

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



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Nov/Dec 2018 • \$4.50



# HARE KRISHNA!

## The Film

### ALSO:

**Cutting the Knots  
of Material Attachment**

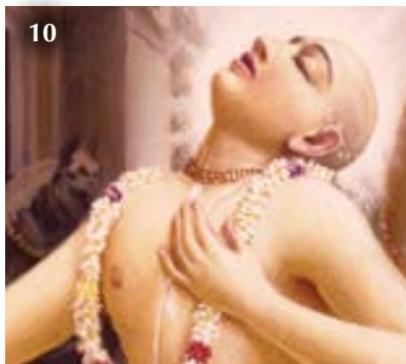
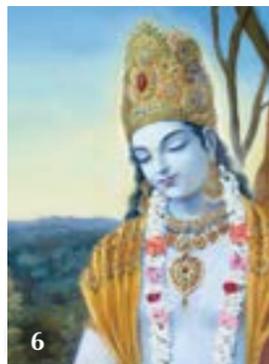
**The Science of Love**

**An Ancient Lesson  
in Self-Mastery**

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

# BACK to GODHEAD

Founded 1944 • Vol. 52, No. 6 • November / December, 2018



## FEATURES

### Founder's Lecture

#### 6 Cutting the Knots of Material Attachment

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains how we – the soul – are bound to this world of suffering by karmic knots and how we can break free.

#### 10 The Science of Love

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers were experts in the most important science of all.

#### 16 Sugrīva-Lakṣmaṇa: Comfort – Material and Spiritual

Overindulgence in material comforts can erode our sense of purpose.

#### 21 An Ancient Lesson in Self-Mastery

Though insulted by a king, Jaḍa Bharata reacted coolly, blessing the king with spiritual instruction.

#### 24 Hare Krishna! The Film

A full-length documentary on Śrīla Prabhupāda's life hits the big screen in movie theatres worldwide.

#### 47 Bringing Kṛṣṇa's Mercy to the Aged

The Vedic Care Charitable Trust aims to help devotees in their final years.

### Book Excerpt: *Essence Seekers*

#### 52 A Quest for the Essence of Nectar

Desiring to attract people to the realm of *bhakti*, a writer created a story based on an allegory from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

#### 56 The Art of Living and Leaving

Through the lives of exemplary personalities, the *Bhāgavatam* teaches us how to live in this world and how to depart from it.

## DEPARTMENTS

### Letters 4

### A Pause for Prayer 15

### Hare Krishna Mahā-Mantra 38

### Book Section: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 39

*King Pṛthu's Desired Benediction*

### Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out 43

*We Accept Only God's "View"*

### Calendar 45

### In Memoriam 51

*Yamarāja Dāsa*

### BTG Index, 2018 61

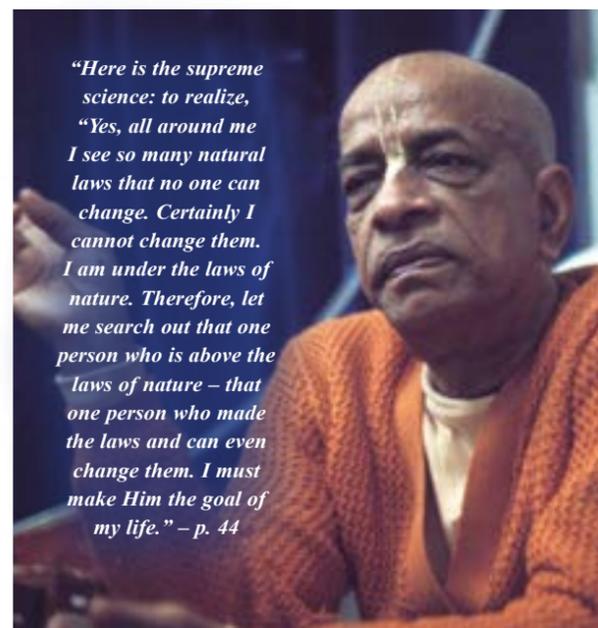
### From the Editor 64

*Back Home, Back to Godhead*

### Krishna.com Store 65

### Vedic Thoughts 67

**COVER** The poster for the movie about Śrīla Prabhupāda's life that has now screened more than two thousand times in cities around the world. Please see the article beginning on page 24.



"Here is the supreme science: to realize, "Yes, all around me I see so many natural laws that no one can change. Certainly I cannot change them. I am under the laws of nature. Therefore, let me search out that one person who is above the laws of nature – that one person who made the laws and can even change them. I must make Him the goal of my life." – p. 44

## WELCOME



Many people around the world are familiar with the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, but few know much if anything about the movement's founder, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta

Swami Prabhupāda. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was working tirelessly to introduce Kṛṣṇa far and wide, he did so without a hint of self-promotion. In this issue we hear about a highly successful project by a team of his disciples, grand-disciples, and admirers to present him to large numbers of people through a film: *Hare Krishna! The Mantra, the Movement and the Swami who started it all*. Having now screened in movie theatres around the world, it has won much admiration for Śrīla Prabhupāda's saintliness and accomplishments.

Also in this issue, Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa draws on a story from the *Rāmāyaṇa* to make the point that comfort can be a problem for spiritual life but need not be. In *An Ancient Lesson in Self-Mastery*, first-time BTG author Dvijamaṇi Gaura Dāsa writes on a theme related to comfort: the need for self-control. Lack of it brings material and spiritual problems to the individual that affect the whole civilization. He tells of an ancient saint who demonstrated the benefits of full self-mastery.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. – Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

## OUR PURPOSES

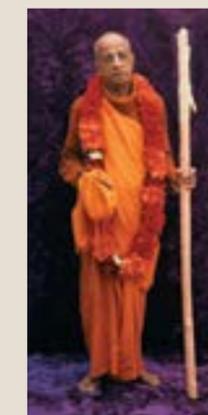
- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God 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.

# BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the  
Hare Krishna Movement



**FOUNDER** (under the direction of His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda) **His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda** (1896–1977)

**BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST REPRESENTATIVE** Govardhana Dāsa • **EDITOR** Nāgarāja Dāsa • **GENERAL MANAGER** Prema-mañjarī Devī Dāsī • **ASSOCIATE EDITORS** Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, Druta-karmā Dāsa, Satyarāja Dāsa, Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, Viśākhā Devī Dāsī • **DESIGN / LAYOUT** Govinda Cordua • **PROOFREADERS** Gadāgraja Dāsa, Keśihanta Dāsa, Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa, Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī, Vegavatī Devī Dāsī • **ARCHIVES** Ekanātha Dāsa • **CUSTOMER SERVICE** Ijya Dāsa • **ACCOUNTS** Rañjita Dāsa

**INDIA: PUBLISHER** Yudhiṣṭhira Dāsa • **PRODUCTION** Sac-cid-ānanda Dāsa, Sundara Rūpa Dāsa • **GENERAL MANAGER & CIRCULATION** Pāṇḍurāṅga Dāsa • **ACCOUNTS** Sahadeva Dāsa • **SUBSCRIBER SERVICES** Mañjarī Devī Dāsī

**EDITORIAL OFFICES** Send editorial correspondence to BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Phone: (386) 462-7794. Email: editors@krishna.com. Or BTG, 3rd Floor, 302, Amrut Industrial Estate, Western Express Hwy., Mira Rd. (E), Mumbai 401104, India. Phone: (022) 32556701. Email: btgindia@pamho.net

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** *Back to Godhead* is published six times a year. For a one-year subscription (US and Canada) send \$19.95 to BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Or call toll-free: 1-800-800-3284. For subscriptions outside the US and Canada add \$10. Payment in US funds (payable on a US bank) must accompany your order. (Postal money orders not accepted.) In the UK send £18.99 to BTG UK Ltd., Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Lane, Watford, Herts. WD25 8EZ. In South Africa send R240 to Back to Godhead, P. O. Box 56003, Chatsworth 4030.

**SUBSCRIBER SERVICE** To change your address or clear up any questions about your subscription, write to BTG Service Center, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Or call 1-800-800-3284. Or email btgsubs@krishna.com. We can answer your questions faster if you send a recent mailing label or invoice. Please allow eight weeks for changes to show on your label.

Printed in South Africa

© 2018 The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International. All rights reserved. (Trustee for The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust: Svavāsa Dāsa.) *Back to Godhead* (ISSN 0005-3643, USPS 604-170) is published bimonthly (six times a year) for \$19.95 per year by Back To Godhead, 18024 NW 112th Blvd., Alachua, FL 32615. Periodicals postage paid at Alachua, Florida, and additional mailing offices. CANADA POST AGREEMENT #: 40612608. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Back to Godhead, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616.

## Letters

### A Measured Critique of Science

Kudos to Badrinarayan Swami for his wonderful piece entitled “In Defense of the Vedic View” [May/June]. An article confronting the modern scientific establishment and defending the viewpoint of scripture can easily stumble into one of several pitfalls: It can decry ignorant notions of scientific theories, thereby defeating a “straw man” but doing nothing to help cut the real man down to size; it can throw out the baby with the bathwater by implying that scientific observation and experiment are useless (rather than limited) and that researchers are evil (rather than misguided or tententious); or it can bloviate on minutiae that are beyond the ken of the average reader and so make no real impression, boring rather than informing.

Badrinarayan Swami’s exposition avoids all of these. In highlighting the limitations of science and dispelling the notion that one must be irrational to be religious, he accurately represents theories (with specific citations to scholarly publications), acknowledges the legitimate and positive role of science and the scientific method, and intersperses the article with analogies that are readily understandable and memorable.

More extreme and acerbic attacks may generate more excitement among the blindly faithful, but measured and perspicuous assaults like this one are more likely to move thoughtful readers to consider the basis of their beliefs and to help loosen the otherwise ineluctable hold of atheistic science on the modern mind.

Well done, Mahārāja.  
Navīna Śyāma Dāsa  
Dallas, Texas

### What to Think of at Death

The essence of the *Śrīmad-*

*Bhāgavatam* is ante nārāyaṇa-smṛti [to remember Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord, and the end of life]. Can a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, a member of ISKCON, go to Goloka Vṛndāvana if he chants the name of Nārāyaṇa at death?

Raghunātha Caitanya Dāsa  
Via the Internet

*Reply:* Nārāyaṇa is one of Kṛṣṇa’s many forms. The verse you cite, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.6, isn’t meant to say that one must remember that specific form of Kṛṣṇa. It is telling us that success in life is to remember God at the end. In ISKCON, our devotion is for Kṛṣṇa, the original form of the Lord, and we are being trained to remember Kṛṣṇa always. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa’s Nārāyaṇa form will go to Vaikuṇṭha, but we devotees of Kṛṣṇa will go to Goloka Vṛndāvana, since the form of the Lord we remember at death will naturally be Kṛṣṇa. We will go where our heart leads us.

### Kali-yuga’s Advance

About how long before things start to get bad in the age of Kali-yuga? And how long will there be Hare Kṛṣṇa temples to go to?

Christian Grivetti  
Via the Internet

*Reply:* If you look around, you’ll see that it is already starting to “get bad.” Although superficially there is advancement, the progress is only in material areas, and the result of that “progress” is spiritual decline. For example, social media and cell phones have made life more impersonal than ever. People don’t talk to people anymore or make deep friendships, but rather click “like” and “friend” and don’t even know who they are talking to or what they are talking about. The world climate is changing, and so there is danger of flooding, earthquakes, and crazy

weather. Fuel is running out, as is clean water. When we buy water, we buy plastic, and plastic is polluting the water – and everything else.

New diseases are replacing the ones that have been vanquished, and people are still dying at the rate of 100%. Countries that were friends are now enemies; people who were friends are now enemies as well.

So, on the outside, Kali-yuga is progressing and causing people to get more and more entangled in material life, with less and less time for spiritual practices. Therefore the qualities that people have on the inside are also declining. People go to the temple to pray for their material life to be less stressful and more productive, rather than praying to Kṛṣṇa for love of God, which is really the only valuable thing and the only thing that will make one happy and peaceful.

Lord Caitanya said that the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* will remain strong for the next ten thousand years and after that Kali-yuga will take over entirely. But knowing that things are declining, we should not hesitate to put proper energy into becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and helping to keep the Hare Kṛṣṇa temples open and strong. This should be done with determination and urgent attention. Each of us must consider how we can assist in helping others to find their relationship with Kṛṣṇa. We should make every effort to improve and enlighten society in an attempt to slow down, or even stop, the progress of Kali-yuga.

### Bhakti-yoga Life

Can I be a *bhakti-yogī* and still live a regular lifestyle? I’m going to graduate school. I live in an apartment with a partner, attend yoga classes, and travel. Also, is it okay to read literature other than the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?

Olivia  
Via the Internet

*Reply:* *Bhakti-yoga* is for anyone, anywhere. It is practical, active yoga that really happens from within the heart. Many of the previous teachers, *ācāryas*, in our line were householders who traveled, taught, and studied. Their priority was to focus on the Lord as the supreme controller, proprietor, and friend. They took shelter in their *sādhana*, or daily spiritual practices of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, studying the scriptures, preaching, and praying.

Anyone can perform these activities. They purify the consciousness and connect us to the Lord Kṛṣṇa. At the same time, we should try to avoid bad association and give our good association.

If the literature you choose is elevating to the consciousness, then it is OK. If not, it may divert you from your focus on the Lord. 🌸

*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.*

### Correction

In the Sep/Oct issue, we omitted a much-needed caption for the painting opening the article “The Right to Lament,” by Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī. The painting depicts a scene, described in the Sixth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, where Nārada Muni is speaking to a child he has just revived from death. The child’s parents, the king and queen, had been greatly lamenting the child’s death, while the queen’s jealous co-wives, who had poisoned the child, feigned lamentation. When questioned by Nārada, the child speaks philosophically, delivering the king and queen from their lamentation.

We also failed to give credit to the artist. The painting was done by Dhṛṭi Devī Dāsī.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

## CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

Founder-*Ācārya*: His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



Korsnäs Gärd, Sweden



For the complete list, go to **centres.iskcon.org**

# CUTTING THE KNOTS

## of Material Attachment

*Our attempts at happiness in the material world keep us bound to repeated suffering, but there is a way out.*

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

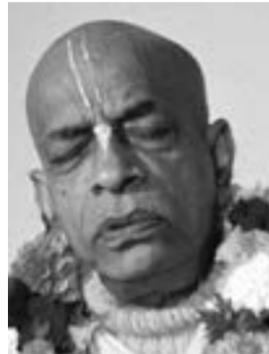
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*bhidiate hṛdaya-granthis  
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ  
kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi  
dṛṣṭa evātmanīśvare*

“Thus the knots of the heart and all mis-givings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions, or karma, is terminated when one sees one’s self and one’s master.”

– Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.21

**B**hidiate means “cut into pieces.” What is cut? The knot. *Hṛdaya-granthis*. *Hṛdaya* means heart, and *granthis* means knot. Everyone’s heart has a knot. What is that knot? The knot is sex. *Pumsaḥ striyā mithunī-bhāvam etam (Bhāgavatam 5.5.8)*. This is the knot. A man wants to have a woman; a woman wants to have a man. This they are searching after. And some way or other if they unite, the knot becomes tied up very strong. Then as soon as the knot is there, there is a house, then land, then children, then friends, then money. In this way, one after another, we become knotted in so many things. If you want to make a knot tight, you make one knot, then another knot, another knot, another knot, another knot – to make it secure. This is our position. In this material world we are knotted in so many



ways, and we are creating more knots. So we have to cut these knots. We are bound up in this material life by so many knots. But we Hare Kṛṣṇa people have begun the process of cutting the knots:

*yad anudhyāsinā yuktāḥ  
karma-granthis-nibandhanam  
chindanti kovidās tasya  
ko na kuryāt kathā-ratim*

“With sword in hand, intelligent men cut through the binding knots of reactionary work [karma] by remembering the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, who will not pay attention to His message?” (*Bhāgavatam 1.2.15*)

These knots are there. The whole world is working so hard on account of being knotted in so many ways. But if you take this sword of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and carefully work, then all these knots will be cut. You will become free.

### Kṛṣṇa Gives Us What We Want

The living entity, the soul, is bound by the subtle body and the gross body on account of these knots, these attachments. Kṛṣṇa is giving us the facilities we want. If

*Dhruva receives  
the audience of  
Lord Viṣṇu, and  
all his material  
desires disappear.*



you want a human body, you get it. If you want an animal body, you get it. If you want a tiger's body, you get it. If you want Brahmā's body, a demigod's body, you get it. That is going on. God is within you, and you are hankering after something, and God is noting down: "All right." Even if you forget, He'll give it to you. "You wanted this facility. Now here it is. You can take it." Kṛṣṇa is so kind.

We are being harassed by getting these different types of body and engagements according to the body. That we can understand. We are not happy, because our main business is sense gratification and we cannot enjoy all these senses fully in one kind of body. There is some defect. We are trying to gratify our senses by

your book, *Easy Journey* . . . So we shall go there?"

"Yes, we shall go."

"And again I shall come back?"

"No. No coming back."

[*Chuckles.*]

So he replied, "Then what is the use of going?"

That means he wants to go only for sense gratification. He wants to go to the moon or any planet, come back, and boast amongst his friends, "You see, I have gone." [*Laughter.*]

That is his business. Actually, he doesn't want to go there, nor has he got the power to go, but he wants to satisfy his senses. "I shall go there and come back and show my very swollen chest – 'I have gone to the moon.'"

**If you want a tiger's body, you get it.  
If you want Brahmā's body, a demigod's  
body, you get it. That is going on.**

flying to another planet, the moon planet. This is sense gratification. We are meant for this planet. We are bound up by our condition. Artificially we are trying to go there, and we are making so many plans: "There will be an intermediate station, and the petrol will be carried from here," and this and that. So many things. Simply spending money. Just childish. Children spoil their time and energy in certain kinds of playing. Similarly, this is going on, because it is sense gratification, that's all. Simply sense gratification. "Let us go and see how it is, this moon planet." You have no business there. You cannot do anything there. You cannot live there, but still, "Let us go, let us go." And spend all the taxpayers' money. Spend like water. This is going on.

If you actually want to go to the moon planet, there is a clear process. A long time ago – I think sometime in 1960 – I wrote the book *Easy Journey to Other Planets*.

So one gentleman met me: "Sir,

One Russian went to outer space, and he was greeted all over the world. He went to India also. Our rascal leaders greeted him, as did Khrushchev and others in his country. When he was in space rounding the earth, he was trying to see, "Where is my Russia? Where is my Moscow?"

So the attraction is here, in Moscow. There is a proverb: The vulture goes very high, three miles, four miles high. But the aim is "Where is a dead body?" He's looking forward. "Where is a dead body?" The aim is not very good. He's looking for some dead corpse to eat. That is his business. But he has gone very high, four miles high.

### Tightening the Knot

Similarly, the aim of all these rascal so-called scientists is how to tighten this knot of material existence, and they are trying to become so many things. You see? *Hṛdaya-granthi*.

Real attachment is here. For the hog the real attachment is stool. But he's getting very fat. "Oh, I am so happy." You see? This is going on.

Nature is very clever. Just to make you attached to stool, she gives you a certain type of body, a hog's body. You become very pleased: "Oh, I am so happy. I am living in heaven."

One time, actually, Indra, the king of heaven, was cursed to become a hog, and he became a hog. He had a wife and many kiddies and was living in a filthy place, eating stool. Brahmā came to him because in his absence the management in the heavenly kingdom was not going nicely.

Brahmā requested, "Indra, now please come with me."

"Where shall I go, sir?"

"Heaven."

"What is that? I cannot go. I have responsibilities. I have my wife, my children, and I am happy here. I do not know what heaven is."

This is attachment. We are canvassing, "Please come with us. Let us go." Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in one song, *rādhā-kṛṣṇa bolo, saṅge calo, ei-mātra bhikhā cāi*:

"Kindly chant 'Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa' and come with me. We are going back home, back to Godhead." Nobody is interested. "What is this 'Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa' nonsense? We are very happy here." That is the knot.

Even if you explain, "Oh, here is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. See how nicely They're dressed and how They enjoy. Just see Their dancing," they don't care for it.

"Oh, I am very happy here. Why shall I go to Goloka Vṛndāvana?"

"You will not be able to stay here."

"Oh, that's all right. As long as I can stay let me enjoy this stool."

That's all. Attachment. This is called attachment. The attachment is so strong that even if you explain, "You will go back home, back to Godhead. Your father is Kṛṣṇa, all-powerful. You can enjoy blissful life, eternal life there," they reply, "No. It is better here."

### Become Spiritually Advanced

But if people take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement seriously, they can become spiritually advanced. The process is *śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ* (*Bhāgavatam* 1.2.17): Simply hear about Kṛṣṇa, as we are doing. Then gradually you come to the platform of goodness, and the lower modes of material nature, namely ignorance and passion, cannot disturb you. You become situated in goodness. And then gradually this stage comes: *evam prasanna-manaso bhagavad-bhakti yogataḥ* (*Bhāgavatam* 1.2.20). You become engaddened, you become joyful, by discharging devotional service. And you will no longer be interested in this rascal life of material existence. *Bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ*.

Dhruva Mahārāja wanted the kingdom of his father, but actually when he saw Lord Viṣṇu before him, he said, "Sir, I do not want anything. My dear Lord, I no longer have any aspiration for this kingdom or that kingdom." This position comes. It is just like that.

At first you are hungry, but if you are given food when your belly is filled up, you will automatically say, "No, no, I don't want anything." Kṛṣṇa consciousness is like that. Actually, because I am a spirit soul and you are a spirit soul, we don't want to eat. We have no need to eat. The need or desire to eat is our material hankering. In order to maintain this body, we require some material things to eat. Otherwise, as spiritual soul, we don't want to eat anything. There is nothing to be eaten.

Therefore the eating propensities should be satisfied by eating Kṛṣṇa's *prasādam*, so that you gradually become spiritualized and your eating propensities may diminish. Our necessities are sleeping, eating, and sex enjoyment. But these can be conquered, because in spiritual life there is no need of eating, no need of sleeping.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as we

have discussed, will gradually bring you to that stage where there is no longer the knot of the material attachment. *Bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ*. We are speaking, "You are not this body; you are the soul," but people cannot understand. They are in doubt. "Oh, how is it that I am a soul? I am this body." But as soon as you come perfectly in spiritual consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the doubts will be over: "I am a spirit soul. I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa." That realization will be fixed.

We are bound up by karma acting. In this life I am acting in such a way that I am preparing my next life. Again, in the next life, I shall act in such a way that I shall prepare my next life. In this way, one after another, one after another, one after another. But if we take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and simply act for Kṛṣṇa, there will be no more *karma-bandhana*, bondage of karma. Then that "one after another" will be finished.

In the *Brahmā-saṁhitā* it is said, "For those who have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the resultant action of their karma is stopped." How? Kṛṣṇa gives you assurance in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66): *ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi*: "I shall give you protection from all kinds of resultant actions of your sinful life. Just surrender to Me." Kṛṣṇa can do everything. A king can excuse you. By law you may be condemned to death, but if you appeal to the supreme executive, the king or the president, if he likes he can excuse you.

Similarly, by nature's law we cannot be freed from the resultant actions of our sinful life. That is not possible. But if Kṛṣṇa desires, if Kṛṣṇa is pleased with you, He can excuse you. Because when you are Kṛṣṇa conscious, you'll always see Kṛṣṇa within the mind, within the heart. That very seeing is immunity from all sinful activities. Then you become free – you go back home, back to Godhead.

Thank you very much. 🌸

### 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."

# The Science of LOVE

*A talk given at a yoga studio in New York City.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

As a young seeker in the 1960s, I was, like most of my peers, looking for love. Material love, yes, but also spiritual love. I was exploring the world's various religions with this in mind. Did religion have much to teach me about love? Was I, as the saying goes, "looking for love in all the wrong places"? Absolutely not. Indeed, all of the world's theistic traditions have much to say about love in all its permutations. But none of them satisfied my quest like the Vaiṣṇava tradition of India, known in the West as the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Here I found love expressed as a science. That might sound strange, but bear with me. You see, the expression of love in the context of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is epitomized in the person of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He appeared in India about five hundred years ago, and many leading spiritual authorities of the day

accepted Him as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in the guise of His own devotee.

They cited scriptural evidence to support their view. Among Caitanya's immediate followers was a group known as the Six Gosvāmīs, who explained *bhakti*, or spiritual love, as a yogic science. They brought out, based on Śrī Caitanya's example and teachings, the inner meaning of loving exchanges with God, not just for Caitanya's tradition but in general, as a universal method for attaining a love supreme.

Śrī Caitanya showed how this plays out experientially. His life and example were soaked in God consciousness. Indeed, He was called "a golden volcano of divine love," the lava, or ecstatic symptoms, uncontainable in His body. And the Gosvāmīs documented it so all of us could benefit from His exuberant, spontaneous love.

*Śrī Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa in the role of His own devotee, displayed the ecstatic emotions of one who has developed pure love of God.*

Detail from a painting by Parīksit Dāsa

Love is natural and easy, but to do it right is a science. When we love someone, a series of free-flowing feelings engulfs us, but if we want to develop a deep and committed relationship with our beloved, we must take certain steps, follow a certain procedure. The procedure may vary from person to person, but overall, certain things work, and certain things do not. For love to blossom, we have to know how to properly show our love for a given person; we have to nurture that person and do other things that help him or her feel loved. Right? We all know this is true, don't we? There's a way to do this, to show one's love.

We may love our husband or wife, for example, but what do we do to help our partner feel loved? This is the question. Though love is natural and from the heart, there's an art and a science to how one develops and shows one's love in the most effective ways. Psychologists have long studied the art and heart of relationships. Just as there are

signs of a healthy and harmonious relationship, and things we do that support the relationship, there are things we do that will harm a relationship. We have to know how all that works. That's the science of love. And because few bother to learn it, the divorce rate is through the roof.

What I'm trying to say, in context, is this: Śrī Caitanya was the exemplar of love. When He would chant Kṛṣṇa's names and dance, people would see He was in deep, deep ecstasy, with tears of love, and they'd say, "I want that – I want to be like Him." And so the Six Gosvāmīs documented the different stages of ecstasy, with special note of His behavior and bodily symptoms. They wrote down the science of how to chant properly, and how to thus experience the love He was feeling. They documented what works and what doesn't work in building a relationship with God through *kīrtana* and through the various processes of *bhakti-yoga*.

Someone may argue that love and science are diametrically opposed, and there is certainly some truth to this. But, as I have already shown, love obeys certain laws of function, even in the material world. Helen Fisher of Rutgers University, for example, has proposed three stages of love – lust, attraction, and attachment. Each stage, she says, is associated with different hormones and chemicals. The initial stages of lust activate one's stress response, increasing blood levels of adrenalin and cortisol. This has the effect of making a person sweat, with a racing heart and a dry mouth. We've all been there, right? [Laughter.] Scientists say that three main neurotransmitters cause attraction: adrenaline, dopamine, and serotonin. Sounds rather clinical, no? [Laughter.] And then comes attachment, the bond that keeps couples together long enough to have and raise children. The two major hormones here are oxytocin and vasopressin. [Loud laughter.]

You laugh, but our entire enterprise of loving exchange in the material world can be reduced to chemicals – that, of course, and conditioning. Deep-rooted tastes based on experience and the inexplicable rumblings of the heart are factors, without doubt. But the point I'm making should be clear, too. Love, even material love, can be analyzed scientifically, and we can't deny that there's some legitimacy to this.

But what is it we're really doing when we express love for someone? The wisdom tradition of India, including the *Bhagavad-gītā*, tells us that lust, attraction, and attachment, in the end, are manifestations of some inner spiritual hunger, an existential thirst, a desire to know and love God. The attempt to satisfy spiritual hunger through sense pleasure is merely a sign of ignorance, of insufficient understanding. Our search for pure, expansive love will be satisfied only in the realm of the spirit, and deep down we know this, because that's who we really are: we're spiritual beings, thirsting after

spiritual relationships. This is what Śrī Caitanya and the Gosvāmīs came to give – this knowledge, this truth.

Until we are educated in the principles of true spiritual love, we must associate with the handmaidens of its material counterpart, including envy, jealousy, pride, hatred, malice, fear, and so on. Only when we go beyond material love – love centered on our bodily identity – can we associate with Kṛṣṇa's most intimate handmaidens, the *gopīkās*, the famous cowherd girls of Vrindavan, the spiritual world, who love Him purely. They are waiting to guide us in our love for Him, if only we mature beyond the mediocre love of the material world.

Ultimately, material love leads us to frustration and madness, and if it's not replaced by spiritual love, it leads to the abyss of emptiness, a spiritual void that makes life unlivable.

#### Bhakti-yoga: The Path to Love

It is often said that religion or spirituality rests on blind faith and sentiment while science rests on observation and experiment. But *bhakti* is also a science. As already stated, the Gosvāmīs left a massive literary tradition showing not only how one can develop love of God but how one can gauge that love scientifically, methodically. The method begins with chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and following certain purifying principles, including sexual restrictions and abstention from meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling. By following these principles, the *bhakti-yogī* seeks to achieve a purified state unfettered by the contaminating forces of Kali-yuga, the current spiritually debilitated age. This allows the scientific experiment to proceed.

In any scientific experiment, the object of study must be observed in its pure form, isolated from outside influences. Nature, as we know, does not always present things in a pure and unmixed form, and so adjust-

ments to an experiment must sometimes be made. Once this is done, the results are carefully watched, and in this way the laws governing nature's behavior are discovered. These laws are documented, and this is how science progresses.

*Bhakti* adheres to this same principle, but in relation to the soul and God. The living being in the material world also does not exist in pure form. We are all informed or colored by our particular body and the conditioning we have accrued over many lifetimes. Therefore the first step in the science of *bhakti* is purification of the self.

That's why the purifying principles already mentioned are required. Some people might find it helpful to live in a monastery or an ashram, where, isolated from exter-

ematics, "Two plus two equals four" is always true. You cannot make it equal five according to your whims. No. Because mathematics is a science, whether you are in America or India or England, you will find that everyone accepts that two plus two equals four. Similarly, you cannot imagine God according to your whims. Nowadays many people say, "You can imagine your God, and I can imagine my God." No, there is no question of imagining anything about God. As stated here, the scientific truth of God can be understood by a person who is *mukta-saṅga*, freed from material association. Such a person, being transcendental to the lower modes of nature, is jubilant and enlightened (*prasanna-manasaḥ*). As long as you are under the jurisdiction of the modes of ignorance and pas-

**The attempt to satisfy spiritual hunger through sense pleasure is merely a sign of ignorance, of insufficient understanding.**

nal influences, the science of *bhakti* can thrive. But ashram life is not always required. It depends on the individual. One's own conscience and the guidance of more experienced *bhakti-yogīs* are critical here. They will determine what the individual needs in this very personal experiment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, gave his book *The Nectar of Devotion* the subtitle "The Complete Science of Bhakti-Yoga," and in his many writings he sought to show how *bhakti* is indeed a science. Here's one example.

The process of *bhakti-yoga* is not a concoction or speculation. It is a science. As stated in the present verse, *bhagavat-tattva-vijñānam*, "one gains scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead." *Vijñāna* means "science." In math-

sion, there is no question of jubilation or enlightenment. Therefore you have to come to the platform of pure goodness.

#### The Science of Love

So that's basically how one develops divine love – by following the principles of *bhakti-yoga*. We can gradually feel our heart becoming purified and our *anarthas*, or habits that hinder our spiritual progress, fading away. When the experiment is conducted in the association of other *bhakti-yogīs*, we can easily gauge our progress. Our fever for material pleasure subsides, and our taste for the accouterments of the spirit increases. We develop a taste for Kṛṣṇa and other spiritual subjects and lose interest in things that take us away from our spiritual pursuits. It's a science.

But I began by saying that my



## YOU'RE INVITED! The Sunday Feast

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

Visit: [centres.iskcon.org](http://centres.iskcon.org)

search for a science of spiritual love was satisfied in the Vaiṣṇava tradition. I'd like to briefly flesh this out, so you can see that a complete taxonomy and theology of love exists in my adopted tradition. For example, one of the great teachers of our lineage, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, writes in his book *Gītamālā*:

The development of ecstatic love of Godhead gradually thickens and intensifies as it manifests in seven stages of ecstasy known as (1) *prema*, general ecstatic love

Love of Godhead increases and is manifested as affection, counter-love, love, attachment, subattachment, ecstasy, and sublime ecstasy. This development is compared to sugarcane seeds, sugarcane plants, sugarcane juice, molasses, crude sugar, refined sugar, sugar candy, and rock candy. One should understand that just as the taste of sugar increases as it is gradually purified, so when love of Godhead increases from *rati*, which is compared to the beginning seed, its taste increases. According to the candidate possessing these tran-

nectarean taste, just as the treatment of curd with sugar, ghee, pepper, and camphor produces a most tasty composition.

### Love and Christianity

A friend from the Christian tradition once pointed out to me that for Christians love of God is intimately connected to love of man. That's how they express their love of God – through loving their brothers and sisters under God's fatherhood. He wanted to know how the Vaiṣṇava conception of love ties in with love for humankind.

This is an urgent question and needs to be addressed. But we shouldn't begin with the misconception that Christianity conflates love of God and love of man. While both types of love are important, Christians, like Vaiṣṇavas, know a clear distinction between the two. If we study closely, we will find that the Christian tradition makes clear that love of God and love of man are two different things. When Jesus was asked which commandment is the greatest, he said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." And then he augmented it: "This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:36–40) So they are actually two different things. The second commandment is like the first one, but it is not the same as the first one. The difference is implicit: Love of man and love of God are distinct.

And then you have the great Christian mystics throughout history who have underscored this point. St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, and others elaborated on love of God and how to pursue that love on a very high spiritual platform. I feel, though, that Vaiṣṇavism goes further, explicating the science of love in ways the Christian mystics would deeply appreciate.

scendental qualities [*sneha*, *māna*, and so on], there are five transcendental mellows – neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parental love, and conjugal love.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, elaborates:

This form of *bhakti* is fit to be cultured. Being duly cultured it gives rise to *rati* [the natural tendency of the soul towards Kṛṣṇa, or the basic principal of love]. Condensed *rati* is *prema*. By the process of gradual augmentation *prema* becomes *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, and *mahābhāva*. A good analogy is furnished by the series of processes in the refining of the raw juice of sugarcane. First there is juice, then molasses, raw sugar, residual sugar, refined sugar, white sugar, and icing sugar. These are varieties of the basic principle [*sthāyi-bhāva*] in the operations of the mellow liquid (*rasa*) of the service of Kṛṣṇa. If the basic principle is conjoined with higher principles known as *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sātvika*, and *vyabhicārī*, then the operations of the liquid mellow of the service of Kṛṣṇa exhibits the most exquisite

for the Personality of Godhead; (2) *sneha*, personal affection borne of a softened and melted heart; (3) *māna*, pouting counter-love due to confidential familiarity; (4) *praṇaya*, mutually intimate love devoid of shyness or hesitation; (5) *rāga*, highly involved attachment that disregards any offense; (6) *anurāga*, the constant presence of supplementary attachments that ripple and twinkle in waves of mutual charms; (7) *bhāva*, the stage of wildly relishable exhilaration in a transparently pure yet supremely inflamed love-passion. All these stages of the *sthāyi-bhāva* [the continuous state of spiritual ecstasy in love of Godhead] are spotlessly free from any material impurities. . . . The above-mentioned symptoms are all together known as *prema* (love of Godhead).

Each of these stages of love of God is delineated in the writings of the Gosvāmīs, and Prabhupāda's books present them in modern language.

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, a near-contemporaneous biography of Śrī Caitanya, helps *bhakti-yoga* practitioners understand these levels of love by comparing them to various kinds of sugar:

Each stage of love of God is delineated in the writings of the Gosvāmīs, and Prabhupāda presents the stages in modern language.

## A Pause for Prayer



Lord Śiva (Rudra) and Lord Kṛṣṇa

Śrī Rudra said: You alone are the Absolute Truth, the supreme light, the mystery hidden within the verbal manifestation of the Absolute. Those whose hearts are spotless can see You, for You are uncontaminated, like the sky.

You are the original person, one without a second, transcendental and self-manifesting. Uncaused, You are the cause of all, and You are the ultimate controller. You are nonetheless perceived in terms of the transformations of matter effected by Your illusory energy – transformations You sanction so that the various material qualities can become fully manifest.

One who has attained this human form of life as a gift from God, yet who fails to control his senses and honor Your feet, is surely to be pitied, for he is only cheating himself.

That mortal who rejects You – his true Self, dearest friend, and Lord – for the sake of sense objects, whose nature is just the opposite, refuses nectar and instead consumes poison.

I, Lord Brahmā, the other demigods, and the pure-minded sages have all surrendered wholeheartedly unto You, our dearest Self and Lord.

– Lord Śiva to Lord Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.63.34, 38, 41-43

For example, Vaiṣṇavas practice vegetarianism as a religious imperative. There is no question of loving God's creatures if you eat them. And how do Vaiṣṇavas show love of their fellow man? By educating them spiritually, by feeding them with *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, consecrated food. In short, by helping them in the most important ways: by giving them a spiritual dimension. This is love on a very, very deep level.

### Awakening Love

This all begins by rendering some simple service to God in the association of His devotees. By regularly rendering devotional service, one gradually becomes attached to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When that attachment is intensified, it becomes love of Godhead. This is the science of *bhakti-yoga*.

It plays out like this. According to the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, if by good fortune we begin to associate with spiritually advanced Vaiṣṇavas, we will naturally feel encouraged in devotional service, become free from all material contamination, and develop expertise in devotional principles. Free of material contamination, we advance with firm faith. Then a taste for devotional topics awakens, followed by a deep attachment to Kṛṣṇa, from which the seed of ecstatic love for Him sprouts in the heart. When that ecstatic emotional state intensifies, it is called love of Godhead.

Such love is life's ultimate goal and the reservoir of all pleasure. If we actually have transcendental love in our heart, the symptoms will be visible in our daily activities. That, says the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, is the verdict of all revealed scriptures. ☸

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

# Sugrīva- Lakṣmaṇa:

## Comfort – Material and Transcendental

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

*Instead of seeking material comfort that breeds spiritual complacency, we can seek transcendental comfort in the Lord and increase our spiritual intensity.*

Comfort breeds complacency. The *Rāmāyaṇa* illustrates this paradox through the story of Sugrīva, the *vānara*\* hero who had been unfairly exiled by his brother, Vāli, due to a misunderstanding. During the exile, after all his attempts at reconciliation with his brother had failed, he formed an alliance with Rāma, who Himself had been exiled from His kingdom, Ayodhya, and was searching for His abducted wife, Sītā. Rāma helped Sugrīva right the wrong done by his brother and gain the kingdom. In return, Sugrīva promised to help Rāma find Sītā.

By the time Sugrīva was enthroned as the king, the rainy sea-

\*A humanlike monkey species.

son had started. The four months of rain made traveling impossible. So Rāma and Sugrīva agreed to wait for the rainy season to end before they began the search for Sītā. During the waiting period, Sugrīva invited Rāma to stay in his kingdom in a royal palace. But Rāma, wanting to be true to the terms of his fourteen-year exile, stayed in a cave outside the kingdom.

During this four-month period, Sugrīva found himself amidst prodigious creature comforts – comforts he had long been deprived of during his exile. And he unwittingly lost himself in sensual revelry, forgetting all about his promise to Rāma.

Time passed and the rainy season ended. Rāma found no sign of

Sugrīva making any arrangements for the search. Feeling concerned, Rāma asked His younger brother Lakṣmaṇa to go to the *vānara* kingdom to take stock of the situation. On his way to Kishkinda, Lakṣmaṇa, contemplating what he thought was Sugrīva's ingratitude, became increasingly incensed, till he was seething with fury. Seeing him, the *vānara* guards became alarmed and scurried off to the palace to alert their king.

Meanwhile, Sugrīva hadn't remained entirely inactive – he had been jolted into activity by his vigilant counselors, his wise wife, Tārā, and his able minister Hanumān. When the rains had started lessening, they had reminded Sugrīva of his promise, and he had immediately

ordered that *vānaras* be summoned from far and wide so that they could join the search. But after this brief phase of dutifulness, Sugrīva was once again sucked into indulgence by his surrounding luxuries.

When Lakṣmaṇa entered Sugrīva's chambers and saw the signs of sensual revelry, he exploded. He declared that ingratitude was the greatest of sins and condemned the ingrates who enjoyed themselves while neglecting their promises to their friends. While Sugrīva was mortified, Tārā intervened and pacified Lakṣmaṇa with gentle words: Even great sages had fallen prey to temptations – let alone a

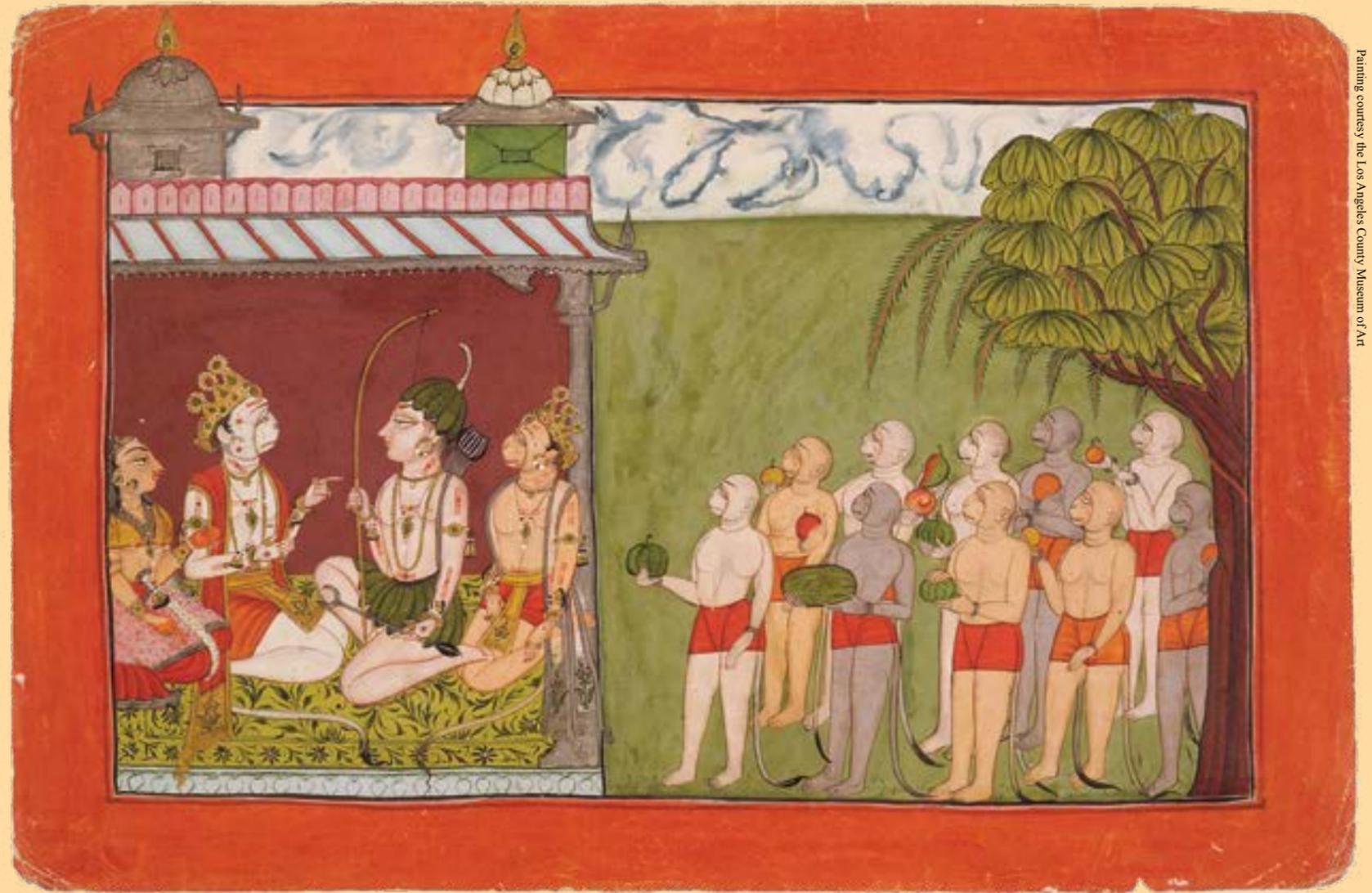
*vānara* who had been long deprived of pleasures and was suddenly surrounded by them. When she assured Lakṣmaṇa that powerful *vānaras* from far and wide were already on their way to Kishkinda to assist in the search for Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa became pacified.

Sugrīva faced another temptation just before the climactic war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. With characteristic cunning the demon king tried to engineer a split in his opponents. He sent messengers secretly to Sugrīva with gifts, stating that the *vānaras* and the *rākṣasas* (Rāvaṇa's man-eating followers) had no enmity with each other. He further offered

Sugrīva a favorable pact of mutual assistance if he withdrew his forces from the fray. Living in an austere military camp and being fixed in Rāma's service, Sugrīva felt not in the least tempted. He rejected the allurements, declaring that Rāma's enemy was his enemy too.

### Subtle Erosion of Devotion

Comforts often erode our devotion subtly. If some miscreants attacked a dam explicitly, security forces would spring into action to counter them and protect the dam. But if those miscreants caused a tiny leak, most observers may not even notice



*Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān meet with Sugrīva and his wife, Tārā, at Sugrīva's palace at Kishkinda.*

it – and the water seeping through may eventually bring down the huge dam.

Similarly, if the forces of illusion came straight out and tempted us with immoral, anti-devotional indulgences, we would probably reject such temptations. But when those forces attack using the weapon of comfort, the attack doesn't make us openly reject God – it just makes us push Him down on our priority list as comforts rise up on that list.

We may acquire worldly resources for God's service and might even use them for that purpose initially. But gradually we may start indulging in them till the original purpose is forgotten and abandoned – not be-

## We are allured towards a technological paradise that is touted as a superior substitute for any spiritual paradise.

cause of any explicit anti-devotional intent on our part but simply because our increasing sense of complacency has subtly eroded our devotional determination.

Such subtle erosion can be countered by the practice of austerity. While adversity involves imposed deprivation of material things, austerity involves their voluntary renunciation. Austerity can sharpen our spiritual purposefulness, as illustrated in an episode from the *Mahābhārata*.

When the Pāṇḍavas were living in the forest, during one of the later phases of their exile they ascended through the Himalayas to the heavenly arena where Kuvera, the treasurer of the gods, has his gardens. That great god invited them to stay there for as long as they desired. The Pāṇḍavas accepted the invitation. While there, they were technically still in forest exile, but their stay in this heavenly forest was far more comfortable than their austere life in earthly forests. After the

Pāṇḍavas had stayed there for some time, Bhīma and Arjuna approached Yudhiṣṭhira and suggested they return to the earthly forest. They both felt that staying amidst comfort would make them forget the atrocities perpetrated against them, deaden their martial spirit, and leave them unprepared to confront the wily Kauravas, who had wrongfully seized their kingdom.

The Pāṇḍavas hoped to regain their kingdom without confrontation, but they were no Pollyannas – they knew that Duryodhana was driven by an inveterate envy of them, so he would be unlikely to settle for any compromise. They needed to be prepared for the war, both in spirit

and in resources. Yudhiṣṭhira agreed with the reasoning of his two heroic brothers, and they soon descended to the austere life in earthly forests.

Externally the situations and responses of Sugrīva and the Pāṇḍavas were radically different. Sugrīva had regained his kingdom, whereas the Pāṇḍavas had lost theirs. Further, Sugrīva had forgotten his obligation to the Lord, whereas the Pāṇḍavas wanted to remember their duty – they wanted their kingdom so that by ruling it through dharma they could serve and glorify the Lord. Still, despite these dissimilarities, the two situations share an underlying theme: indulgence in comforts can erode our sense of purposefulness. Sugrīva lost that sense because of immersion in comforts and pleasures. The Pāṇḍavas, on the other hand, protected themselves from such a loss by giving up the comforts that might have made them complacent. Indeed, austerity can often serve as an insurance against complacency.

### Technological Paradise?

In our times, comforts come to us primarily through technology. It often fills us with a sense of godless omnipotence – we are led to believe that just by clicking a few buttons we can get whatever we want. Thus we are allured towards a technological paradise that is touted, overtly or covertly, as a superior substitute for any spiritual paradise.

But while we may temporarily control more and more external things by clicking a few buttons, we find ourselves being increasingly unable to control by any button the world within us. Our minds and emotions become increasingly disorderly. As the Reverend Martin Luther King put it, "The means by which we live have outdistanced the ends for which we live. Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men."

In contemporary times, the more humanity is distancing itself from God in the hope of a hi-tech paradise, the more it is being overwhelmed by mental problems. Indeed, the World Health Organization has declared mental health problems the greatest health challenge of the current century.

Nonetheless, the *bhakti* tradition is not Luddite; both the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* feature sophisticated weapons. *Bhakti* wisdom explains that the problem is not the prevalence of technology; the problem is the absence of God consciousness – an absence that is aggravated by the reductionistic worldview that accompanies modern technology.

Reductionism\* makes us see technological wizardry as the product of humanity, not the gift of divinity. However, all technological products that humanity has devel-

\*The theory that every complex phenomenon can be explained by analyzing the simplest, most basic physical mechanisms in operation during the phenomenon.

oped – be they planes for commuting or phones for communicating – are based on existing natural principles such as the laws of motion or the semiconductor effect. And these natural principles don't originate in human intelligence; they originate ultimately in God's intelligence. Therefore, for the discerning observer every technological success is not just a testimony to human intelligence but also a tribute to divine intelligence.

To cultivate such discernment, we need to perform the conscious austerity of fixing our mind on God through direct devotional practices such as chanting God's names and studying scripture. When we habituate ourselves to such direct God consciousness, we will be able to see the spiritual underlying the technological, thereby protecting ourselves from complacency.

### Spiritualization, Not Rejection

*Bhakti* asks not for the rejection of the world but for the world's connection with its source. While some renouncer traditions do see the world primarily as a place of entanglement, the *bhakti* tradition sees it more positively – as a resource to serve God. Everything material and spiritual comes from God, so it is intrinsically connected with Him as His energy and is meant to be used in His service.

Accordingly, the *bhakti* tradition doesn't romanticize adversity or demonize prosperity – it urges us to utilize whatever circumstance we find ourselves in. Adversity in and of itself is not spiritually beneficial; extreme adversity can make both basic material subsistence and basic spiritual practice difficult. And prosperity in and of itself is not spiritually harmful; a reliable and comfortable provision of material needs can free the mind from survival anxiety to ponder higher spiritual truths and ultimately the highest spiritual truth, God.

Though the kingdom had induced forgetfulness in Sugrīva, none of his counselors asked him to renounce it. Instead, they asked him to revive his remembrance of Rāma's benedictions and render practical service to Him. Similarly, we can see whatever comforts we have as God's gifts. Rather than seeing them as agents of temptation and illusion, we can see them as expressions of God's kindness and thus feel inspired to serve Him better. We can think, "As God has given me a comfortable situation in which to serve Him, let me increase and intensify my service to Him: increase in quantity by using these resources to spread His glories, and intensify in quality by cherishing His remembrance more."

Tārā, Hanumān and Lakṣmaṇa all reminded Sugrīva of his obligation and helped him correct his deviation. Similarly, we too need friends and guides who can remind us of our obligation to the Lord, especially when we start deviating from it.

Spiritual association is vital for preserving our sense of devotional purposefulness. To the extent we keep ourselves in such association and hear spiritual messages therein – as did Sugrīva – we will be safe, even amidst worldly comforts. We won't be caught by the material, but will see beyond the material to the supreme spiritual reality, the Lord of our heart, thus staying connected with Him. And that inner connection is life's supreme comfort, the one comfort that will never become pale and stale, the one comfort that will always shelter us, and the one comfort that, far from breeding complacency, will raise our devotion to greater fervor. ☀

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

## BACK TO GODHEAD

### Subscriber Service Information

Your satisfaction is our highest priority.

### LET OUR BTG SERVICE CENTER HELP YOU WITH:

#### Renewing:

We will automatically notify you by mail when it's time to renew. If you prefer, you can even renew your subscription by calling us toll-free.

#### Gift Subscriptions:

An easy way to send a thoughtful gift! You can send a gift subscription of BTG to friends and family any time of the year. We'll also include an attractive gift card announcing your gift.

#### Change of Address:

If you are moving or taking a vacation, we'd be happy to change your address or suspend service temporarily.

#### Other Questions:

We'll gladly help you with these and any other questions you may have concerning your BTG subscription.

### CONTACT US:

**1-800-800-3284**

BTG Service Center  
P. O. Box 430  
Alachua, FL 32616, USA

E-mail: [btgsubs@krishna.com](mailto:btgsubs@krishna.com)



<http://btg.krishna.com/subscriber-services>



# An Ancient Lesson in Self- Mastery

by Dvijamaṇi Gaura Dāsa

*“A person in command of his mind, continuously focused on the goal of his life, will not succumb to pride or the whims of others.”*

**S**ociologists tell us that even the most introverted person will influence ten thousand people during his or her lifetime.” Motivational speaker Tim Elmore notes a fact that may seem obvious, but of which many of us may not be conscious: Everyone has some effect on the minds and hearts of the people he contacts. An introspective person will ponder, “If I will end up influencing many people regardless of whether or not I try, why not seek to refine my consciousness so that I can have the best and most lasting impact upon those whose lives I touch?”

Let’s take a situation that most of us

wish to avoid, but sometimes cannot. In anger, someone insults me. Now I must make a choice. I can consider whether or not to speak, and, if I’m practiced in self-control, whether or not to express anger myself. Of course, if I have not elevated myself by developing self-control, I am forced to retaliate and speak harshly in return. The consequence will be an unbalanced state of mind. I forget that I have a responsibility to keep out of dangerous situations that may jeopardize my role as a teacher, student, father, mother, son, daughter, or whatever. I may even descend further to the platform of unbridled anger.

*Left: King Rahūgaṇa apologizes to Jaḍa Bharata for not having recognized his elevated spiritual state.*

Painting by Ācārya Dāsa

What follows is the suffocating feeling of regret, the price for one who loses control. Regret has the purpose of inspiring rectification. “If I can act in such a base manner, where does it end? How can I change?” One who recognizes his pitiable position as a servant of the lower self is a candidate for cultivating balance. An honest person accepts that he cannot control the emotions and decisions of others but can work on controlling his own mind.

Even if a person is not habitually aggressive or inimical, it is important to remember that anyone in the material atmosphere is liable to slip down to that level. If my instigator has indeed become morally corrupted, that means that his sense of re-

is more precise and powerful than knives. A poem may be able to convey a more powerful message than volumes of prose, even more so a Sanskrit *sūtra*, which contains an ocean of wisdom in a mere aphorism. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī quotes an aphorism in support of aphorisms: “Essential truth spoken concisely is true eloquence.” In addition, truly eloquent speech is speech that uplifts others, even one’s supposed enemies. The more a person practices subduing the urges coming through the mind, directing his thoughts to higher subjects, the more his consciousness becomes laser-like. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “Those who are on this path are resolute in pur-

pose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.” (*Gītā* 2.41) When a person learns to control himself, he transcends the influence of petty urges for sensual pleasure and egoistic domination.

### A King Learns Tolerance

A person in command of his mind, continuously focused on the goal of his life, will not succumb to pride or the whims of others. As recounted in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, a great king called Rahūgaṇa was being carried on a palanquin by several of his servants. At a river they came upon a young, seemingly dull man whom they employed in their service. They posted him under the palanquin in hopes that their work would be alleviated. Unbeknown to them, the man, who has since become known as Jaḍa Bharata (“Dull Bharata”), was a self-realized soul who had equal re-

gard for all forms of life. While carrying the king, the new recruit carefully avoided stepping on any ants or small creatures. Because he couldn’t keep pace with the others, he disturbed the king’s smooth ride. The king interpreted this errant behavior as negligence born of disobedience and disrespect. He rebuked the new man with insults, threatening severe punishment to correct him. The supposedly dull man then spoke up. He informed the king that his belittling, sarcastic remarks were not untrue, but that they pertain only to the body, an entity separate from the essential spiritual being within. The notion that one soul is master over another soul is incorrect. “Today you are a king and I am your servant, but tomorrow the position may be changed, and you may be my servant and I your master. These are temporary circumstances created by providence.”

Describing the existence of the spirit soul imprisoned within every material body, Jaḍa Bharata replied with the natural humility and composure of a pure *bhakta*. He said, “You have said that I am not stout and strong, and these words are befitting a person who does not know the distinction between the body and the soul. The body may be fat or thin, but no learned man would say such things of the spirit soul.” Willing to continue the labor for which he had been enlisted, he became silent, expecting neither honor nor dishonor in return for the lesson. Being without pride, Jaḍa Bharata neither faulted the king nor accepted the allegation of his being crazy, but coolly dissipated the ignorance and passion that clouded the consciousness of the king. Then he prepared himself to continue carrying the king’s palanquin, accepting the work as a chance to be relieved of past karma.

Rather than retaliate out of fury, a self-controlled person chooses the path of compassion. He knows that someone acting out of hate has become blind to his own welfare. The deluded soul’s natural divinity is

shrouded by decisions made under the enfeebling pressure of the material energy. Everyone is originally glorious. A saint will act to reinstate another person in his own original glory. Behind his tolerance is knowledge of the original beauty of the soul from whom he receives spiteful blows. He responds to hate with compassion. He bases his words on eternal truth.

### Self-control and Civilization

The need for promoting a culture of self-control is felt when one observes the political situation of the modern world, in which global warfare is an ever-present threat. Advanced nations promoting science and technology as the solution to problems of education, healthcare, and crime foist their own worldview upon those of lesser status. This is done without regard for the traditions and wisdom of the great sages of yore who spread knowledge of God in many parts of the world. The economically and militarily weaker nations are persuad-

ed to accept the idea that new discoveries in science ensure a brighter future, rife with ergonomic comforts and the plentiful fruits of industrial production. To become powerful but remain blind to the spirit ends in despair. As stated by Śrī Prahlāda: “As blind men guided by another blind man miss the right path and fall into a ditch, materially attached men led by another materially attached man are bound by the ropes of fruitive labor, which are made of very strong cords, and they continue again and again in materialistic life, suffering the threefold miseries.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.31)

What is the method to curb the madness of a civilization in which money speaks loudest? Development of character and courage. As Jaḍa Bharata showed by his example, those who are fortunate to have genuine spiritual knowledge must be firmly convinced and emboldened to propagate spiritual truth. They expect no honor in return for their efforts, and are naturally peaceful simply knowing that they are giving satisfaction to the Supreme Lord.

The leaders of the world can bring much greater contentedness among its peoples through simple education in the art of self-control. To this end they might choose to place enlightened followers of the God-conscious way of life in the role of educators. The attempt to balance interests among nations will succeed when the common interest of all men and women is clearly defined – internal harmony of one’s own thoughts and deeds through dedicated service to God. Who else but the Supreme Person can appreciate the desires, travails, emotions, and longings of every single person? A responsible leader trains his followers in enhancing their faith in the revealed scriptures and in the saintly guides who are experts in self-mastery.

Let us now return to the original situation of being insulted. Here I am, pursuing transcendental life, and an unexpected attack crashes upon my ego. Pricked by thorny words, I am instigated to react. Having

(please turn to page 47)

## The reward for bringing the “pushings” of the mind and forces of anger under control is access to subtler planes of reality.

gret or shame has been repeatedly ignored. He has become practiced in ignoring his conscience, the voice that urges him to use higher reasoning. The Supersoul, or indwelling guide, has allowed this stubborn person to become callous to the situation of others. He may enjoy the “thrill” of fiercely claiming one’s own territory and violently impugning trespassers who pose a threat to his sense of ownership. But such an existence is filled with fear. My responding in a like manner, with blind ferocity, will yield misfortune. However, I may be able to benefit both of us by acting with spiritual intelligence.

### Uplifting with Eloquence

The reward for bringing the “pushings” of the mind and forces of anger under control is access to subtler planes of reality. Subtle energy is more powerful than gross energy. For example, laser technology

## LOOKING FOR NEWS OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MOVEMENT?

Log on to [www.iskconnews.org](http://www.iskconnews.org)



The Internet is the ideal place for timely news, and [iskcon.com](http://iskcon.com), run by ISKCON Communications, maintains an active news page. So whether you want to see what’s happening in ISKCON or have some news to report, log on to [www.iskconnews.org](http://www.iskconnews.org).

# HARE KRISHNA!

*Veteran ISKCON filmmakers fulfill their desire to introduce Śrīla Prabhupāda to audiences around the world.*

## The Film

by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

I was in Houston, Texas, for the premiere screening of the *Hare Krishna!* film, and during the question-and-answer session after the screening, an elderly woman in the front row raised her hand. I called on her.

“For many years now,” she said, “I’ve had a dream I wanted to fulfill,

but I kept telling myself that I was too old, that such dreams were meant for people half my age or less. But after seeing your film and what Śrīla Prabhupāda did at such an advanced age, now I realize that I’m not too old. That I can also try to fulfill my dream and, with God’s mercy, maybe I will have a tiny bit of the success that Prabhupāda had.”

*A billboard in New Orleans.*



## The Backstory

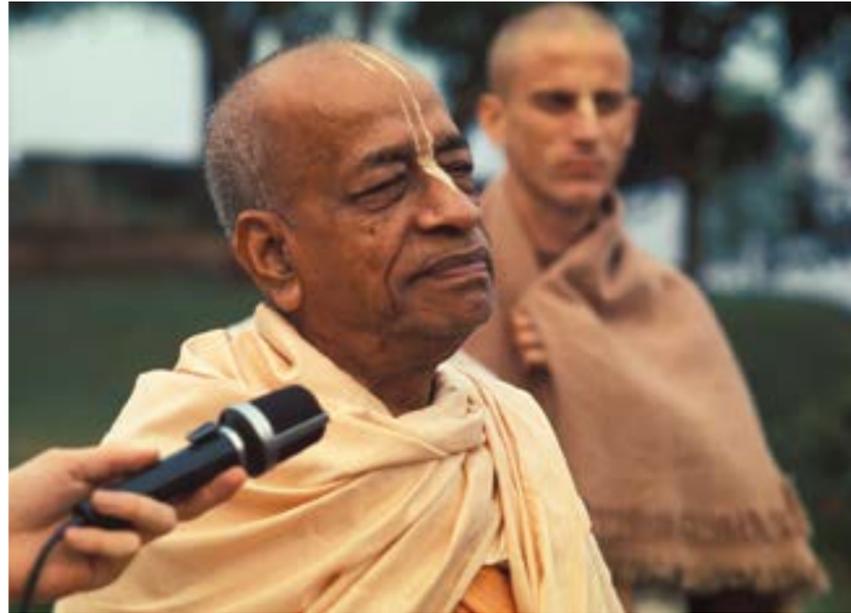
In March of 1974 my husband, Yadubara Dāsa, said to Śrīla Prabhupāda, “We would like to make a film about your life.”

Yadubara and I had just released the first documentary film on the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, *The Hare Krishna People*. We’d premiered that film in Mayapur, West Bengal, during Gaura Pūrṇimā, the full-moon festival in honor of the anniversary of the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and devotees from around the world were enthusiastic to screen the film in their temples and in other places when they traveled to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thinking of our next project, Yadubara had approached Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda considered the question and said, “What is the need?”

“Since devotees are now chanting the *mahā-mantra* on the streets of major cities everywhere,” Yadubara replied, “many people throughout the world have heard of Hare Kṛṣṇa. But very few people have heard of you, the person who founded the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in the



West. We feel it’s important for people to know the person behind the movement.”

Again Prabhupāda considered. Then with a casual left-to-right movement of his head, he said, “Yes, then it is all right.”

Yadubara and I had made *The Hare Krishna People* film under the banner of ISKCON Cinema, an entity established to produce films on the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. As the

ISKCON Cinema team, Yadubara and I went on to make other films: *The Spiritual Frontier*, *Brilliant as the Sun*, *A Spark of Life*, *The Golden Avatar*, *Vrindavan: Land of Krishna*, *The World of Hare Krishna*, and *Your Ever Well-Wisher*. We also produced an eleven-part chronological DVD series that contained all the known footage of Śrīla Prabhupāda along with commentary by his followers and acquaintances.



Then in 2013, Hari Śauri Dāsa, who was organizing the museum exhibitions in the upcoming Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (TOVP) in Mayapur, suggested that we make a documentary on the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda for screening in the large, modern TOVP theatre.

Initially Yadubara and I resisted the idea. *Your Ever Well-Wisher*, released in 1983, was a 55-minute documentary on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life and had been well received by devotees. Why not use that? But in rewatching that film, we realized why we should not use it: The film techniques (a narrator and a straight linear story with no flashbacks) as well as the technical quality of the film were outdated. And that film was oriented for a devotee audience;

we needed a ninety-minute film oriented for the public. (Ninety minutes is the standard length for publicly screened documentaries.)

So we began *Hare Krishna! The Mantra, the Movement, and the Swami who started it all*.

We thought this film would take two years to complete – twice as long as any of our other films – but *Hare Krishna!* turned into a four-year project. We thought our initial budget was reasonable and covered all our projected expenses, but the actual cost of *Hare Krishna!* was twice our estimate. Not having previously made a film for public release, we needed a larger crew, and as word spread of the project, one by one they came.

Help first came in the form of

Coralie Tapper from Australia. She did the bureaucratic groundwork for our new, nonprofit production company, Inner Voice Productions, Inc. Her sister, Hlādinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī, offered her talents as an editor, and in the backyard of our production house in Alachua, Florida, Hlādinī’s husband, Kṛṣṇa Murāri Dāsa, created an excellent set of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s cabin aboard the Jaladuta cargo ship that carried him from India to the United States.

Other dedicated, talented, and enthusiastic young people joined us: Kṛṣṇa Śakti Dāsa, a film editor from Los Angeles; Lalitā Priyā Devī Dāsī, a producer/director from Sydney; and Lalitā Priyā’s cousin Jessica Heinrich, also a producer and also from Sydney.



Since 1972, Yadubara Dāsa and Viśākhā Devī Dāsī (left, editing film in Los Angeles in the early 1970s) have been making films on the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement as a husband-wife team. Śrīla Prabhupāda (above left, with Yadubara behind him) encouraged their efforts and funded their first film, *The Hare Krishna People*. Their latest film, *Hare Krishna!* (being shot above) was their first film to be released in theatres for the public.



*The couple was joined by an enthusiastic and talented crew, here shown shooting reenactments in Kolkata: Krishna Sanchez (far left), a young film editor from Los Angeles; Adric Watson (third from left), an up-and-coming Australian cameraman; and Lalitā Priyā Dāsī (left, with Yadubara), a producer, also from Australia. The actors were devotee children (second from far left), and the set (below) was an unused city temple.*

Photos by Krishna Sanchez





### A Mountain of Material

In our production house near the New Raman Reti temple community, our small team struggled. One of our biggest challenges was the mountain of material we had to work with: 31 hours of footage of Śrīla Prabhupāda, archival footage of India from the 1900s showing the culture and events that Śrīla Prabhupāda lived in and through, archival footage from the 1960s and '70s of the U.S. when Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived, 90 hours of interviews with followers and scholars who knew Prabhupāda and his movement, 20,000 photographs of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers, reenactments of Śrīla Prabhupāda's

The India film crew on location at Kusum Sarovara in Vrindavan (above). Right: In the backyard of the Inner Voice Productions house in Alachua, Florida, Yadubara discusses with film editor Hlādinī Rādhā Dāsī and set designer Kṛṣṇa Murāri Dāsa ideas for the set of the cabin on the Jaladuta cargo ship (Śrīla Prabhupāda first came to America on the Jaladuta). Below, Śeṣa Dāsa plays Śrīla Prabhupāda in a reenactment of boarding the Jaladuta.



Bhismadeva Dasa / HoofprintMedia.com

Bhismadeva Dasa / HoofprintMedia.com



childhood and meeting his spiritual master, reenactments of his 1967 health crisis, plus 1,800 hours of audio – lectures and conversations of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Where to start and what to use?

From the beginning our vision for *Hare Krishna!* was that Śrīla Prabhupāda would tell his own story in his own words. Making that a reality, though, was difficult. Prabhupāda almost always spoke about different aspects of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but once in a while, on rare occasions,

### Thoughts from Directors



**Yadubara Dāsa (John Griesser), Producer and Director**

Our gratitude goes out to the hundreds of supporters who so liberally donated to produce *HARE KRISHNA!* All in all, the film was a team effort, with over three hundred individuals and companies involved in the production. It was not an easy film to make: struggling with the mass of material, trying to decide what to use, where to begin, what should come next and in what order, all the time meditating on how to present Śrīla Prabhupāda's life and teachings in the best way possible to capture the hearts of the public. His is a classic hero's journey, but how to transpose Śrīla Prabhupāda's inspiring life most effectively to film?

For four years, our core team of six made decision after decision – thousands of them – to come up with the final movie. As the director, I had to make choices, sometimes against the judgment of the crew but more often agreed upon with delight and in line with our individual and combined inspirations. It was moving to witness the crew – absorbed in Śrīla Prabhupāda's pastimes – coming closer to him. Along the way there were many “Kṛṣṇa magic” moments that none of us could have arranged or predicted.

Traveling with the film for a year to over one hundred screenings and premieres around the world and seeing the transformation in the hearts and minds of many who didn't know anything about Śrīla Prabhupāda and his ISKCON movement has been inspiring beyond words. For many, the film has crossed all racial and religious barriers. And for devotees, viewing the film has evoked a sense of pride in their connection with Śrīla Prabhupāda and increased their desire to serve and become more serious in trying to follow his instructions. All in all, the impact of *Hare Krishna!* has been more than any of us ever imagined.

**Lalitā Priyā Devī Dāsī (Lauren Ross), Producer, Co-director**

What is so powerful about this film is that you are directly hearing from Śrīla Prabhupāda his incredible life story in a unique way that we haven't seen before. This, combined with seeing him on the screen in such living color and hearing from those who were

close to him, provides the viewer with a profoundly intimate experience in getting to know Prabhupāda and forging a personal relationship with him. You can't help but be moved by his presence before you on the screen. This was my experience in helping to make the film. Prabhupāda transformed from being a somewhat distant figurehead into being a living, breathing, dynamic, well-wishing, compassionate force and friend in my life.

Making the film was about helping to provide an opportunity for others to experience this intimacy with him, an opportunity that could not be possible without the dedication of Yadubara and Viśākhā Prabhū. They have made it their life's work to capture Prabhupāda in stills and on film, and it is by their legacy that new generations will come to feel as if they themselves walked alongside Prabhupāda when he was physically present, hanging on his every word or waiting for him to arrive off the next airplane. It is by their sacrifice and dedication that Prabhupāda's story is preserved and accessible to all in this way for many years to come, and I feel grateful and indebted to them.



**Jessica Heinrich, Co-director**

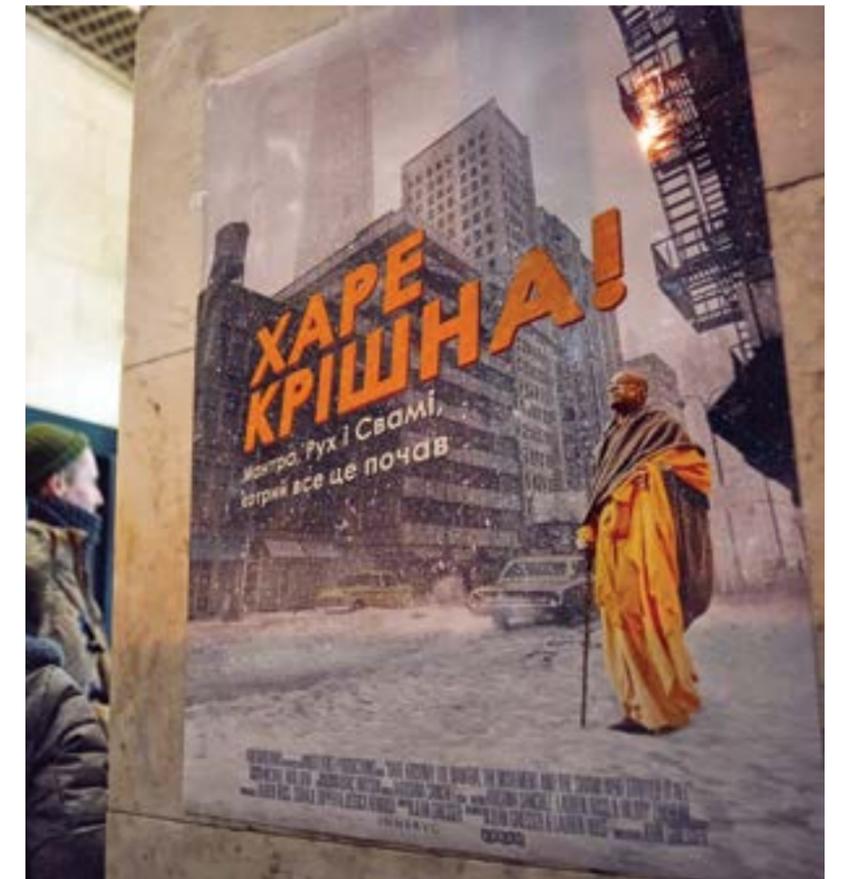
Being a part of the *Hare Krishna!* film team has been a life-changing experience for me, not only regarding my career, but also on a much deeper level. Through the process

of making the film about the inspirational life of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the history of the *bhakti-yoga* practice in the West, I realized how important it is to prioritize leading a balanced and conscious life where I take time for self-exploration, to connect with other people on a deeper level, and to be more aware of my choices and their impact on the world around me. To be able to share Prabhupāda's story with thousands of people around the world and to see the uplifting quality it has on audiences, regardless of their own spiritual beliefs, is very gratifying.





The official film poster (left). Above: the marquee of the New York City world theatrical premiere at the Village East Theater, located only ten blocks from the first temple at 26 Second Ave. Right: Viśākhā Dāsī addresses the audience before the screening at the Odeon Cinema, Covent Garden, in downtown London, England. Below right: a movie poster at the cinema in Kiev, Ukraine. Below: The audience at the New York premiere gives the film a standing ovation. Below left: the film crew after being awarded the Grand Jury Prize for best picture at the Illuminate Film Festival.





he would relate what it was like to be alone in New York City at age seventy with no steady source of income, no supporters, and no friends; what it was like for him when everything he had of value was stolen from the Manhattan office space he was renting; how he started the first temple at 26 Second Avenue in Manhattan, and so forth. These sentences were gems for us, and we strung them together so that as far as possible Śrīla Prabhupāda tells his own story in his film. He also occasionally explains the basic tenets of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and even jokes with a reporter.

We worked with this audio and visual material for two and a half years and came up with a two-hour, twenty-minute rough edit. And we were stuck. We needed to cut out fifty minutes but no longer knew what to include and what to exclude. We were attached to it all.

Then, through a friend of a friend, we met Peter Rader and Paola di Florio, Hollywood documentary filmmakers, who saw our rough cut and, although they hadn't previously heard of Prabhupāda, became captivated by his message, his personality, and especially his story. With the help of their fresh and expert input, we were able to work steadily forward, making major and mi-

nor adjustments to the film. Peter and Paola also offered us all their contacts for both film production and distribution, which in the end proved most valuable.

In September 2016 we held a test screening of our now ninety-minute film in Gainesville, Florida, inviting seventy newcomers to see the film and give written and spoken feedback. We also had another test screening with a small group of devotees from the Alachua, Florida, community where we were based. As a result of all this input, the film's title changed from *Acharya* (hardly anyone knows what it means) to *Hare Krishna!* (which is famous) and got further insights into how to shape the film.

### Successful Release

One contact from Peter and Paola was Richard Abramowitz, head of Abramorama, a film distribution and marketing company.

After seeing the film, Richard wrote, "We think your film is terrific: consistently smart and interesting. We're certain there's an audience for it."



And indeed there was. Richard was enthusiastic to represent our film to cinema houses throughout the U.S. and Canada, and we signed a contract engaging not only Abramorama but also their partner PR company, Falco Ink, which has

represented such Academy Award winners as *Gladiator* and *American Beauty*. We also submitted the film to the 2017 Illuminate Film Festival, the world's premiere festival for "conscious cinema," held annually in Sedona, Arizona. To our surprise



The Vice President of India, Honorable Venkaiah Naidu (above), inaugurates the India premiere in New Delhi. Left: the audience and press at the New Delhi premiere. Far left: Yadubara with Rohit Shetty (Rādhikā Patī Dāsa), the devotee behind the film's successful distribution throughout India. Upper left: one of many Mumbai billboards.

and by Kṛṣṇa's grace, on June 4 *Hare Krishna!* won the Jury Prize for best film of the festival.

The world public premiere in New York City was on June 16, 2017, before a full house in the Village East Cinema, just blocks from the first Hare Kṛṣṇa temple at 26 Second Avenue. The Los Angeles premiere followed, and in both cities the weeklong screenings were extended. Then *Hare Krishna!* traveled to 36 North American cities (346 screenings), Moscow (premiering on Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day), India (50 cities and 700 screenings), South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, Bahrain, Holland, the United Kingdom, and other countries throughout the world. Līlānanda Dāsa, our marketing director for Latin America, with the help of a team of devotees, organized screenings in 136 cities.

Although *Hare Krishna!* received some favorable comments from professional film reviewers, overall their reviews were not anywhere near as favorable as the responses from the public – members of the audience – many of whom were previously unfamiliar with Prabhupāda, his teachings, and his mission. 🌸

*Viśākhā Devī Dāsī*, the film's screenwriter and co-director, has been writing for BTG since 1973. Visit her website at [OurSpiritualJourney.com](http://OurSpiritualJourney.com).



In Gujarat, Yadubara Dāsa receives a gift (upper left) from Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai, head of the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission of the Jain tradition, after a screening to three thousand followers. Above and left: In Brazil, taxis and buses carry ads. Far left: Tamil actors Namitha and Veerendra attend the Chennai premiere. Below left: Attendees at the screening in Bahrain, a progressive Middle Eastern country. Below: a Durban, South Africa, newspaper article on the filmmakers' history.



## Reviews by Media, Celebrities, and Clergy

“A stirring story.” – *Washington Post*

“It was triumphant. It was so beautiful, I cried.” – Boy George, Grammy-winning Artist

“A cinematic breath of fresh air that could not have been released at a more appropriate time.” – Bridgitte Jackson-Buckley, *Medium*

“I am beyond touched.” – CC White, queen of devotional soul music

“The film effectively summons an evocative moment in time.” – Michael Rechtshaffen, *LA Times*

“Not only was it relevant then, it is ultimately relevant today.” – Rodney Charles, actor and producer

“The film provides an uplifting spiritual experience, regardless of one's beliefs or personal religion.” – LC Cragg, *Red Carpet Crash*

“Prabhupada is so powerful, and it is such an incredible story. The world needs this!” – Paola di Florio, Oscar-nominated director and TV producer

“What first comes to mind when you hear the word “yoga”? A sun salute? Your favorite flow class? For bhakti yoga practitioners, it's so much more than a way to sweat off the day – it's a way of life. And they have Srila Prabhupada to thank for their practice.” – Jentry Womack, *Yoga Journal*

“Beautiful . . . I was absorbed.” – Peter Rader, Hollywood writer, producer, and director

“If *Hare Krishna!* film director John Griesser's goal was to reintroduce the world to the magic of Prabhupada, he hit his mark. *Hare Krishna!* is the second coming of Prabhupada.” – Sam Slovicki, *LA Yoga*

“I liked the film very much. It shows how one can make a revolution in such a simple way, with music, chanting, happiness, with the feasts he used to make, and in this to find the meaning of life, the reasons for happiness, and to find joy in Krishna, God.” – Bishop Dom Flavio Irala, Diocese Anglican Church, Sao Paulo

“It is an insightful, enduring portrait about one of the most important figures of the twentieth century whose message of Krishna consciousness continues to reverberate in today's fragile world.” – Rachel Stark, *Namarupa*

“It was a pleasure to watch the biography of a Saint, of a person who appears to be very simple, like a simple child. Simply with chanting and love of God he could bring happiness to the world. And with this simple thought and in only 12 years, he caused a revolution and changed the world in a way that everyone knows, in one form or another, this result. Therefore, it is worthwhile to watch this Film, a Film that displays the courage of a great saint.” – Archbishop Dom Marcelo Rezende, Liberal Catholic Church, Brazil

“What an amazing love letter to an amazing man.” – Radha Mitchel, actress

“I'm so in love with this movie.” – Stuart Sender, Oscar-nominated director

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

# KING PṚTHU’S DESIRED BENEDICTION

*Pṛthu Mahārāja replies to Lord Viṣṇu’s  
request that he ask for a benediction.*

## CANTO 4: CHAPTER 20

23

पृथुरुवाच

वरान् विभो त्वद्वरदेध्वराद् बुधः

कथं वृणीते गुणविक्रियात्मनाम् ।

ये नारकाणामपि सन्ति देहिनां

तानीश कैवल्यपते वृणे न च ॥२३॥

*pr̥thur uvāca*

*varān vibho tvad varadeśvarād budhaḥ*

*katham vṛṇīte guṇa-vikriyātmanām*

*ye nārakāṇām api santi dehinām*

*tān īśa kaivalya-pate vṛṇe na ca*

*pr̥thuh uvāca* – Pṛthu Mahārāja said; *varān* – benedictions; *vibho* – my dear Supreme Lord; *tvad* – from You; *vara-da-īśvarāt* – from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the highest of the bestowers of benedictions; *budhaḥ* – a learned person; *katham* – how; *vṛṇīte* – could ask for; *guṇa-vikriyā* – bewildered by the modes of material nature; *ātmanām* – of the living entities; *ye* – which; *nārakāṇām* – of the living entities living in hell; *api* – also; *santi* – exist; *dehinām* – of the embodied; *tān* – all those; *īśa* – O Supreme Lord; *kaivalya-pate* – O bestower of merging in the existence of the Lord; *vṛṇe* – I ask for; *na* – not; *ca* – also.

**My dear Lord, You are the best of the demigods who can offer benedictions. Why, therefore, should any learned person ask You for benedictions meant for living entities**

**bewildered by the modes of nature? Such benedictions are available automatically, even in the lives of living entities suffering in hellish conditions. My dear Lord, You can certainly bestow merging into Your existence, but I do not wish to have such a benediction.**

PURPORT: There are different kinds of benedictions according to a person’s demands. ① For *karmīs* the best benediction is promotion to the higher planetary systems, where the duration of life is very long and the standard of living and happiness is very high. ② There are others, namely *jñānīs* and yogis, who want the benediction of merging into the existence of the Lord. This is called *kaivalya*. ③ The Lord is therefore addressed as *kaivalya-pati*, the master or Lord of the benediction known as *kaivalya*. But devotees receive a different type of benediction from the Lord. Devotees are anxious neither for the heavenly planets nor for merging into the existence of the Lord. According to devotees, *kaivalya*, or merging into the existence of the Lord, is considered as good as hell. The word *nāraka* means “hell.” ④ Similarly, everyone who exists in this material world is called *nāraka* because this material existence itself is known as a hellish condition of life. Pṛthu Mahārāja, however, expressed that he was interested neither in the

1. What is the best benediction a *karmī* aspires for?
2. What benediction do *jñānīs* and yogis aspire for?
3. Why is the Lord addressed as *kaivalya-pati*?
4. Why is everyone who exists in this material world called *nāraka*?

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

PRONUNCIATION:

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

Photo by David Creek

benediction desired by the *karmīs* nor that desired by the *jñānīs* and yogis. Śrīla Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatī Prabhu, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya, described that *kaivalya* is no better than a hellish condition of life, and as for the delights of the heavenly planets, they are factually will-o'-the-wisps, or phantasmagoria. They are not wanted by devotees. Devotees do not even care for the positions held by Lord Brahmā or Lord Śiva, nor does a devotee desire to become equal with Lord Viṣṇu. As a pure devotee of the Lord, Pṛthu Mahārāja made his position very clear.

24 न कामये नाथ तदप्यहं क्वचिन्  
न यत्र युष्मच्चरणाम्बुजासवः ।  
महत्तमान्तर्हृदयान्मुखच्युतो  
विधत्स्व कर्णायुतमेष मे वरः ॥२४॥

na kāmāye nātha tad apy aham kvacin  
na yatra yuṣmac-caraṇāmbujāsavaḥ  
mahattamāntar-hṛdayān mukha-cyuto  
vidhatsva karṇāyutam eṣa me varaḥ

na – not; kāmāye – do I desire; nātha – O master; tat – that; api – even; aham – I; kvacit – at any time; na – not; yatra – where; yuṣmat – Your; caraṇa-ambuja – of the lotus feet; āsavaḥ – the nectarean beverage; mahat-tama – of the great devotees; antaḥ-hṛdayāt – from the core of the heart; mukha – from the mouths; cyutaḥ – being delivered; vidhatsva – give; karṇa – ears; ayutam – one million; eṣaḥ – this; me – my; varaḥ – benediction.

**My dear Lord, I therefore do not wish to have the benediction of merging into Your existence, a benediction in which there is no existence of the nectarean beverage of Your lotus feet. I want the benediction of at least one million ears, for thus I may be able to hear about the glories of Your lotus feet from the mouths of Your pure devotees.**

PURPORT: In the previous verse Mahārāja Pṛthu addressed the Lord as *kaivalya-pati*, the master of the liberation of merging into His existence. This does not mean that he was anxious for *kaivalya* liberation. That is made clear in this

5. Why did Pṛthu Mahārāja ask for the benediction of having millions of ears?
6. How, as stated in the beginning of the *Bhāgavatam*, did the *Bhāgavatam* become more relishable?
7. What did Caitanya Mahāprabhu say is the consequence of hearing about the Lord from a Māyāvādī?

verse: “My dear Lord, I do not want such a benediction.”  
5 Mahārāja Pṛthu wanted to have a million ears to hear the glories of the lotus feet of the Lord. He specifically mentioned that the glories of the Lord should emanate from the mouths of pure devotees, who speak from the cores of their hearts. 6 It is stated in the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.3), *śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam*: the nectar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* became more relishable because it emanated from the mouth of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. One might think that these glories of the Lord can be heard from anywhere, from the mouths of either devotees or nondevotees, but here it is specifically mentioned that the glories of the Lord must emanate from the mouths of pure devotees. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī has strictly prohibited hearing from the mouth of a nondevotee. There are many professional reciters of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* who speak the narrations very ornamentally, but a pure devotee does not like to hear from them because such glorification of the Lord is simply a vibration of material sound. But when heard from the mouth of a pure devotee, glorification of the Lord is immediately effective.

The words *satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvidāḥ* (*Bhāgavatam* 3.25.25) mean that glorification of the Lord is potent when uttered from the mouth of a pure devotee. The Lord has innumerable devotees all over the universe, and they have been glorifying the Lord since time immemorial and for an unlimited time. But still they cannot completely finish enumerating the glories of the Lord. Pṛthu Mahārāja therefore wanted innumerable ears, as Rūpa Gosvāmī also desired to have millions of ears and millions of tongues to chant and hear the glorification of the Lord. In other words, if our ears are always engaged in hearing the glorification of the Lord, there will be no scope for hearing the Māyāvāda philosophy, which is doom to spiritual progress. 7 Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that if anyone hears from a Māyāvādī philosopher preaching about the activities of the Lord, even if it is a description from the Vedic literature, he is ultimately doomed. By hearing such Māyāvāda philosophy one cannot come to the destination of spiritual perfection of life.

25 स उत्तमश्लोक महन्मुखच्युतो  
भवत्पदाम्भोजसुधा कणानिलः ।  
स्मृतिं पुनर्विस्मृततत्त्ववर्त्मनां  
कुयोगिनां नो वितरत्यलं वरैः ॥२५॥

sa uttamaśloka mahan-mukha-cyuto  
bhavat-padāmbhoja-sudhā kaṇānilaḥ  
smṛtiṁ punar vismṛta-tattva-vartmanām  
kuyoginām no vitaraty alaṁ varaiḥ

saḥ – that; uttama-śloka – O Lord, who are praised by selected verses; mahat – of great devotees; mukha-cyutaḥ

– delivered from the mouths; *bhavat* – Your; *pada-ambhoja* – from the lotus feet; *sudhā* – of nectar; *kaṇa* – particles; *anilaḥ* – soothing breeze; *smṛtim* – remembrance; *punaḥ* – again; *vismṛta* – forgotten; *tattva* – to the truth; *vartmanām* – of persons whose path; *ku-yoginām* – of persons not in the line of devotional service; *naḥ* – of us; *vitari* – restores; *alam* – unnecessary; *varaiḥ* – other benedictions.

**My dear Lord, You are glorified by the selected verses uttered by great personalities. Such glorification of Your lotus feet is just like saffron particles. When the transcendental vibration from the mouths of great devotees carries the aroma of the saffron dust of Your lotus feet, the forgetful living entity gradually remembers his eternal relationship with You. Devotees thus gradually come to the right conclusion about the value of life. My dear Lord, I therefore do not need any other benediction but the opportunity to hear from the mouth of Your pure devotee.**

PURPORT: It is explained in the previous verse that one has to hear glorification of the Lord from the mouth of a pure devotee. This is further explained here. 8 The transcendental vibration from the mouth of a pure devotee is so powerful that it can revive the living entity’s memory of his eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In our material existence, under the influence of illusory *māyā*, we have almost forgotten our eternal relationship with the Lord, exactly like a man sleeping very deeply who forgets his duties. In the *Vedas* it is said that every one of us is sleeping under the influence of *māyā*. We must get up from this slumber and engage in the right service, for thus we can properly utilize the facility of this human form of life. As expressed in a song by Thākura Bhaktivinoda, Lord Caitanya says, *jīva jāga, jīva jāga*. The Lord asks every sleeping living entity to get up and engage in devotional service so that his mission in this human form of life may be fulfilled. This awakening voice comes through the mouth of a pure devotee.

A pure devotee always engages in the service of the Lord, taking shelter of His lotus feet, and therefore he has a direct connection with the saffron mercy-particles that are strewn over the lotus feet of the Lord. Although when a pure devotee speaks the articulation of his voice may resemble the sound of this material sky, the voice is spiritually very powerful because it touches the particles of saffron dust on the lotus feet of the Lord. As soon as a sleeping living entity hears the powerful voice emanating from the mouth of a pure devotee, he immediately remembers his eternal relationship with the Lord, although up until that moment he had forgotten everything.

For a conditioned soul, therefore, it is very important to hear from the mouth of a pure devotee, who is fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Lord without any material desire, speculative knowledge or contamination of

the modes of material nature. Every one of us is *kuyogī* because we have engaged in the service of this material world, forgetting our eternal relationship with the Lord as His eternal loving servants. It is our duty to rise from the *kuyoga* platform to become *suyogīs*, perfect mystics. The process of hearing from a pure devotee is recommended in all Vedic scriptures, especially by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. One may stay in his position of life – it does not matter what it is – but if one hears from the mouth of a pure devotee, he gradually comes to the understanding of his relationship with the Lord and thus engages in His loving service, and his life becomes completely perfect. Therefore, this process of hearing from the mouth of a pure devotee is very important for making progress in the line of spiritual understanding.

26 यशः शिवं सुश्रव आर्यसङ्गमे  
यदृच्छया चोपशृणोति ते सकृत् ।  
कथं गुणज्ञो विरमेद्विना पशुं  
श्रीर्यत्प्रवत्रे गुणसङ्गहेच्छया ॥२६॥

yaśaḥ śivaṁ suśrava ārya-saṅgame  
yadrcchayā copāśṛṇoti te sakṛt  
katham guṇa-jñāḥ viramed vinā paśuṁ  
śrīr yat pravatre guṇa-saṅgrahēcchayā

yaśaḥ – glorification; śivam – all-auspicious; *su-śravaḥ* – O highly glorified Lord; *ārya-saṅgame* – in the association of advanced devotees; *yadrcchayā* – somehow or other; *ca* – also; *opāśṛṇoti* – hears; *te* – Your; *sakṛt* – even once; *katham* – how; *guṇa-jñāḥ* – one who appreciates good qualities; *viramet* – can cease; *vinā* – unless; *paśuṁ* – an animal; *śrīḥ* – the goddess of fortune; *yat* – which; *pravatre* – accepted; *guṇa* – Your qualities; *saṅgraha* – to receive; *icchayā* – with a desire.

**My dear highly glorified Lord, if one, in the association of pure devotees, hears even once the glories of Your activities, he does not, unless he is nothing but an animal, give up the association of devotees, for no intelligent person would be so careless as to leave their association. The perfection of chanting and hearing about Your glories was accepted even by the goddess of fortune, who desired to hear of Your unlimited activities and transcendental glories.**

PURPORT: The association of devotees (*ārya-saṅgama*)

8. What result is achieved by hearing the transcendental vibration from the mouth of a pure devotee?

is the most important factor in this world. 9 The word *ārya* refers to those who are advancing spiritually. In the history of the human race, the Āryan family is considered to be the most elevated community in the world because it adopts the Vedic civilization. The Āryan family is distributed all over the world and is known as Indo-Āryan. In prehistoric days all of the members of the Āryan family followed the Vedic principles, and therefore they became spiritually advanced. The kings, known as *rājarṣis*, were so perfectly educated as *kṣatriyas*, or protectors of the citizens, and so greatly advanced in spiritual life, that there was not a bit of trouble for the citizens.

The glorification of the Supreme Lord can be very much appreciated by the Āryan family. Although there is no bar for others, the members of the Āryan family very quickly catch the essence of spiritual life. How is it that we are finding it very easy to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness among the Europeans and Americans? History reports that the Americans and Europeans proved their capability when they were anxious to expand colonization, but at the present time, being contaminated by the advancement of material science, their sons and grandsons are turning into reprobates. This is due to their having lost their original spiritual culture, which is Vedic civilization. Presently these descendants of the Āryan family are taking this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement very seriously. Others who are associating with them and hearing the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* from the lips of pure devotees are also becoming captivated by the transcendental vibration. Transcendental vibrations are very much effective when chanted among Āryans, but even though one does not belong to the Āryan family, he will become a Vaiṣṇava simply by hearing the mantra because the vibration has great influence over everyone.

Mahārāja Pṛthu points out that even the goddess of fortune, who is the constant companion of Lord Nārāyaṇa, specifically wanted to hear about the Lord's glories, 10 and for the association of the *gopīs*, who are pure devotees, the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, underwent severe austerities. The impersonalist may ask why one should bother chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* continually for so many years instead of stopping and trying for *kaivalya*, liberation, or merging into the existence of the Lord. In answer, Mahārāja Pṛthu maintains that the attraction of this chanting is so great that one cannot give up the process unless he is an animal. This is the case even if one comes in contact with this transcendental vibration by chance. Pṛthu Mahārāja is very emphatic in this connection – only an animal can give up the practice of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Those who are not animals but actually

intelligent, advanced, human, civilized men cannot give up this practice of continually chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

27 अथाभजे त्वाखिलपुरुषोत्तमं  
गुणालयं पद्मकरेव लालसः ।  
अप्यावयोरेकपतिस्पृधोः कलि-  
र्न स्यात्कृतत्वच्चरणैकतानयोः ॥२७॥

*athābhaje tvākhila-pūruṣottamaṁ  
guṇālayaṁ padma-kareva lālasaḥ  
apy āvayor eka-pati-sprdhoh kalir  
na syāt kṛta-tvac-carāṇaika-tānayoḥ*

*atha* – therefore; *ābhaje* – I shall engage in devotional service; *tvā* – unto You; *akhila* – all-inclusive; *pūruṣa-uttamaṁ* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *guṇa-ālayam* – the reservoir of all transcendental qualities; *padma-karā* – the goddess of fortune, who carries a lotus flower in her hand; *iva* – like; *lālasaḥ* – being desirous; *api* – indeed; *āvayoh* – of Lakṣmī and me; *eka-pati* – one master; *sprdhoh* – competing; *kalir* – quarrel; *na* – not; *syāt* – may take place; *kṛta* – having done; *tvac-carāṇa* – unto Your lotus feet; *eka-tānayoḥ* – one attention.

**Now I wish to engage in the service of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to serve just like the goddess of fortune, who carries a lotus flower in her hand, because His Lordship, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the reservoir of all transcendental qualities. I am afraid that the goddess of fortune and I would quarrel because both of us would be attentively engaged in the same service.**

PURPORT: The Lord is here addressed as *akhila-pūruṣottama*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of the entire creation. *Puruṣa* means “the enjoyer,” and *uttama* means “the best.” There are different kinds of *puruṣas*, or enjoyers, within the universe. Generally they can be divided into three classes – those who are conditioned, those who are liberated, and those who are eternal. In the Vedas the Supreme Lord is called the supreme eternal of all eternals (*nityo nityānām*). Both the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities are eternal. The supreme eternals are the *viṣṇu-tattva*, or Lord Viṣṇu and His expansions. So *nitya* refers to the Personality of Godhead, beginning from Kṛṣṇa to Mahā-Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and other expansions of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (*rāmādi-mūrtiṣu*), there are millions and trillions of expansions of Lord Viṣṇu, as Rāma, Nṛsimha, Varāha, and other incarnations. All of them are called eternals.

[Continued in the next issue.]

9. What does the word *ārya* refer to?

10. Why did Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, undergo severe austerities?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

# We Accept Only God's "View"

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

**Dr. Singh:** Nowadays it seems everyone has his “view.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Every rascal will give his own “view.” But we don’t have to accept this.

“Modern world” means “I think,” “in my opinion,” “in my view.” This is going on. But we don’t accept this.

**Dr. Singh:** We hear these very words all the time from so-called scientific authorities. “In my opinion.” “In my view.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** In your opinion. In your view. But first of all, who are you? A soul shackled inside a material body, totally under the control of the material laws. So what is the value of your view?

This is *ahaṅkāra*, false ego. *Ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate*: one wants to give his view when he thinks, foolishly, “I am this big, proud material body. I am something.” *Kartāham iti manyate*: he thinks, “I am doing such great things.” But actually he is *vimūḍha*, a great ass. He does not understand that in fact he is not the material body, and that material nature – not he – is carrying out his so-called great activities.

In fact, material nature is pulling him around by his ear: “Come here. Lie down and sleep.” And he has to lie down and sleep. He’s so independent. So what is the value of his “view”?

*Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ.* As Lord Kṛṣṇa explains, “The spirit soul bewildered by false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that in reality are being carried out by the modes of material nature.” He doesn’t realize that he is totally under the control of nature.

Now, you rascal scientists, just try to understand. From the spiritual world you have fallen into this prison, this material world. You have

**Material nature is pulling him around by his ear: “Come here. Lie down and sleep.” And he has to lie down and sleep.**

your prison uniform, this material body. So shall I have to accept your view? You are a fallen criminal, and I have to accept your view? What is the value of your view?

**Dr. Singh:** These rascal scientists are so arrogant. They won’t listen.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Make them listen. “What is the value of your proud view? You have become a criminal. You are being punished. And we have to accept your view?”

Again, what is the value of this materially imprisoned living entity’s view? No value. At least we Kṛṣṇa conscious, God conscious, people will not accept it. This position we shall maintain. “No ‘view’ from you, sir. Only Kṛṣṇa’s view shall we accept – only God’s view.”

That’s all. “Who are you to propound some view, rascal scientist? Your view? We don’t give your view any value.” Stick to this point. And maintain it scientifically. Then it will stand. Don’t compromise.

*Mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya.* “I am the supreme

truth,” the Lord says. “There is no truth superior to Me.” This is the Supreme’s view. The Supreme’s view we shall accept.

Why accept some puny rascal’s view? We are getting knowledge from the supreme person – nobody is greater than Him; nobody is equal to Him. So why shall we accept some puny nonsensical rascal’s view?

All over the world, people are becoming godless cats and dogs in the mere dress of human beings. So *para-upakāra*: we have to rescue them from this nonsense and make them truly happy – restore their God consciousness. The first step is to disprove their nonsensi-

cal pseudoscientific “view” that life comes from matter, with no need for the soul or the supreme soul. This is simply incorrect.

**Dr. Singh:** How true. This materialistic view is incorrect. So we are holding these nonsensical ideas – this pseudoscience – under the light of honest scientific scrutiny. And we’re showing that it is all wrong.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is required. Now, as you say, sometimes scientists bring data to amplify the God conscious understanding. And that is nice. We can employ their data to restore people’s sense of God.

**Dr. Singh:** Yes. Unfortunately, pseudoscientists often use the phrase “the laws of nature” to imply a universe without a lawmaker. So to suggest the lawmaker, we can say, “the higher laws of nature.”

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. These so-called scientists – they do not even know all the laws of nature.

**Dr. Singh:** They don’t know all the natural laws. They know only a few, **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. And they

do not know who the lawmaker is. They do not know that the laws of nature can be changed by the lawmaker. It is just as we see in ordinary, mundane governmental affairs: today something is the law, but tomorrow the government can change it. So this is the real meaning of God: the supreme governor, the person who makes the natural law – and who can change it.

Kṛṣṇa says, *daivī hy eśā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā*:

“No one can overcome My natural laws.” And then He goes on to say, “But anyone who surrenders unto Me can cross beyond My natural laws.” That is the difference between the ordinary being and the Supreme Being. God can change the laws.

For example, Kṛṣṇa’s natural law states that if you have sinned, you must suffer. Now, you and I are not God; so if we break His law and commit sin, we must suffer. That’s all. But Kṛṣṇa can change the law and

say, *ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayisyāmi*: “Even though you have sinned, I will deliver you from the resultant suffering. Don’t be afraid. Simply surrender to Me.”

How can Kṛṣṇa say this? He can say this because He is the Supreme. So here is God realization. Here is the supreme science: to realize, “Yes, all around me I see so many natural laws that no one can change. Certainly I cannot change them. I am under the laws of nature. Therefore, let me search out that one person who is above the laws of nature – that one person who made the laws and can even change them. I must make Him the goal of my life.”

**Dr. Singh:** That’s why it seems best to say “the higher laws of nature.”

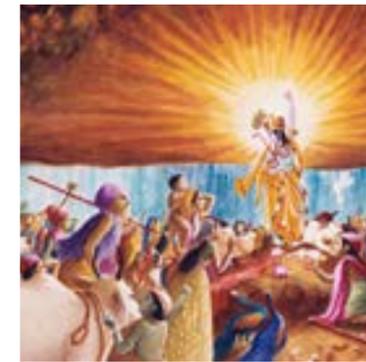
**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. And be sure to mention the highest law of nature: God, the lawmaker – who can do anything, even change the laws – requests us, “Just become My devotee and surrender to Me. I’ll protect you.” ☀

# CALENDAR

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

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

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



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

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

16 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a great

follower of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan.

19 – **Utthānā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

23 – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsa-yātrā. Last day of Bhīṣma Pañcaka and Cāturmāsya.

**Month of Keśava**  
(November 24–December 22)

## DECEMBER

3 – **Utpannā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans.

19 – **Mokṣadā Ekādaśī**  
Fasting from grains and beans. The anniversary of the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

**Month of Nārāyaṇa**  
(December 23 – January 21)

26 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

## AN ANCIENT LESSON IN SELF-MASTERY (continued from page 23)

cultivated a strong desire to benefit the world of forgotten souls, however, I remember that doing this begins with the one whose hard glare I now face. Before saying anything, I engage my thoughts in begging for tolerance and wisdom. The desire to act in my own defense slackens, and the words of Jaḍa Bharata appear brilliantly in my mind. Now,

not only am I able to avoid disaster, but I have the chance to leave a beneficial impression upon the soul who superficially appears as my aggressor.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “It is the duty of the transcendentalist to try strenuously to control desire and anger.” (*Gītā* 5.23, Purport) Those who pursue self-mastery, following the example of great sages such as Jaḍa Bharata, are benefactors of the whole society. The cumulative effect of their self-control can spread

through time, opening the minds of those around us, or even those we may yet come to know. ☀

*Dvijamaṇi Gaura Dāsa, a disciple of His Grace Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa Adhikārī, joined ISKCON in 2008 after earning a degree in international politics from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. He serves as the temple commander at ISKCON Orlando and assists in local college outreach programs and saṅkīrtana activities.*



Śrīla Prabhupāda's early disciple Gurudas, who inspired and helped found the Vedic Care Charitable Trust (VCC), comforts Yaśodā Devī Dāsī in her final days.

# Bringing Kṛṣṇa's Mercy to the Aged

By Ananta Śeṣa Dāsa

*The Vedic Care Charitable Trust aims to help devotees in their final years.*

**T**he *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches that we cannot avoid old age, disease, or death. When Śrīla Prabhupāda brought Kṛṣṇa consciousness to America in 1965, his young disciples accepted the truth of this teaching. And as time has passed and devotees have aged, this teaching has become more relevant. Gurudas, one of Prabhupāda's earliest disciples, has spent his life in Kṛṣṇa's service. He helped establish the London temple, traveled the world distributing books and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and recently started the Vedic Care Charitable Trust to help aging devotees in their final years.



Gurudas with Ārādhana Devī Dāsī, another founder of the VCC.

### Care in Practice

Although the Vedic Care Charitable Trust (VCC) has only existed since 2015, it has already done a lot of good. One example involves a woman in Belgium named Manisha, who was uninitiated because she could not stop smoking. This did not deter her from devotional service, however. She chanted daily, distributed *prasādam* every Wednesday, and hosted a biweekly *kīrtana* program at her home.

In 2016 Manisha was diagnosed with bladder cancer, and after an operation, she received chemotherapy. After three treatments, she decided to stop the chemotherapy, since it was making her too sick. She knew that this would mean the cancer would kill her, but at age seventy-eight, she was ready for that.

With financial support and guidance from the Vedic Care Charitable Trust, her friend Bhagavati Devī Dāsī was able to help her quit smoking so that she could live out her time with the devotees at Radhadesh, the ISKCON community in the Belgian Ardennes. Through Kṛṣṇa's mercy, Manisha was able to

sell her home in Liège and move to a home near the temple. Inspired by this mercy, Bhagavati wrote to her spiritual master, Kadamba Kānana Swami, and asked him to initiate Manisha. Since she was now following all four of the regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds, he was very happy to do so. With special permission from the local temple authorities and ISKCON's governing body commissioner (GBC) for Belgium, Manisha was initiated.

After her initiation, she did well for some weeks, but then things started to go downhill very fast. She had developed metastasized bone cancer and was in a lot of pain. For the last two weeks of her life, she could no longer leave her bed. After a few days, Bhagavati called in the local palliative care team and requested a home nurse for Manisha.

Recognizing that spiritual care was more important than physical care, Manisha's friend turned her room into a spiritual place with an altar opposite her bed. Pictures of Kṛṣṇa adorned the walls, and Bhagavati's *śālagrāma-śilā* (Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as a deity in the form of a small stone) moved into her room.

When Manisha was introduced to Him, it was explained that at the end she would be able to hold Him in her right hand.

A recording of Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting *japa* played most of the time except for when she was listening to the *Bhagavad-gītā* or the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. On Lord Balarāma's appearance day, Bhagavati purified Manisha's right hand with a few drops of water, put a flower in it, and asked for her prayer to Balarāma. She asked Him to take her as soon as possible.

The next morning, Manisha was in a lot of pain, so a morphine pump was set up to help her manage the pain. Bhagavati recalls:

Manisha was very sleepy, and I just sat next to her bed to read to her. The doctor came again at 2:00 p.m. and told us that she would have another twenty-four to thirty-six hours. By 3:00 p.m. I was sitting with Manisha together with another devotee and her breathing changed into the labored "death rattle." I knew she would probably not have twenty-four hours, so I called my spiritual master, who happened to be at Radhadesh. He

came half an hour later and started chanting for her. There were many devotees in the room with her. Her family was sitting at her left side, and I was sitting at her right side, armed with *tulasī* leaves and Ganges water. I had put my *śālagrāma-śilā* in her right hand, and she was holding on to Him tightly.

We could regularly see her lips move when she was trying to chant with the *kīrtana*. At 4:40 p.m. she opened her eyes and started staring with huge eyes. At 4:45 she smiled, chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, and stopped breathing for a long time. I quickly administered the *tulasī* leaves and Ganges water. She breathed one more time and left while her spiritual master was chanting and I was also chanting the mantra in her right ear very loudly.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66), Kṛṣṇa says, "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear." In line with this teaching, Kadamba Kānana Swami stated that since Manisha had given up everything she had in Liège to move and leave her body in Radhadesh, Kṛṣṇa reciprocated. This act of surrender was her ticket back home to Godhead. This story illustrates the crucially important work being performed by the Vedic Care Charitable Trust.

### The Origins of the VCC

Gurudas formed the Vedic Care Charitable Trust with the help of Ārādhana Devī Dāsī, Rāma Nṛsimha Dāsa, and Yadunandana Pāda Dāsa, who soon moved on to other pursuits. In a recent interview, Gurudas explained the need for this work: "I saw the need to take care of our devotees. For fifty years we have evolved, building new temples and communities and farms, publishing new books, starting cow protection programs, but no devotee care. Many devotees who served for years were sent out of the ashram or temple because there was no care facil-

ity. My idea is preventative medicine via outreach teams that can assist the families in homes or hospitals and bring the holy names and healthy *prasādam* to those devotees."

Laying out the general idea, Gurudas explained that the VCC is an international member-supported organization meant to create retirement homes offering *kīrtana*, *kṛṣṇa-kathā* (spiritual discussions), classes, seminars, consulting, and counseling. It also promotes self-subsistent farms and other creative projects.

"Our retirement homes allow residents to spend their later years in like-minded association," Gurudas said, "instead of being cared for in isolation and having to react alone to the symptoms of sickness. Staffed hospice facilities and Vedic transition support will be avail-

able through this international cooperative based on love and trust. With a focus on preventative care, we can ease the pain and suffering together."

In March 2016 Gurudas spoke about his vision when *The New York Times* ran a half-page article about him and his work. ([www.nytimes.com/2016/03/06/business/retirement-special/krishna-devotees-look-to-provide-for-this-life.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/06/business/retirement-special/krishna-devotees-look-to-provide-for-this-life.html))

The Vedic Care Charitable Trust was registered as a charity in June 2015. Ārādhana Devī Dāsī, cofounder, trustee, and CEO, says, "We're a platform for connecting everyone who is caring in an isolated way." In other words, there are devotees who are independently trying to do what they can to help but many times lack the know-how and resources. The VCC brings those individuals

## Mayapur Institute

MAYAPUR, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

### Winter Courses 2018–2019

#### Bhakti Śāstrī

Nov. 4, 2018 – Feb. 22, 2019

In-depth study of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, and *The Nectar of Instruction*. (Separate courses for men and women. The graduation ceremony will be 10–15 days after the course ends.)

Enroll online at [mayapurinstitute.org](http://mayapurinstitute.org)

#### Bhakti Vaibhava

Nov. 4, 2018 – Mar. 1, 2019

Module 1: Concentrated study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Cantos 1–3  
Module 2: Cantos 4–6  
Module 3: Cantos 7–10  
Module 4: Cantos 11–12

### Gaura Pūrṇimā Courses 2019

To serve the large number of devotees visiting Sri Mayapur Dham for Gaura Pūrṇimā, Mayapur Institute offers short-term courses such as Leadership and Management, the Grihastha Ashram Course, and Teacher Training Courses. The aim is to enable students to improve their vocational potential so that they can apply Vedic principles to modern life and make positive contributions to society.

Scheduled tentatively for Feb. 22 to Mar. 25. The actual schedule will be announced at [mayapurinstitute.org](http://mayapurinstitute.org) in November or December.

together under a single umbrella and offers those resources. “Most devotees come to us when in desperate need,” she continues, “having nowhere else to go, and although we have many other caring-oriented projects, hands-on devotee care is our main focus. Being neither a religious nor a medical charity, we have the advantage of acquiring financial supporters from many other already established nonprofit organizations, from government grants, and from disparate individuals. By doing our service in an inclusive way, we’ll be extending our preaching power into mainstream yogic lifestyles and advancing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This holistic service is very needed in our Vaiṣṇava communities.”

also makes material life better. Consider, for example, three elements of a devotee’s life that the VCC offers: sick or dying devotees and others: diet, association, and *saṅkīrtana*.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.13) states: “The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin.” The sick or dying devotee who is fed only *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* will enjoy a karma-free diet that aids in the liberation of the soul and benefits the material body.

The second aspect of the devotee’s life to consider is association. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.25) states: “In the association of pure

and neighbors. They may blaspheme or use foul language. One will hear every manner of foolishness coming from the lips of these people, but never will one hear the transcendental vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa. Surrounded by such people, one might decrease one’s chanting or otherwise be harmed in body and spirit. So it is crucial that devotees have the opportunity to associate with other devotees as they prepare to leave this world.

The final aspect of the devotee’s life to consider is *saṅkīrtana*, the chanting and hearing of the holy names. The regular chanting and hearing of the transcendental vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the supreme method of attaining Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this age of Kali. The benefits are legion. For example, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.14) tells us that “Living beings who are entangled in the complicated meshes of birth and death can be freed immediately by even unconsciously chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is feared by fear personified,” and in *The Nectar of Devotion* (Chapter 2), Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s advice to King Parīkṣit: “My dear King, if you want to be fearless in meeting your death next week (for actually everyone is afraid at the point of death), then you must immediately begin the process of hearing and chanting and remembering God.” (*Bhāgavatam* 2.1.5) For this reason, *saṅkīrtana* is perhaps even more important for the elderly.

Diet, association, and *saṅkīrtana* are crucial elements that will allow the elderly to accept aging without lamentation and accept death without fear. They will allow the devotee to live a healthier, happier, and more meaningful life right up to the moment of death. Unfortunately, many elderly devotees, being in traditional care facilities, are being denied these. This is why it is so important

devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”

In the purport to this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, “One must give up the association of materialistic persons and seek the association of devotees because without the association of devotees one cannot understand the activities of the Lord.” When placed into a typical retirement home or hospice, the devotee is surrounded by materialists who speak of everything except Kṛṣṇa. They may discuss issues of health from a secular standpoint. They may discuss sporting events, the lottery, or wins and losses at a recent trip to the casino. They may discuss the illicit activities of royalty, celebrities,

**In its three-and-a-half-year existence, the charity has cared for about fifty devotees and begun a number of important projects.**

In its three-and-a-half-year existence, the charity has cared for about fifty devotees and begun a number of important projects. Individual care is being offered in Vrindavan, India; London, England; Radhadesh, Belgium; Alachua, Florida; and New Talavan, Mississippi. In addition, planning for a model facility is underway in Sedona, Arizona. This facility will demonstrate how devotees will be cared for in a Kṛṣṇa conscious environment, where people follow the regulative principles, discuss the Lord’s glorious pastimes, and chant His holy name. In this way the aging devotee, through association with other devotees, will be able to peacefully transition back home to Godhead.

### The Importance of Vedic Care

One of the premises inspiring the Vedic Care Charitable Trust is that the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life greatly benefits the spirit soul and

# IN MEMORIAM

## Yamarāja Dāsa

On June 22 this year, Yamarāja Dāsa, the longest-serving member of the *Back to Godhead* staff, passed away at the New Raman Reti devotee community in Alachua, Florida. Ten years ago he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a type of cancer, but he continued to design and lay out the magazine until a month or two before his passing.



Born in 1948 near Portland, Oregon, Yamarāja came to ISKCON in 1971 and was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. He joined the staff of BTG in 1975 and worked on approximately 230 issues of the magazine. He was also an expert photographer, and many of his photos have appeared in BTG over the years.

Shortly before his departure, when faced with the option of moving from a rehabilitation facility either into a hospice or back to New Raman Reti, Yamarāja chose the latter, desiring to be among devotees. He departed shortly after *maṅgala-ārati* on

the auspicious disappearance day of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa while a recording of Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting played in his room.

His coworkers at BTG – and all BTG readers – will miss his valuable contribution to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s magazine. Two days before his departure, the July/August issue arrived from the printer, so he was able to see it – the last issue he completed. Surely Lord Kṛṣṇa has given him a suitable place to continue his service.



that Kṛṣṇa conscious retirement homes and hospices be constructed. Once they’re established, the elderly devotee in need of care will receive nourishing *prasādam* while surrounded by other devotees engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

### Endorsements and Volunteers

In addition to the primary goal of establishing care facilities, the Vedic Care Charitable Trust runs a website ([www.vediccare.org](http://www.vediccare.org)) that is useful to those needing service and those who want to help. Plans and success stories can be found there, as well as a library of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature and the VCC journal, *The Vedic Times*. The outreach care programs allow volunteers to visit shut-ins and those in care facilities to share *śāstra* readings, *kīrtana*, and *prasādam*. In this way those like Manisha who

need association and care before the VCC facilities are established can still have access to it.

Many devotees have endorsed and applauded the efforts of the VCC. GBC member Guru Prasāda Swami said, “I fully and wholly endorse this most wonderful effort to serve Vaiṣṇavas. In the beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it states unequivocally that service to the Vaiṣṇavas is the key to performing *bhakti*.”

GBC executive committee member Yadunandana Swami concurs. “Service to the Vaiṣṇavas is the highest religious principle, the offering that pleases the Lord the most.”

Ambarīṣa Dāsa many have best explained the need for what the VCC offers: “Many devotees from around the world have sacrificed their lives and well-being to give the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and

Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi to people everywhere. There must be a place for them at the end of life where they can be cared for in a Kṛṣṇa conscious environment.”

Prabhupāda taught the principle *dāsa anudāsa*: “[I am] the servant of the servant.” The Vedic Care Charitable Trust is set up to be the servant of Kṛṣṇa’s servants. Its work is a crucial form of devotional service. It will continue, and the more devotees who join its cause, the more work can be accomplished. ☸

*Ananta Śeṣa Dāsa joined the Vedic Care Charitable Trust as a volunteer after a conversation with Gurudas in New Vrindaban in 2015. Since September 2017, he has served as the director of the literary department.*

*Readers interested in learning more or getting involved may visit the VCC website: [www.vediccare.org](http://www.vediccare.org).*

# A QUEST FOR THE Essence of Nectar

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

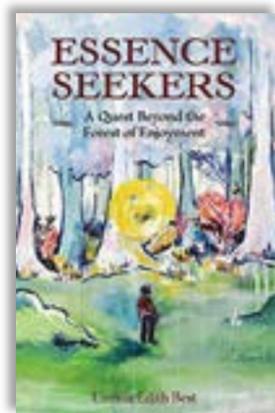
*A story that happened long ago, is happening now,  
and will take place in some future time as well.*

**B**efore we get to the excerpt from *Essence Seekers*, I'd like to spend a few moments explaining why I wrote the book and what it's all about.

Where do we find entertainment, ideas, direction, adventure, and comfort? Often it's in stories. Stories thrill us, intrigue us, scare us, inspire us, and guide us. Whether surrounding the family screen, watching a live performance, or gathering around a storyteller, humans are drawn to narratives.

For thousands of years, great saints and enlightened souls have used not only historical narratives but also fiction to convey spiritual truth and guidance. But in today's world, most stories – fiction and nonfiction, in movies and books, on television and the Internet – are at best a distraction from the spiritual path. And at worst they fill our minds and hearts with thoughts and desires we then have to struggle to cleanse from our awareness. Furthermore, among the many religious and spiritual stories available, most are filled with inspirational platitudes, or they promote a particular sectarian religion or some vague impersonal idea.

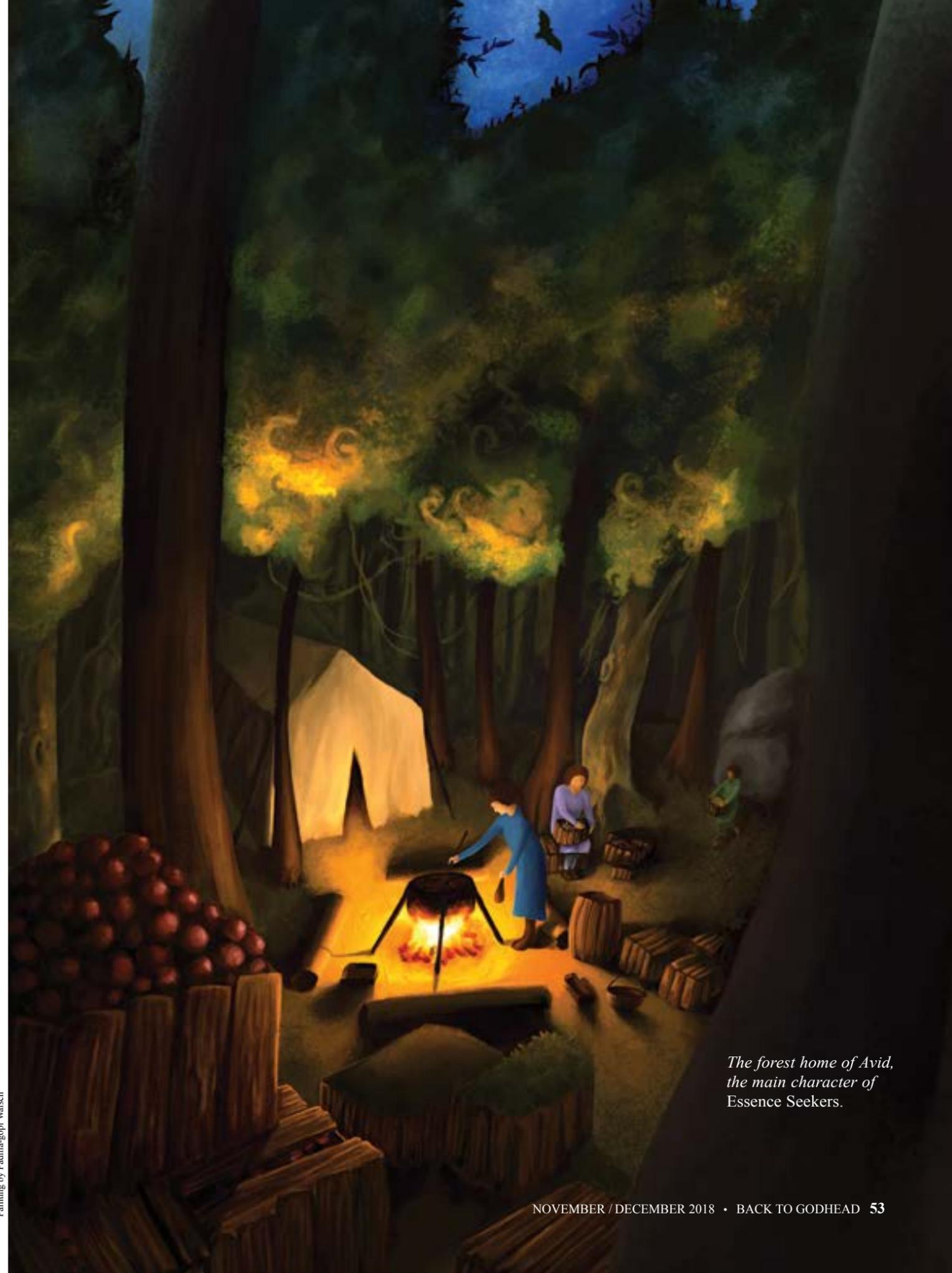
I wanted to write a story that would interest a mod-



ern audience while relating, in the personal way that Lord Caitanya taught, timeless and universal guidance about finding spiritual perfection. In pursuit of that challenge, I gained much inspiration from the medieval text *Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā* (“Splendid Instructions to the Mind”), by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. The twelve-verse book is full of metaphors begging to form the basis for the kind of story I wanted to write. For example, as a metaphor for speaking of one's liberation separate from spiritual love, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī wrote of a tigress that threatens to eat us. His analogy for nurturing inner ill motives while serving the Supreme was thinking that a bath in donkey urine is going to get us clean. He compared the process of surrender to the Lord to a bath in an ocean of love.

I felt that Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī had written the outline of a narrative – an account of how someone can come to perfection, complete enlightenment. But not just perfection in general. He described very personal perfection in the eternal service of Kṛṣṇa and His consort – the Divine Couple of the ultimate manifestation of the spiritual world.

Excerpted from *Essence Seekers: A Quest Beyond the Forest of Enjoyment*, by Urmila Edith Best. Copyright © 2018 Padma Inc. All rights reserved. Available from Amazon.com (print and Kindle) and Krishna.com (print only).



*The forest home of Avid,  
the main character of  
Essence Seekers.*

## Turning Sugar into Cotton Candy

Inspired, I sought blessings from advanced devotees of Kṛṣṇa and started to put fingers to keyboard and expand the metaphors into a narrative – as vendors at a fair turn sugar into cotton candy. But my understanding of *Śrī Manaḥ-sikṣā* was superficial, and I faltered. For the first step, then, with the strong encouragement of those who introduced me to *Śrī Manaḥ-sikṣā*, I worked with a team of over twenty devotees who

greatest number of people, the story would need a beginning level as well. In fact, I thought, it may be most useful for a story to start at the very beginning of spiritual life, with a person's initial curiosity, desire, and conviction that something exists beyond ordinary life. So I considered where I could find metaphors to create a story that would take readers from the start of spiritual life to *Śrī Manaḥ-sikṣā's* intermediate-level first verse.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* several sections of metaphors describe

find it. While his mother yearns for wealth and status, and his brothers and sisters go through betrayal and hope, Avid deepens his desire for a quest beyond the ordinary. To find the essence of life, he and his friends must overcome diversions and pass tests, forcing them to distinguish again and again between appearance and reality, promises and pitfalls.

While serious practitioners of *bhakti-yoga* naturally find the allegories from the *Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and *Śrī Manaḥ-sikṣā* an impetus to deep introspection, the language and narrative of *Essence Seekers* are accessible to readers unfamiliar with the language and concepts of *bhakti-yoga* and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to find novel ways and means, in terms of time and circumstance, to bring people to an awareness of Kṛṣṇa. Allegories are as old as life itself and are a gentle yet insistent way to transform heart and mind.

Now on to the excerpt, which is one of the book's introductory chapters.

\* \* \*

### Where It Began

Really and truly this story was first told very long ago – well, one and a half billion people believe it really happened, so there's a reasonable chance it did. Before the Egyptians built the pyramids, and before the ancient Greeks or the Chinese had an advanced civilization – this story was told by a prodigy. Prodigies often become famous for clearly demonstrable skills – say, in music, dance, or mathematics. A prodigy in inner wisdom and insight may remain invisible to the world. It is said that there was a wise man who voluntarily had never said a word in his life. This was Jada. That name was not his given name. The meaning of Jada in the ancient tongue is *dull* and *foolish*. It was a name born of bullying and cruelty on the part of Jada's half-brothers and their friends, and

it stuck as if his real name. By the time most children start to speak, Jada's understanding, insight, compassion, detachment, peace, and feeling of connection with all life had blossomed in ways rarely seen even in the great teachers and leaders in the world. He chose to become an absolute hermit to focus on inner meditation, but how was such a young hermit – merely a toddler – to join an order or retire to the caves of mountains? So, he became a hermit inside himself. He responded only enough to survive. His loving father tried until his death to educate his son, with no external success, though the boy learned all.

Of course, he did not appear particularly wise to anyone because he never spoke and barely appeared to hear or see. Nor did he make practically any effort to care for or maintain himself. After his father died when he was a teenager, he left his stepmother and half-brothers. He traveled and lived on whatever he could find or whatever he was given, without comment or complaint. Jada patiently bore even a murder attempt upon him, absorbed in his inner understanding. Perhaps, even though he was filled with compassion, he felt that the benefits of isolating himself from the world outweighed enlightening others. Many cloistered ascetics in numerous traditions have followed such lives. But, one day he broke his silence, and this story is the result.

Once, while Jada, strong in the prime of life, was walking along a main road, King R. Gana was traveling the same road in his palanquin. Near where Jada rested, the palanquin carriers also took a break. One of the four palanquin carriers suddenly complained of illness and left the king's service to seek treatment. King Gana then pressed Jada into slavery as the replacement carrier. The wise man carried the king's palanquin while trying to avoid stepping on insects and other creatures of the road, as was his habit. Needless to say, the king got a very shaky

ride. The king then halted his carriers and came out of the palanquin to berate his newest palanquin carrier and to demand excellent service. No one knows why Jada decided at that point to speak for the first time in his life. But speak he did, and he told the king this story of merchants in a great forest. As soon as King Gana understood the story, he awakened to his inner nature and became a seeker of the essence of life. Jada's story was passed orally through many generations, and was put into writing a few thousand years ago, as is noted in the written account.

Much later, in recent times – more recent than the wise man and the king, at any rate – another part of this story was put in writing. It was around the time European colonists were first coming to the Western Hemisphere. A wealthy government officer in India under Islamic rule voluntarily decided to live in poverty in the Sacred Garden, becoming somewhat a recluse in the more traditional way. Those who recognized his wisdom and holiness called him a name that in the ancient tongue means *the servant who has mastered his mind and senses*, or a *servant leader* as we say in modern times. In a short form, he can be called Das G. His story starts where Jada's ends – with the determination

to seek the essence of life – and tells of a journey through many obstacles, and with many helpers, to find that essence in a most personal way.

Here these two parts of the story find their rightful place together. But, the wise man who taught the king, and the government officer-turned-servant leader, never made it clear if the stories they told happened in a past distant to them, or within their own time, or would happen in the future. Perhaps these stories were not even from this planet. Therefore, we who hear this story today don't know if the vehicles used in the story have animals or motors running them, or if the messages sent back and forth are carried in someone's bags or via satellites. In this re-telling, readers may decide for themselves about such details. It could be – indeed it's very likely – that this story happened long ago, is happening now, and will take place in some future time as well. Of course, the names and details would be different each time, but yet the most important parts of the story would still be the same.

So, we begin . . . ☸

*Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī is a Back to Godhead associate editor. To learn more about her writings and other activities, visit [urmiladevidasi.org](http://urmiladevidasi.org).*

## The language and narrative of Essence Seekers are accessible to readers unfamiliar with the language and concepts of bhakti-yoga.

helped produce an expanded English version of the original work\* – translators, commentators, artists, and editors. Then I traveled the world teaching it over and over until the book became a good friend.

At that point it was time to start the story. But what kind of story? *Back to Godhead's* editor in chief, Nāgarāja Dāsa, suggested to me many years ago that hearing about how people come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness can have a great impact on readers. And Śivarāma Swami had written such a story in fictional form in the back of his book *Śuddha-bhakti-cintāmaṇi*. In *Back to Godhead* magazine, the stories of people who take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness are very popular. Furthermore, *Śrī Manaḥ-sikṣā's* metaphors are already arranged as a *paddhati*, or step-by-step guide. So the story would be a corresponding progression of consciousness.

*Śrī Manaḥ-sikṣā* begins at an intermediate level of spiritual progress, however. To be useful to the

material life and the urge to transcend it. I chose the description of the Forest of Enjoyment that Jaḍa Bharata, the previously silent and “hidden” perfected soul, gave to King Rahūgaṇa. Jaḍa Bharata compares saints to honeybees, a python's squeeze to sleep, and cannibalistic demons to tax collectors. Some sections of the story I wanted to write went beyond Jaḍa Bharata's allegory and were only partially represented in Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's metaphors. For those sections I pulled in metaphors that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu told to His disciple Sanātana Gosvāmī. Mahāprabhu tells of two witches, a crazed elephant, and treasure hidden and guarded. Now the outline was complete.

### An Avid Seeker

The story's main character, Avid, at first simply wants to know where his family's real home is beyond the forest they're perpetually living in. His question attracts a mysterious being who directs him to find an “otherworldly essence of nectar.” But Avid doesn't understand the nature of that essence, or how to

\* An excerpt of that book appeared in the Jan/Feb 2018 edition of *Back to Godhead*.

## How to Put BTG in Your Will

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

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

*We can learn from the examples of great souls who lived by upholding virtuous principles and left behind extraordinary teachings, legacies, and accomplishments.*

# The Art of LIVING and LEAVING

by Gaurāṅga Darśana Dāsa

Life is a preparation, and death is an examination” is an often-heard saying, at least in spiritual circles. A fact of life is that everyone who has entered a body has to leave it one day. The time between birth and death is what we call life. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the consciousness with which one leaves the body decides his or her next destination. Living a principle-centered life leads one to leave this world to enter a better world. Apart from attaining a wonderful destination, one leaves behind a legacy and a good example for many others to follow. Through various exemplary personalities, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* teaches us *how to live* in this world and *how to leave* this world.

## The Art of Living

The knowledge we attain from various sources strongly influences how we live. Our family, upbringing, association, and surroundings shape our thoughts, values, and aspirations. The rare human life is specially endowed with

higher intelligence and discriminatory power. Thus scriptures advise human beings to live according to noble values, with God consciousness, while doing the needful to survive through honest means. Such living sets a right example and inspires others.

*ahimsayā pāramahṁsya-caryayā  
smṛtyā mukundācaritāgrya-sīdhunā  
yamair akāmair niyamaiś cāpy anindayā  
nirīhayā dvandva-titikṣayā ca*

“A candidate for spiritual advancement must be nonviolent, must follow in the footsteps of great *ācāryas*, must always remember the nectar pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, must follow regulative principles without material desire and, while following the regulative principles, should not blaspheme others. A devotee should lead a very simple life and not be disturbed by the duality of opposing elements. He should learn to tolerate them.” (*Bhāgavatam* 4.22.24)

*The pure devotee Dhruva Mahārāja, having ruled the world as God’s representative, leaves for the spiritual world on a transcendental vehicle piloted by associates of Lord Viṣṇu.*

## The Art of Inquiring

Relevant inquiries make one's life fruitful when one gets fitting answers on how to mold one's life in the appropriate way. King Parīkṣit ruled his citizens by following the footsteps of his glorious grandfathers, the Pāṇḍavas. He even challenged Kali, the personification of the current spiritually debilitated age, and established a Kṛṣṇa-conscious kingdom. A *brāhmaṇa* boy's curse, ordained by the supreme will, sentenced him to die in seven days. Seeing the curse as a blessing in disguise, King Parīkṣit retired from political responsibili-

After hearing the *Bhāgavatam* for seven days, Parīkṣit left this world and went back to Godhead.

## Leaving Behind Attachments

Responsibility shouldn't lead to undue attachment, and detachment doesn't mean irresponsibility. The *Bhāgavatam* narrates stories of saintly kings known as *rājarsis* who ruled the earth religiously, taking care of the citizens' physical and spiritual needs. And when an able successor was ready to take charge of the political responsibilities, these kings, despite their great influence, followers, accomplishments,

**While dying, a sincere practitioner of bhakti-yoga can remember Kṛṣṇa without difficulty and thus attain His lotus feet.**

ties and sat on the bank of the Ganges to fast until death. He inquired from the great sages who assembled there, "What is the duty of a person in all circumstances? And what is the duty of a person about to die?" Śukadeva Gosvāmī arrived there as if called for and enlightened Parīkṣit Mahārāja on this topic by speaking the magnum opus *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Practically the whole *Bhāgavatam* deals with these two inquiries by Parīkṣit: "How to live? How to leave?" Every human being should ask such relevant questions. In essence, Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied that one should hear about Kṛṣṇa, chant His glories, and remember Him in all circumstances, for such devotional service is the topmost beneficial activity for every human being. Lord Kṛṣṇa, after His departure from this world, descended in the form of the *Bhāgavatam* through the discussion between Parīkṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmī. The *Bhāgavatam* acts as a transcendental torchlight to give light to the misdirected civilization of the Kali-yuga.

and unexcelled facilities, were detached and mature enough to leave behind everything for a higher purpose. Thus they promptly retired at the right time to dedicate the rest of their lives in devotional service unto the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

For instance, King Yudhiṣṭhira ruled the kingdom religiously and responsibly in line with the knowledge he had received from Lord Kṛṣṇa and Bhīṣmadeva, the illustrious grandsire of the Kuru dynasty. Yudhiṣṭhira raised his grandson Parīkṣit with suitable training and before retiring entrusted the kingdom to him. Several other saintly kings, like Priyavrata, Uttānapāda, Dhruva, Pṛthu, the Pracetās, Bharata, and Parīkṣit himself, also represent similar examples of leaving behind one's material attachments at the right time. They had glorious departures from this world to enter the spiritual world.

## Leaving Without Bewilderment

Death is inevitable for anyone who

is born. Just as a student who won't study well throughout the academic year cannot expect good results on the final exam or a good career, a person who lives whimsically throughout life cannot expect a good destination in the next life. Thus how one leaves this world depends on how one lives in this world. At the time of death one's power of remembrance is slackened due to derangement of bodily functions. For a common man it is very difficult to remember things clearly at the time of death, but by the grace of the Supreme Lord and His bona fide representatives, the spiritual masters, a sincere practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* can remember Kṛṣṇa without difficulty and thus attain His lotus feet.

*nottamaśloka-vārtānām  
juṣatām tat-kathāmṛtam  
syāt sambhramo 'nta-kāle 'pi  
smaratām tat-padāmbujam*

"This was so because those who have dedicated their lives to the transcendental topics of the Personality of Godhead, of whom the Vedic hymns sing, and who are constantly engaged in remembering His lotus feet, do not run the risk of having misconceptions even at the last moment of their lives." (*Bhāgavatam* 1.18.4)

Once there was a great fight between the demigods and the demons. Vṛtrāsura terrified the demigods with his unparalleled power, and they anxiously approached Lord Viṣṇu for a solution. Viṣṇu told them that Vṛtrāsura could be killed by a thunderbolt weapon (*vajra*) made from the bones of the great sage Dadhīci.

When requested by the demigods, selfless Dadhīci understood their predicament and the order of Viṣṇu and prepared himself to give up his body to restore balance in the universal administrative system. Without bewilderment, he entered into deep meditation on the Supreme Lord's lotus feet and left his body without even perceiving that his body was being separated from himself.

In his previous life Vṛtrāsura had been King Citraketu, a great devotee of the form of the Lord known as Saṅkarṣaṇa. Once, by speaking some ill-chosen words, Citraketu offended Pārvatī Devī, the wife of Lord Śiva, and she cursed him to become a demon. But even in that demonic body, as Vṛtrāsura, his devotion only increased.

Being aware that Lord Viṣṇu had ordained his death, Vṛtrāsura prepared himself without bewilderment and fought dutifully with Indra in battle. In fact, his only purpose in life – indeed his ecstasy – was to be killed by the thunderbolt in the hands of Indra. Vṛtrāsura rebuked Indra and inspired him to fight and to keep faith in Lord Viṣṇu's promise of his victory. Vṛtrāsura then offered heartfelt prayers to the Supreme Lord, even while on the battlefield. When Indra cut off his arms, Vṛtrāsura swallowed Indra. Considering the fight over, Vṛtrāsura entered into deep meditation on Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa. But Indra came out of Vṛtrāsura's body and, working for a full year, cut off the head of Vṛtrāsura, who was absorbed in devotional trance.

Both Dadhīci and Vṛtrāsura were great devotees of the Lord, who had ordained their death. Knowing this didn't bewilder them, but they gratefully accepted the Lord's decision and left their bodies in deep devotion and in meditation on the Lord, only to reach His lotus feet. For great devotees, leaving the body is no reason for bewilderment, as they are always sure that the Supreme Lord is their ultimate well-wisher and destination.

## Leaving Behind a Spiritual Path

A gentleman makes his own life successful by following a genuine path and leaves his path of success for many others to follow. Many saints and devotees of the Lord have performed unalloyed devotional service throughout their lives and have prescribed methods of train-

# Teachers Wanted for Krishna Avanti Schools (UK)



**Subject: Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE)**  
Curriculum based on the *Gītā*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and other texts, alongside texts from other faiths.

For information on teaching the PRE:  
[avanti.org.uk/pre/](http://avanti.org.uk/pre/)

For information on careers at the Krishna Avanti schools:  
[avanti.org.uk/careers](http://avanti.org.uk/careers)

ing people in general in the spiritual path. The duty of an *ācārya*, or spiritual master, is to find the means by which devotees may render service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and thus go back to Godhead. For example, Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of Lord Caitanya's leading disciples, wrote many wonderful books, including the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which explains the science of *bhakti-yoga* (and which Śrīla Prabhupāda presented as *The Nectar of Devotion*). An *ācārya* gives the suitable method for his followers to cross the ocean of nescience. This method entails accepting the boat of the Lord's lotus feet. If this method is strictly adhered to, the followers will ultimate-

ly reach the spiritual destination by the grace of the Lord. This method is called *ācārya-sampradāya*.

*svayaṁ samuttīrya sudustaraṁ dyuman  
bhavārṇavaṁ bhūmam adabhra-  
sauhrdāḥ  
bhavat-padāmbhoruha-nāvam atra te  
nidhāya yatāḥ sad-anugraho bhavān*

"O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [*vāñchā-kalpataru*]. When *ācāryas* completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method

by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.2.31)

## Leaving Behind Life Teachings

Sometimes a glorious person may not be recognized by the people and may even be misunderstood during his lifetime. But the world often will realize his brilliance towards the end of his life or after his departure. Such a person who sticks to his

the universe, including Paraśurāma, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and others. Bhīṣma instructed Yudhiṣṭhira on the dharmas of charity, liberation, rulers, women, and devotional service.

Having enlightened Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīṣma withdrew his senses from external objects and focused on the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Pārthasārathī (the charioteer of Arjuna). He praised Kṛṣṇa in various ways, offered fervent prayers, and, while meditating on the Lord’s form, departed at an auspicious time. Bhīṣma’s long life of successes and

## Bhīṣma praised Kṛṣṇa, offered fervent prayers, and, while meditating on the Lord’s form, departed at an auspicious time.

spiritual values despite the odds is acknowledged and exalted by God Himself for his unshakable sincerity. His life and realizations serve as great teachings.

Bhīṣmadeva, mentioned earlier, was a lifelong celibate and a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He loved the Pāṇḍavas, the righteous sons of King Pāṇḍu, and as an affectionate family elder he protected them in various ways. Although valiant, vastly learned, and dedicated to devotional service, for various reasons Bhīṣma had to fight on the opposite side, against the virtuous Pāṇḍavas. Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to teach the world through Bhīṣma that vice cannot conquer virtue regardless of who tries to execute it. And Bhīṣma played his humble part in the Lord’s higher plan.

Kṛṣṇa, however, wanted to glorify His devotee Bhīṣma before his departure. When Yudhiṣṭhira was overwhelmed with guilt at causing a great massacre to enthrone him as king, no one, including Kṛṣṇa and Vyāsadeva, could pacify him. So Kṛṣṇa chose Bhīṣma to counsel Yudhiṣṭhira, in the presence of eminent personalities from all over

struggles, his teachings to Yudhiṣṭhira, and his complete absorption in Kṛṣṇa before leaving this world constitute great instructions for devotees.

## Leaving Behind One’s Example

Determination, dedication, and devotion impress us, as do genuine regret for mistakes and honest gratitude towards well-wishers. These qualities, which are natural for a sincere person, inspire awe when exhibited by a child.

The five-year-old prince Dhruva was tormented by the harsh words of his stepmother, Suruci, who refused to let him sit on the lap of his father, the king. Upon being inspired by his own mother, Sunīti, and instructed by the great sage Nārada Muni, Dhruva worshiped the Lord with an ambitious desire to attain a position superior to even Brahmā. Within six months he attained the audience of Lord Viṣṇu, who rewarded him beyond his imagination. Dhruva’s heart, however, had been transformed by his sincere practice of *bhakti* and the Lord’s audience, and

he regretted worshiping the Lord with a material desire.

Dhruva set an unparalleled example of determination in devotional service at a young age. His example shows that anyone – even with material desires, or even a child – can worship the Supreme Lord and become an object of His mercy. The Lord and devotion to Him will purify one’s selfish, materially motivated intentions.

As ordained by the Lord, Dhruva ruled the earth for thirty-six thousand years and then retired. Eventually a Vaikuṅṭha airplane came to take him to the abode of the Supreme Lord. Although about to go, before boarding the airplane Dhruva humbly offered his respects to the sages present. And he wasn’t willing to go without his mother, Sunīti, who first inspired him to worship Kṛṣṇa. His heart was filled with gratitude towards her. Then he was shown another Vaikuṅṭha airplane, in which his mother was also going back to Godhead. Thus Dhruva went to the Lord’s abode. His example gives us lessons on respect, determination, sincere repentance, and gratitude in *bhakti*.

## Leaving Behind a Legacy

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, dedicated his life to spreading the message of Lord Caitanya in English, as ordered by his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In his seventieth year, Śrīla Prabhupāda traveled to America and started a worldwide spiritual movement. He circled the globe fourteen times to spread the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, inspiring millions to take up *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. He translated the most important Vaiṣṇava literatures into English and wrote similar books that guide humanity on the spiritual path. The books he left behind, translated into various languages, are distributed (*please turn to page 63*)

## AUTHORS

- His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
See “Book Section: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam” under DEPARTMENTS.  
See also FOUNDER’S LECTURE under FEATURES.  
See also “Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out” under DEPARTMENTS.
- Ādi Puruṣa Dāsa  
*Dealing with Difficulties*, Sep/Oct, page 61.
- Ananta Śeṣa Dāsa  
*Bringing Kṛṣṇa’s Mercy to the Aged*, Nov/Dec, page 47.
- Badrinarayan Swami  
*In Defense of the Vedic View*, May/June, page 16.
- Bhaktimārga Swami  
*Out Walking in the USA*, Sep/Oct, page 20.
- Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa  
See *Criticism with a Critical Eye*, Mar/Apr, page 52.  
*Intention in Tension?* May/June, page 10.  
*Don’t Identify with the Mind . . . Identify the Mind*, July/Aug, page 12.  
*Jatāyū: Victorious in Defeat*, Sep/Oct, page 53.  
*Sugrīva-Lakṣmaṇa: Comfort – Material and Transcendental*, Nov/Dec, page 16.
- Dvijamaṇi Gaura Dāsa  
*An Ancient Lesson in Self-Mastery*, Nov/Dec, page 21.
- Gaurāṅga Darśana Dāsa  
*Bhakta-vaśyatā: Bound by Love*, Sep/Oct, page 56.  
*The Art of Living and Leaving*, Nov/Dec, page 56.
- Girirāja Govinda Dāsa  
*The Reliable Way to Gain Knowledge*, May/June, page 22.
- Karuṇā Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī  
*In Excess of Our Quota*, Jan/Feb, page 20.  
*The Right to Lament*, Sep/Oct, page 41.
- Kāśīśvar Dāsa  
*A Sadhu at Red Square*, July/Aug, page 40.
- Kṛṣṇanandinī Devī Dāsī  
*A Tale of Two Disciples*, Mar/Apr, page 58.
- Lokanāth Swami  
See BOOK EXCERPT under FEATURES.
- Māyāpur-śāśī Dāsa  
*Lord Buddha: Making the Faithless Faithful*, Mar/Apr, page 23.  
*Sanātana Gosvāmī: Teacher of Devotional Service*, July/Aug, page 29.
- Nāgarāja Dāsa  
See “From the Editor” under DEPARTMENTS.

- Nārāyaṇa Dāsa  
See SPIRITUAL PLACES under FEATURES.
- Nikuṅja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī  
*From One Percent to a Hundred*, May/June, page 54.
- Pārijāta Devī Dāsī  
*ISKCON’s Presence in Greater Mumbai*, Mar/Apr, page 48.
- Prāṇadā Devī Dāsī  
See BOOK EXCERPT under FEATURES.
- Puruṣottama Nitāi Dāsa  
*Lust Blinds, Love Liberates*, Mar/Apr, page 11.
- Raman, Osho  
*The Uniqueness of Transcendental Hunger*, May/June, page 28.
- Sārvabhauma Dāsa  
*Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Original Sporting Propensity*, Jan/Feb, page 62.
- Satyarāja Dāsa  
*New Vrindaban: An Overview in Honor of Its 50th Anniversary*, Jan/Feb, page 32.  
*Ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti: Śrī Caitanya’s Six-Armed Form*, Mar/Apr, page 16.  
*Many Gods or One? Five Prominent Deities and Their Universal Meaning*, May/June, page 47.  
*The Life of a Text: Bhagavad-gītā Through the Centuries*, July/Aug, page 18.  
*“O Govinda Within My Heart”: Kṛṣṇa’s Long Journey from Braj to Brooklyn*, Sep/Oct, page 13.  
*The Science of Love*, Nov/Dec, page 10.
- Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī  
See BOOK EXCERPT under FEATURES.
- Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī  
See BOOK EXCERPT under FEATURES.
- Viśākhā Devī Dāsī  
*Joy of Devotion*, May/June, page 59.  
*Tests*, July/Aug, page 58.  
*Hare Krishna! The Film*, Nov/Dec, page 24.
- Yogeśvara Dāsa  
See BOOK EXCERPT under FEATURES.
- DEPARTMENTS**  
**“Book Section: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam”**  
*Lord Brahmā Appeals to King Pṛthu*, Jan/Feb, page 25.  
*Lord Viṣṇu Instructs King Pṛthu*, Mar/Apr, page 27.  
*Lessons from Viṣṇu*, May/June, page 33.  
*Instructions for Rulers*, July/Aug, page 23.

Lord Indra and Prthu Mahārāja Reconcile, Sep/Oct, page 45.

King Prthu's Desired Benediction, Nov/Dec, page 41.

**“From the Editor”** – Nāgarāja Dāsa

Fulfilled by the Simple Life, Jan/Feb, page 66.

Being with God to Be with God, Mar/Apr, page 64.

Pleasing God, May/June, page 64.

How God Spends His Time, July/Aug, page 64.

Bhakti and Vedānta, Sep/Oct, page 64.

Back Home, Back to Godhead, Nov/Dec, page 64.

**“In Memoriam”**

Yamarāja Dāsa, Nov/Dec, page 51.

**“Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out”**

“Knowledge” That’s Illusion, Jan/Feb, page 29.

The Right Source of Knowledge, Mar/Apr, page 31.

The Most Practical Scientific Understanding, May/June, page 37.

Research Honestly, July/Aug, page 27.

Nothing Bogus Allowed, Sep/Oct, page 49.

We Accept Only God’s “View,” Nov/Dec, page 45.

**FEATURES**

An Ancient Lesson in Self-Mastery, Dvijamaṇi Gaura Dāsa, Nov/Dec, page 21.

The Art of Living and Leaving, Gaurāṅga Darśana Dāsa, Nov/Dec, page 56.

Barnyard Karma, Yogīnātha Dāsa, Sep/Oct, page 34.

Bhakta-vaśyatā: Bound by Love, Gaurāṅga Darśana Dāsa, Sep/Oct, page 56.

**BOOK EXCERPT**

O Mind! Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Jan/Feb, page 12.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Bombay Office, Lokanāth Swami, Mar/Apr, page 34.

Bearer of Light for the West, Yogeśvara Dāsa, May/June, page 40.

The Path of Heartfulness, Prāṇadā Devī Dāsī, July/Aug, page 55.

A Quest for the Essence of Nectar, Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, Nov/Dec, page 52.

Bringing Kṛṣṇa’s Mercy to the Aged, Ananta Śeṣa Dāsa, Nov/Dec, page 47.

Dealing with Difficulties, Ādi Puruṣa Dāsa, Sep/Oct, page 61.

Don’t Identify with the Mind . . . Identify the Mind, Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, July/Aug, page 12.

**FOUNDER’S LECTURE** – Śrīla Prabhupāda

Happiness by Living in Goodness, Jan/Feb, page 7.

The Supreme Yogi, Mar/Apr, page 6.

Action Without Reaction, May/June, page 7.

Our Intimate Relationship with Kṛṣṇa, July/Aug, page 6.

The Only Way to See God, Sep/Oct, page 6.

Cutting the Knots of Material Attachment, Nov/Dec, page 6.

From One Percent to a Hundred, Nikuṅja Vilāsinī Devī Dāsī, May/June, page 54.

Hare Krishna! The Film, Viśākhā Devī Dāsī, Nov/Dec, page 24.

In Defense of the Vedic View, Badrinarayan Swami, May/June, page 16.

In Excess of Our Quota, Karuṇā Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī, Jan/Feb, page 20.

Intention in Tension? Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, May/June, page 10.

ISKCON’s Presence in Greater Mumbai, Pārijāta Devī Dāsī, Mar/Apr, page 48.

Jatāyu: Victorious in Defeat, Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, Sep/Oct, page 53.

Joy of Devotion, Viśākhā Devī Dāsī, May/June, page 59.

The Life of a Text: Bhagavad-gītā Through the Centuries, Satyarāja Dāsa, July/Aug, page 18.

Lord Buddha: Making the Faithless Faithful, Māyāpur-śāsi Dāsa, Mar/Apr, page 23.

Lust Blinds, Love Liberates, Puruṣottama Nitāi Dāsa, Mar/Apr, page 11.

Many Gods or One? Five Prominent Deities and Their Universal Meaning, Satyarāja Dāsa, May/June, page 47.

New Vrindaban: An Overview in Honor of Its 50th Anniversary, Satyarāja Dāsa, Jan/Feb, page 32.

“O Govinda Within My Heart”: Kṛṣṇa’s Long Journey from Braj to Brooklyn, Satyarāja Dāsa, Sep/Oct, page 13.

Out Walking in the USA, Bhaktimārga Swami, Sep/Oct, page 20.

The Reliable Way to Gain Knowledge, Girirāja Govinda Dāsa, May/June, page 22.

The Right to Lament, Karuṇā Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī, Sep/Oct, page 41.

Ṣaḍ-bhuja-mūrti: Śrī Caitanya’s Six-Armed Form, Satyarāja Dāsa, Mar/Apr, page 16.

A Sadhu at Red Square, Kāśīśvara Dāsa, July/Aug, page 40.

Sanātana Gosvāmī: Teacher of Devotional Service, Māyāpur-śāsi Dāsa, July/Aug, page 29.

The Science of Love, Satyarāja Dāsa, Nov/Dec, page 10.

See Criticism with a Critical Eye, Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, Mar/Apr, page 52.

**SPIRITUAL PLACES**

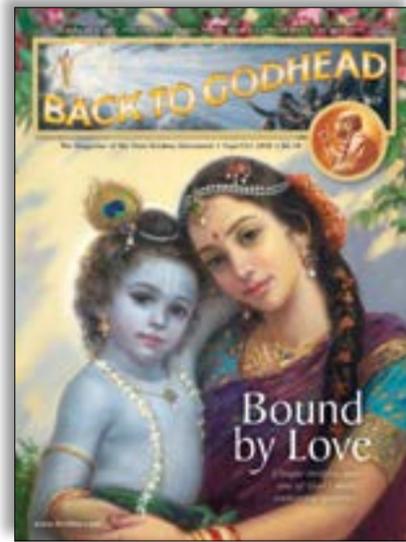
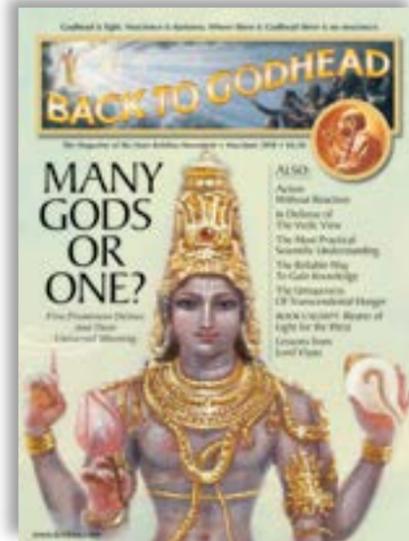
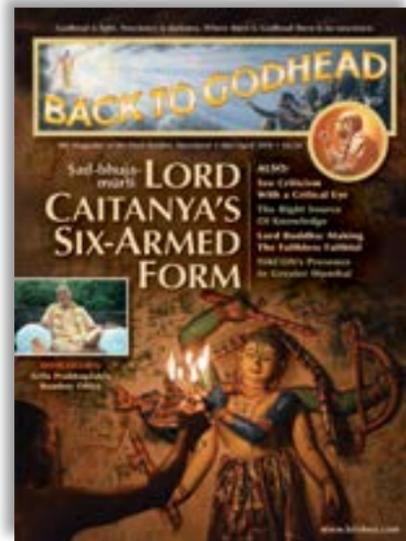
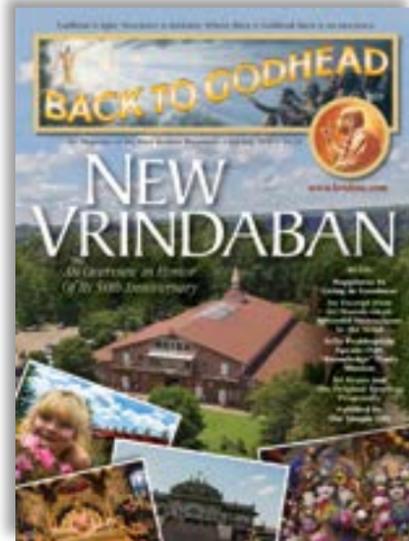
Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma in the Abode of the Reclining Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa Dāsa, July/Aug, page 45.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Original Sporting Propensity, Sārvabhauma Dāsa, Jan/Feb, page 62.

Sugrīva-Lakṣmana: Comfort – Material and Transcendental, Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa, Nov/Dec, page 16.

A Tale of Two Disciples, Kṛṣṇanandinī Devī Dāsī, Mar/Apr, page 58.

Tests, Viśākhā Devī Dāsī, July/Aug, page 58.



**LIVING AND LEAVING**

(continued from page 60)

all over the world. Even in his last days, lying on a bed and physically inactive, he continued to translate the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and give his profound devotional commentaries. He left behind a legacy that is being continued by his sincere followers, whose hearts were touched by his warmth and spiritual depth.

The great souls mentioned in this article lived by upholding virtuous principles, left behind their own extraordinary accomplishments, teachings, legacies, and personal examples, and departed to the spiritual realm to serve the Supreme Lord eternally. Human life is a rare gift. To utilize it effectively, one may derive inspiration from such model personalities and learn the art of living and the art of leaving. ☀

Gaurāṅga Darśana Dāsa, a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānāth Swami, is dean of the Bhaktivedānta Vidyāpīṭha at ISKCON Govardhan Eco Village (GEV), outside Mumbai. He has written study guides, including Bhāgavata Subodhinī and Caitanya Subodhinī, and teaches Bhāgavatam courses at several places in India. He also oversees the deity worship at GEV.

# Back Home, Back to Godhead

WHEN ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA titled this magazine “Back to Godhead,” he took inspiration from a phrase spoken by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In Prabhupāda’s opening essay in the first issue, published during World War II, he quoted the Archbishop saying that people “want the kingdom of God without God” and “Our resolve must be back to God.”

In that article and others, Prabhupāda, like the dictionary, used the term “Godhead” to mean God. But in the phrase “back to Godhead,” which appears thousands of times in his writings, the context suggests that by “Godhead” Prabhupāda often means “the kingdom of God,” and I think it’s fair to say that most of his followers think of it that way, as they have even from the beginning of his movement in the West. So when we use the phrase “back to Godhead,” we generally mean “back to Kṛṣṇa’s abode,” and we take Prabhupāda’s beloved phrase “back home, back to Godhead” as evidence of this (even though “Godhead” here could mean “God”).

All of this is to lead into a discussion of the desire of people in various religious traditions to go to the kingdom of God after death. We Hare Kṛṣṇa people want to go back to Godhead, and people in other traditions want to go to the kingdom of God according to their conception of that place. But the aspirations are not quite the same. While others want to be citizens in God’s kingdom, we want to be among God’s family and friends.

Because we know God’s identity – He’s Kṛṣṇa – we want to be in His company, not just in His world. Unlike the general citizens of a state, we know intimate details of God’s personality as expressed in His home life and

in His leisure life with His friends. Our highest aspiration is to directly serve Kṛṣṇa outside His official capacity.

As revealed in the Vedic literature, the kingdom of God is unlimited and includes two major divisions: Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka. Though both regions are populated exclusively by devotees of the Lord, the devotees in Vaikuṅṭha experience Kṛṣṇa in His majestic form as Nārāyaṇa, or Viṣṇu. Most Vaikuṅṭha residents serve and worship Nārāyaṇa from a distance, while, as with any king, a relative few engage as His personal attendants. Whatever their status, everyone in Vaikuṅṭha is fully satisfied to be there.

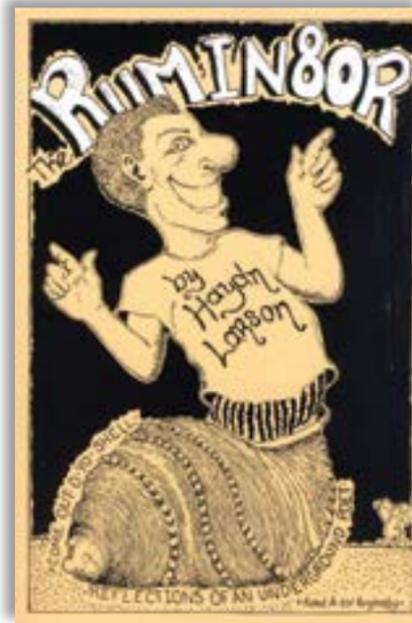
An important understanding in the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is that Kṛṣṇa responds to our desire. We’re in the material world because our desire to be with Kṛṣṇa is not fully developed. When our desire to go back to Godhead and serve Kṛṣṇa there is strong enough – when it is exclusive – then Kṛṣṇa will grant us entrance.

Everyone and everything in Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka is focused solely on the service of the Lord. (In the spiritual world, even the “things” are fully conscious devotees.) If we’re not ready to live in such an atmosphere, then we wouldn’t be comfortable in the kingdom of God.

The spiritual practices of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, prescribed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the spiritual authorities in His line, are meant to nurture within us the pure desire for intimate service to Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. When the Lord and His pure devotees recognize our spiritual longing, we’ll gain entrance to the kingdom where God reigns as an irresistible cowherd boy.

– Nāgarāja Dāsa

## Books



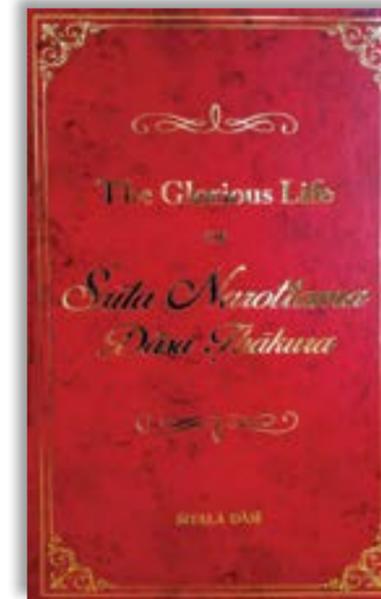
**The Rumin8or: Reflections of an Underground Poet** – By Haydn Larson (Ādideva Dāsa). *The Rumin8or* takes you into the unbridled workings of a devotional poet’s meditations. A sweet covering of wit and whimsy coat the poems and illustrations. Basic truths gleaned from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Gītā* and other teachings infuse their core.

The book makes a great gift for the curious. It casts a nonthreatening light on life’s Big Questions that the reader can freely Rumin8ate on.

A compilation of fourteen zines by the author/artist. Softbound, 114 pages, 6" × 9". \$10.00 ADBS703

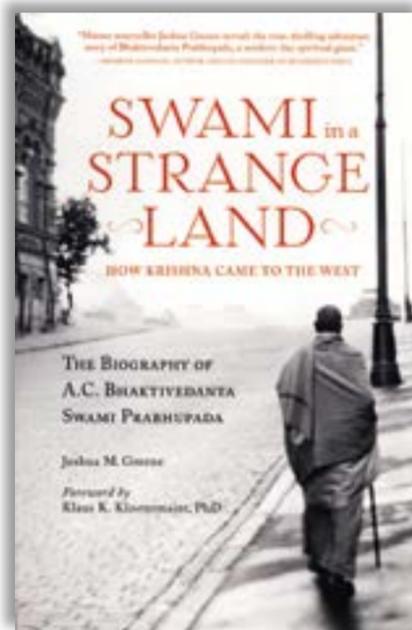
**The Glorious Life of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura** – By Śītālā Dāsī. A gem of a book on the life of a prince and pioneering saint in the *bhakti* tradition. Written as an easy-to-read, enchanting story.

Hardbound, 277 pages, 5¾" × 8¾". \$19.95 SDBH615



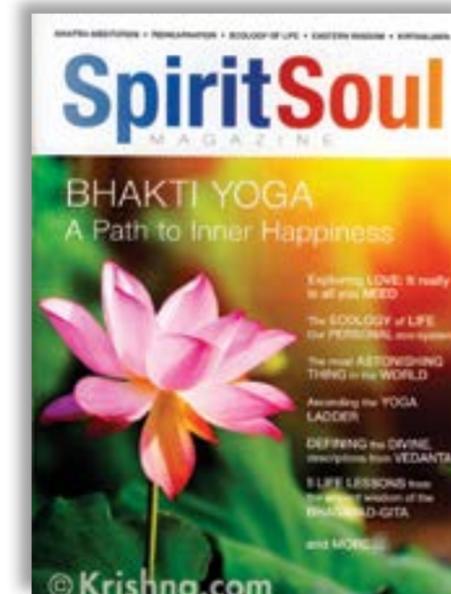
**Swami in a Strange Land** – By Joshua M. Greene (Yogeśvara Dāsa). Carefully researched, skillfully crafted, and extraordinarily intimate, this narrative follows Prabhupāda as he rises from an anonymous monk to a world-renowned spiritual leader. Set in locations as far ranging as remote Himalayan caves and the gilded corridors of Paris’s City Hall, *Swami in a Strange Land* traces the rise of Eastern spirituality in the West – and in particular, the rise of yoga culture and vegetarianism and the concepts of karma and reincarnation.

Softbound, 340 pages, 6" × 9". Plus three eight-page color photo inserts. \$17.99 MPBS627

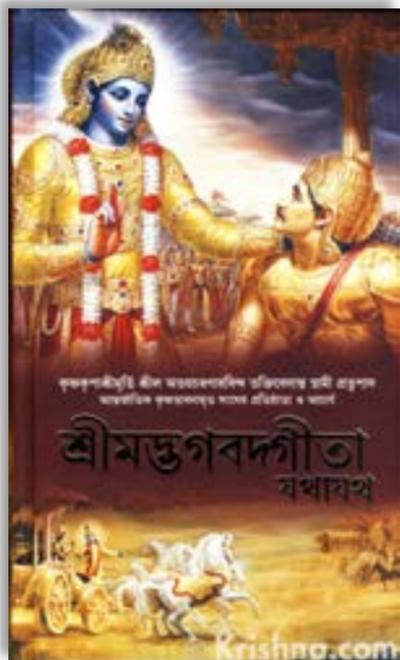


**SpiritSoul Magazine** – *SpiritSoul Magazine* offers a holistic approach to spiritual exploration and integration. Since body, mind, and soul are inextricably bound together, it can be a challenge to bring a spiritual focus into our busy daily lives. Those who’ve found practical ways to do so, though, find that their lives improve substantially. *SpiritSoul* offers suggestions on how to make life more spiritual, while highlighting the ancient and philosophical traditions behind many of today’s popular spiritual practices.

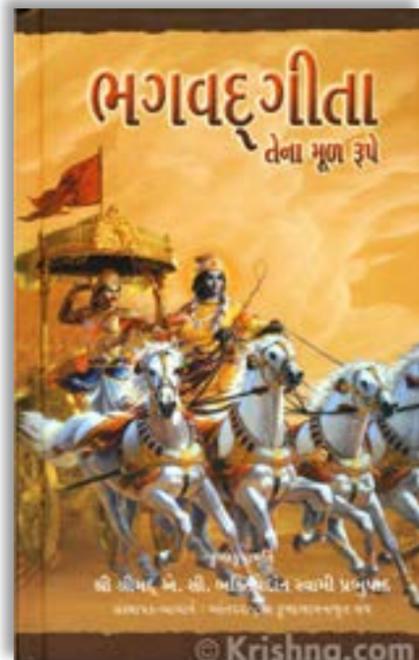
Magazine, 32 pages, 8¼" × 11". \$2.95 WLBG523



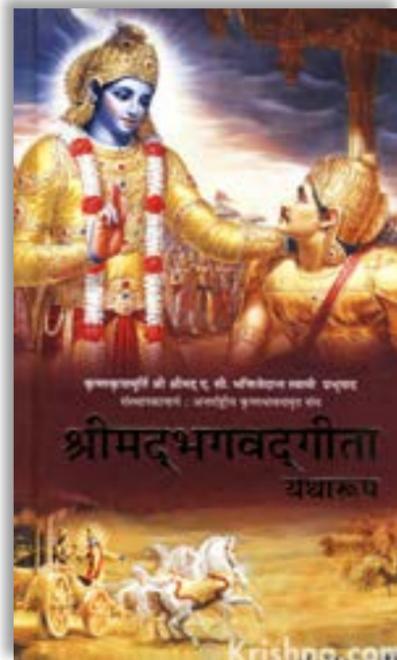
Krishna.com store 1.800.800.3284 or 386.462.1241



**Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Bengali**  
Hardbound, 767 pages, 16 color plates, 5" × 8½". \$14.95 BLBH607



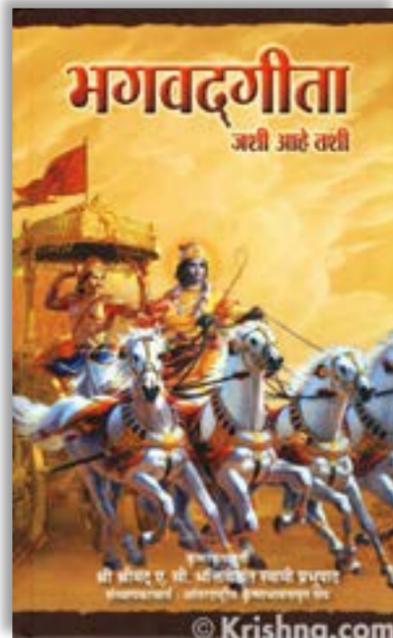
**Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Gujarati**  
Hardbound, 728 pages, 16 color plates, 5½" × 8½". \$14.95 BLBH648



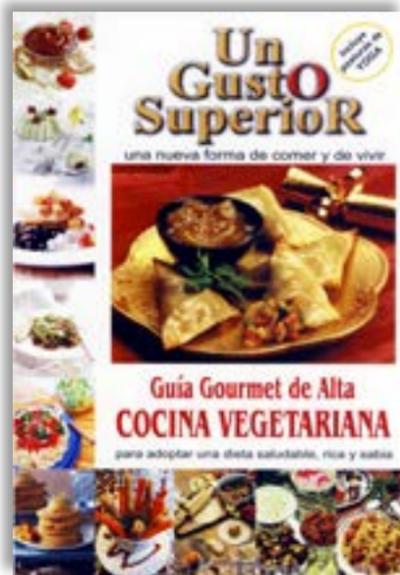
**Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Hindi**  
Hardbound, 644 pages, 16 color plates, 5" × 8½". \$14.95 BLBH707



**Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Kannada**  
Hardbound, 864 pages, 16 color plates, 5½" × 8¾". \$14.95 BLBH717



**Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Marathi**  
Hardbound, 648 pages, 16 color plates, 5" × 8½". \$12.95 BLBH727



**The Higher Taste, Spanish (Un Gusto Superior)**  
Softbound, 104 pages, 5¾" × 8¼". \$2.95 B7BS623

## VEDIC THOUGHTS

The Personality of Godhead in His all-pervading feature of Paramātmā enters every entity, from the biggest to the most minute. His existence can be realized by one who has the single qualification of submissiveness and who thereby becomes a surrendered soul. The development of submissiveness is the cause of proportionate spiritual realization, by which one can ultimately meet the Supreme Lord in person, as a man meets another man face to face.

His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.55, Purport*

The Supreme Lord, who is greater than the greatest, becomes submissive to even a very insignificant devotee because of his devotional service. It is the beautiful and exalted nature of devotional service that the infinite Lord becomes submissive to the infinitesimal living entity because of it. In reciprocal devotional activities with the Lord, the devotee actually enjoys the transcendental mellow of devotional service.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu  
*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.145*

The only duty of the most merciful persons is to transform the degraded taste of people. If you can save even one person from the great force of *mahā-māyā*, then that will be a greater act of philanthropy than opening millions of hospitals.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura  
*64 Principles for Community, Principle 21*

When a diseased eye is treated with medicinal ointment it gradually recovers its power to see. Similarly, as a conscious living entity cleanses himself of material contamination by hearing and chanting the pious narrations of My glories, he regains his ability to see Me, the Absolute Truth, in My subtle spiritual form.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.26*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is a magician, and the material world is His magical show.

*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.10*

Nothing is higher than the Supreme Person. The Supreme Person is the highest.

*Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.11*

The impersonalist conception of the identity of the individual and the Supreme is a preposterous phantasmagoria, like the horn of a rabbit. It has no reference to reality, and it is completely rejected by the people in general. They do not accept it. Those few texts of the Upaniṣads that apparently teach the impersonalist doctrine are interpreted in a personalist way by the author, Vyāsadeva himself.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa  
Commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.2*

The Personality of Godhead is pure, being free from all contaminations of material tinges. He is the Absolute Truth and the embodiment of full and perfect knowledge. He is all-pervading, without beginning or end, and without rival.

Lord Brahmā  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.40*

# SpiritSoul

## MAGAZINE

We at *Back to Godhead* created *SpiritSoul* especially for devotees looking for a publication for people who, unlike most BTG readers, know little or nothing about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the first issue, and we'll come out with more according to demand.

Our first issue features articles on:

- The ecology of life
- Mantra meditation *japa* and *kīrtana*
- Exploring love
- Five life lessons from the *Bhagavad-gītā*
- The nature of God – Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān
- The true guru
- Dharma, free will, and destiny
- Reincarnation
- Near-death experiences
- Vegetarianism, Govinda's Restaurants worldwide

The concise and easy-to-read articles are presented with an attractive design and artwork.



32 pages, \$2.95

Call the Krishna.com  
Store for quantity  
pricing.

1-800-800-3284

(1-386-462-1241)