show His opulence) to manifest in His body. Thus Mother Yaśodā's rope became two fingers too short in binding Him. She got more and more ropes and tied them together, but the rope was always two fingers too short.

### Divinity's Desire vs. the Devotee's Determination

Yaśodā's determination didn't slacken despite her failure. So Kṛṣṇa had to transform His desire. Seeing her loving endeavor (*parīśrama*), Kṛṣṇa became merciful (*kṛpā*). His *kṛpā-śakti*, which reigns as the king of all His potencies and illuminates them, melts His heart and turns it into butter. It made His *satya-sankalpa-śakti* and *vibhūti-śakti* immediately disappear. The distance of two fingers was filled by the devotee's endeavor and the Lord's causeless mercy. The *bhakta-niṣṭhā*, or the firm faith of the devotee seen in his or her tireless endeavors to serve and worship Kṛṣṇa, and the *sva-niṣṭhā*, or the steady quality in Kṛṣṇa that brings forth His mercy

## Although fear personified and even Yamarāja, the lord of death, fear Kṛṣṇa, He was now fearful of Yaśodā's stick.

cizing and complaining against Him. Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are very enchanting, but when His pure devotees like the *gopīs* or Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the *Bhāgavatam* narrate them, they taste more nectarean, being mixed with the love of the devotee. Thus Mother Yaśodā experienced greater pleasure upon hearing from the *gopīs* about Kṛṣṇa's thefts than the *gopīs* did by witnessing them. The *gopīs'* apparent angry complaints are nothing but expressions of their loving affection for Kṛṣṇa.

### The Absolute Truth Lies

When the *gopīs* complain, Kṛṣṇa often doesn't admit His naughty activities. Instead, He speaks many lies against them and claims innocence in front of Mother Yaśodā. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth (*satyam param*), whose eternal existence is beyond the creation, maintenance, and dissolution of this material cosmos, of which He is the ultimate cause. Yet He often lies to the *gopīs*, cheats them, tricks them, bewilders them, and in this way captivates their hearts. Kṛṣṇa steals butter and performs much mischief in Yaśodā's house, but when questioned by her, He cleverly makes false statements that fascinatingly have deeper and truer meanings. For instance, when Yaśodā asked Kṛṣṇa,



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upon seeing the devotee's efforts, causes Kṛṣṇa to be bound. In the absence of these two, the rope will remain two fingers too short.

*sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā  
visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ  
dṛṣṭvā pariśramam kṛṣṇaḥ  
kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane*

“Because of Mother Yaśodā's hard labor, her whole body became covered with perspiration, and the flowers and comb were falling from her hair. When child Kṛṣṇa saw His mother thus fatigued, He became merciful to her and agreed to be bound.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.9.18)

### The Liberator in Bondage

Thus Kṛṣṇa, who can liberate everyone from material bondage, is Himself bound by the love of

go against some of His other qualities. There is no contradiction in this, because Kṛṣṇa possesses all the qualities and all their opposites too. He is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. He is within everything and apart from everything. His quality of being merciful to His devotees, because He is controlled by their loving devotional service, stands as the epitome of all His attributes. Thus the process of *bhakti* is glorified in the *dāmodara-līlā*.

*nāyaṁ sukhāpo bhagavān  
dehinām gopikā-sutaḥ  
jñāninām cātma-bhūtānām  
yathā bhaktimatām iha*

“Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mother Yaśodā, is easily accessible to devotees engaged in spontaneous loving service, but not to mental specula-

Kṛṣṇa with her ropes of love, Yaśodā gave Kṛṣṇa the fame of being controlled by His devotees. The glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are proclaimed throughout the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the literature of *sāṅkhya-yoga*, and other Vaiṣṇava literature, yet Mother Yaśodā considered that Supreme Person her ordinary child out of Her intense affection for Him (*trayyā copaniṣadbhīḥ ca . . . , Bhāgavatam* 10.8.45). Śukadeva Gosvāmī glorifies her, saying that neither Lord Brahmā, nor Lord Śiva, nor even the goddess of fortune, who is always the better half of the Supreme Lord, can obtain from the Supreme Lord, the deliverer from this material world, such mercy as received by Mother Yaśodā. (*nemaṁ viriñco na bhavo . . . , Bhāgavatam* 10.9.20).

To love and be loved is the need and innate nature of every person, not to speak of the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa loves every individual soul, who is part of Him, and He desires that every soul also love Him. But only His unalloyed devotees completely realize their relationship with Him and love Him unconditionally. Love includes being controlled and dominated by one's beloved and thus presenting oneself as a subordinate to such love. Thus Kṛṣṇa finds great pleasure in being controlled by His unalloyed devotees and is purchased by their love. This quality of Kṛṣṇa's is celebrated as *bhakta-vaśyatā*. 🌸

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Some may want to become one with God, but the devotee becomes so much more powerful than God that he or she can control God.

His devotee. The rope with which Yaśodā bound Him is the rope of her pure love. In this *dāmodara-līlā*, Kṛṣṇa shows Yaśodā and the whole world that only love can bind Him. And even in that bound state, He retains His quality of liberating others. Therefore He was able to liberate the sons of Kuvera by pulling down the Yamalārjuna trees. (See Canto Ten, Chapter Ten.) In His liberating them, He again exhibited His quality of being controlled by His devotee, because it was His devotee Nārada who desired that the sons of Kuvera be liberated by Kṛṣṇa.

### The Possessor of All Qualities and Their Opposites

To show the quality of being controlled by His devotees, Kṛṣṇa may sometimes act in ways that

tors, aspirants of self-realization, or those in bodily identification.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.9.21)

### The Devotee Becomes Greater than God

Kṛṣṇa is *asamordhva* – no one is equal to Him or greater than Him. Some philosophers may want to become one with God, but in Vaiṣṇava philosophy the devotee becomes so much more powerful than God that he or she can control God. The Supreme Godhead Kṛṣṇa elevates His devotee beyond His own position, just as Arjuna became the hero at Kurukshetra while Kṛṣṇa was simply his chariot driver. Mother Yaśodā is the epitome of *vātsalya-rasa*, or parental love for Kṛṣṇa. The word *yaśodā* means “giver of fame.” By binding

# Dealing with Difficulties

*A change of perspective helps, and inner satisfaction is indispensable.*

by Ādi Puruṣa Dāsa

PEOPLE OFTEN say that life is a journey – even when they don't seem to have a desired destination in mind. Still, it is true that as we go through life, we encounter numerous people and circumstances that enable us to grow and mature, even though the journey of life is not always a clear path and has its ups and downs. We often find ourselves in difficult situations unpleasant to go through. Fortunately, there are ways to deal with difficulties. First of all we can look at them with a different attitude. As the saying goes, “We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.” Thus, instead of looking at events in our life as obstacles, we can look at them as opportunities. There is a great example of this in the *Mahābhārata*, the world's longest epic.



The *Mahābhārata* is a battle between good and evil. The good Pāṇḍavas must battle against the bad Kauravas. The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas are cousins, but despite this, the Kauravas committed great crimes against the Pāṇḍavas. They stole the Pāṇḍavas' land, tried to burn them alive, poisoned and tried to drown one of them, and attacked them with weapons. And if that wasn't enough, they tried to disrobe their queen.

Despite these numerous crimes, the Pāṇḍavas exhibited great qualities of tolerance and forgiveness. But when they saw that the Kaura-

vas were becoming tyrannical and destroying justice, they had to take action. First they tried to negotiate a peaceful settlement. But that didn't work out, and they were left with no choice but to wage war against the Kauravas to restore justice to the kingdom.

**Instead of getting bewildered every time things don't go our way, we can understand that extreme attachment leads to anger.**

vas were becoming tyrannical and destroying justice, they had to take action. First they tried to negotiate a peaceful settlement. But that didn't work out, and they were left with no choice but to wage war against the Kauravas to restore justice to the kingdom.

The two parties soon found themselves on the verge of a battle, pitted against one another in a fight that would determine the fate of the Indian kingdom. Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍavas, became despondent. He was a warrior and thus duty-bound to fight and restore justice to the kingdom. But he began to lament, feeling he was in a total lose-lose situation. Should he win the war, he would feel anguished on account of the bloodshed he had committed, especially since some of his relatives were fighting on the other side, and should he fail to conquer his enemies, he would die in the battle.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna's charioteer and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, looked at the situation from a different point of view. Rather than

### The Value of a Different Perspective

looking at the battle as a hopeless situation, Kṛṣṇa saw it as a hopeful one. Should Arjuna win the war, he and his brothers would enjoy an unrivaled kingdom on earth. Should they die in battle, they would be promoted to a higher realm because a warrior who dies on the battlefield fighting for justice is eligible to enter heaven.

Though we may not be as fortunate as Arjuna to have God personally instruct us, if we follow the instruc-

tions of the Lord or His representative then we become much happier. Thus, by looking at our challenges in a different light, we can also turn our seemingly hopeless situations into hopeful ones.

Moreover, by understanding the process by which we become frustrated, we can become less disturbed when dealing with difficult situations. Kṛṣṇa describes the cause of frustration and anger in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.62–63): "While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool."

A good example of this is when a child sees an ice cream cone – he begins to hanker after it, desiring to enjoy it. But when his mother tells him he can't have it, he becomes

frustrated and angry because he wasn't able to get what he wanted. Thus he suffers. Or let's say the mother did give the child the ice cream cone but it wasn't as tasty as he thought it would be. He would still be unhappy. Even though he got the ice cream, he still suffered, because it didn't meet his expectations.

Thus, when we hanker after something with the intention of enjoying it, we become attached to it. But if we fail to enjoy it, or we enjoy it but it doesn't meet our expectations, we can become frustrated instead of satisfied. In this way our desire to enjoy becomes the source of our frustration and anger.

By recognizing this cycle, we can better handle whatever curveballs life throws at us. Instead of getting bewildered every time things don't go our way, we can understand that extreme attachment

leads to anger, and thus we can prevent ourselves from letting anger take away our intelligence.

### Detachment by Internal Satisfaction

How do we prevent ourselves from getting overly attached to different sense objects? By being satisfied within. Then naturally we will be less disturbed by external events. Just as a river doesn't disturb the ocean, because of the ocean's fullness, different desires don't disturb someone satisfied within, because he is already full in himself.

A practical way to become internally satisfied is to practice *bhakti-yoga*. *Bhakti-yoga* goes beyond the physical aspect of modern-day yoga and connects us with Kṛṣṇa, or God, thus enabling us to taste spiritual bliss. Because the activities of *bhakti-yoga* give joy directly to the soul, we naturally experience a higher taste and find inner fulfillment. Thus we feel self-satisfied and no longer rely on external factors for

happiness, such as money, wealth, or bodily pleasure.

One of the main activities of *bhakti-yoga* is to chant the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Chanting these Sanskrit names for God brings great spiritual bliss. And we don't have to chant these particular names of God. *Bhakti-yoga* is a nonsectarian process, so people are free to chant whatever name of God is given in their own faith or religion. Still, many people find the *mahā-mantra* especially potent because it has been chanted for centuries and handed down through multiple generations of spiritual teachers and students.

Chanting the *mahā-mantra* not only enables us to relish great joy, but it also purifies us. In our pure state, we experience boundless love for Kṛṣṇa and devote ourselves to serving Him for His pleasure. In this position there is a reciprocal relationship between Kṛṣṇa and us, and the more pleasure we try to give Him, the more we ourselves experience. Each of us, as eternal spirit souls, is originally in this pure state, but our pure nature is now covered by material contamination, like a drop of pure rainwater that has fallen from the sky and landed in the mud. Our impurity under the influence of the material energy is, however, temporary. When dirt is removed from a drop of water, the water regains its pure quality; similarly, when the dirtlike impurities are removed from our heart by chanting the *mahā-mantra*, we become completely pure.

When we become completely pure, then we can understand fully that we are spiritual beings, servants of Kṛṣṇa and part of Him. And even before we come to this stage, we gain great benefit from understanding theoretically that we are spirit souls and not the material body. From a broader perspective, we can contextualize our problems and understand that they are temporary.

Even a lifelong problem can last only as long as our body lasts. While a lifetime sounds like a long time, compared to eternity it is merely a flash. The *Gītā* (2.20) teaches us that we are everlasting, and therefore we are fortunately entitled to eternal life. Thus, while we may be constantly plagued with problems, if we understand the bigger picture of life we can realize how insignificant such problems really are in the grand scheme of things.

Ultimately, as souls it is in our best interest to revive our dormant love for God and our innate spiritual nature, which is eternal, full of consciousness and bliss. By reviving our spiritual nature, we can guarantee our long-term happiness and achieve a high level of happiness even while caged in our material bodies. Chanting the *mahā-mantra* is a powerful way to revive our

spiritual nature. It can be done anytime, anywhere, and we don't need to renounce the world to derive benefit from chanting. We can even chant in the mind while performing our regular activities. Ideally, we should set some time aside to chant the mantra out loud, either on meditation beads or with musical instruments. By regularly chanting, daily if possible, we can rapidly discover its benefits.

Though life throws us into difficult circumstances, we can endure them if we change our perspective, take wisdom from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and practice *bhakti-yoga*. By doing so we will be less disturbed in the midst of even our most challenging difficulties. 🌸

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## Bhakti and Vedānta

ONE OF THE MANY attractive features of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is how well it satisfies us both intellectually and emotionally. The Vaiṣṇava scriptures at its foundation contain rigorous philosophical presentations as well as deeply moving narrations of exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. I often reflect on the aptness of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s name in this regard: Bhaktivedanta. *Bhakti* means devotional service to the Lord. It concerns the heart. *Vedānta* refers to the *Upaniṣads*, the most directly philosophical part of the *Vedas*. *Vedānta* is also shorthand for the *Vedānta-sūtras*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s concise commentary on the *Upaniṣads*, in which he authoritatively resolves difficult questions about the Absolute Truth. Anyone who has tackled the *Vedānta-sūtras* can testify to the intellectual challenge they provide.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva shows himself to be a philosopher of the highest order. He is in fact an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared in this world to organize the vast Vedic literature to make it more accessible in the current age. Besides performing that task, Vyāsadeva composed books and thus added to the Vedic canon. Included in those is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a striking example of the blend of “head” and “heart” found in the Vedic literature. Śrīla Prabhupāda, when confronting the claim that the stories about Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhāgavatam* are mythological, would point out that they were narrated by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a renowned and respected philosopher. Would a serious thinker of his caliber waste his time telling ordinary stories? No, Prabhupāda would argue, these are factual descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eternal, transcendental exchanges with His devotees.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a rich source of material to satisfy the intellect and the heart, and therefore both Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī used it as their main reference

when explaining and validating Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Jīva Gosvāmī is known as the greatest philosopher among the Six Gosvāmīs, and in his *Ṣaḍ-sandarbha* (“Six Treatises”) he relies primarily on the *Bhāgavatam* to put forward powerful arguments in support of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, an elaborate exposition of the diverse flavors of love tasted by Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. It too relies heavily on evidence from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

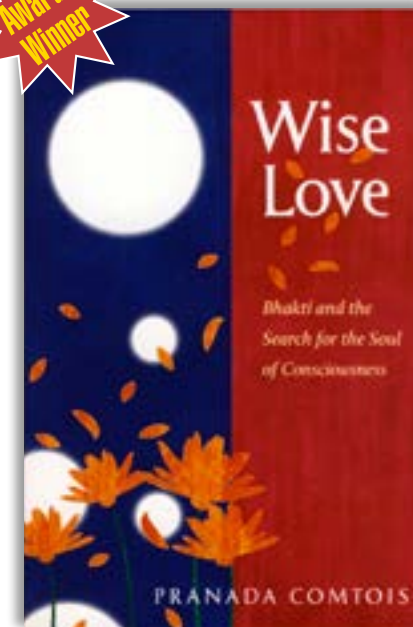
Two words that capture the two aspects of Kṛṣṇa consciousness I’ve been discussing are *tattva* and *rasa*. *Tattva* (literally “that-ness”) refers to the various aspects of reality. Discussions of *tattva* are philosophical in the traditional sense. Discussions of *rasa*, on the other hand, are about life in the realm of spirit. Śrīla Prabhupāda translates the word *rasa* variously as taste, juice, humor (meaning “temperament”), and mellow (as a noun; thus a coinage).

Śrīla Prabhupāda would routinely characterize philosophical speculation as “dry.” That’s because armchair guesswork, even when touching on the metaphysical, must fail to satisfy our innermost longings because it can never reveal Kṛṣṇa and His intimate dealings with His devotees. And that’s where the juice of *rasa* is to be found.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva begins the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.1) with an allusion to the *Vedānta-sūtras*, thus implying that the *Bhāgavatam* is a commentary on his previous composition, and implying the serious philosophical nature of the *Bhāgavatam*. Then, in text three, Vyāsadeva requests his audience to relish the “nectarean juice” of the *Bhāgavatam*. If we accept his invitation, we’ll not only learn what ultimate reality is but taste it to our full satisfaction.

– Nāgarāja Dāsa

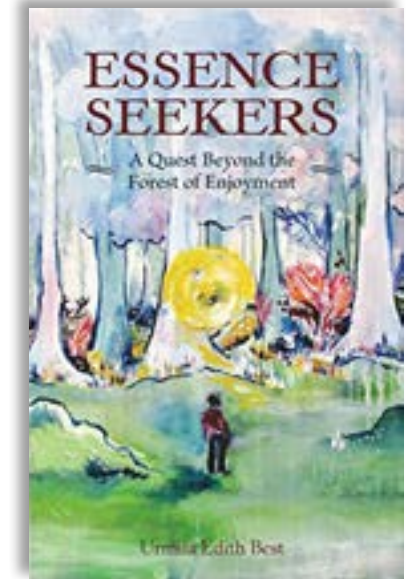
## Books



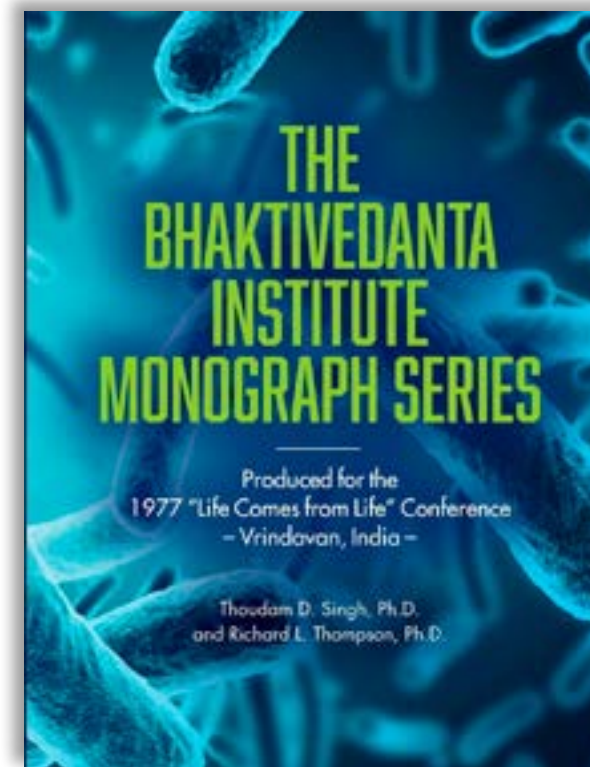
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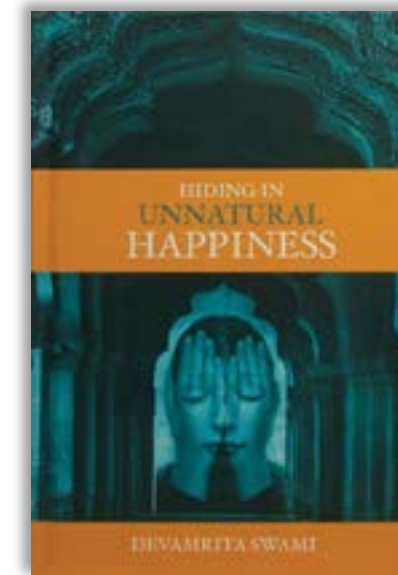


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## VEDIC THOUGHTS

One who disbelieves in the *śāstras* is an atheist, and we should not consult an atheist, however great he may be. A staunch believer in the *śāstras*, with all their diversities, is the right person from whom to gather real knowledge. Such knowledge may seem inconceivable in the beginning, but when put forward by the proper authority its meaning is revealed, and then one no longer has any doubts about it.

His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 5.14, Purport

The soul's propensity is not to enjoy matter or even to renounce it. There is no "give me, give me" in the spirit soul's nature. The soul is the associated counterpart of the Absolute Truth, Viṣṇu. The soul's only self-interest is to desire happiness for the Absolute Truth. Pure Vaiṣṇavas always search with heart and soul after what will make the Absolute Truth happy.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura  
*Uncommon Conversations, Conversation 7*

My dear Uddhava, an intelligent person should never take to literatures that do not contain descriptions of My activities, which purify the whole universe. Indeed, I create, maintain, and annihilate the entire material manifestation. Among all My pastime incarnations, the most beloved are Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Any so-called knowledge that does not recognize these activities of Mine is simply barren and is not acceptable to those who are actually intelligent.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.11.20

Of the different processes recommended for disentanglement from material life, the one personally explained and accepted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be considered all-perfect. That process is the performance of duties by which love for the Supreme Lord develops.

Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.7.29

A person who has transcendental knowledge as his charioteer and who carefully holds the reins of the mind reaches the end of the path: the transcendental realm of Lord Viṣṇu.

*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.9

With intellect purified by faith, and with all sincerity, please worship Kṛṣṇa, an ocean of good qualities, who is the acme of transcendental glory, and who purifies those who purify others. How wonderful! Just by rising in one's heart, even the semblance of His name destroys the heap of grievous sins, just as the dawn dispels all darkness.

*Padma Purāṇa*  
Quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.1.103

Honor the *Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures that tell of this devotional service. Hear from them regularly about the Lord's pastimes. For when those narrations enter the holes of your ears and you relish them with love, they will swiftly award you the Lord's abode.

Vaikuṅṭha-dūtas  
*Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.3.124





# 2018

## Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival of India

*Remaining Schedule for North America*

**September 1** / Seattle Rathayātrā and Flavors of India Fest

**September 3–4** / Vancouver, BC, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī and Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā

**September 8–9** / Kalowna, BC, Festival

**September 12** / Boulder, CO, University of Colorado Festival

**September 22** / Philadelphia Rathayātrā

**September 29** / Morrisville, NC, Rathayātrā

**October 6** / Nashville Rathayātrā

**October 14** / Bloomington, IL, Śrī Rāmacandra Vijayotsava Festival

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

