

Part Three

30th March 2004

-

30th April 2004

Gokarn, Karnataka, India
30 March 2004

Ramanavami in Gokarna Tirtha



Gokarna, the site of Rama Tirtha, is a most auspicious place to observe Ramanavami, the appearance day of Lord Ramacandra.



Ramanavami morning: after finishing my puja, I go to the barber at Kotitirtha and have my head shaved.



Bathing in Kotitirtha.



The temple to Sri Krsna, just next to Kotitirtha.



As I bathe, a team of brahmanas is performing a fire sacrifice inside this yajnasalla.



The yajnasalla is adorned with the figure of Lord Krsna, since this bank of Kotitirtha is where He did penance.



At other sites around Kotitirtha, brahmanas are engaged in different ritualistic performances on this Ramanavami day.



The brahmanas at Gokarna and Udupi are very fixed in their duties and do not beg for money from Western devotees.



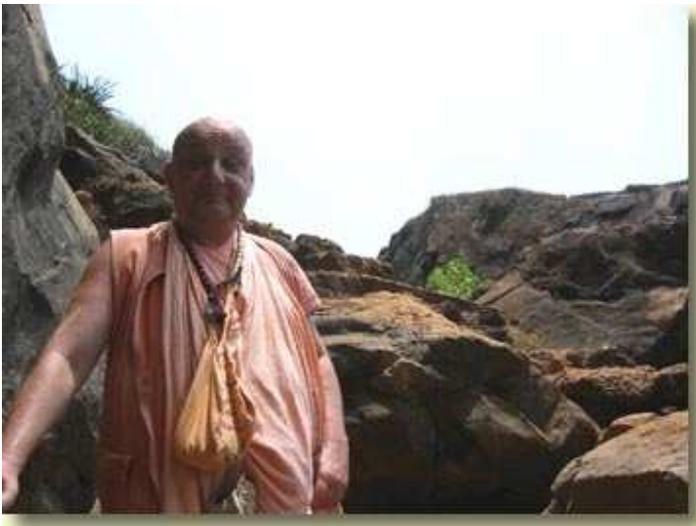
After Kotitirtha I went to Rama Tirtha. I took darsana of the Sita-Rama-Lakshmana Deities while different brahmanas arrived carrying waterpots to perform abhiseka. I witnessed one elderly brahmana woman go on the altar and bathe the Deities. A fire sacrifice was being performed in the darsana hall, and a feast was being prepared in the temple kitchen. After viewing the Deities and then circumambulating Them while chanting japa, I performed kirtana.



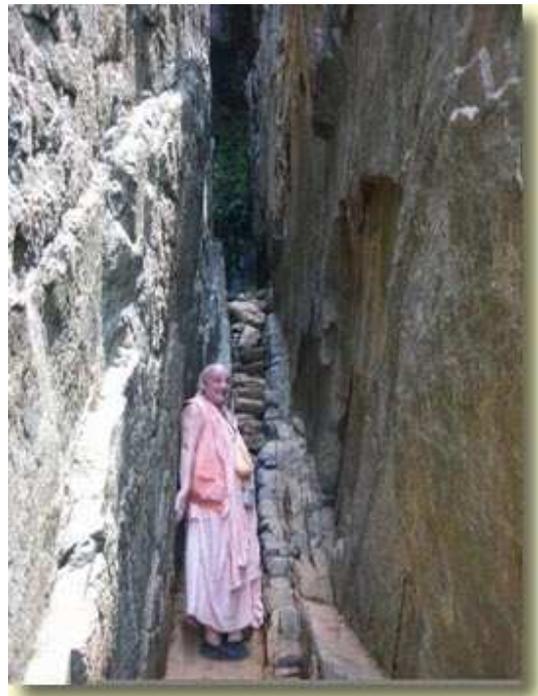
Japa under a tree at Rama Tirtha.



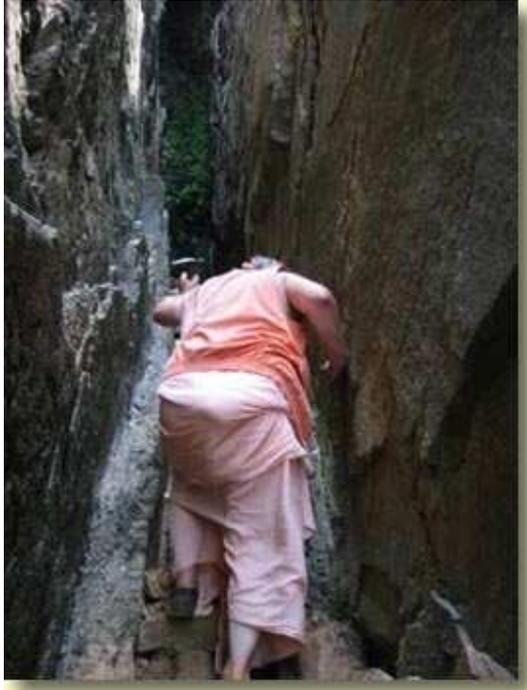
About 15 minutes walk from Rama Tirtha is Jatayu Tirtha. This is the place where the great eagle Jatayu fell to earth after the demon Ravana severed his wings. Jatayu, though very aged, attacked Ravana in a valiant attempt to stop him from kidnapping Sita-devi.



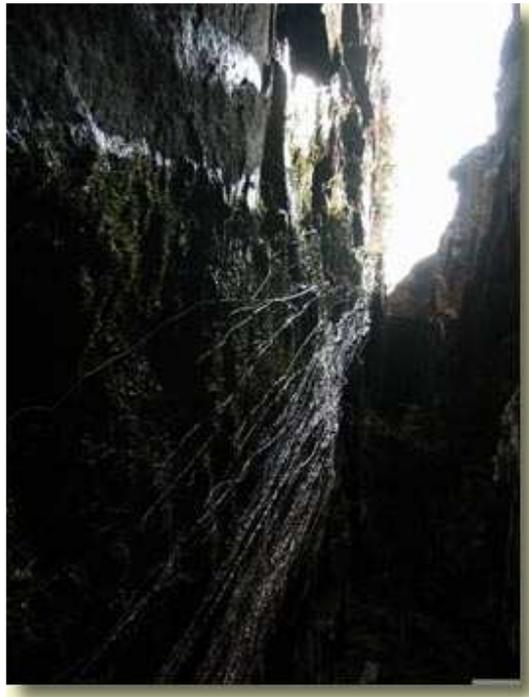
We are going to see where one of Jayatu's severed wings fell to earth. To get there we have to take a rocky path right down to the edge of the ocean.



This tremendous cleft in the rock was split open by a falling wing of Jatayu!



There is a small simple stone shrine at the top where you can sprinkle drops of water on your head from a little pool. Brahmanas daily do a flower puja at this shrine.



The water drops into the pool from above.



After returning to Rama Tirtha from Jatayu Tirtha, I bathe in the sea.



Jaya Sri Rama! Jaya Sri Gokarna Tirtha!

*Belgaum, Karnataka, India
1 April 2004*

The S. U. V. Fashion and The Quality of Ignorance in Modern Life

While in Gokarna (of all places!) a copy of an American magazine called *The New Yorker* for 12 January 2004 came into my hands. Way back in the year I was born it was already an "old" magazine, and so--like politicians, ugly buildings and whores, which become respectable if they just last long enough--in year 2004 *The New Yorker* is not merely a publication, it's an honored institution of great tradition. Yes, but what tradition? Well, I suppose it's the tradition of that heady blend of big-city affectations one finds in most of the world's largest metropolises: one part pseudo-

intellectualism mixed with one part pretense to culture (in a word: sophistication), plus snobbery and bohemianism thrown in to taste.

Anyway, starting on page 28 there's an article called "Big and Bad" by Malcolm Gladwell that I found interesting. The subtitle is *How the S. U. V. ran over automotive safety.*

So what's an S. U. V. ? Stupid question if you're from the United States; for everyone else, S. U. V. stands for Sport Utility Vehicle. In simple language, it's a car. Well, sort of a *truck*, really. But a truck that people use as a car.

What kind of truck could people use as a car? Start with a pickup truck--a light truck that's supposed to rattle along dirt roads in a cloud of dust carrying two yokels in the cab and whatever they are hauling in the unroofed load space behind: watermelons, or cabbages, or sacks of potatoes, or two or three power lawnmowers, or a dozen bags of cement, six shovels, and a wheelbarrow. OK, now take that pickup truck, get rid of the yokels and their haulage, and stretch the cab, adding a comfy back seat with two doors. Then extend the roof back to the load space gate. Swap the gate for a fifth door. Enclose the load space sides with windows. Underneath it all, shove in a big engine with a 4-wheel drive train.

Sounds like an old-fashioned Land Rover. Hang on, that's only the U. V. (utility vehicle) part of the contraption. The S is what makes all the difference. S for sport, S for styling, S for speed, S for sexy, S for. . . stupid.

That's what writer Gladwell is saying, more or less, in "Big and Bad. " S. U. V. s are driven by pretty stupid people. So many stupid people in America have so much money that S. U. V. s are the hottest thing going today in the auto market. I see quite a few S. U. V. s in India too. Maybe Indians have good reason to drive big heavy-duty 4-wheel-drive passenger "cars," since Indian roads are rough going. But as to what use Americans put S. U. V. s, let's hear from Mr. Gladwell:

Toyota's top marketing executive in the United States. . . loves to tell the story of how at a focus group in Los Angeles "an elegant woman in the group said that she needed her full-sized Lexus LX 470 to drive up over the curb and onto lawns to park at large parties in Beverly Hills. " One of Ford's senior marketing executives was even blunter: "The only time those S. U. V. s are going to be off-road is when they miss the driveway at 3 A. M. "

Who are these stupid people who pay big money for a truck they use only as a car?

Fred J. Schaafsma, a top engineer for General Motors, says, "Sport-utility owners tend to be more like, 'I wonder how people view me,' and are more willing to trade off flexibility or functionality to get that. " . . . internal industry market research concluded that S. U. V. s tend to be bought by people who are insecure, vain, self-centered, and self-absorbed, who are frequently nervous about their marriages, and who lack confidence in their driving skills. Ford's S. U. V. designers took their cues from seeing "fashionably dressed women wearing hiking boots or even work boots while walking through expensive malls. "

Such people buy S. U. V. s because they think--or rather, they *feel*--that this type of automobile is safer to drive than an ordinary passenger car. That's because it is bigger, heavier and puts the driver in a seat that's higher from the ground. Gladwell spends much of his article informing his readers about scientific studies that prove S. U. V. s are in reality many times more unsafe than vehicles that are designed to carry passengers. Remember, the pickup truck upon which the S. U. V. is based is *not* designed to transport Mom, Pop, the kids and Barko the dog over city streets. It's designed to carry two yokels plus whatever junk they tossed into the back over country roads. But a stupid person presumes "bigger and badder" means "better. " Sort of like, "Hey, my neighbors? They all have *dogs* to guard their houses. But me? *I'm* gonna get a *bear* to guard *my* house. " Dumb as a bag of hammers.

All that was by way of introduction to the passage in "Big and Bad" that I personally found most interesting. I'll just quote it.

Over the past decade, a number of major automakers in America have relied on the services of a French-born cultural anthropologist, G. Clotaire Rapaille, whose specialty is getting beyond the rational--what he calls "cortex"--impressions of consumers and tapping into their deeper "reptilian" responses. And what Rapaille concluded. . . was that when S. U. V. buyers thought about safety they were thinking about something that reached into their deepest unconscious. "The No. 1 feeling is that everything surrounding you should be round and soft, and should give," Rapaille told me. "There should be air bags everywhere. Then there's this notion that you should be up high. That's a contradiction, because the people who buy these S. U. V. s know at the cortex level that if you are high there is more chance of a rollover. But at the reptilian level they think that if I am bigger and taller I'm safer. You feel secure because you are higher and dominate and look down. That you can look down is psychologically a very powerful notion. And what was the key element of safety when you were a child? It was that your mother fed you. . . there was warm liquid. That's why cupholders are absolutely crucial for safety. If there is a car that has no cupholder, it is not safe. If I can put my coffee there, if I can have my food, if everything is round, if it's soft, and if I'm high, then I feel safe. It's amazing that intelligent, educated women will look at a car and the first thing they will look at is how many cupholders it has. " . . . one of the things Rapaille learned was that car buyers felt unsafe when they thought that an outsider could easily see inside their vehicles. [Thus on his advice a major car company made the back window of a "hot" model smaller.] Of course, making windows smaller--and thereby reducing visibility--makes driving *more* dangerous, not less so.

The above paragraph is reminiscent of Ayurveda's psychological profile of the *kapha* personality type. The *kapha* mind takes shelter of bodily bulk, roundness, softness, the ready availability of nourishment. This *prakrti* (nature) evolves from the *tamo-guna*.

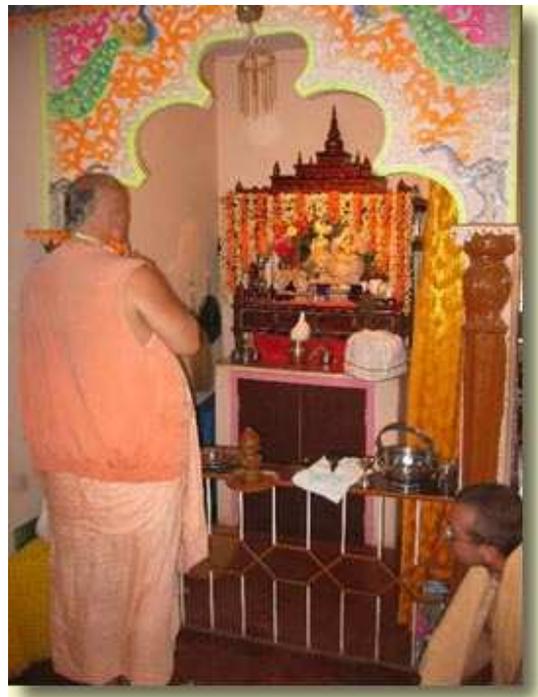
Rapaille's notion of a "reptilian" level of response most likely comes out of Darwinism, but from the Vedic perspective we can agree there is a specialized level of consciousness at which reptiles function. Most souls now inhabiting human forms passed through that level as they ascended out of the lower species toward human incarnation; moreover the desire-seeds that sprout at that level remain buried in the human subconscious. When in spite of achieving a human birth a soul remains enthralled by stupidity--as much of today's population is--then such "reptilian" desires will take shape in the human mind: the shape of an S. U. V, which is a

tortoise-body on wheels. Round, hard on the outside, soft on the inside, a head held up high above the ground (that's why a tortoise has such a long neck). . .

*Belgaum, Karnataka, India
3 April 2004*

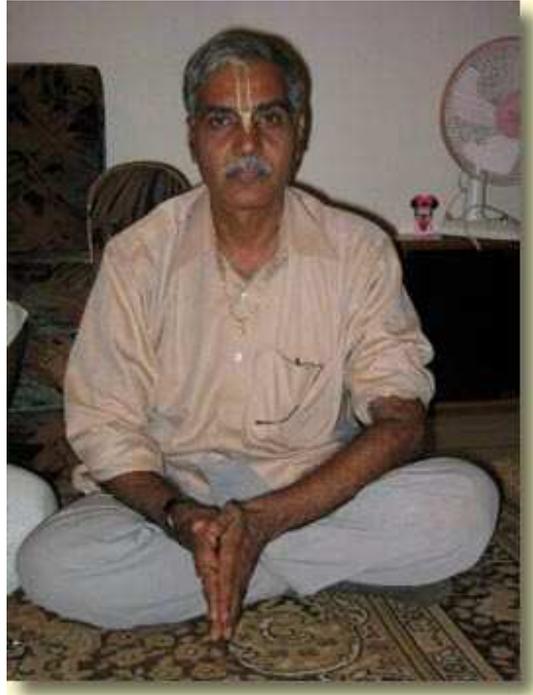
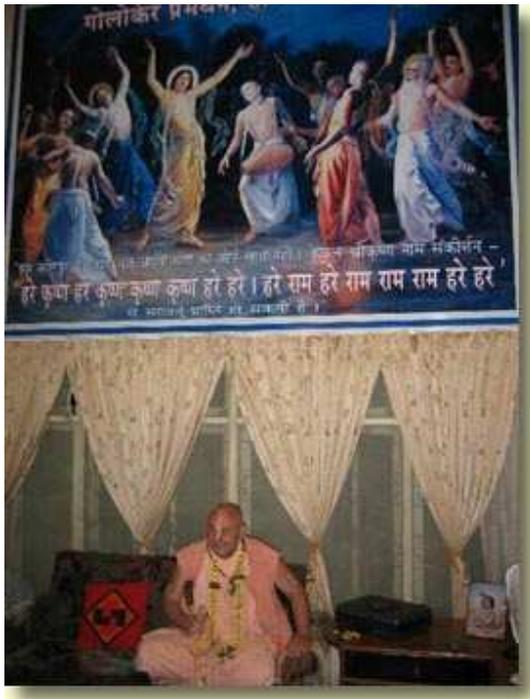
Home Preaching Programs

Radha Govinda Prabhu's House

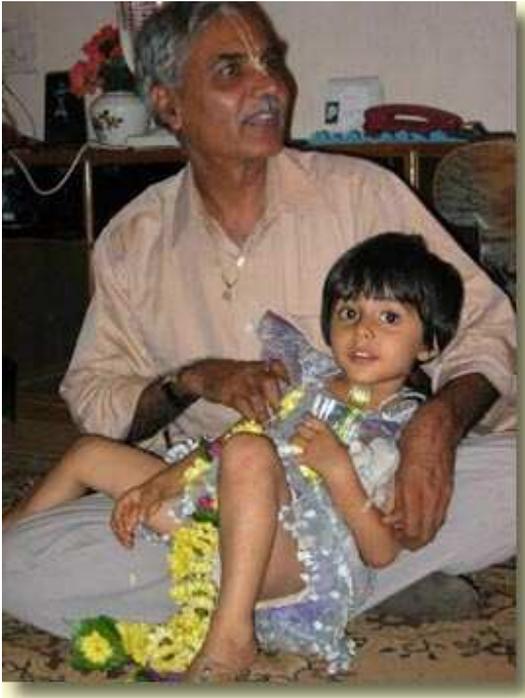




Mr. Katwa's House

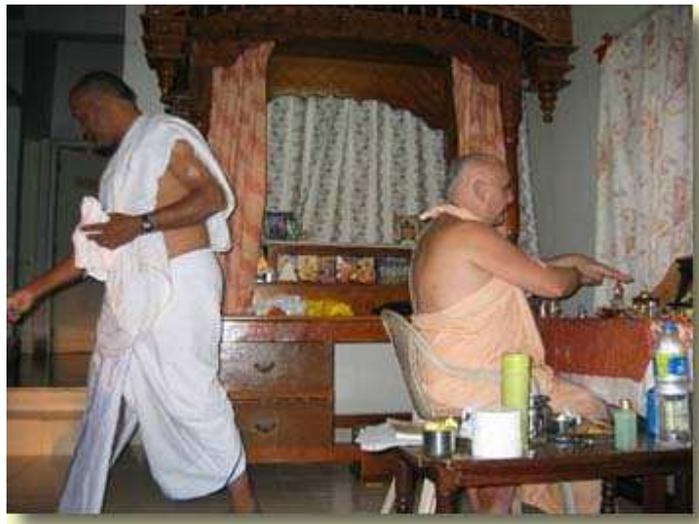


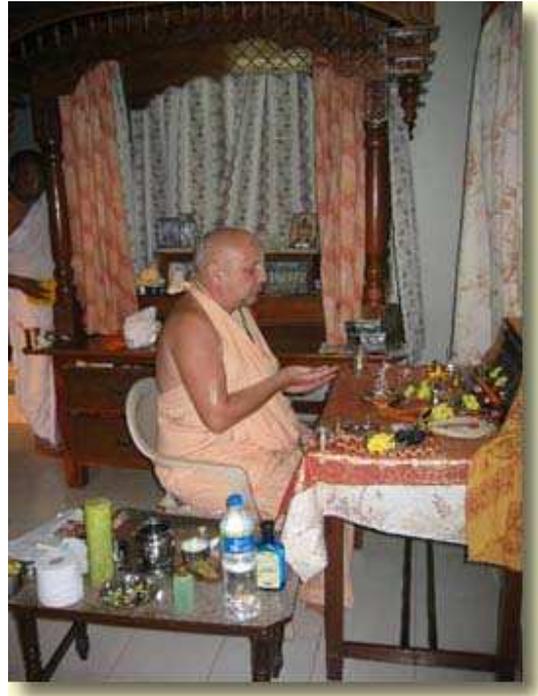




*Belgaum, Karnataka, India
4 April 2004*

Morning Puja, 3 April 6:00 AM, at Prahladananda Prabhu's House





Preaching at G.I.T.



On 3 March I was invited to lecture for an hour and a half at the G.I.T., Belgaum.



Before the program began we met with the principal of the institute, Dr. D.H. Rao, who received his Ph.D. in Canada



Dr. Rao introduced me to the assembly.



The students listened attentively...



...and after my talk many had profound questions--much more philosophical than the "What's that mark on your forehead?" sort of question often asked by students in the West.



At the close of the program one of the professors came up to the podium to express his personal appreciation for the lecture.

Lunch at Mr. Katwa's House



This Sri Govinda Saligram Sila presides in the home of Mr. H.D. Katwa, Chairman and Managing Director of Katwa Udyog Limited, a multi-million dollar international corporation. Mr. Katwa is a great supporter of ISKCON Belgaum and a personal friend of mine.



Mr. Katwa and his daughter-in-law oversee the service of Sri Govindaji's prasadam.



Sri Govinda's expert cooks ki jaya!

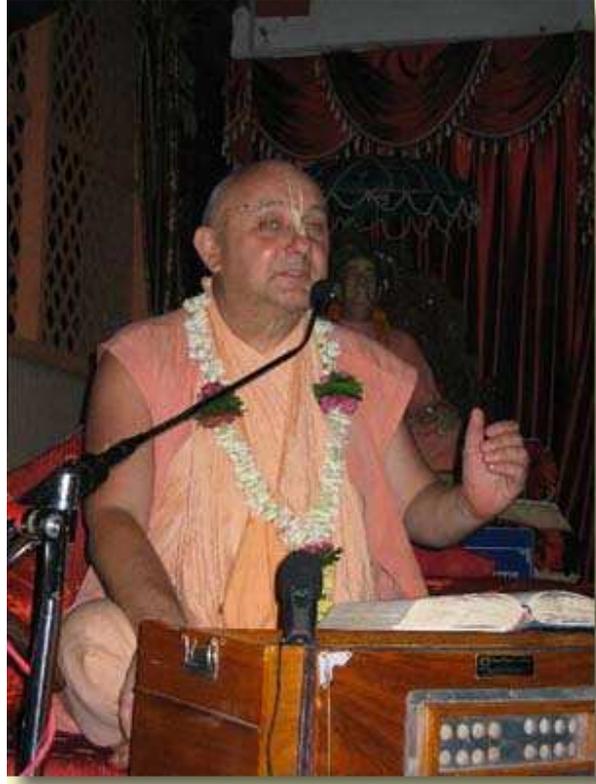


Mr. Katwa's grand-daughter.



Relaxing a bit after prasadam.

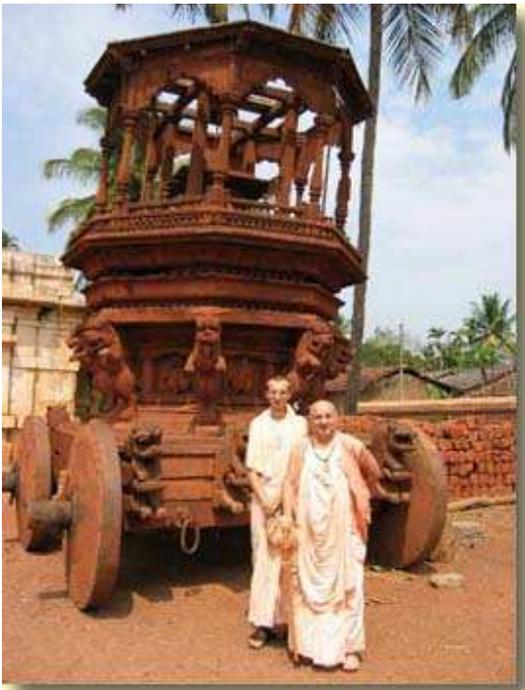
Gita Class



Evening Bhagavad-gita class at the Belgaum ISKCON temple. On the average I am giving 3 classes a day here.

*Belgaum, Karnataka, India
5 April 2004*

Visit to Bhuvara Nrsimha Temple at Halsi Village, 4 April 2004



We went by car 35 kilometers out of Belgaum to Halsi, a small village that is the site of an ancient Nrsimha temple. Now we are standing in front of Lord Nrsimha's ratha cart.



At the entrance of the temple. This Mandira was constructed more than a thousand years ago. The Deity, named Bhuvara Nrsimha, was worshiped at this spot long before this particular temple was built; the Pandavas visited this place 5000 years ago.



Kurma stays in the exact center of the temple floorspace as the support of the entire structure.



The Deity of Lord Varahadeva.



Sri Bhuvana Nrsimha ki jaya! This Deity is self-manifest.



The Deity of Sri Yoga Narayana.



The utsava-murtis of Sri-Sri Lakshmi-Nrsimhadeva. They ride on the ratha cart during festivals.



A machine for beating a drum, clanging a gong and ringing two bells during puja!



Lord Sri Bhuvana Nrsimha and Srimati Lakshmi-devi are now ready for

abhiseka.



The Lord's garland of saligram silas.



Lord Yoga Narayana is undressed to receive His snana (bath) through the bathing ceremony for the Bhuvana Nrsimha Deity.



The abhiseka begins.



Closeup view of small murtis of Lakshmi-Nrsimha and Lakshmi-Varaha.



The pujari now bathes the Deity in milk. The brahmanas who do this worship are coming in

a family parampara that goes back to the time of the construction of the present temple.



Laksmiji is now bathed in milk.



The priest has placed the small murtis and the saligram garland into a pan for cleansing.



He dries Lord Bhuvana Nrsimha with a towel.





The Deity is dressed, decorated, and garlanded. The pujari offers Him coconut and bananas, and then arati.



Worship of Sri Yoga Narayana and Sri Varaha is included in the arati to Sri-Sri

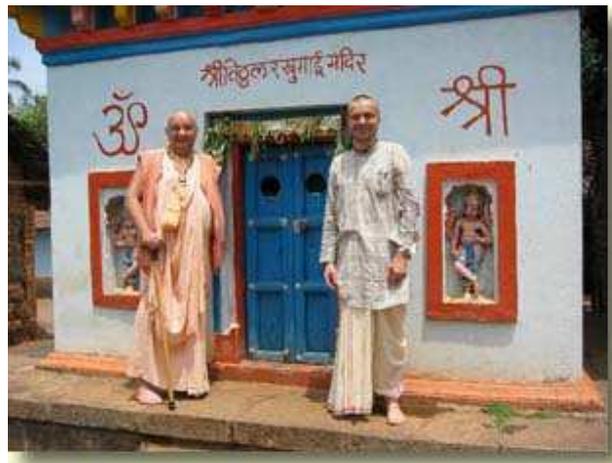


The temple seen from the side opposite the main entrance.

Laksmi-Bhuvara Nrsimhadeva.



In a shrine on the same grounds as the Bhuvara Nrsimha Mandira, these Deities of Vitthala (Sri Krsna), Rukmini and Satyabhama are worshiped.



At the entrance to the shrine of Sri-Sri-Sri Rukmini-Krsna-Satyabhama.

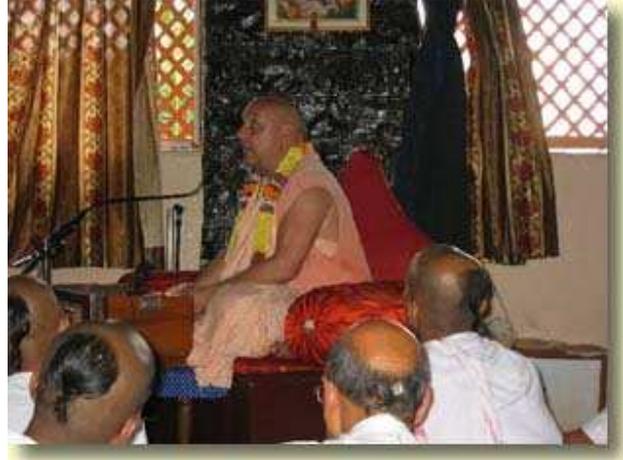


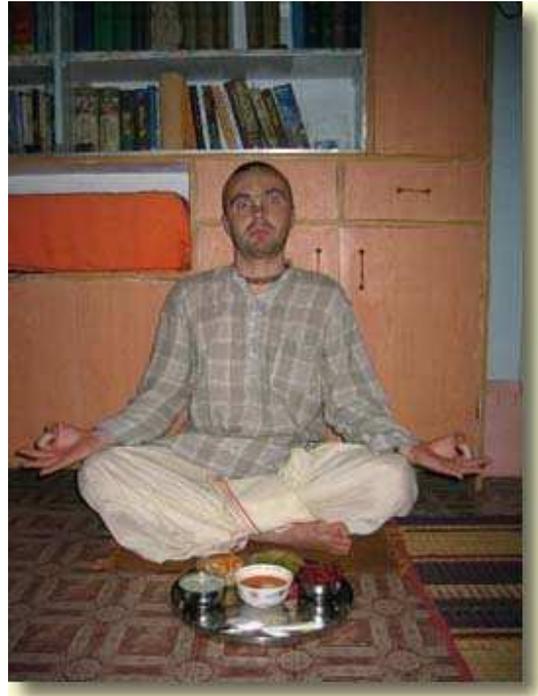
The Bhuvana Nrsimha Mandira seen from another angle.



Beneath Tulasi-devi's shrine the brahmanas have buried an Ugra-Nrsimha Deity that was formerly worshiped in the temple. They put Ugra-Nrsimha here because when He was in the temple, many fires would break out. The fires were displays of the Lord's displeasure with the offenses the priests committed in their puja. Since He was buried under Tulasi-devi, Ugra-Nrsimha has been peaceful.

Sunday Feast at ISKCON Belgaum

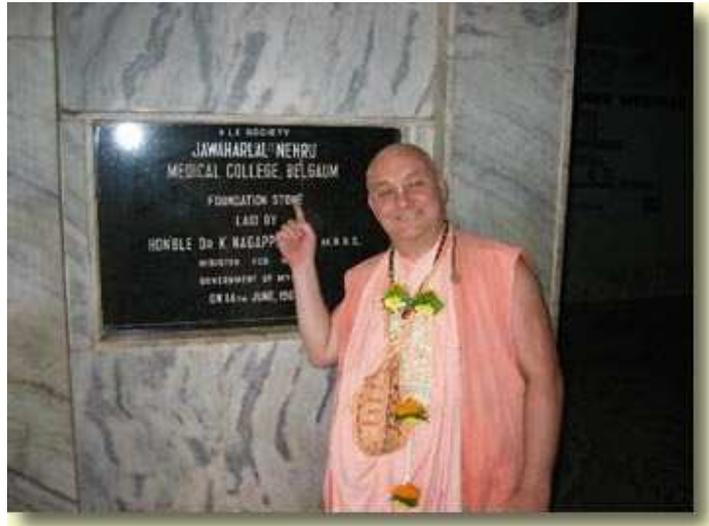


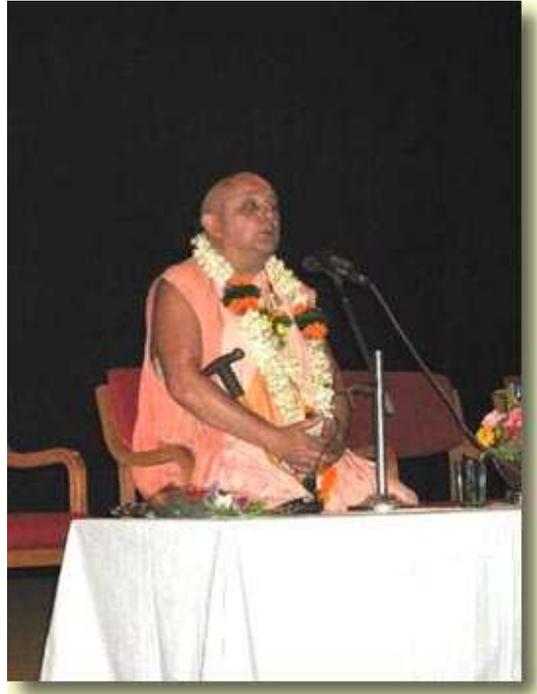
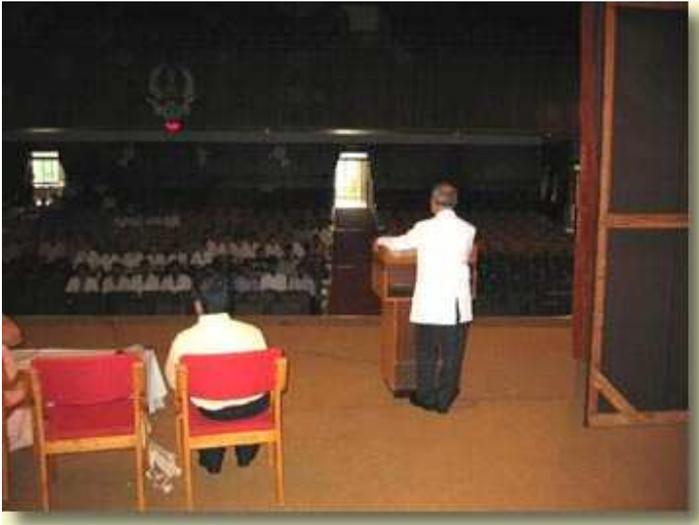


Belgaum, Karnataka, India
6 April 2004

Preaching at the Nehru Medical College, Belgaum, 5 April

I met Dr. V.D. Patil, the principal of the college, at his office; then I went to the auditorium where Dr. Patil introduced me to the assembly; whereupon I spoke on human psychology from the Vedic perspective; and after my talk, was presented with an award!







*Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
7 April 2004*

Sicilian Blazes Put Science to the Test

Mon Apr 5, 10:39 AM ET

By Shasta Darlington

CANNETO DI CARONIA, Sicily (Reuters)--The gate at the entrance to this tiny Sicilian village has come off its hinges and swings in the wind as cats wander into homes abandoned after a series of mystery fires.

A series of spontaneous fires started in mid-January in the town of Canneto di Caronia in about 20 houses. After a brief respite last month, the almost daily fires have flared up again--even though electricity to the village was cut off.

An endless flow of scientists, engineers, police and even a few self-styled "ghostbusters" have descended on the town searching for clues to the recent spontaneous combustion of everything from fuse boxes to microwave ovens to a car.

The blazes, originally blamed on the devil, have not hurt anyone.

"We're working in the dark. We don't have a single lead so far," said Pedro Spinnato, mayor of the trio of Caronia towns.

"Every time some new scientist comes to town, they arrive thinking the whole thing has been invented or that they're going to solve the mystery in two minutes. They've all been wrong. "

ELECTRICIANS AND EXORCISTS

The 39 inhabitants of the town halfway between Palermo and Messina were evacuated after the regional government declared a state of emergency in Canneto, which occupies a single street nestled between a railway line and the sea.

But after weeks of sleeping in a nearby hotel and houses rented for them by the government, they're getting desperate.

"I've seen an air conditioner burst into flames and burn down in 30 seconds. These are not normal events, but I think we're going to have to start looking for a different kind of help," said Antonio Pezzino, whose house was first hit.

From the start, Gabriele Amorth, one of the Catholic Church's exorcists, suspected the devil was at work.

"I've seen things like this before," he told *Il Messaggero* daily. "Demons occupy a house and appear in electrical goods," he said, urging the parish priest to take action.

The local priest, Don Antonio Cipriani, decided together with residents to let scientists have a first go at the fires.

After a brief visit to Canneto di Caronia, the head of the Committee for the Control of Paranormal Claims has ruled out demons or poltergeists--at least for the time being.

"The fact that the phenomenon occurs only when there are people present makes it hard to believe that it is a natural, or even supernatural phenomenon," the committee's Massimo Polidoro said. "But we don't exclude further investigation if things aren't eventually explained. "

UNSOLVED MYSTERY

Nobody can say the experts aren't trying. Canneto looks increasingly like a set for the TV hit "The X-Files. "



Two fire trucks and a police jeep sit at the entrance of Canneto on alert for the next blaze while a van with a large, rotating antennae on top measures the radio waves. A host of three-legged instruments to monitor geomagnetic, meteorological, electromagnetic and electrostatic indicators sit in apartments and next to lemon trees in the gardens. Colored markings on the street indicate the presence of volcano experts.

Police ruled out a possible prankster or pyromaniac after they saw wires burst into flames.

The hypotheses now range from a build-up of electrical energy caused by grounding wires running off the railway to a rare "natural phenomenon" in which surges of electricity rise from the earth's core.

The fires have even consumed unplugged lamps and an entire apartment. Black scorch marks still scar the apartment walls.

Italy's big utility, Enel, cut off electricity to the town and hooked it up to a generator - but that caught fire as well.

More recently cellular phones and cars have also been acting up, with lock and alarm systems being set off without any apparent reason.

SACRIFICIAL GOAT?

The evacuated families of Canneto di Caronia who gather almost every night in the three-star hotel perched above their abandoned village are giving up hope.

"I just want to go home," said Rosi Cioffo, a shopkeeper and mother of two. "I don't know what's causing it and I don't care anymore--even if it's the devil. "

Her 9-year-old daughter, who is frightened every time a TV or bathroom fan switches on, may not agree.

Spinnato, the mayor, sounds just as desperate.

"Someone wrote to us saying the solution was to sacrifice a black goat and collect its blood. At some point, that's going to start looking like a good idea. "



Somewhere under the earth of Canneto di Caronia, could there be an Ugra Nrsimha sila waiting to be uncovered and properly worshiped?

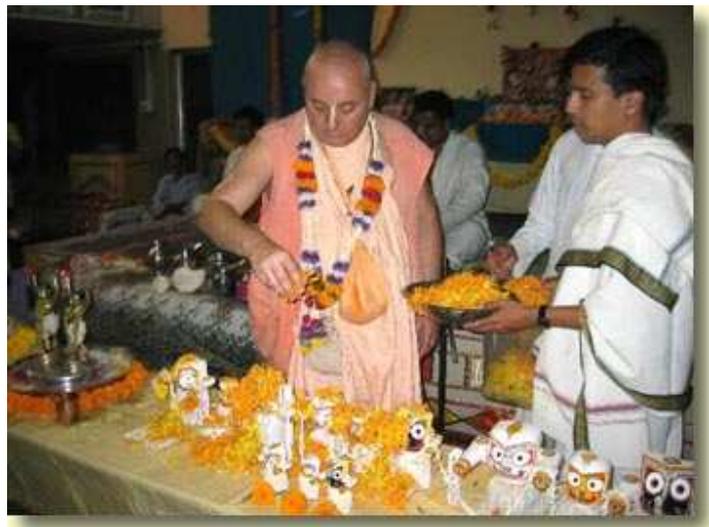
*Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
10 April 2004*

**Kolhapur Deity Installation and Lecture at Homeopathic College
9, 10 April**





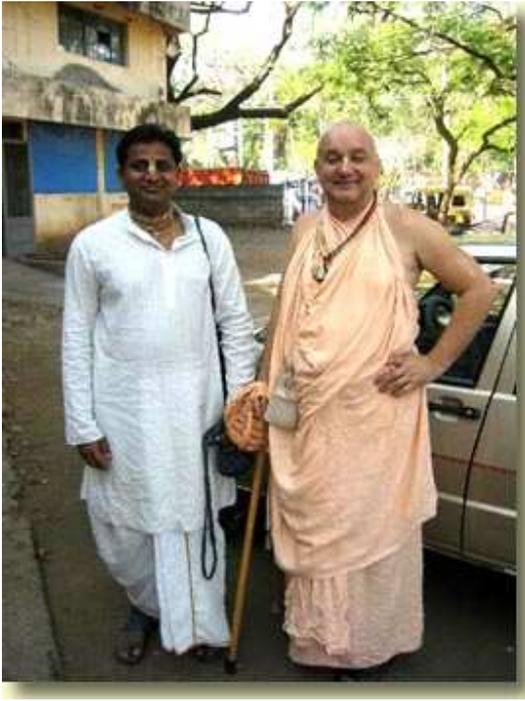
9 March evening: the devotees of Kolhapur gathered in a public hall for the installation of a transcendental phalanx of Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai and Sri-Sri-Sri Jagannatha-Baladeva-Subhadra-devi Deities.





I did the first abhiseka, bathing Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai in pancamrta and Sri-Sri-Sri Jagannatha-Baladeva-Subhadra in flowers. Then the devotees who will worship these Deities in their homes bathed Them.





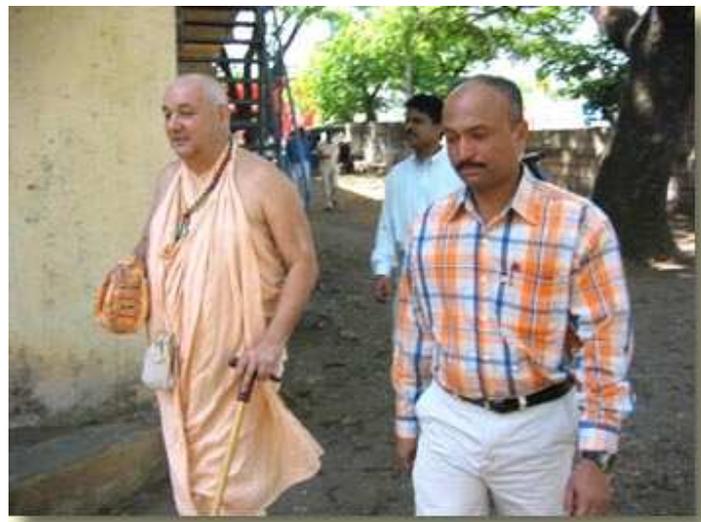
With His Grace Vrndavana Ananda Prabhu, a leading preacher in Kolhapur. We are at a homeopathic college where I gave a program on the morning of 10 April, which is the birthday of the German medical researcher Hannemann, the founder of homeopathy.



The subject of my lecture, as requested by the college teaching staff, was Stress Management. I spoke "you are not that body" philosophy and recommended the chanting of the Hare Krsna mahamantra as the Vedic treatment of stress. To my left in this picture you can see...



...the portrait of homeopathy founder-acarya Hannemann. I got the honor of putting a garland on it!



After the lecture I met with the leading teachers of the college. They were very pleased with my talk. The gentleman next to me explained the spiritual theory of homeopathy.

Penn State Study Finds Origins of Snakes

Apr 9

By DAN LEWERENZ, Associated Press Writer

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. --Using DNA evidence, two Penn State University researchers think they have answered a long-standing question among scientists: Did snakes evolve from land-based lizards, or did they come from the sea?



In an article for the May 7 issue of the journal *Biology Letters*, Penn State biology professor Blair Hedges and postdoctoral scholar Nicolas Vidal write that the genetic evidence strongly suggests that snakes evolved from land-dwelling lizards. It's a conclusion that confirms a general trend in evolutionary biology, but bucks more than 100 years of thinking about reptiles, Hedges said.

"Actually the snakes came from Kadru, one of the wives of Kasyapa Muni! Just see the bogus propaganda of modern science--the title of this article boldly states the origin of snakes was found, but the text of the article waffles with phrases like 'strongly suggests.'"

The first tetrapods, or four-legged creatures, migrated from the oceans onto land 365 million years ago. Many animals later returned to the sea, including the ancestors of modern dolphins and whales--their arms and legs evolved into fins.

Herpetologists, though, have been divided about the origin of snakes. Some thought snakes evolved from land-based lizards, losing their legs to better squeeze through small holes and crevasses close to the ground. Others thought aquatic lizards, such as mosasaurs, made a second migration onto land as snakes.

Evidence for the aquatic theory came largely from physical similarities between monitor lizards such as the Komodo dragon--the closest living relatives of mosasaurs--and snakes.

"Monitors have these long, forked tongues like snakes, and not many other lizards have similar tongue morphology," Hedges said. "The body shape of a monitor is very long and snakelike. The jaws are very large and tending toward the snake's jaw type. So there were several lines of evidence, morphologically, that point toward a snake-monitor relationship. "

To test that theory, Vidal and Hedges compared the DNA from 17 of the 25 known families of snakes to DNA from all 19 families of lizards. They found snakes to be much more similar to land-based lizards than they were to monitors, providing strong evidence for a terrestrial evolution.

"In the last five or so years, people looking at gene sequences have claimed that they found support for a monitor-snake relationship in the sequence data," Hedges said. "But in all cases, they were missing many families of lizards, so I guess you could say the didn't have all the data to really say that for certain.

"When we had all of the families' data, it clearly showed there was no snake-monitor relationship. "

Although the evidence contradicts the strongly held beliefs of some herpetologists, Nancy J. Berner, associate professor and chair of biology at the University of the South, said the DNA comparison would be strong evidence for those looking strictly at physical similarities.



"The thing that really caught my attention, and that I think is really significant, is that the investigators were looking at genetic relatedness as opposed to anatomical structures," Berner said. "What this does is it's taking the new technology that's out there and applying it to an old question, really testing old theories. I would say that they're really on to something here. "

*"See?
Science has
really solid
proof of
evolution!
Why don't
you devotees
open your
eyes and
accept it?
Cultists!"*

Although their research leads Hedges and Vidal away from the monitor lizards and the aquatic theory, they still haven't determined exactly where snakes began to separate from the lizard family tree.

"Now we need to identify the closest relative of snakes. We don't have it yet," Vidal said. "We can exclude monitors--that's statistically supported, strongly--so we know their origin is not marine. But all of the other lizard lineages are terrestrial, so we have to find which one. "



*"Look Ma--
I'm
evolving!"*

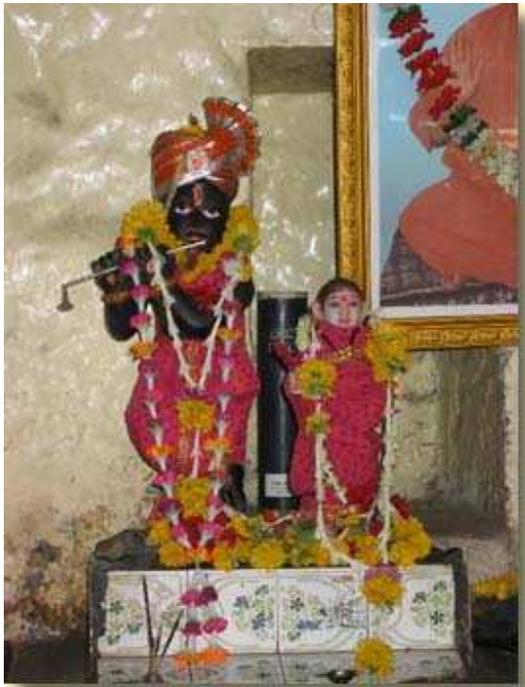
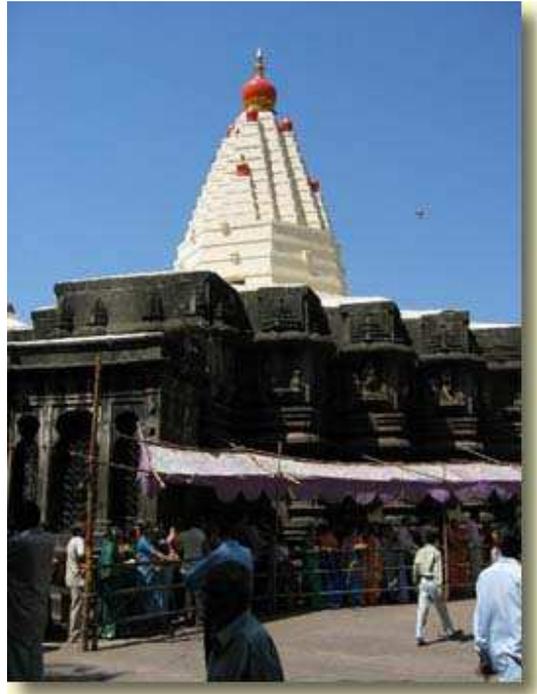
*Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
11 April 2004*

**We Visit the Mahalaksmi Temple, the Sesusayi Temple,
and I give the Sunday Feast Lecture
11 April**

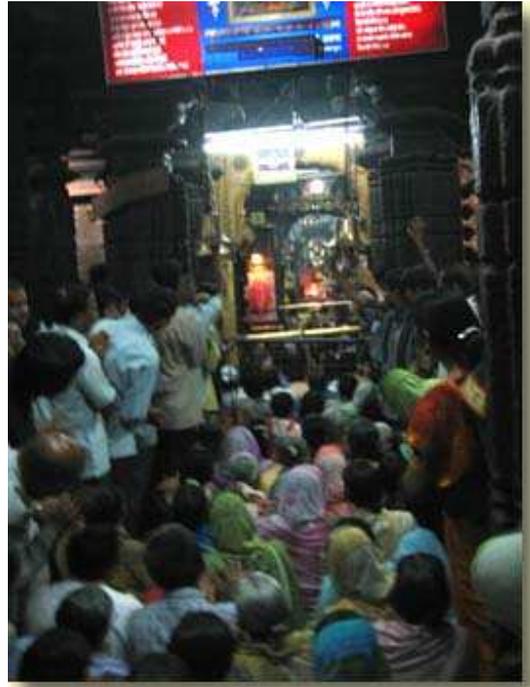


The Mahalaxmi Temple in Kolhapur is one of the most important Lakshmi temples in India. The Deity is the consort of Lord Venkatesvara at Tirupati but She has come to Kolhapur to perform austerities. No pilgrimage to Tirupati is complete if it does not include a trip to Kolhapur to have darsana of Mahalaxmi.





There are many Deities within the Mahalaksmi temple complex. Here are Sri-Sri Radha-Krsna.



Photography of the Mahalaksmi Deity is not permitted. But we managed to get this shot from a far distance.



Laksmiji's huge ghee lamp towers. On festive occasions like Diwali, all these lamps will be alight at night.

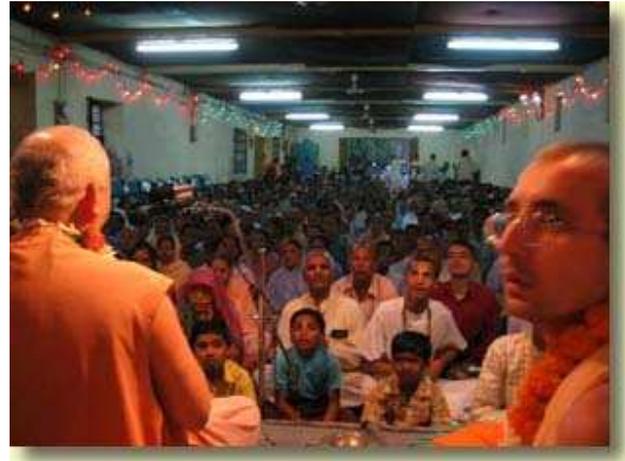


Two years ago I did a 3-day program at this spot! Well, I can't say it was me alone...the

wonderful Kolhapur devotees made it possible.



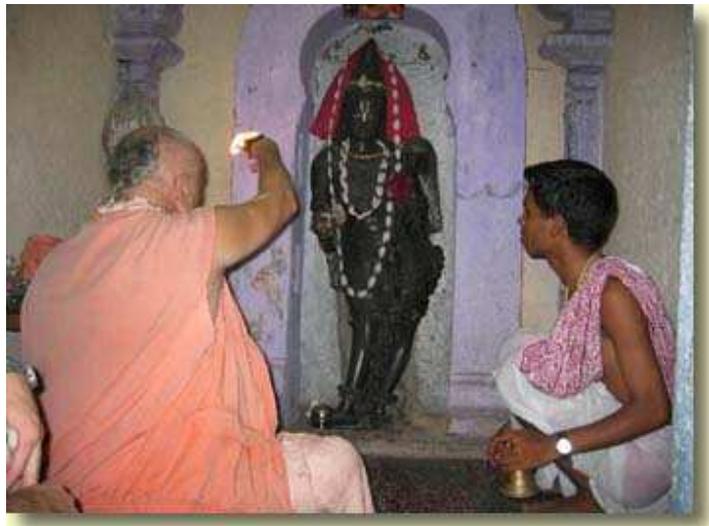
The Seshasayi Deity in Kolhapur. In In2-MeC of January 2003 I related the history of this most remarkable murti. At the Lord's head is His consort Lila-sakti; at His feet are His consorts Sri and Bhudevis.



Sunday feast program in Kolhapur. There is no ISKCON temple in this city, so the devotees normally use a Radha-Krsna temple in town for this function. But today that temple had a function of its own. We held the feast in a hall made available by a nice woman. Full house!



After the Sunday feast Martanda, Rocana and I returned to the Mahalaksmi temple. We thought we might get a nice photo of Her in the quieter hours of the evening, but it was simply not possible. Above is a photo of Sri Bharata Maharaja (Lord Ramacandra's brother) who has His own shrine in the Mahalaksmi



Since I did the 3-day program here 2 years ago, this young brahmana priest who is in charge of the shrine for Sri Bharata has kept my picture here. I only discovered this tonight! He asked me to do arati for Sri Bharata and it was my honor to comply. Hare Krsna!

compound. You'll notice a small photo on a green cloth to the left of the Deity's lotus feet. That is a photo of me!

*Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
12 April 2004*

**Amazing Nrsimhapura!
Morning, 12 April**



After I completed my morning puja we piled into a car and drove an hour and a half to Nrsimhapura. Martanda and I at the front gate of the temple complex.



We are about to enter the temple building. The Nrsimhapura Mandira is an ancient structure that is slowly being renovated.



Nrsimhapura temple is like no other Nrsimha temple that I know about. The Deity is housed deep underground!



We begin the descent.



We enter this underground darsana hall where a few sacred pictures and small altars can be seen. But this is not our destination.



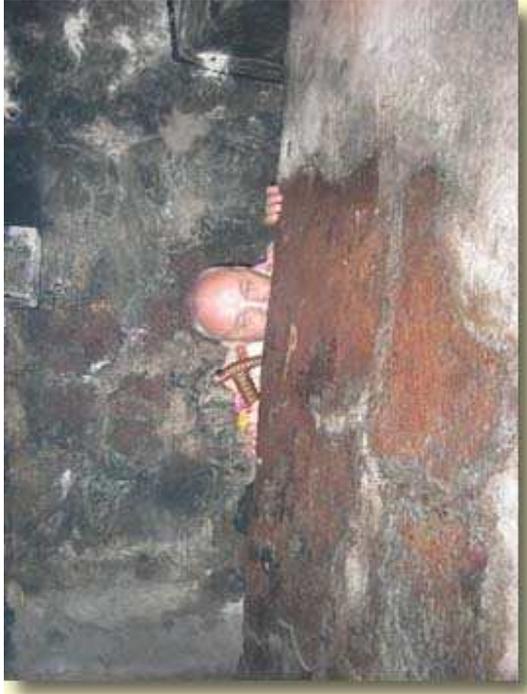
We descend to another level, through this doorway.



And having reached that level we go even lower!



This is a steep stairway...mind your step!



Around the last corner...



Sri Ugra-Nrsimha ki jaya! This is a self-manifest Deity that appeared from one huge saligram sila. He was located in the Krsna River that flows next to the temple by a brahmana who had a dream that guided

him to the Lord. In the dream Lord Nrsimhadeva told him, "Where you see fire on top of water, that is where I am." After the brahmana awoka he went to the river and sure enough saw fire burning on the surface. Beneath that fire this murti was recovered.



We sit before the Deity a long time and chant. Nrsimhapura Ugra-Nrsimha is an incredibly powerful Deity. As soon as one is in His presence one becomes so humbled it almost takes one's breath away! Seated in the middle is Jayananda Prabhu, who drove us.

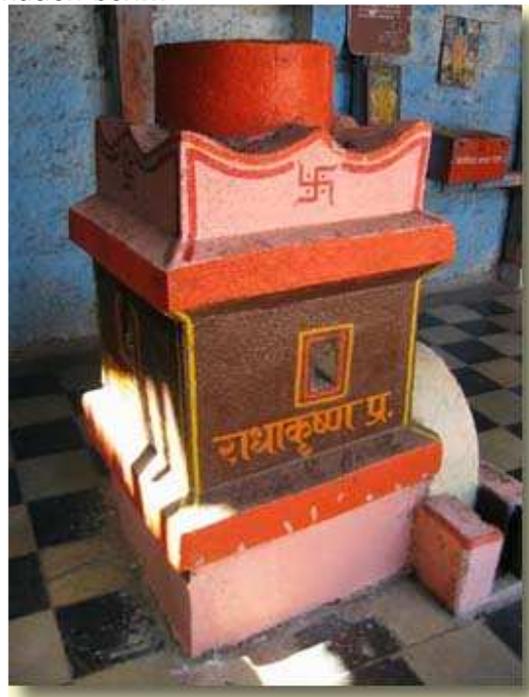


The figures seen around the Lord's head are the Dasavataras!





This shaft in the upper back wall of the darsana room is for donations. Coins are dropped into this donation box...

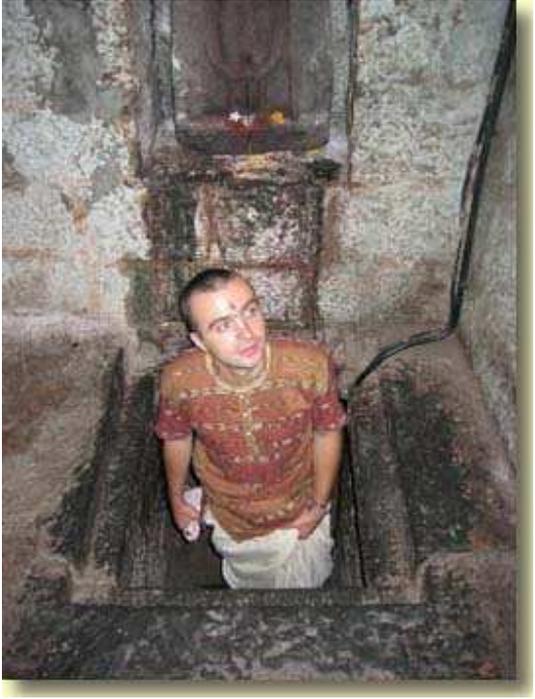


...located on the surface. The coins drop 3 floors through the shaft and spill onto the floor of the darsana area, rolling up to Lord Ugra Nrsimha's lotus feet! Of course if you happen to be sitting and chanting your japa underneath the donation shaft, you're liable

to get a coin abhiseka.



The temple is so old it is almost a ruin. Still the Deity is visited throughout day by hundreds of devotees who live in the villages in the area.



Rocana Prabhu emerging from the Deity level. "He took my mind away from me!" was Rocana's comment.



The lovely Krsna River seen from Nrsimhapur Mandira. This river really lives up to its name: it is dark like Krsna, it is pure like Krsna, it is beautiful like Krsna, and it is sweet like Krsna.



Looking back at the mandira from the bank of the Krsna river.



Just to take a bath in the Krsna River is more than worth the price of an air ticket to India.



Rocana's mind still hasn't returned.



Sriman Vrndavana Ananda Prabhu.



Martanda takes a dip.



A river to keep in your heart.

*Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
13 April 2004*

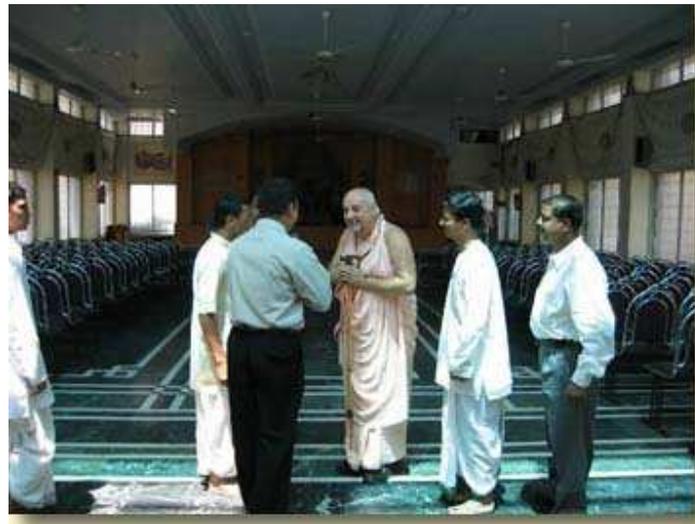
**Preaching Programs:
Kolhapur Bar Association
Kolhapur Police Department**



On the afternoon of 12 April I gave a talk to the Bar Association (the lawyer's guild) of Kolhapur. Here Vrndavana Ananda Prabhu and I are seated with Mr. Deshmukh, the head judge of civil and session court for Kolhapur District.



These Indian lawyers, I have to say, were a tougher audience than most people I've preached to in this country. But at the end they were satisfied.



The next morning we went to the Srinivasa Mandapam to speak to assembled members of the Kolhapur Police Force, headed by District Police Commissioner Padmanabham.



The Srinivasa Mandapam is dedicated to Lord Srinivasa (Venkateswara), who presides over the place in this form of wood.



The program was conducted in an upstairs conference hall.



The subject was Stress Management. First Vrndavan Ananda lead the group in chanting the mahamantra in meditative style to demonstrate its effectiveness as a stress reliever.



I spoke afterwards, taking the audience from the "how" of chanting to the "why."



The program with the police was a great success! Many books were sold and several policemen came forward to express their personal interest in Krsna consciousness. Truly, so far it is only in India that we see clear evidence that ISKCON can in coming years become a influential force in society.



Today's Email from Regular Readers

Today, as I was looking at in2-mec, I exclaimed: your internet diary is so wonderful! Working hard on finishing my study and being involved in all kinds of other matters, I very rarely express directly to you my profound appreciation for the inspiration that you are giving me through your diary.



Again I would like to assure you that I derive the greatest pleasure and enlightenment from your web site and papers you publish there. I think this is the rare potent spiritual place on Internet, maybe the only one. Please go on and don't stop. many thanks.

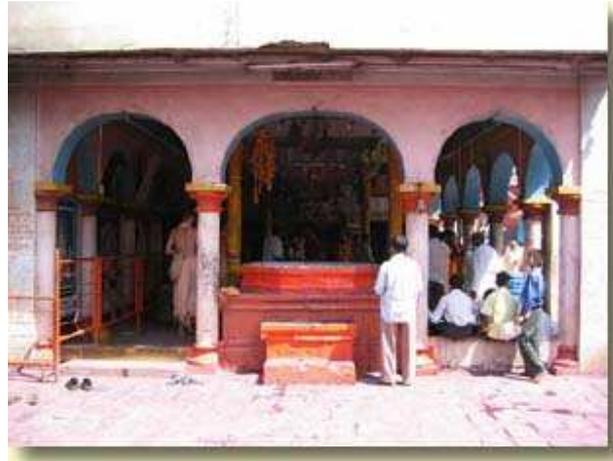
*Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
14 April 2004*

**Congregational Program
at Laksmi-Nrsimha Mandira in Sangavade
and at the nearby Jatesvari Temple**

This morning several hundred Kolhapur devotees traveled a few miles outside the city to the village of Sangavade, where there is a Laksmi-Nrsimha Mandira. We had a short *darsana* and *kirtana* there. Then we went another mile or so to the temple of the demigoddess Jatesvari. She is worshiped as an expansion of Lord Siva; moreover it is said that Lord Nrsimhadeva accepted Jatesvari as His sister! I seriously doubt that this belief has authority. Anyway, on Nrsimha Caturdasi the pujaris bring the Deity of Nrsimha together with the Jatesvari *murti*. Whatever Jatesvari may be, we conducted a Stay High Forever *kirtana* at her temple. I hope she is pleased with us.



*Outside the Sangavade Nrsimha temple with
Vrndavana Ananda Prabhu.*



A look at the darsana area.



Sri-Sri Lakshmi-Nrsimha at Sangavade. The Deity is actually self-manifest from a large stone, and the

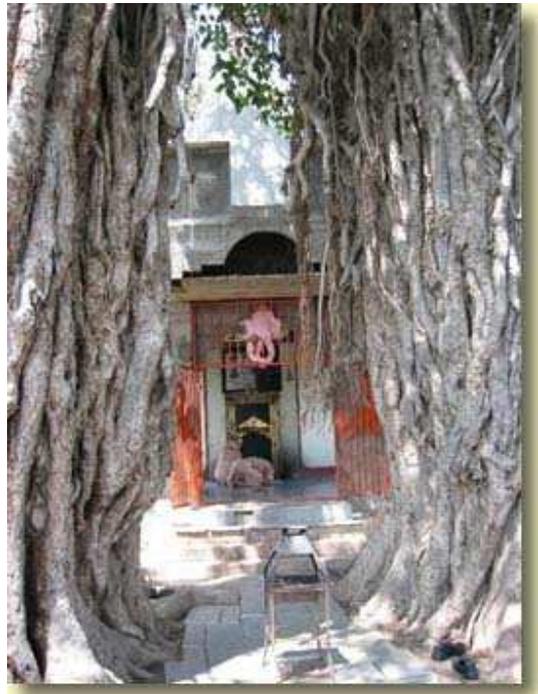
priests fit the metal features (the Deity faces etc.) to the stone. Before the Deity is bathed each morning the metal fittings are removed.

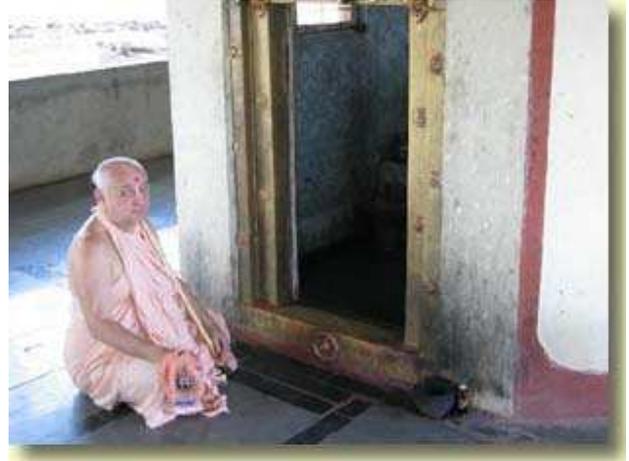


Kirtana in the darsana hall and while circumambulating the temple.



Jatesvari temple. The big trees in front are auspicious banyans.





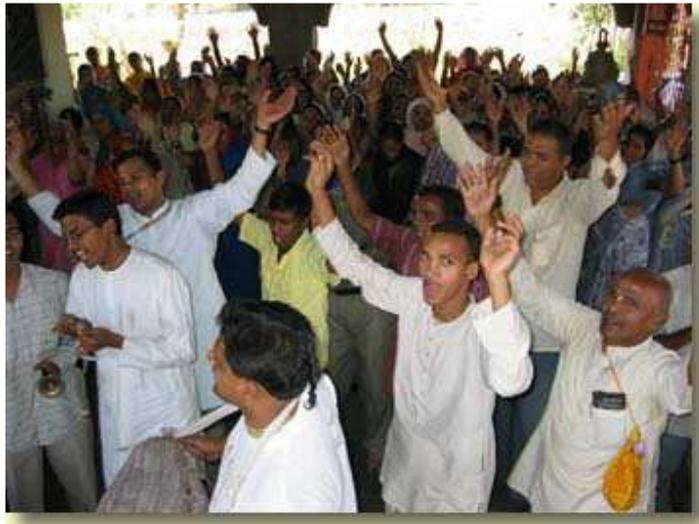
Jatesvari Devi.



The devotees arrive, having walking from the Nrsimha temple while performing sankirtana.



The Stay High Forever kirtana begins.



*Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
15 April 2004*



I read through the pre ISKCON stories and I wanted to tell you that they are all wonderful. Nice narrated, thrilling and much inspiring. May I suggest you to print or publish them on web separately? At least for me they solved many questions which no longer hang around in my head.

Thanks a lot.

Also, I have one question:

What is the place for Kundalini Shakti in Gaudia Vashnava tradition, practice and philosophy?

Hare Krsna! Thanks for your appreciation of In2-MeC. As to your question about kundalini yoga, Srila Prabhupada has answers for you. In Srimad-Bhagavatam 4. 29. 6, he explains that the kundalini-sakti or "the serpent power" as some call it is comprised of 5 subtle life forces: prana, apana, udana, vyana and samana. The Bhagavatam compares these combined 5 pranas to a 5-headed serpent.

In his purport to Srimad-Bhagavatam 4. 23. 15, Prabhupada states:

The aim of this particular system of asana, known as the sitting posture for liberation, or muktasana, is to attain success in kundalini-cakra and gradually raise the life from the muladhara-cakra to the svadhisthana-cakra, then to the manipura-cakra, the anahata-cakra, the visuddha-cakra, and finally to the ajna-cakra. When the yogi reaches the ajna-cakra, between the two eyebrows, he is able to penetrate the brahma-randhra, or the hole in his skull, and go to any planet he desires, up to the spiritual kingdom of Vaikuntha, or Krsnaloka. The conclusion is that one has to come to the brahma-bhuta stage for going back to Godhead. However, those who are in Krsna consciousness, or who are practicing bhakti-yoga (sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam pada-sevanam), can return to Godhead without even practicing the muktasana process.

Srila Prabhupada goes on to explain that the purpose of the muktasana process (kundalini yoga) is achievement of the brahma-bhuta stage. Since devotional service to Krsna is eternally manifest within the realm of Brahman, the spiritual sky, one who engages in bhakti-yoga is brahma-bhuta (a liberated soul) himself. This is the meaning of Bg 14. 26.

In addition, there is this question and answer at the end of a Srimad-Bhagavatam lecture His Divine Grace gave in London, 30 July 1971.

Guest 2: Many books from the East advocate the, without any success in yoga, before one has success, the Kundalini must be opened. What do you think about this?

Prabhupada: Well, we think of Bhagavad-gita first, then others. Bhagavad-gita says that yoga should be practiced concentrating one's mind on Krsna. Mat-parayanah. Vasudeva-parayanah. Narayana parayanah. These words are there. So if yoga practice is performed by concentrating one's mind on Krsna or Visnu, that is first-class yoga, and that is stated in the Bhagavad-gita, yoginam api sarvesam mad-gatenantaratmana, "Of all yogis, one who is always thinking of Me within the heart,

he is first class yogi. " So if you are practicing yoga we should recommend that you think of Krsna within your heart. That will help you. That is our advice. But if you think something else, that is your business. (Laughter)

Jaya Srila Prabhupada!



Thinking about Dimensions

In the early 1880s a book by the name of *Flatland* was published. The author was Edwin Abbott Abbott (1838-1926), a British Shakespearean scholar. His purpose in writing the book was to open his readers' minds to higher dimensions. To do this he ushered his readers into a lower-dimensional world, Flatland. The idea was to get the readers to first appreciate the ordinary world of three dimensions we live in, and then to acknowledge that beyond ours there could be a world of four dimensions, just as there could be a world like Flatland of only two dimensions.

Length and width are the only spatial dimensions known in Flatland. What for us is a line on a page, for a Flatlander is a wall. We live in houses that are more or less cubes. A house in Flatland is more or less a simple square. A Flatlander's skin is an outline of a body with only one orifice for eating and excreting. If a Flatlander had two orifices, his body would be divided into two parts, and he would come apart.

To a 2-D person, a 3-D person is a god. Think about it. From our vantage point all of Flatland's secrets are laid bare. Flatlanders find privacy from one another when they retreat into the squares of their own rooms. But a square can hide nothing from us. We would even see inside the Flatlanders' bodies.

Suppose Flatland was situated on the surface of soup in a bowl. How would the residents perceive a spoon that enters their world again and again, emptying it bit by bit? It would look like a simple line whose size varies in time; because Flatlanders would see the spoon only in terms of their flat plane world, to them it would be a crazy and unpredictable transformative 2-D entity that appears and disappears out of nothing, uncannily changing shape over time. They would make reports about the spoon that would curiously resemble reports 3-D people make about ghosts and UFOs. Flatlanders who had not seen the spoon would undoubtedly dismiss such reports as mad.

That's the point: after considering what it would be like for *us* to play with the Flatlanders' minds, we can then consider what it would be like for 4-D personalities to play with *our* minds. Abbott's book only suggested it; it was the writings of an American, Charles Howard Hinton (1853-1907), that developed rigorous speculations about the relationship between the 3-D world and the 4-D world. Here's a simple example: look at a corner of the room you are sitting in right now. What do you see in terms of dimensions? If in that corner two walls meet at a 90 degree angle, and if the floor meets the walls at a 90 degree angle, what you see are three perpendicular solid plane surfaces coming together at one point. In a 3-D world, that's it. Three

solid plane surfaces at 90 degrees from one another can *only* come together as you observe them do in the corner of your room. But in a 4-D world, you would--sitting where you are now and looking at that corner--observe *four* solid plane surfaces come to one point at 90 degree angles from one another.

It does no good to picture in your mind two walls and a floor meeting at that same point in a room next to yours: "Oh sure, I get it!" No, you don't. You are not able to see those walls and floor from where you are. You have to get up, go out of your room, and observe the corner of that room *separately* from your corner. You can fit the adjacent corners of the two rooms together in your mind, but that is only theoretical. In a 4-D world you would *directly observe* the meeting of four solid planes at 90 degree angles from one another. And *that* experience is extremely difficult to picture in your mind.

We would be completely open to the sight of a 4-D being. Not only would he see everything inside of us, but at the same time he would see all the sides of the surface of our bodies. When Hinton published his works, such ideas bordered on the fantastic, but nowadays they are fully incorporated into mathematics. Mind-boggling animations have been produced of "hypercubes" and "tesseract," objects of the fourth dimension. Physicists routinely work with eleven hypothetical dimensions. Theory holds that there could be any number of dimensions.

What some thinkers have implied from this is that the perception of higher dimensions depends upon consciousness. There are portals to greater states of awareness, and one who knows how to open them can then see *a totally different world* than before. My Godbrother Revatinandana Prabhu remembers asking Srila Prabhupada about how *bhoga* is transformed into *prasadam*. Srila Prabhupada replied that actually everything already is *prasadam*. Meaning: everything already is *spiritual*. But unless we engage in the process for transforming our consciousness (i. e. the act of offering "*bhoga*" to Krsna), the portal to the spiritual dimension will not open for us, because we will be stuck in the consciousness of sense gratification.

On this view, then, matter does not "change" into spirit. Matter *is* spirit, but we are aware of spirit only *as* matter. *The perception of "matter" manifests within lower, mundane consciousness.* In higher consciousness, there is no matter. When we offer *bhoga* to Krsna in our practice of *sadhana-bhakti*, the Lord, by His mercy, allows a portal to open--at least partially--by which we can have some degree of perception of the offered item in its fuller spiritual reality.

One consequence of this is that we ought not to anticipate the reality of spirit from the standpoint of the "reality" of matter. In science, it is accepted that mathematical logic--which is the means by which a 3-D person can conceive of the fourth dimension and beyond--only *partially* accounts for higher-dimensional reality. In short, we cannot "figure out" the fourth dimension, and enter into it, by logic alone. We can get an idea of it, that's all. But an idea of a thing is not the same as the experience of it.

To offer an example from science, the established theory of what electricity is--meaning the electrical force that we experience in this 3-D world--is that it is gravity in the fourth dimension. Now, this is speculation of course. But the philosophical lesson is that our present experience of electricity and gravity hardly leads to the experience of them as *the same thing* in a higher dimension. Similarly, our present

experience of matter and spirit is that they are two different things. We cannot arrive at an understanding of what the experience of spirit is like in higher dimensions by studying our present experience of matter and then developing a logic based on that experience.

Of course, we know that the material world exhibits name, form, quality, activity and relationship because these characteristics are inherent in the spiritual world; we know that the material world is a shadow of the substance of spirit. But how far can we carry this logic? "There is pizza here, so there must be pizza in Goloka Vrndavana. " (I've heard devotees talk like this; probably they were joking, but anyway. . .) Yeah? So there is baseball here too. Does that mean there is baseball in Goloka Vrndavana? And used car dealerships, Internet cafes, and abortion clinics? It's not a matter of *quid pro quo*, "For this, that. "

*kim va yogena sankhyena
nyasa-svadhyaayor api
kim va sreyobhir anyais ca
na yatra-atma-prado harih*

Transcendental practices that do not ultimately help one realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead are useless, be they mystic yoga practices, the analytical study of matter, severe austerity, the acceptance of sannyasa, or the study of Vedic literature. All these may be very important aspects of spiritual advancement, but unless one understands the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, all these processes are useless. (*Bhag.* 4. 31. 12)

*deho 'savo 'ksa manavo bhuta-matram
atmanam anyam ca viduh param yat
sarvam puman veda gunams ca taj-jno
na veda sarva jnam anantam ide*

Because they are only matter, the body, the life airs, the external and internal senses, the five gross elements and the subtle sense objects [form, taste, smell, sound and touch] cannot know their own nature, the nature of the other senses or the nature of their controllers. But the living being, because of his spiritual nature, can know his body, the life airs, the senses, the elements and the sense objects, and he can also know the three qualities that form their roots. Nevertheless, although the living being is completely aware of them, he is unable to see the Supreme Being, who is omniscient and unlimited. I therefore offer my respectful obeisances unto Him. (*Bhag.* 6. 4. 25)

The supreme dimension of reality, in which everything is revealed in its true, original nature, is Sri Krsna's personal state of consciousness. The above verses show that while we may be able to play around with the perspectives of different dimensions, we can never know Krsna's dimension of consciousness. Unless, of course, He kindly reveals that dimension to us. But for that, we must surrender to Him utterly.

And that entails giving up our attachments to lower dimensions of consciousness, whether they be sensual, mental, intellectual, mystical, or even reverential. To surrender to Krsna means to love Krsna with complete abandon (*sarva dharmam parityaja*) and nothing less. To love Krsna with complete abandon means to want only what Krsna wants and nothing less. If Krsna does not permit pizza "to be" in His

personal abode, then pizza is ultimately *not*, despite our logic of "as above so below." And so it goes that so much of our present experience of "reality" is founded only upon our "I am the enjoyer" attitude. ("I enjoy pizza so much. . . there *must* be pizza in the spiritual world!") Separated as we are from Krsna, we are *not* in truth enjoyers. Thus much of our present experience of "reality" is not real at all.

I've got more to say about this, but this subject matter is rather challenging. So I'll say the rest tomorrow.



Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India
16 April 2004

Thinking about Dimensions (continued from yesterday)

I'm using pizza as a mere symbol for something else: sex. *Prakṛta-sahajiyas* like the Bauls are devotees of sexual pleasure. They suppose that the *adi-rasa* (original erotic exchange) between Sri Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis* is of the nature of the human sexual experience. It is just wildly magnified and undiminishing--an incredibly intense, perpetual orgasm. The Bauls practice a sort of *sadhana* by which they hope to attain the same peak of pleasure they imagine the Lord enjoys all the time.

Readers of Srila Prabhupada's books know the retort to the *sahajiya* standpoint. So many quotations could be brought forward; I'll offer just one here that nicely covers the point. It is from *Nectar of Devotion* Chapter 16.

Great devotees up to the standard of Uddhava are very dear friends of the Lord, and they desire to follow in the footsteps of the *gopis*. So the *gopis'* love for Kṛṣṇa is certainly not material lusty desire. Otherwise, how could Uddhava aspire to follow in their footsteps? Another instance is Lord Caitanya Himself. After accepting the

sannyasa order of life, He was very, very strict about avoiding association with women, but still He taught that there is no better method of worshiping Krsna than that conceived by the *gopis*. Thus the *gopis'* method of worshiping the Lord as if impelled by lusty desire was praised very highly even by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. This very fact means that although the attraction of the *gopis* for Krsna appears to be lusty, it is not in the least bit material. Unless one is fully situated in the transcendental position, the relationship of the *gopis* with Krsna is very difficult to understand. But because it appears to be just like ordinary dealings of young boys and girls, it is sometimes misinterpreted to be like the ordinary sex of this material world.

Yesterday I wrote:

One consequence of this [understanding of dimensions] is that we ought not to anticipate the reality of spirit from the standpoint of the "reality" of matter.

The pleasure of sex felt in the physical body belongs to the mundane dimension of experience. The dimension of Krsna's experience of the *adi-rasa* is, like Krsna Himself, utterly inconceivable to the living entity in the mundane dimension. It is utterly inconceivable even to the liberated soul. (You may refer again to the two quotations cited in yesterday's article for substantiation.)

Now, if mundane sex pleasure does not exist in Krsna's personal abode--the dimension of ultimate reality--then ultimately *it does not exist*. It is *maya* through and through. In philosophical language, mundane sex is a "verisimilitude. " That means it has power to convince living entities that it is real. It has that power because of its superficial resemblance to the *adi-rasa*, which *is* real. But like a counterfeit hundred dollar bill, the verisimilitude is worthless.

A doubt can be raised. In *Bhagavad-gita* Krsna states in clear language that the physical sex act is to be engaged in His service; indeed He becomes that *dharmic* sex. Getting back to pizza, in ISKCON it's considered "an offerable prep. " So how can I argue that these things have no ultimate existence?

There is a principle called *aropita* (imposition) which Srila Prabhupada explains in his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 7. 1. 6. I'll just cite a segment of this purport; I recommend the reader to refer to the complete text.

So-called attachment, detachment and obligations pertain to the material nature, which is an emanation from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but whenever the Lord descends and acts in this material world, He does so in His spiritual position. Although His activities materially appear different, spiritually they are absolute and nondifferent. Thus it is an imposition upon the Supreme Lord to say that He is envious of anyone or friendly to anyone.

Why does the Lord descend into our dimension and apparently accept its limitations? The well-known answer is given in *Bhagavad-gita* 4. 8. He descends to deliver His devotees and to annihilate the demons; and of the two, the first purpose is the decisive one. (The Lord doesn't have to come to kill the demons as they are killed in any case by His material energy.) Thus out of loving compassion for His devotees the Lord seems to conform to the material nature, although personally He has nothing to do with that nature.

In *Prema-Vivarta* we find an explanation of a level of devotional service called *aropa-siddhi*. This may help us understand more fully the implications of the previous quotation by Srila Prabhupada. At the *aropa-siddhi* level, the consciousness of the devotee is still absorbed in the dimension inhabited by mundane objects and activities. But to that dimension he brings a devotional attitude. He tries to offer the best of everything to the Lord, considering low-class things to be not worthy for the Lord's service. Still, this devotee isn't clear in his understanding about *what the Lord Himself enjoys*. In other words, he conceives the Lord's enjoyment in terms of his own enjoyment. This is an *aropita* (imposition) as defined by Prabhupada above, but due to the element of *bhakti* it is an *aropita* that the Lord mercifully complies with for the sake of delivering His devotee. This *aropa-siddhi* is the level of devotional service on which the *kanistha-adhikari* functions.

So, in regards to sex, pizza, and so on. . . you do the math.

Surrendering to Krsna requires us to accept that there is a "dimensional gap" dividing the *jivatma* from Lord Krsna. This gap *cannot* be bridged. . . except by the Lord's mercy. Therefore it behooves us to be very cautious about easy chatter about what life in Goloka Vrndavana is like. It is not "like" anything we are experiencing now, for the reason that Krsna doesn't personally "like" our experience here in the material world. Otherwise, why does He come here to deliver us from that experience? Even though He enters this world, He does not partake in its experience. Now, certainly we have much *sastric* information that gives us--at our present lower-dimensional stage--a transcendental idea of what the spiritual world is like. But as Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura points out in *Harinama Cintamani* (where he explains the perfectional stage of chanting the holy names):

By the mercy of Radha one receives the mercy of Krsna, and thus quickly ones material body will dissolve and one will attain pure spiritual body in Vraja. There are even higher stages than this, but these are not possible to describe by mere words. These things will be revealed by the mercy of Krsna.

We find it mind-boggling to imagine what the corner of a room would look like if our consciousness shifted up into the next material dimension. We can't very well expect the supreme dimension of consciousness to be like a pizza picnic with our gal pal in the park!

There's another point I want to make along these same lines. Within the mundane dimension of consciousness, no proof of the reality of Krsna consciousness can be demonstrated. The very idea--that the supreme dimension of reality can be, or ought to be, put on display for all within the mundane dimension to see so that Krsna consciousness can be "proven at last"--is sheer blockheadedness. The supreme dimension eternally exerts absolute control over our dimension. How will the mundane dimension bring the supreme dimension into its range of observation? At the same time, Krsna reserves the right to reveal Himself to whomever He may choose. He reveals Himself under His own autocratic terms, by His own sweet will. His terms may conform to conditioned expectations (*viz.* the *aropita* principle presented above). Or they may not. It is entirely up to Him.

Jorge Luis Borges wrote a novel about a very similar concept. It's titled *Tloen, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*. It's not about Krsna, of course. It's about Tloen, a place that exists as a myth within a higher-dimensional realm called Uqbar. In our world of 1937,

interest in Tloen and Uqbar is excited when a mysterious book turns up purporting to be a volume of an encyclopedia from that dimension. However, a careful investigation "proves" that this book is an elaborate hoax. A plot is uncovered called Orbis Tertius. It was devised and financed by an eccentric millionaire named Ezra Buckley. Over a period of more than eighty years he had employed three hundred visionaries to produce, out of their imaginations, a vast "*First Encyclopedia of Tloen*." The 3-D evidence that Tloen is a fiction is absolutely incontrovertible.

That phrase I just used, "the 3-D evidence," is intended to signal that there's a big surprise around the corner.

There are always people who latch onto a weird idea as being true, even when it is "proven" untrue. Plenty of people believe a conspiracy killed President Kennedy even though the US Government "proved" that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. So in *Tloen, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, belief in Tloen catches on with some people even after Tloen is dismissed as the fancy yarn of a rich crank.

It turns out that the nature of the dimension of Tloen is belief! And so, because there are people who believe in it, Tloen gradually manifests itself, the result being that more and more people take up the belief in defiance of "cold, hard facts." At the end of the novel Planet Earth *becomes* Tloen. It would seem that the higher-dimensional intelligence of Tloen first generated faith in itself on earth through the fiction of Tloen, which was orchestrated from Tloen.

In a couple of essays published last January I told of a devotee of some sort who has a website that proclaims his faith in Darwinian evolution. He mentions there his appreciation for a book about Bhaktivinoda Thakura written by a scholarly Godbrother of mine. That book gave him the *raison d'être* for adapting whatever consciousness of Krsna he has to the "proofs" of modern science. He feels very comfortable now that his faith is married to "reason."

Ha ha ha.

You can see from the above proofs of reason that from the standpoint of a theoretical higher dimension, his reliance on the "proofs" of our world is, philosophically speaking, a joke.

Since material philosophers are situated in the material *prema* of *vilasa-vivarta*, they are unable to realize the spiritual *prema-vilasa-vivarta*. They cannot accommodate an elephant upon a dish. Similarly, mundane speculators cannot capture the spiritual elephant within their limited conception. It is just like a frog's trying to measure the Atlantic Ocean by imagining it so many times larger than his well. Materialistic philosophers and sahajiyas cannot understand the talks between Ramananda Raya and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu concerning the pastimes of Sri Radha and Krsna. (*Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya* 8. 193p)



Miraj and Satara, Maharashtra, India
17 April 2004

Let's do some Math

Yesterday I wrote:

So, in regards to sex, pizza, and so on. . . you do the math.

When I keyed that sentence into my laptop, I was in a rush to leave Kolhapur yesterday afternoon for the town of Miraj, where last evening I did a Namahatta program. And today I'm moving on to Satara. In the midst of all this hectic here and there, it crossed my mind that some readers may jump to the conclusion that "the math" I talked about involves this equation: sex, pizza and other *aropita* devotional engagements always and in every case equals the *kanistha* level of devotion.

That's not an accurate conclusion. Therefore today I've written this comment on yesterday's essay.

Obviously Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is no *kanistha-adhikari*. Yes, he sired a large family, and he authored bhajanas intended to be sung to Baul melodies. (In his day, Baul melodies were as much relished in mundane Bengali society as pop melodies are relished in the West.) But that does not mean he thought physical sex was spiritual. Nor does it mean that he was a fan of Baul music.

As we saw from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* purport quoted in yesterday's essay, when the Supreme Lord comes to this material world He seems to conform to mundane expectations. Thus one might impose on Him the notion that while acting in this world, the Lord partakes in material consciousness. For example, in His appearance as Lord Ramacandra, He banished His wife Sita-devi from Ayodhya, even though she was in the delicate condition of her pregnancy; an *aropita* imposition on this *lila* would be to say that He did that because He had fallen into the mindset of a male chauvinist. A big Indian politician, Raj Gopalacarya, wrote a summary of the *Ramayana* in which he argued that Sita in her suffering represents the travails of all womanhood. This is the same blockheaded "Armed with what I know from this dimension, I can figure out what it's like in higher dimensions" sort of logic that I analyzed yesterday. Confronting the transcendental pastimes of the Lord, this logic fails miserably. Similarly, it fails in the presence of the pure devotional service of Vaisnava *acaryas* like Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

The Lord and His pure devotee only apparently conform to the mundane dimension; that is mercy for those who are limited by that dimension. Without that mercy the fallen souls would have no access to the association of Bhagavan and *bhagavata*. Yes, that mercy by which transcendence becomes visible within the material world is aimed at the neophyte devotees. But that doesn't mean Bhagavan and *bhagavata* share the neophytes' consciousness. Srila Prabhupada gives the example of a teacher showing schoolchildren how to write A-B-C. That doesn't mean the teacher is only on the A-B-C stage of education.

My two-part essay on dimensions was really concerned with the *experience* a conditioned *jiva* has within the mundane dimension. The thrust of my examination

was that Krsna and Krsna's pure devotee do not enter that experience even though they appear to enter that dimension. They don't enter that conditioned experience because it is *maya*; Bhagavan and *bhagavata* are never touched by *maya*.

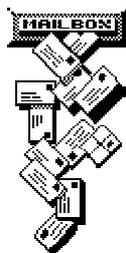
A related point that may use some polishing is: when I speak of the absence of pizza or sex in Goloka Vrndavana, it is not correct to construe that I am saying that there's something lacking in Lord Krsna's abode. To raise such a doubt in the context of this discussion on dimensions is pretty absurd, considering that the physics of the 2-D world of Flatland are in place in our own 3-D world. Nobody can argue that we're unfortunate because we don't have length and width. What *is* "lacking" in our 3-D world vis-a-vis Flatland is the *experience* of being *limited* to only two dimensions.

Similarly, the experience of sense gratification is "lacking" in Goloka Vrndavana because Krsna's abode is chock-full of supreme transcendental bliss. In fact it's the experience of sense gratification that is the actual condition of lack. Here in our world, one thinks sex and pizza are "da Bomb" because one has no spiritual taste. No doubt sex and pizza can be engaged in Krsna's service, by His mercy. But if while doing so a devotee is also thinking they are "da Bomb," he lacks advancement.

I am a devotee of Radhaji. Before I had devotion to Krsna, but after a while I realized that he is sexist. Thousands of wives at Dwaraka but he did not give any of them daughters, only sons. That is just so sexually biased of Krsna. So I say he is not my god anymore. Mothers and daughters have such a beautiful bond. They are the real heart of the family, not fathers and sons. Maybe you can tell me why Krsna has not even one daughter!

Hare Krsna! I've published your letter here only as an object lesson to the visitors of In2-MeC. It is not my policy to involve this web domain in the kind of issue you raise. If you do a little surfing you'll quickly find any number of KC sites that feature open forums, q&a chats and the like. Kindly post your question to those web pages, please. It will surely elicit a flurry of well-meaning comments from every pandita from New York to New Delhi. Here at In2-MeC, although there is a facility for visitors to send in email, there is no guarantee that such emails will be answered. I do not feel a need to explain why. The reason should be obvious just by looking at the overwrought discussions--some of which are prolonged for weeks and months--on other KC sites.

Satara, Maharashtra, India
18 April 2004



Today's follow up on the topic of dimensions is fantastic, I love it. It substantiates feelings that have grown in me since re-reading Substance and Shadow, and is another brilliant poke in the eye of all those smug Know-it-alls. I hate this attitude that all information can be passed through our senses and neatly labeled, catalogued and then filed away leaving us in a nice tidy office with everything in place and ourselves still very much in control, and if something doesn't quite fit within our 'acceptable' understanding of life, or spiritual life, then modify it so it does, or plain disregard it. Plus this trend of seeking verification of the sastra in science has always struck me as insulting and offensive.

We have all chuckled at Prabhupad's story of hell being a place with no newspapers, but then some of us emulate the miners in trying to conceive of what the spiritual world is like. Such wonderful nad'Ve arrogance. What abiding faith in the empirical process. . . . Give me a few relevant details and by my own powerful intellect I will quickly come up with a working model of the spiritual world.

I don't want Vrndavan to be anything like this material world, a sort of de-bugged version of the very best you can imagine. I cannot think of any way of life that will be eternally satisfying, but I am convinced that there is such a life. Your articles have very nicely sorted out my dilemma of how such truths can be perceived. Not by expanding the imagination and intellect unlimitedly, but by entering a different dimension by the Lord's mercy.

Like so many times before, this realization is nothing different to what I have said a hundred times to different people, but now I can say it with real conviction.

All glories to In2-MeC, and its illustrious author.

There was an extremely miserly man, so stingy that even Lord Krsna became interested to see how far he would go to save money. When the man's father died, this miser thought, "The custom is that I should hire four men to carry my father's body on a stretcher to the cremation ground. I should purchase wood for the pyre, and then hire a *brahmana* to do the funeral ceremony. But all that is frightfully expensive. Instead, let me drive the body myself to the burning ground in a bullock cart. I'll find the wood myself in the forest. And I'll light the fire myself. "

As he was driving the bullock cart with his father's body in the back, Lord Krsna appeared on the road in the guise of a *brahmana*. This *brahmana* stopped the miser and inquired what he was doing. After hearing the explanation, the *brahmana* said, "The usual cost for a funeral ceremony, all things included, is Rs. 400. But for just Rs. 101, I'll take care of everything for you--transporting the body, gathering the wood, conducting the ceremony. "

The miser agreed and the Lord in His guise as a priest arranged for everything. At the end the *brahmana* stood before the man, His hand outstretched for His due. The miser said, "Look, you just come to my house tomorrow and I'll pay you. " The *brahmana* smiled, nodded, and left.

The next day the *brahmana* showed up at the man's door. The miser peeked out the window and, seeing who it was, was astonished. He thought that this *brahmana*, being so simple-hearted as to offer to perform the funeral for one-fourth the usual price, and who made no fuss when he delayed payment, would not bother to track him down. The miser ordered his wife to loosen her hair and start wailing that her husband was dead. In the meantime he went into his room and laid down on the bed.

Of course, Sri Krsna wasn't fooled by this. But He played along. . . in His own way. After entering the home, He consoled the woman and assured her He'd take care of all her husband's funeral arrangements for free. The miser heard all this but just lay there, eyes closed, not moving. Krsna personally carried him to the burning *ghat*, gathered the wood, built a pyre, and laid the man on it. The Lord then ignited a stick and readied to set the pyre alight. The man continued to play dead.

Krsna couldn't help but start laughing. He revealed His true form to the man. "Get up," He told him. "I've never seen a miser as stingy as you. You are prepared to be burned alive before parting with only Rs. 101. I find this so funny; truly today you have pleased Me. Now ask Me for anything. "

"All I want, my dear Lord," the miser replied, "is that You forget about the Rs. 101. Let that be Your blessing upon me. Don't ask me for that money!"

Satara, Maharashtra, India
19 April 2004

**They say that whatever exists is one, being at the same time one and all--
but they cannot agree about what to call it.**

This observation is attributed to a Greek satirist who live 400 years before Christ. His barb was aimed at the monistic philosophers of the Hellenic world: Pythagoras ("What is, exists equally, not more or less; it is all continuous"), Parmenides ("The oneness cannot be divided, because the whole of it is present everywhere"), Heraclitus ("All things are one; the waking share one common world but when asleep each man turns away to a private one"), Zeno ("Reality is indivisible and motion is illusion"). So many hoary old sages saying the same thing--"all that is real is nondifferent, all that is different is unreal"--yet differing with one another over the details.

In India, of course, there have been many monistic philosophers through the ages; they too differed about how all is one. And that's not simply because these philosophers, being human, fell short of pristine monism. The philosophy itself is riddled with gaps in logic.

Madana Misra lived soon after Adi Sankaracarya. He tried to patch up some of the gaps in Sankara's teachings: 1) what is bound by birth and death--*jiva* or Brahman? 2) who is *tattvamasi* (the same as Brahman)--only the fully-realized *jiva*, or all *jivas* realized and unrealized? 3) Who is under the influence of ignorance--*jiva* or Brahman? 4) Is there only one *avidya*, or are there many? Madana Misra's answers

to these questions were 1) *jiva*, 2) the fully-realized *jiva* only, 3) the *jiva*, 4) there are as many *avidyas* as there are *jivas* in *avidya*.

Following the line set down by Madana Misra, Vacaspati Misra wrote a commentary called *Bhamati*. In pursuance of the doctrine of this commentary, a Mayavada school of thought arose known as the Bhamati school. Now, Vacaspati Misra wrote *Bhamati* to fill in the gaps of logic in the writings of his predecessor, Madana Misra. In doing so he moved away from some of his predecessor's doctrinal positions.

One major gap is, if there are many selves each under his own special *avidya*, why do we share one common world? To explain this, Vacaspati Misra appealed to the doctrine of Isvara that Sankaracarya taught: that above the many *jivas* is one "Lord" who orchestrates and harmonizes all their illusions. This Isvara is also in illusion, but it is a more exalted illusion than that of the ordinary living entities. Madana Misra had been dismissive of Isvara. . . he was quite openly an atheist. According to Vacaspati Misra, Isvara limits and reflects Brahman, and thus creates *tulavidya*, the individual ignorances that cover the individual *jivas*.

The Bhamati school is in competition with the Vivarana school. Padmapada, a disciple of Adi Sankaracarya, wrote a commentary entitled *Pancapadika*; a follower of his, Prakasatman, wrote a commentary called *Vivarana* that became the name of the school that keeps Padmapada at its head.

Padmapada taught that ignorance resides in Brahman. Thus there is only one ignorance, not many. He saw ignorance as reflecting Brahman more than limiting it. He affirmed a role for Isvara in this, but isn't clear as to whether Isvara is Brahman or a *jiva*.

Prakasatman, in trying to clarify Padmapada's position, argued that Brahman has two natures. (A very curious argument from an "all-is-one" advocate!) These are *svarupa* and *tatastha*. The first is the nature of Brahman itself as *saksin* or witness, the second is the nature of Isvara. Isvara is powerful. He creates the world from *avidya*. The *jivas* are reflections of Brahman in that creation of Isvara. The *jivas* are identical with Brahman; they are just fooled by their own reflections. And because they are fooled by the reflection of Brahman, the conclusion is that ignorance resides in Brahman.

All this stress on reflection as the explanation of the origin of the *jivas* raises the question of why *jivas* have individual sentience if they are just reflections. The reflection we see in the bathroom mirror in the morning is insentient. If there is only one ignorance, then why aren't all the *jivas* liberated as soon as any one of them is liberated? How are all these complexities of creation made possible by the reflection of a Brahman that is *nirvisesa*--without form, quality, activity, etc. ?

Sarvajnanatman was another Mayavadi philosopher coming after Sankaracarya. He stuck to the the idea that there is one Self only, not many selves. If there is only one Self, it may be asked, then who is the *guru*? For the *guru* is another besides our self who is necessary for our attainment of liberation. Sarvajnanatman's answer is that the *guru* is our imagination. Then how is it possible for imagination to give us liberation? Liberation and bondage, he replied, are both nothing more than a dream. If scripture is taken literally, Advaita will be destroyed.

Suresvara wrote a huge commentary on *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad*. Ignorance is in Brahman, he maintained. All the complexities and distinctions in Advaita philosophy--which are full of contradictions that divide different Advaitist philosophers from one another--are for the people in ignorance. For those in pure knowledge, there is only oneness.

Prakasananda wrote the *Vedānta-siddhānta-mukta-vallī*. His philosophy is called *dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-vada* ("the philosophy that seeing the world creates the world"). In Western terms, this philosophy is *metaphysical solipsism*: I am the only Self; all else is my creation. For Prakasananda there is no external world. There is no God. There is no difference between *pratibhasika* and *vyavaharika* illusion. (The first degrades the *jīva* into lower births; the second elevates him to higher levels of consciousness in which he has a better chance of understanding Brahman.) Prakasananda dismissed any notion of liberation coming in gradual stages (e. g. first the *jīva* has to get higher births, and then in these more *sattvik* conditions of life he may come closer and closer to Brahman realization). Gradualism, Prakasananda contended, goes against monism. He rejected all notions of causation. When Sankaracarya wrote of *Īśvara* and the modes of material nature as the engine of creation, he was just giving a metaphor. Another name for Prakasananda's philosophy is *ajātivada* ("the philosophy that nothing is caused"). His doctrine is very close to the Sunyavada of the Buddhist *acārya* Nagarjuna.

Satara, Maharashtra, India
20 April 2004

Visit to Mahabalesvara

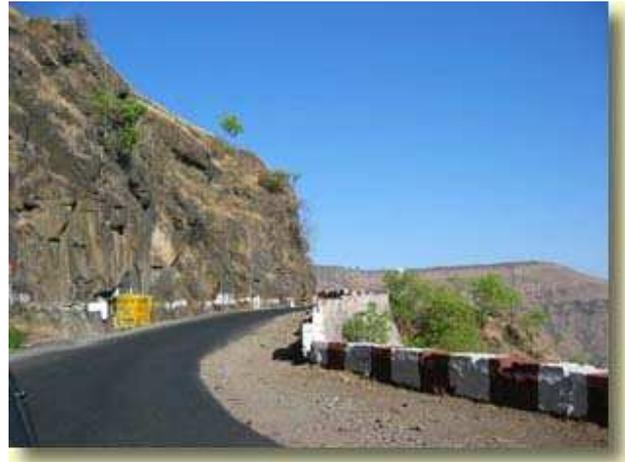
As I write this we are preparing to leave Satara for Pune. This morning at 7:00 AM we drove up into the hills above Satara to a holy place called Mahabalesvara. At this place two demons, Mahabala and Atibala, were killed by Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva after a battle that lasted thousands of years. At a temple whose history can be traced back thousands of years, the Mahabalesvara Sivalinga is worshiped. This linga is very unusual; if one can say it looks like anything within recognition, it resembles a meteor embedded in the earth. Although photography of the Mahabalesvara linga is forbidden, we managed--with the permission of the friendly priest who was on duty during our visit--to obtain a picture of it.

A short walk from the Mahabalesvara temple is the holy place where five sacred rivers spring from the rock of a cave. These rivers are Gayatri, Savitri, Koyna, Venna and Kṛṣṇa. At the shrine established in the cave, the waters of these rivers flow from a cow's mouth so that pilgrims can sprinkle their heads with it or take a full bath.

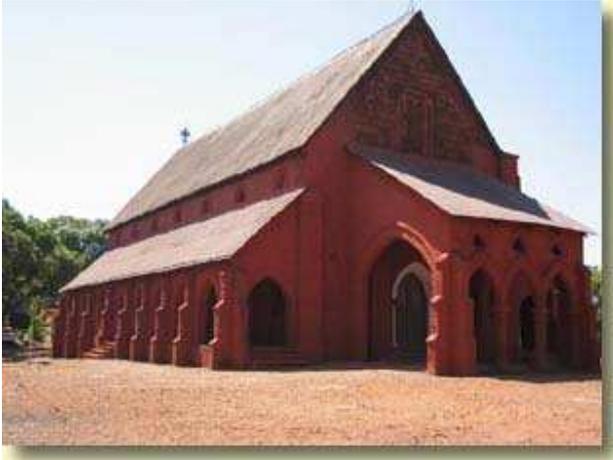
A few kilometers from the Sivalinga temple and the shrine of five rivers is Mahabalesvara City. This is a hill station that the British established during their rule of India. Many of the buildings are from that period. There's a quaint atmosphere to the place. The cultivation of strawberries was introduced by the British in these hills; since India's independence, strawberry fields forever have been maintained. Served with whipped cream, they are a delicious testimony to the fact that all things foreign in India are not necessarily bad.



The night before (19 April) I did a namahatta program in the town of Coregaon.







The Krsna River seen from the way up to Mahabalesvara.



First sight of the Mahabalesvara temple.



This is the Mahabalesvara linga.



The shrine of five sacred rivers.

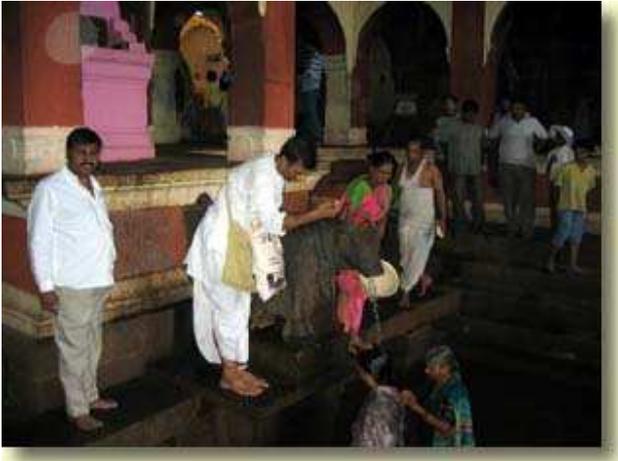
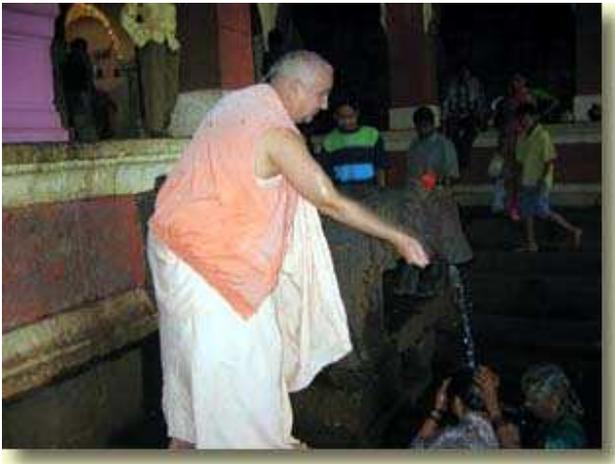


The holy waters mix together and flow from this cow's mouth.

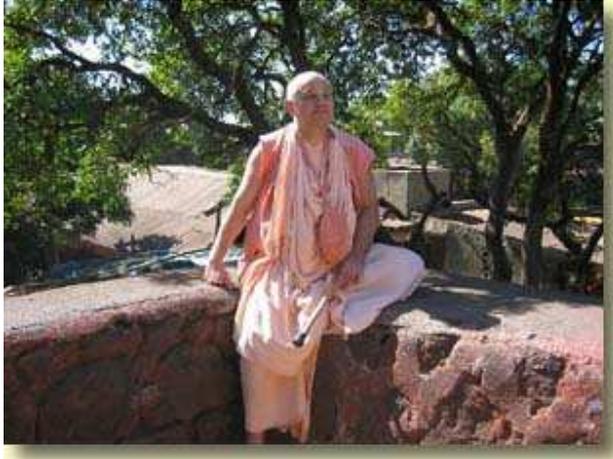


The other rivers flow from these sources.

This beautiful Deity marks the source of the Krsna River!

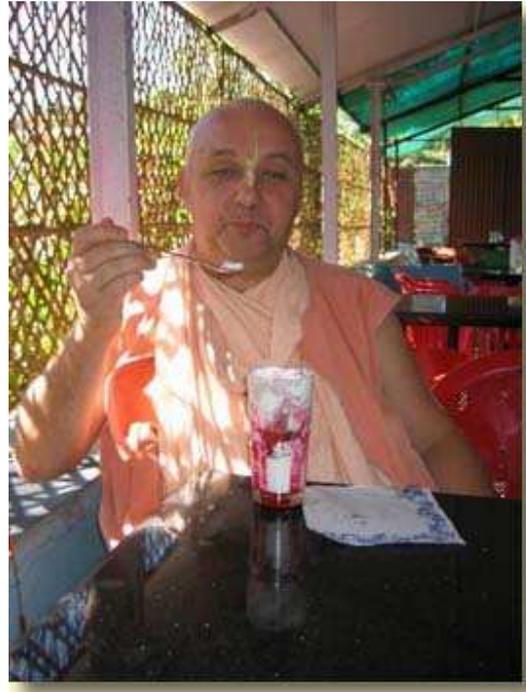






Strawberries for sale.

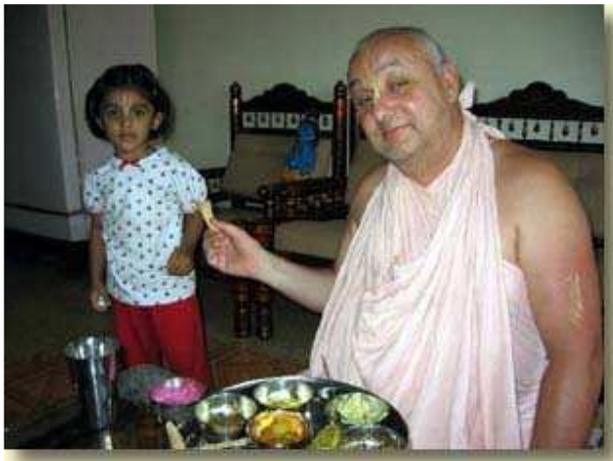




*Pune, Maharashtra, India
22 April 2004*



**Torchlight of Knowledge
Highlights
Pune 21-22 April**



In Pune we stayed in the apartment of a nice

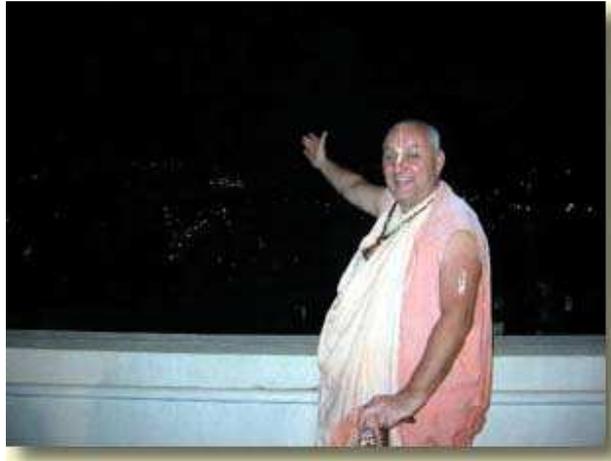
devotee family. This is little Nandarani dasi, 2 years old.



Jaya Nrsimha Prabhu, his good wife Yasodharani, and daughter Nandarani.



The view from Jaya Nrsimha Prabhu's flat.



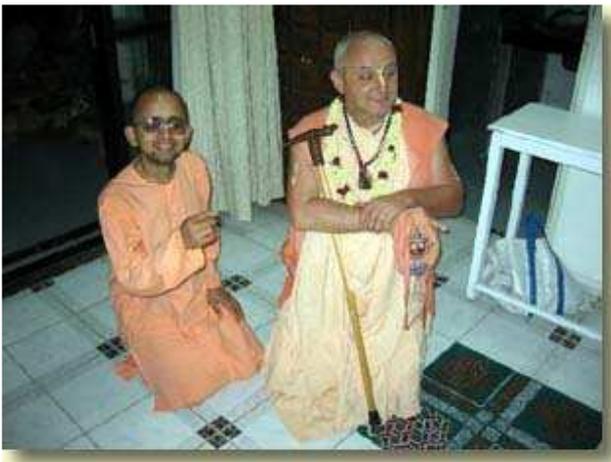
Pune noir--the city as seen at night from the roof of an 11 story apartment building.



There are three and a half million stories in Pune city...most of these stories are about lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy. But a few thousand are about the development of Krsna consciousness.



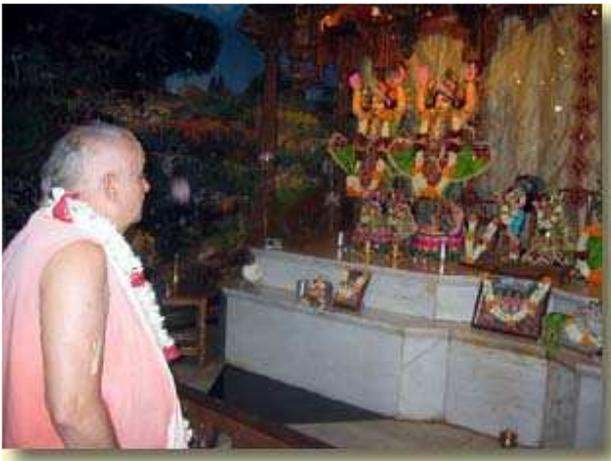
Rooftop preaching program.



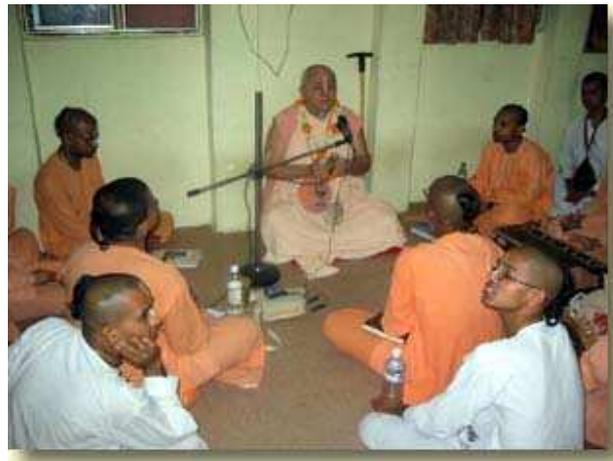
With Radhesyama dasa Brahmachari, ISKCON Pune temple president.



Srīmad-Bhagavatam class, ISKCON Pune.



Deity darsana.



Afternoon class for the ISKCON Pune

brahmacaris.



Lovely Vrndavana diorama at Jaya Nrsimha Prabhu's flat.



*Last program in Pune, evening of 22 April.
Tomorrow early in the morning we take a train
to Mumbai.*

*ISKCON Chowpatti, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
24 April 2004*

**In2-MeC Mission Statement:
Use the Internet
to Overturn the Philosophy Behind the Internet**

And what is the philosophy behind the Internet?

Mayavadi philosophy!

When the yearning for human flesh has come to an end [BTW, this refers to the desire to be within a human body, not the desire to be a cannibal], what will remain? Mind may continue, uploaded into the Net, suspended in an ecology of voltage as ambitiously capable of self-sustenance as was that of its carbon-based forebears.

--John Perry Barlow, lyrics writer for the Grateful Dead and "computer cowboy", in a letter to *Harper's Magazine* August 1994

Nothing could be more disembodied than cyberspace. It's like having your everything amputated.

--John Perry Barlow, quoted by Kevin Kelly in *Out of Control: The Rise of Neo-Biological Civilization* (Addison-Wesley, 1994)

The only thing wrong with the universe is that it is currently running somebody else's program.

--Ken Karakotosios, Apple Computer employee, quoted by Kelly in *Out of Control*

The apparent individuals that life has dispersed itself into are illusions.

--Kevin Kelly, *Out of Control*

We are as Gods, and we might as well get good at it.

--Stewart Brand, editor of the *Whole Earth Catalogue* and virtual reality visionary

Stripped of all secondary motives, all addictions are one: to make a world of our own. I can't think of anything more addictive than being a god.

--Kevin Kelly, *Out of Control*

About the need for Krsna consciousness in cyberspace, my Godbrother Radhakunda Prabhu writes on his website radhikamadhavabindu@yahogroups.com:

We need to speak especially about that Blackish-blue Boy who has nine signs on the bottom of His feet. He wears beautiful ankle bells, a gorgeous effulgent bright yellow dhoti, a green sash, a jewelled waist belt with tinkling bells. He has three folds in his broad waist and a deep navel. He has soft baby-like hairs so fine on His belly. He has a broad chest with a golden hair on the left side and a silver Srivats on the right. He wears a pearl necklace hanging to His waist, a kaustubha gem, a jewelled locket with a picture of Radharani. He has strong arms that beautify His ornate intricately jewelled armlets and bracelets. He has 10 full bright-moon fingernails and moon-like toenails. He wears five rings on His left hand and 2 on His right. He has three lines around His conch shell-like neck, a dimple in His chin, small round jasmine bud-like teeth bimba-red lips, shark-like earrings that reflect brilliant light from His sapphire-like cheeks. His high, turned-up nose has a gold and jewel inlaid pearl at the tip.

His lotus eyes extend to His ears and constantly move here and there, they're reddish like copper and are hooded by His snake-like eyebrows. A precisely made half-moon sandalwood paste tilak sits between His eyebrows and decorates His broad forehead. His beautiful moon-like lotus face is sweetly framed by curly locks of cobalt blue hair falling in unlimited waves. His turban is laced with gunja berries and strands of jewels and has a peacock feather leaning gently to the left. Now just meditate ever so deeply with mind fully absorbed in concentrated attention on His beautiful sweet smile!

From the same website, this about Srimati Radharani:

1. Srimati Radharani is always to be found with Sri Krsna, and Madhava is always to be seen with Radhika. One is never without the other's company.

2. From the Gopalottara-tapani:

"She is the embodiment of maha-bhava, or the highest transcendental ecstasy, and none of the other gopis, or cowherd damsels of Vrndavana, possesses Her excellent qualities. Radharani is therefore known as the most famous Gandharva."

3. In the Padma Purana Narada Muni describes Srimati Radharani:

"As much as Srimati Radhika is dear to Lord Krsna, Her pond Radha-kunda is as beloved to Him. Among all the gopis Srimati Radharani is most dear to Krsna.

4. From the Ujjvala-nilamani of Srila Rupa Goswami:

"The principal characteristics of Srimati Radharani, the Queen of Vrndavan, are that She is charming, ever-youthful, has roving eyes, and ever-sparkling smile, a body marked with all auspicious lines, Her fragrance drives Krsna mad with desire. She is an exponent of fine music, has sharp intelligence, is dextrous, shy, respectable, patient, grave, playful, eager to display the highest ecstasy of maha-bhava, that She is the primary source of supreme spiritual love, the most famous, the object of attraction for Her elders, that She is controlled by the love of Her girlfriends, the principal of Krsna's many loves, and She has Him always under Her control."

5. C.C. Adi 4.238-272:

Once Lord Krishna considered with His heart: "Everyone says that I am complete bliss, full of all rasas. All the world derives pleasure from Me. Is there anyone who can give Me pleasure? One who has a hundred times more qualities than Me could give pleasure to My mind. One more qualified than Me is impossible to find in the world. But in Radha alone I feel the presence of one who can give Me pleasure. Although My beauty defeats the beauty of ten million cupids, although it is unequalled and unsurpassed and although it gives pleasure to the three worlds, seeing Radharani gives pleasure to My eyes. The vibration of My transcendental flute attracts the three worlds, but My ears are enchanted by the worlds of Srimati Radharani. Although My body lends fragrance to the entire creation, the scent of Radharani's limbs captivates My mind and heart. Although the entire creation is full of different tastes because of Me, I am charmed by the nectarean taste of the lips of Srimati Radharani. And although My touch is cooler than ten million moons, I am

refreshed by the touch of Srimati Radhika. Thus although I am the source of happiness for the entire world, the beauty and attributes of Sri Radhika are My life and soul.



Hare Krishna Mantra Hits Hollywood

by Bhakta Jim Seymour

[<http://preaching.krishna.org/Articles/2004/04/007.html>]

Posted April 17, 2004

On Thursday March 11th and Friday March 12th in Oakland CA, about 40 Krishna devotees from the Bay Area were invited to take part in a new feature film starring Richard Gere, Juliette Binoche, Max Minghella and Kate Bosworth. The group of devotees were featured in a scene involving a rousing kirtan held at a Krishna Temple, with a few select devotees also being used in other scenes for the movie. The production will be in theatres by next winter.

Story Background

The film, entitled "Bee Season", is based on the popular novel of the same name, written by Myla Goldberg. In the story, Richard Gere plays the father Saul, who absorbs himself in the study of Jewish Mysticism. His daughter Eliza (played by young newcomer Flora Cross), becomes a national spelling bee champion. This event starts to dramatically alter the family's comfortable existence. Saul soon begins to lavish time and affection on the blossoming Eliza, leaving his son Aaron desperately searching to find a replacement for the connections to his father and his Jewish faith. First-time actor Max Minghella, son of "Cold Mountain" director Anthony Minghella, plays the part of Aaron. Now Aaron embarks on a type of spiritual vision quest, which leads him to meet Kate Bosworth's character Chali, who is a Hare Krishna devotee in the film. He becomes curious about her chanting the Hare Krishna Mantra on japa beads, and begins to ask her questions about the philosophy. I overheard Kate rehearsing some of her dialogue off-set, and I heard, "There are many names of God. We call Him Krishna". She later takes Aaron to the temple, where they join the devotees for an ecstatic kirtan!

How it all came about

The film crew initially contacted Grantharaja dasa from the Bhaktivedanta Institute at the Berkeley Krishna Temple. He in turn put them in touch with Gadadhara dasa, a recent graduate of San Francisco State's Cinema department. Gadadhara dasa then busily set out to coordinate an incredible mountain of legal and logistical details! Everything from casting to costume design to choreography was amazingly pulled together by this hard-working devotee. He even drove all the way to up to Redwood Valley in Mendocino County to bring a beautiful Murti of Srila Prabhupada down to the film set.

On Thursday before the film shoot, he and I prepared an enormous amount of prasadam to be distributed to the film crew the next day. We brought lots of Krishna books to distribute as well.

A week or so before the film shoot, Gadadhara dasa even arranged for Max Minghella, Kate Bosworth and others to meet with Hansadutta dasa, and hear from him all about Krishna Consciousness. They listened with rapt attention for over an hour and a half, being mesmerized by his expert preaching. Later they took Krishna prasadam. It was clear that they were very profoundly affected by his explanations of the chanting, the philosophy and the science of self-realization. On the day of the film shoot, I spoke with Cristina Solletti a legal clearance/Krishna devotee liaison on the crew, who commented, "Until we all got to meet with Hansadutta, no one had ever been able to so clearly articulate to us what Krishna Consciousness actually is. He made it so easy for us to understand the philosophy. It was just amazing".

Devotees on the Set, "Lights, camera...action!"

The actual filming of the kirtan scene was a fascinating experience for the devotees, and a very powerful experience for the film crew. Before the cameras rolled, we were summoned onto the set for a rehearsal kirtan. Locannath dasa from Berkeley did a wonderful job leading our kirtans for the filming, and as soon as we started chanting the Hare Krishna Maha-mantra, we noticed a change in the atmosphere on the set, and in the attitudes of the film crew.

After about two or three minutes of kirtan, the dual-directing team of Scott McGhee and David Seigel (who previously directed "The Deep End") stopped everyone, looked at each other and commented, "Wow, that's really powerful. This is going to be a great shoot!" They later commented, "Your spiritual practice of chanting Hare Krishna is the most beautiful thing we have ever witnessed. Outside of some very basic choreography that we need from you, whatever you naturally do, just go for it. We want you to really let go!" And, that's just what we did. It was completely ecstatic. We actually saw a lot of the crew members chanting and dancing along with us from behind all the props and equipment!

One really interesting thing that happened for the crew was their observation of the natural tendency for the men in the kirtan party to gravitate to the center, and for the women to remain around the outside.

They stopped us a couple of times, and tried to get us to evenly mix and mingle the men and the women. One devotee commented, "You can't change nature". I spoke with Kate Bosworth several times on the film set, and she told me, "Wow, I never realized how fun the chanting and dancing could be. No wonder the devotees are always so happy when I see them out chanting in the streets!"

For those of you who don't recognize Kate's name as an actress, she played the blonde surfer in the film, "Blue Crush". I later gave Max and her some japa beads, a book on Kirtan, and then I let her choose which style and color of bead bag she wanted from an assortment I brought from Vrindavan India. Upon this, she commented, "Now I want to go to India!" I encouraged her to definitely go if she finds the time between her many movie projects.

As mentioned earlier, some devotees got to be on the film set for two whole days, because they were cast in some other scenes for the movie besides the kirtan scene. Kuvalesaya dasa, who came all the way up from Los Angeles, was cast in a scene where he meets Richard Gere, who asks him directions to the temple. Other devotees who were cast in small scenes included Laxshmi devi dasi, Krishna Priya devi dasi, Abhaya dasa, and bhaktas Chad, Paul and Ian, who played background pedestrians and car drivers.

"Cut. That's a wrap!"

At the end of day two's filming, several members of the film crew unanimously commented to the devotees that, "Your presence here and your chanting scene has not only been the most fun for all of us, but it has been the most incredible part of the entire movie!" It was truly a wonderful opportunity for us to be able to meet, talk with and preach to this very nice film crew. I saw many of them on several occasions reading Srila Prabhupada's books. They were all very respectful, pious people, and they clearly appreciated the chance to intimately spend time with so many devotees.

We were all grateful for the chance to spread the Holy Names of Krishna through the medium of a motion picture. We can only hope that the editors don't cut out too much of our all-too-brief scenes for this film! In conclusion, I'd like to mention that it was clear to all of the devotees that this event was the direct arrangement of Krishna. We agreed that "we were not the doers" of anything.

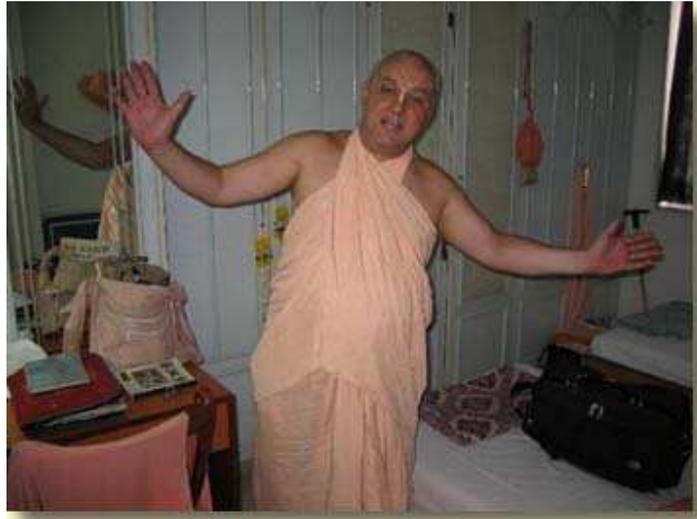
As Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad-gita, "I am the ability in man". Ki Jaya!

Hare Krishna, and All Glories to Srila Prabhupada.

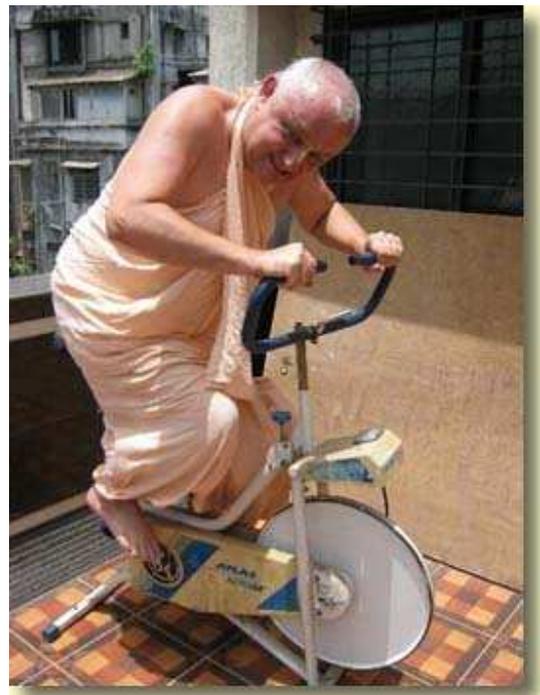
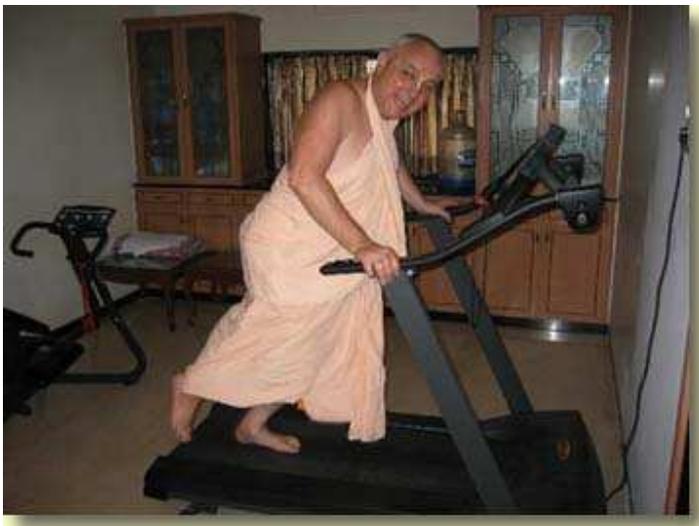
Your eternal servant,
Bhakta Jim Seymour

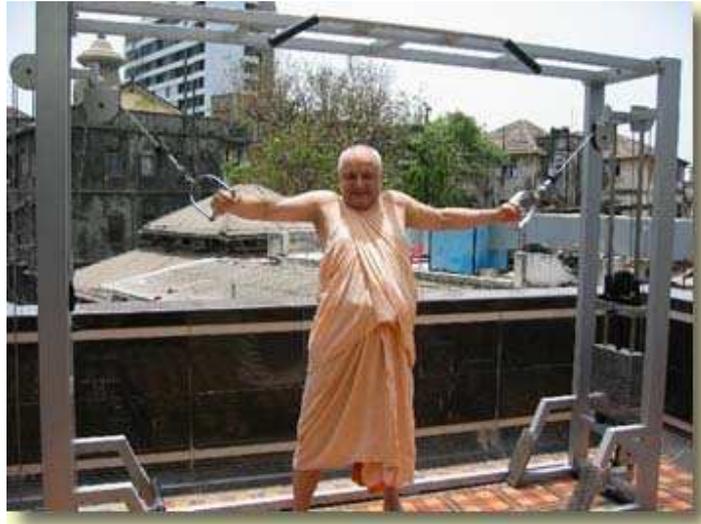


ISKCON Chowpatti

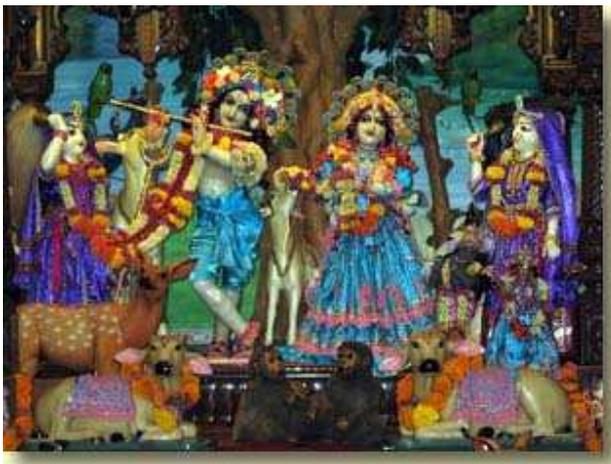


ISKCON Chowpatti has a brand-new guest facility. All glories to the exemplary Vaisnava-seva of the Chowpatti devotees, inspired and guided in their service attitude by HH Radhanatha Maharaja!

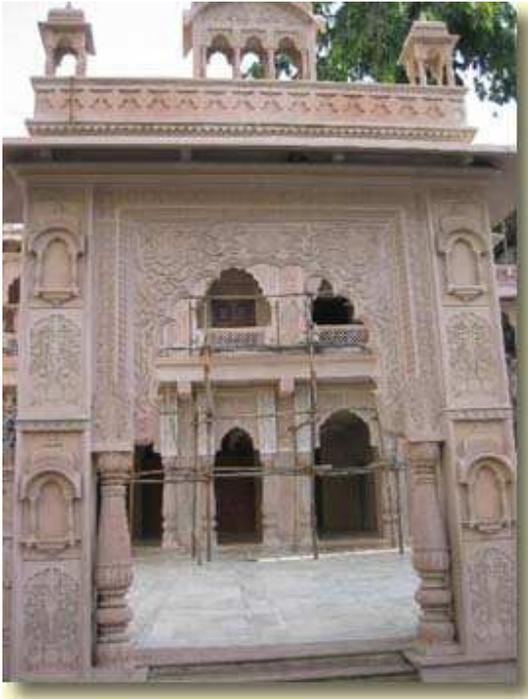
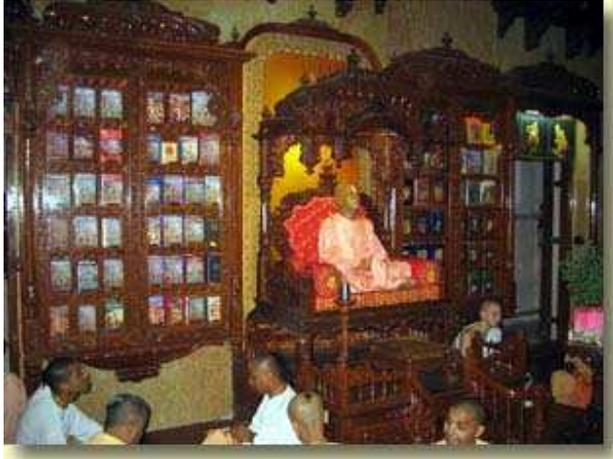


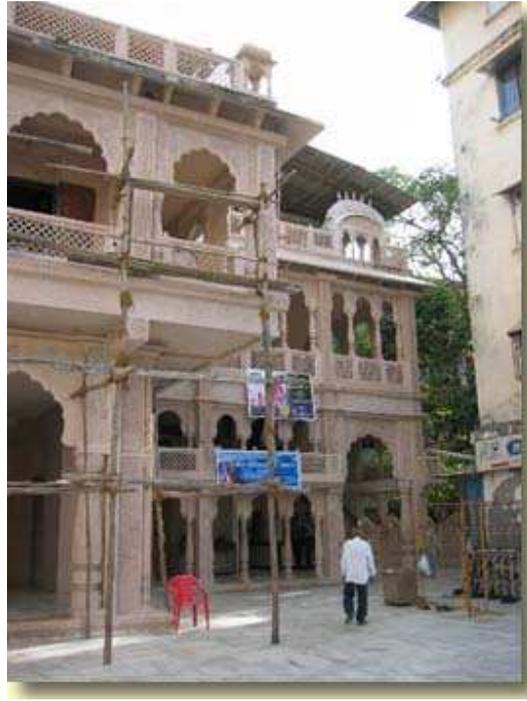


The new facility is replete with modern exercise machines. We are planning a Himalayan trek in May, so now's the time to get in shape!



Their Lordships Sri-Sri Radha-Gopinatha, Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai and Lord Srinatha.



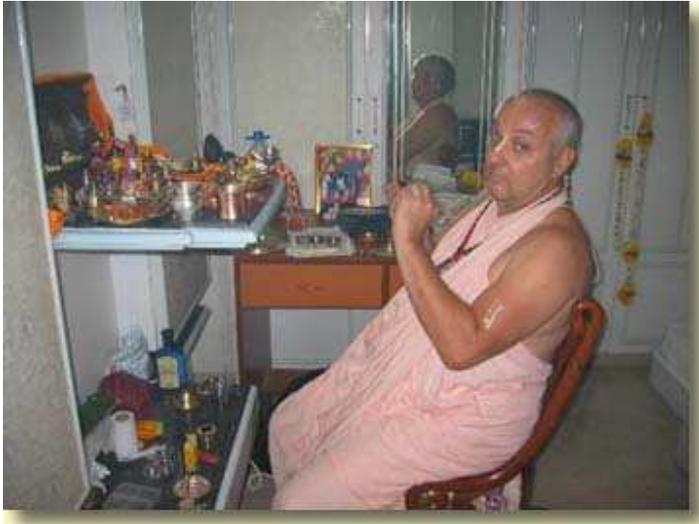


The temple facade is being renovated in Rajasthani style.

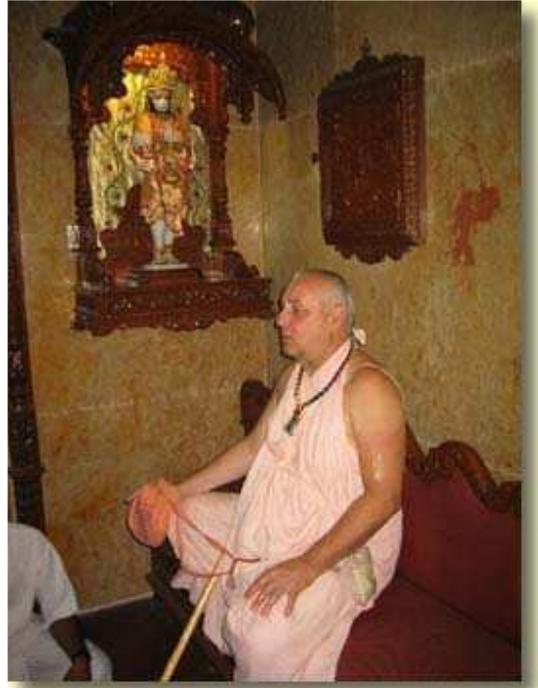


There is a small grove of sacred trees (kadamba and tamal) on the temple grounds. This shrine to Laksmi-Narayana is more than a hundred years old and belongs to ISKCON. Mohandas

Gandhi used to worship here...so I am told, anyway.



The morning of my arrival at a new place after traveling, I offer a more elaborate puja than usual to Sri-Sri Jagannatha-Sudarsana, Sri-Sri Laksmi-Sesasayi, Sri Giriraja and Sri Ananta-Nrsimhadeva. Setting up the altar and worshipping Their Lordships today took 3 hours.



Morning japa in the temple.

ISKCON Chowpatti, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
25 April 2004

A Sense of the Future

British author E. M. Forster (1879-1970) had a keen sense of the future. In his works of fiction eighty years ago, he pointed to the coming of things that would not make their presence felt in the Western world until much later, around the time of his death.

What things were these?

One was Krsna consciousness. . . as a spiritual value that would be sought by people of the West.

You see this in *A Passage to India*, a novel he wrote in the early 1920s. At the end of it he describes a Janmastami festival in India. We see the *brahmana* who conducts the *puja* preaching to some English visitors who are eager to know more about Sri Krsna. There is a suggestion that these Britishers are sincere enough to even become devotees of Krsna.

Forster died in 1970 in Coventry; by this time the fledgling ISKCON in London had been getting writeups in English newspapers for a couple of years. I wonder if,

before he left his body, Forster read about the Western devotees of Krsna. (A *Passage to India* was reviewed in *Back to Godhead* magazine some years ago when a Hollywood movie based on Forster's book was released.)

In 1928 Forster wrote a story called "The Machine Stops. " In this, he sensed the coming of the cyber age. People will live sealed off from one another in rooms that are much like the cells in a beehive. A glowing blue vision-plate predominates in each cell; it is much like a television or a computer display, but it transmits images as well as receives them. It is only through the vision-plate that each individual knows about the world. People rarely if ever venture out of their rooms. They order food electronically and it is delivered to their doors. They communicate with friends electronically. They work their jobs electronically. At the end of Forster's story, The Machine--which is the name of the vast unity of apparatuses and systems that keeps the human hive in operation--breaks down, and everyone in the hive dies helplessly.

So far the cyber-revolution has not actually reduced people to living in hives, but the way some "techies" live, they might as well be sealed alone in individual cells packed with computerized gadgetry. Cyber-visionaries like those I quoted in yesterday's In2-MeC entry preach the desirability of humanity evolving into "the hive-mind. " People who are addicted to sitting in front of their PCs, surfing the Net, are susceptible to such preaching. In the year E. M. Forster died, the personal computer revolution had just begun. Most people of that time knew nothing about that revolution; probably Forster himself had no clue that primitive microcomputers were being designed in 1970. By 1974 money was being made from hardware and software aimed at the home user, and companies like Apple and Microsoft were in the process of being born.

Looking at the way computers now dominate our lives, we can appreciate the farsightedness of drama critic and naturalist Joseph Wood Krutch, who wrote *The Twelve Seasons: A Perpetual Calendar for the Country* in 1949. Here he stated:

Man's development takes him farther and farther away from his associations with his fellows, seems to condemn him more and more to live with what is dead than what is alive.

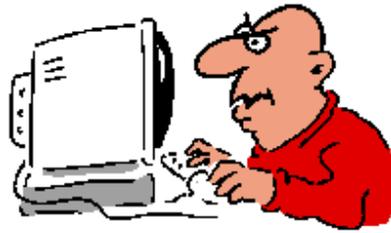
Around the same time as Krutch wrote those words, E. B. White predicted that man's technologies

will insist that we forget the primary and the near in favor of the secondary and the remote.

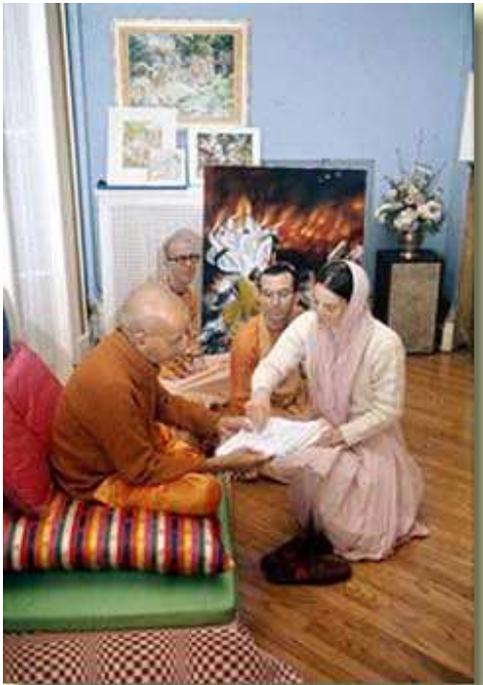
White foresaw the day when people will take artificial representations of ideas, sounds and images to be reality, and the original ideas, sounds and images to be artificial. He believed this would develop to a point when

the solid world becomes make-believe. . . when all is reversed and we shall be like the insane.

What was future to Forster, Krutch and White is our now. Our now is a choice between Krsna consciousness and a media-induced insanity of artificial imagery, or in one word: *maya*.



No Machines Without Soul!



No machine can work without a soul. I was talking of this computer. What is called? Computer? Eh? Computer. But still a trained man requires to handle the computer. Then what is the meaning of this computer? Whatever machine you make. . . Similarly, we should understand that this great machine, which is known as cosmic manifestation, material nature--there is a supreme spirit which is manipulating. That is Krsna. [SP Lecture, 21 July 1971]



The machine is working very nicely so long the pilot or the driver is there. Similarly, where is the difficulty to understand this universal affair? If we accept the same principle, that "I am a small fragmental portion of Krsna. I have entered this body. This body is working so nicely. . . Similarly, because Krsna has entered as Maha-Visnu, Garbhodakasayi Visnu, Ksirodakasayi Visnu, therefore it is working. " [SP conversation 30 April 1976]

*ISKCON Chowpatti, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
27 April 2004*

Of Camels in Germany, Jesus in Bombay and Reiki in Riga

Yesterday a young man (thankfully not initiated by any ISKCON *guru*) came to see me. He likes my lectures but has a problem that he considered is not appropriate to present in front of everyone in the form of a question at the end of class. Our conversation went something like this.

Young man: Maharaja, I have a serious problem. Though I'm following ISKCON for some time now and chant 16 rounds daily, recently I met a man here in Bombay who is in direct touch with Jesus Christ. Through him, Jesus is speaking. I don't see Jesus myself. He sees him, and he tells me so many things that are the same as what Srila Prabhupada taught. He speaks about reincarnation, vegetarianism, and intelligent beings on other planets.

Me: And you believe him?

Young man: Yes, because so much of what he says is the same as what Prabhupada says. But my problem is I am losing faith in Krsna consciousness because when I asked him about Krsna, then Jesus, speaking through this man, told me, "I don't know any Krsna. "

Me: Well, then what you are trying to impress me with here is flawed by a very great contradiction. You've tried to validate what this man says in my eyes by telling me it is in agreement with Srila Prabhupada's teachings. Then you say he doesn't know Krsna, and this is harming your faith. But Krsna is the very sum and substance of Srila Prabhupada's teachings. How then can you transfer your faith in Srila Prabhupada to this man? Your reasoning shows no logic at all.

Young man: Yes, it is true, I am very confused. Maharaja, if I could just arrange for you to meet this man. . .

Me: I am not interested in meeting him. There is no reason for me to meet him. Actually, he is not the problem. You are the problem, or rather your mind is the problem. You've put your faith in this person for a reason that makes no sense at all.

Young man: No, but if I find out it is really true that Jesus speaks through him. . .

Me: How will you prove or disprove that? You are simply hung up in this man's words. He speaks some words, you put your faith in his words. And the reason you've given for why you put faith in his words is unsound. So where does proof come into it?

Young man: I asked him to show me Jesus directly. He promised that very soon I'll see Jesus myself.

Me: Even if you see Jesus yourself, it doesn't prove anything. There are madmen locked in the insane asylum who have the subjective experience of seeing Jesus or

Napoleon. To them their visions are perfectly real. But they are mad. Here in India one out of every tenth person will tell you he has directly seen Shirdi Sai Baba, or Samartha Maharaja, or Swami Gajanand, or some other departed mystic. Or some demigod. Or even Lord Krsna Himself! But the people who make such claims are common fools. *So what* if a pan-chewing, tea-drinking, bidi-smoking autoricksha walla wakes up in the middle of the night and sees Shirdi Sai or Sri Krsna standing over him? His life doesn't change. He remains what he is--a fool! What to speak of the world changing. We know who Srila Prabhupada is by what he did. He changed the whole world in twelve years, at a time of his life when most men are too feeble to take care of themselves. And you are telling me that you have faith in this person because of what Srila Prabhupada taught! How is he like Srila Prabhupada in his activities?

Young man: He does a lot of welfare work. . .

Me: That's mundane. That Nirankari Baba also does a lot of welfare work, and he tells people to eat meat on Ekadasi. Does his mundane welfare work mean I have to believe his nonsense teachings?

Young man: No, but if it turns out Jesus is really speaking through him. . .

Me: I'm sorry. This conversation is over. You are too mixed up in your head to follow what I am telling you. I don't think you've heard a word I've said, because you are too absorbed in your faulty thoughts.

Young man: No, I heard everything you said, Maharaja. I just. . . I mean. . . I'm very confused.

Me: That's it. You're very confused. You need help. You need steady spiritual guidance in your life. And you're not getting the kind of help you need from this fellow who tells you he speaks for Jesus. He's just leading you deeper and deeper into confusion.

Young man: Yes.

There are a lot of people in this world who share in the same flawed logic as exhibited by this young man. And some of them come into ISKCON and get initiated. A few years ago a Godbrother who is an ISKCON *guru* related to me how a lady disciple of his left his shelter to take reinitiation from a "rasika" Gaudiya Math *sannyasi*.

"I met with her to try to talk her out of leaving," he said, "but. . . well, you know *her*. "

I did know her, but I raised my eyebrows in an unspoken question, as if I did not understand what he was getting at.

So he had to admit it out loud: "She's not very intelligent. "

I knew this woman, and I knew what he said about her is true. She joined ISKCON at an old age, and thus was quite sentimental and settled in her ways. She didn't speak English, and at this stage of her life was unlikely to learn a new language.

I felt like asking him, "If you knew she was unintelligent, then why did you initiate her?" But that's a question I ask myself sometimes. Initiation reform should begin at home. And so for the past several years I've stopped initiating new disciples.

A couple days ago I received an email from Riga in Latvia. Apparently there's a big problem there because some devotees are getting too involved with Reiki. Half a dozen years ago I wrote something about Reiki, so this correspondent from Riga asked me to upload that to him. I don't seem to have a copy of that Reiki essay on file anymore. Besides that, I told him, I find the subject of Reiki too boringly stupid to get excited about. Someone who gets carried away from Srila Prabhupada's teachings by this sort of thing is suffering in his head from a crashed logic program.

In the 1930s, the developmental psychologist Alexander Romanovich Luria tested the logic of herdsmen of Uzbekistan by posing simple theoretical questions to them. The test went like this.

"There is a land far to the northwest of here called Germany. Its climate, conditions and people are different from Uzbekistan. You have camels here. But in Germany there are no camels in the whole country. Now, Berlin is a city in Germany. Are there camels in Berlin?"

The Uzbeki might ask, "Is Berlin a large city?"

"Yes, very large. "

"If it is a large city, then there should be camels. "

"But what do my words about Germany suggest?"

"They suggest that there are camels in Berlin, because if it is a large city then Khazaks, Kirghiz and Uzbekis will be there. "

"But if there aren't any camels in the whole of Germany?"

"If there are large cities, there will be camels. "

In ISKCON, the test might go like this:

"Srila Prabhupada says that Vedic knowledge must be received through *guru-parampara* in order to be bona fide. Reiki is a teaching that came from a cigarette-smoking Japanese man who had no connection to *guru-parampara*. Is Reiki bona fide?"

"Reiki teaches about *ki*, which is the Japanese equivalent *prana*. The science of *prana* is taught in the Vedas. So, yes, Reiki is bona fide Vedic knowledge. "

"But it comes from a Japanese man who didn't follow the regulative principles and had no connection to *parampara*. What do my words suggest?"

"They suggest that Reiki is bona fide, because in Srila Prabhupada's books there is mention of *prana* and subtle personalities in higher planes. Reiki teaches about these things, and so do the Vedas. "

This is what is called "marching to the sound of a different drummer. "



*ISKCON Chowpatti, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
28 April 2004*

Total Mumbai Masala Slammer, Baby!



*Shakaboom
shakaboom
shakaboom! Play them
Mumbai mrdangas, I
gotta dance!*



Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Chowpatti. In 1970, Srila Prabhupada gave a talk at this place. As he exited this building he glanced around the neighboring area and commented, "We should have a temple here." ISKCON Chowpatti-- which began with a single room in the 1980s and gradually expanded to the size it is now--is two minutes walk from here.



Inside this Mumbai taxicab, the Maharastrian Mayavadi "saint" Shirdi Sai Baba has the place of honor.



Along the shore at Chowpatti.



The beach facing the Arabian Sea is so peaceful, one tends to forget that on the opposite side of these waters the troubled Middle East is boiling in a political stew.





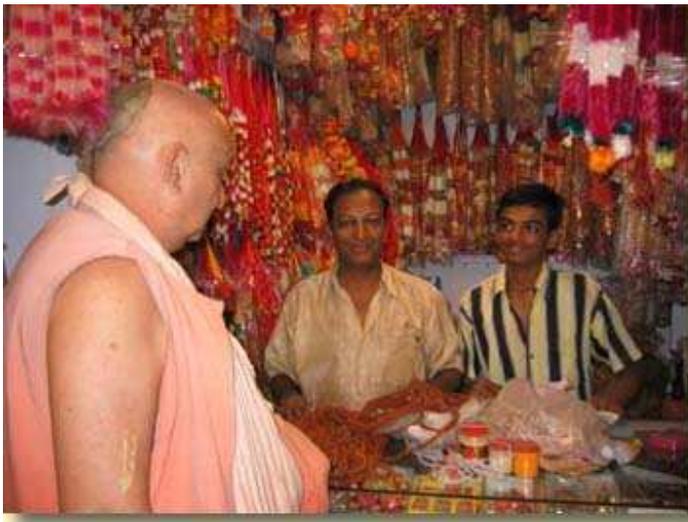
Last Saturday evening I gave a talk on "Overcoming Greed."



Next day was the Sunday Feast program.



Welcome to the Hindmata Restaurant, operating in Mumbai for more than eighty years. Since 1921 it has been run by a family whose members are now ISKCON devotees. Excellent pure veg Jain meals-ready hotel...all preps offered to Krsna!



Shopping for my shilas at "little Vrndaban," a Pushti Margi (i.e. Vallabhacarya Vaisnava Sampradaya) area in Mumbai.



On the way to a home program.



Darsana of beautiful Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai in this home temple.



*Home program finale: harinama dance program!
Shakaboom, shakaboom, shakaboom...*

*ISKCON Chowpatti, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
29 April 2004*

For me, the article that follows--The Death of Socialism--which I found on the Internet, sheds excellent light upon the mind-set behind not only the specific European doctrine of socialism, but also the general obsession with social issues, the obsession of the type that we can even see in ISKCON. This mind-set is a thing I've had to deal with repeatedly in my years in ISKCON, particularly during the nine years (1977-1986) I served in the zone of Harikesa Swami.

In my opinion Harikesa resembled, in at least one important way, a socialist of the classical school. Like Rousseau (whom I've written about before in In2-MeC, and who is mentioned below), Harikesa wanted independence for himself and socialism for everyone else. In 1996, while I was chairman of the GBC, he proposed that the GBC Body be reorganized along a "varnasrama" scheme. . . "varnasrama" that was considerably flavored with Mother State socialistic values. In that proposal he offered a classification of each GBC member as either a brahmana or a ksatriya--but tellingly, he kept himself unclassified.

Harikesa has left ISKCON, but socialism didn't leave with him. Today's GBC Body exhibits certain socialistic tendencies that I am not comfortable with. To be honest, I am not, to begin with, comfortable with "social issues. "

I think that to stay away from social issues is appropriate for the sannyasa asrama. But in ISKCON, some sannyasis are very active in the societal problems of the movement; and a good number of non-sannyasi ISKCONians (brahmacaris/brahmacarinis and grhasta men and women) expect sannyasis to be managers and/or social authorities. I recall a question and answer period after a Sunday feast lecture in a temple where one of the ladies asked me to give my opinion about some ISKCON social issue that had just flared up in some Pamho. net conference. Knowing zero about this issue, I asked her, "Why do you want me to talk

about this?" Her reply was, "You're the boss. " Meaning: "You're a sannyasi, so you're responsible for this society. "

Ha! Let me be up front about this: not only do I not see myself as a "boss" in ISKCON, I do not see myself as responsible in any way (even as a teacher or example-setter) for persons who are more absorbed in social problems and paradigms than they are in their own individual Krsna consciousness.

The vasudeve bhagavati verse (SB 1. 2. 7) teaches us that the evidence of advancement in Krsna consciousness is the appearance of jnana-vairagya in the individual. That's not to say that message of this verse is "anti-society. " Krsna conscious jnana-vairagya means yukta-vairagya, the expert yet detached use of matter in the Lord's service--which certainly includes the matter of social dynamics. But the vasudeve bhagavati verse is clearly aimed at the individual "unit" within Vedic society. The real business of that unit is to become renounced of social dependency through transcendental wisdom.

But within the GBC and other levels of ISKCON leadership one often hears that the individuals in ISKCON are "not very intelligent"--as I cited, day before yesterday, an ISKCON guru saying about a disciple. I recall a GBC man saying in a Mayapur meeting that ISKCON devotees in general do not come to conclusions that are based upon philosophy. They come to conclusions that are based upon rumor, gossip and politics. And so many on the GBC believe that their main duty is to direct the "mass" of devotees, since the mass is unable to intelligently direct itself.

It may very well be true that the mass of ISKCON devotees is not equipped to make intelligent decisions. But if it is not, it should be learning to do so. We should not remain outer-directed our whole lives long.

Look at the verse that precedes SB 1. 2. 7, and the verse that follows it. The context is unmistakable: that to merely follow the social formalities of varnasrama-dharma without atma-suprasidati--personal, individual spiritual satisfaction--is a waste of time. Verse 1. 2. 9 is likewise explicit. Dharmasya hi apavargasya: the goal of varnasrama-dharma occupational engagements is liberation only. Liberation is individual. This fact is made doubtless in SB 1. 15. 50. In the purport, Srila Prabhupada explains

When flying an airplane, one cannot take care of other planes. Everyone has to take care of his own plane, and if there is any danger, no other plane can help another in that condition. Similarly, at the end of life, when one has to go back home, back to Godhead, everyone has to take care of himself without help rendered by another.

That is why I wrote above:

not only do I not see myself as a "boss" in ISKCON, I do not see myself as responsible in any way (even as a teacher or example-setter) for persons who are more absorbed in social problems and paradigms than they are in their own individual Krsna consciousness.

I find that my individualistic viewpoint on "ISKCON social issues" is borne out by history. Devotees who suffer from mental agitation over perceived social injustices,

inequalities, inconsistencies and so on in ISKCON have very likely ventured into a personal danger zone in their spiritual lives. The irony is that society--even if it is "reformed" (ah, that favorite old word!)--isn't, at the end of the day, going to be able to help them out of that danger zone.

I mentioned one "reform-conscious" sannyasi already. I could mention a good number more along with similarly "reform-conscious" brahmacaris/brahmacarinis and grhastas who, like Harikesa, are no longer members of ISKCON. Is that ISKCON's fault? I think that question is answered by the fact that these persons I'm thinking of maintain no reasonable standard of sadhana-bhakti in their personal lives now that they are "free" of "the corrupt institution. "

*In the article that follows I've taken the liberty to render in **bold** points that I think are important for our consideration. At the end of the essay I offer some comments on these points. Many of these comments are directly from Srila Prabhupada.*

The Death of Socialism

by Roger Kimball

Those who dare to undertake the institution of a people must feel themselves capable, as it were, of changing human nature, of transforming each individual into a part of a much greater whole, of altering the constitution of man for the purpose of strengthening it.

--Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1762

We are all socialists nowadays.

--Edward, Prince of Wales, 1895

The most important political event of the twentieth century is not the crisis of capitalism but the death of socialism.

--Irving Kristol, 1976

What is socialism? In part, it is optimism translated into a political program. Until he took up gardening, Candide was a sort of proto-socialist; his mentor Pangloss could have been one of socialism's founding philosophers. **Socialism is also unselfishness embraced as an axiom: the gratifying emotion of unselfishness, experienced alternately as resentment against others and titillating satisfaction with oneself.** The philosophy of Rousseau, which elevated what he called the "indescribably sweet" feeling of virtue into a political imperative, is socialism *in ovo* ["in the egg"]. "Man is born free," Rousseau famously exclaimed, "but is everywhere in chains. " **That heart-stopping conundrum too thrilling to be corrected by mere experience** is the fundamental motor of socialism. It is a motor fueled by this corollary: **that the multitude unaccountably colludes in perpetuating its own bondage and must therefore be, in Rousseau's ominous phrase, "forced to be free. "**

We owe the term "socialism" to some followers of Robert Owen, the nineteenth-century British industrialist who founded New Harmony, a short-lived utopian community on the banks of the Wabash in Indiana. Owen's initial reception in America was impressive. In an 1825 address to Congress, Joshua Muravchik reports

in *Heaven on Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism*,[1] Owen's audience included not only congressmen but also Supreme Court justices, cabinet members, President Monroe, and President-elect John Quincy Adams. Owen described to this august assemblage how his efforts to replace the "individual selfish system" with a "united social" system would bring forth a "new man" who was free from the grasping imperatives that had marred human nature from time immemorial. (And not only human nature: the utopian socialist Charles Fourier expected selfishness and cruelty to be obliterated from the animal kingdom as well: one day, he thought, even lions and whales would be domesticated.)

The starry-eyed aspect of socialist thinking did not preclude a large element of steel. As Muravchik points out, the French Revolution was "the manger" of socialism. It was then that the philosophy of Rousseau emerged from the pages of tracts and manifestos to strut across the bloody field of history. The architects of the revolution invoked Rousseau early and often as they set about the task of "changing human nature," of "altering the constitution of man for the purpose of strengthening it. "

This metamorphosis does not come easily. Human nature is a recalcitrant thing. It is embodied as much in persistent human institutions like the family and the church as in the human heart. All must be remade from the ground up if "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" are at last to be realized. Since history is little more than an accumulation of errors, history as hitherto known must be abolished. The past, a vast repository of injustice, is by definition the enemy. Accordingly, the revolutionists tossed out the Gregorian calendar and started again at Year One. They replaced the Genesis-inspired seven-day week with a ten-day cycle and rebaptized the months with names reflecting their new cult of nature: Brumaire (fog), Thermidor (heat), Vendémiaire (wind), etc. **A new religion was born, as imperious as it was jealous. It is significant that the socialist mentality is usually also an atheistic mentality, where atheism is understood not so much as the disbelief in God as the hatred of God--an attitude as precarious logically as it has been destructive in practice. There is an important sense in which religion as traditionally understood reconciles humanity to imperfection and to failure. Since the socialist sets out to abolish failure, traditional religion is worse than *de trop*: it is an impediment to perfection.** ("Criticism of religion," Marx said, "is the prelude to all criticism. ") In 1793, the churches were closed to worship and ransacked for booty. The anti-clericalism that had been a prominent feature of revolutionary sentiment grew increasingly vicious. Muravchik describes so-called "revolutionary marriages" in which priests and nuns were tied together naked and drowned. Rousseau was always going on about establishing the "reign of virtue. " His far-seeing disciple Maximilien Robespierre spoke more frankly of "virtue and its emanation, terror. "

It is one of the great ironies of modern history that socialism, which promises a more humane, caring, and equitable society, has consistently delivered a more oppressive and mismanaged one. Socialism's motto--Muravchik optimistically offers it to us as socialism's epitaph--turns out to be: "If you build it, they will leave. "

If, one must add, they are allowed to leave. As Muravchik reminds us in this excellent survey of socialist personalities and socialist experiments, encouraging dissent is never high on a socialist's agenda. **The socialist pretends to have glimpsed paradise on earth. Those who decline the invitation to embrace the vision are not just ungrateful: they are traitors to the cause of human**

perfection. Dissent is therefore not mere disagreement but treachery.

Treachery is properly met not with arguments but (as circumstances permit) the guillotine, the concentration camp, the purge.

In tracing socialism's phenomenal trajectory, *Heaven on Earth* tells the "story of man's most ambitious attempt to supplant religion with a doctrine about how life ought to be lived that claimed grounding in science rather than revelation. " It is, to say the least, a cautionary tale. Muravchik provides a devastating anatomy of the socialist dream--a dream that with clocklike regularity becomes a nightmare. If, as Muravchik suggests, socialism was "the most popular political idea ever invented," it is also undoubtedly the bloodiest. Of course, many who profess socialism are decent and humane people. **And it is worth noting that socialism comes in mild as well as tyrannical versions.** Muravchik, who was once a socialist himself, pays frequent homage to the generous impulses that lie behind some allotropes of the socialist enterprise. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that "regimes calling themselves socialist have murdered more than one hundred million people since 1917. " Why? **Why is it that the more dogged the effort to achieve the announced goals of socialism, the more the outcome mocked the human ideals it proclaimed?** And why is it that conservatives, who by and large have agreed with Samuel Johnson that "A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization," have regularly been demonized as uncaring brutes?

A large part of the answer lies in the intellectual dynamics of utopianism. *Utopia* is Greek for "nowhere": a made-up word for a make-believe place. **The search for nowhere inevitably deprecates any and every somewhere.** Socialism, which is based on incorrigible optimism about human nature, is a species of utopianism. It experiences the friction of reality as an intolerable brake on its expectations. **"Utopians," the philosopher Leszek Kolakowski observed in *The Death of Utopia Reconsidered*, "once they attempt to convert their visions into practical proposals, come up with the most malignant project ever devised: they want to institutionalize fraternity, which is the surest way to totalitarian despotism. "**

There was also the intervention of Marx. Intellectually, Marxism is the most highly developed--as well as the most influential and most murderous--form of socialism the world has seen. But Kolakowski is surely correct that Marxism's influence, far from depending on its alleged "scientific character," depends "almost entirely [on] . . . its prophetic, fantastic, and irrational elements. " Marxism says that as capitalist societies develop, most people are hounded into abject poverty while a tiny coterie of capitalists thrive. This scenario is presented, à la Hegel, as a "dialectical" inevitability. But in fact capitalism has always made societies richer, much richer. Capitalists get rich, and workers become more prosperous than their grandparents could have ever imagined possible.

Whether or not this is a *necessary* concomitant of market forces, it is an historical fact. The curious thing is that this phenomenon, which any dispassionate observer might count as a refutation, leaves the true-believing Marxist entirely unruffled. **Whatever else one can say about it, Marxism is surely one of the most impervious systems of thought ever devised. It is also one of the most protean. It has always, as Kolakowski notes, been able to change "content from one situation to another and [crossbreed] with other ideological traditions. " In part, this is a testimony to its intellectual adaptability; in**

part, it is simple mendacity. As Marx himself explained in an 1857 letter to Friedrich Engels about an election prediction he had made, "It's possible that I shall make an ass of myself. But in that case one can always get out of it with a little dialectic. I have, of course, so worded my proposition as to be right either way. "

Muravchik begins his account of the career of socialism with figures like François-Noël Babeuf and Sylvain Maréchal, whose radical egalitarianism and endorsement of violence helped set the tone--and the murderous program--of the French Revolution. Maréchal, who took to signing himself l'HSD (l'Homme Sans Dieu, the man without God), was above all an apostle of radical egalitarianism: equality understood not as a legal postulate but as an existential imperative. "If there is a single man on earth who is richer and more powerful than his fellows," he wrote, "then the equilibrium is broken: crime and misfortune are on earth. " It is imperative, Maréchal said in his *Manifesto of Equals*, to "remove from every individual the hope of ever becoming richer, or more powerful, or more distinguished by his intelligence. " Tough work, that removal, but the promised rewards were great: really establish equality, Maréchal argued, and the result would be "the disappearance of boundary marks, hedges, walls, door-locks, disputes, trials, thefts, murders, all crimes. . . courts, prisons, gallows, penalties, . . . envy, jealousy, insatiability, pride, deception, duplicity, in short all vices. " Of course, until that happy day arrives there will be plenty of "trials, thefts, murders, . . . courts, prisons, gallows, penalties" in order to hasten the institution of equality.

Babeuf, who called himself "Gracchus" Babeuf after the legendary Roman land reformer, also put radical equality at the center of his revolutionary program. Since nothing institutionalized inequality more than private property, he reasoned, private property and its distillate, money, must go. Babeuf looked forward to the "general overthrow of the system of private property" as an "inevitable" adjunct of revolution. "Society," he said, "must be made to operate in such a way that it eradicates once and for all the desire of a man to become richer, or wiser, or more powerful than others. " Like Maréchal--like Robespierre whom he admired as a "regenerator" who "mow[ed] down all that impeded him--Babeuf (who also called himself "the Marat of the Somme") believed that "in order to govern judiciously it is necessary to terrorize the evilly disposed, the royalists, papists and starvers of the public. . . . [O]ne cannot govern democratically without this terrorism. " If the cost of paradise was unfortunately high, it was as nothing compared with the envisioned benefits. "I don't think it is impossible," Babeuf enthused to his wife, "that within a year, if we carry out our measures aright and act with all necessary prudence, we shall succeed in ensuring general happiness on earth. "

Today Babeuf is little more than a footnote to the history of tyranny. As with many extremists, the very extravagance of his pronouncements is implicitly taken as a license to dismiss him or deprecate his importance. What fundamentally challenges the status quo is defanged by the rhetoric of extremism: what is extreme is also exceptional, a special case, i. e. , not really threatening. But this line of reasoning misunderstands the threat posed by radicals like Babeuf. His extremism was not limited to acts perpetrated in the late eighteenth century. It lived on in the murderous socialist programs he helped to inspire. Babeuf's importance in the history of socialism was underscored by Marx and Engels. In *The Holy Family*, their first work together, they fondly note that Babeuf's attack on private property "gave rise to the communist idea. " (The essence of Communism, Marx correctly observed,

can be summed up in a single phrase: the abolition of private property.) Babeuf's importance was reaffirmed in the founding manifesto of the Comintern in 1919, whose authors saw themselves as "the direct continuators of the heroic endeavors and martyrdom of a long line of revolutionary generations [starting] from Babeuf. " In our own day, the Frankfurt-school Marxist Herbert Marcuse has championed Babeuf's thought as a tool to battle the seductive evils of advanced capitalism.

Muravchik ranges confidently through the history of socialism, neatly weaving biography, anecdote, and political commentary into a fascinating chronicle of disappointed idealism. A large part of *Heaven on Earth* is given over to the rise and eventual foundering of what we might call "soft socialism. " Muravchik patiently details the experiments of utopians like Robert Owen, Marxist reformers like Eduard Bernstein (a protégé of Engels), the trade-union movements of Samuel Gompers and George Meany, and mid-twentieth-century redactions of the socialist impulse in Clement Attlee's Labour government, Julius Nyerere's Tanzania, and the Israeli kibbutz.

Perhaps his most illuminating pages are devoted to the careers of Mussolini and of Engels. We tend to think of fascism as the antithesis of socialism or Marxism. But as Muravchik reminds us, there are in fact deep continuities between them. Mussolini began as a disciple of Lenin and did not so much repudiate Marxism-Leninism as become a self-declared "heretic. " Thus one of Mussolini's groups of thugs called itself the Cheka, after Lenin's secret police. As Muravchik observes, "However fierce they grew in their antipathy to communism, the fascists never ceased mimicking it, implicitly underscoring their claim to be the true or superior heirs to the same legacy. " (Something similar can be said of Hitler, whose party, after all, was called National Socialism. It is true that Hitler was adamantly anti-Communist; at the same time, he acknowledged that he had "learned a great deal from Marxism. ")

Most of us think of Engels as the junior partner in the conglomerate of Marxism, Inc. In some ways that perception is accurate. But Muravchik shows that Engels's contribution to the formation of Marxist doctrine was much larger than is usually recognized. The well-to-do son of a German textile manufacturer, Engels beavered diligently for decades in the Manchester office of Engels & Ermen in order to earn enough money to support his comrade-in-arms. (Engels was always sending Marx money; when he finally retired from the family firm, he made Marx an annuity of £350--several times more than the average family lived on but not enough for Marx, who always adjusted his spending to a level above what his benefactors supplied.) Engels was an indefatigable publicist. It was Engels, for example, who suggested the title *Communist Manifesto* for their jointly authored "confession of faith. " When Marx finally, after innumerable delays, managed to complete the first volume of that great reader-proof tome *Das Kapital*, Engels flogged it everywhere, taking it upon himself to write ten separate reviews of the book. He also completed volumes two and three of the book, working up Marx's scattered notes into something resembling a consecutive argument. More substantively, Engels's 1844 *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* articulated many central points of the doctrine we have since learned to call Marxism, above all the thesis that the evolution of capitalism necessarily leads to cutthroat competition among capitalists and poverty and dehumanization for the majority of the populace. Marx himself called it "a work of genius" and incorporated many of its central arguments into his later work.

Muravchik's argument has two aspects. Like many other disabused commentators, he presents a sobering chronicle of socialism's delusions and crimes. He reminds us--if we still need reminding--of the central role that the "annihilation. . . of reactionary races" (Marx), the "extermination" of enemies (Lenin) has always played in "really existing" Marxism. Muravchik also presents the cheering news that daybreak has come at last, that we have finally awakened from the long dream of socialist utopia. It is difficult to argue with the first part of his argument. What about the second? It is certainly significant that the Soviet Union imploded and that its last leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, should have recently acknowledged that Communist claims about economic progress had been "pure propaganda. " Perhaps it is also significant that Tony Blair in Britain should have campaigned on the slogan "Labour is the party of business. " But I cannot help receiving the news of socialism's death with a certain scepticism. For one thing, the fact that an idea has been thoroughly discredited does nothing to render it impotent. **It is part of the perversity of human nature that discredited ideas are often the most successful ideas. Then, too, I see little evidence that socialism's fundamental tenet--namely, the ideal of equality--is on its way to the dustbin of history. The wheels of egalitarianism may grind away more slowly in liberal democratic countries than in Communist ones, but grind away they do.** It would be pleasant to think that in leaving history's bloodiest century behind, we have also left behind the passions that sparked its unprecedented carnage. But time and again history has taught us that the hunger for equality is among mankind's most brutal passions. It is for this reason that I believe the philosopher David Stove was correct when he identified "bloodthirstiness" as a central ingredient in the psychology of egalitarianism. Socialism will be conquered to the extent that egalitarianism is conquered. In the meanwhile, I fear that Stove is correct that "very far from communism being dead, as some foolish people at present believe, we can confidently look forward to bigger and better Marxes, Lenins, Stalins, Maos, Kim Il Sung, Pol Pots, Ceausescus, Baader-Meinhofs, Shining Paths, and all the rest. "

Notes

1. *Heaven on Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism*, by Joshua Muravchik; Encounter Books, 400 pages, \$27. 95. Go back to the text.

Another look at some significant points from *The Death of Socialism*

Socialism is also unselfishness embraced as an axiom: the gratifying emotion of unselfishness, experienced alternately as resentment against others and titillating satisfaction with oneself.

Comment:

This "gratifying emotion of unselfishness" is what Srila Prabhupada terms "extended sense enjoyment. In *Sri Isopanisad 2* His Divine Grace writes:

An ordinary man works for his own sense enjoyment, and when this principle of sense enjoyment is extended to include his society, nation or humanity in general, it assumes various attractive names such as altruism, socialism, communism, nationalism, humanitarianism, etc. These "isms" are certainly very attractive forms of karma-bandhana (work which binds), but the Vedic instruction of *Isopanisad* is

that if one actually wants to live for any of the above "isms," he should make them God-centered.

Roger Kimball, the author of the above essay on the death of socialism, points out that doctrinaire unselfishness (i. e. extended selfishness) is experienced by the socialist as resentment against others and titillating satisfaction with himself. Such is *dvandva-moha* (*Bg* 7. 27).

That heart-stopping conundrum too thrilling to be corrected by mere experience

Comment:

The conundrum Kimball is talking about is Rousseau's exclamation "Man is born free but is everywhere in chains!" A conundrum is a paradox, a riddle. It is a problem that actually cannot be solved.

Now, Rousseau's famous conundrum is first of all paradoxical because it isn't true. Man is not born free. To believe so is utterly idiotic, and that's even before we bring in the doctrine of *karma*. A new-born baby is utterly dependent. Everyone is well-aware of mankind's helplessness in infancy, so how can anyone proclaim "Man is born free"?

Second of all, mankind is everywhere in chains, yes, but not fundamentally because of social conditions. He is chained by birth, death, disease and old age. People who are obsessed by social issues sweep these existential issues into the background. There is a reason for that which we shall see shortly. In any case, the existential issues of mankind's mortal condition cannot be solved socially, medically, scientifically or by any other type of material endeavor. The conundrum, accurately stated, is that mankind *desires* to be free from his very birth, but is everywhere in chains at every step of his life.

Rousseau's exclamation is said to be "too thrilling to be corrected by mere experience. " This is the sort of blockheaded idealism that Rousseau and so many Romantics after him indulge in. The experience of history shows again and again that mankind cannot free himself by his own endeavor. But still these dreamers, intoxicated by *ahamkara* (which literally means "I"--*aham*--"am the doer"--*kara*), argue "Why not?"

that the multitude unaccountably colludes in perpetuating its own bondage and must therefore be, in Rousseau's ominous phrase, "forced to be free. "

Comment:

This is Rousseau's own answer to "Why not?" The reason that experience shows again and again mankind hasn't managed to free himself is because again and again mankind contributes to his own bondage. Which means he doesn't have sense enough to want to be free. Which further means he doesn't even understand what freedom is. Which necessitates that he be educated what freedom is, so that he'll want to be free.

Education is not the socialist's solution to bondage, however. How can it be? He is in ignorance. *Vidya* (education) is the Vedic solution. Srila Prabhupada writes in *The Science of Self-Realization*:

The culture of *vidya*, or transcendental knowledge, is essential for the human being, otherwise the culture of *avidya*, or nescience, binds him to conditional existence on the material platform. Materialistic existence means the pursuit or culture of sense gratification, and this kind of knowledge of sense gratification (*avdiya*) means advancement of repeated birth and death. Those who are absorbed in such knowledge cannot learn any lesson from the laws of nature, and they do the same things over repeatedly, being enamored of the beauty of illusory things. *Vidya*, or factual knowledge, on the other hand, means to know thoroughly the process of nescient activities while at the same time culturing transcendental science and thereby undeviatingly following the path of liberation.

The solution that Rousseau declares is that mankind must be forced to be free. *This* is a real conundrum! It suggests that Rousseau had no idea what real freedom is. Certainly he didn't. "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free," said Goethe. Who is free?

The Roman poet Horace answered this question nicely: "Who then is free? The wise man who can command himself. " Rousseau, profligate that he was, was by no means in command of himself. He was enslaved by the senses of his lusty mortal body and by the speculations of his uncontrolled mind. And that is precisely the sense in which "mankind is everywhere in chains. "

A new religion was born, as imperious as it was jealous. It is significant that the socialist mentality is usually also an atheistic mentality, where atheism is understood not so much as the disbelief in God as the hatred of God--an attitude as precarious logically as it has been destructive in practice. There is an important sense in which religion as traditionally understood reconciles humanity to imperfection and to failure. Since the socialist sets out to abolish failure, traditional religion is worse than *de trop*: it is an impediment to perfection.

Comment:

The above quotation states very much in very few words. The urge to take charge of society and mold it without regard to the laws of God, but only according to mundane ideals (another conundrum!), is a symptom of aggressive atheism.

Hiranyakasipu was so powerful that even the demigods in other planets would tremble simply by the unfavorable raising of his eyebrow. (*Bhag.* 1. 3. 28p)

In other words, he [Maharaja Vena] was an atheist, who did not believe in the existence of God, and who consequently stopped all Vedic ritualistic ceremonies in his kingdom. Prthu Maharaja considered King Vena's character abominable because Vena was foolish regarding the execution of religious performances. Atheists are of the opinion that there is no need to accept the authority of the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be successful in religion, economic development, sense gratification or liberation. According to them, *dharma*, or religious principles, are meant to establish an imaginary God to encourage one to become moral, honest and just so that the

social orders may be maintained in peace and tranquillity. Furthermore, they say that actually there is no need to accept God for this purpose, for if one follows the principles of morality and honesty, that is sufficient. (*Bhag.* 4. 21. 30p)

Sisupala's father was known as Damaghosa due to his superior ability to cut down unregulated citizens. *Dama* means curbing down, and *ghosa* means famous; so he was famous for controlling the citizens. Damaghosa thought that if Krsna came to disturb the marriage ceremony, he would certainly cut Him down with his military power. (*Krsna* Ch 52)

Thus on the material platform animalistic leaders are worshiped by animals. Sometimes physicians, psychiatrists and social workers try to mitigate bodily pain, distress and fear, but they have no knowledge of spiritual identity and are bereft of a relationship with God. Yet they are considered *mahajanas* by the illusioned. (*Cc Madhya* 17. 185p)

The French term *de trop* means something superfluous or unnecessary. Religion is worse than unnecessary for the aggressive atheist. He thinks where religion prevails, society suffers. The faith that God will relieve humanity of suffering in the next world cripples action in this world for correcting such suffering. Thus for the aggressive, socially-conscious atheist, God is the single delusion of mankind that is most instrumental in robbing him of the willpower to free himself. If faith in God were merely superfluous, it could be tolerated. But it is the very chain of bondage. It is the opiate of the people. It must be eradicated.

The socialist pretends to have glimpsed paradise on earth. Those who decline the invitation to embrace the vision are not just ungrateful: they are traitors to the cause of human perfection. Dissent is therefore not mere disagreement but treachery.

Comment:

People are very fond of the pattern of *Rama-rajya*, and even today politicians sometimes form a party called *Rama-rajya*, but unfortunately they have no obedience to Lord Rama. It is sometimes said that people want the kingdom of God without God. Such an aspiration, however, is never to be fulfilled. (*Bhag.* 9. 10. 50p)

And it is worth noting that socialism comes in mild as well as tyrannical versions.

Comment:

The above-quoted purport continues:

Good government can exist when the relationship between the citizens and the government is like that exemplified by Lord Ramacandra and His citizens. Lord Ramacandra ruled His kingdom exactly as a father takes care of his children, and the citizens, being obliged to the good government of Lord Ramacandra, accepted the Lord as their father. Thus the relationship between the citizens and the government should be exactly like that between father and son. When the sons in a family are well trained, they are obedient to the father and mother, and when the father is well

qualified, he takes good care of the children. As indicated here by the words *sva-dharma-nirata varnasrama-gunan-vitah*, the people were good citizens because they accepted the institution of *varna* and *asrama*, which arranges society in the *varna* divisions of *brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya* and *sudra* and the *asrama* divisions of *brahmacarya*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*. This is actual human civilization. People must be trained according to the different varnasrama occupational duties.

I see mild socialism entering when the government adopts a more "motherly" (material) than "fatherly" (spiritual) relationship with its citizenry, and when the citizenry in turn adopts a more infantile dependence upon the government. "Raising a family"--which is what the above quotation from Srila Prabhupada compares good government to--is raising children to become well-trained adults who enact their personal realization of *dharma*. That realization is the blessing of the Lord and spiritual master. It is the blessing of increasing independence from material nature and increasing dependence upon Krsna's mercy.

Why is it that the more dogged the effort to achieve the announced goals of socialism, the more the outcome mocked the human ideals it proclaimed?

Comment:

Prabhupada: . . . [Y]ou can do everything by becoming Krsna conscious. That is the advantage of Krsna consciousness. Krsna says, *aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami*. You cannot get out of sinful action, but Krsna can do it. Therefore He says, "I'll get you released. " You cannot get released; therefore He says, "I'll do that. "

Harikesa: So bringing it to a practical platform. . .

Prabhupada: Practical means it will be done by Krsna. Your only business is to surrender to Krsna. You cannot do anything. And as soon as you think that "I shall be able to do it," then you are a rascal. Immediately you are rascal.

Harikesa: So only a fully surrendered soul can do everything perfectly.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Harikesa: A fully surrendered soul is the only one who can do things perfectly.

Prabhupada: He cannot do anything, even in his. . . Everything is to be done by Krsna. But he has to apply his intelligence by Krsna consciousness. Even if he is intelligent, he cannot do anything. (Vrindaban, December 3, 1975)

The search for nowhere inevitably deprecates any and every *somewhere*.

Comment:

Sometimes when one Gopi would serve Krishna very nicely, the others would say, Oh, she has done so nicely, now let me do better for pleasing Krishna. That is envy, but it is transcendental, without malice. So we shall not expect that anywhere there is any Utopia. Rather, that is impersonalism. People should not expect that even in

the Krishna Consciousness Society there will be Utopia. Because devotees are persons, therefore there will always be some lacking--but the difference is that their lacking, because they have given up everything to serve Krishna--money, jobs, reputation, wealth, big educations, everything--their lackings have become transcendental because, despite everything they may do, their topmost intention is to serve Krishna. "One who is engaged in devotional service, despite the most abominable action, is to be considered saintly because he is rightly situated. " The devotees of Krishna are the most exalted persons on this planet, better than kings, all of them, so we should always remember that and, like the bumblebee, always look for the nectar or the best qualities of a person. Not like the utopians, who are like the flies who always go to the open sores or find the faults in a person, and because they cannot find any utopia, or because they cannot find anyone without faults, they want to become void, merge, nothing--they think that is utopia, to become void of personality. (Letter from Srila Prabhupada, 72-02-04)

"Utopians," the philosopher Leszek Kolakowski observed in *The Death of Utopia Reconsidered*, "once they attempt to convert their visions into practical proposals, come up with the most malignant project ever devised: they want to institutionalize fraternity, which is the surest way to totalitarian despotism. "

Comment:

One thing, we can never expect to find any kind of utopia, even in the spiritual world. Where ever there are persons there are bound to be differences, so we should not expect any kind of perfect arrangement, especially here in the material world. Even sometimes amongst the gopis there is envy, but that enviousness is transcendental and should not be accepted in the mundane sense. Anyway one quality of a devotee is that he is always very much tolerant of other people, so I request you simply to tolerate the faults of others and always think that I am myself the most faulty. In this way your humble attitude will qualify you to advance very quickly in Krishna Consciousness. (Letter from Srila Prabhupada, 72-05-25)

Whatever else one can say about it, Marxism is surely one of the most impervious systems of thought ever devised. It is also one of the most protean. It has always, as Kolakowski notes, been able to change "content from one situation to another and [crossbreed] with other ideological traditions. " In part, this is a testimony to its intellectual adaptability; in part, it is simple mendacity. As Marx himself explained in an 1857 letter to Friedrich Engels about an election prediction he had made, "It's possible that I shall make an ass of myself. But in that case one can always get out of it with a little dialectic. I have, of course, so worded my proposition as to be right either way. "

Comment:

Religious principles that obstruct one from following his own religion are called *vidharma*. Religious principles introduced by others are called *para-dharma*. A new type of religion created by one who is falsely proud and who opposes the principles of the Vedas is called *upadharma*. And interpretation by one's jugglery of words is called *chala-dharma*. (*Bhag.* 7. 15. 13)

The living entity has nothing to do with bodily pains and pleasures. These are simply mental concoctions. An intelligent man will find the original cause of everything. Material combinations and permutations may be a matter of fact in worldly dealings, but actually the living force, the soul, has nothing to do with them. Those who are materially upset take care of the body and manufacture *daridra-narayana* (poor Narayana). However, it is not a fact that the soul or Supersoul becomes poor simply because the body is poor. These are the statements of ignorant people. The soul and Supersoul are always apart from bodily pleasure and pain. (*Bhag.* 5. 12. 7p)

It is part of the perversity of human nature that discredited ideas are often the most successful ideas. Then, too, I see little evidence that socialism's fundamental tenet--namely, the ideal of equality--is on its way to the dustbin of history. The wheels of egalitarianism may grind away more slowly in liberal democratic countries than in Communist ones, but grind away they do.

Prabhupada: So where is equal rights? Even in Russia, there is managerial class and laborer class. Where are equal rights? Why there are managers? Yes. I have seen it. The managerial class and the laborer class. So where is equality? Why the managerial class? You know that? There must be required. The old women, they are sweeping the street. Why not Mr. Lenin come and sweep the street? Why he is sitting in a big palace and the poor woman has been engaged to sweep the street? Where is equality? What advancement they have made? We are following opiate. They are following opiate, Lenin's rascal's philosophy. That's all. That is also opiate. But where is equality? That is also opiate. You are advocating equality, but where there is a man manager and another man is working. So why you are accepting this nonsense philosophy being opiated by rascal Lenin? (Morning walk, Rome, 29 May 1974)

*ISKCON Chowpatti, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
30 April 2004*

Sayin' Goodbye to Mumbai with a Bang, Baby!



Gotta dance, see, to that Mahamantra Trance beat!



The beautiful Sri-Sri Lakshmi-Narayana, ISKCON Chowpatti.



Day visit to ISKCON Juhu.



Vaisnava initiation ceremony, ISKCON Juhu.



Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai, Srila Prabhupada and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Juhu.



Sri-Sri Radha-Rasabihara Lalita-Visakha Sakhi, Juhu.



Sri-Sri Sita-Rama abhiseka ceremony.



Lovely Juhu temple outer courtyard; inside, devotees gather for the festival.



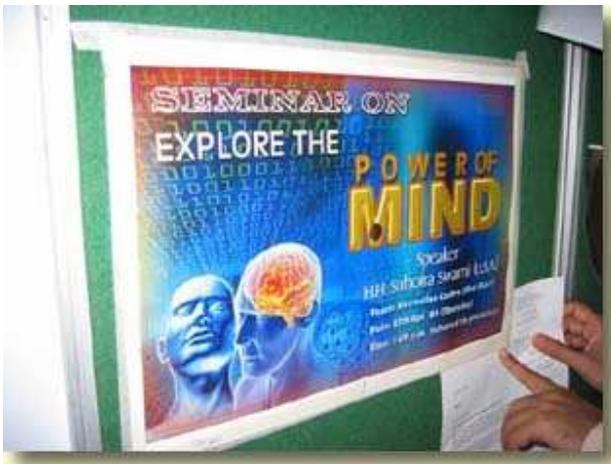
The ISKCON Juhu mandira towers.

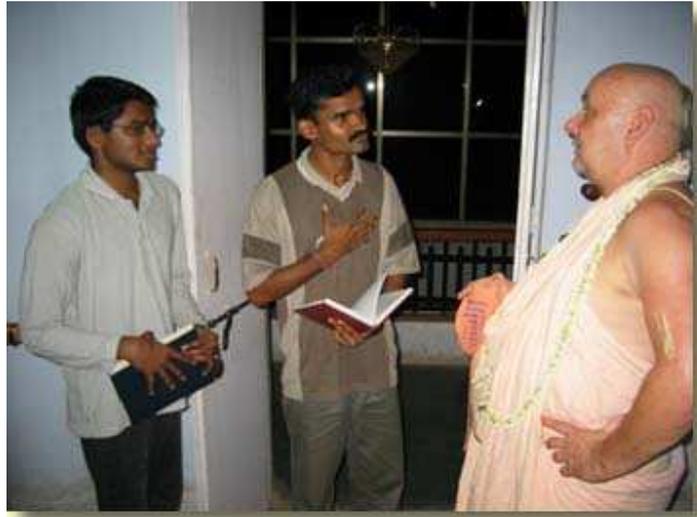


Sri Prabhupada's quarters, ISKCON Juhu.



The temple of Lord Siva across the street from ISKCON Juhu that Srila Prabhupada used to visit before taking his morning walks on the beach. Lord Siva protects the Vaisnava holy places.



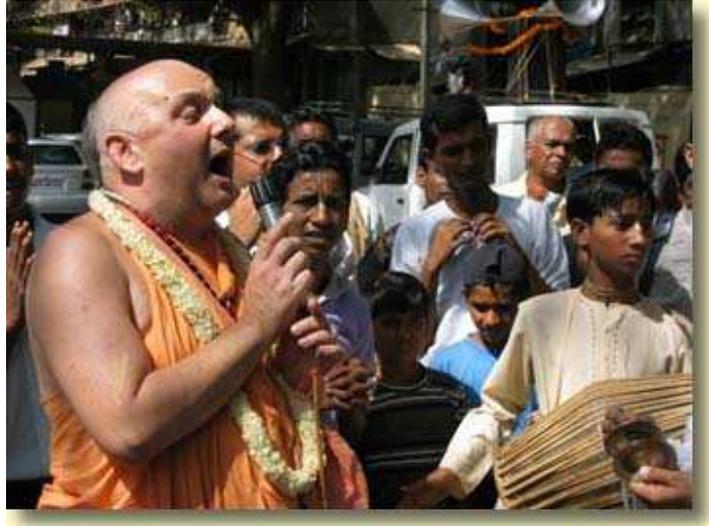


Lecture at an engineering college. Afterward I had a lively talk with some very interested students.

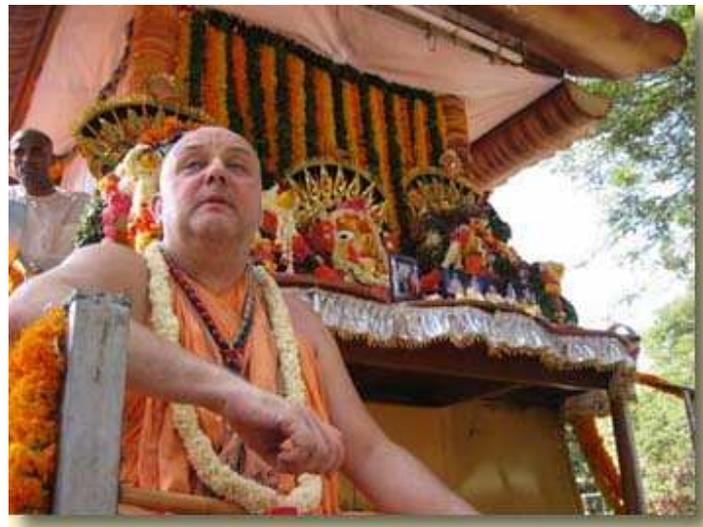


It was the transcendental arrangement of Sri-Sri Jagannatha Sudarasana that although I missed the regular Bombay Rathayatra when it was held earlier this year, the Chowpatti congregation was having a special Rathayatra on the last day of my visit here.

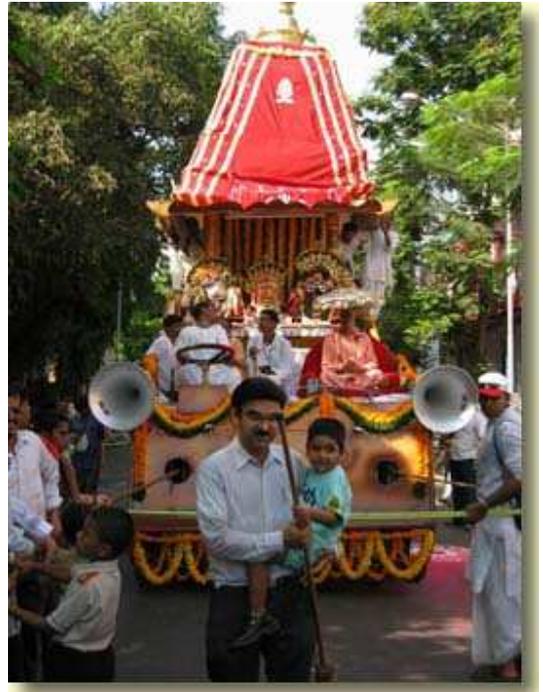




The warm-up kirtana with humorous dancing for the pleasure of Sri-Sri-Sri Jagannatha-Baladeva-Subhadra.



The dedication arati and then cart-pulling procession begins.



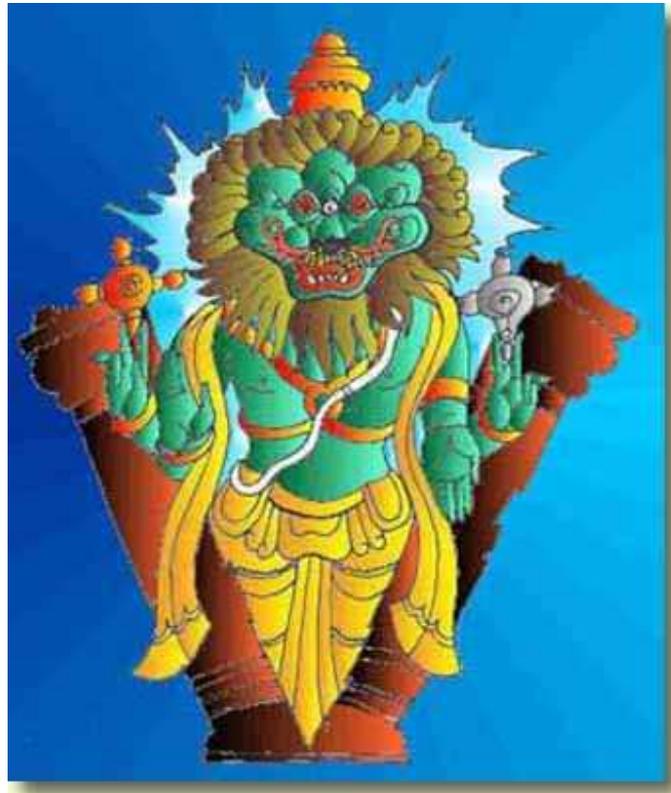


D-O-G or G-O-D? The Rath cart passes in front of an animal hospital.



Sri Jagannatha Rathayatra ki jaya!

3 May is Sri Nrsimha Caturdasi!



RRROOAA-AAARRRR!!!!

For reasons explained in the next section (Upcoming: Gandaki River Trek!) I may not be able to post anything here on Nrsimha Caturdasi. So here's some Nrsimha nectar in anticipation of Our Most Dangerous Lord's divine appearance day!

Nrsimha Bija Mantra

*om kshraum
ugram viram maha visnum jvalantam sarvatomukham
nrisimham bhisanam bhadram mrtyu mrtyum namamy aham*

May my head be protected by the moon-colored one, who is the greatest among persons. My obeisances unto the ferocious and powerful, the great Visnu, the fiery one, who's faces are on all sides, the fearful one, Nrsimha, who causes the death of even death personified, (or who can overcome death).

Daily Nrsimha Prayer

*tava kara-kamala-vare nakham adbhuta-srngam
dalita-hiranyakasipu-tanu-bhrngam
keshava dhrta-narahari-rupa jaya jagadisa hare*

O Keshava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of half-man, half-lion! All glories to You! Just as one can easily crush a wasp between one's fingernails, so in the same way the body of the wasp like demon Hiranyakashipu has been ripped apart by the wonderful pointed nails on Your beautiful lotus hands." (from *Sri Dasavatara-stotra*)

Have a Nrsimha-sila?
Please do special *puja* on His appearance day!

Srila Rupa Goswami mentions some of the benefits of worshipping a Nrsimha shalagram sila in his book, *Padyavali*:

A tulasi leaf offered to the lotus feet of the Nrsimha shalagram sila destroys the sin of murder. Water that has washed the lotus feet of the Nrsimha shalagram sila destroys the sin of theft. Foodstuff offered to the Nrsimha shalagram sila destroys the sin of drinking liquor. Sincere surrender to the Nrsimha shalagram sila destroys the sin of adultery with the wife of the spiritual master. Association with the devotees of the Nrsimha shalagram sila destroys the sin of offenses to the devotees. This is the extraordinary glory of the Nrsimha shalagram sila. (Srila Rupa Goswami: *Padyavali*, Verse 116)

Pray to be purified by Lord Nrsimhadeva's grace!

*om namo bhagavate nara-simhaya namas tejas-tejase avir-avirbhava
vajra-nakha vajra-damstra karmashayan randhaya randhaya tamo grasa grasa om
svaha.
abhayam abhayam atmani bhuyistha om kshraum*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Nrsimhadeva, the source of all power. O my Lord who possesses nails and teeth just like thunderbolts, kindly vanquish our demonlike desires for fruitive activity in this material world. Please appear in our hearts and drive away our ignorance so that by Your mercy we may become fearless in the struggle for existence in this material world. (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 5.18.8)

Ugra-Nrsimha-dhyana

*mimamsamanasya samutthito 'grato
nrsimha-rupas tad alam bhayanakam*

*pratapta-camikara-canda-locanam
sphurat-sata-keshara-jrimbhitananam*

*karala-damshttram karavala-cañcala-
kshuranta-jihvam bhru-kuti-bhishanam*

*stabdhordhva-karnam giri-kandaradbhta-
vyattasya-nasam hanu-bheda-bhishanam*

*divi-sprishat kayam adirgha-pivara-
grivoru-vakshah-sthalam alpa-madhyamam*

*candamshu-gauraish churitam tanuruhair
vishvag bhujanika-shatam nakhayudham*

*durasadam sarva-nijetarayudha-
praveka-vidravita-daitya-danavam*

Hiranyakashipu studied the form of the Lord, trying to decide who the form of Nrsimhadeva standing before him was. The Lord's form was extremely fearsome because of His angry eyes, which resembled molten gold; His shining mane, which expanded the dimensions of His fearful face; His deadly teeth and His razor-sharp tongue, which moved about like a duelling sword. His ears were erect and motionless, and His nostrils and gaping mouth appeared like caves of a mountain. His jaws parted fearfully, and His entire body touched the sky. His neck was very short and thick, His chest broad, His waist thin, and the hairs on His body as white as the rays of the moon. His arms, which resembled flanks of soldiers, spread in all directions as He killed the demons, rogues and atheists with His conchshell, disc, club, lotus and other natural weapons. (*Bhag.* 7.8.19-22)



Sri Nrsimha Protection *Mantras*

*om kraum
namo bhagavate nrsimhaya
jwalamaline diptadamstraya
agninetryaya sarvaraksoghnyaya
sarvabhuta vinasanaya
sarva jvara vinasanaya
daha daha paca paca raksa raksa
hum pat swaha*

I offer my respects to Lord Narasimhadev who has a beard of flames and eyes like pillars of fire, and who is the protector of the devotees, cut cut, burn burn, and protect protect us.

*om namo bhagavate sri maha nrsimhaya
damstra kupalavudanaya grocha
rupaya vajra nakhaya jvala maline
maha vishnan pacha pacha
mama astrun vidravaya vidravaya
mama sarva rista prabhunjaya
chata chata hana hana chindi chindi
mama sarva bhistan puraya puraya
mam raksa raksa hum phat svaha*

I offer my respects to the great Lord Narasimhadev. You have nails and teeth like bolts of lightning and are garlanded by a mane of flames. Chopping, cutting, tearing, and killing please protect us your devotees.

*om namo bhagavate narasimhaya
hiranyasipu vaksa stala vidharanaya tribhuvana-vyapakaya
bhuta prita pisacha dakhini sakhini mulon mulanaya
stambhodbhavaya samsta doshan
hara hara visara visara
pacha pacha hana hana
kampaya kampaya
hrim hrim hrim hrim
phat phat tam tam
ehi rudra yajna pataye svaha*

Obeisances unto You Narasimha. You who killed the demon Hiranyakashipu, who was threatening the three worlds. You remove all impediments from devotional life like the various ghosts and witches You chase away. O Lord of sacrifice whose transcendental activities are invoked by the sacrifice of Your devotees, we sacrifice for You.

Sri Ahovalam Stotram
(chant it as you do *Sri Brahma-samhita*)

*lakshmi-kataksha-sarasi-ruha-rajahamsam
pakshindra-shaila-bhavanam bhava-nasham isham*

*gokshira-sara-ghana-sara-patira-varnam
vande kripa-nidhim ahobala-narasimham*

I offer my obeisances to that ocean of mercy, Ahobala Nrisimha. He is a great swan swimming amongst the lotuses of Lakshmi's furtive glances. He is the Supreme Lord, who puts an end to material imprisonment and who appeared from the stone of the Garuda pillar. His body has lines of colour: both a creamy colour and the colour of rain clouds.

*adyanta-shunyam ajam avyayam aprameyam
aditya-candra-shikhi-locanam adi-devam
abja-mukabja-mada-lolupa-matta-bhringam
vande kripa-nidhim ahobala-narasimham*

I offer my obeisances to that ocean of mercy, Ahobala Nrisimha. He has no beginning or end. He is unborn, everlasting, and immeasurable. He is the original God who gives brightness to the sun, moon, and to fire. He is like a honey bee intoxicated by his passionate desire for the lotus face of Lakshmi.

*kotira-koti-ghatitojjvala-kanti-kantam
keyura-hara-mani-kundala manditangam
cudagra-ranjita-sudhakara-purna-bimbam
vande kripa-nidhim ahobala-narasimham*

I offer my obeisances to that ocean of mercy, Ahobala Nrisimha. He looks splendid with his thick shiny mane tied back and with his body decorated with armlets, necklaces, and jewelled ear rings. His face is like the disc of the full moon, adorned with his crown.

*varaha-vamana-nrisimha-subhagyam isham
krida-vilola-hridayam vibhudendra-vandyam
hamsatmakam paramahamsa-mano-viharam
vande kripa-nidhim ahobala-narasimham*

I offer my obeisances to that ocean of mercy, Ahobala Nrisimha. He is the all-fortunate supreme Lord: Varaha, Vamana, and Nrisimha. His heart is frolicking with his own playful pastimes. The most intelligent persons pray to him, the Supreme soul, who fascinates the great sages.

*mandakini-janana-hetu-padaravindam
vrndarakalaya-vinodanam ujjvalangam
mandara-pushpa-tulasi-racitanghri-padmam
vande kripa-nidhim ahobala-narasimham*

I offer my obeisances to that ocean of mercy, Ahobala Nrisimha. His lotus feet are the source of the Ganges. His body is resplendent as he enjoys himself in his superexcellent abode, and his lotus feet are bedecked with Tulasi leaves and the flowers from the heavenly coral tree.

*tarunya-krishna-tulasi-dala-dhama-rabhyam
dhatri ramabhi ramanam mahaniya-rupam*

*mantradhi-raja-matha-danava-mana-bhangam
vande kripa-nidhim ahobala-narasimham*

I offer my obeisances to that ocean of mercy, Ahobala Nrisimha. His most favourite thing is fresh dark Tulasi leaves. He exhibits a magnificent form as he enjoys with his female assistants, the goddesses of fortune. He breaks the pride of the demons by destroying Ravana, that master of magic spells.



Upcoming: Gandaki River Trek!

This evening at 9:45 we board a train for Mathura where tomorrow we'll arrive at (hopefully) 4:30 PM. (See map of India; trace the distance from Mumbai to Agra, which is very close to Mathura.) We'll stay overnight at IBSA in Govardhana, leaving most of our luggage behind when the next morning we taxi into Delhi. At 7:30 PM on 2 May we take a train to Gorakhpur (see map of Nepal). From there we take a bus to Pokhara (see map of Nepal). From Pokhara we'll fly to Jomsom near the border of Tibet and take a trek up the Gandaki River to Muktinath.



The whole journey--which again, starts *this very evening*, 30 April--is likely to take more than two weeks. I cannot foresee what opportunities I'll have to upload entries to my e-journal. I will certainly *not* be bringing my laptop with me to Nepal! I suppose there are Internet access places in Pokhara, though I don't know for sure since the last time I was there was in 1987, before the World Wide Web existed.

In any case, there's no doubt that my In2-MeC journal entries will be largely interrupted beginning tomorrow until approximately 20 May.

But after that, Krsna willing, we'll feature a BIG JUICY PHOTO REPORT! Haribol!