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BACK TO GODHEAD

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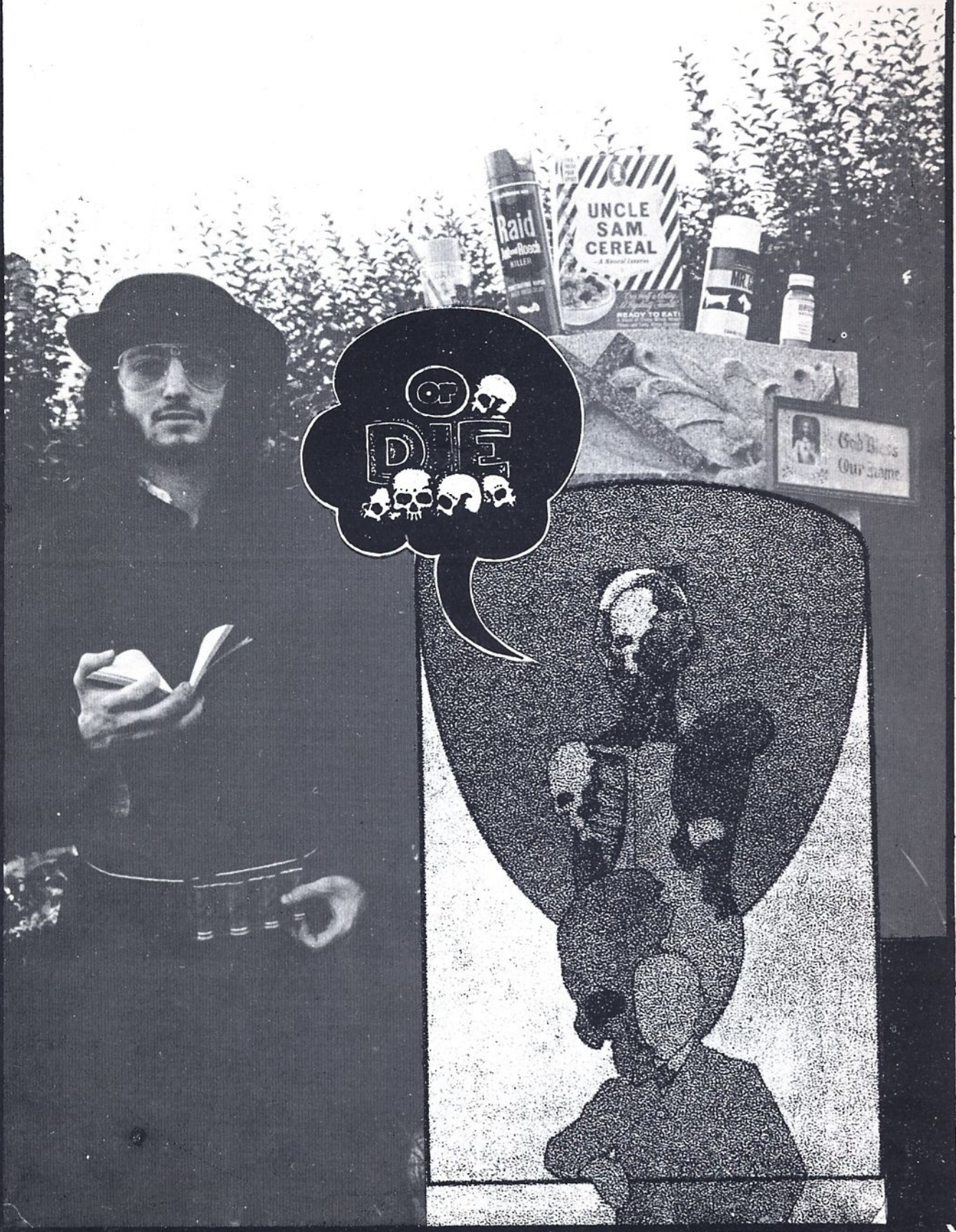
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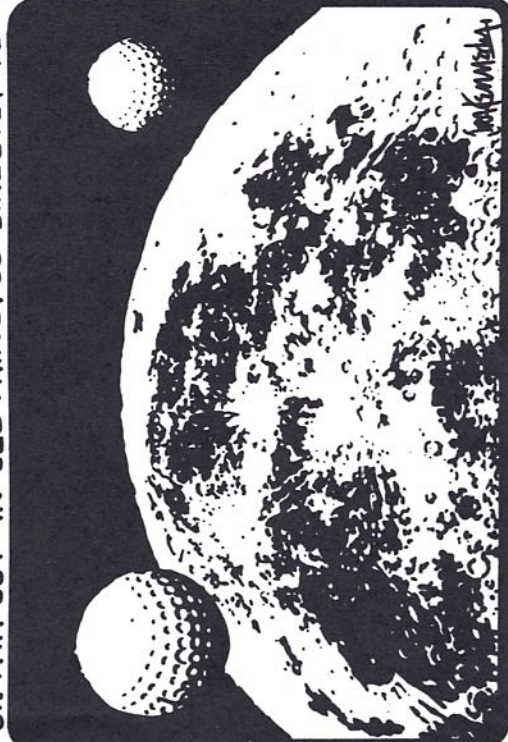
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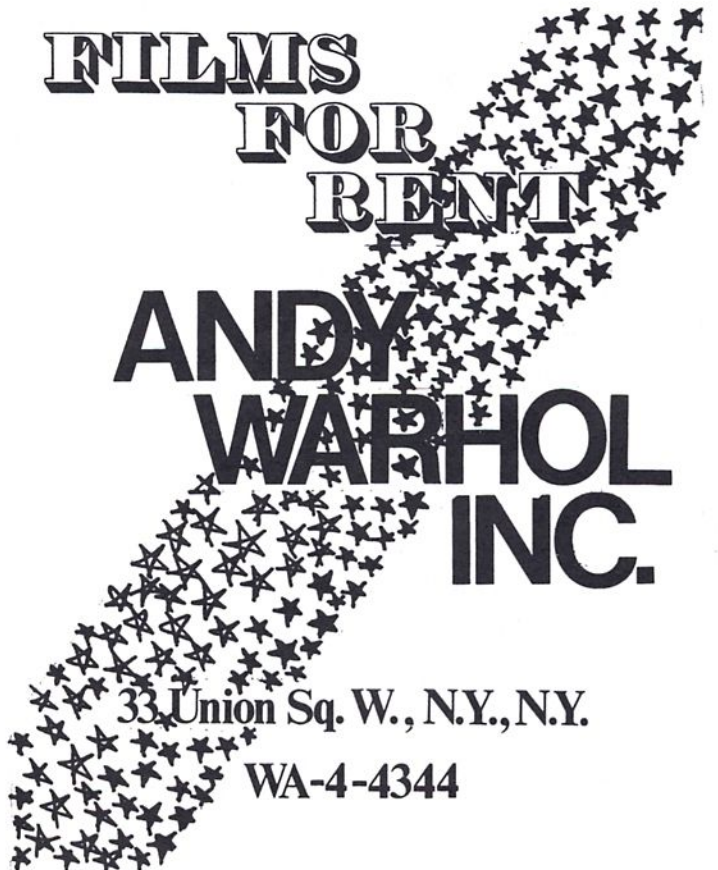
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Cover: Sri Vishnu Murti, one of the many forms of God described in the Upanishads. Painting by Jadurany Devi Dasi.

"The recommended process for God realization in this Age is chanting of the Hare Krishna Mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare."

—A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

BACK TO GODHEAD

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Editorial

The Poor Little Rich World

The United States is about to enter a stage of cultural and economic ascendancy so colossal that all the rest of the world (with a very few nations excepted) will soon stand as primitives in American eyes. Such is the conclusion drawn by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber in his celebrated book, "The American Challenge."

That "rest of the world," meanwhile, has also been talked about lately. On an American lecture tour, scientist-philosopher-writer C.P. Snow has made the grim prediction that an age of harsh famine is about to descend upon the less advanced nations—comprising most of the human race.

It is both unrealistic and trite to say at this point that the U.S. must be prepared to share its wealth if humanity is to be saved from darker times. (We say "darker" because this decade—in fact, this whole century—has hardly been bright by anyone's standards.) Nor is it true that a change in institutions, such as socialization, will make much difference. Recent events in Eastern Europe have demonstrated how powerful the sense of national existence is, in spite of 50 years of "world socialism" in Russia, and 20 years of the same in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.

What could save mankind from a bitter and barbarous future—in which America will be barbarized no less than her neighbors, in many ways aside from simple association—is a change in the world view of contemporary man. Western thinkers have recently returned from a 2,000 year idyll with the teachings of Jesus Christ, and have reverted to various systems of consciousness which—either pragmatically, as in the Church and the ecumenical movement, or overtly, as in scientific atheism—exclude God from the center of existence. But that no such system has produced a single formula for contentment is a readily observable truth.

There are sufficient resources in the world, if taken as a whole, to support the human community adequately. But what "adequate" means is to be questioned. And, as we go into 1969 with all our schemes for the relief of poverty and suffering, we may also ask what "rich" means, what "poor" means, what "happy" means, what "wretched" means...

The answers to these questions, if we obtain them, could decide the course of human history.

We at BACK TO GODHEAD have made it our policy to offer mankind these answers, as they are to be found in the Vedic scriptural literature of India, because we have discovered that that is where the answers lie. In the realization of the supremacy, the beauty and the loving kindness of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the fulfillment of the individual human life is to be had. We say this not because it is written somewhere. We could hardly speak reasonably to an analytical, skeptical generation in such terms. But we say it because it is entirely possible for each individual to achieve that realization, that direct, personal confrontation with the Lord, for himself. And we hold the Vedic texts as sacred because, in quite pragmatic terms, they work, they do lead the way to God realization—"Krishna Consciousness," as our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, has styled it.

The fulfillment of the individual means the fulfillment of the nation and race. This fulfillment can be economic as well as spiritual, as the Vedic writings do not neglect to state. We urge our readers to study these writings with no more than an open mind; we neither ask nor require a suspension of the reasoning faculty. "Sri Ishopanishad," presented in two parts beginning this issue, is an example of the sublime and exquisite wisdom of the ancient seers as it can be applied to the problems of our time. Such texts, if studied by the serious members of the human community today, can offer the way to a future for all men—for all life on this planet—which will be both bright and supremely rewarding. And, as Lord Chaitanya, the Apostle of Love of God, has said, "there is no other way."

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DRUGS AND ECSTASY



by Subaldas

Nature and scientific laboratories alike produce a vast supply of chemicals which are capable of altering man's consciousness. The average "straight" American adult consumes three to five of these mind-altering drugs in the course of each day, and they therefore play an important part in determining the structure of contemporary society. Some social groups, for example, function in coffee consciousness, others in beer consciousness, and still others in psychedelic consciousness.

Basically, contemporary society is divided into two. One group, comprised mainly of the middle-aged, uses such drugs as alcohol, cigarettes and tranquilizers, while the younger generation has more generally adopted marijuana, LSD, mescaline, and various other psychedelics. The older drug users generally prefer "depressants," drugs which tend to limit and decrease consciousness; and, according to their standard of morality, the use of such drugs is perfectly acceptable. Doctors, lawyers, clergymen, politicians, teachers—all the supposedly respectable leaders of society—set the example, and the masses follow along with them. Until recently, this social group seemed to be so firmly established, along with its social mores, that it represented the only "sane," "realistic" and "respectable" members in our modern civilization.

However, during the past few years a psychedelic revolution has been taking place. The world's youth has turned to a group of drugs which tend to expand consciousness rather than limit it, and which produce a stimulating rather than sedative effect. As may be expected, this new type of drug produces a whole new social outlook, which is directly challenging the established social order. The establishment, in turn, is fighting back in an effort to keep from being toppled over.

In a lecture before the American Psychological Symposium, one of the foremost spokesmen for the new drug movements, William S. Burroughs, said: "Alcohol is a sedative drug similar in action to barbiturates. Yet because of purely verbal associations we do not think of alcohol as being a drug because it is our national drug." This statement is supported by the fact that 93 million adult American citizens drink, and six million of them are confirmed alcoholics. The per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages in the U.S. today is approximately 24 gallons per year.

Establishment people are quick to point out the dangers, real or imagined, of drugs like LSD and marijuana, while at the same time ignoring the dangers of alcohol. Yet every year drinking takes a toll of 25 thousand lives on the American highway and causes a million injuries. What's more, the most common example of psychosis in connection with

drugs is not caused by LSD or marijuana, but is the permanent breakdown caused by excessive use of alcohol, which accounts for no fewer than 20% of the patients in U.S. mental hospitals. Furthermore, facts show that 50% of our prison population committed its crimes while drunk. Thus, while there is a direct connection between alcohol and crime, there is so far no evidence that psychedelic drugs have similar effects.

SMOKE FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

In 1604, James I, King of England, tagged smoking, "a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fumes thereof nearest resembling the horrible stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless." Today some 60 million Americans smoke millions of pounds of tobacco every year at a cost of about \$9 billion. Tobacco is taken primarily, of course, in the form of cigarettes (528 billion consumed each year), which are supplemented by pipe tobacco, cigars, snuff and chewing tobacco. In spite of an anti-smoking campaign in the U.S. in recent years—a result of quite conclusive evidence linking cigarette smoking to a variety of diseases—there has been little progress made in stopping the habit. This is largely due to the fact that all of \$232 million were spent on television advertisements alone last year, not to mention various other media, in order to promote smoking.

Caffeine is another very popular intoxicant. Americans consume coffee at the rate of seventeen pounds per year for every man, woman and child in the nation. This amounts to millions of pounds of pure caffeine. In addition, sedatives, stimulants and tranquilizers are used by about 20 million Americans, most of whom are members of the upper and middle classes, and most over thirty.

THE NATURE OF NARCOTIC DRUGS

In order to see this subject more clearly, we should consider anything which is more than the basic requirement for maintaining a healthy body to be a narcotic drug. Of course, this would

include baseball, television, chewing gum, and quite a good deal more that we tend to think of as harmless if not actually beneficial. But our radical definition of narcotics must be evaluated from the spiritual rather than the material point of view.

Generally speaking, Americans have been trained to think of "narcotic" as meaning "addictive." The dictionary definition, however, classifies as narcotic anything which, in small doses, causes relief or stimulation, but which in excess results in stupefaction, indolence, lethargy, coma or convulsions. Narcotic drugs are therefore necessarily associated with the abnormal and unhealthy condition of the body. They are used either to relieve pain, which is itself abnormal, or to create an abnormal state of consciousness in an otherwise healthy organism.

But the very meanings of such terms as "normal" and "healthy" must now come into question. For, according to the scriptural sources which offer the science of spiritual self realization to us, our true and original identity is that of pure spirit soul. It is the spiritual platform of awareness that is, therefore, the "normal" and "healthy" state for the living being. By the terms of such a transcendental definition of self, we who exist in the material world, under the material conception of life, are conditioned spirit souls, drugged by the body itself, and thus made to forget who we are. At some point we start identifying with the body and its desires, and thus we become more and more intoxicated by material Nature as we try satisfying the demands of the senses. So, quite factually, we are all drugged.

People of advanced intelligence ordinarily try regaining their original unconditioned consciousness, and, according to those who have succeeded, this is a state of unalloyed ecstasy, in which there is no need for any kind of intoxication. The great mystics, incarnations, sages and religious leaders throughout the ages have never used drugs in their spiritual undertakings, nor advocated their adherents taking them.

However, today's young have turned to such chemicals for spiritual awakening. They have grown up in a materially prosperous and secure society, which has been unable all the same to satisfy them. The young have looked upon the

pleasures of their parents' generation and its whole social structure as dry and empty, and have searched elsewhere for fulfillment. And they have discovered psychedelic drugs. Psychedelics (literally, "mind-manifesting") are not new. They have been known for centuries. Peyote and "magic" mushrooms were used by the American Indians since before the time of Columbus, and there is even mention of a beverage called soma in the ancient Vedic civilization of India, whose antiquity can hardly be calculated.

Both young and old are now, as they have been always, looking for pleasure. They are going about it in different ways, with varying means, varying outlooks, and varying results—but the basic principle of pleasure beyond the ordinary or "normal" confines of bodily material existence remains constant. What's more, this constant pleasure principle holds true not only for humanity. In Robert S. de Ropp's famous book, "Drugs and the Mind," he describes some experiments which have been conducted using rats with electrodes embedded in the pleasure and pain areas of the brain. This involves the use of an arrangement called a Skinner box, and Dr. James Olds has described the results of these experiments as follows:

Electrical stimulation in some of the regions of the hypothalamus actually appeared to be far more rewarding to the animals than an ordinary satisfier such as food. For example, hungry rats ran faster to reach an electric stimulator than they did to reach the food. Indeed, a hungry animal often ignored available food in favor of the pleasure of stimulating itself electrically. Some rats with electrodes in these places stimulated their brains more than 2,000 times per hour for 24 consecutive hours!

TRANSCENDENT ECSTASY

According to the great Vedic writings, human life is meant not simply to find mechanical ways of stimulating various areas of the brain (which is itself only an instrument of consciousness), but is meant for reaching the ultimate spiritual ecstasy, which is transcendental to all material conditions.

An example of such spiritual ecstasy and its transcendence over material

conditions is found in the life of the great saint, Haridas Thakur. Haridas was sentenced by the governor of his province to be whipped in all 24 streets of the town until dead. He was given this cruel punishment because he was himself a Moslem, but had taken up the practice of chanting the Holy Names of the Lord: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. Both the Moslem priests and the caste brahmins were jealous of him, and looked upon him as a renegade from his own sect. Two brutelike men were given the job of whipping him, and they beat him severely in all the ordained 24 streets.

Haridas, during all this, went on with his chanting, and experienced great ecstasy. He was completely oblivious to any physical suffering because his consciousness was fixed on the spiritual platform, which is far beyond the physical, and is unaffected by it. In the end, he went on to continue his work of chanting in devotional service, and the attempt to destroy him failed.

According to great saints such as Haridas Thakur, real pleasure is not to be found in the whole of this material creation. In comparison with spiritual bliss, all that we know here is suffering. Our situation is compared to that of a man stranded in the middle of the ocean, swimming very hard to keep from being dragged under by the big waves. He naturally thinks of how much he is suffering. Then, when the waves calm down and he doesn't have to struggle so hard, he may think he's enjoying. Actually, of course, this is not enjoyment. It is simply a less intense form of suffering, since he is still stranded in the middle of the ocean.

THE QUEST FOR ECSTASY

Many users of psychedelic drugs are, without question, sincerely looking for a way to get out of this ocean of material misery. They want to make a permanent solution to all their problems. And this, after all, is the primary occupation of the human being, as is declared in all the great scriptures of the world. Human life is not meant for working hard in factories, going to meaningless baseball games, or dumbly watching a television screen. It is meant for finding out such things as who you are, what the purpose of your life is, what God is, and what your relationship with God is. Human life begins to reach fulfillment only when

this stage of inquiry is attained. Few enough know what questions to ask in order to get the ultimate answers.

According to the Vedic sources, until a person starts looking for the answers which will make a final solution to all the problems of life—such as birth, death, disease and old age—he is actually no better than an animal. Man and the animals have four principles in common—eating, sleeping, mating and defending. The thing that is uniquely man's, however, and which differentiates him from the animals, is his highly developed consciousness. Before attaining the human form of life, the spirit soul passes through birth in eight million other species. As it progresses through the stages of evolution, its consciousness and intelligence grow. And, in the civilized human form of life the final stage of evolution is arrived at. This great achievement should surely not be wasted on mere animalistic sense enjoyment, but should be used for final and ecstatic spiritual realization.

The modern forms of Judaeo-Christian faith in the West have failed to satisfy youth's desire for direct communion with God. Therefore, many of the young have turned to drugs as the key to spiritual awareness. Most members of the psychedelic movement do consider it religious, and a number of groups have incorporated as churches. One thing is certain—the movement is large and ever-growing. There is no lack of people looking for pleasure through drugs and willing to experiment in their quest. Authorities estimate that over ten million Americans have used marijuana, peyote, and LSD. Most of these are in the high school and college age groups. According to United Nations statistics, in 1951 there were 200 million marijuana users throughout the world—a number equal to the entire population of the U.S.A. Yet marijuana has only really become popular in the 'Sixties, and what astronomical figures represent the 1969 usage can only at this point be guessed.

The great souls whose teachings form the basis of the world's authoritative religions have always maintained that the body is a source of pain and suffering. The Bhagavad Gita, one of the most important books on the science of ecstasy, describes the soul as Sat-chit-ananda, a form which is eternal, full of knowledge, and full of bliss. Somehow or other we in the material world have fallen into Maya, illusion, and are accepting some-

thing which is false in place of reality. The body is not the true identity of the living being, but we foolishly accept it as ourselves. Therefore, when the body is hungry we think we are hungry, and when the body is in pain we think we are in pain. This is the material concept of life. When we break with the false ego, the interknitting junction between spirit and matter, then we are liberated from the threefold miseries—miseries caused by the body and the mind, by other living entities, and by natural phenomena.

Drugs such as LSD may sometimes help to break this false identification with the body, but the chemically-induced state of "ego loss" does not last for very long. Such at least is the program for a "trip" outlined in "The Psychedelic Experience," a classic "manual based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead" by Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpert, three of the early leaders of the psychedelic movement. Furthermore, the process of ego loss does not necessarily lead one to positive knowledge of who or what he really is. Some therefore identify with the mind, which is the subtle material body, and others think they are God, while still others think that they are nothing—Void. Most cannot see beyond the interplay of cells, molecules, atoms, DNA, and the nervous system, because it is precisely the material senses, and not the spiritual, which are affected by drugs.

It is a popular theory in the psychedelic movement that everything is merely an extension of the body, mind, or nervous system. "It's all one" is the common phrase. Actually, this is true. Everything is one in the sense that everything emanates from one source, Krishna, and it is His energy which is acting in various ways, according to His direction. However, although everything is one, we find within this one infinite amounts of variegatedness and individuality. We are all individual spiritual living entities, scattered throughout the material creation. Constitutionally we are parts and parcels of Krishna, the Supreme Whole. We therefore have the same qualities as Krishna, but we possess them in very minute quantities, while He possesses them in full.

Now, complete bliss is one of Krishna's qualities. He is known as the Reservoir of all pleasure, and by establishing contact with Him through service the living entity can regain his own na-

tural state of bliss. This ecstasy is eternal. When achieved, there is no coming down again to the material platform of existence. Such a state of supreme consciousness is not available through artificial means. In The Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says that He can only be reached through devotion.

The recommended method for reviving this natural, forgotten attitude of devotion to Krishna is to chant His Names: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. This mantra, when properly chanted, immediately raises one to the spiritual platform, and puts the living entity in direct touch with the Supreme Lord. Krishna is a Person, but He is present everywhere. Just as there is fire potentially present in wood, so Krishna is suffused throughout His creation. We simply have to know how to find Him. It's really very simple. When we call His Name, He comes.

PSYCHEDELIC LEADERSHIP

On a successful LSD trip a person may think he has reached the Godhead. Sometimes, as is detailed in the Book of the Dead, a person will reach the "Clear Light," which is described in the Vedic texts as Krishna's glowing bodily effulgence, called the "Brahmajyoti." This effulgence permeates the whole spiritual sky, just as the sunshine permeates this whole universe. Realization—that is, direct perceptual experience—of the Clear Light is devoid of all variegatedness, however, and such a state of consciousness is therefore very unnatural for a living being who is eternally individual and who is accustomed to varieties for enjoyment. A person can remain in the Clear Light for short periods of time, but then he must come down again to the material platform in order to experience the varieties required for full enjoyment. In this sense, of course, the Clear Light itself becomes no more than a "variety," a change from ordinary consciousness. It is a "high," but not a final, unending or supreme state of ecstasy. The only way to remain permanently fixed on the spiritual plane is through realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Through this realization we can experience spiritual variegatedness, which is said to be far beyond any impersonal realization of the Godhead.

In order to achieve this topmost realization, it is necessary to have the guidance of a spiritual master who is a bona fide representative of Krishna. The psychedelic movement does not have such leaders qualified in the devotional line. Quite the contrary, these members of the psychedelic movement have, in the final analysis, practically nothing to offer mankind. They themselves have to continue taking drugs in order to feel any ecstasy. Their state of bliss is, after all, a temporary intoxication which one has to pay money for. How spiritual can it be? True spiritual ecstasy is both eternal and free to everyone.

Dr. Sidney Cohen, another major figure in the drug movement, has suggested that religious experience may one day be redefined as "a dyssynchrony of the reticular formation of the brain." This is the rather peculiar direction in which scientists are heading. They conduct experiments involving psychedelic drugs, and then they try fitting the results to suit their needs. Because a drug may allow someone to experience something different from "normal" consciousness, the scientists conclude that the experience is, in the first place, due entirely to the drug, and, in the second, that it is equivalent to the religious ecstasies of the mystics and saints.

In his book, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," William James took note of exactly this point when he wrote: "Medical materialism finishes up Saint Paul by calling his vision on the road to Damascus a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic." In this way scientists with an atheistic bias have tried to rule out the existence of a transcendent God Who exists beyond all material concepts, by holding the very evidence of direct confrontation with God to be no more than a chemical aberration within the body—in other words, an hallucination.

Even the argument against the validity of drug experiences can be questioned. As one thinker has pointed out, simply because we see something through a window doesn't mean the window caused the view. Similarly, psychedelic drugs may often open a window in the mind to let us see what is already there. However, it is only through Krishna's Grace that one can actually have full knowledge of what lies outside that window. And He may choose to reveal Himself or not, without reference to drugs or the laws

of Nature.

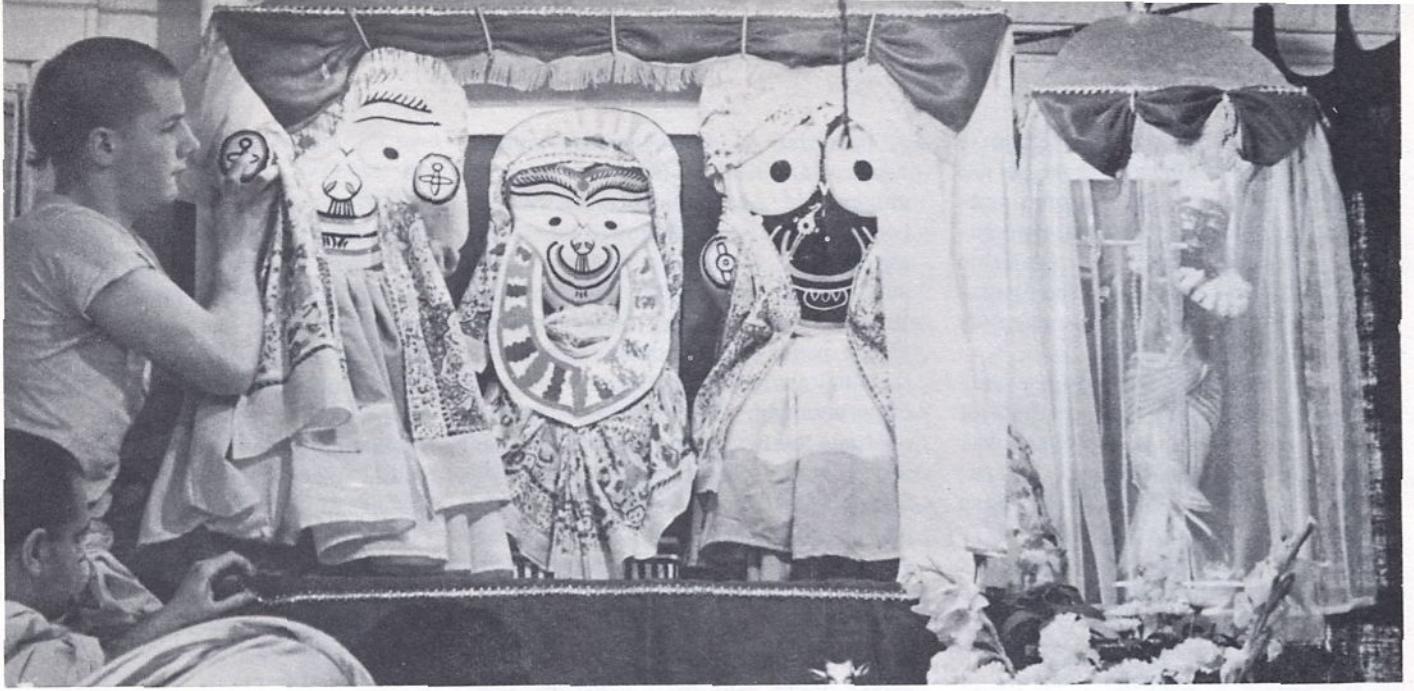
Timothy Leary, self-styled "high priest" of the psychedelic movement, has written: "a final comment about the disciplined yoga of psychedelic drugs. They are not shortcuts: they do not simplify. They answer no questions; they solve no problems." What value they can have, then, aside from the pleasure-giving potency present in such other narcotics as tobacco and alcohol, must come into question. On the other hand, the standard system of devotional service is the shortest and simplest method for reaching God. It does answer all questions and solve all problems.

ECSTASY AND THE LAW

Legislation will never be successful in stopping people from using drugs, because there is a basic human need for pleasure. The pleasure derived from drugs, quite apparently, is greater than most people's fear of the law. Whether people are running to or from reality is not important for the law to consider. The important thing is that people are looking for pleasure. Whether it be through beer, pot, coffee, LSD, baseball or television, the basic need is the same. To condemn one form of intoxication and not another is mere hypocrisy.

Millions of dollars are spent every year to induce people to drink liquor and smoke cigarettes, while millions are spent elsewhere to stop people from using psychedelics. Both pursuits could well be abandoned for the general benefit of mankind.

With the insight which transcendental devotional service to God provides, it is possible to create a far wiser and more effective system of law than now exists—one which could actually solve (imagine it!) the problems of our day. Such laws should be designed to curb the desire within the people for using drugs, rather than simply to repress and prohibit their actions. Instead of legislating negatively, there should be positive legislation to encourage the propagation of Krishna or God consciousness. Krishna Consciousness, devotional service, burns out the desire to use any kind of drug because it provides everyone with the natural and unbounded ecstasy of love of God. Everything and anything that falls short of this endeavor may be found lumped together in the teachings of the Vedas under a single heading: ignorance.



C E L E B R A T I O N S



In the picture above, a devotee helps to place Balarama, one of three Jagannath deities, in position above the altar in ISKCON's New York temple.

At left, Brahmananda, President of the New York temple, twines initiation beads around the neck of his new God brother-to-be.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, opposite page, sanctifies the japa beads of the new initiate.

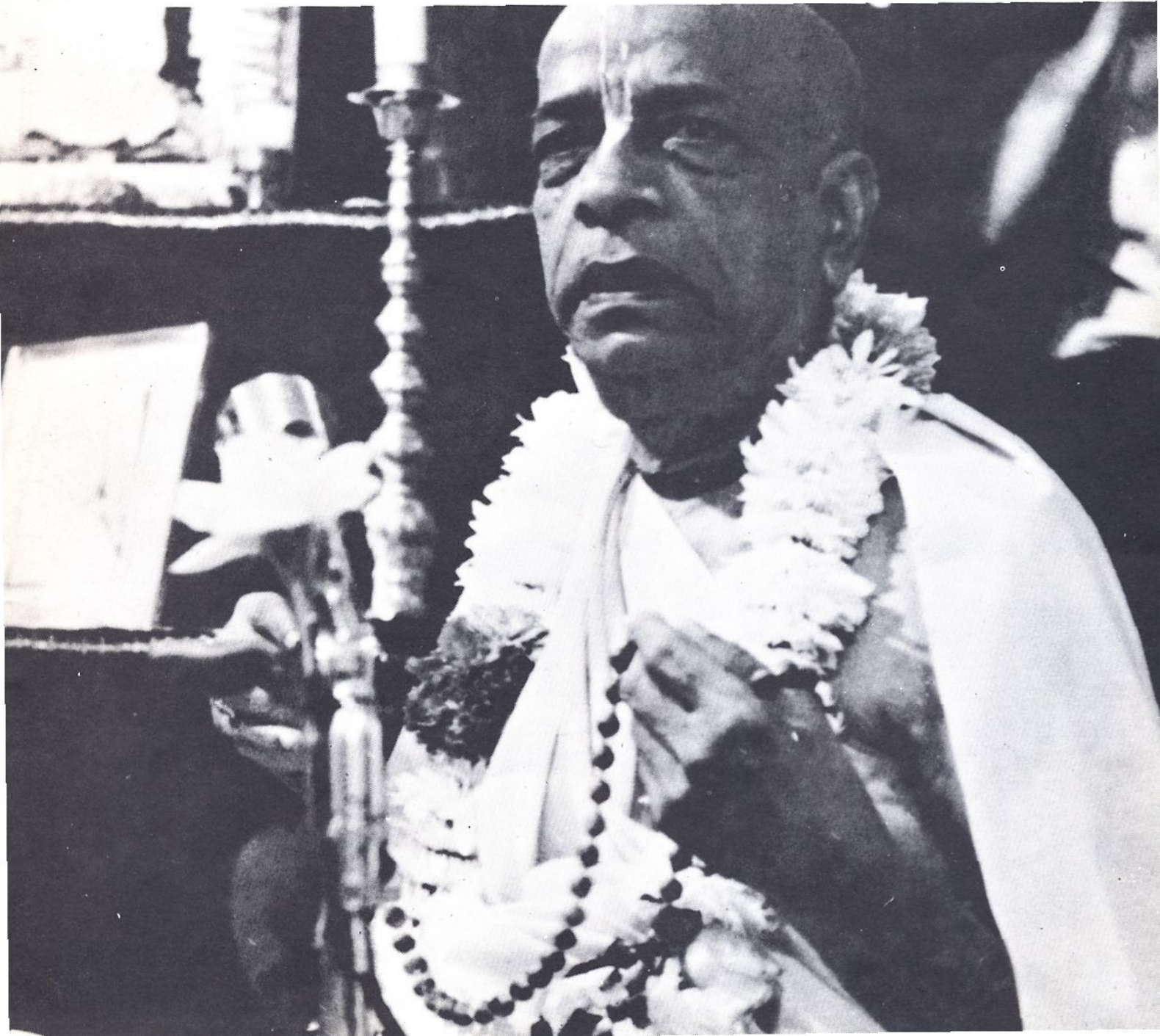
In the "Bhakti Rasamrita Sindu" (The Waves of the Nectar of Devotion), by the great saint Srila Rupa Goswami, there are listed 64 forms of "Upasana"—service and worship of the Lord. Of these 64, the following three are considered to be of the essence of spiritual life:

1. Submission to the Spiritual Master, or Guru,
2. Receiving initiation and training from him, and
3. Affectionately serving him.

In the study of God realization known as Krishna Consciousness, the most important celebration for a devotee to take part in is his own acceptance of initiation from the Spiritual Master. Initiation is the formalized ritual of entering into a new stage of existence. Even in our modern-day secular society the fundamental events of changing status—birth, marriage, and death—are celebrated by ritual which recognizes, at least formally, man's link with the

Supreme. Spiritual initiation, however, is not the same as our wedding or funeral ceremonies, which clearly indicate events related to the body. Surrendering at the feet of the Spiritual Master is a spiritual event. As His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Spiritual Master of the Hare Krishna Movement, once explained to a disciple: "We [Guru and students] are all eternal associates."

He added, further, that the Spiritual Master continues to teach in the material world until all his disciples have been delivered into the spiritual sky. For this reason, the Spiritual Master is cautioned by most authorities not to accept too many disciples. And, for the sake of the beloved Spiritual Master, it is incumbent upon the initiated disciple to remain fixed in transcendent Krishna Consciousness through performance of devotional service. In this way, a reciprocal relationship of spiritual love is established.





The initiation ceremony includes the following rites: First, water sacraments and sanctification of the initiate's japa (chanting) beads by the Spiritual Master. There are 108 beads, usually hand carved from the sacred Tulasi plant. They stand for the 108 Gopis, the Spiritual Maidens with whom Lord Krishna displayed His transcendental pastimes. After sanctification, the beads are returned and the initiate is informed of his spiritual name. Unlike material names, which refer to the body only, spiritual names refer to the true self, and are eternal. In general, they are names of Krishna, His Associates, or great saints. They are all appended with "Das" or "Devi Dasi" (the servant of), the former for boys and the latter for girls.

The initiate also receives a string of Tulasi neck beads, which is one of the marks of a Vaishnava, a devotee of the Lord, and which acts as protection against Yamaraj, the demigod of Death. These neck beads are never removed.

In addition to the usual deity offerings of sweet scents, flowers, incense, candles and eatables, an impressive fire sacrifice is kindled at such ceremonies, upon which ghee (clarified butter), grains (barley and sesame) and whole

bananas are sacrificed. Each initiate, as well as others taking part in the ceremony, throws handfuls of grain into the fire at the prescribed times. In the Vedic age, when wealth was measured in the number of cows and grains, tons of butter and grain were sacrificed to Lord Vishnu, and this was the recommended process for God realization. In Kali Yuga, the present age of quarrel and discord, when the earth is poor and men are not engaged in agrarian occupations, the recommended process is "Sankirtan," the chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord.

The fire sacrifice marks the climax of the initiation ceremony, and is followed by joyous singing and ecstatic dancing before the deities. Upon conclusion, Prasadam—food prepared and offered to the deities—is distributed, and feasting begins.

In addition to the initiation ceremonies depicted above, there are many other celebrations within the scope of Krishna Consciousness, the more frequent and elaborate being marriages and installations of the deities in their temples. Both of these also utilize the fire sacrifice.



Above, the Spiritual Master returns the sanctified beads to the new disciple: "Your name is Vamanadev."

At left, His Divine Grace performs the fire sacrifice.

Above, opposite page. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami bathes the Radha Krishna deities in milk before installation.

Below, opposite page. the garlanded Radha and Krishna, installed in the New York temple.

Deity worship, one of the most important aspects of devotional service, is probably the least understood by non-devotees and neophytes alike. Composed of apparently material elements, the deity may look like an idol to one with limited knowledge, but it is actually a Form of the Lord incarnate, called "Archa-Vigraha." The philosophy of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu teaches that God is simultaneously one and different from His creation. Krishna is in every atom, and He can assume various transcendental forms for our benefit, to make it easier for us to worship Him. In no way is the Lord ever subject to, or contaminated by, the laws of material Nature.

by Nayana Bhiram



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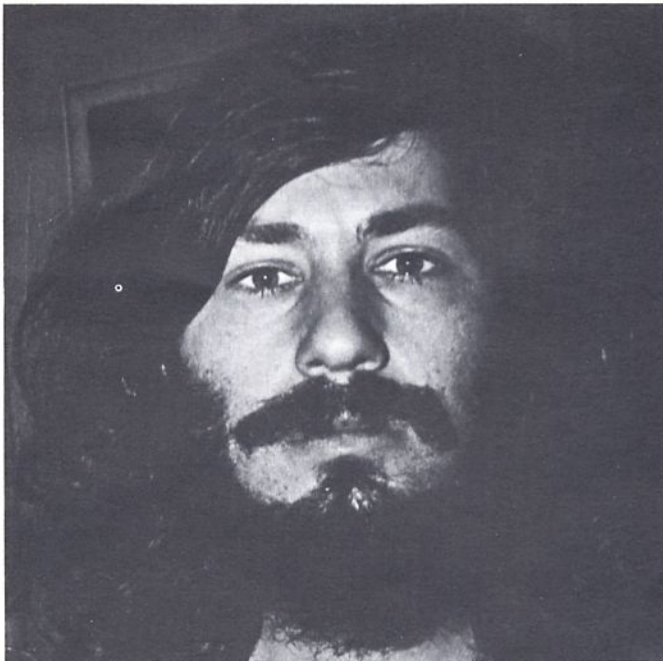
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Book Review

I AND THOU by Martin Buber, 137 pp., Scribner Library, \$1.25.

THE WAY OF MAN (According to the Teachings of Hasidism) by Martin Buber, 41. pp., Citadel Press, \$.95.

by **Nayana Bhiram**

One of the best-known Jewish thinkers of recent times is Martin Buber. Called a poet, mystic and existentialist, the late professor has written a number of appreciations of Hasidism, a mystical Jewish folk movement begun in 18th century Europe, and far more widely read is his treatise on the "philosophy of dialog," I AND THOU.

Before beginning the text of I AND THOU, the author cites the following line from Goethe: "So, waiting, I have won from you the end: God's presence in each element." The idea is supposedly not pantheistic, not that various items are gods, but that, according to Buber, "a divine spark lives in every thing and being, but each such spark is enclosed by an isolating shell." How to find that spark and confront God directly is the problem, and not a new problem to be sure. Tennyson expressed it when, having plucked a "flower from the cran-nied wall," he exclaimed in perplexity: "if I could understand what you are, root and all, and all in all, I should know what God and man is."

Buber says one can know God through personal relationship—with either Nature, other men, or "spiritual beings." Such a relationship is what Buber calls the "I and Thou" relationship. It is reciprocal, and therefore dialog.

The nature of reality is taken here to be twofold—or, rather, to be approachable in two distinct ways: The I-Thou relationship is meeting the world, supposedly as it is, with one's whole being. It is contrasted with the relationship called "I-It." The I-It relationship means taking the world as a tool for one's own aggrandizement. Such a relationship applies to the false world of things to be used and possessed—a world within which most of us live. In I-It consciousness, I am not, paradoxically, an "I" but an "it"—another thing to be used. On the other hand, as I relate to Thou, I become truly I.

Needless to say, the I-Thou relationship is the more desirable of the two. Yet, although in Buber's estimation it is a vehicle for love of God, at times I-Thou sounds more like an end. Nearly everyone wants to have a nice loving relationship with other living entities,

and to feel love of God. Unfortunately, however, such a state of consciousness is not possible under the material concept of life, where everything is based on either immediate or extended self-interest and sense-gratification.

Buber's method of exposition is not so clear and straightforward as he seems to believe it is. Speaking in the first person singular, at times the author assumes a pose of affected simplicity, like Khalil Gibran, in his "Prophet," and at other times an abstrusely philosophical one resembling Nietzsche's "Zarathushtra." This pseudo-poetical style of spirituality no doubt accounts for much of the volume's success. Most people think that mystical awareness means something misty and obscure—rather than clarity and light. And so, when an author speaks in vague spiritual

"GOD'S PRESENCE IN EACH ELEMENT"

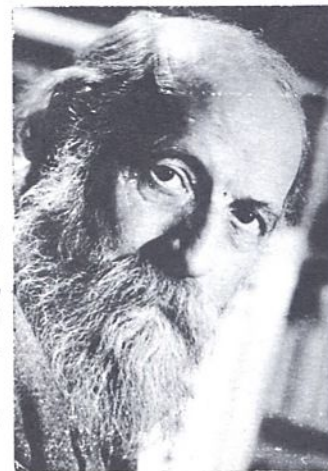
commonplaces and platitudes, it is to be expected that he may attract a number of followers. To pin down more precisely what Buber is advocating, however, we must turn to his less known posthumous volume, THE WAY OF MAN.

A brief but concise exposition of Buber's thoughts, THE WAY OF MAN is clearly a product of maturity as compared to his earlier I AND THOU. The author takes six Hasidic stories to illustrate the steps in attaining to "The Way"—the way to achieving God realization. This idea of The Way is, of course, borrowed from Taoism, to which Buber is indeed much indebted.

As far as the first step in God realization is concerned, Buber agrees with almost all spiritual authorities that it is to ask, Who am I? So long as a person does not venture onto this path of self-inquiry, he cannot hope to attain the perfection of life.

The second step is called here The Particular Way, and this means that each man has his own individual means of attaining the Absolute. Buber asserts that God says, "Whatever you do may be a way to me, provided you do it in such a manner that it leads you to me." (Exactly where this tautologous quotation of God's comes from is not explained.) "But what it is that can and shall be done by just this person and no other, can be revealed to him only in himself."

In other words, what Buber is advocating here is what is known as "doing your own thing"—a popular doctrine, no doubt, but it can be spiritual suicide for anyone who is serious about self realization. For according to The Bhagavad Gita, which is one of the most widely revered texts covering the science of God realization, no progress can be made without surrendering oneself to a bona fide spiritual master. And, as long as one is engaged in devotional service to the Supreme Lord through the transparent medium of the spiritual master,



Martin Buber

it doesn't matter what one's specific activity is. In this way, though the Vedic standard does permit everyone to act according to his individual nature, it requires that that action first be dovetailed into devotional service under the master's direction.

Thirdly, after advising one to do his own thing, Buber further advises the spiritual seeker to unify his soul, which is nothing less than to realize that soul means "the whole man, body and spirit together." Buber's lack of distinction here between body and soul is an error of serious significance, and can only be attributed to a poor fund of knowledge. Understanding that "I am not this body" is essential to the attainment of spiritual knowledge, and is the most elementary teaching of the Vedas: "Aham Brahmasmi"—I am Brahman, pure spirit soul.

In The Bhagavad Gita, Lord Sri Krishna explains the eternal nature of the soul to Arjuna, his pupil, in the following terms: "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." (II, 12) So, according to authoritative scriptural sources, we learn that our true position is that of eternal spirit soul, that we are coeval parts and parcels, and servants, of the Supreme Lord.

The fourth and fifth points of Buber's Way go together: making peace with oneself, and thus making peace with the

continued on page 30

The most ancient of India's famed Upanishads speaks with surprising relevance to the problems of technological man in this new and important translation. The author, one of the most distinguished teachers of Vedic religion and thought, has also translated such profound texts as *The Bhagavad Gita* (published this year by Macmillan) and the *Srimad Bhagwatam*. As founder and Guru of the Krishna Consciousness Movement in the West, he is able to add the practical insights of his experience among today's young spiritual seekers to an understanding of the eternal, sublime wisdom of the Vedas.

SRI ISHOPANISHAD



**Rendered into English by
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami**

Invocation

The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete. And because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as a complete whole. Whatever is produced of the complete whole is also complete by itself. And because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.

PURPORT

The Complete Whole, or the Supreme Absolute Truth, is the complete Personality of Godhead. Impersonal Brahman forms an incomplete realization of the Absolute Complete, and so also is the conception of Paramatman, the Supersoul. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Sat-chit-ananda Vighraha: impersonal Brahman realization is the realization of His Sat, or eternity aspect, and Paramatman, Supersoul realization, is the realization of His Sat and Chit, eternity and knowledge aspects. But realization of the Personality of Godhead is realization of all the transcendental features, Sat, Chit, and Ananda, or bliss. In the Personal concept, this is realized in complete form (Vighraha). And so the Complete Whole is not formless. If He is formless, or if He is less than His creation in any other thing, He cannot be complete. The Complete Whole must have everything, both within our experience and beyond our experience. Otherwise He cannot be complete.

The Complete Whole Personality of Godhead has immense potencies, and all of them are as complete as He is. Therefore this phenomenal or material world is also complete by itself. The twenty-four elements of which this material universe is a temporary manifestation are completely adjusted to produce complete things, necessary for the maintenance and subsistence of this universe. No extraneous effort by any other unit is required for this maintenance. The universe has its own time, fixed by the energy of the Complete Whole, and when that time is complete this temporary manifestation will be annihilated by the complete arrangement of the Complete.

There is complete facility for the small complete units, namely the living beings, to realize the Complete; and all forms of incompleteness are experienced only on account of incomplete knowledge of the Complete. The human form of life is a complete manifestation of the consciousness of the living being, which is obtained after evolving through 8,400,000 species of life in the cycle of birth and death. If a human being does not realize his completeness within the Complete in this life of full consciousness, he loses the chance of realizing his completeness, and is put again into the cycle of evolution by the law of material Nature.

Because we do not know that there is a complete arrangement in Nature for our maintenance, we make efforts to utilize the resources of Nature to create a so-called complete

life of sense-enjoyment. This misleading life of sense-enjoyment is called illusion, because the living entity cannot enjoy the life of the senses without being dovetailed with the Complete Whole. For example, the hand of a body is a complete unit so long as it is attached to the complete body. When the hand is detached from the body, it may appear like a hand, but actually it has none of the potency of a hand. Similarly, the living beings are parts and parcels of the Complete Whole; and as long as the parts and parcels are detached from the Complete Whole, the illusory representation of completeness is not enough to bring the desired result.

The completeness of human life can only be realized when the human form of life is engaged in the service of the Complete Whole. Any service in this world, whether social, political, communal, international, or even inter-planetary, will remain incomplete unless and until it is dovetailed with the Complete Whole. And, when everything is dovetailed with the Complete Whole, the attached parts and parcels also become complete in themselves.

Mantra One

Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to Whom they belong.

PURPORT

The Vedic knowledge is infallible because it comes down through the perfect disciplic succession of spiritual masters beginning with the Lord Himself. The Vedic knowledge is received from the transcendental sources, and the first word was spoken by the Lord Himself. The words spoken by the Lord are called "Apouresheya," not delivered by any person of the mundane world. A living being of the mundane world has four principal defects, which are: 1. that he must commit mistakes, 2. he must sometimes be illusioned, 3. he must try to cheat others, and 4. he is endowed with imperfect senses. With these four principles of imperfection one cannot deliver perfect information in the matter of all-pervading knowledge. The Vedas are not known like that. The Vedic knowledge was originally imparted into the heart of Brahma, the first created living being, and Brahma in his turn disseminated the knowledge to his sons and disciples, who have continued the process down through history.

The Lord being "Purnam," or all-perfect, there is no chance of His being subjected to the laws of material Nature, while the living entities and inanimate objects are all controlled by the laws of Nature, and thus, ultimately, by the potency of the Lord. This Ishopanishad is a part of the Yajur Veda, and as such it contains information as to the proprietorship of all things that exist within the universe.

This point is confirmed by The Bhagavad Gita, in the Seventh Chapter, where "Para" and "Apara Prakriti" are discussed: The elements of Nature—earth, fire, water, air, sky, mind, intelligence and ego—all belong to the inferior or material energy of the Lord, whereas the living being, the organic energy, is the superior energy, the "Para Prakriti," of the Lord. Both the Prakritis or energies are emanations from the Lord, and ultimately He is the Controller of everything that exists. There is nothing in the universe which does not belong either to the Para or the Apara Prakriti, and therefore everything is under the proprietary right of the Supreme Being.

The Supreme Being, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, being the complete Person, has the complete and perfect intelligence to adjust everything by His different potencies. The Supreme Being is often compared with fire, and everything—organic and inorganic—is compared with the heat and light of the fire. The fire distributes energy in the form of heat and light, and likewise the Lord displays His energy in different ways. And He remains the ultimate Controller, Sustainer and Dictator over everything. He is full of all potencies, the Knower of everything, the Benefactor of everyone, and is full of all inconceivable opulences: power, wealth, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation.

One should therefore be intelligent enough to know that except for the Lord no one is the proprietor of anything, but should instead accept the things which are set aside by the Lord as his quota. The cow, for example, gives milk, but she does not drink the milk. Her milk is designated as food for the human being. The cow eats grass and straw but does not drink her own milk. Such is the arrangement of the Lord, and we should be satisfied with the things that have been very kindly set aside for us by Him. We should always consider to Whom the things that we possess actually belong.

Take, for example, our dwelling house, which is made of earth, wood, stone, iron, cement, and so many other material things. If we think in terms of Sri Ishopanishad, then we must know that we cannot produce any of the above-mentioned building materials ourselves. We can simply bring them together and transform them into different shapes by our labor. A laborer cannot claim to be the proprietor of a thing just because he has worked hard to manufacture it.

There is always this great quarrel between the laborers and the capitalists in present-day society. The quarrel has now taken an international shape, and the world is in danger. Men face each other in enmity just like cats and dogs snarling. Sri Ishopanishad cannot give advice to the cats and dogs, but It delivers the message of Godhead to man through the bona fide Acharyas, or holy teachers. And the human race may take this Vedic wisdom from Sri Ishopanishad: that no one should quarrel over material possessions. One must be satisfied by whatever privileges are given to him by the mercy of the Lord. There can be no peace if the communist or the capitalist or any other party claims to be the proprietor of the resources of Nature, which are entirely the property of the Lord.

The capitalist cannot curb down the communist simply by political maneuvering, nor can the communist defeat the capitalist simply by fighting for the stolen bread. If they do

not recognize the proprietorship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then all the property which they claim to be their own is stolen, and therefore they shall be liable to punishment by the laws of Nature. The Bomb is in the hands of both the communists and the capitalists, and if both do not recognize the proprietorship of the Supreme Lord, it is sure and certain that, ultimately, The Bomb will ruin both parties. Therefore, in order to save themselves, both must follow the instruction of Sri Ishopanishad, and thus bring peace to the world.

Human beings are not meant for quarreling like cats and dogs. They must be intelligent enough to realize the importance of human life, and to realize the aim of human life. The Vedic literature is meant for humanity and not for cats and dogs. Cats and dogs can kill other animals for food and for that there is no question of sin on their part. But if a man kills an animal for the satisfaction of his uncontrolled taste buds, he is responsible for breaking the laws of Nature, and therefore he must be punished.

There is a standard of life for human beings which cannot apply to the animals. The tiger does not eat rice, wheat or cow's milk because it has been given its quota of foodstuff in the shape of animal food. There are many animals and birds who are either vegetarian or non-vegetarian, but none of them transgress the laws of Nature as they have been ordained by the will of the Lord. Amongst the living beings—whether animals or birds or reptiles—there is strict adherence to the laws of Nature, and therefore there is no question of sin for them, nor are the Vedic instructions meant for them. Human life alone, then, is a life of responsibility.

It is also wrong to consider that simply by becoming a vegetarian one can save himself from transgressing the laws of Nature. Vegetables also have life. One life is meant to feed another living being, and that is the law of Nature. One should not be proud of being a strict vegetarian. The point is to recognize the Supreme Lord. The animals have no developed consciousness to recognize the Lord, but a human being is sufficiently intelligent to take lessons from the Vedic literature, and thereby know how the laws of Nature are working, and derive profit out of such knowledge. If a man neglects the instruction of the Vedic literature, his life is very risky. The human being is therefore required to recognize the authority of the Supreme Lord. He must be a devotee of the Lord. He must offer everything to the service of the Lord and partake of only the remnants of foodstuff offered to the Lord. That will make him able to discharge his duty properly. In The Bhagavad Gita the Lord directly states that He accepts the vegetable foodstuffs from the hands of a pure devotee. Therefore a human being should not only become a strict vegetarian, but he should also be a devotee of the Lord, and offer to the Lord all his food, and only then partake of the "Prasadam," or mercy of God. Such a devotee can properly discharge the duty of human life. Those who do not do so are eating only sins, and thus will be subjected to the different types of distress which are the result of the various sins.

The root of sin is deliberate disobedience to the laws of Nature, through not recognizing the proprietorship of the Lord. Disobedience to the laws of Nature or disobedience

to the order of the Lord will bring ruin to the human being. On the other hand, if one is sober and knows the laws of Nature, without being influenced by unnecessary attachment or abhorrence, he is sure to be recognized again by the Lord, and thus become eligible for going back to Godhead, back to the eternal Home.

Mantra Two

One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on doing work in that way, because that sort of work will not bind him to the law of karma. And there is no alternative to this way for man.

PURPORT

No one wants to die, and everyone wants to live for as long as he can drag on. This temperament is not only visible individually, but also it is visible collectively in the community, society and nation. There is a hard struggle for life in every class of living entities, and the Veda says that this is quite natural for the living being. The living being is eternal by nature, but due to his bondage in the material existence he has to change his body from one to another. This process is called transmigration of the soul. This transmigration is also called "Karmabandhana," or being bound by one's own work. The living entity has to work for his livelihood because that is the law of material Nature, and if he does not act according to the prescribed duties of his particular life he transgresses the law of Nature, making himself bound more and more in the cycle of birth and death.

The cycle of birth and death is present in life other than the human form. When the living entity gets the chance for human life, however, it is his chance to get free from the chain of the law of karma. Karma, Akarma, and Vikarma are principles very clearly described in The Bhagavad Gita. Actions which are done in terms of the prescribed duties mentioned in the revealed Scriptures are called "karma." Actions which make one free from the cycle of birth and death are called "akarma." And actions which are performed by the misuse of one's freedom, thereby directing oneself toward the lower regions of life, are called "vikarma."

Of these three categories of activities, the one which makes one free from the cycle of further bondage to karma is preferred by intelligent men. Ordinary men want to perform good work in order to be recognized and to achieve some status of life in this world or in heaven, but more advanced men want to be free altogether from the actions and reactions of work. Intelligent men know well that both good and bad works are equally causes of the material miseries of life. They therefore seek to do work which will free them from the reactions of good and bad work. This freedom from good and bad work is ascertained herewith in Sri Ishopanishad.

The instruction of Sri Ishopanishad is better explained in The Bhagavad Gita, sometimes called The Geetopanishad,

the cream of all the Upanishads. In The Bhagavad Gita, the Personality of Godhead says that no one can attain the state of "Naiskarma" or akarma without beginning the prescribed duties mentioned in the Vedic literature. The Vedic literature can regulate the working energy of the human being in such a way that one can gradually realize the authority of the Supreme Being. When one realizes the authority of the Personality of Godhead, it is to be understood that he has attained the stage of positive knowledge. At this purified stage of life, where the modes of Nature—namely goodness, passion and ignorance—cannot act, one is enabled to work on the basis of Naiskarma, or work which does not bind one to the cycle of birth and death.

Factually, no one has to do anything more than to render devotional service to the Lord. In the lower stage of life, however, one can not at once adopt the activities of devotional service, nor can one completely stop reactionary work. A conditioned soul is accustomed to working for sense gratification, for his own selfish interest, immediate or extended. An ordinary man wants to work for his own sense enjoyment, and when the principle of sense enjoyment is extended from the individual to include the collective 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 Karmabandhana, the bondage of one's own work, but the Vedic instruction of Sri Ishopanishad is that, if you actually live for any of the above isms, make them God-centered. There is no harm in becoming a family man, an altruist, socialist, communist, nationalist, or humanitarian—provided all such activities are executed in relation with "Ishavasya," the God-centered conception.

God-centered activities are evaluated in The Bhagavad Gita as being so rich that even a little bit of them can save one from the greatest danger. The greatest danger of life is to glide down again into the evolutionary cycle of birth and death. If some way or other a man misses the spiritual opportunity offered by his human form of life, and thus glides down again into the evolutionary cycle, it must be considered the most regrettable incidence, although foolish man cannot see this, due to his defective senses. Sri Ishopanishad advises us, therefore, to exert our energy in the Ishavasya spirit, and in that engagement we may wish to live for many, many years. Otherwise, one's long life is no better than that of a tree, which is also a living being, and which lives for hundreds and hundreds of years. There is no point in living a long time like the trees, or breathing like the bellows, or begetting children like the hog and the dog, or eating like the camel. Even a humble life, with God-centered activities, is more valuable than the colossal hoax of so-called altruism or socialism without any relation to God.

When activities such as altruism are executed in the spirit of Sri Ishopanishad, every one of them becomes a form of Karma Yoga, as is recommended in The Bhagavad Gita. And that guarantees the executor against the dangers of the evolutionary process of birth and death. Such God-centered activities, even though half-finished, are still good for the executor, because they will guarantee him the human form of life in his next birth. In this way he can have another chance to improve his position on the path of liberation.

Mantra Three

The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.

PURPORT

A human life is distinguished from animal life on account of its heavy responsibilities. Those who are cognizant of these responsibilities and work in that spirit are called "suras," the godly. And those who are either neglectful of the responsibilities or who have no information about them, are called the "asuras," or demons. There are only these two kinds of human beings all over the universe. In the Rig Veda it is stated that the suras always aim at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord Vishnu, and act accordingly. Their ways are as illuminated as the path of the Sun.

Intelligent human beings must always remember that this particular form of body is obtained after an evolution of many millions of years of transmigration of the soul. This material world is sometimes compared with an ocean, and this human body is compared with a solid boat, designed to cross over the ocean. The Vedic Scriptures and the Acharyas, or saintly teachers, are compared with the expert boatman, and the facilities of a human body are compared with favorable breezes, which can help the boat smoothly ply to the desired destination. If, with all these facilities, a person does not fully utilize his human life for self-realization, such an asura must be considered "Atmaha," a killer of the soul. The killer of the soul is destined to enter into the darkest region of ignorance to suffer perpetually, and here is a warning by Sri Ishopanishad in clear terms.

There are swine, dogs, camels, asses, etc., whose economic necessities are just as important as ours. But the economic problems of these animals are solved under nasty conditions, while the human being is given all facilities for comfortable life by the laws of Nature, because the human form of life is more important than animal life. And why is man given a better life than the swine and other animals? Why is a highly placed servant given all the facilities of comfortable life, rather than an ordinary clerk? The answer is that the highly placed officer has to discharge duties of a higher nature. Similarly, the human being has higher duties in life than the animals who are engaged always in the business of feeding their hungry stomachs.

The modern soul-killing civilization has only increased the problems of a hungry stomach. We approach some polished animal, a modern civilized man, and he says that he wants to work for the satisfaction of the stomach and there is no necessity for self-realization. But the laws of Nature are so cruel that in spite of his eagerness to work hard for his stomach, there is always the question of unemployment, even after denouncing the prospect of self-realization.

We are given this human form of life not to work hard like the ass, the swine and the dog, but to attain the highest perfection of life. If we do not care for self-realization, it

is by the law of Nature that we have to work very hard even though we do not want to do so. In this age the human being has been forced to work hard like the ass and the bull, pulling carts. These are some of the examples of the regions where an asura is sent to work, revealed by this verse of Sri Ishopanishad. If a man fails to discharge his duties as a human being, he is forced to transmigrate to the planets called "Asurya" in the degraded species of life, to work hard in ignorance and darkness.

In The Bhagavad Gita it is also stated that the half-self-realized men who in their previous lives could not complete the process of approaching Godhead but had sincerely tried for it—in other words, those who failed to attain success in realizing their relation with God—are given the chance of appearing in the family of "Suchi" or "Srimata." Suchi means a spiritually advanced Brahmin, and srimata means a Vaishya, or member of the mercantile community. This means that such fallen candidates are given a better chance for culturing self-realization on account of their sincere efforts in past lives. If the fallen candidates are given the chance of taking birth in respectable noble families, we can hardly imagine the state of those who have completely achieved success in the attempt.

Simply to make an attempt for realizing God is to guarantee that the next birth will be in a noble family. But those who do not make any such attempt at all, and who want to be covered by illusion, too materialistic and attached to material enjoyment, must enter into the darkest region of hell, which is confirmed in all the Vedic literature.

Such materialistic asuras sometimes make a show of religiousness with the ultimate aim of material prosperity. The Bhagavad Gita, however, rebukes them as men called great on the strength of false perfection, empowered by the votes of the ignorant and by material wealth. Such asuras, devoid of self-realization and the conception of Ishavasya, the Lord, are sure to enter into the darkest regions.

The conclusion is that we are not meant only for solving economic problems on a tottering platform, but we are also meant for solving the problems of the material life into which we have been placed by the conditions of Nature.

Mantra Four

The Personality of Godhead, although fixed in His Abode, is more swift than the mind, and can overcome all others running. The powerful demigods cannot approach Him. Although in one place, He has control over those who supply the air and rain. He surpasses all in excellence.

PURPORT

The Supreme Lord, Who is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, is not knowable even to the greatest philosopher through mental speculation. He can be known only by His

devotees through His mercy. In The Brahma Samhita it is said that the non-devotee philosopher who can travel at the speed of the mind, or at the velocity of the air, and who can travel in space for hundreds of years, will find the Absolute still far, far away from Him. As described in the Upanishads, the Absolute Personality of Godhead has His transcendental Abode, known as Krishna Loka, where He remains, engaged in His Pastimes. But by His inconceivable potency He can simultaneously reach every part of the creative energy. In The Vishnu Purana this potency is compared with the light and heat of the fire. The fire can distribute its light and heat from one place, and similarly the Absolute Personality of Godhead, although fixed up in His transcendental Abode, can diffuse His different energies everywhere.

Such energies are innumerable, but principally they are classified into three: the internal potency, the marginal potency, and the external potency. In each and every one of them, there are hundreds and millions of sub-headings. The dominating demigods who are empowered to have control over the administration of natural phenomena such as the air, light, rain, etc. are all classified within the marginal potency of the Absolute Person. The living beings, including humans, are also products of the marginal potency of the Lord. The material world is the creation of the external potency of the Lord, and the spiritual sky, where the Kingdom of God is situated, is the manifestation of His internal potency.

The different energies of the Supreme Lord are represented everywhere by His different potencies. Although there is no difference between Him and His energies, still one should not mistake the energy for the Supreme Truth. The Supreme Lord expands Himself by His different energies, but one should not wrongly conclude that the Supreme Lord, being thus distributed everywhere, has His Personal existence solely in the impersonal Brahman. Men are accustomed to reach conclusions only according to their own capacity to understand. But the Supreme Lord is not subject to our limited capacity to understand Him. It is for this reason that the Upanishads warn us that no one can approach the Lord by his own limited potency.

In The Bhagavad Gita, the Lord says that no one, not even the great rishis and suras, can know Him. So what is there to say of the asuras, who are not even qualified to understand the ways of the Lord? All these words mentioned in Mantra Four of Sri Ishopanishad suggest very clearly that the Absolute Truth is ultimately the Absolute Person; otherwise there would have been no necessity of mentioning so many varied things in support of His personal features.

Individual parts and parcels of the potencies of the Lord, although having all the symptoms of the Lord Himself, have limited spheres of activities, and therefore are all limited. The parts and parcels are never equal to the whole. Therefore the parts and parcels cannot appreciate the full potency of the Lord. Foolish and ignorant living beings who are parts and parcels of the Lord, under the influence of the material energy, try to make a conjecture on the transcendental position of the Lord. Sri Ishopanishad warns them not to make any mental speculation about the identity of the Lord. Try to know the Transcendence from the superior source of

the Vedas, which is already in knowledge of the Transcendence.

Every part of the Complete Whole is endowed with some particular energy to act, and forgetfulness by that part of his particular activities is called Maya, Illusion. Sri Ishopanishad has therefore, from the very beginning, warned us that we should be careful to play the part designated for us by the Lord. This, however, does not mean that the individual soul has no initiative of his own. Because he is the part and parcel of the Lord he must have the initiative of the Lord as well. Proper use of one's initiative, active nature, with intelligence to understand that everything is but the potency of the Lord, can lead one to the revival of his original consciousness, which was lost on account of association with Maya, the external energy.

All power is obtained from the Lord, and therefore each particular power must be utilized to execute the will of the Lord, and not otherwise. The Lord can be known by one who has adopted a submissive attitude. Perfect knowledge means to know the Lord in all His features, to know about His potencies and how such potencies are working by His will. These things are exclusively described by the Lord in The Bhagavad Gita, which is the essence of all the Upanishads.

Mantra Five

The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk. He is far away, but He is very near as well. He is within everything, and again He is outside of everything.

PURPORT

Here is an explanation of the Supreme Lord's transcendental activities by His inconceivable potencies. There are two sets of contradictory words mentioned herein to prove the inconceivable potency of the Lord. He walks, and He does not walk. These two phrases are contradictory. If someone can walk then it is improper to say that he cannot walk. These contradictions show the inconceivable power of God. With our limited fund of knowledge we cannot accommodate such things, and therefore the Lord is conceived in terms of our limited powers of understanding. The impersonalist philosophers of the "Mayavada" school accept only the impersonalist part of the Lord's activities, and refute His Personal feature. The Bhagawat school, however, accepts the Lord in both ways, i.e., as Personal and impersonal. And the Bhagawats also accept His inconceivable potencies. Without inconceivable potency there is no meaning to the words "Supreme Lord."

We should not take it for granted that, because we cannot see God before our eyes, there is therefore no personal existence of the Lord. To refute this sort of argument, Sri Ishopanishad warns us that the Lord is far away from us, but He is very near to us also. The Abode of the Lord is beyond the material sky. We have no means to measure even the material sky. If just the material sky is so far,

far away from us, then what of the spiritual sky, which is beyond the material sky altogether? That the spiritual sky is situated far, far away from the material world is further confirmed in The Bhagavad Gita. But, in spite of the Lord's being so far away, He can at once, within less than a second, descend before us with a speed more powerful than the mind or the air. He can walk so quickly that no one can surpass Him. This fact has already been described in the previous verse.

When the Personality of Godhead thus comes before us, however, we neglect Him. This negligence on the part of the foolish people is condemned by the Lord in The Bhagavad Gita. The Lord says that the foolish deride Him, taking Him to be one of the mortal beings. But He is not a mortal being, nor does He come before us with a body produced of material Nature. There are many so-called scholars who say that when the Lord descends, He does so in a body of matter, just like an ordinary living being. Such foolish men place the Lord on a level equal to that of the ordinary man, not knowing His inconceivable power.

Because He is full of inconceivable potencies, God can accept our service through any sort of medium, and He can convert His different potencies according to His own will. The unbelievers argue that the Lord cannot incarnate Himself, or if at all, He descends in a form of material energy. This argument is nullified if we accept His inconceivable potencies as realities. Even if He appears before us in the form of some material energy, it is quite possible for Him to convert the material energy into spiritual energy. The source of the energies being one and the same, the energies can be utilized suitably according to the will of that energetic Source. For example, the Lord appears in the Form of Archa, or Deities supposedly made of earth or stone. These forms, engraved from wood or stone or any other matter, are not idols, however, as is held by the iconoclasts.

In the present state of our imperfect material existence we cannot see the Supreme Lord on account of our imperfect vision. But still, those devotees who want to see Him by means of material vision are favored by the Lord, Who appears in so-called material form to accept the devotees' service. This does not mean that such devotees, who are in the lowest stage of devotional service, are worshipping an idol. In fact, they are worshipping the Lord, Who has agreed to appear before them in a particular way which is approachable by them. This Archa Form is not fashioned in terms of the order or whim of the worshipper. It is eternally existent with all Its paraphernalia. This can be actually felt by a sincere devotee, but not by an atheist.

In The Bhagavad Gita the Lord says that He treats His devotee in proportion to the degree of surrender made by the devotee. He reserves the right not to expose Himself to anyone and everyone, except those who surrender unto Him. Therefore, for the surrendered soul, He is always within reach, whereas for the non-surrendered soul, He is far, far away, and cannot be approached.

There are two words in the revealed Scriptures which are important in this connection: Saguna and Nirgun—with qualities and without qualities. Saguna does not mean that the Lord becomes subjected to the laws of material Nature when He appears, although He has qualities and appears in

the material form. For Him there is no difference between material and spiritual energies, because He is the Source of such energies. He is the Controller of the different energies, and as such He cannot at any time be under their influence, as we are. The material energy works according to His direction, and therefore He can use the material energy for His purpose, but without ever being influenced by any of the qualities of His energies. Nor for this purpose does He become a formless entity at any time. Ultimately He is the eternal Form, the Primeval Lord. And the impersonal representation, or Brahman effulgence, is the glow of His Personal rays, as the Sun's rays are the glow of the Sun god.

When the boy saint Prahlad Maharaj was in the presence of his atheist father, his father asked him, "Where is your God?" The child Prahlad replied that God resides everywhere. The father then angrily asked whether his God was within the pillar of the palace, and the child said yes. At once the atheist king broke the pillar in front of him into pieces, at which the Lord appeared as Nrishingha (the half-man, half-lion Incarnation) from within the pillar, and killed the atheist king. This means that the Lord is within everything, which is created by His different energies. And by His inconceivable power He can appear at any place in order to favor His sincere devotee. Lord Nrishingha appeared from within the pillar not at the order of the atheist king, but by the wish of the devotee Prahlad. An atheist cannot order the Lord to appear, but to show mercy to His devotee the Lord can appear anywhere and everywhere.

The Bhagavad Gita confirms this, in the statement that the Lord appears to vanquish the unbelievers and to protect the believers. To vanquish an unbeliever, of course, the Lord has sufficient energies and agents who can do the work, but to favor the devotee is a pleasing task for Him, and therefore He descends as an incarnation. He does so only to favor His devotees, then, and not for any other purpose.

In the Brahma Samhita it is said that Govinda, the Primeval Lord, enters everything by His plenary portion. He enters the universe as well as the atom of the universe. He is outside in the Virata Form, and He is within as "Antaryami." As Antaryami He is witness of everything that we are doing, and He gives us the result of our actions as Karma Phal. We ourselves may forget what we have done in previous lives, but because the Lord is the witness of our actions, the result of our actions is always there, and we have to undergo the reactions all the same.

In fact there is nothing except God within and without. Everything is manifested of His different energies, like the heat and light of fire, which means there is a oneness among the diverse energies. In spite of this oneness, however, the Lord enjoys in His Personal Form all that is enjoyable to the little senses of the little part and parcel living entities.

Mantra Six

A person who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord, and sees all entities as His parts and parcels,

and who sees the Supreme Lord within everything, never hates anything, nor any being.

PURPORT

Here is an explanation of the "Maha Bhagwat," the great personality who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are three stages of realizing the presence of the Supreme Lord: The "Kanistha Adhikary," the person who is in the lowest stage of realization of the Lord, goes to one place of worship, such as a temple, church, or mosque, in terms of his particular type of religious faith, and worships there in terms of the scriptural injunctions. Such devotees think that the Lord is there at the place of worship and nowhere else. Such devotees cannot recognize who is in what position in the devotional line, or in terms of realization of the Supreme Lord. They follow the routine formulas and sometimes quarrel among themselves, estimating one particular type of worship better than another. These Kanistha Adhikarys, in the lowest stage of devotion, are called materialistic devotees, or those just trying to transcend the material boundary to reach the spiritual plane.

Next above these Kanistha Adhikarys are the "Madhyam Adhikarys," the devotees who are in the intermediate stage of devotional service. These Madhyam Adhikarys observe four principles in relation to the Supreme Lord, which are as follows:

1. They see, first of all, the Supreme Lord;
2. They see next the devotees of the Lord;
3. They see also the innocent, who have no knowledge about God; and at last,
4. They see the atheists who have no faith in the Lord, and who hate those in the devotional line.

The Madhyam Adhikary devotee behaves differently toward the different above-mentioned four principles. He adores the Lord, considering Him the object of love, and he makes friendship with those who are in the devotional line. He tries to awaken the dormant love of Godhead in the hearts of the innocent people, but he does not approach the atheists who deride at the very Name of the Lord.

Above the Madhyam Adhikary there is the "Uttam Adhikary" devotee, who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord. He does not make any particular discrimination between the atheist and the theist, but sees in every one of them the part and parcel of God. He knows that there is no difference between a vastly learned Brahmin and a dog in the street, because both of them are of the Lord, though in different embodiments due to the different qualities of material action. The Brahmin particle of the Supreme Lord has not misused the little independence given him by the Lord, but the dog particle has misused his independence, and thus he has been punished by the law of Nature, being encaged in the ignorant form of a dog. Without considering the respective actions of the Brahmin and the dog, the Uttam Adhikary tries to do good to both. Such a learned devotee of the Lord is not misled by the material bodies of the Brahmin and the dog, but he is attracted by the spiritual spark within the respective entities.

Those who imitate an Uttam Adhikary in terms of the sense of oneness or fellowship, but who behave in terms of bodily relationships, are false philanthropists. Therefore the concept of universal brotherhood must be learnt from the Uttam Adhikary devotee of the Lord, and not from a foolish person who has no proper vision of the individual soul and of the Supersoul—the plenary expansion of the Supreme Lord, which dwells everywhere.

In this Mantra of Sri Ishopanishad it is clearly mentioned that one should "observe," or see. This means one must follow the previous Acharya, the perfected Teacher. "Anu-pasyati" is the exact Sanskrit word used in this connection. "Anu" means to observe. One should not try to see things as he does with the naked eye. The naked eye cannot see anything properly, due to its material defectiveness. One cannot see properly unless one has heard from a superior source. And the highest source is the Vedic wisdom spoken by the Lord Himself. This truth is coming in disciplic succession from the Lord to Brahma, from Brahma to Narada, from Narada to Vyasa, and from Vyasa to many of His disciples. Formerly there was no necessity of recording the message of the Vedas, because people of earlier ages were more intelligent and had sharper memories, and they could follow instructions simply by hearing once from the mouth of a bona fide spiritual master.

At present there are many commentaries on the revealed Scriptures, but most of them are not in the line of Srila Vyasadeva, who originally taught the Vedic wisdom. The final, most perfect and sublime work of Srila Vyasadeva is The Srimad Bhagwatam, which is the correct commentary on the Vedanta Sutra. Similarly, there is The Bhagavad Gita, which is spoken by the Lord Himself and which was recorded by Vyasadeva. These are the more important of the many revealed Scriptures, and any commentary which does not conform to the principles of The Gita or The Srimad Bhagwatam is unauthorized. There is complete symmetrical agreement between the Upanishads, Vedanta, the Vedas, The Bhagavad Gita and The Srimad Bhagwatam. Therefore, no one should try to reach any conclusion about the Vedas without being instructed by members of the line of Vyasadeva, or at least those who believe in the Personality of Godhead and His diverse energies.

Only one who is already in the liberated status, according to The Bhagavad Gita, can become an Uttam Adhikary devotee, and can see everyone or every living being as his own brother. This cannot be seen by politicians who are always after some material gain. Imitation of this liberated status is to serve the outward body (for fame, or some such reward) but is not service to the spirit soul. Such imitators have no information of the spiritual world. The Uttam Adhikary sees the spirit soul of an entity, and serves him as spirit, which includes matter automatically.

Mantra Seven

One who always sees all living entities as spiritual sparks, in quality one with the Lord, becomes a true knower of

things. What is there as illusion or anxiety for him?

PURPORT

Except for the two more advanced devotees described above, no one can correctly see the spiritual position of a living being. The living entities are qualitatively one with the Supreme Lord, as the sparks of the fire are qualitatively one with the nature of the fire. But sparks are not fire as far as quantity is concerned. The quantity of heat and light present in the fire is not equal to the quantity of heat and light in the sparks. The Maha Bhagwat, the great devotee, sees oneness in the sense that everything is the energy of the Supreme Lord. And as there is no difference between the energy and the energetic, there is the sense of oneness. Without heat and light there is no meaning of fire, and yet heat and light from the analytical point of view are different from fire. But in synthesis, heat, light, and fire are all the same one thing.

The Sanskrit words found here, "Ekatvam anupasyata," mean to see the unity of the living entities from the viewpoint of the revealed Scriptures. Every individual spark of the Supreme Whole has almost eighty per cent of the known qualities of the Whole, but they are not as good as the Supreme Lord. These qualities are present in minute quantity, as the living entity is but a minute part and parcel of the Supreme Whole. This is like the drop of water and the ocean: The quantity of salt present in the drop is never comparable to the quantity of salt present in the complete ocean. But the quality of the salt present in the drop is equal in quality, in chemical composition, with that present in the ocean.

If the individual living being were equal both in quality and in quantity, then there would be no question of the living entity's being submerged by the influence of material energy. It has already been discussed in previous mantras that no living being, even the powerful demigods, can surpass the Supreme Being in any respect. Therefore "ekatvam" does not mean that a living being is equal in all respects with the Supreme Lord. It means, in a broader sense, that there is one interest, just as in a family the interest of all the members is one. In a nation, although different individual citizens are there, the national interest is one. Therefore, the living entities being parts and parcels of the same Supreme family, the interest of the Supreme Being and that of the parts and parcels is not different. Every living being is the son of the Supreme Being. As it is said in The Bhagavad Gita, all living creatures, including birds, reptiles, ants, aquatics, trees, and so on, all over the universe—all are emanations from the marginal potency of the Supreme Lord. And therefore all of them belong to the same family of the Supreme Being. There is no clash of interest in spiritual life.

The spiritual entities are meant for enjoyment. By nature, by constitution, every living being—both the Supreme Lord and each different part and parcel—is meant for enjoyment

eternally. The living beings who are engaged in the material tabernacle are also seeking enjoyment always, but they are seeking their enjoyment on a platform which is not meant for them. Aside from this material world, there is the spiritual platform where the Supreme Being is enjoying with His innumerable associates, without any trace of material qualities. That platform is called "Nirguna." On the Nirguna platform there is no clash of enjoyment. Here in the material world there is always a clash between different individual beings, because here the center of enjoyment is missed. The center of enjoyment is the Supreme Lord, Who is the center of the sublime and spiritual Rasa Dance. We are all meant for joining Him, and for enjoying life with one transcendental interest and without any clash. That is the high platform of spiritual interest, and as soon as such a perfect form of oneness is realized there can be no question of illusion or lamentation.

Maya, or illusion, means a Godless civilization, the result of which is lamentation. The Godless civilization sponsored by the modern politicians is always full of anxieties, and that is the law of Nature. No one can surpass this law, as is stated in The Bhagavad Gita. Only those who surrender at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord can overcome the stringent laws of Nature. If, therefore, we wish to get rid of all sorts of illusion and anxiety and create unity of all diverse interests, we must bring God into all our activities.

The results of our activities must be used to serve the interest of the Lord, and not for any other purpose, because only by serving the interest of the Lord can we feel the "Atmabhuta" interest mentioned here in Sri Ishopanishad. This and the "Brahmabhuta" interest mentioned in The Bhagavad Gita are one and the same thing: The Supreme Atman, or Soul, is the Lord Himself, and the minute Atman is the living entity. The Supreme Atman or Paramatman alone maintains all the individual minute beings, because the Supreme Lord wants to derive pleasure out of their affection. The father extends himself by his children and maintains them in order to derive pleasure. If the children of the father are obedient to his will, family affairs will run smoothly with one interest and a pleasing atmosphere. Exactly the same thing is transcendentially arranged in the Brahman, or Absolute family of the "Param Brahman," the Supreme Spirit.

The Param Brahman is as much a Person as the individual entities are. None of them are impersonal. Such transcendental personalities are full of transcendental bliss, knowledge and life eternal. That is the real position of spiritual existence, and as soon as one is fully cognizant of this transcendental position he at once surrenders unto the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Being, Sri Krishna. But such "Mahatmas," Great Souls, are very rarely seen, because such transcendental realization is achieved only after many, many births. Once attained, however, there is no more illusion or distress, no more of the misery of material existence, and there are no birth and death as we experience them in the present status of our life. That is the information we get from this mantra of Sri Ishopanishad.

Mantra Eight

Such a person must know in fact the Greatest of all, Who is unembodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without veins, pure and uncontaminated, the self-sufficient Philosopher Who is awarding everyone's desires since time immemorial.

PURPORT

Here is the description of the transcendental and eternal Form of the Absolute Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord is not formless. He has His own transcendental Form Which is not at all similar to those of the mundane world. The living entities in this world have their forms embodied by the material Nature, and they work like any material machines. The physiological and anatomical structure of the body of a living being must have a mechanical construction, with veins and so forth in the embodiment. But in the transcendental body of the Lord there is nothing like veins. It is clearly stated here that He is unembodied. That means that there is no difference between His body and soul, nor does He accept a body by the law of Nature as we do. In the material concept of bodily life, the soul is different from the gross embodiment and subtle mind. The Supreme Lord is apart from any such compartmentalized arrangement, however. There is nothing like a difference of body and mind in the Supreme Lord. He is the Complete Whole, and His mind and body and He Himself are all one and the same.

In The Brahma Samhita there is a similar description of the body of the Supreme Lord. He is described there as the "Sat-chit-ananda Vighraha." This means that He is the eternal Form fully representing transcendental Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. The Vedic literature states clearly that He has a completely different kind of transcendental body, and thus He is sometimes described as formless. This formlessness means that He has no form like ours, or that He is devoid of a form which we can perceive. In The Brahma Samhita it is further said that the Lord can do anything and everything with any one of the parts of His body. It is said there that with each and every one of the parts of His body, such as the hand, he can do the work of the other senses. This means that the Lord can walk with His hands, He can accept a thing by His legs, He can see by His hands and feet, and He can eat by His eyes. In The Sruti Mantras it is said that He has no hands and no legs like us, but that He has a different type of hand and leg, by which He can accept all that we offer Him, and walk faster than anyone anywhere. These things are confirmed in this mantra of Sri Ishopanishad by the use of words like omnipotent.

The Lord's Sri Vighraha, His worshipable form, Which is installed in the temples by authorized Acharyas who have realized the Lord in terms of Mantra Seven, is also non-different from the Original Form of the Lord. The Original Form of the Lord is that of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna expands Himself by an unlimited number of Forms like Valadeva, Rama, Nrishingha, Baraha, etc.—and all of These are one

and the same Personality of Godhead.

Similarly, the Archa Vighraha Which is worshipped in the temples is also an expanded Form of the Lord. By worshipping the Archa Vighraha of the Lord, one can at once approach the Lord, Who accepts the service of the devotee by His omnipotent energy without any reproach. The Vighraha of the Lord descends by request of the Acharyas, the holy teachers, and works exactly in the original way by His omnipotent energy.

Foolish people who have no knowledge of these mantras of Sri Ishopanishad, or of any other Sruti Mantras, consider the Sri Vighraha Who is worshipped by the pure devotees to be made of material elements. To the imperfect eyes of the foolish people, or to the Kanistha Adhikaryas, this Form is considered material. But such people with little knowledge do not know that, the Lord being omnipotent and omniscient, He can transform matter into spirit and spirit into matter as He desires.

In The Bhagavad Gita, the Lord regrets the fallen condition of men with little knowledge, who regard the body of the Lord as material because He descends like a man into this world. Such poorly informed persons do not know the omnipotence of the Lord. To the mental speculators, therefore, the Lord does not manifest Himself in fullness. He can be appreciated only in proportion to one's surrender to Him. And the fallen condition of the living entities is due entirely to forgetfulness of our relationship with God.

In this mantra, as well as in many others in the Vedas, it is clearly mentioned that, from time immemorial, the Lord is supplying. The living being first of all desires, and then the Lord supplies the object of desire in proportion to the degree of qualification. If a man wants to be a high court judge he must not only have acquired the necessary qualifications, but he must also depend upon the disposition of the authority concerned, who can award the title of high court judge. Simple acquisition of the qualifications of a high court judge is not sufficient in order to occupy the post. This must be awarded by some superior authority. Similarly, the Lord awards enjoyment to the living being in proportion to his qualifications—in other words, by the law of Karma. Those qualifications, however, are not sufficient without the mercy of the Lord.

Ordinarily the living being does not know what to ask for from the Lord or what post to qualify himself for. When the living being knows his constitutional position, however, he asks to be accepted into the transcendental association of the Lord, in order to render transcendental loving service unto Him. Instead of asking for this, the living being under the influence of material Nature asks for many other things, and his mentality is described in The Bhagavad Gita as divided, or splayed, intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is one, but the opposite number is of many varieties. In The Srimad Bhagwatam it is said that persons who are captivated by the temporary beauties of the external energy forget their real aim of life, which is to go back to Godhead. Forgetting this, one tries to adjust things by various plans and programs, which are compared with the process of chewing already chewed refuse. But the Lord is so kind that He allows the forgetful living being to do so without interfering in his activities. If a living being wants to go to hell, the Lord

allows him to do so without interference, and if he wants to go back to home, back to Godhead, the Lord also helps him to do that.

God is described here as "Paribhu," the greatest of all. No one is greater than, or equal to Him. Other living beings are described here as beggars who ask from the Lord, and the Lord supplies their desirables. If other entities were equal to the Lord in potency, or if they were omnipotent or omniscient, there would be no question of begging from the Lord even for so-called liberation. The real liberation of the living being is to go back to Godhead. Otherwise, liberation as conceived by the impersonalist remains a myth, and the begging business for sense gratification has to continue eternally, unless the beggar comes to his senses and realizes his constitutional position.

The Supreme Lord is self-sufficient. When Lord Krishna appeared on Earth 5,000 years ago He displayed the full manifestation of Godhead by His various activities. In His childhood He killed many powerful demons, and there was no question of acquiring such power by any extraneous endeavor. He lifted Goverdhan Hill without any practice of weightlifting. He danced with the Gopis without any social restriction, and without any reproach. Although the Gopis approached Him with feelings of amorous love, the mixing of the Gopis and Lord Krishna has been worshipped even by Lord Chaitanya, Who was a strict Sannyasi and rigid follower of disciplinary regulations. To confirm this, Sri Ishopanishad says that He is "antiseptic" and "prophylactic," pure and uncontaminate. He is antiseptic in the sense that even an impure thing in the estimation of the mundane world can become purified just by touching Him. The word prophylactic refers to His association, and is mentioned in The Bhagavad Gita. There it is said that a scrupulous devotee may appear in the beginning to be "durachara," not well-behaved. Yet he is still to be accepted as pure because he is on the right path. That is the prophylactic nature of the Lord's association.

The Lord is "Apapabidham," that is, nothing like sin can touch Him. Even if He may do something which appears to be sinful, such actions are all good, as there is no question of the Lord's being affected by sin. In all circumstances He is "Suddam," most purified, often compared to the Sun. The Sun exacts moisture from many untouchable places of the earth, and itself remains pure. In fact it purifies obnoxious things by its sterilizing effect. If the Sun is so powerful, although only a material object, we can imagine the purity and strength of the All-powerful Lord.

Mantra Nine

Those who are engaged in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance.

In this mantra there is a comparative study of "Vidya" and "Avidya." Avidya, or ignorance, is undoubtedly dangerous, but Vidya—knowledge which is misguided—is still more dangerous. In modern human civilization this explanation of Sri Ishopanishad is more applicable than at any other time in the past. Modern civilization has advanced considerably in the matter of mass education, and yet the result is that people are more unhappy than before on account of too much stress on material advancement, without any taste for the most important aspect of life, the spiritual aspect.

So far as Vidya is concerned, the first mantra of Sri Ishopanishad has explained very clearly that the Supreme Lord is the Proprietor of everything, and forgetfulness of this fact is called ignorance. The more a man forgets this fact of life, the more he is in darkness; and in view of this, a Godless civilization directed toward the so-called advancement of education is more dangerous than a civilization in which the mass of people are less advanced.

There are different classes of men, called "karmis," "jnanins" and "yogis." The karmis are those who are engaged in the activities of sense gratification. Almost 99.9 per cent of the people in modern civilization are engaged in the activities of sense gratification under the flags of various activities such as industrialism, economic development, altruism, political consciousness, and so on. But all these activities are more or less based on the satisfaction of the senses, without any reference to the sort of God consciousness described in the first mantra of Sri Ishopanishad.

In the language of The Bhagavad Gita, people who are engaged in gross sense gratification are "Mudhas"—in darkness like the ass, the symbol of stupidity. People who are simply engaged in the pursuit of sense gratification, without any real profit in life, are in the estimation of Sri Ishopanishad worshipping Avidya. And those who play the role of helping this sort of civilization in the name of educational advancement, are doing more harm than those who are on the platform of gross sense gratification. The advancement of learning by the Godless people is as dangerous as a valuable jewel on the hood of a cobra. The cobra decorated with such a valuable jewel is quite as dangerous as one which is not so decorated.

Again, the advancement of educational activities by a Godless people is, according to the Hari Bhakti Sudhodaya, a decoration for a dead body. In India as in many other countries, some people follow the custom of leading a procession with a decorated dead body for the pleasure of the lamenting relatives. In the same sense, modern civilization is a patchwork of activities meant to cover the perpetual miseries of material existence. Such activities are targetted toward sense gratification, but above the senses there is the mind, and above the mind there is the intelligence, and above intelligence there is the soul. Therefore, the aim of education should be self realization, realization of the spiritual values of the soul. Any education which does not lead to such a realization of life must be considered "Avidya," or nescience. And to culture such nescience means going down to the darkest region of ignorance.

Such mistaken educators are known in the Vedic language by four names:

1. Vedabadarata,
2. Maya Apahritajnana,
3. Auri Bhavam,
4. Naradhama.

The Vedabadarata people pose themselves as very learned in the Vedic literature, but unfortunately they are completely diverted from the purpose of the Vedas. In The Bhagavad Gita it is said that the purpose of the Vedas is to know the Personality of Godhead, but these Vedabadarata men are not at all interested in the Personality of Godhead. On the contrary, they are fascinated by such results as the attainment of heaven.

As is said in Mantra One of Sri Ishopanishad, we should know that the Personality of Godhead is the Proprietor of everything, and we must be satisfied with our allotted portion of the necessities of life. The purpose of the whole Vedic literature is to awaken this God consciousness in the forgetful living being, and the same principle is presented in various ways in the world's various Scriptures for the understanding of foolish mankind. Thus the ultimate purpose is to bring one back to Godhead.

But the Vedabadarata people, instead of realizing the purport of the Vedas, take it for granted that side issues such as the attainment of heavenly pleasure for sense gratification—the lust for which is the very cause of their material bondage in the first place—is the ultimate end of the Vedas. Such people misguide others by misinterpreting the Vedic literature, and sometimes they condemn the Puranas, which are authentic Vedic explanations for laymen. The Vedabadaratas make their own explanations of the Vedas, neglecting the authority of the great teachers, called Acharyas; and they tend to raise some unscrupulous person from among themselves as the leading exponent of Vedic knowledge.

These men are especially condemned by this mantra of Sri Ishopanishad with the very appropriate Sanskrit word "Vidyarata." "Vidya" means Veda, because the Veda is the original in all knowledge; and "rata" means engaged. Vidya-rata means engaged in the study of the Vedas. As such, the so-called Vidyaratas are condemned here because they do not know what the purpose of the Vedas is, on account of disobeying the Acharyas. Such Vedabadaratas are accustomed to finding meaning in every word of the Vedas to suit their own purposes, without knowing that the Vedic literature is not a collection of ordinary books which everyone can understand, unless trained through the chain of disciplic succession.

One must approach a bona fide spiritual master in order to understand the transcendental message of the Vedas. That is the direction of the Katha Upanishad. But these Vedabadarata people have their own Acharya, who is not in the chain of transcendental disciplic succession. Thus they will progress into the darkest region of ignorance by misinterpreting the Vedic literature, even more so than those who have no knowledge of the Vedas at all.

The "Maya apahritajnana" class of men are self-made "Gods." Such men think that they are themselves God, and there is no necessity of worshipping any other God. They

will agree to worship an ordinary man if he happens to be rich, but will never worship the actual Personality of Godhead. Such foolish men cannot recognize their own foolishness, regarding the question of how God can ever have been entrapped by illusion. If God were ever entrapped by illusion, then illusion would be more powerful than God. But they also say that God is all-powerful. If God is all-powerful, then how can He be overpowered by illusion? The self-made Gods cannot answer all these questions very clearly, but they are satisfied that they have become God themselves.

Mantra Ten

The wise have explained to us that one result is derived from the culture of knowledge, and it is said that a different result is obtained from the culture of nescience.

PURPORT

The culture of knowledge can be practically conducted in the following way, as is advised in The Bhagavad Gita (Thirteenth Chapter). There it is said that:

1. One should become a perfect gentleman himself, and learn to give proper respect to persons other than himself.
2. One should not pose himself as a religionist simply for name and fame.
3. One should not become a source of anxiety to others by the actions of his body, mind or words.
4. One should learn forbearance, even if there is provocation from others.
5. One should learn to avoid duplicity in his dealings with others.
6. One must have a bona fide spiritual master who can lead him gradually to the stage of spiritual realization, and to such an Acharya or spiritual master he must submit himself with service and relevant questions.
7. One must follow the regulative principles enjoined in the revealed Scriptures, in order to approach the platform of self realization.
8. One must be fixed up in the tenets of the revealed Scriptures.
9. One should completely refrain from practices which are detrimental to the interest of self realization.
10. One should not accept more than what he requires for the maintenance of the body.
11. One should not falsely identify himself with the material covering of the gross body, nor consider as his own those who are related with his body.
12. One should always remember that, so long as he has a material body, he must face the miseries of repeated birth, death, old age, and disease. There is no use in making plans to get rid of these miseries of the material body. The best thing is to find out the means by which one may regain his spiritual identity.
13. One should not be attached to more than the necessities of life required for spiritual advancement.

14. One should not be more attached to wife, children and home than is ordained in the revealed Scriptures.

15. One should not be happy or distressed in regard to the desirables and undesirables created by the mind.

16. One should become an unalloyed devotee of the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, and serve Him with rapt attention.

17. One should develop a feeling for residing in a secluded place with a calm and quiet atmosphere favorable for spiritual culture, and thus avoid congested places where the non-devotees congregate.

18. One should become a scientist or philosopher, and make research into spiritual knowledge—not material knowledge—recognizing that spiritual knowledge is permanent, whereas material knowledge ends with the death of the body.

These eighteen items form a gradual process for developing real knowledge. Except for these eighteen items, all other items whatever are grouped within the category of nescience. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, a great Acharya, said that all the forms of material knowledge are merely external features of the illusory energy, and by culturing them one becomes no better than an ass. Here in Sri Ishopanishad the same principle is repeated. Material advancement of knowledge means actually converting a human being to the status of an ass. Some materialistic politicians, under cover of spiritual garments, do decry the present system of civilization as satanic, but unfortunately they do not care for the culture of real knowledge which is described in The Bhagavad Gita, and therefore they cannot change the satanic situation.

In the modern setup of things, even a boy thinks himself self-sufficient, and pays no respect to elderly men. Thus, due to the wrong type of education imparted by our universities, boys all over the world have become the cause of headache to the elderly people. Therefore Sri Ishopanishad warns very strongly that the culture of nescience is different from that of knowledge. The universities are, so to speak, centers of nescience only, and therefore the scientists are busy discovering lethal weapons to wipe out the existence of other countries.

University students today are not given instructions on the regulative principles of Brahmacharya, the spiritual process of life, nor do they have any faith in the respective scriptural injunctions. Religious principles are taught for the sake of name and fame only, and not for the matter of practical action. Therefore there is animosity not only in the social and political fields, but in the field of religion as well.

Nationalism in different parts of the world has also developed on account of this nescient education of the people. They have no information that this tiny earth is just a lump of matter floating in immeasurable material space along with many other lumps. In comparison to the vastness of space, these material lumps are like dust particles in the air. Because God has kindly made these lumps of matter complete in themselves, they are perfectly equipped with all necessary arrangements for floating on in space. Our sputnik drivers are very proud of their achievements, but they do not look to the Supreme Driver of these greater, more gigantic sputniks called planets.

There are innumerable suns occupying space, with

innumerable arrangements of planetary systems. We small creatures, as the infinitesimal parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, are trying to dominate these unlimited planets by repeated birth and death, but are generally frustrated by old age and disease. This span of human life is scheduled for about 100 years, although it is gradually decreasing to the limit of 20 or 30 years of life. Thanks to the culture of nescient education, befooled men have created their own nationalisms within these planets in order to grasp at sense enjoyment for these few 20 or 30 years. Such foolish people are drawing up various plans to make some demarked portion of earth as perfect as possible, which is ultimately ridiculous. And for this purpose each and every nation has become a source of anxiety for the others. More than 50% of their energy is spoiled in defense measures, with no caring for the real culture of knowledge, and they are falsely proud of becoming advanced in both material and spiritual knowledge.

Sri Ishopanishad warns of this faulty mode of education, and The Bhagavad Gita gives instructions as to the development of real knowledge. In this mantra there is a hint that the instruction of Vidya, knowledge, must be gained from the "dheera." Dheera means undisturbed, not disturbed by material illusion. No one can be undisturbed unless and until he has perfect spiritual realization. When one is perfectly spiritually realized he has no more hankering for anything acquired, nor does he lament for anything lost. Such a dheera has realized that the material body and mind which he has acquired by chance material association are foreign elements, and therefore he simply makes the best use of a bad bargain.

The material body and mind are bad bargains for the spiritual living entity. The living entity has different functions in the living world, but this material world is dead. So long as the living spiritual sparks manipulate the dead lumps of matter, the dead world appears to be a living world. But actually it is the living souls, the parts and parcels of the Supreme Living Being, which move the world. The dheeras are those who have come to know all these facts by hearing of them from superior authorities, and who have realized them by following the regulative principles.

To follow the regulative principles, one must go under the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. The transcendental message comes down from the spiritual master to the disciple with the regulative principles, and not in the hazardous way of nescient education. One can become a dheera only by such submissive hearing. In The Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna became a dheera by submissively hearing from the Personality of Godhead. The perfect disciple must be like Arjuna, and the spiritual master must be as good as the Lord Himself. These are the processes of learning Vidya, knowledge, from the dheera, the undisturbed.

"Adheera," one who has not undergone the training of a dheera, cannot be an instructive leader. Modern politicians who pose themselves as dheeras are themselves adheeras. One cannot expect perfect knowledge from them. They are busy with their own remuneration in dollars and pounds. How can they lead the mass of people to the right path of self realization? One must hear submissively from the dheera in order to get actual education in life.

BOOK REVIEW—continued
 world. This is a very nice sentiment. Psychologists have been trying since long before Freud to establish peace within man's heart. And we have today the United Nations trying to make peace in the world. Both in vain. It is very easy for humanists like Martin Buber to advocate peace—individual and collective—but as for offering a practical method to attain it, they are completely baffled in their attempts.

Such a practical peace formula is offered, however, in the Gita Mahatma, an authorized commentary on The Bhagavad Gita: "Let there be one hymn for chanting, and let there be one occupation for the human race, namely transcendental loving service to the Lord."

Buber's last points are "not being preoccupied with the world," rightfully understanding that the "earth is the Lord's," and thus hallowing it for God's sake. Again, what is meant by "hallowing" is not explained, and it is doubtful whether the author himself knows. Like so many materialists who advocate dealing with the "here and now" of this earth, Buber fails to realize that this material world is only temporary and, in that sense, illusory. Not that it doesn't

exist, but that it is always changing, hence impermanent, and thus unreal. The point in Krishna Consciousness, the Vedic science of God realization, is to be attached neither to oneself nor to the material world, but only to Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The material world is recognized in the light of such transcendental devotion to be only a manifestation of Krishna's energy, and the true spiritual process is to go directly to the source.

Although an impersonalist, at times Buber does come close to the personalist conception. In his writing on Hasidism, he states that "God, no matter how infinite he is comprehended as being, is still Person and remains Person." Were it otherwise it would not be possible for the I-Thou dialog between man and God to exist. Nevertheless, because Buber does not know very much about God as a person, his idea of dialog is quite roundabout. That is, one can "converse" with God through the medium of other entities. Why not directly, this reviewer wonders?

In the serious pursuit of God realization, which is really only another way of phrasing dialog with the Absolute, one can learn about the name, fame,

and pastimes of the Supreme Lord. The Krishna Consciousness system, for example, follows the teachings of the Srimad Bhagwatam and other Vedic scriptures. Since God is non-different from His Name, one need only chant His Holy Names to associate with Krishna. The effect is blissful. As original Krishna conscious entities, we can attain our natural position of full knowledge, full bliss and eternity simply by associating with the Lord by chanting His Names: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. This is a real, direct I-Thou relationship—and it is eternal, not fleeting like the chance meeting of eyes of a child and a cat, as Buber for some reason chooses to see it.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami has written: "God is situated in everyone's heart. God is not away from us. He is present. He is so friendly that, in our repeated change of births, He remains with us. He is waiting to see when we shall turn to Him." We have simply to turn to Krishna in order to revive our dormant love of Godhead, which has for so long remained buried within our hearts. END

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STUFFING:

1 medium sized cauliflower
8 oz. package frozen peas
1 tsp. cumin seeds
1/4 tsp. crushed red peppers
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1 tsp. salt

MASSALA:

1/4 tsp. cloves
3/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. coriander
1/4 tsp. cardamon
3/4 tsp. ginger
1/4 tsp. sage
1/4 tsp. thyme
1 tsp. turmeric

COVERING:

5 cups white flour
6 tbsp. butter
1-1/2 cups water

Make massala by mixing dry ingredients together in a cup. Then, in a 4-quart saucepan heat oil till smoking. Add cumin seeds and crushed red peppers. Cook till black. Break cauliflower into small pieces, add and stir. Add massala and mix well. Add peas and mix well. Add salt. Add water and cover. Cook for about 3 hours, stirring occasionally. When done, mash vegetables into a pulp with fork. Set aside to cool.

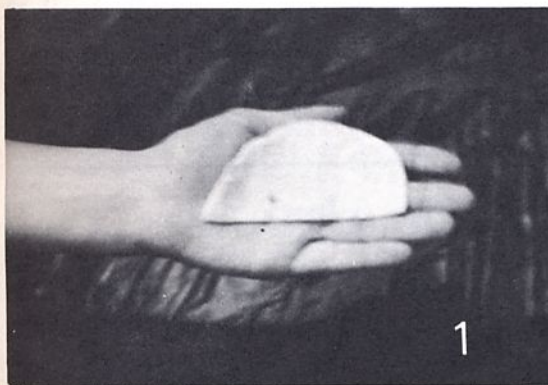
Mix flour and butter well by rubbing the mixture between palms of hands. Add water and knead into an even, stiff dough. Make a few 1/2-inch diameter balls. Roll balls out into circles 4 or 5 inches in diameter, and about 1/8 inch thick. Cut circles in half and fold into cones as shown in figures 1 through 3. Seal this fold with a little water on finger. Stuff the cone to the top. Then seal cone by folding down the loose flap, stretching dough as it is folded (figure 4). Finished samossa should look like a fat little triangle. Make all samossas in this way. Let them set about half an hour before deep frying.

Deep Frying:

Heat 2 quarts of oil in a large heavy pot or deep fryer. When oil is sufficiently hot, but not smoking, put samossas into it and fry for about 15-20 minutes or till golden brown. Stir frequently while frying. Makes about 60.

SPICED PASTRY

by Uddhava



1



2



3



4

SAMOSSA
(ALSO
PRONOUNCED
SANGOSSA)
IS A
FAVORITE
FOOD
OF THE
DEVOTEES
OF KRISHNA.
AS AN
HORS
D'OEUVRE
OR
AS A
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IN
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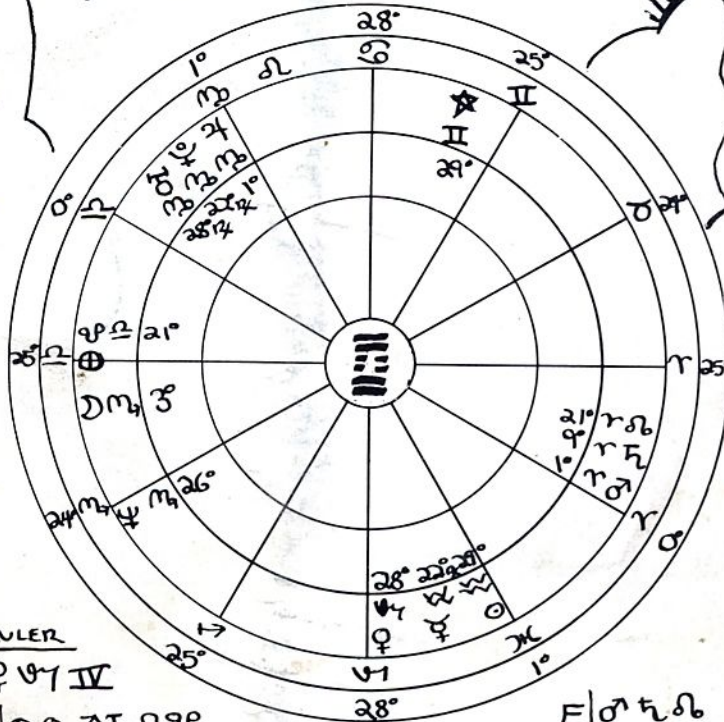
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J. S. Bach

March 16, 1968

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