

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



BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No. 64

Special Celebration Issue

*in
honor of*

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Śrī
Rādhā-
Kṛṣṇa

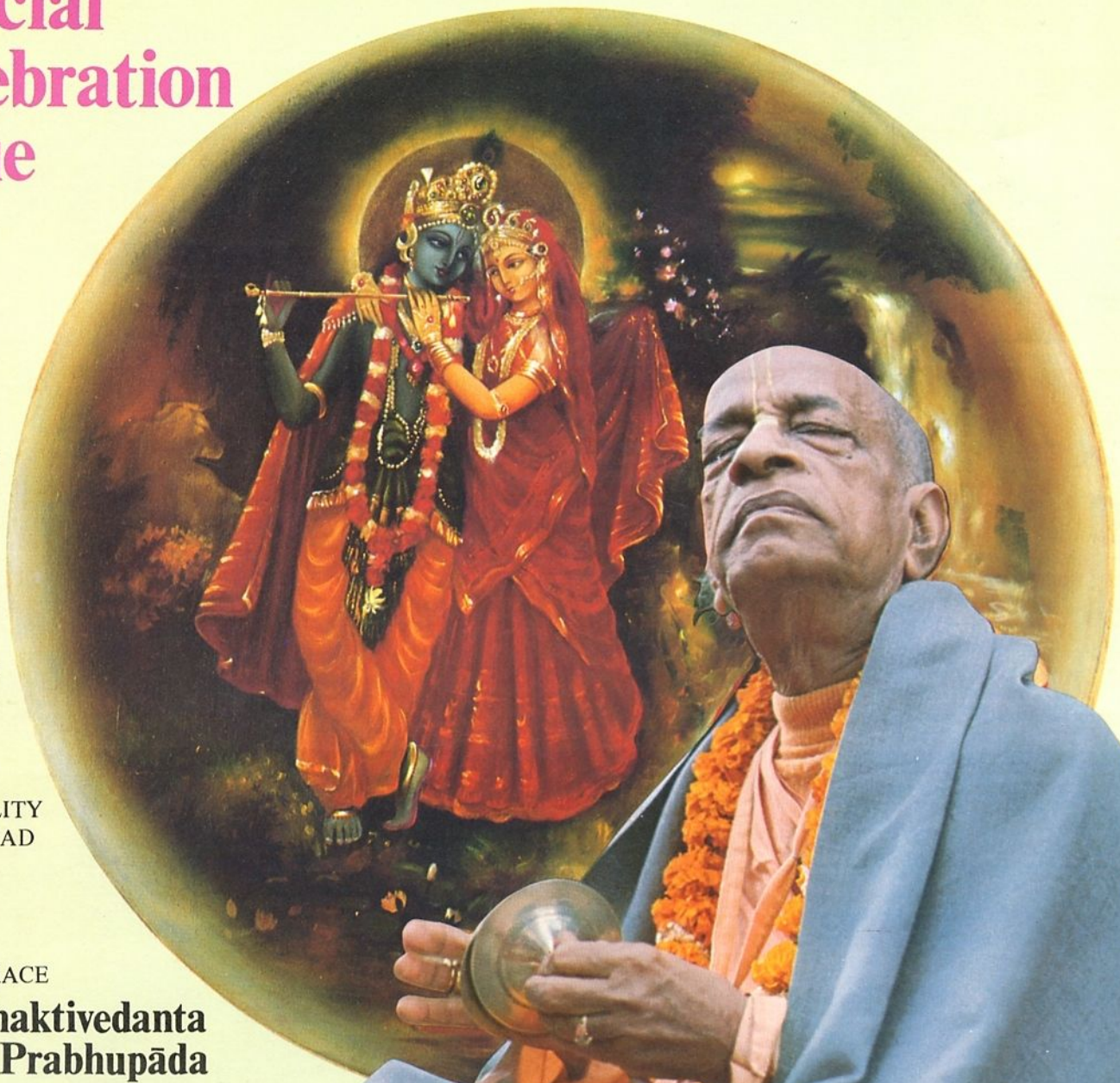
THE
SUPREME
PERSONALITY
OF GODHEAD

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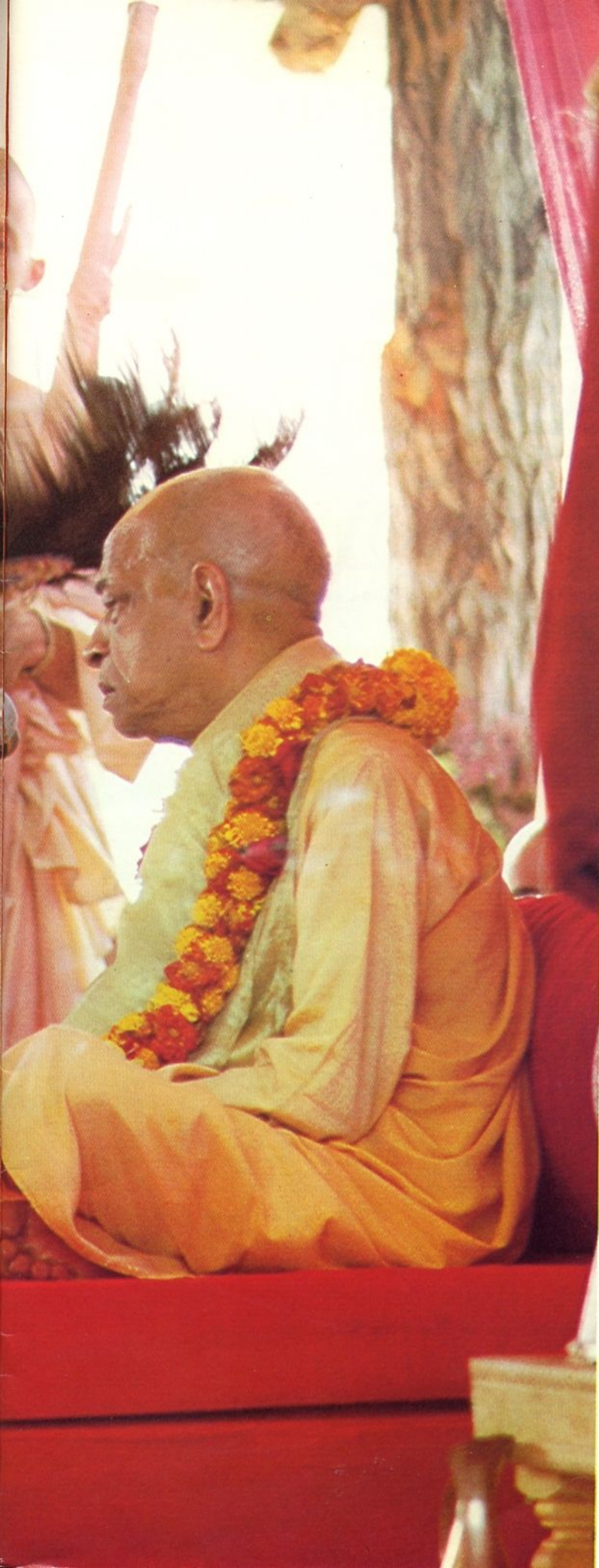
HIS
DIVINE GRACE

**A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda**

SPIRITUAL MASTER
OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MOVEMENT







nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhakti-vedānta-svāmin iti nāmine

"We offer our respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet,"

namas te sārāsvate devaṁ gaura-vāṅī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe

"Our respectful obeisances unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism."

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

"Unto those broad-minded souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, all the imports of spiritual knowledge are automatically revealed." (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23)

Among all the eternal living beings, one living being is the Supreme Eternal. He is the Supreme Lord, and all others are His servants. The Lord has many names, but the name Kṛṣṇa is universal, for this means "all-attractive."

Every one of us has an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa that we have somehow forgotten. Unless we revive this dormant relationship, we cannot have peace and happiness—either individually, nationally or on a global scale.

Kṛṣṇa is not a myth, a legend or the subject of an allegory. Nor is He an impersonal light or vague omniscient force. He is a person, the Supreme Person. He lives, and we can live with Him.

As one needs the help of a qualified teacher to understand the material sciences, one also needs a qualified teacher to understand the science of God. Such a teacher is the spiritual master. A genuine spiritual master must be able to instruct his students in the practical details of understanding who God is, what our relationship with Him is, and how this relationship can be revived.

Having received scientific instruction in God consciousness from revealed Vedic scriptures, the devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement assert with conviction—a conviction nourished both by Vedic knowledge and by practical experience—that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the genuine spiritual master who can teach us how to know Him, how to love Him, and how to go back to Him—back home, back to Godhead. With this special issue of *Back to Godhead*, which celebrates the appearance anniversaries of our spiritual master, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, we invite intelligent, broad-minded people to study and understand this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for their own eternal benefit and the benefit of others.

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead*
are spelled according to a system accepted by
scholars throughout the world which indicates
the exact pronunciation of each word.

Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost
as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like
the *u* in *but*, the long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and
held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like
the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The
vowel *y* is pronounced like the *re* in the
English word *fibre*. The *c* is pronounced as in the
English word *chair*, and the aspirated consonants
(*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch*-
heart, *hedge-hog*, *red-hot*, etc. The two aspirants
ś and *ṣ* are pronounced like the English *sh*;
s is pronounced as in *sun*. Thus *Kṛṣṇa* is pro-
nounced KRISHNA, *Caitanya* is pronounced
CHAITANYA, etc.

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THE BIRTH OF LORD KRṢṆA

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



AS STATED in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says that His appearance, birth, and activities are all transcendental, and one who understands them factually becomes immediately eligible to be transferred to the spiritual world. The Lord's appearance or birth is not like that of an ordinary man who is forced to accept a

to be very auspicious. Rohiṇī is under the direct supervision of Brahmā. According to the astrological conclusion, besides the proper situation of the stars, there are auspicious and inauspicious moments due to the different situations of the different planetary systems. At the time of Kṛṣṇa's birth, the planetary systems were automatically adjusted so that everything became auspicious.

At that time, in all directions, east, west, south, north, everywhere, there was an atmosphere of peace and prosperity. There were auspicious stars visible in the sky, and on the surface in all towns and villages or pasturing grounds and within the minds of everyone there were signs of good fortune. The rivers were flowing full of waters, and lakes were beautifully decorated with lotus flowers. The forests were full with beautiful birds and peacocks. All the birds within the forests began to sing with sweet voices, and the peacocks began to dance along with their consorts. The wind blew very pleasantly, carrying the aroma of different flowers, and the sensation of bodily touch was very pleasing. At home, the *brāhmaṇas*, who were accustomed to offer sacrifices in the fire, found their homes very pleasant for offerings. Due to disturbances created by the demoniac kings, the sacrificial fire altar had been almost stopped in the

houses of the *brāhmaṇas*, but now they could find the opportunity to start the fire peacefully. Being forbidden to offer sacrifices, the *brāhmaṇas* were very distressed in mind, intelligence and activities, but just on the point of Kṛṣṇa's appearance, automatically their minds became full of joy because they could hear loud vibrations in the sky of transcendental sounds proclaiming the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The denizens of the Gandharva and Kinnara planets began to sing, and the denizens of Siddhaloka and the planets of the Cāraṇas began to offer prayers in the service of the Personality of Godhead. In the heavenly planets, the angels along with their wives, accompanied by the Apsarās, began to dance.

The great sages and the demigods, being pleased, began to shower flowers. At the seashore, there was the sound of mild waves, and above the sea there were clouds in the sky which began to thunder very pleasingly.

When things were adjusted like this, Lord Viṣṇu, who is residing within the heart of every living entity, appeared in the darkness of night as the Supreme Personality of Godhead before Devakī, who also appeared as one of the demigoddesses. The appearance of Lord Viṣṇu at that time could be compared with the full moon in the sky as it rises on the eastern horizon. The objection may be raised that, since Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on the eighth day of the waning moon, there could be no rising of the full moon. In answer to this it may be said that Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in the dynasty which is in the hierarchy of the moon; therefore, although the moon was incomplete on that night, because of the Lord's appearance in the dynasty wherein the moon is himself the original person, the moon was in an overjoyous condition, so by the grace of Kṛṣṇa he could appear just as a full moon.

In an astronomical treatise by the name *Khamānikya*, the constellations at the time of the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa are very nicely described. It is confirmed that the child born at that auspicious moment was the Supreme

Brahman or the Absolute Truth.

Vasudeva saw that wonderful child born as a baby with four hands, holding conchshell, club, disk and lotus flower, decorated with the mark of Śrīvatsa, wearing the jeweled necklace of *kaustubha* stone, dressed in yellow silk, appearing dazzling like a bright blackish cloud, wearing a helmet bedecked with the *vaidūrya* stone, valuable bracelets, earrings and similar other ornaments all over His body and an abundance of hair on His head. Due to the extraordinary features of the child, Vasudeva was struck with wonder. How could a newly born child be so decorated? He could therefore understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa had now appeared, and he became overpowered by the occasion. Vasudeva very humbly wondered that although he was an ordinary living entity conditioned by material nature and was externally imprisoned by Kaṁsa, the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, was appearing as a child in his home, exactly in His original position. No earthly child is born with four hands decorated with ornaments and nice clothing, fully equipped with all the signs of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Over and over again, Vasudeva glanced at his child, and he considered how to celebrate this auspicious moment: "Generally, when a male child is born," he thought, "people observe the occasion with jubilant celebrations, and in my home, although I am imprisoned, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has taken birth. How many millions of millions of times should I be prepared to observe this auspicious ceremony!"

When Vasudeva, who is also called Ānaka-dundubhi, was looking at his newborn baby, he was so happy that he wanted to give many thousands of cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas*. According to the Vedic system, whenever there is an auspicious ceremony in the *kṣatriya* king's palace, the king gives many things in charity. Cows decorated with golden ornaments are delivered to the *brāhmaṇas* and sages. Vasudeva wanted to perform a charitable ceremony to celebrate Kṛṣṇa's appearance, but because he was shackled within the walls of Kaṁsa's

prison, this was not possible. Instead, within his mind he gave thousands of cows to the *brāhmaṇas*.

When Vasudeva was convinced that the newborn child was the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, he bowed down with folded hands and began to offer Him prayers. At that time Vasudeva was in the transcendental position, and he became completely free from all fear of Kaṁsa. The newborn baby was also flashing His effulgence within the room in which He appeared.

Vasudeva then began to offer his prayers. "My dear Lord, I can understand who You are. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of all living entities and the Absolute Truth. You have appeared in Your own eternal form which is directly perceived by us. I understand that because I am afraid of Kaṁsa, You have appeared just to deliver me from that fear. You do not belong to this material world; You are the same person who brings about the cosmic manifestation simply by glancing over material nature."

One may argue that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who creates the whole cosmic manifestation simply by His glance, cannot come within the womb of Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva. To eradicate this argument, Vasudeva said, "My dear Lord, it is not a very wonderful thing that You appear within the womb of Devakī, because the creation was also made in that way. You were lying in the Causal Ocean as Mahā-Viṣṇu, and by Your breathing process, innumerable universes came into existence. Then You entered into each of the universes as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Then again You expanded Yourself as Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and entered into the hearts of all living entities and entered even within the atoms. Therefore Your entrance in the womb of Devakī is understandable in the same way. You appear to have entered, but You are simultaneously all-pervading. We can understand Your entrance and nonentrance from material examples. The total material energy remains intact even after being divided into sixteen elements. The material body is



nothing but the combination of five gross elements—namely earth, water, fire, air and ether. Whenever there is a material body, it appears that such elements are always existing outside of the body. Similarly, although You appear as a child in the womb of Devakī, You are also existing outside. You are always in Your abode, but still You can simultaneously expand Yourself into millions of forms.

“One has to understand Your appearance with great intelligence because the material energy is also emanating from You. You are the original source of the material energy, just as the sun is the source of the sunshine. The sunshine cannot cover the sun globe, nor can the material energy—being an emanation from You—cover You. You appear to be in the three modes of material energy, but actually the three modes of material energy cannot cover You. This is understood by the highly intellectual philosophers. In other words, although You appear to be within the material energy, You are never covered by it.”

We hear from the Vedic version that the Supreme Brahman exhibits His effulgence, and therefore everything becomes illuminated. We can understand from *Brahma-saṁhitā* that the *brahmajyoti*, or the Brahman effulgence, emanates from the body of the Supreme Lord. And from the Brahman effulgence, all creation takes place. It is further stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that the Lord is also the support of the Brahman effulgence. Originally He is the root cause of everything. But persons who are less intelligent think that when the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes within this material world, He accepts the material qualities. Such conclusions are not very mature, but are made by the less intelligent.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is directly and indirectly existing everywhere; He is outside this material creation, and He is also within it. He is within this material creation not only as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu; He is also within the atom. Existence is due

to His presence. Nothing can be separated from His existence. In the Vedic injunction we find that the Supreme Soul or the root cause of everything has to be searched out because nothing exists independent of the Supreme Soul. Therefore the material manifestation is also a transformation of His potency. Both inert matter and the living force—soul—are emanations from Him. Only the foolish conclude that when the Supreme Lord appears He accepts the conditions of matter. Even if He appears to have

accepted the material body, He is still not subjected to any material condition. Kṛṣṇa has therefore appeared and defeated all imperfect conclusions about the appearance and disappearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“My Lord, Your appearance, existence and disappearance are beyond the influence of the material qualities. Because Your Lordship is the controller of everything and the resting place of the Supreme Brahman, there is nothing inconceivable or contradic-

The Reality of Kṛṣṇa's Appearance

By His Holiness SATSVARŪPA DĀSA GOŚVĀMĪ

One should not mistakenly think that Kṛṣṇa's appearance and pastimes are mythical or allegorical. Rather, we should accept Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute Truth, the cause of all causes, who actually appeared in a humanlike form and walked the earth. Bhagavad-gītā states that the proper transcendental understanding of His appearance is so important that if one realizes only this one subject, at the time of death he does not have to return to the material world, but goes to join Kṛṣṇa in the eternal spiritual world called Vaikuṅṭha.

One should hear the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa from a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa who has understood Kṛṣṇa through his own spiritual master in a disciplic succession from Kṛṣṇa Himself. Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā* that those who thus perfectly understand Him worship Him in His personal form. He declares, “There is no truth superior to Me. Everything depends on Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.” Materialistic scientists and philosophers who accept as truth only what they can perceive with their imperfect senses, as well as so-called transcendentalists who speculate that God is impersonal, cannot understand Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, nor can they achieve the perfection of life, love of God. Working outside of Kṛṣṇa consciousness,

therefore, they exist in illusion, for whatever they achieve independently from Kṛṣṇa is vanquished at the time of death, and then they must take on new bodies in the various species of material life.

The most elevated transcendentalists, however, understand Kṛṣṇa's *līlās*, or pastimes, and relish them without cessation. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* declares: “The highest perfectional gain of humanity is to discuss the activities and glories of the pious actor [Kṛṣṇa].” The great sages who compiled the Vedic literature, and the great spiritual masters who in turn recited it, such as Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva, Nārada and others, were completely free from all the vices of material attachment because they were aware of spirit's permanence and matter's temporality. Consequently their being fully absorbed in the activities of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, is solid evidence that the accounts of His activities are not whimsical tales. Had these pastimes been merely tall stories, such perfect sages would not have relished them. These sages were concerned with the highest good for humanity, beyond the illusion of temporary material welfare work, and therefore we should take seriously their recommendation that we hear the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. There are many examples of devotees who have attained perfection simply by hearing these pastimes.

His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Goṣvāmī is the personal secretary of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

tory in You. As You have said, material nature works under Your superintendence, just like government officers working under the orders of the chief executive. The influence of subordinate activities cannot affect You. The Supreme Brahman and all phenomena are existing within You, and all the activities of material nature are controlled by Your Lordship.

“You are called *śukla*. *Śukla* or ‘whiteness’ is the symbolic representation of the Absolute Truth because

it is unaffected by the material qualities. Lord Brahmā is called *rakta*, or red, because Brahmā represents the qualities of passion for creation. Darkness is entrusted to Lord Śiva because he annihilates the cosmos. The creation, annihilation and maintenance of this cosmic manifestation is conducted by Your potencies, yet You are always unaffected by those qualities. As confirmed in the *Vedas*, *harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt*: the Supreme Personality of Godhead is always free from all material qualities. It is also said that the

qualities of passion and ignorance are nonexistent in the person of the Supreme Lord.

“My Lord, You are the supreme controller, the Personality of Godhead, the supreme great, maintaining the order of this cosmic manifestation. And in spite of Your being the supreme controller, You have so kindly appeared in my home. The purpose of Your appearance is to kill the followers of the demoniac rulers of the world who are in the dress of royal princes but are actually demons. I am sure that You

The Eternal Road Show

Yearly we celebrate Janmāṣṭamī to commemorate the day Kṛṣṇa appeared on earth some 5,000 years ago. But that same occurrence, Kṛṣṇa’s birth on a planet in one of the material universes, is not a one-time event. It is always going on somewhere, even now as you read this article!

Instructing His great disciple Sanātana Gosvāmī regarding the spiritual technology of the Supreme Lord’s descent (*avatāra*), Lord Caitanya explained that just as the sun perpetually seems to rise and set somewhere on earth, so Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally appears and disappears in His transcendental pastimes. The time is always six a.m. somewhere on earth. An hour after six a.m. in New York City, six a.m. arrives in Detroit. An hour later it moves further west, and an hour later it is elsewhere. Similarly, Janmāṣṭamī and all the pastimes Kṛṣṇa displayed on earth continuously move and appear sequentially on planets in various universes. Lord Caitanya told Sanātana, “His pastimes are like the waves of the Ganges River; as there is no limit to the flowing waves of the Ganges, there is no cessation to the different features and incarnations Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals in different universes.”

Kṛṣṇa appears in our universe for only 125 years, but in each and every universe He exhibits all the pastimes He performs here, including His apparent birth, His boyhood pastimes and His pastimes as a youth. Since the universes are numberless, His *līlās* are going on at every moment, at every second, without limit. They

are therefore called eternal.

To our vision, Kṛṣṇa is born as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva, and after 125 years He disappears or dies. But the fact is that He exists eternally; He simply leaves this world for another. We may again cite the example of the sun, which first rises every day on the eastern horizon but still is not a product of that horizon. Although when we first behold the sun we associate it with the east because of our angle of vision, the sun always shines independently in the sky, regardless of how it appears and disappears to us locally. The sun does not die or set in the evening; it only seems to as it leaves our vision. Kṛṣṇa’s coming and going is something like that. He associates with a mother and father and takes birth in a certain family and land, but He exists eternally and travels from universe to universe to enjoy blissful exchanges with His devotees.

Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes go on as a kind of road show, visiting one planet after another. Not only does Kṛṣṇa travel; He brings with Him His mother, His father, His cowherd friends, the *gopīs*, the cows and the land of Vṛndāvana. Thus Kṛṣṇa is never considered alone, without His eternal associates and abode. When He descends, He descends with His entourage and paraphernalia, and when He travels they all travel with Him.

Kṛṣṇa’s road show is separate from and yet identical with His supreme original activities on the spiritual planet Goloka in the eternal *brahmajyoti*, the effulgent spiritual sky far beyond all the material universes. It is said that

the Lord is so captured by the association of the liberated devotees in Goloka that He never leaves—but He expands Himself to come to the material universes, enact the same pastimes, and thus attract the fallen souls, who are His parts and parcels, to come back home, back to Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa appears in our universe, according to an eternal schedule, once every $4,320,000 \times 1,000 \times 2$ years. In the *Bhāgavatam*, concerned devotees ask, “Now that Kṛṣṇa has left, where can we find the religious principles?” The answer is that by reciting the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa as related in the *Bhāgavatam* and *Gītā*, one can associate with Kṛṣṇa as directly as one could by being face to face with Him. That is called *līlā-smaraṇa*, association by remembrance. Because Kṛṣṇa’s *līlās* in Vṛndāvana are absolute, remembering those pastimes is the same as being with Him.

The perfection of human life, therefore, is to practice *bhakti-yoga* under the direction of a spiritual master and thus attain pure love for Kṛṣṇa, free from all material sense gratification. By hearing Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes from the spiritual master, one becomes attracted to the activities of the spiritual world, which are always performed for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure, and thus one is cured of the desire to lord it over the material world. Under the spiritual master’s direction, one can take part in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes simply by remembering them. Thus one can eventually join Kṛṣṇa in His eternal traveling road show and ultimately transfer oneself to Kṛṣṇa’s Goloka planet in the spiritual sky. ❀

will kill all of them and their followers and soldiers.

“I understand that You have appeared to kill the uncivilized Kaṁsa and his followers. But knowing that You were to appear to kill him and his followers, he has already killed so many of Your predecessors, Your older brothers. Now he is simply awaiting the news of Your birth. As soon as he hears about it, he will immediately appear with all kinds of weapons to kill You.”

After this prayer of Vasudeva, Devakī, the mother of Kṛṣṇa, offered her prayers. She was very frightened because of her brother’s atrocities. Devakī said, “My dear Lord, Your eternal forms, like Nārāyaṇa, Lord Rāma, Śeṣa, Varāha, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Baladeva, and millions of similar incarnations emanating from Viṣṇu, are described in the Vedic literature as original. You are original because all Your forms as incarnations are outside of this material creation. Your form was existing before this cosmic manifestation was created. Your forms are eternal and all-pervading. They are self-effulgent, changeless and uncontaminated by the material qualities. Such eternal forms are ever-cognizant and full of bliss; they are situated in transcendental goodness and are always engaged in different pastimes. You are not limited to a particular form only; all such transcendental eternal forms are self-sufficient. I can understand that You are the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu.”

“After many millions of years, when Lord Brahmā comes to the end of his life, the annihilation of the cosmic manifestation takes place. At that time the five elements—namely earth, water, fire, air and ether—enter into the *mahat-tattva*. The *mahat-tattva* again enters, by the force of time, into the nonmanifested total material energy; the total material energy enters into the energetic *pradhāna*, and the *pradhāna* enters into You. Therefore after the annihilation of the whole cosmic manifestation, You alone remain with Your transcendental name, form, quality and paraphernalia.

“My Lord, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You because You are the director of the unmanifested total energy, and the ultimate reservoir of the material nature. My Lord, the whole cosmic manifestation is under the influence of time, beginning from the moment up to the duration of the year. All act under Your direction. You are the original director of everything and the reservoir of all potent energies.

“Therefore, my Lord, I request You to save me from the cruel hands of the son of Ugrasena, Kaṁsa. I am praying to Your Lordship to please rescue me from this fearful condition because You are always ready to give protection to Your servitors.” The Lord has confirmed this statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by assuring Arjuna, “You may declare to the world, My devotee shall never be vanquished.”

While thus praying to the Lord for rescue, mother Devakī expressed her motherly affection: “I understand that this transcendental form is generally perceived in meditation by the great sages, but I am still afraid because as soon as Kaṁsa understands that You have appeared, he might harm You. So I request that for the time being You become invisible to our material eyes.” In other words, she requested the Lord to assume the form of an ordinary child. “My only cause of fear from my brother Kaṁsa is due to Your appearance. My Lord Madhusūdana, Kaṁsa may know that You are already born. Therefore I request You to conceal this four-armed form of Your Lordship which holds the four symbols of Viṣṇu—namely the conchshell, the disc, the club and the lotus flower. My dear Lord, at the end of the annihilation of the cosmic manifestation, You put the whole universe within Your abdomen; still by Your unalloyed mercy You have appeared in my womb. I am surprised that You imitate the activities of ordinary human beings just to please Your devotee.”

On hearing the prayers of Devakī, the Lord replied, “My dear mother, in the millennium of Svāyambhuva Manu, My father

Vasudeva was living as one of the *prajāpatis*, and his name at that time was Sutapā, and you were his wife named Pṛṣṇī. At that time, when Lord Brahmā was desiring to increase the population, he requested you to generate offspring. You controlled your senses and performed severe austerities. By practicing the breathing exercise of the *yoga* system, both you and your husband could tolerate all the influences of the material laws: the rainy season, the onslaught of the wind, and the scorching heat of the sunshine. You also executed all religious principles. In this way you were able to cleanse your heart and control the influence of material law. In executing your austerity, you used to eat only the leaves of the trees which fell to the ground. Then with steady mind and controlled sex drive, you worshiped Me, desiring some wonderful benediction from Me. Both of you practiced severe austerities for 12,000 years, by the calculation of the demigods. During that time, your mind was always absorbed in Me. When you were executing devotional service and always thinking of Me within your heart, I was very much pleased with you. O sinless mother, your heart is therefore always pure. At that time also I appeared before you in this form just to fulfill your desire, and I asked you to ask whatever you desired. At that time you wished to have Me born as your son. Although you saw Me personally, instead of asking for your complete liberation from the material bondage, under the influence of My energy, you asked Me to become your son.”

In other words, the Lord selected His mother and father—namely Pṛṣṇī and Sutapā—specifically to appear in the material world. Whenever the Lord comes as a human being, He must have someone as a mother and father, so He selected Pṛṣṇī and Sutapā perpetually as His mother and father. And on account of this, both Pṛṣṇī and Sutapā could not ask the Lord for liberation. Liberation is not so important as the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The Lord could have awarded Pṛṣṇī and Sutapā immediate liberation, but He preferred to keep them within this material world for His different

appearances, as will be explained in the following verses. On receiving the benediction from the Lord to become His father and mother, both Pṛṣṇi and Sutapā returned from the activities of austerity and lived as husband and wife in order to beget a child who was the Supreme Lord Himself.

In due course of time Pṛṣṇi became pregnant and gave birth to the child. The Lord spoke to Devakī and Vasudeva: “At that time My name was Pṛṣṇigarbha. In the next millennium also you took birth as Aditi and Kaśyapa, and I became your child of the name Upendra. At that time My form was just like a dwarf, and for this reason I was known as Vāmanadeva. I gave you the benediction that I would take birth as your son three times. The first time I was known as Pṛṣṇigarbha, born of Pṛṣṇi and Sutapā, the next birth I was Upendra born of Aditi and Kaśyapa, and now for the third time I am born as Kṛṣṇa from you, Devakī and Vasudeva. I appeared in this Viṣṇu form just to convince you that I am the same Supreme Personality of Godhead again taken birth. I could have appeared just like an ordinary child, but in that way you would not believe that I, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, have taken birth in your womb. My dear father and mother, you have therefore raised Me many times as your child, with great affection and love, and I am therefore very pleased and obliged to you. And I assure you that this time you shall go back home, back to Godhead, on account of your perfection in your mission. I know you are very concerned about Me and afraid of Kaṁsa. Therefore I order you to take me immediately to Gokula and replace Me with the daughter who has just been born to Yaśodā.”

Having spoken thus in the presence of His father and mother, the Lord turned Himself into an ordinary child and remained silent.

Being ordered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva attempted to take his son from the delivery room, and exactly at that time, a daughter was born of Nanda and Yaśodā. She was Yogamāyā, the internal potency of the Lord. By the influence of this internal potency,

Illustration: Yadurāṅgi-devī dāsi



Vasudeva carries his son Kṛṣṇa across the River Yamunā. . . and replaces his son for the daughter of Yaśodā.

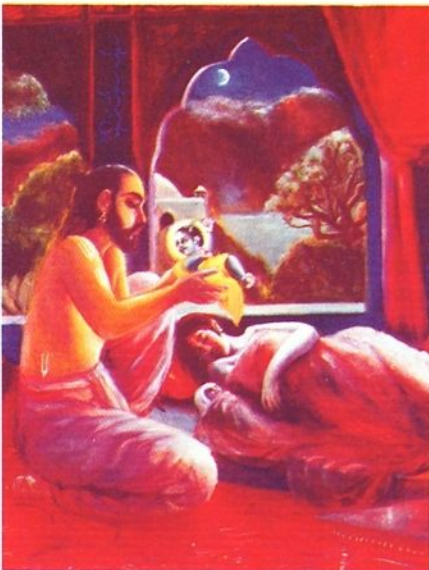


Illustration: Bharadrāja dāsa

Yogamāyā, all the residents of Kaṁsa’s palace, especially the doorkeepers, were overwhelmed with deep sleep, and all the palace doors opened, although they were barred and shackled with iron chains. The night was very dark, but as soon as Vasudeva took Kṛṣṇa on his lap and went out, he could see everything just as in the sunlight.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said that Kṛṣṇa is just like sunlight, and wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the illusory energy, which is compared to darkness, cannot remain. When Vasudeva was carrying Kṛṣṇa, the darkness of the night disappeared. All the prison doors automatically opened. At the same time there was thunder in the sky and severe rainfall. While Vasudeva was carrying his son Kṛṣṇa in the falling rain, Lord Śeṣa in the shape of a serpent spread his hood over the head of Vasudeva so that he would not be hampered by the rainfall. Vasudeva came onto the bank of the Yamunā and saw that the water of the Yamunā was roaring with waves and that the whole span was full of foam. Still, in that furious feature, the river gave passage to Vasudeva to cross, just as the great Indian Ocean gave a path to Lord Rāma when He was bridging over the gulf. In this way Vasudeva crossed the River Yamunā. On the other side, he went to the place of Nanda Mahārāja situated in Gokula, where he saw that all the cowherd men were fast asleep. He took the opportunity of silently entering into the house of Yaśodā, and without difficulty he replaced his son, taking away the baby girl newly born in the house of Yaśodā. Then, after entering the house very silently and exchanging the boy with the girl, he again returned to the prison of Kaṁsa and silently put the girl on the lap of Devakī. He again clamped the shackles on himself so that Kaṁsa could not recognize that so many things had happened.

A full account of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s birth and activities on earth is to be found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s book Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This article is an excerpt from that book.



Photo: Bhargava dāsa

Left: Janmāṣṭamī, 1972. Devotees of the Lord take advantage of His appearance day to make a holy pilgrimage to New Vṛndāvana, where Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma—all forms of Kṛṣṇa—preside.

Below: During the New Vṛndāvana festival, Sudāmā Mahārāja (center, with saffron staff), one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples in the renounced order of sannyāsa, preaches the glories of the Lord to the assembled devotees.

Opposite: The appearances of the Lord, His pure devotee and His pleasure potency are occasions for especially ecstatic singing and dancing. In India, as in the rest of the world, national and sectarian limitations become irrelevant in a flood of love of Kṛṣṇa.

Three Occasions for Transcendental Festivities by Viśākhā-devī dāśī

THIS YEAR, three auspicious days of special celebration for all devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead fall within the months of August and September. The first (August 11) is Janmāṣṭamī, the unique day commemorating Kṛṣṇa's appearance on earth five thousand years ago. The next day, Vyāsa-pūjā (August 12), celebrates the appearance anniversary of our beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Finally, Rādhāṣṭamī (September 23) marks the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal companion.

Janmāṣṭamī is the most opulent festival day for devotees. In India it is still observed with great pomp in every Hindu house, and even the devotees of other religious groups enjoy the ceremonies of this auspicious day. Many people make a holy pilgrimage to Gokula Vṛndāvana, the place of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, which is located near Delhi in India. It is said that if someone simply goes to Vṛndāvana, he will immediately feel separation from Kṛṣṇa, who performed such nice activities when He was present there. Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples have arranged for the construction of an opulent Kṛṣṇa consciousness temple in Vṛndāvana. This temple will officially open in a joyful ceremony on this coming Janmāṣṭamī.

In the west, hundreds of devotees observe Janmāṣṭamī by making a holy pilgrimage to New Vṛndāvana, a 1,000-acre Kṛṣṇa conscious community in the West Virginia hill country. New Vṛndāvana is so named because it is the western counterpart of India's Vṛndāvana. Great authorities on spiritual science state that the area known as Gokula Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes on earth, is as good as Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode in the spiritual sky. Poor human understanding cannot possibly determine how Goloka Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world, far beyond human comprehension, can be nondifferent from actual geographical places in India and West Virginia.

Viśākhā-devī dāśī, a graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology, is a professional photographer who joined ISKCON in 1971. She is now traveling around the world making documentary films about the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Yet Vṛndāvana and New Vṛndāvana, although on earth, are on the spiritual plane; their positions in material space and time in no way restrict their eternal transcendental nature.

For the pleasure of the Lord, New Vṛndāvana has contented, milk-giving cows (now numbering more than two hundred), acres of rolling green pasturing grounds, and vast tracts of farmland where devotees raise a wide variety of crops. Thus all the necessities of life are easily provided, and the residents of New Vṛndāvana find that the combination of simple rural living and Kṛṣṇa consciousness makes their lives complete and fulfilling. Devotees in New Vṛndāvana are now constructing seven temples, modeled after the seven major temples in Vṛndāvana, India. Soon, therefore, no one in New Vṛndāvana will ever be beyond the sound of temple bells, reminding everyone of Kṛṣṇa's all-attractive presence.

During the week of Janmāṣṭamī, devotees from all over North America flock to this beautiful land for many days of festivities to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Simply hearing about the transcendental activities of the Lord in the association of pure-hearted devotees brings feelings of transcendental bliss. In fact, the first symptom of one who has actually come to the spiritual platform is that he is always joyful. This joyous life is attained as a

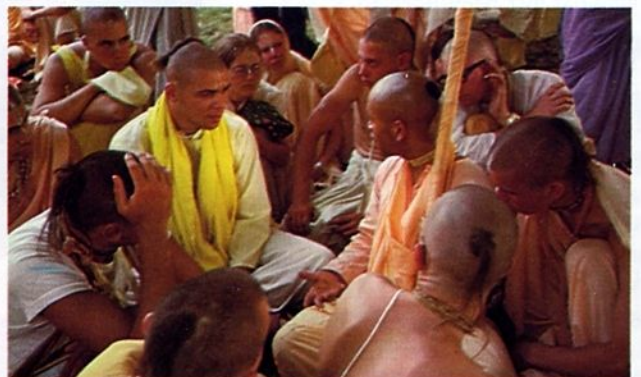


Photo: Bhargava dāsa

reaction to reading *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or associating with people interested in the spiritual life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially those who are seriously determined to achieve the favor of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda allows his most advanced disciples in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to accept the renounced order of life and engage themselves full time in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness (opposite, below). In this order, called *sannyāsa*, the devotee breaks his connection with wife and family and fully surrenders his life to the Lord's service. The thoughts of such pure devotees dwell in Kṛṣṇa, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss enlightening one another and con-

chief, a peacock fan and a whisk, while the assembled devotees sing beautiful prayers in glorification of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa (see the inside back cover of this magazine). This chanting is accompanied by the melodious sounds of *mṛdaṅgas* (drums) and *karātalas* (hand cymbals). Such purifying devotional activities arouse feelings of ecstasy even in neophytes. Thus *maṅgalārati* (*maṅgala* means "auspicious") is always adorned with joyful clapping, dancing and exclamations of "Hari bol! Hari bol!" ("Chant the names of Hari, or Kṛṣṇa.")

After *ārati* most of the disciples continue their *japa* (soft chanting of the *mahā-mantra*), while others bathe

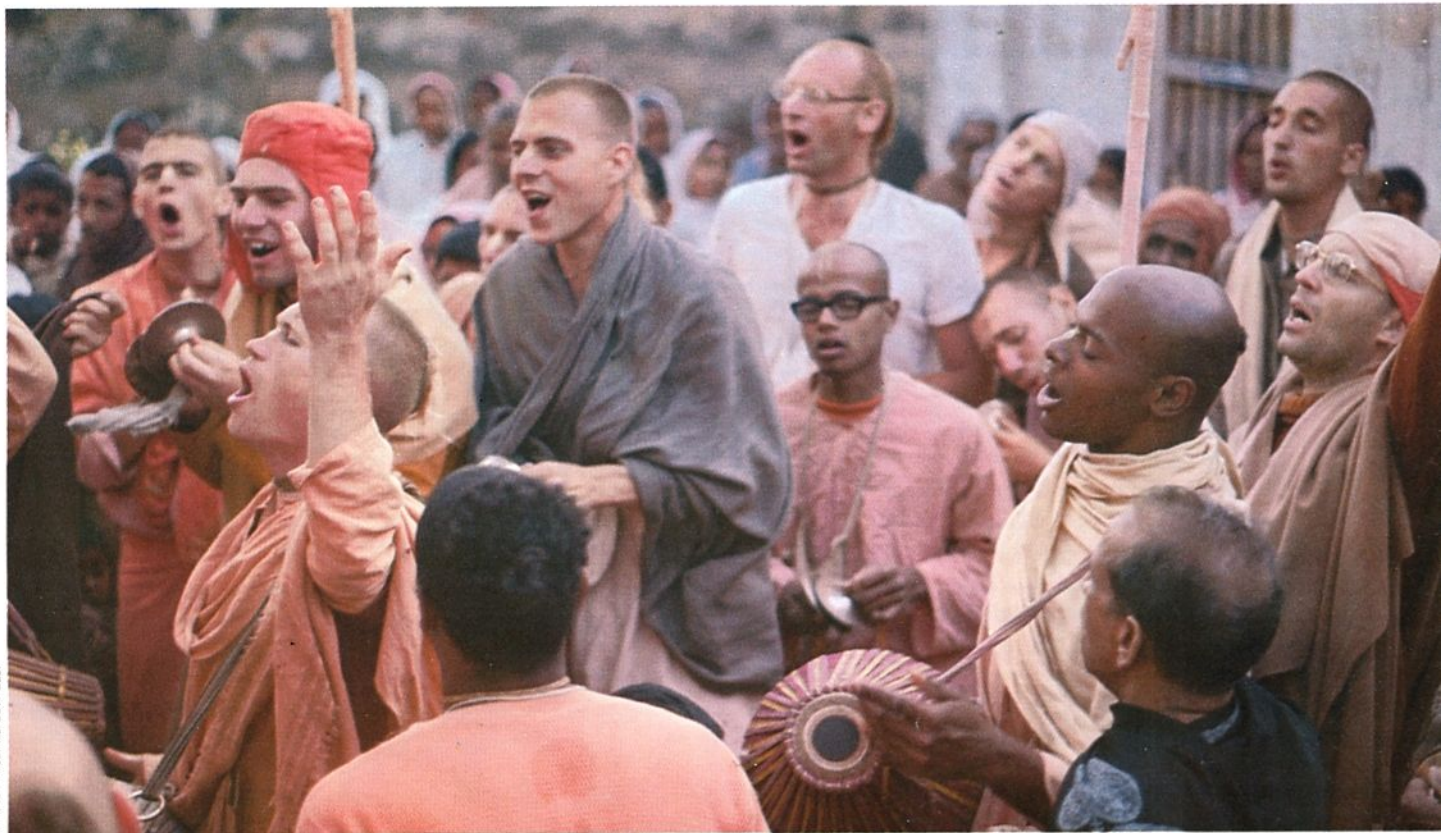


Photo: Vṛsakha devi dāsi

versing about Him. By the grace of the Lord these fully dedicated *sannyāsīs* are able to abandon all material desires born of false ego and thus become fully self-satisfied.

The association of other devotees, especially such elevated *sannyāsīs*, generates spontaneous feelings of happiness within the minds of the devotees who come together at New Vṛndāvana for the many days of festivities. There is ecstatic singing (above), dancing and philosophical discussion throughout the days and nights. For the entire week of Janmāṣṭamī, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa goes on literally twenty-four hours a day.

All Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples begin the day of Janmāṣṭamī as usual by rising and bathing early and chanting the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—until *maṅgalārati* at 4:30 a.m. Each day at this time, the Lord is worshiped with incense, a camphor lamp, a ghee lamp, water in a conchshell, a flower, a handker-

and dress the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. According to revealed scriptures, since God is unlimited and absolute, there is no difference between the Lord and the Lord's form and name. Therefore the Deity, or form of Kṛṣṇa, is God Himself, but this fact is visible only to His devotees.

To honor Kṛṣṇa on the day of His birth, devotees offer their services to the Deities by dressing Them in new garments made especially for the occasion and lavishly decorating the Lord's altar with flowers to create a nice transcendental atmosphere so that everyone naturally becomes absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental appearance in this world. In observance of the great day of Janmāṣṭamī itself, no one takes any food or water until midnight, when, after a majestic bathing and *ārati* ceremony, a little *prasāda* (the Lord's mercy in the form of food) is distributed to everyone.

The day after Kṛṣṇa's appearance day is Vyāsa-pūjā, the appearance day of the spiritual master of the universe

(*jagad-guru*), His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Although bogus *yogīs* often claim the title *jagad-guru* to increase their false prestige, we properly honor Śrīla Prabhupāda with this title because he is a bona fide representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme spiritual master, and is making Kṛṣṇa's message known all over the world.

On the day of Vyāsa-pūjā in New Vṛndāvana, as in all the ISKCON centers around the world, the disciples read their personal offerings in appreciation of Śrīla Prabhupāda. In their own words, the disciples express the purport of this prayer:


*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmlītaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

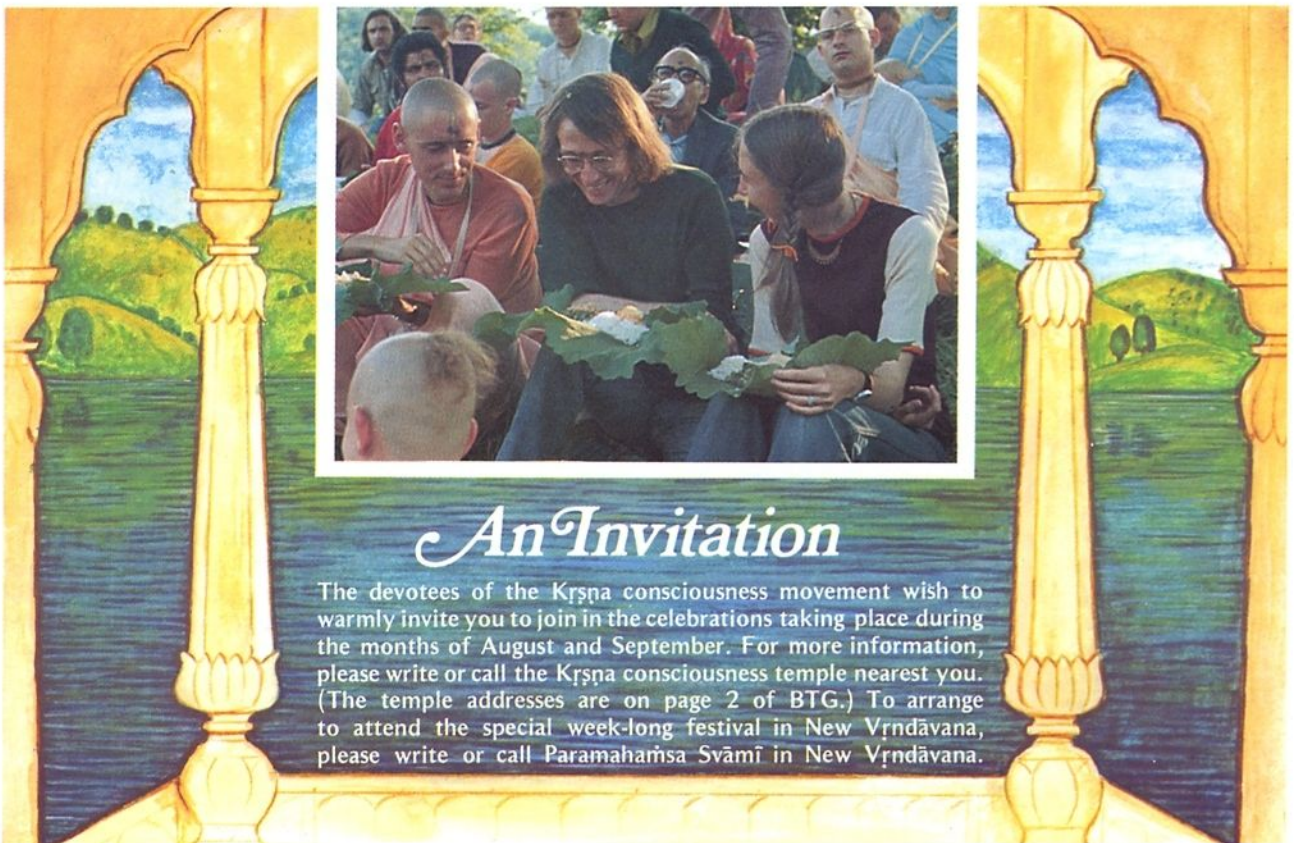
“I was born in the darkest ignorance, but my spiritual master has opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.”

The morning's activities culminate in an *ārati* offered simultaneously to the Deities and to Śrīla Prabhupāda. The spiritual master is not God, but he is God's pure representative. Therefore, on account of his being the most confidential servitor of the Lord, he is honored as much as the Supreme Lord Himself. After the *ārati* ceremony, all the devotees partake of a sumptuous feast of Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* to their full satisfaction.

The third festival, Rādhāṣṭamī, the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, occurs on September 23. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī personifies Kṛṣṇa's internal energy, or pleasure potency. She is described as the symbol of devotional service in the highest degree, and She is known throughout

the world as the most beloved of Kṛṣṇa. Her name is always associated with Kṛṣṇa, for devotees speak of “Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.” Rādhārāṇī is always prepared to fulfill all the desires of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, She is the supply source of all the demands of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and She is qualified with uncommon qualities for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. Rādhāṣṭamī is a special opportunity to glorify Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, under whose care one can attain perfection in devotional service.

Many thousands and millions of living entities are wandering within this material world, and some of them, by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, can get the seed of devotional service. One must sow this seed in the field of the heart, just as a gardener sows the seed of a valuable tree. Periodic occasions for remembering the Lord and His pure devotees, such as Janmāṣṭamī, Vyāsa-pūjā and Rādhāṣṭamī, stimulate ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa. Joining in these activities is just like pouring water on the creeper of devotion. As one hears and chants the holy name of the Supreme Lord or takes part in discussions of devotional service in a society of pure devotees, the plant of devotional service sprouts from the seed of devotion and begins to grow freely. When fully grown, it transcends the length and breadth of the universe and enters the effulgence that pervades the spiritual world. The plant penetrates even this effulgence and then gradually enters the planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, where it takes shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. After attaining this position, the plant produces the fruit known as love of Godhead. That is the ultimate goal of devotional service and the perfection of human life. Therefore devotees take advantage of these festive days to glorify Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and Their pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda. 



An Invitation

The devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement wish to warmly invite you to join in the celebrations taking place during the months of August and September. For more information, please write or call the Kṛṣṇa consciousness temple nearest you. (The temple addresses are on page 2 of BTG.) To arrange to attend the special week-long festival in New Vṛndāvana, please write or call Paramahaṁsa Svāmī in New Vṛndāvana.

Vyāsa-Pūjā Day Address

Delivered at New Vṛndāvana, Sept. 2, 1972, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

*Śrīla Prabhupāda with disciples
and well-wishers at New Vṛndāvana
The spiritual master is honored
as the representative of God.*

OF COURSE those who are my students know what this ceremony is, but I shall inform those who are visitors something about this ceremony so that it may not be misunderstood. Outsiders may see and wonder why this person is being worshiped like God, and there may be some doubt. Actually this ceremony is etiquette, and it is called Vyāsa-pūjā. Vyāsa is the original author of Vedic literature, and he is an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa [God]. It is he who gave us all Vedic knowledge, and he received the knowledge from Nārada. Nārada received the knowledge from Brahmā, and Brahmā received it from Kṛṣṇa. In this way, by disciplic succession, we receive transcendental knowledge.

Five thousand years ago, before Vyāsadeva, there was no need of written literature. People's memories were so sharp that they would remember for life whatever they had heard from the spiritual master. In this age of Kali-yuga, however, we are reduced in bodily strength, power of memory, feelings of sympathy for others, duration of life, and religious propensities. In this way we have degenerated in this age. We can understand this very easily. Formerly when a person was attacked, many people would come to help him, asking, "Why is this man being attacked?" However, at the present moment if a man is attacked, passers-by will not care because they have lost their sympathy for others and their sense of mercy. Our neighbor may starve, but we don't care. Formerly, however, there was sympathy for other living entities, even for an ant. For instance, when Mahārāja Parīkṣit was touring his kingdom and saw a man trying to kill a cow, he immediately drew his sword and said, "Who are you? Why are you killing a cow in my kingdom?" The government is supposed to give everyone protection; it is not that the government is meant to give protection only to human beings and not to animals. Because it is Kali-yuga, however, the government discriminates between two nationals. A national is one who has taken birth in a country. The trees, aquatics, flies, reptiles, snakes, birds, bees, human beings—everyone born in the land was formerly protected by the government. Why should the government give protection to one type of living entity and neglect others? This means that human beings have lost their sympathy for other living entities, and this is one of the characteristics of Kali-yuga. Before the advent of Kali-yuga, even an ant would not be killed unnecessarily. There was one instance of a hunter who killed many animals, but when he became a devotee, he was not prepared to kill even an ant. Thus this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is so nice that it makes a person perfect in knowledge, perfect in strength—perfect in everything.

This process by which one can make life perfect is coming

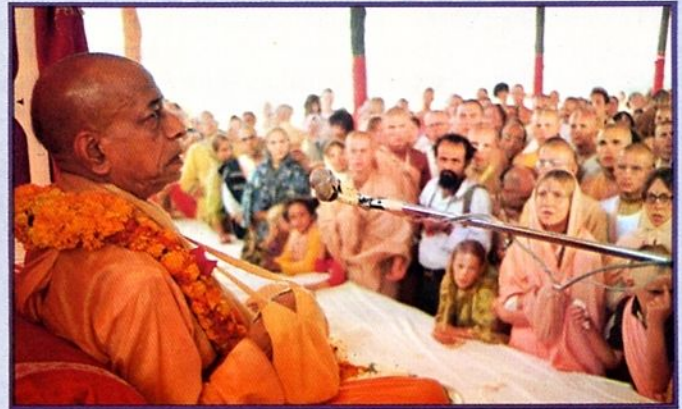


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

down from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the origin of everything, and therefore knowledge of perfection is also coming from Him. Periodically (after millions and millions of years) Kṛṣṇa comes. He comes once in a day of Brahmā, and a day of Brahmā is so long that it is difficult to calculate. According to Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ
rātriṁ yuga-sahasrāntām te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ*

"By human calculation, a thousand ages taken together is the duration of Brahmā's one day. And such also is the duration of his night." (Bg. 8.17)

Thus Brahmā's one day is about 4,320,000,000 years. This means that Kṛṣṇa comes once every 8,640,000,000 years. Why does He come? He comes to show how a human being should live in order to make his life perfect. Kṛṣṇa comes thus once in a millennium and imparts perfect knowledge in *Bhagavad-gītā*. This perfect knowledge that comes from Kṛṣṇa is distributed by *paramparā*, disciplic succession. The example may be given of a ripened mango at the top of a mango tree. If the mango is dropped, it will be lost; so the mango is handed from one person to another, from one limb to another, until it is brought down. In the same way, Vedic knowledge is taken from authority coming down through disciplic succession. As stated, Kṛṣṇa gives the knowledge to Brahmā, Brahmā gives it to Nārada, Nārada gives it to Vyāsadeva, Vyāsadeva to Madhva Ācārya, Madhva Ācārya to his disciplic succession, later to Mādhavendra Purī, to Tīsvara Purī, to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to the six Gosvāmīs, to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, to Jīva Gosvāmī, to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, to Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, to Viśvanātha Cakravartī, to Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura,

to Gaurakīṣora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and then to my spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and now we are distributing that same knowledge.

It is not that we manufacture knowledge. How can perfect knowledge be manufactured? To manufacture perfect knowledge, we must be perfect, and, being in the conditional state, we are conditioned by four defects. The first defect is that we commit mistakes. Of all the people who are seated here, there is not one person who can claim that he has never committed a mistake in his life. That is natural; to err is human. To commit mistakes is not unusual; it is indeed the usual thing. Even illustrious personalities like Mahatma Gandhi committed so many mistakes. Another defect in the conditioned living entity is the tendency to be illusioned. This means accepting one thing to be something else. For instance, we accept this body to be ourself, but it is not. From this false conception, all the trouble in the world comes. People are thinking, "I am American, I am Indian, I am Russian, I am man, woman, dog, cat, etc." This is illusion because we are not these bodies. We can understand this at death when one's relatives cry, "Oh, my son is gone! Oh, my daughter is gone!" The body may be there, but we lament that the person is gone. Thus after death we can understand that our father or son was not this body; he was something else. Mistaking the body to be the self in this way is called illusion.

Another defective characteristic of the living entity is the propensity to cheat. Everyone is trying to cheat others. When businessmen make agreements, they try to make the agreement in their favor. One person is thinking that he is so clever that he is cheating the other, and the other person is thinking in the same way. The cheating propensity is there, even between the husband and wife, and sometimes between father and son, what to speak of other relations. Finally, the fourth defect of the living entity is that he has imperfect senses. We are very much proud of our sense of sight. Everyone says, "Can you show it to me? I want to see." But what actually is our power of seeing? At night it is very difficult to see, and if there is a wall, we cannot see through it. Every day we see the sun as a small disc, but actually it is thousands of times larger than the earth. We cannot see anything situated a long distance from us, nor can we even see our own eyelids, which are actually covering the eyes themselves. In this way if we study every one of our senses, we will find that they are imperfect. If we are illusioned, if our senses are imperfect, if we have a cheating propensity, and if we are certain to commit mistakes, how can we give perfect knowledge? Since an imperfect personality can only give imperfect knowledge, there is no benefit in accepting knowledge from any ordinary living entity. If knowledge is imperfect, what is its use? A conditioned living entity can only theorize, but we don't want theory. We want to know the facts. That perfect knowledge which is factual can only come from God.

One who distributes knowledge exactly as God distributes it, who distributes the same knowledge imparted by God, is also perfect. A postman may deliver us a hundred dollars, but we do not consider that the postman is giving us a hundred dollars. The money is sent by a friend, and it is simply the postman's business to hand it over as it is, without taking anything or adding anything to it. His perfection is that he delivers the hundred dollars as it is sent by one's friend. That is his perfection. The postman may be imperfect in so many ways, but when he does his business perfectly, he is perfect. Similarly,

Vyāsa-pūjā means that we are receiving knowledge from Kṛṣṇa perfectly through the agency of the spiritual master. The spiritual master is the representative of Vyāsa because he is delivering that same knowledge that is coming down by disciplic succession from Vyāsa. Because he delivers that knowledge without change, he is offered respects one day out of the year on his appearance day as the representative of Vyāsadeva, and this is called Vyāsa-pūjā.

The spiritual master receives all honor and all contributions on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is not that he receives them for his personal self. For instance, when India was under British rule, there was a viceroy who represented the king, and often many people would present the viceroy with valuable jewels. However, it was the law that the viceroy could not touch even a single jewel, for they were all going to the royal treasury. The viceroy could accept all contributions on behalf of the king, but the contributions themselves actually went to the king. Similarly, on Vyāsa-pūjā day whatever honor or contributions are given to the spiritual master are rendered to God. Just as knowledge comes from the top and goes downward, the honor and contributions go from the bottom upward. This, then, is the process. The spiritual master has to teach the disciple how to send his respects and contributions to God. This is the real meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā. The spiritual master is accepted to be as good as God. Why?

*sākṣād dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*

"The spiritual master is honored as much as the Supreme Lord because of his being the most confidential servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and is followed by all authorities. Therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, who is a bona fide representative of Śrī Hari [Kṛṣṇa]." (Śrī Gurv-aṣṭaka)

All the śāstras (scriptures) and Vedic literatures declare that the spiritual master is as good as God. It is not that he is God, but that he is as good as God. The Māyāvādīs or impersonalists think that the spiritual master is God, but we Vaiṣṇavas (devotees) do not accept this. How can a man become God? Rather, because the spiritual master is God's representative, he is honored as much as God. One should not think that he is offered respects because he has become God. *Kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya*. It is just as when someone pats our son or dog, we become pleased. The spiritual master is a very confidential servant or dog of God; therefore if we can please him—*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādaḥ*—God becomes pleased. If someone pleases our small child, we become automatically pleased. One may please a child with a two-cent piece of candy, but to please the father, thousands of dollars may be required. So the purpose of pleasing the father may be fulfilled by offering the son a two-cent piece of candy.

This, then, is the business of the spiritual master. One should not think that this person is sitting very comfortably and accepting all honor and contributions for himself. The honor and homage to the spiritual master are needed just to teach the student how to offer them to God. This is the sum and substance of Vyāsa-pūjā. Thank you very much.





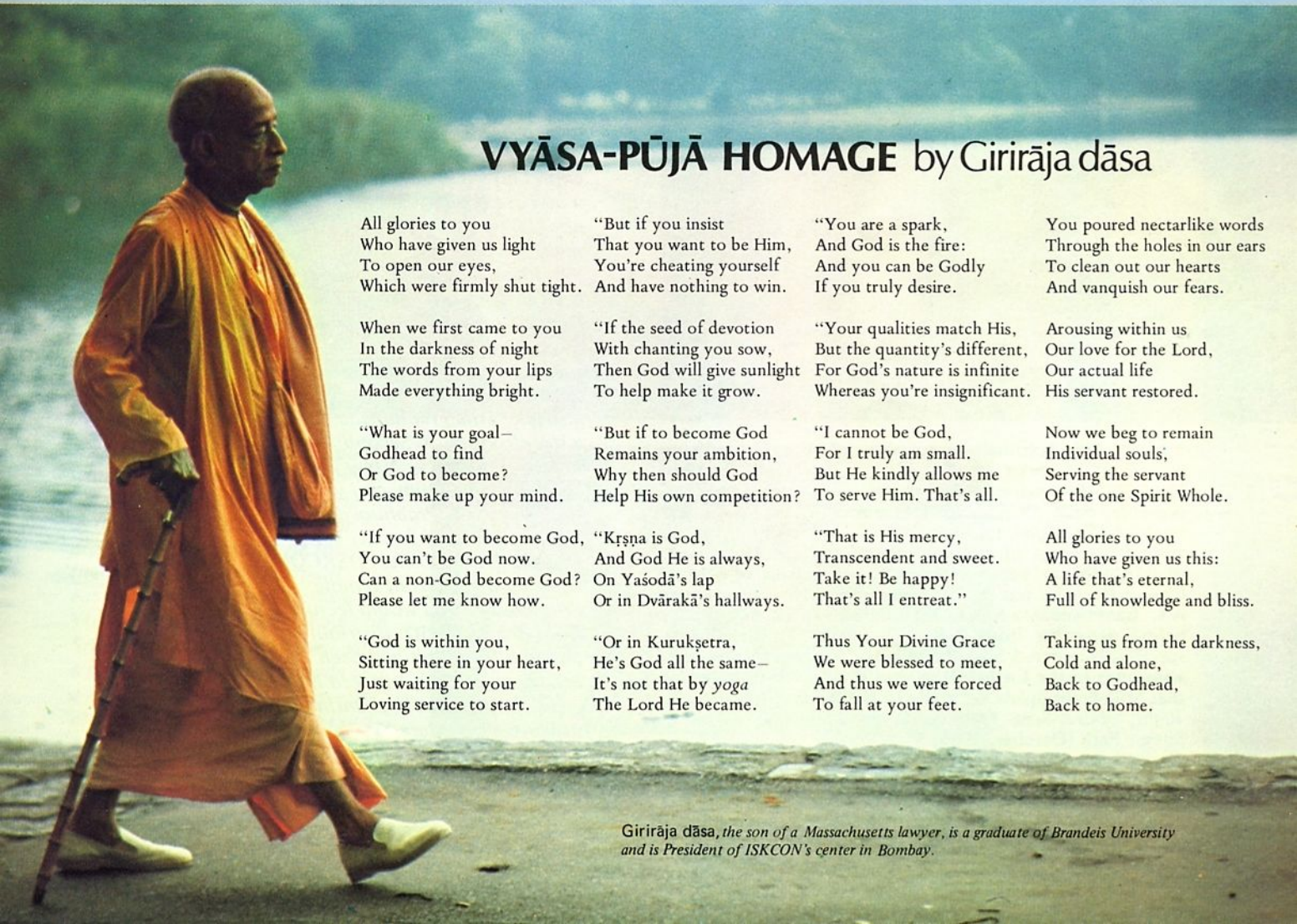
THE WORD "PRABHUPĀDA" is a term of the utmost reverence in Vedic religious circles. It signifies a great saint even among saints. The word actually has two meanings: first, one at whose feet (*pāda*) there are many *prabhus* (a term meaning "master" that the disciples of a *guru* use in addressing one another); second, one who is always found at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa (the supreme master).

Prabhupāda

In the line of disciplic succession through which Kṛṣṇa consciousness is conveyed to mankind, there have been a number of figures of such spiritual importance as to be called Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda executed the will of his master, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and therefore he and his associate Gosvāmīs are called Prabhupāda. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Gosvāmī Ṭhākura executed the will of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and therefore he is also addressed as Prabhupāda. Our spiritual master, Oṃ Viṣṇupāda 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swami Mahārāja, has in the same way executed the will of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda in carrying the message of love of Kṛṣṇa to the western world. Therefore, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, we, the humble servants of His Divine Grace from all the different centers of the *saṅkīrtana* movement in North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia, prefer to address His Grace our spiritual master as Prabhupāda. We have asked if we may have his permission to do so, and he has kindly said yes.



VYĀSA-PŪJĀ HOMAGE by Girirāja dāsa

All glories to you
Who have given us light
To open our eyes,
Which were firmly shut tight.

When we first came to you
In the darkness of night
The words from your lips
Made everything bright.

"What is your goal—
Godhead to find
Or God to become?
Please make up your mind.

"If you want to become God,
You can't be God now.
Can a non-God become God?
Please let me know how.

"God is within you,
Sitting there in your heart,
Just waiting for your
Loving service to start.

"But if you insist
That you want to be Him,
You're cheating yourself
And have nothing to win.

"If the seed of devotion
With chanting you sow,
Then God will give sunlight
To help make it grow.

"But if to become God
Remains your ambition,
Why then should God
Help His own competition?

"Kṛṣṇa is God,
And God He is always,
On Yaśodā's lap
Or in Dvārakā's hallways.

"Or in Kurukṣetra,
He's God all the same—
It's not that by *yoga*
The Lord He became.

"You are a spark,
And God is the fire:
And you can be Godly
If you truly desire.

"Your qualities match His,
But the quantity's different,
For God's nature is infinite
Whereas you're insignificant.

"I cannot be God,
For I truly am small.
But He kindly allows me
To serve Him. That's all.

"That is His mercy,
Transcendent and sweet.
Take it! Be happy!
That's all I entreat."

Thus Your Divine Grace
We were blessed to meet,
And thus we were forced
To fall at your feet.

You poured nectarlike words
Through the holes in our ears
To clean out our hearts
And vanquish our fears.

Arousing within us
Our love for the Lord,
Our actual life
His servant restored.

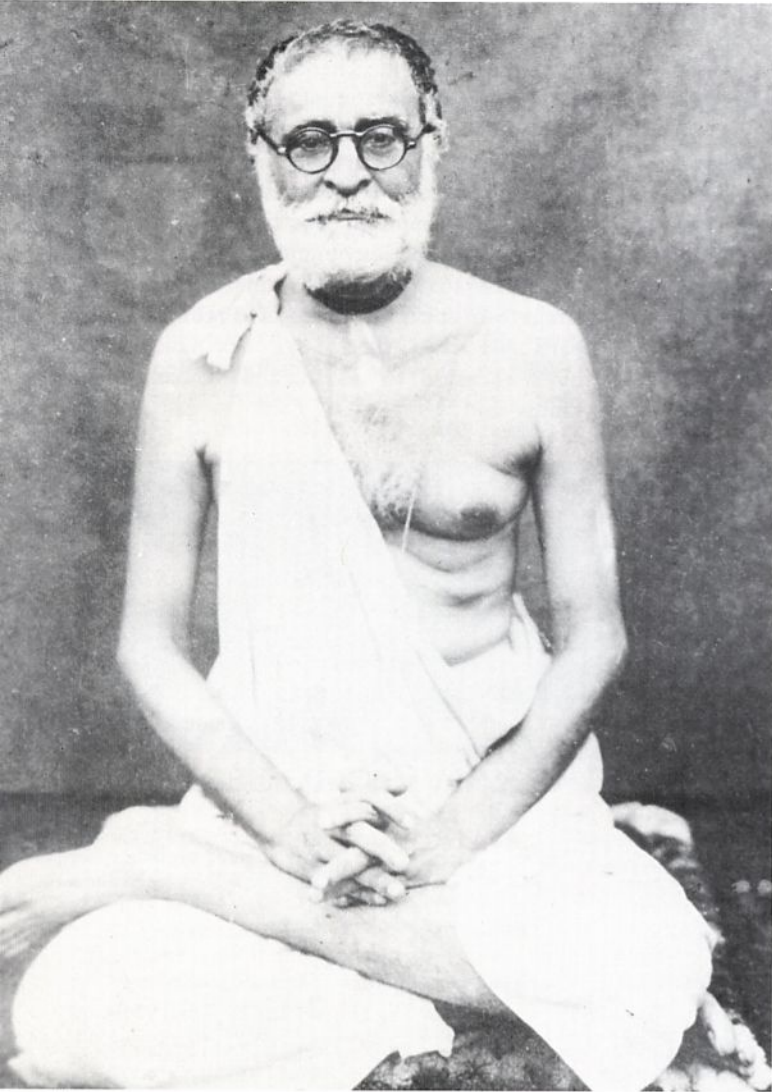
Now we beg to remain
Individual souls,
Serving the servant
Of the one Spirit Whole.

All glories to you
Who have given us this:
A life that's eternal,
Full of knowledge and bliss.

Taking us from the darkness,
Cold and alone,
Back to Godhead,
Back to home.

TO UNDERSTAND HIS GREATNESS

A survey of the transcendental accomplishments of the foremost spiritual teacher of the modern age, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



Above: The spiritual grandfather of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. A great scholar, lifelong ascetic and powerful preacher, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta wrote many books and established temples throughout India to make known the eternal teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In 1933, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta became the spiritual master of Abhay Charan De, who was later to be known as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. In 1936, just days before departing from this world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta specifically ordered Śrīla Prabhupāda to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the English language. It is to fulfill this order that Śrīla Prabhupāda has come to the West.

Right, above: Śrīla Prabhupāda preaching in Tompkin's Square Park (October, 1966).

Right, below: Early disciples of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement pose before Śrīla Prabhupāda's first temple (1968).

In 1965, at the age of 70, a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa packed a metal suitcase with books and personal belongings, left his small room in India's holy city of Vṛndāvana, and boarded the steamship Jaladuta to sail to the West.

He arrived at Boston's Commonwealth Pier on September 18, 1965, with little hope that the American people would pay heed to the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that his spiritual master had charged him to deliver. "Most of the people here," he wrote in a poem to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "are covered by nature's modes of ignorance and passion. I do not know how they will be able to understand Your transcendental message." He had no friends and nowhere to stay. He had brought only forty rupees and his books. "But I know that Your causeless mercy can make everything possible," he prayed, "because You are the most expert mystic. . . . Somehow or other You have brought me here to speak about You. Now it is up to You to make me a success or a failure, as You like." Now, nine years later, it is clear that Lord Kṛṣṇa has made His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda an overwhelming success.

In 1966, after months of personal struggle, Śrīla Prabhupāda rented a storefront at 26 Second Avenue in New York City. A few young students joined him, and with their help Śrīla Prabhupāda formed the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). In his first storefront temple, Śrīla Prabhupāda would lecture from Bhagavad-gītā, distribute prasāda (food that had been offered to Kṛṣṇa), and lead his tiny group of disciples in chanting the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.





On Sundays, Śrīla Prabhupāda would go to nearby Tompkin's Square Park, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa as usual, distribute prasāda, and urge the young people he found there to revive their dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The New York Times published a report on Śrīla Prabhupāda's activities, with a picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a headline declaring that he was attracting young people to Lord Kṛṣṇa. This was the birth of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.



The basis of the movement is the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra itself—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare! Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This chanting—the most recommended means for spiritual progress in this age—cleanses the mind. Thus it enables one to transcend temporary designations of race, religion and nationality and understand one's true identity as an eternal, spiritual living being.

According to the Vedic literature, the eternal living being takes birth in one body after another in 8,400,000 species of life. But the chanting frees one from this cycle of birth and death. In an age where philosophical speculation simply leads to disappointment or confusion, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra lifts one directly to spiritual knowledge. In other words, simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa one can directly experience self-realization. People are confused and misled

because they look for happiness in the material world. But the chanting at once puts one in touch with Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of all happiness. Thus one becomes fully satisfied, and the pains and pleasures of material life become insignificant. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, therefore, is the prime benediction for all humanity. Śrīla Prabhupāda has introduced this chanting all over the world.

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

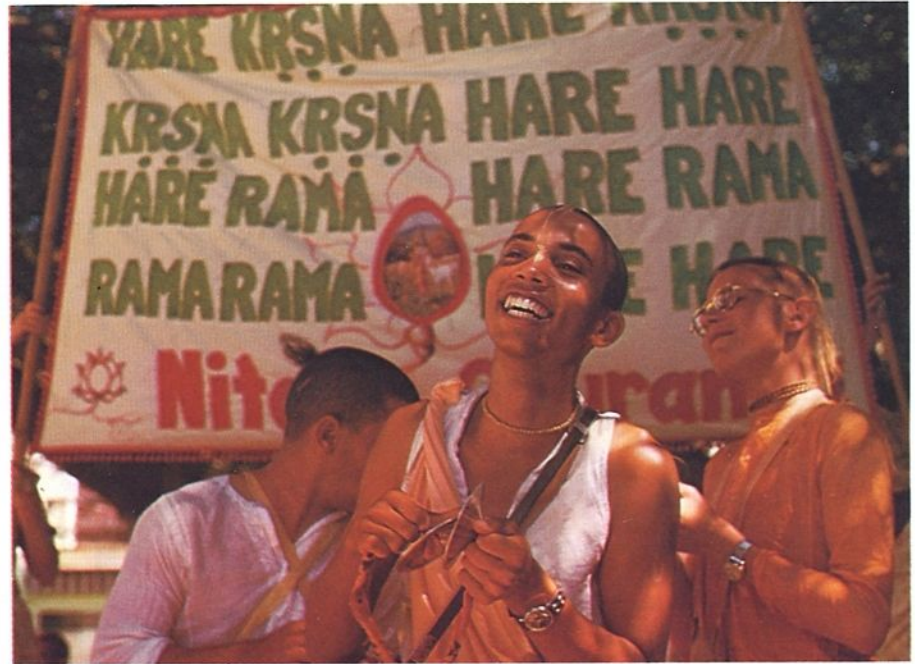


Above: ISKCON devotees from around the world hold saṅkīrtana, congregational chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, in Māyāpur, India, the birthplace of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Lord Caitanya is the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who stressed the importance of saṅkīrtana for the modern age.
Right: Śrīla Prabhupāda's preachers broadcast the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in Nairobi, Kenya.



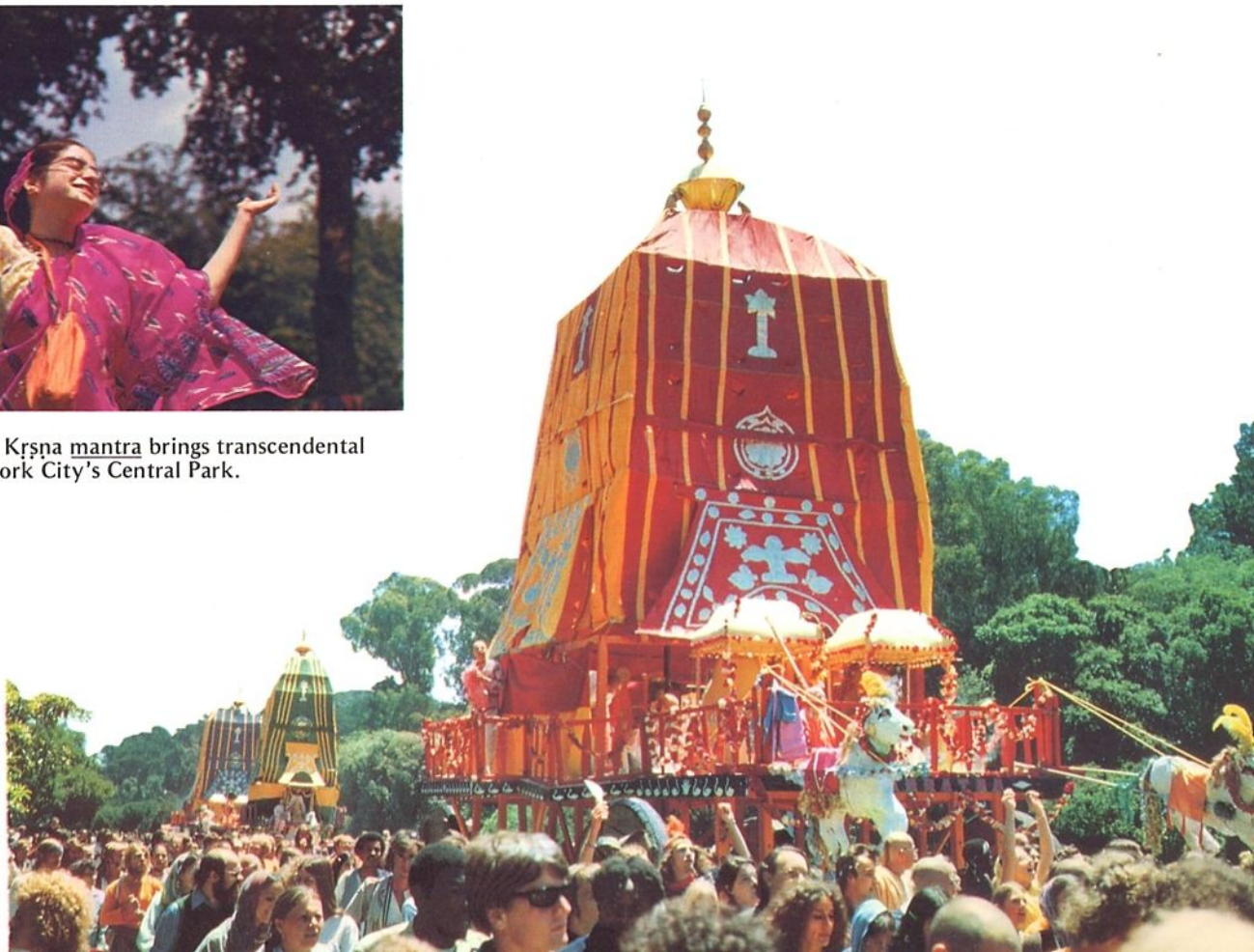


Below: Bright-faced devotees and the mahā-mantra in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
Bottom: Every year, thousands of people share the bliss of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in ISKCON's Rathayātrā Car Festival in San Francisco.



Above: The Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra brings transcendental ecstasy to New York City's Central Park.

Photo: Muralivadana dāsa



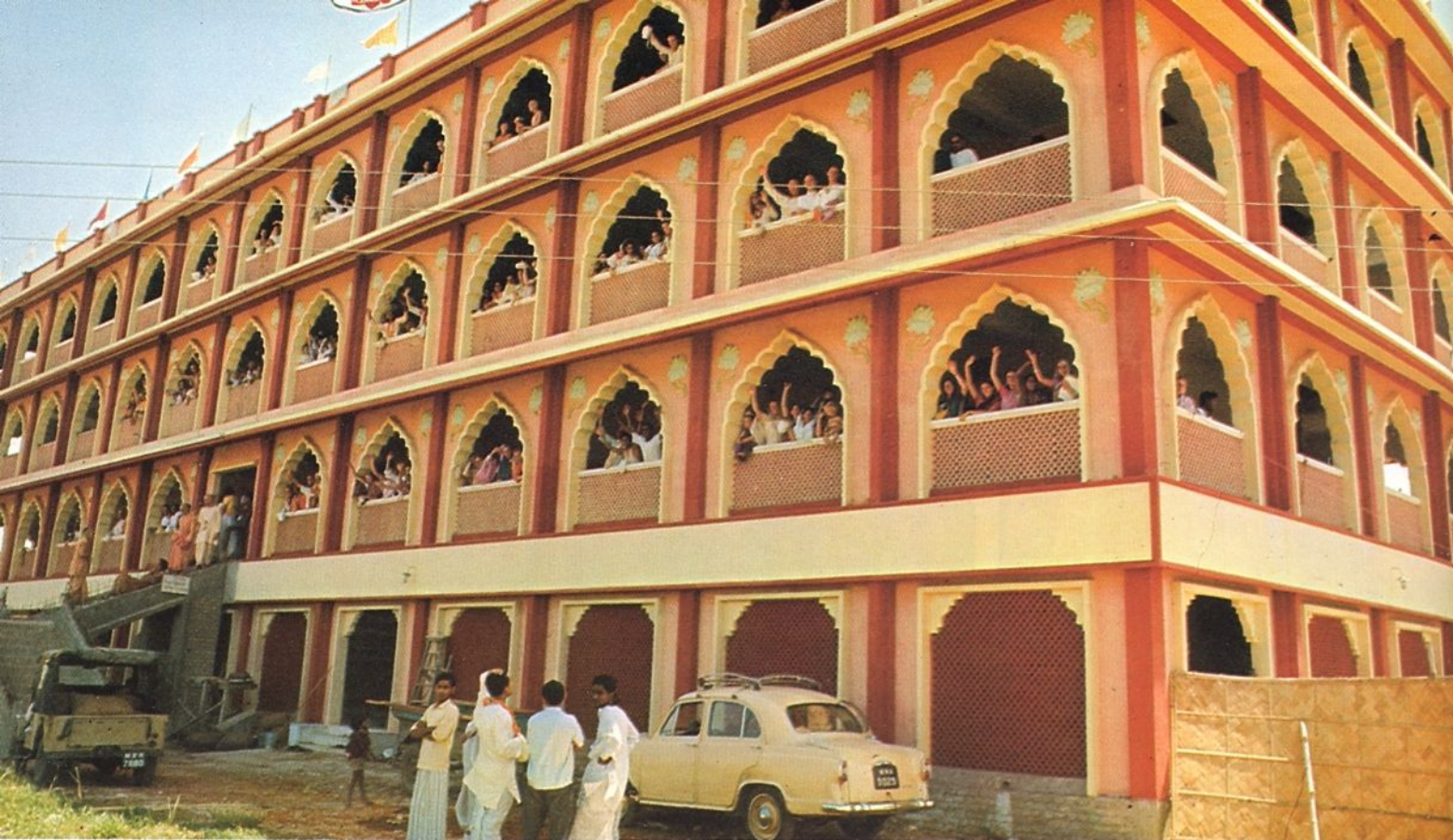


Photo: Viśakhā-devī dāśa

After carefully training his first disciples in New York to carry on the chanting and maintain the temple in his absence, Śrīla Prabhupāda flew to San Francisco. There he again attracted a few serious followers and started his second temple. Other temples soon appeared in Montreal, Boston and Buffalo, and the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement spread to large cities throughout America and Canada.



the San Francisco Chronicle. Śrīla Prabhupāda's devotees chanted on the streets, in clubs and in private homes, they established a permanent center only a few blocks from the British Museum, and they made a record of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra that became the number one song in all Great Britain. Śrīla Prabhupāda sent other disciples to Germany and France, and soon the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement was flourishing all over Europe. He later sent disciples to Africa, Australia, South America, Indonesia and Japan. Now there are more than 65 temples all over the world.

These temples are not simply places for devotees to live comfortably, eating and sleeping at the expense of the spiritual master or the public. Rather, they are active centers where everyone is busy working to serve Kṛṣṇa—and, through Kṛṣṇa, serve all living beings.

The temples fulfill two main

functions. First, they are centers where people can learn about Kṛṣṇa and get a taste for spiritual life by attending classes, festivals and other special programs. Second, they are colleges for training serious students to understand Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Bhagavad-gītā calls this the "king of education" because one who understands Kṛṣṇa, or God, attains not only the most valuable knowledge but also the most perfect self-realization.

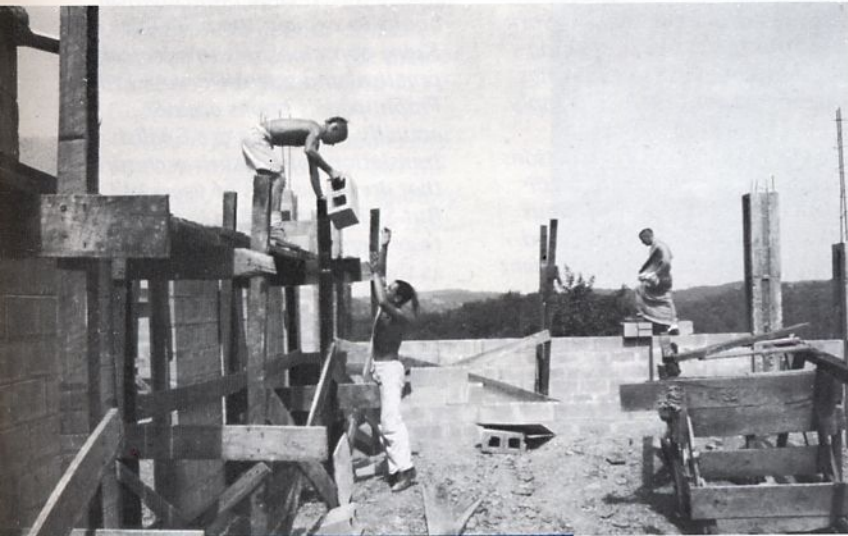
Two especially notable centers are the ISKCON temples in India's holy cities Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana. Vṛndāvana is the birthplace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Māyāpur is the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the "golden incarnation" of Kṛṣṇa who makes love of Kṛṣṇa very easily available in our modern age of quarrel. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla Prabhupāda's own spiritual master, wanted Westerners especially to have the chance to come to these holy places to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda has fulfilled Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's wish. He has built wonderful temples with fully modern facilities so that now Westerners can visit these holy places without discomfort, absorb themselves in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and return home spiritually purified and refreshed.



In 1968 Śrīla Prabhupāda sent three married couples to London. Prabhupāda's own spiritual master had wanted a permanent center in London, and he had sent disciples to start one, but somehow they were unable to do anything. Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, however, drew immediate attention. "Kṛṣṇa Chant Startles London," headlined

Left: A view of the ISKCON International Center on the holy island of Māyāpur. The center has ample living space for five hundred devotees and guests. The sacred rivers Ganges and Sarasvatī flow nearby. Bottom, left: Bhaktivedanta Manor, ISKCON's European headquarters, named in Śrīla Prabhupāda's honor, rests on a spacious estate just outside London. The Society also maintains an active center in the city itself. Middle, left: The main building of ISKCON's Gurukula school in Dallas, Texas.

Photo: Viśakhā-devī dāśī



Left and below: Farming, gardening and construction in New Vṛndāvana.



Photo: Bhārgava dāsa



Another of Śrīla Prabhupāda's projects is New Vṛndāvana, a 1,000-acre Kṛṣṇa conscious farm community in the hills of West Virginia. First established in 1968, New Vṛndāvana provides the ideal atmosphere of a busy yet peaceful village fully devoted to spiritual progress. Moreover, it demonstrates how a Kṛṣṇa-conscious society engages each person according to his talents and propensities. In ISKCON's temples in large cities, devotees work as preachers, or they employ their technical or professional skills in Kṛṣṇa's service. In New Vṛndāvana, however, devotees maintain the farm, grow crops and tend cows for Kṛṣṇa. This illustrates how every individual can live happily in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by working in the occupation for which he is most inclined.



Above and left: Sanskrit and a smile at Gurukula. The teachers, noted the New York Times, are both strict and affectionate, and the children laugh easily.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has also established the West's first Kṛṣṇa conscious school—Gurukula, a primary school in Dallas, Texas, for almost one hundred boys and girls between the ages of five and fifteen. The Vedic literature says that a human birth is a rare opportunity, for a human being has the intelligence with which to understand the ultimate purpose of life. Therefore from the

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

very beginning a young child should learn how to love Kṛṣṇa. Then he will be happy in both this life and the next. Gurukula, therefore, aside from teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, teaches a young child how to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus Śrīla Prabhupāda is giving these children the chance to become not only expert in ordinary material affairs but spiritually enlightened as well.

A child at Gurukula learns how to read—and be Kṛṣṇa conscious.

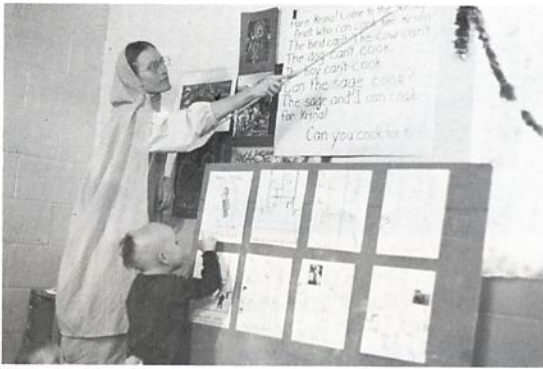


Photo: Murali Radana dāsa

Photo: Viśakhā-devī dāśī

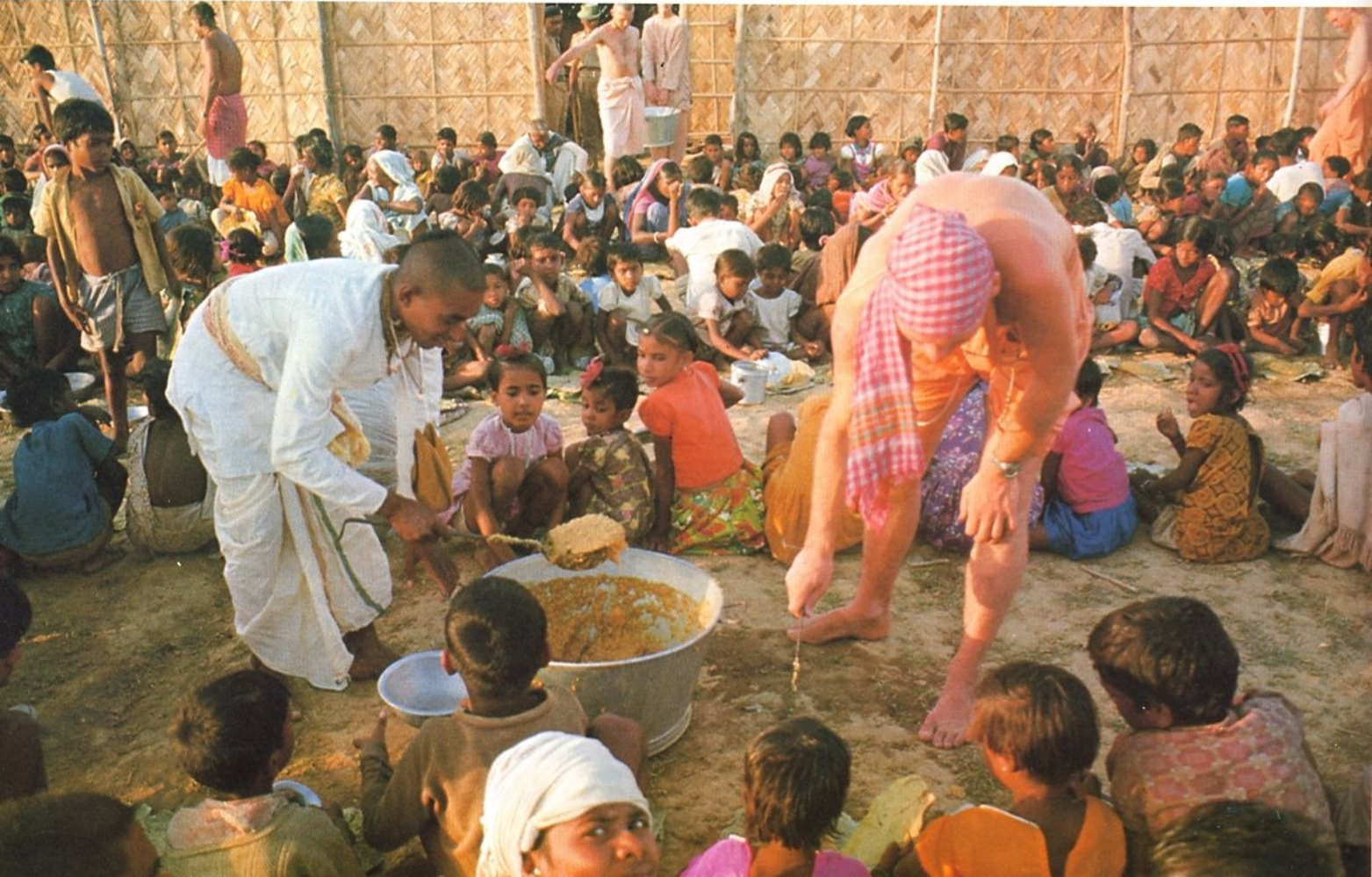
Śrīla Prabhupāda, furthermore, has brought kṛṣṇa-prasāda to the Western world. Kṛṣṇa-prasāda is food offered to Kṛṣṇa. According to Bhagavad-gītā, eating food prepared only for the enjoyment of the senses implicates one, under the laws of karma, in a network of sinful reactions. But eating food offered first to Kṛṣṇa has just the opposite effect. Simply by eating such prasāda, one cleanses himself of the reactions to past sins, which are impediments to self-realization. Thus even if one cannot understand Vedic philosophy, or even chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, one can advance in spiritual life simply by eating kṛṣṇa-prasāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, therefore, has arranged to distribute such prasāda all over the world. In India, where hunger, for many people, is a day-to-day problem, Śrīla Prabhupāda's temples distribute prasāda to as many as six thousand people daily. And in the West, where food is plentiful but spiritual realization is not, all Śrīla Prabhupāda's temples dis-

tribute prasāda as a regular part of their programs.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's most substantial contribution, however, is to be found in his books. His Divine Grace has written more than a dozen large philosophical books to explain the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a logical, practical and scientific way. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are not actually new. They are English translations of Sanskrit scriptures that are thousands of years old. But Śrīla Prabhupāda is the first to present these scriptures purely, as they are, without changing their meaning to fit preconceived mundane notions. Now, consequently, for the first time, people are understanding the eternal wisdom of these ancient scriptures. They are therefore becoming devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Before Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the West, more than seven hundred editions of Bhagavad-gītā were available in English. But although scholars and philosophers studied Bhagavad-gītā for hundreds of years, not a single person became



Śrīla Prabhupāda's books give explicit knowledge of the Absolute Truth as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. But now thousands of people have read Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, understood its message and thus become Kṛṣṇa's devotees. In this way they are finding unlimited bliss and satisfaction, and they are becoming eligible to get out of this material world and at the time of death go back home, back to Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books give overwhelming evidence that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa and that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the supreme perfection

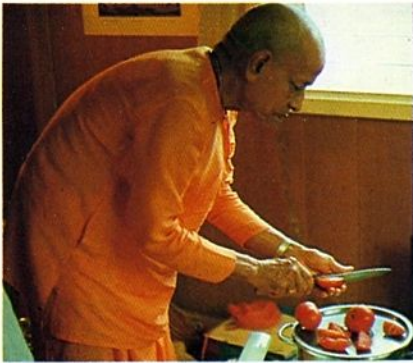


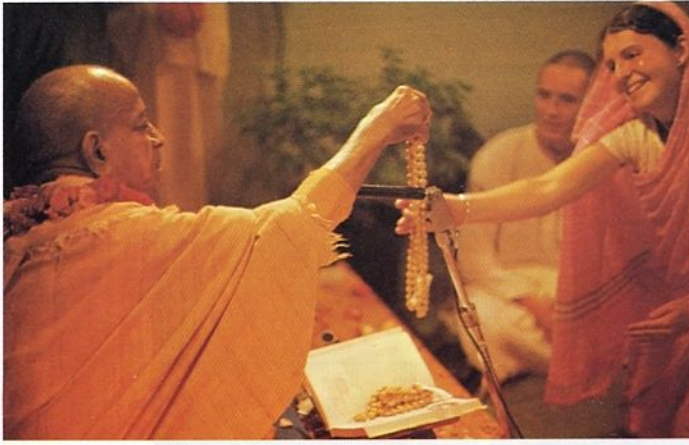
Illustration: Muralīdhara dāsa



Photo: Bhārgava dāsa

Above, left: Śrīla Prabhupāda prepares prasāda for a feast in ISKCON's Temple in Honolulu. Left: Tidbits of prasāda win eager acceptance at the Rathayātrā Festival in London. Far left: Devotees distribute full plates of prasāda to children in Māyāpur, West Bengal. "You have my admiration and blessings for your selfless work."—Kenneth Keating, former US Ambassador to India.

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa



Śrīla Prabhupāda initiates his disciples in the authorized Vedic way of spiritual understanding. He teaches as *ācārya*, a spiritual master who imparts the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness both by precept and by the ideal example of his life.

of spiritual life. Too often, people have assumed that the Supreme is impersonal or void. Even people who believe that the Supreme is a person have had little idea of who that person is. But Śrīla Prabhupāda has given explicit knowledge of the Supreme as the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He has explained in detail His name, form, qualities and pastimes and explained how to develop love for Him. Nowhere else can one find out precisely who God is, what He looks like, where He lives, and how He enjoys His pastimes with His devotees in the spiritual world. Therefore Kṛṣṇa consciousness, by virtue of its completeness, its authenticity, the integrity of its Vedic logic and arguments, and its potency to invoke one's dormant love of Godhead, surpasses all the other philosophies of the world. It is this supreme philosophy that is being freely distributed by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

It is the mercy and kindness of His Divine Grace that he has dedicated all his time and energy to give us the chance to know and love Kṛṣṇa. We can only aspire to follow in his footsteps, for by his personal example he has shown the meaning of pure devotion. We have yet to fully appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda's greatness and the greatness of the gifts he has given us. Moreover, Śrīla Prabhupāda is always humbly unwilling to take personal credit for his accomplishments. "I am most insignificant," he says. "But somehow or other I have tried to carry out the orders of Kṛṣṇa and my spiritual master. Whatever success has come, it is only by their grace."

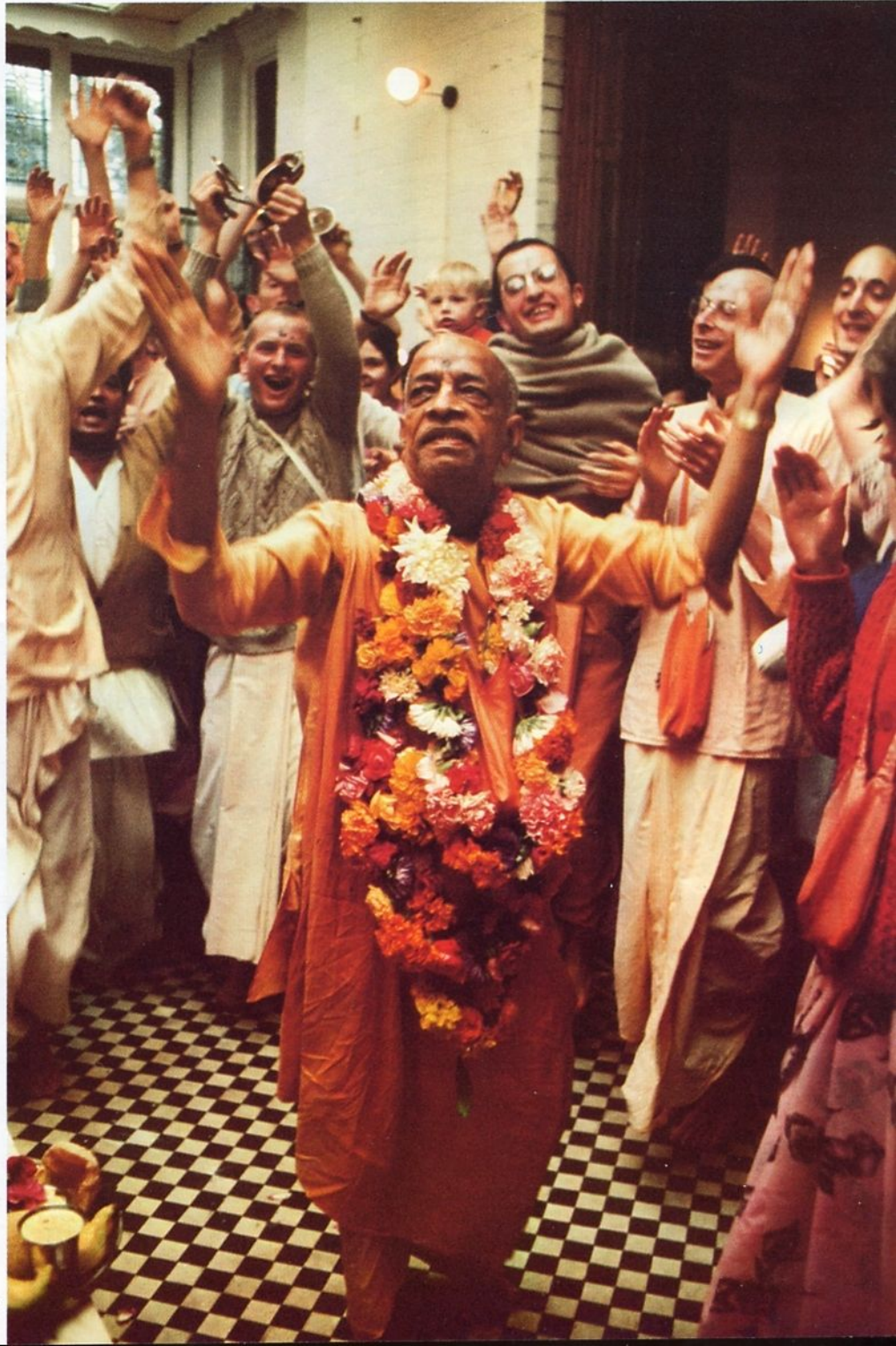




Illustration: Parīkṣit dāsa

What Is The Pleasure Potency?

FEVERYONE naturally wants to enjoy, yet no one is fully independent in finding enjoyment. To satisfy our desires, we need the association of others. We use the expression “to enjoy oneself,” but we enjoy ourselves most in good company. Indeed, most people would find prolonged solitude practically unbearable.

Kṛṣṇa, however, the Supreme Lord, being the source of everything, is fully independent. He is independent in His existence, His knowledge and His pleasure, for everything rests upon Him, as pearls are strung on a thread.

Kṛṣṇa, therefore, needs no one. Since in one sense He is everything, no one exists outside of Him. Consequently, when Kṛṣṇa wants to enjoy, He expands the potency or energy within Himself that gives Him enjoyment. This potency is a person. Her name is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Rādhārāṇī is not a different person from Kṛṣṇa—or, rather, She is both one with and different from Him. How could two people be one person or one person be two? A simple example will illustrate how this is so. The sun cannot exist without the sunshine, nor the sunshine without the sun. We say, “The sun is in my room”—even though the sun itself is ninety-three million miles

Jayādvaita dāsa is the Editor of *Back to Godhead*.

WHO IS THAT GIRL WITH KṚṢṆA?



by JAYĀDVAITA DĀSA

When people see a picture like the one you see here, they often ask, “Who is that girl with Kṛṣṇa?” The answer is that She is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure potency. The devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement humbly try to glorify Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī because by Her mercy one can advance wonderfully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

away—because the sun appears in the form of its energy. Therefore the energy (the sunshine) and the energetic (the sun) are simultaneously one and different. Similarly, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are simultaneously one and different. Kṛṣṇa, the self-effulgent Lord, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is His supreme pleasure energy. Together They constitute the complete Absolute Truth.

Who Can Understand All This?

One cannot understand anything about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa through mental speculation. Kṛṣṇa and His potencies are *acintya*, inconceivable, and *ananta*, unlimited. He is the very source of the mind itself, and therefore He is beyond the mind. The limited mind cannot understand the unlimited Personality of Godhead. The Vedic literature explains this very logically: “That which is transcendental to material nature is inconceivable, whereas speculative arguments are all mundane. Since mundane arguments cannot touch transcendental subject matters, one should not try to understand transcendental subjects through mundane arguments.”

When ordinary mundane intellectuals try to explain or interpret the identity or pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa’s unlimited nature bewilders them, and therefore they misconstrue everything. Thus they sometimes consider Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to be like an ordinary girl and boy of the material world. But although they often pose as learned scholars, they do not know what they are talking about. One should therefore strictly avoid the confused mundane ideas of such blundering intellectuals. If one wishes to understand Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, one must understand Them by hearing submissively from a bona fide authority.

The original authority on Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Everyone is first an authority regarding his own self, and this is also true of Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, since Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, no one else

can understand Him fully. Kṛṣṇa’s disciple Arjuna confirms this as follows in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*svayam evātmanātmānaṁ
vettha tvaṁ purusottama
bhūta-bhāvana bhūteṣa
deva-deva jagat-pate*

“Indeed, You alone know Yourself by Your own potencies, O origin of all, Lord of all beings, God of gods, O Supreme Person, Lord of the universe!” (Bg. 10.15)

Although Kṛṣṇa is inconceivable to mental speculation, those to whom He reveals Himself can understand Him. Kṛṣṇa first gave such transcendental understanding to Brahmā, the first created living being. Brahmā later transmitted this knowledge to his son Nārada, who transmitted it to Vyāsa, the author of *Bhagavad-gītā*. In this way, the knowledge has descended from master to disciple, through a chain of disciplic succession, even down to the present day. A spiritual master in this disciplic line is a bona fide authority regarding Kṛṣṇa. He is the proper person from whom to receive transcendental knowledge.

What Gives Kṛṣṇa Pleasure?

According to such spiritual authorities, Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasure, and therefore He is all-attractive. Yet Kṛṣṇa Himself derives pleasure from the service rendered by His devotees. Such devotional service attracts even Him. Kṛṣṇa Himself, while speaking to a friend, confirms this as follows in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “My dear Uddhava, you may know from Me that the attraction I feel for devotional service rendered by My devotees is not to be equalled even if one performs mystic *yoga*, philosophical speculation or ritualistic sacrifices, studies *Vedānta*, practices severe austerities or gives up everything in charity. These are, of course, very nice activities, but they are not as attractive to Me as the transcendental loving service rendered by My devotees.” (Bhāg. 11.12.1)

Kṛṣṇa is full in six opulences: beauty, wealth, fame, strength, knowledge and renunciation. No amount of material opulence, therefore, can attract Him. Just as one could not attract a millionaire by offering him a few dollars, one cannot attract Kṛṣṇa merely by one’s limited material opulence. Nevertheless, pure devotional service attracts even Kṛṣṇa. This is the unique transcendental excellence of devotional service.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the embodiment of pure devotional service. No one can be a greater devotee than She. The very name Rādhārāṇī comes from the Sanskrit word *ārādhana*, which means “worship.” Her name is Rādhārāṇī because She excels all in worshiping Kṛṣṇa. Although Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that He can attract millions of Cupids and is therefore called Madana-mohana, “the attractor of Cupid,” Rādhārāṇī can attract even Kṛṣṇa. She is therefore called Madana-mohana-mohanī—“the attractor of the attractor of Cupid.”

The same Kṛṣṇa who is not attracted by any amount of material opulence finds Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī irresistible. One time Kṛṣṇa, to joke with the *gopīs*, the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana, was hiding Himself beneath a bush, but finally they spotted Him from a distance. Kṛṣṇa then changed Himself into His four-armed form of Nārāyaṇa. When the *gopīs* approached and found Nārāyaṇa instead of Kṛṣṇa, they were not very interested in Him; only Kṛṣṇa’s original two-armed form attracted them. They therefore offered their respectful obeisances unto Lord Nārāyaṇa and prayed that He would bestow upon them the benediction of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal association. Then they went on searching for Kṛṣṇa. When Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī passed by, however, Kṛṣṇa tried to maintain His disguise as Nārāyaṇa but was unable to do so; He kept slipping back to His original two-armed form. This illustrates the great influence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s pure transcendental love.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that as one surrenders unto Him, He reciprocates accordingly. Therefore the more

Rādhārāṇī tries to please Kṛṣṇa, the more He desires to please Her, thus in turn increasing Her enthusiasm to increase His pleasure. Therefore although the Lord is unlimited, both He Himself and His potency for pleasure are always increasing. The all-blissful reciprocation between the Lord and His pleasure potency is expressed in the transcendental pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, which are described in detail in *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Love or Lust— What's the Difference?

The reciprocation of love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the essence of spiritual love. Because Kṛṣṇa is the origin of everything, He is the origin of love also. The attraction between boys and girls in the material world is a perverted reflection of the purely spiritual relationship between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. One who thinks he can be happy through material sexual enjoyment cannot understand the relationship between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; and, conversely, if one hears about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from a bona fide spiritual master, his material sexual desires evaporate.

In the material world, although one may profess true love, inwardly one's real desire is to enjoy his own senses. We love someone as long as he or she pleases our senses, and when such sensual pleasure dwindles, the so-called love dwindles with it. Thus the love affair ends in separation or divorce. But pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa on the spiritual platform have no desires to please themselves. They desire only to please Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is true unalloyed love.

What we speak of as "love" in the material world is actually lust, or a desire to serve oneself. It has no permanent basis; today I love one girl, tomorrow another, according to my changing fancy. Indeed, although a boy and girl may change sexual partners

as often as dogs and cats do, in our modern idiom we refer to their sexual intercourse as "lovemaking," as though the gross friction of two hot bodies could generate love. We speak of love so easily, but actually in this material world there is no love—it is all lust. The difference between love and lust is like the difference between gold and iron. Both gold and iron are metals, but otherwise they are not at all alike.

The conditioned souls in the material world are generally misdirected and frustrated in love because they try to get pleasure by satisfying their material bodily senses. They do not know that they are different from their bodies. The body is always changing—from childhood, to youth, to old age—but the same person is always present in each body. He identifies himself as an American or Englishman, a Jew or a Christian, a boy or a girl, according to his body, but that body is not himself. Therefore no matter how diligently he tries to be happy by gratifying his bodily demands, he is never successful. Just as one cannot satisfy a bird by cleaning its cage and not feeding the bird itself, one cannot satisfy himself merely by trying to satisfy his physical senses. Besides that, the more one tries to satisfy the senses, the more they demand. Indulgence cannot satisfy the senses, any more than gasoline can extinguish a fire. Trying to smother one's anxieties with the gasoline of sense gratification will only ignite an explosion. Therefore, by trying to satisfy his material desires for sensual enjoyment the poor conditioned soul merely increases his desire, but not his satisfaction. He becomes a servant of the senses, working hard to fulfill hankerings that can never be fulfilled. To find real pleasure, one must find real love—and for this one must love Kṛṣṇa. To be truly happy, one must engage in His devotional service.

Such devotional service is under the control of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. She is the presiding Deity of devotional service. Because She is very merciful, devotees especially take advantage of Her merciful nature to attain the service of Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, although

THE BEST FRIEND OF EVERYONE IS A BOOK

The best friend of all living beings is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for He is the Supreme Lord who resides in everyone's heart. He is the surpeme all-attractive person, the reservoir of all beauty, knowledge, wealth, fame, strength and renunciation. He appears in this world, age after age, to invite us to revive our eternal relationship with Him. Now He has appeared as a book.

KṚṢṆA, The Supreme Personality of Godhead

by His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

750 pages, with 82 full color original illustrations. Two-volume hardbound set: \$14.95 (individual volumes: \$7.95 each). Complete paperback trilogy edition: \$4.95 (individual volumes: \$1.95).

*"Everyone is
looking for KṚṢṆA.
Some don't realize
that they are, but
they are. I request
that you take advantage
of this book, KṚṢṆA,
and enter into its
understanding."*

George Harrison
(from his Introduction)

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engagement in pure devotional service is rarely achieved, one can achieve it very easily by the grace of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Bhagavad-gītā confirms that those who are truly *mahātmās*, great souls, take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's *daiivī prakṛti*, or spiritual energy—Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. "Always chanting My glories," Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion." (Bg. 9.14) This devotional service is not an activity of the material world; it is fully spiritual because it is directly under the control of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual energy—Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

To perform devotional service, one should follow in the footsteps of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī by performing pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, without any concern for material profit. But one should not worship Kṛṣṇa alone. Kṛṣṇa is not complete without Rādhārāṇī, as the sun is not complete without the sunshine. One should therefore worship both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, for together They are the complete Absolute Truth.

Actually, worshipping Rādhārāṇī is better than worshipping Kṛṣṇa. More precisely, one can best worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, through Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, His supreme pleasure energy. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." (Bg. 9.26) But rather than offer a flower directly to Kṛṣṇa, better to offer the flower to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, requesting, "My dear Rādhārāṇī, please recommend me to Your Kṛṣṇa." Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller, yet He is controlled by the pure devotion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Kṛṣṇa is therefore also known as the "property of Rādhārāṇī." If one can please Rādhārāṇī, therefore, one can very easily please Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī has the vision of a *mahā-bhāgavata*, the most highly elevated devotee. Thus She sees everyone equally. If anyone approaches Her to serve Kṛṣṇa, even if he is the most

fallen, She immediately bestows Her mercy upon him by recommending to Kṛṣṇa, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa, here is a devotee. He is better than Me." Because Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is always absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa, She is very dear to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore if one tries in this way to reach Kṛṣṇa through Rādhārāṇī, he will surely be successful.

How Can We Learn To Serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa?

To be able to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, one must first approach a bona fide spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa has two energies—material and spiritual. The spiritual energy is full of eternal bliss and knowledge, whereas the material energy causes ignorance, misery and death. Although we are all originally spiritual, unfortunately we are now engrossed in the material energy. Because of illusion, however, we do not remember our real position, nor do we know how to return to the spiritual world. Therefore Kṛṣṇa personally descends to this material world to attract us by exhibiting His transcendental pastimes and by speaking the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* for our enlightenment. But Kṛṣṇa returned to His abode 5,000 years ago. Does this mean that we can no longer approach Him? No. In His absence, we may approach Him through His representative, the spiritual master.


The spiritual master is the mercy incarnation of God. Because Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, approaching Him is difficult. But He is also most compassionate, and out of His compassion He empowers His pure devotees to bring back home, back to Godhead, the fallen souls who have forgotten Him.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the tender-hearted female counterpart of Lord Kṛṣṇa, represents His compassionate nature. Therefore the spiritual master, who compassionately appears in the material world for the sake of the fallen souls, is considered a representative of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. By the mercy of the spiritual master, one can obtain the

mercy of Kṛṣṇa. There is no alternative means for success. Without the mercy of the spiritual master, one cannot make any progress in devotional service. This is the opinion of all bona fide authorities on devotional life.

The spiritual master trains his disciples in such a way that they can become free from bondage to material consciousness, engage in devotional service, and thus gradually develop pure love of Godhead. The spiritual master has the responsibility of scientifically engaging each disciple in a practical manner. Among the many different paths for the attainment of spiritual realization, one needs the expert guidance of a bona fide spiritual master to understand which path to follow to make actual progress toward the supreme goal.

In our modern age, the most recommended process for perfection is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rāma* are names of the Lord, and *Hare* addresses Harā, the pleasure potency of the Lord—Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. As living spiritual souls, we are originally spiritual energy, but somehow or other we have now fallen into this material world of birth and death. But when we come under the shelter of the supreme spiritual energy, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, we come to our happy, normal position.

Rādhārāṇī is the potency who gives transcendental pleasure to Kṛṣṇa. When the mercy of that potency is bestowed upon a living entity, he develops love of Godhead and thus attains the highest pleasure—and he can also distribute that pleasure to others. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has introduced this process of chanting to the Western countries and is spreading it all over the world. "The chanting," he says, "is exactly like the cry of a child for its mother's presence. Mother Harā [Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī] helps the devotee achieve the Lord Father's grace, and the Lord reveals Himself to the devotee who chants this *mantra* sincerely." 

ŚRĪ GURV-AṢṬAKA

(Eight Prayers Glorifying the Spiritual Master)

by Śrīla VIŚVANĀTHA CAKRAVARTĪ ṬHĀKURA

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who appeared in the latter half of the 17th Century, is a great spiritual master in the Kṛṣṇa conscious chain of gurus and disciples. He says that one should loudly chant the following eight prayers, with care and attention, during *brāhma-muhūrta*, the auspicious time an hour and a half before sunrise when devotional practices are especially potent. Anyone who thus chants these eight beautiful prayers glorifying the spiritual master will certainly get a chance to render direct service to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Vṛndāvana, after the demise of his body.

1 *saṁsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka-trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam prāptasya kalyāṇa-guṇārṇavasya vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
saṁsāra—of material existence; dāva-anala—by the forest fire; līḍha—afflicted; loka—the people; trāṇāya—to deliver; kārūṇya—of mercy; ghanāghana-tvam—the quality of a cloud; prāptasya—who is the receiver of; kalyāṇa—auspicious; guṇa—of qualities; arṇavasya—who is an ocean; vande—I offer obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī—auspicious; carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

The spiritual master is receiving benediction from the ocean of mercy. Just as a cloud pours water on a forest fire to extinguish it, so the spiritual master delivers the materially afflicted world by extinguishing the blazing fire of material existence. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is an ocean of auspicious qualities.

2 *mahāprabhoḥ kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta-vādītra-mādyan-manaso rasena romāṇca-kampāśru-taraṅga-bhāḷo vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
mahāprabhoḥ—of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu; kīrtana—by chanting; nṛtya—dancing; gīta—singing; vādītra—playing musical instruments; mādyat—gladdened; manasaḥ—whose mind; rasena—by the mellow; roma-aṅca—standing of the hair; kampa—quivering of the body; āśru-taraṅga—torrents of tears; bhāḷo—who feels; vande—I offer my obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī-carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

Chanting the holy name, dancing in ecstasy, singing, and playing musical instruments, the spiritual master is always gladdened by the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because he is relishing the mellows of pure devotion within his mind, sometimes his hair stands on end, he feels quivering in his body, and tears flow from his eyes like waves. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.

3 *śrī-vigrahārādhana-nitya-nānā-śṛṅgāra-tan-mandira-mārjanāḍau yuktasya bhaktāṁś ca niyujāto 'pi vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
śrī-vigraha—the arcā-vigraha (Deities); ārādhana—worshiping; nitya—always; nānā—with various; śṛṅgāra—clothing and ornaments; tat—Their; mandira—temple; mārjana—cleaning; āḍau—beginning with; yuktasya—who is engaged; bhaktāṁś—his disciples; ca—and; niyujātaḥ—who engages; api—also; vande—I offer my obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī-carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

The spiritual master is always engaged in the temple worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. He also engages his disciples in such worship. They dress the Deities in beautiful clothes and ornaments, clean Their temple, and perform other similar worship of the Lord. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.

4 *catur-vidha-śrī-bhagavat-prasāda-svādy-anna-tṛptān hari-bhakta-saṅghān kṛtvāva tṛptīm bhajātaḥ sadāiva vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
catuḥ—four; vidha—kinds; śrī—holy; bhagavat-prasāda—which have been offered to Kṛṣṇa; svādu—palatable; anna—by foods; tṛptān—spiritually satisfied; hari—of Kṛṣṇa; bhakta-saṅghān—the association of devotees; kṛtvā—having made; eva—thus; tṛptim—satisfaction; bhajātaḥ—who feels; sadā—always; eva—certainly; vande—I offer my obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī-carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

The spiritual master is always offering Kṛṣṇa four kinds of delicious food [analyzed as that which is licked, chewed, drunk and sucked]. When the spiritual master sees that the devotees are satisfied by eating *bhagavat-prasāda*, he is satisfied. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.

5 *śrī-rādhikā-mādhavayor apāra-mādhurya-līlā-guṇa-rūpa-nāmnām pratikṣāṇāsvādāna-lolupasya vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
śrī-rādhikā—of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; mādhavayoḥ—of Lord Mādhava (Kṛṣṇa); apāra—unlimited; mādhurya—conjugal; līlā—pastimes; guṇa—qualities; rūpa—forms; nāmnām—Their holy names; pratikṣāṇa—at every moment; āsvādāna—relishing; lolupasya—who aspires after; vande—I offer obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī-carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

The spiritual master is always eager to hear and chant about the unlimited conjugal pastimes of Rādhikā and Mādhava, and Their qualities, names and forms. The spiritual master aspires to relish these at every moment. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.

6 *nikuñja-yūno rati-keli-siddhyai yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣāṇiyā tatrāti-dākṣyād ati-vallabhasya vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
nikuñja-yūnaḥ—of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; rati—of conjugal love; keli—of pastimes; siddhyai—for the perfection; yā yā—whatever; ālibhiḥ—by the gopīs; yuktiḥ—arrangements; apekṣāṇiyā—desirable; tatra—in that connection; ati-dākṣyāt—because of being very expert; ati-vallabhasya—who is very dear; vande—I offer obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī-carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

The spiritual master is very dear because he is expert in assisting the *gopīs* who at different times make different tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's conjugal loving affairs within the groves of Vṛndāvana. I offer my most humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.

7 *sākṣād dharitvena samasta-śāstrair uktaḥ tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhīḥ kintu prabhōr yaḥ priya eva tasya vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
sākṣāt—directly; hari-tvena—with the quality of Hari; samasta—all; śāstraiḥ—by scriptures; uktaḥ—acknowledged; tathā—thus; bhāvayate—is considered; eva—also; sadbhīḥ—by great saintly persons; kintu—however; prabhōḥ—of the Lord; yaḥ—who; priyaḥ—dear friend; eva—certainly; tasya—of him (the guru); vande—I offer obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī-carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and followed by all authorities. Therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is a bona fide representative of Śrī Hari [Kṛṣṇa].

8 *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi dhyāyam stuvāṁś tasya yaśas tri-sandhyāṁ vande guroḥ śrī-carāṇāravindam*
yasya—of whom (the spiritual master); prasādāt—by the grace; bhagavat—of Kṛṣṇa; prasādāt—the mercy; yasya—of whom; aprasādāt—without the grace; na—not; gatiḥ—means of advancement; kutaḥ api—anywhere; dhyāyam—meditating upon; stuvān—glorifying; tasya—of him (the spiritual master); yaśaḥ—the glory; tri-sandhyām—three times a day; vande—I offer obeisances; guroḥ—of my spiritual master; śrī-carāṇa-aravindam—unto the lotus feet.

By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement. Therefore I should always remember and praise the glory of the spiritual master. At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master.



“In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time.”—*Bhagavad-gītā*

When one is situated in transcendental knowledge, he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself. Cultivate this transcendental knowledge. Read the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

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