



KRISHNA VOICE

Vol 24, No.7, July 2023



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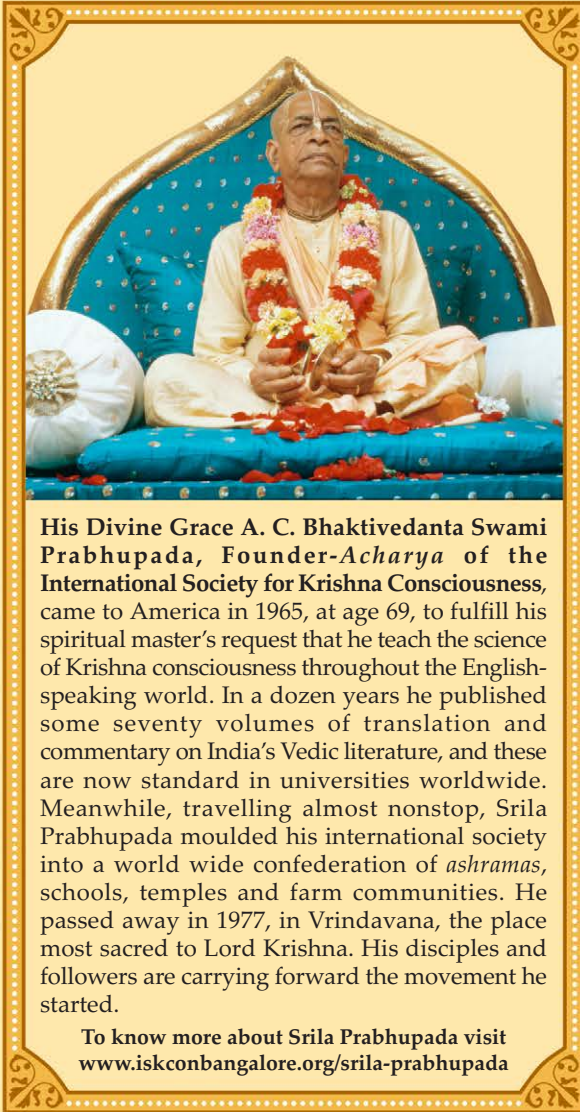


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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age 69, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Krishna consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, travelling almost nonstop, Srila Prabhupada moulded his international society into a world wide confederation of *ashramas*, schools, temples and farm communities. He passed away in 1977, in Vrindavana, the place most sacred to Lord Krishna. His disciples and followers are carrying forward the movement he started.

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada

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Shine with the Supreme Person

Our brilliant original nature is covered because we've forgotten our relationship with Krishna

A lecture given in Honolulu, on January 28, 1974

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*ka va saheta viraham purusottamasya
premaivaloka-rucira-smita-valgu-jalpaih
sthairyam samanam aharan madhu-manininam
romotsavo mama yad-anghri-vitankitayah*

“Who, therefore, can tolerate the pangs of separation from that Supreme Personality of Godhead? He could conquer the gravity and passionate wrath of His sweethearts like Satyabhama and others by His sweet smile of love, pleasing glance, and hearty appeals. When He traversed my [earth’s] surface, I would be immersed in the dust of His lotus feet and thus would be sumptuously covered with grass, which appeared like hairs standing on me out of pleasure.”—*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.16.35

Kava saheta viraham purusottamasya. Purushottama. There are two words—*purusa* and *prakrti*. *Prakrti* means “enjoyed” or “the energy,” and *purusa* means “the enjoyer” or “the powerful.” We living entities are *prakrti*. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gita*: *prakrti vidhi me param*. And Krishna is the *purusa*, the Supreme Person or the supreme enjoyer.

The *purusa* has different features: His personal feature, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His expansions. His expansion feature is of two kinds: *svamsa*, or His personal expansions, and *vibhinna*, His separated expansions. We living entities are all *vibhinna*, separated expansions, small particles. We are like particles of sunshine. The sunshine is a combination of very small particles of light. Similarly, we living entities are small particles, part and parcel of God. We are also bright, shining. We are not dull. But on account of our combination with material nature we have been covered. Therefore our shining quality is now stopped. That is due to forgetfulness of our relationship with the Supreme *purusa*—*purushottama*, or *uttama purusa*.

There are three grades of *purusa*: *uttama*, *madhyama*, and *adhama*. We are the lowest grade, *adhama*; therefore there is a chance of our brightness being sometimes covered. But we can again revive our brightness and shine with the Supreme Person. As the sun and the sunshine shine together, when we are again posted in our own constitutional position—where Krishna is like the sun and we are shining particles—then our life is successful. That is wanted.

Therefore Krishna, the Purushottama, comes to take us back: “Why are you now covered? Why has your shining stopped? You are morose. You are suffering the threefold miserable conditions of material existence. Why are you rotting here?” *Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja*.

Krishna comes Himself. He is within everyone’s heart. He is ready to instruct, but He’ll instruct only persons who have engaged themselves in devotional service. The master may have many workers, but he speaks to the important persons, not to the ordinary person. Similarly, the master Krishna is there in everyone’s heart:

*isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrd-dese arjuna tisthati
brahmayan sarva-bhutani yantrarudhani mayaya*

Whatever we are getting for our sense enjoyment is with the sanction of the *purusa*, the Supreme Person. The Paramatma feature is *madhyama* [the intermediate] *purusa*. Purushottama [*purusa uttama*] is the Supreme Person, and the Supreme Person by His expansion as the Supersoul is present in everyone’s heart. *isvarah sarva-bhutanam*. He’s guiding as friend, but He speaks directly with the living entity as soon as we are purified by devotional service. *Tesam satata-yuktanam bhajatam priti-purvakam*. That qualification we have to attain. Then Krishna, Purushottama, will speak from within, just as He spoke from within Brahma (*tene brahma hrda ya adi-kavaye*).

We have to become qualified to talk with the Supreme Person, and He will give us advice. He’s ready to give us advice from within and from without—from within as Supersoul and from without as the spiritual master. Therefore it is said, *guru-krishna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija*. Both are required: guru and Krishna. Krishna is within your heart. If you are sincere, if you actually want Krishna, He will help you in meeting the spiritual master, His



representative. And by the instruction of the spiritual master you will develop more and more your Krishna consciousness, your original position.

This is called devotional service, or *bhakti-lata*, “the creeper of devotional service.” To grow a creeper one first of all sows the seed and waters it; then gradually the seed sprouts and the creeper grows. It will become a big tree or creeper and give you fruits. Similarly, the *bhakti-lata-bija*, the seed of the *bhakti* creeper, is given by the spiritual master in cooperation with Krishna. That is initiation.

Initiation means sowing the seed of devotional service. Now, if after getting initiation you think, “I have become perfect. Now again whatever nonsense I was doing I shall go on doing it,” then it will be useless. Suppose you plant a seed. If you don’t take proper care and water it nicely, then it will not grow; it will be stunted. So initiation means that by the mercy of Krishna, through His agent, the spiritual master, you get the seed of *bhakti-lata*, the creeper of devotional service. So you have to take care of yourself by following the instructions. You cannot think, “Now that I have a spiritual master and I have initiation, my business is finished. Let me do all nonsense.” No.

At initiation, before the fire we promise, “No illicit sex, no meat-eating, no gambling, no intoxication.” The fire is a representation of *yajna-purusa*, the Lord of sacrifice, and through fire the *yajna-purusa*, or Purushottama, eats. So during the initiation ceremony the fire is present, the spiritual master is present, *shastra*, or scripture, is present, and Krishna is present. They are all witnesses.

If you are in court, before the high-court judge you promise, “Whatever I’ll speak in this court will be the truth.” So the judge knows that promise, and he gives his judgment based on that promise. Similarly, the promises made at initiation must be kept; otherwise the initiation will be useless. By the mercy of guru, by the mercy of Krishna, you get the thing. Now to use the thing properly will depend on you. I can give you a very nice thing, but if you keep it locked up in your treasury and never use it, then what good will it do you? *Mali haya sei bija kare aropana*. You have to sow the seed and pour water and see that it is nicely growing.

So don’t think that after the official ceremony of initiation your business and my business are finished. No. The business begins. It is not the finishing; it is the beginning. *Adau gurv-asrayah*. The beginning is to take shelter of guru. Then the student must be very inquisitive—*sad-dharma-prccha*. You’ll find all these instructions in *The Nectar of Devotion*.

Today some of you are going to be initiated. This is the beginning of your spiritual life. But if you don’t take care for further development, then that is up to you. You may fall down, because Maya is very strong. Maya will place so many impediments. She does not like that so easily you go back home, back to Godhead. Maya’s business is like the police’s business. The police’s business is to see that the criminal has returned to his original consciousness as a law-abiding citizen. Otherwise the police will go on punishing him. Similarly, Maya is the police agent. Her business is to chastise you. Every moment this is going on. Material life means to be within the jurisdiction of Maya, and she’s always punishing us, because we have tried to forget Krishna and that is not good for us. That is explained in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*:

*ya esam purusam saksad
atma-prabhavam isvaram
avajananti na bhajanty
sthanad bhrastah patanty adhah*

I’ll give you a practical example. This finger is part and parcel of my body, but if it becomes diseased, then it cannot act as my finger. It becomes a source of pain only. Then sometimes the doctor advises, “Unless you cut off this finger, the whole hand will be faulty.” And you have to cut off the one finger to save the other fingers. Similarly, we are all part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, and we become disobedient or diseased. To become disobedient to God means we are in a diseased condition, because we always have to be obedient to somebody. Even in our so-called disobedient state—when we don’t care about God—we care about somebody else. That is obligatory. You cannot say, “I don’t care about anybody.” That is not possible. If you don’t care about God, then you have to care about somebody else. If you don’t care about the state law, then you have to care about the police department. You cannot say, “I am independent.” That is not possible.

Our position is one of forgetting God. We have been kicked constantly by Maya. Maya has given us the senses, and the senses are dictating to us, “Do this, do that, do this, do that.” And we become servant of our senses.

So two things are there. You are servant by constitution, but when you forget or give up the service of the Lord, then you become servant of your senses or Maya. That is your position. Now you must voluntarily give up the service of the senses and surrender to the master of the senses, Hrsikesha.

One of Krishna’s names is Hrsikesha. Hrsikesha is the master of senses, Krishna. In our present condition we

have forgotten the master of our senses and have taken our senses as our master. That is our position. That position has to be purified—we have to become not the servant of the senses but the servant of the master of the senses. Then we also become master of the senses. That purificatory process is called devotional service, or *bhakti*. That is described in *Narada Pancaratra: sarvopadhi vinirmuktam tat paratvena nirmalam*.

Now, how we have become the servant of our senses? Because of so many designations—“I am American,” “I am Indian,” “I am Hindu,” “I am Muslim,” “I am Christian,” “I am this,” “I am that.” Accepting designations means becoming a servant of the senses. So we have to forget our designations. At initiation everyone should consider, “I am no longer American,” “I am no longer Indian,” “I am no longer this or that,” “No longer do I think, ‘I am Hindu, he is Christian.’ Now I must think, ‘I am the servant of Krishna.’” “When you think in this way, then you become designationless—“I am the servant of Krishna.” *Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya dasa*. You become designationless and immediately purified.

*sarvopadhi vinirmuktam
tat paratvena nirmala
hrsikena hrsikesa
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

Nirmalam means “spotless.” When your senses are engaged in the service of the master of the senses, that is called *bhakti*.

These things are all very elaborately explained in our books.

Those who are going to be initiated should take it as a vow not to fall down again. Catch Krishna’s lotus feet very tightly and you’ll not fall down. *Mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te*. Be determined. Don’t make it a farce—“Today I am initiated, and tomorrow I will again give up everything and again grow my hair and then go to hell.” No. Don’t do that. If you want to be serious, then the path is clear for going back to Godhead.

*mam ca yo ‘vyabhicarena
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa gunan samatityaitan
brahma-bhuyaya kalpate*

As soon as you engage yourself in devotional service you become purified of all material contamination. *Sa gunan samatityaitan*. We are being troubled by the three modes of material nature, but if we stick to our devotional service we’ll be protected. It is not very difficult to follow the four regulative principles. For example, no illicit sex. There is no question of stopping sex, but no illicit sex. But people today are so unfortunate that although a man has a wife he goes to another girl and although the girl has a husband she goes to another man. So unfortunate.

These things should be stopped if you want to be serious. Otherwise, make a farce and do whatever you like. I cannot give you protection. That is not possible.

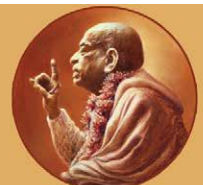
You must follow these rules and regulations if you are serious. Then take initiation. Don’t make a farce. That is my request. One has to be very determined—*bhajante mam drdha-vratah*. This word is used in the *Bhagavad-gita: drdha-vratah*, “strong determination”—“Yes, in this life I shall go back home, back to Godhead.” This is determination.

And what is the difficulty? No difficulty. Chant the Hare Krishna mantra. You are accepting the beads. You must chant sixteen rounds. You can finish in two or three hours. You have twenty-four hours. Of course, if you want to sleep twenty-three hours, that is another thing. You have to minimize your sleeping. If you cannot finish sixteen rounds, then you must not sleep on that day, you must not eat. Why don’t you forget to eat? Why do you forget chanting Hare Krishna? This is negligence, *aparadha*, offense. Rather, you should forget your sleeping and eating, and you must finish sixteen rounds. That is called determination.

So you are welcome to take initiation. But if you are neglectful, if you want to make it a farce, that is your business. I cannot give you protection.

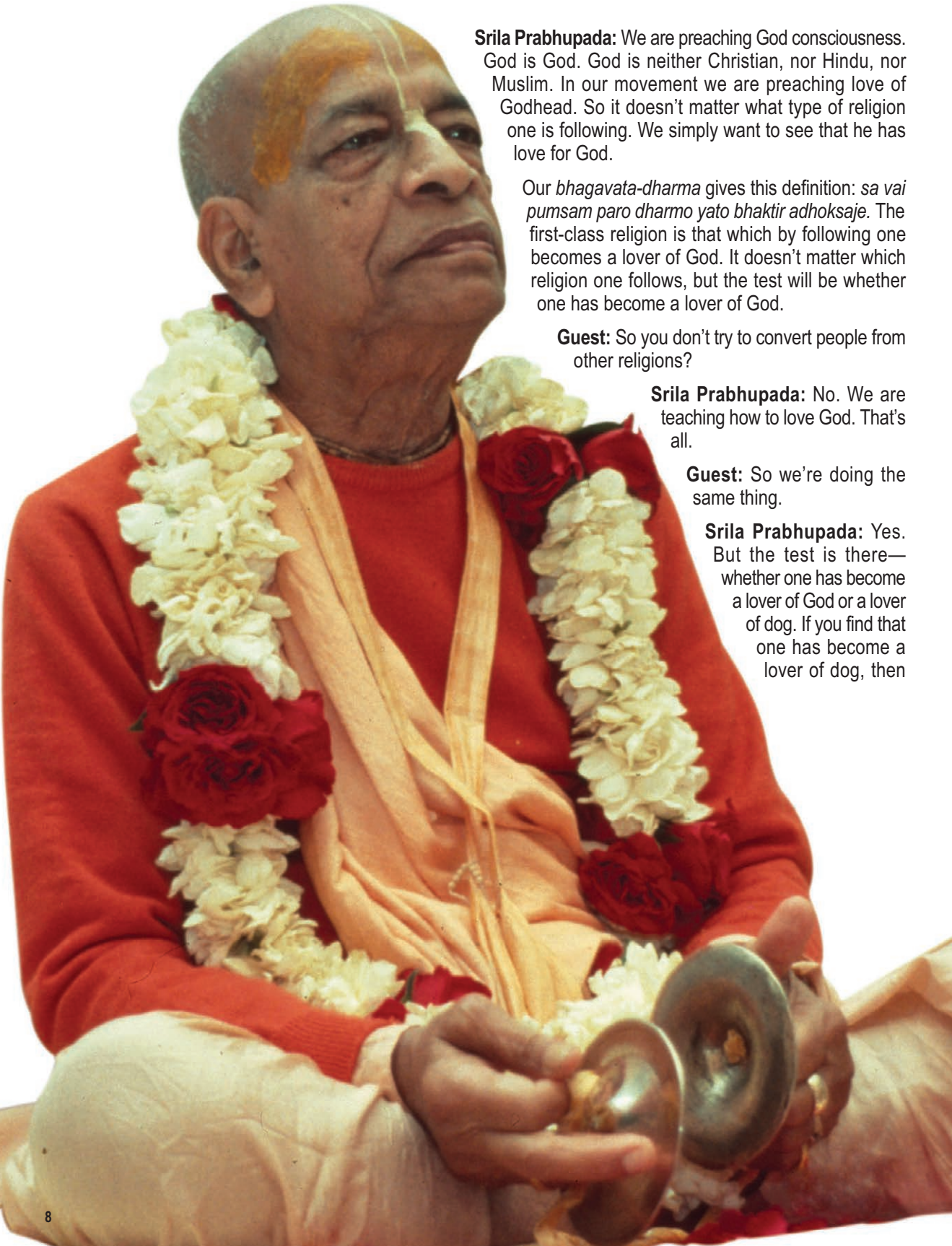
Thank you very much. 🙏

Srila Prabhupada, the founder-*acharya* of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita*. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada-lectures



Who Loves God?

The following conversation took place in London on August 14, 1971.



Srila Prabhupada: We are preaching God consciousness. God is God. God is neither Christian, nor Hindu, nor Muslim. In our movement we are preaching love of Godhead. So it doesn't matter what type of religion one is following. We simply want to see that he has love for God.

Our *bhagavata-dharma* gives this definition: *sa vai pumsam paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhoksaje*. The first-class religion is that which by following one becomes a lover of God. It doesn't matter which religion one follows, but the test will be whether one has become a lover of God.

Guest: So you don't try to convert people from other religions?

Srila Prabhupada: No. We are teaching how to love God. That's all.

Guest: So we're doing the same thing.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. But the test is there—whether one has become a lover of God or a lover of dog. If you find that one has become a lover of dog, then

his religion is useless.

Guest: How does one know?

Srila Prabhupada: You can see whether he's loving God or dog. That's all. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says:

*yugayitam nimesena
caksusa pravrsayitam
sunnyayitam jagat sarvam
govinda-virahena me*

Yugayitam nimesena: "Every moment is just like twelve years." *Caksusa pravrsayitam:* "I am crying torrents of rain." *Sunnyaytam jagat sarvam:* "Oh, I find everything vacant." *Govinda-virahena me:* "Without God." This is an ideal picture.

Another test: *bhaktih paresanubhavo viraktir anyatra ca*. If one has become a lover of God, naturally he will be detached from material enjoyment. Love of God and love of the material world cannot go together. Lord Jesus Christ never advised going for economic development, for industrial development. He sacrificed everything for God. That is one test—"Here is a lover of God." Lord Jesus Christ was punished. He was ordered, "Stop this preaching." But he did not. So that is love of God. He sacrificed everything.

The idea is that Lord Jesus Christ and his followers must both be, at least to some extent, at that point. That is the test. So we say that you follow any religious path. Which one doesn't matter. We want to see whether you are a lover of God. That is our propaganda.

And if one is serious about loving God, it doesn't matter which way he'll develop that dormant love. If a person wants to be a very nice student of mathematics, it doesn't matter from which university he takes the degree. Students sometimes go to other countries for education.

So if one is serious about loving God, then it doesn't matter in which way he learns that art. He won't discriminate, "Oh, I must learn this art from this university." No. Any university. It doesn't matter.

So our principle is that we are teaching love of God. Those who are after God are coming to us. It does not matter whether they are in America, in Russia, in Africa, or Canada. They are coming. And the method is simple. Chant the holy name of God. If you have a name for God, chant it. We preach this. We don't say that you must chant "Krishna." If you know any name for God, then chant that. If you haven't got any name of God, then chant our conception of the name of God—"Krishna."

Lord Chaitanya says that there are many names of God and in each name the full potency of God is there. And there are no hard and fast rules for chanting the holy name of God. Anyone can chant anywhere, at anytime, in any circumstances.

Lord Chaitanya says, "My Lord, You are so merciful that I can associate with You simply by chanting Your holy name. But I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for that."

We are teaching our students to chant. They always carry a bead bag, and they chant: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Now, where is the loss? Where is the want of time? While walking in the street they are chanting. I am sitting here talking with you. As soon as I finish I shall chant Hare Krishna. Where is the difficulty?

But ask people to chant the holy name of God, and they won't accept. That is unfortunate. Chanting is such a simple thing. You don't have to go to the church or the temple or hell or heaven—in any condition you can chant the holy name of God. But people are so unfortunate they won't accept this theory. There is no charge, there is no loss. If there is some gain, why not try for it? 🙏

Fasting		Festivals	
Jul 13	Ekadashi	Jul 3-17	First month of Chaturmasya
Jul 14	<i>break fast</i>		<i>Fasting from green leafy vegetables</i>
Jul 29	Ekadashi	Jul 18-Aug 16	Purshottama Adhika Masa
Jul 30	<i>break fast</i>		<i>Chaturmasya Vrata not observed during Adhika Masa</i>
		Aug 17-30	First month of Chaturmasya continues
			<i>Fasting from green leafy vegetables</i>

India's Heritage

The Original Social System

By Ravi Gupta

One of the first things that comes to mind for many people when they hear mention of India is Hinduism's infamous caste system, one of the most hotly debated topics on India. People see casteism as a major cause of India's problems. The lower classes are abused and oppressed while the upper classes rule—all based on birth. People question why anyone would believe in a religion that supports such abuse.

On an electronic bulletin board, one Indian writes, "My family suffered a great deal because of this casteism, and I think it is a very big handicap for our nation." When people in the West are asked what they know about India, they often reply, "The caste system and the Taj Mahal."

How has India acquired such a notorious way of organizing society? What is the proper role of the *brahmanas*, the priestly class? How is the system supposed to function?

Caste discrimination by birth, thought to be one of the fundamental characteristics of Hinduism, is absent from the Vedic scriptures, the essence of which is the *Bhagavad-gita*. The present-day caste system is a degradation of *varnashrama-dharma*, the original social system described by Lord Krishna Himself in the *Bhagavad-gita* (4.13):

*catur-varnyam maya srstam
guna-karma-vibhagasah*

"According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me." Because among human beings Lord Krishna created divisions, called *varnas*, they are natural in any society. Classes exist, whether based on birth, wealth, power, or occupation. A classless society is therefore impossible. Even communism, which was supposed to be classless, had enormous disparity between the ruling class and ordinary workers.

Lord Krishna says that a person's *varna* comes from his *guna*, "nature" or "quality," and karma, the type of activity he does. Krishna does not use the word *janma*, "birth." The *varnashrama* system is not rigid or oppressive. If a person born into a family of a lower *varna* shows the qualities and inclinations of a *brahmana*, he can be educated accordingly and become a *brahmana*. On the other hand, being born in an upper-*varna* family does not automatically confer that status without the proper qualities and training. Srila Prabhupada gives an example: "A son cannot claim, 'Because my father is a lawyer, then I am also lawyer.' The son also must become a qualified lawyer."

Now, a child who grows up in a pure and austere family that studies the scriptures and worships the Lord will tend to be attracted to those qualities and activities when he grows up. Children of doctors often grow up to become doctors themselves. To that extent birth can be one factor indicating a person's work. But the decisive factors are one's qualities and training.

For example, Lord Rsabhadeva, an incarnation of Krishna, was a king, and therefore his one hundred sons were born in a *kshatriya* family. But, as Srila Prabhupada writes, "Out of these, ten were engaged as *kshatriyas* and ruled the planet. Nine sons became good preachers of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (*maha-bhagavatas*), and this indicates that they were above the position of *brahmanas*. The other eighty-one sons became highly qualified *brahmanas*." (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 5.4.13, purport). Another example: Kanchipurna, the instructing guru of the great devotee Ramanujacharya, was a *shudra* by birth.

After reading on the Internet *Bhagavad-gita's* description of the caste system, an Indian gentleman wrote, "I think Hinduism is completely distorted, and it is upon our shoulders that we bring it back to its original state. To tell people the basic definition of each caste would be very helpful."

The Brahmanas

The *Bhagavad-gita* (18.42) concisely defines the *varnas*, beginning with the *brahmanas*: "Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom, and religiousness—these are the natural qualities by which the *brahmanas* work."

The *brahmanas* are situated in the mode of goodness. *Brahmana* means "one who knows Brahman, the Absolute Truth." If a person thinks, "I am a *brahmana* because my parents were *brahmana* caste," he is not a knower of Brahman but a knower of the body.



Krishna describes the spiritual vision of the *brahmanas*: “The humble sages [*brahmanas*], by virtue of knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle *brahmana*, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater [outcaste].” (Bg. 5.18) By definition, a *brahmana* sees everyone equally and thus, out of humility, does not repress anyone. As soon as he does, he is no longer a *brahmana*.

The *brahmanas* are the teachers of society. With their knowledge of the scriptures they guide society in the proper direction, toward self-realization. The *brahmanas* advise the *kshatriyas*, the administrators, on how to govern to ensure the spiritual advancement of the citizens. The *kshatriyas* then use their diplomatic skill to lead society.

To ensure that the *brahmanas* stay free from the pursuit of power, wealth, and prestige, and that their work is, as far as possible, without self-interest, *brahmanas* do not receive a salary for teaching, but rather depend on charity and begging. They don’t accumulate wealth beyond what they need to live. The *brahmanas* depend fully on the Supreme Lord, and the other *varnas* support them for their valuable service.

Srila Prabhupada said that because modern society is lacking in *brahmanas* with spiritual vision, it is producing cats and dogs—debauches, drunkards, and woman-hunters. These cats and dogs accept as their leader the biggest beast, who will do the most to satisfy their sensual desires, and thus create a chaotic society.

Furthermore, today’s so-called *brahmanas* in India hardly possess the ideal qualifications presented in the *Bhagavad-gita*. Instead, they have taken to meat-eating, intoxication, and other sinful activities. Therefore society suffers without brahminical guidance. That is why Srila Prabhupada wanted to create *brahmanas* who could properly guide leaders in how to organize society for spiritual progress while simultaneously alleviating its material problems. The importance of well-trained *brahmanas* cannot be overestimated.

The Kshatriyas

“Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity, and leadership are the natural qualities of work for the *kshatriyas*.” (Bg. 18.43) Ruling by the instructions of the *brahmanas*, the *kshatriyas* have the duty to protect citizens and maintain peace and order.

Srila Prabhupada describes how society would be organized under the Krishna conscious state: “In Vedic civilization, the land was given to the people for cultivation, not for ownership, and a tax was collected that was twenty-five percent of the person’s income.... One cannot get land from the government unless he agrees to produce something, and if everyone produces food then there is no scarcity. At least he has his own food produced by himself.” If work is delegated in this way, Srila Prabhupada says, then there is no hunger or unemployment. By contrast, in today’s consumer society most people don’t grow food crops; rather, they produce an endless variety of needless commodities.

One of the most important duties of the *kshatriyas* is to make sure the citizens know the purpose of human life and engage in duties that will help them fulfill it. To do this, the *kshatriyas* themselves must be *rajarisis*, or saintly kings. They must possess some of the scriptural knowledge and good qualities of the *brahmanas*. In the fourth chapter, Lord Krishna describes how the knowledge of the *Bhagavad-gita* was “passed down through disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.” Srila Prabhupada wrote in a letter, “Such a noble king is not an autocrat but is guided by *brahmanas* in how to rule and see everyone employed in their respective duties.”

An example of the ideal *rajarishi* is Lord Rama, the incarnation of Krishna in the role of a king. During Lord Rama’s reign, called *Rama-rajya*, people were peaceful, happy, materially satisfied, and spiritually advanced.

Most people, however, are neither *brahmanas* nor *kshatriyas*, but *vaishyas* and *shudras*.

The Vaishyas

“Farming, cow protection, and business are natural work for the *vaishyas*.” (Bg. 18.44) *Vaishyas* protect cows, grow food for themselves, and sell the excess. Cow protection is essential for the material and spiritual survival of society. Cow protection develops compassion, and milk builds the finer tissues of the brain for understanding spiritual matters.

The Shudras

“For the *shudras* there is labour and service to others.” (Bg. 18.44) *Shudras* do work that is of service to the other classes, so they must depend on others for their maintenance. Srila Prabhupada writes, “The *shudra* class can attain all comforts of life simply by rendering service to the higher classes. ... The higher castes should always look after the maintenance of the *shudras*. ... A *shudra* should not leave his master when the master is old and invalid, and the master should keep the servants satisfied in all respects.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.9.26)

Although in general *shudras* may be less intelligent, by faithfully carrying out their occupational duties under the guidance of a spiritual master they can attain the highest platform of spiritual perfection. Srila Prabhupada writes, "The process of devotional service is so strong that the pure devotee of the Supreme Lord can enable people of the lower classes to attain the highest perfection of life." (Bg. 9.32)

The Social Body

The *varnashrama* system may be compared to a social body. The *brahmanas*, with their knowledge to direct society, can be compared to the head, eyes, and brain of the social body; *kshatriyas*, who offer protection, are the arms; the *vaishyas*, who support society, are the stomach; and the *shudras* are the legs.

Common sense tells us that we need our head even more than we need our arms and legs, because without the head the entire body is useless. So the *brahmanas* are the most important, because of the guidance they provide. Yet without the labour of the *shudras*, the legs, society would not get anywhere. Without the support of the *vaishyas*, the *brahmanas* would be unable to devote their time to teaching and studying. And without protection and land from the *kshatriyas*, the *vaishyas* could not carry out their occupation of providing for society. But when each part of the social body performs its proper function, then the entire society can be peaceful and cooperative and can concentrate on its real goal, Krishna consciousness. 🙏

Akshaya Patra News

Facilities and Building Solutions (FABS) partnered with The Akshaya Patra Foundation by donating a food distribution vehicle.

Shri Vasudev Keshav Dasa, Senior Vice-President, ISKCON-Bangalore presented a memento of appreciation to Shri P.S. Somasundar, Managing Director, FABS.



Swayam Vyakta Kshetram

Thothadri Vanamamalai Temple

by Sampatkumara Ramanuja Dasan (Adv. Ashwin.S)

The Legend

There is a strong connection between the pastime of the temple and Adishesha and Garuda, two devotees of Sriman Narayana, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kashyapa was married to both Kadru and Vinatha throughout his lifetime. Both of them were sisters, but this didn't stop them from harbouring envious feelings towards each another.

Kashyapa extended a benediction to each of them individually. Kadru spoke the following wish: "Let a thousand brave and radiant sons be born to me." The boon was bestowed to her by Kashyapa.

When Vinatha heard this, she heaved an envious sigh and pleaded with the gods, "Let such sons be born to me, who are braver and brighter than even my sister's sons." Kashyapa bestowed the boon to her as well. After learning that his wives were about to have children, he gave them the advice that they needed to care for the new-borns and then went to do his penance in the woods. After a considerable amount of time had passed, Kadru finally gave birth to one thousand eggs, while Vinatha gave birth to two eggs. The eggs were carefully incubated in either jars or containers that contained hot water and were maintained at a warm temperature.

After a period of 500 years, the eggs that Kadru had laid began to hatch, and her sons began to take physical form. Of the one thousand Naga sons who were born, the most notable ones were Shesha, Vasuki, and Takshaka. The offspring of these thousand sons may be found in every snake that has since ever been born on this earth.



Rajagopuram



The beautiful mandapas in the temple

Because Vinatha's eggs did not hatch, she became envious. She was in a hurry, so she cracked open one of the eggs, within was a son who was only partially developed. This son was furious at his physical shape and condemned his mother for her hasty conduct, claiming that she would be a slave to Kadhru for five hundred years or until the son from her second egg was born, whichever came first. He also said that he would be a slave to Kadhru.

As a result of his service to the sun god as a charioteer and herald, as well as his role in the creation of the crimson sky at dawn, he was given the name Aruna. Garuda, Vinatha's second son, was eventually born after 500 years had passed, in the shape of a massive bird that had an incredible amount of strength. As soon as he was born, he took flight effortlessly in the direction of food. Once, Kadhru contacted Vinatha and asked her to tell her the hue of the heavenly horse Uchchaisravas, which emerged from the ocean when the *devas* and *asuras* churned it to produce nectar. Kadhru wanted to know what colour the horse was so she could paint it. Vinatha said, without a moment's hesitation, that the horse was a brilliant white colour. Kadhru said that her statement was false and that the tail in question was dark. After some back and forth, Kadhru proposed a wager to Vinatha: whoever lost the bet would have to become the other's servant. This sparked a heated exchange between the two. In an effort to deceive Vinatha, Kadhru summoned her thousand sons and instructed them to coil around Uchchaisravas's tail in such a way that it gave the impression that it was black in hue. Some of her boys did what she asked, while others disobeyed her and refused to comply with her requests. Those who ignored her instructions were cursed by Kadhru, and she foretold that they would be burnt alive in the *sarpa satra yagna* (snake sacrifice) that would be conducted by King Janamejaya of Hastinapura (King Janamejaya was the son of Maharaja Parikshit).

Kashyapa was troubled by this curse, but Brahma, who happened to be present at the time, explained to him that such a curse was necessary, since serpents had developed into a significant threat to civilization. Then, Brahma provided Kashyapa with the antidote for the snake venom. Because the Nagas had wrapped themselves around Uchchaisravas's tail, giving it a dark appearance, Kadhru triumphed in the wager. As a result, Kadhru was able to acquire Vinatha as a slave.

At another time, Kadhru made a suggestion to Vinatha that Vinatha should take her, and that Garuda should take her Naga boys to the lovely island of Ramaniyaka, which is located in the midst of the ocean inside the home of snakes. Vinatha and Garuda carried out the orders given to them. Once they arrived at their destination, Kadhru requested that Garuda bring her boys to the abode of the sun so that they might offer their reverent homage. As Garuda reached the sun, he was carrying on his back the Naga sons of Kadhru. The Nagas were unable to tolerate the heat and began to slip off as Garuda got closer to the island of Virana. They fell to the ground in a faint. When Kadhru heard the screams of her children, she became very concerned, and she placed the responsibility for what

had happened to her children on Garuda. In her anguish at her son's predicament, Vinatha, who had been advised by Kadru to do so, pleaded with Garuda to get some water from the Ganga. Garuda complied with the command and carried the water to the southern bank of the Gautami River, where he sprinkled it on the snakes and they came back to life.

The location where this event took place is known as Nagalaya, which literally means "the abode of the snakes." In a different telling of the event that can be found in the *Adi Parva* of the *Valmiki Ramayana*, it is said that when the Nagas passed out and fell to the ground, Kadru prayed to Indra to come to the help of her children and save them from the danger they were in. Taking immediate action, Indra caused rain showers to fall on the Nagas, and their formerly burnt appearance was completely removed. After that, they established their home on the island of



Vanamamalai Perumal, with Sridevi and Bhudevi



The Supreme Personality of Godhead at Vanamamalai with His consort

Ramaniyaka.

Garuda and Adishesha together came to Vanamamalai to pray to Sriman Narayana with just one desire – the ability to serve Narayana always and they both ended up becoming permanent inhabitants of Vaikuntha after some time had passed. They are both constantly willing to serve the Personality of Godhead in whatever capacity that is required of them. It is believed that this prayer was attained in Vanamamalai.

Vanamamalai is connected to another divine personality, Maharshi Romarishi.

At one point in the course of their time spent in exile, the Pandavas made their way into the Romarishi forest. A wise man named Romarishi, whose whole body was covered in hair, had a beard that was so long that it covered his body completely and also covered the entire forest floor like a carpet.

There was a holy tree in that forest which produced a particularly unique kind of fruit. If a person were to try that fruit just once, it would satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst for an indefinite amount of time. However, the fruit was not to be picked; rather, it was to be consumed only when it had fallen to the ground on its own.

One day, Dharmaraja and Draupadi found themselves in the vicinity of the tree by coincidence. Draupadi resisted the urge to take a bite off of the deliciously large fruit that was dangling from the tree.

She said, "Is it not permissible for us to take that fruit?" The fruit was knocked to the ground when Dharmaraja shot it with an arrow. He moved towards the fruit in order to pick it up with his hand. He was unable to move it because of how hefty it was. Although he used both of his hands and every ounce of power he had in an effort to raise it, he was unable to do so.

Draupadi too made an effort, but to no avail. In the meantime, Arjuna made his way there. He laboured to pick up the fruit but was ultimately unsuccessful. The three of them collaborated their efforts but were unable to move the fruit. The two younger brothers came in and made an attempt to lift the fruit, but they were also unsuccessful

in doing so.

At long last, the valiant warrior Bhima appeared. He warned the others to stay back and then said, "I will lift it." But even Bhima was not successful.

When these six individuals were trying to pick up the fruit, the strands of Romarishi's hair were being stomped and tugged. He came to the conclusion that someone must have been attempting to take the fruit. He was fuming with rage now. His long hairs began to tangle with each other and twist around the Pandavas in an attempt to bind them.

As soon as Draupadi understood the gravity of the situation, she appealed to Lord Krishna. Krishna materialised before them.

Draupadi submitted herself at His feet and asked for assistance.

Krishna said: "Sister, I am powerless. Romarishi is a very wise man. I make My home in his beating heart. How could I possibly act in a way that is contrary to what My followers want?"

Draupadi begged with her Lord one last time, saying, "You alone can save us, and You can do anything if you wish to."

Krishna responded, "I will assist you, but all of you must remain completely silent, no matter what the circumstances are, and you must carry out My instructions to the letter."

The Pandavas and Draupadi gave their word that they would follow His instructions. Krishna moved in the direction of Romarishi's *ashrama* and gave them the instruction to follow Him at a later time.

During this time, Romarishi's anger had grown to the point where he began walking towards the tree so that he might condemn the people who had cut down the tree. At that same moment, Krishna walked inside the *ashrama*. When Romarishi reached the Lord, he fell at His lotus feet. It brought him indescribable delight to see Him. He said, "How incredibly blessed I am to have You here as my guest. Oh, Lord! What can I do for You?"



The most beautiful Lord along with His consort receiving abhisheka on an auspicious day



The centuries old Deity of Narayana in Vanamamalai



The Lord on a swing during the swing festival

While they were waiting for the Pandavas to come, Krishna kept him occupied by having him talk about various spiritual topics.

As soon as the Pandavas and Draupadi arrived at the *ashrama*, Krishna made a beeline for them and bowed down to worship them.

The Pandavas were embarrassed, but they remembered the Lord's instruction, so they maintained their composure. After seeing Krishna bow down before the Pandavas, Romarishi followed suit and did the same. He then offered his respects to the guests. Then Krishna beckoned for them to enter the *ashrama* where he was staying. They were introduced to Romarishi by Him. He lauded the righteous Dharmaraja, the courageous Arjuna and Bhima, the astute Nakula and Sahadeva, and most of all, the devoted Draupadi.

At that time, Romarishi had completely forgotten about the fruit and the thieves. Krishna shared with Romarishi the knowledge that the Pandavas were the ones who were enticed to try the fruit despite their lack of awareness about the one-of-a-kind qualities of the fruit.

Romarishi had a strong desire to win favour with individuals who could win favour with the Lord. He instructed: "Allow them to take the fruit. It is important to me that they have it."

The Pandavas were able to live a long life without experiencing hunger because they consumed the fruit.

Sage Romarishi's *ashrama* is said to be situated in Vanamamalai and he prayed to Narayana to get His *darshana* in this holy place. 🙏

(To be continued)

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam



Sri BRAHMOTSAVA Vaikuntha Hill

Srila Prabhupada's
ISKCON
BANGALORE



Arati



Dwaja Arohana



Abhisheka to Srila Prabhupada



Sri BRAHMOTSAVA Vaikuntha Hill

Srila Prabhupada's
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BANGALORE



Kalyanotsava



Dolotsava



Sri BRAHMOTSAVA Vaikuntha Hill

Srila Prabhupada's
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BANGALORE



Sri Rajadhiraja Govinda



Sri Radha Krishnachandra



Sri Lakshmi Narasimha



Smt. Mahalakshmi



Sri Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra SNANA YATRA

Srila Prabhupada's
ISKCON
BANGALORE



Abhisheka



Arati - Gaja Vesha



Sri Jagannatha Baladeva
and Subhadra Devi
RATHA YATRA
ISKCON Vaikuntha Hill



Ratha Yatra at Vaikuntha Hill



Offering arati before the chariot begins to roll



Sri Jagannatha Baladeva
and Subhadra Devi
RATHA YATRA
ISKCON Vaikuntha Hill



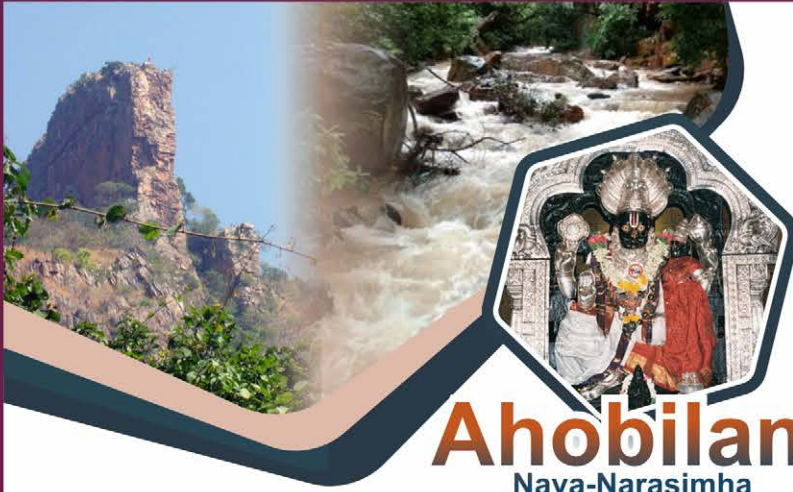
Sri Jagannatha Baladeva and Subhadra Devi Deities on Ratha



Arati of Their Lordships in Sunabesh alankara



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Ahobilam

Nava-Narasimha
Divyadesam Pilgrimage

Travel dates:

June 30, July 14, Aug 11,
Sept 8, Oct 13, 2023

Time:

Friday 7pm to Sunday 11pm

Places of visit:

9 Narasimha temples
Pralhada School
Bhava Nashini, Ahobilam Mutt

Amount:

₹7,500/-

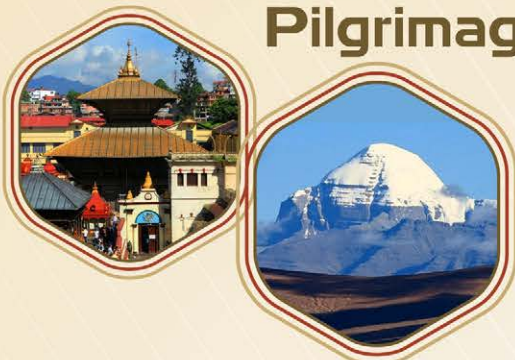


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- July 28 - 31 : **Pandharpur-Kolhapur Pilgrimage**
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- August 4 - 7 : **Guruvayur-Thrissur Pilgrimage**
Thrissur & Guruvayur
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(Per Person)

Kailash Mansarovar Pilgrimage



Travel Date
Aug 17 to 27, 2023

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& more...

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Amount

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Mathura Vrindavan Kurukshetra

Pilgrimage

Puri Chari Kshetra Pilgrimage

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