

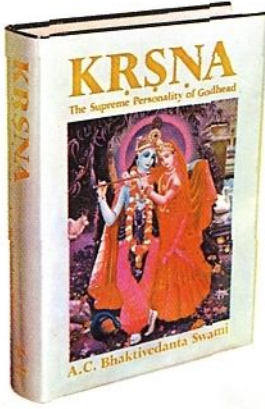
No. 34 50¢

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT



BOOKS BY A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI



KṚṢṆA

The Supreme Personality of Godhead

The most comprehensive and authoritative Vedic scriptural literature is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (the Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead), the mature contribution of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the *Vedas*. Of the twelve cantos of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Tenth Canto is considered the most confidential, since it describes the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. *Kṛṣṇa* is a summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the original speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, has declared that there are three classes of men and that the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa will be relished by each of them. The liberated soul who is no longer interested in mundane topics most certainly hears about Kṛṣṇa with the highest pleasure. The person who is trying to become liberated will also enjoy these topics of the Personality of Godhead, which purify anyone who hears them. And even the gross materialist will enjoy hearing about Kṛṣṇa because of the resemblance between His affairs with the *gopīs* and the loving affairs of ordinary boys and girls. This presentation of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa is a rare opportunity for all mankind to become attracted to the transcendental world of the Personality of Godhead and to thus derive the highest benefit.

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Lord Caitanya, the central figure, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, came specifically to introduce the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* five hundred years ago, as the easiest and most sublime process of God realization in this age of Kali.

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS?

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness was formed in 1966 by Prabhupāda A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who came from India on the order of his Spiritual Master to preach love of God to the people of the West. Prabhupāda is in a line of disciple succession going back directly 500 years to the time when Lord Caitanya appeared in India, and from there back still further—5000 years—to the time when Kṛṣṇa first spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is experienced as a process of self purification. Its means and end are an open secret, and there is no financial charge for learning Kṛṣṇa Consciousness or receiving initiation into the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. The gist of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is that one takes whatever capacity or talent he or she has and dovetails it with the interests of the Supreme Enjoyer, the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The writer writes articles for Kṛṣṇa, and we publish periodicals in this way. The businessman does business in order to establish many temples across the country. The householders raise children in the science of God, and husband and wife live in mutual co-operation for spiritual progress. These activities are done under the sanction of the expert Spiritual Master, and in line with the Scriptures. Devotional service in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness means regular chanting in the temple, hearing talks about the Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and taking foodstuffs prepared for and offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

By books, literature and records, the Society is dedicated to awakening the worldwide public to the normal, ecstatic state of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, so that all may regain their eternal position of favorably serving the will of Kṛṣṇa. Saṅkīrtana—congregational chanting—is carried to the people: in public parks, schools, on t.v., in the theater, on the streets. Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is not an idler's philosophy. Rather by chanting and by engagement in the service of Kṛṣṇa, anyone who takes part will experience the state of "samādhi," ecstatic absorption in God-consciousness, 24 hours a day!

As the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is non-sectarian, any man, Hindu or Christian, will become better in his faith by chanting the Holy Name of God and by hearing the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Without knowledge and realization and loving service to the One Supreme God, there can be no religion. Let everyone rejoice in the Saṅkīrtana Movement, and we may see the fulfillment of the prediction made by Lord Caitanya 500 years ago: that the chanting of the Holy Names of God, Hare Kṛṣṇa, would be carried to every town and village of the world. Only in this way can real peace prevail. It is sublime and easy.

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA
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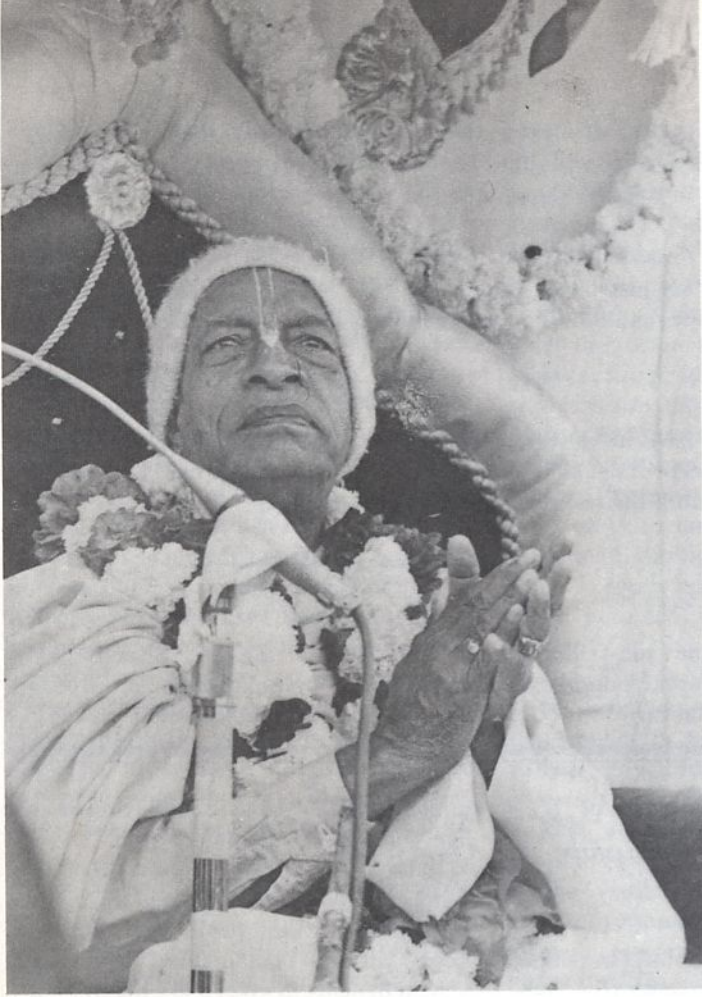


Founder
(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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Poem by Śrīla Prabhupada on His First Arrival in the USA

The spiritual master and founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, is now engaging thousands of men and women in America and throughout the world in the science of *bhakti-yoga*, transcendental loving service to God. Prabhupada had no personal motive in first beginning ISKCON; he so vigorously preaches the philosophy of God consciousness simply because he has been ordered to do so by his own spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda first arrived in the United States in 1965 with seven dollars, a letter of introduction to an Indian family in Pennsylvania, and a suitcase with some volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the following poem, written in Bengali on the day of his arrival in the USA, Śrīla Prabhupāda addresses the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, asking Him His purpose in sending His servant to America. The translation from Bengali was done by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.

1

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are so kind upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now You can do whatever You like with me.

2

But I can guess that You have some business here, otherwise why should You call me to this demoniac place?

3

Most of the population here is covered by nature's modes of ignorance and passion, and I do not know how they will be able to understand the transcendental message of Vāsudeva.

4

But I know that Your causeless mercy can make everything possible because You are the most expert mystic.

5

Therefore, I am simply praying for Your mercy so that I can be able to convince them about Your message.

6

All living entities have come under the control of the illusory energy by Your will, and therefore, if You like, by Your will they can also be released from the clutches of illusion.

7

If You so desire, I wish that You may deliver them; just by Your desire they will be able to understand Your message.

8

The words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if they receive them in submissive aural reception, repeatedly, then they will be able to understand Your message.

9-13

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Second Chapter, verses seventeen through twenty-one, it is said: "For anyone who gives aural reception to the always auspicious transcendental messages about You by hearing and chanting, You become a special well-wisher, and thus, remaining within his heart, You clear up all inauspicious understanding. When such inauspicious understanding is almost cleared up, a person realizes the importance of devotional service. In that stage of understanding, the influence of the modes of ignorance and passion becomes almost nil, and the resultant action of passion and ignorance can no more attack the heart; thus he becomes joyful, being situated on the platform of goodness. When, by dint of devotional service, he thus becomes jubilant due to awakening the modes of goodness, he becomes liberated from material contamination and is able to understand the science of God. In this stage of liberation, all misgivings in the heart, or the bondage of the material network, become cut to pieces, and by the science of God he is elevated from all sorts of doubts. At this stage the result of past activities becomes vanquished because of his realization of the Supreme Lord."

14

This is the process of becoming liberated from the influence of the modes of ignorance and passion, and thus they can become freed from all inauspicious things accumulated in the heart.

But because I am very unfortunate, unqualified, and the most fallen, I am therefore seeking Your benediction so that I may be able to convince them about this Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Somehow or other, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now it is up to You to make me a success or a failure, as You like.

You are the Lord of the whole creation, so if You like You can make my power to speak suitable, so that they can understand.

By Your causeless mercy only my words may become transcendently pure, and I am sure that when such a transcendental

message penetrates their hearts, certainly they will feel en-
gladdened and thus become liberated from all unhappy con-
ditions of life.

I am just like a puppet in Your hands; You have brought me here, and now You can make me dance as You like.

I have no devotion, nor have I any knowledge, but still I have been designated Bhaktivedanta. Now if You like You can just fulfill the real purport of Bhaktivedanta.

The most unfortunate, insignificant beggar, Bhaktivedanta Swami, onboard the ship Jaladuta, Commonwealth Pier, Boston, Massachusetts (U.S.A.). Dated 18th September, 1965.

HARI KĪRTANA: THE YOGA FOR THE MODERN AGE

—by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

*Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahādā-
vāgni-nirvāpaṇam śreyaḥ kairava candrikā
vitarāṇam vidyāvadhū jīvanam ānandām-
budhi-wardhanam pratīpadam pūrṇāmṛtās-
vādanam sarvātma-snapanam paraṇi vi-
jayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam.* All glories to
the saṅkīrtana movement. *Param vijayate
śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam.* Lord Caitanya
Mahāprabhu, when He was only a sixteen-
year-old boy, introduced this saṅkīrtana
movement 500 years ago in Navadvīpa,
India. It was not that He manufactured
some religious system, just as nowadays
so many religious systems are being manu-
factured. Actually religion cannot be
manufactured. *Dharmam tu sākṣād-bhaga-
vat-praṇītam.* Religion means the codes of
God, the laws of God, that's all. Certainly
we cannot live without obeying the state
laws, and similarly, we cannot live without
obeying the laws of God. And in the
Bhagavad-gītā the Lord says, "yadā yadā
hi dharmasya glāṇir bhavati bhārata."
Whenever there are discrepancies in the
prosecution of religious activities, "yadā
yadā hi dharmasya glāṇir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya," and there is
a predominance of irreligious activities,
"tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham," at that time
I (Kṛṣṇa) appear. And in the material
world we can see the same principle
demonstrated, for whenever there is dis-
obedience of state laws, there is the advent
of some particular state officer or police-

man to "set things right."

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is worshiped
by the Gosvāmīs. There were six Gosvāmīs:
Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Raghu-
nātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī,
Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghu-
nātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. There are three
meanings of *go*. *Go* means land, *gō*
means cow, *go* means senses. And *svāmī*
means master. So *gosvāmī* means that they
were masters of the senses. When one be-
comes master of the senses, or *gosvāmī*, he
can make progress in spiritual life. That is
the real meaning of *svāmī*. *Svāmī* does not
mean that he is servant of the senses, but
master of them.

One of these six Gosvāmīs, Rūpa Go-
svāmī, was the head, and he compiled a
nice verse in honor of Lord Caitanya
Mahāprabhu. He says, *anarpitacarīm cirāt
karuṇayāvāṭīṇaḥ kalau samarpayitum
unnotojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam hariḥ
puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-saṁdīpitaḥ
sadā hr̥daya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-
nandanah. Kalau* means this age, this
age of Kali, the Iron Age, which is very
much contaminated, an age of quarrel
and disagreement. Rūpa Gosvāmī says
that in this age of Kali, when everything is
disagreement and quarrel, "You have de-
scended to offer the highest love of God."
Samarpayitum unnotojjvala-rasām. And
not only the topmost, but a very brilliant
rasa or transcendental humor. *Puraṭa-*

sundara-dyuti. "Your complexion is just
like gold, like the luster of gold. You are
so kind that I bless everyone [The Go-
svāmīs can bless because they are masters
of the senses.] that this form of the Lord,
Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, may always
remain dancing in everyone's heart."

When Rūpa Gosvāmī first met Lord
Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Prayāg, Lord
Caitanya was chanting and dancing in the
street, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa." At that
time also he offered one prayer. *Namo
mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te.*
"O You are the most munificent of all
incarnations because You are distributing
love of Godhead." *Kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya
te kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāme gaura-
tviṣe namaḥ.* "You are Kṛṣṇa Himself
because if You were not Kṛṣṇa You could
not distribute Kṛṣṇa-prema or love of God,
for love of Kṛṣṇa is not so easily acquired.
But You are distributing this love freely
to everyone."

In this way this saṅkīrtana movement
was inaugurated in Bengal, India, and in
Navadvīpa. In this sense, the Bengalis are
very fortunate that in their country this
movement was inaugurated by Lord
Caitanya who predicted, *Prithivite achhe
yata nagarādi grām sarvatra prachār haibe
more nāma.* "In all the villages and towns
all over the world, everywhere, this saṅ-
kīrtana movement will be preached." That
is His future prediction.

So by the grace of Lord Caitanya, this
movement is already introduced in the
Western countries, beginning from New
York. Our saṅkīrtana movement was first

introduced in New York in 1966. At that time I came and began to chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in Tompkins Square. I was chanting there for three hours with a small *mṛdaṅga* (drum), and these American boys assembled and gradually joined, and so it is increasing. First of all it was started in a New York storefront, 26 Second Avenue, then we started our branches in San Francisco, in Montreal, Boston, in Los Angeles, in Buffalo, in Columbus. We now have twenty-four branches, including one in London and one in Hamburg. In London they are all American boys and girls, and they are preaching. They are not *sannyāsī*, nor are they Vedāntists, nor Hindus, nor Indians, but they have taken this movement very seriously. Even in the *London Times* there was an article headlined, "Kṛṣṇa Chant Startles London." So we have many in the movement now. All my disciples, at least in this country, are Americans and Europeans. They are chanting, dancing, and are issuing a paper, *Back to Godhead*. Now we have published many books, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, *Īsopaniṣad*. It is not that this movement is simply a sentimental movement. Don't think that these boys are dancing out of some religious sentiment or fanaticism. No. We have the highest philosophical and theosophical background.

As an illustration, let us consider Caitanya Mahāprabhu. While He was preaching, He went to Benāres, the seat of māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*. The followers of Śāṅkarācārya are mostly seen in Benāres. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu was there, He was chanting and dancing. Some of the people very much appreciated this, and so He quickly became famous. One prominent *sannyāsī*, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, leader of many thousands of Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*, was informed: "Oh, from Bengal one young *sannyāsī* has come. He is so nicely chanting and dancing." Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī was a great Vedāntist, and he did not like the idea. He said, "Oh, he is a pseudo-*sannyāsī*. He is chanting and dancing, and this is not the business of *sannyāsī*. A *sannyāsī* should always engage himself in the study of philosophy and *Vedānta*."

Then one of the devotees who did not like the remarks of Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī came back and informed Lord Caitanya that He was being criticized. So the devotee arranged a meeting of all the *sannyāsīs*, and there was a philosophical discussion on *Vedānta* between Prakāśānanda Sara-

svatī and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. These accounts and philosophical discussions are given in our *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. It is remarkable that Prakāśānanda himself with all his disciples became Vaiṣṇavas.

Similarly, Caitanya Mahāprabhu had a great discussion with Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, the greatest logician of that time, who was also Māyāvādī, impersonalist, and he was also converted. So Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement is not mere sentimentalism. There is a very rich background if one wants to understand this *saṅkīrtana* movement through philosophy and logic. There is ample opportunity, for this movement is based on science and on the authority of the *Vedas*. But it is all simplified. That is the beauty of this movement. Whether one is a great scholar or philosopher or a child, he can take part without any difficulty. Other systems of self-realization, the *jñāna* process or *yoga* process, are also recognized, but it is not possible to practice them in this age. That is the verdict of the *Vedas*: *krte yad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ dvāpare paricaryāyām kalau tadd hari-kīrtanāt* (Bhāg. 12.3.52).

In the *Satya-yuga*, the Golden Age, it was possible to execute the meditation process. For instance, Vālmīki Muni meditated for sixty thousand years to get perfection. But where is our old age? Besides that, for the meditation process, as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, one has to select a secluded place, he has to execute it alone, he has to sit down in a rigid posture, he has to lead a life of complete celibacy and so on. There are many rules and regulations. Thus *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* meditation is not possible. But if one is satisfied by imitating, that is a different thing. If one, however, wants perfection, then he has to execute all the eight stages of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. If this is not possible, then it is a waste of time.

What is the ultimate goal of the *yoga* process or meditation? Contact with the Supreme, the Supersoul, the Supreme Lord, is the aim and object of all *yoga* processes. Similarly, philosophical research, the *jñāna* process, also aims at understanding the Supreme Brahman. These are recognized processes, undoubtedly, but according to authoritative description, they are not practical in this Iron Age of Kali. Therefore one has to take to this process of *Hari-kīrtana*. Anyone can practice without pre-qualification. One doesn't have to

study philosophy or *Vedānta*. This was the purport of Lord Caitanya's meeting with Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī.

When the *Vedānta* philosophy was thoroughly discussed between Lord Caitanya and Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī first of all asked Caitanya Mahāprabhu, "I understand that You were a very good scholar in Your early life [Lord Caitanya was actually a very great scholar. His name was Nimai Paṇḍit, and at the age of sixteen He defeated one great scholar from Kashmire, Keśava Kāśmīrī.], and I understand that You are a great Sanskrit scholar, and that especially in logic You are a very learned scholar. You were also born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, and now You are a *sannyāsī*. How is it that You are chanting and dancing and not reading *Vedānta*?" This was the first question asked by Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, and Lord Caitanya replied, "Yes, the reason is that when I was initiated by My spiritual master, he said that I am fool number one. 'You don't discuss *Vedānta*,' he told me. 'You will simply spoil Your time. Just take to this chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, and You will be successful.'" That was his reply. Of course Caitanya Mahāprabhu was not a fool, and certainly *Vedānta* is not for fools. One needs sufficient education, and one must attain a certain status before he can understand *Vedānta*. In each and every word there are volumes of meanings, and there are many commentaries by Lord Śāṅkarācārya and Rāmānujācārya, huge volumes in Sanskrit. But how can we understand *Vedānta*? It is not possible. It may be possible for one person or two persons to understand, but for the mass of people it is not possible. Nor is it possible to practice *yoga*. Therefore, if one takes to Caitanya Mahāprabhu's method, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, the first installment of gain will be *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*: all the dirty things will be cleansed from the heart simply by chanting. Chant. There is no expenditure, and there is no loss. If one simply chants for one week, he'll see how much he will progress in spiritual knowledge.

We are attracting many students simply by chanting, and they are understanding the entire philosophy and becoming purified. This Society's movement started only four years ago, 1966, and we have so many branches already. The American boys and girls are taking it very seriously, and they are happy. Ask any one of them. *Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. They are cleansing the

dirty things from the heart, simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

The next point is *bhava-mahādāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam*: as soon as the heart is cleansed of all dirty things, then all the problems of material existence are immediately solved. This world has been compared with *dāvāgni*, which means a blazing fire in the forest. In this material existence no one wants unhappiness, but it comes by force. That is the law of material nature. No one wants fire, but wherever we go in a city the fire brigade is always active. There is always fire. Similarly, there are many things that no one wants. No one wants death—there is death. No one wants disease—there is disease. No one wants old age—there is old age. They are there, against our will, against our desire.

Thus we should consider the state of this material existence. This human form of life is meant for understanding, not for wasting valuable life like animals by eating, sleeping, mating and defending. That is not advancement of civilization. The *Bhāgavatam* says that this body is not meant for working hard simply for sense gratification. *Nāyam deha dhabhajām nrīlike kastān kāman arhati bīdbhujam ye*. To work very hard and satisfy oneself by sense gratification is the business of hogs, not human beings. The human being should learn *tapasya*. Especially in India, so many great sages, so many great kings, and so many *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* have passed their lives in great *tapasya* in order not to go further to sleep. Lord Buddha was a prince who gave up everything and engaged himself in *tapasya*. This is life. When King Bharata Mahārāja, under whose name India was named Bhāratavarṣa, was twenty-four years old, he gave up his kingdom, his young wife and young children and went away for *tapasya*. When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu was only twenty-four, He gave up His young wife, mother, everything. There are many, many examples. India is the land of *tapasya*, but we are forgetting that. Now we are making it the land of technology. It is surprising that India is now no longer propagating this *tapasya*, for India is the land of *dharma*: *dharma-kṣetre kurukṣetre*.

But it is not only in India; everywhere in this Age of Iron everything is degraded, degraded in this sense: *prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya kalav asmin yuge janāḥ*. In this age

of Kali the duration of life is diminished, and men are not moved to understand self-realization, and if they are, they are invariably misled by so many deceitful leaders. The age is very corrupt. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu's process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the best and the simplest method. *Harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam/ kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*. "In this age of Kali there is no other religion than glorifying the Lord by utterance of His holy name, and that is the injunction of all the revealed scriptures. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way." This verse appears in *Bṛhad-Nārādīya Purāṇa*. Simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. There is no other alternative. *Harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam. Kalau...in this age, Kali, nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*. There is no other alternative for self-realization. So we have to accept it.

There is another version in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Parīkṣit Mahārāja was informed by Śukadeva Gosvāmī of the faults of this age in the Twelfth Canto, third chapter, and now all the symptoms of the age of Kali are apparent. In the conclusive portion, however, Śukadeva Gosvāmī says, *kaler doṣanidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ*. "My dear King, this age, Kali, is full of faulty things, but there is one good opportunity." What is that? *Kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*. "Simply by chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, one can become liberated and go back to Godhead."

This is practical and authorized, and one can also test himself to see how he is advancing simply by chanting. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not something new, something that we have introduced or manufactured. It is authorized on the Vedic principles, authorized by *ācāryas* like Caitanya Mahāprabhu and others. And the method is very simple; there is no loss. We are not charging anything, we are not asking for fees and giving the people some secret *mantra* and promising them that within six months they will become God. No. This is open for everyone—children, women, girls, boys, old people—everyone can chant and see the results.

To further this end we not only are establishing New Vṛndāvana, our commune, but are establishing New Navadvīpa and New Jagannātha Purī in America. We have already started New Jagannātha Purī in San Francisco, and the *Ratha-yātrā*

Festival is going on. This year also there will be a great ceremony of *Ratha-yātrā* in London. There will be three cars for Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma, and They will be taken to the River Thames. And in America they have imported New England and New York, so why not New Vṛndāvana? We should especially establish this New Vṛndāvana because Lord Caitanya recommended *ārādhya bhagavān kṛṣṇa tad dhāma vṛndāvanam*. Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, in the Vṛndāvanadhāma of Vrajabhūmi, is the Supreme Worshipable Deity, and His place Vṛndāvana is also worshipable. The Western boys and girls are taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they should have a place like Vṛndāvana. Svāmī Kīrtanānanda, who went to Vṛndāvana with me two years ago, knows what Vṛndāvana is like, so I have instructed him to construct at least seven temples. In Vṛndāvana, there are 5,000 temples of Radha-Kṛṣṇa, but the most important temples are seven, established by the Gosvāmīs. Our program is to live in New Vṛndāvana, depend on agriculture and cows as an economic solution, and peacefully execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa—that is the Vṛndāvana scheme. *Yuktāhāra-vihāraś ca yoga bhavati sid-dhidah*. This human form of life isn't meant for increasing artificial needs. We should be satisfied just to maintain the body and soul together, and the rest of the time we should enhance our Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that after leaving this body we won't have to take another material body but will be able to go back home, back to Godhead. That should be the motto of human life.

Material life means eating, sleeping, mating and defending, and spiritual life means something more than this. This is also the difference between animal life and human life. In animal life, the common formula is eating, sleeping, mating and defending. A dog eats, a man also eats. A man sleeps, and a dog also sleeps. A man has sex life, and the dog also has sex life. The dog defends in his own way, and man also defends in his own way, maybe atomic bombs. These four principles are common to human beings and animals, and advancement of these four principles is not human civilization but animal civilization. Human civilization means *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*. In the *Vedānta-sūtra* the first aphorism is *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*. "Now is the time for inquiry about Brahman." That is the human life. As long as one is

not spiritually inquisitive, *jñāsu śreyo uttamam*, he is an animal because he lives according to these four principles, that's all. He must be inquisitive to know what he is and why he is put into these miseries of life, birth, death, old age, disease. Is there any remedy? These matters should be questioned. That is human life; that is spiritual life.

Spiritual life means human life, and material life means animal life. That's all. We have to make the adjustments that are recommended in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Yuk-tāhāra-vihārasya*. (Bg. 6.17) For instance, this does not mean that because I am

going to be a spiritual man I shall give up eating. Rather, my eating should be adjusted. *Bhagavad-gītā* describes what class of food is first class, in goodness, and what class of food is in passion, and third class, in ignorance. We have to raise ourselves to the *sattvic* (goodness) platform of human civilization, then revive our transcendental consciousness or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Everything is there in the *śāstras*. Unfortunately we do not consult them.

Evañ prasanna-manaso bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ bhagavat-tattva-vijñānaṁ mukta-saṅgasya jāyate (Bhag. 1.2.20). Unless one is liberated from the clutches of

these three modes of material nature, he cannot understand God. *Prasanna-manaso*. He must be a Brahman realized soul. *Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati*. (Bg. 18.54). These injunctions are there, so one should take advantage of these *śāstras* and preach. That is the responsibility of intelligent men. The mass of people know that God is great, but they do not know how great God actually is. That we will find in the Vedic literature. That is our duty in this Iron Age. That is *Hari-kīrtana*, *param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*: glorification of the Supreme.

CONTENTS OF THE GĪTĀ SUMMARIZED

—by Kīrtanānanda Swāmī (ISKCON—New Vṛndāvana)

Saṅjaya said: “Seeing Arjuna full of compassion and very sorrowful, his eyes brimming with tears, Madhusūdana, Kṛṣṇa, spoke the following words: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the progressive values of life. They do not lead to higher planets, but to infamy.” Having set the scene in the First Chapter with Arjuna's display of misdirected compassion, here in the Second Chapter, Kṛṣṇa at once begins His instruction. The Second Chapter is sometimes called “the contents of the *Gītā* summarized,” for actually in its compass, Kṛṣṇa gives the whole purview of the transcendental message. It will be repeated in so many ways, but it is actually all here in nutshell. However, the Second Chapter deals more extensively with one particular subject than any other, and that is the nature of the individual soul and its constitutional position, or its relationship with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The point should again be made that compassion is one of the most noble human emotions, materially considered, but compassion wrongly placed is ignorance. Arjuna's compassion is ignorance because it is displayed in contradiction to the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is personally present before him; therefore Kṛṣṇa uses the word *kutas*, wherefrom. Wherefrom have these impurities come? And “impurities” is the next important word. These impurities which have overcome Arjuna are not befitting a man who knows the progressive values of life. The problem which Kṛṣṇa is pointing out is

not inherent in the nature of the individual soul; it is something external—wherefrom. Somehow or other a covering has come over the consciousness. As long as these impurities are present, one cannot know the progressive values of life. One who knows the progressive values of life knows what is matter and what is spirit and knows what will help one to cultivate the knowledge of matter and spirit. A civilization that is based on this knowledge is called *Aryan*. *Aryan* does not mean blond hair and blue eyes; it is not so cheap. An *Aryan* is one who is conscious that he is not the body, who is in full knowledge that he is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, and who therefore knows that his duty is to extricate himself from the impurities which are covering that consciousness.

Arjuna was deviating from the great Vedic tradition of his forefathers who maintained a progressive God conscious civilization aimed at helping all living entities to go back to home, back to Godhead. Instead, he was thinking like the non-Aryans, the materialistic men, about bodily relationships. “Oh, this is my family! These are my relatives, and this is my country!” All such designations are false because they belong only to this body, which is temporary, and since it is temporary, it is ultimately frustrating, or confusing. Therefore Arjuna quickly came to the conclusion, “Now I am confused.”

As was pointed out earlier, atheistic men are always confused because they make their senses the standard, and the senses are like wild horses running in

different directions. Kṛṣṇa says, “The intelligence of the irresolute is many-branched.” And Arjuna frankly admits, “Now I am confused about duty and have lost all composure because of weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me clearly what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.” This is the point at which spiritual life begins. Without coming to the conclusion that I know nothing, I am in no position to receive spiritual knowledge. Unless I empty myself of all false opinions, I will not be very receptive to the absolute message. One cannot fill a cup that is already full. If the conditioned soul is still under the illusion that he knows something, or can somehow or other figure it out, he cannot make spiritual progress. The *Bhagavad-gītā* actually begins when Arjuna says, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, I am confused. I know nothing. Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.” The first qualification, therefore, is surrender. But surrender to what? Actually everyone is surrendered; I see some of my friends surrendered to their wives, I see others surrendered to a sport, or to their senses, or to drugs. Some have even surrendered to a dog. Surrendered to what, or to *whom*? Arjuna gives us the perfect example—he surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

If one wants to surrender for the purpose of knowledge, one must surrender to someone who is in knowledge. Now knowledge of the Absolute is not so cheap that just anyone in the street has it. One must test very carefully to see if the symptoms are there. All of the Vedic literatures advise us to approach a bona fide spiritual master to get rid of the perplexities of life



Kṛṣṇa is the original spiritual master of the Gītā, and Arjuna is the original disciple.

which happen without our desire. *Bhagavad-gītā*, 4.34, says: "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth." The qualification of the spiritual master is that he has seen the truth. And what is that truth? That is answered in the Seventh Chapter, 19th verse: "After many, many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes, and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare." So that is the qualification of a spiritual master: he has found out Kṛṣṇa, he has surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, and he knows that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes and all that is. So if one is fortunate enough to find such a soul who is in contact with Kṛṣṇa, who thinks Kṛṣṇa, who walks with Kṛṣṇa, who talks with Kṛṣṇa, who sleeps with Kṛṣṇa, who eats with Kṛṣṇa, whose whole life is devoted to spreading the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, he is most fortunate because he has a chance to solve all the problems of life.

And just what are the problems of life? Birth, old age, disease and death. These are the miseries of material nature which are plaguing us like a burning fire, and he who has not solved them is known as a miser, a *kṛpaṇa*. In the *Garga Upaniṣad* it is stated: "He is a miserly man who does not solve the problems of life as a human, and who thus quits this world like the cats

and dogs, not understanding the science of self-realization." This example is actually very appropriate, for a miser takes something that has some potential value and simply hides it, or effectively wastes it. This human body is the most valuable gift because there is developed consciousness in it. One can ask, "Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Who is God? What is His nature?" The animals cannot ask such questions. But if we simply spend our life fulfilling our animal desires or economic needs in the matter of eating, sleeping, defending and mating (as do all the animals), then this human life is effectively wasted, and we are misers.

Arjuna is acting like a *kṛpaṇa*, like a miserly man, because he is overly concerned with his wife and family, country and society. These exist simply on the basis of "skin disease." He is not thinking about the ultimate solution to birth, old age, disease and death. Arjuna forgets, but Kṛṣṇa never forgets. That is the qualification of a spiritual master—he does not forget Kṛṣṇa, and therefore he can save one from death. In the *Upaniṣads* it is said that no one should become a spiritual master, or a father, or teacher, unless he can save his dependents from death. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original spiritual master, and He can make a solution to all problems, including death. So how Kṛṣṇa spoke and how Arjuna heard should guide us in making a final solution.

Mundane scholars who deride Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Person say that one need not surrender to Kṛṣṇa personally, but to some unborn, unmanifest within. They do not know that there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa's within and without, and one who has no such understanding is the greatest pretender and the greatest fool.

Having surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna now takes the position of a disciple and listens, and Kṛṣṇa assumes the role of supreme teacher and speaks authoritatively. There is no question, no hesitancy, and He begins by chastising His disciple: "While speaking learned words you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief." Indirectly He is calling Arjuna a fool, because "those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead." To be a wise man means more than to parrot a few phrases, and to be an enlightened man calls for enlightened living. Therefore Kṛṣṇa now develops the central theme of the chapter, namely the spirit soul is eternally existing as His own part and parcel.

"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." In both the *Kaṭha* and *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads* it is affirmed that the Lord is the maintainer of innumerable living entities and that by His plenary portions He is alive in the heart of every living entity and is eternally maintaining them individually, both in the conditioned and liberated states. The impersonalist idea that after death one again merges into the Supreme and loses his individuality is here refuted by Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme authority, and He says, "Never was there a time, past, present, or future." Furthermore, this point is central to Kṛṣṇa's argument. He is telling Arjuna that there is no cause for lamentation, because whether one is in this body or that body, the individuality is still there. If one could lose his individuality, then there would be cause for lamentation. But Kṛṣṇa is telling His disciple that there is no cause for lamentation because in spite of all such apparent bodily changes the individual soul is there eternally. In verse 20 He says: "For the soul there is never birth or death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval." If individuality were only an illusion, as the impersonalists maintain, then how could Kṛṣṇa say this? Can something which is temporary and illusory, likened by the impersonalists to a ripple on the water, which is here for an instant and soon gone, be described as "unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval"?

Nor can it be argued that the individuality Kṛṣṇa is referring to pertains to the body only. Kṛṣṇa has already condemned His disciple for such a bodily conception, so how could He Himself have resorted to it? Again in verses 23-25 Kṛṣṇa affirms that the soul can never be divided, cut into pieces, burned, moistened, withered, or dissolved. It is "eternally the same." I have my individuality now, and I have it eternally; the only difference is that now it is exhibited through matter, and when the impurities mentioned in the first verse are removed, that individuality is exhibited in its pristine purity.

Kṛṣṇa is reinforcing the concept of the eternal individuality of the soul in so many ways. It is eternally His own part and parcel. It cannot be cut into pieces. Since it can never be cut into pieces, it is eternally fragmental, just as it is "eternally

the same.” Where is the ground for maintaining that someday the part can become the whole? That is not *Bhagavad-gītā*, and that is certainly not the way Arjuna understood it. This concept is repeated in many places in the *Vedas* and in many different ways just to confirm the stability of the conception of the soul. Repetition of something is necessary in order that we understand it without error.

Just to reassure his disciple, Kṛṣṇa presents the argument from another angle. He suggests that just for the sake of argument Arjuna should suppose that the soul is not eternal. Still there is no reason for lamentation. Suppose this consciousness is just a result of a chance combination of matter, as modern scientists and anthropologists are inclined to assert, that at a certain point in evolution consciousness appears for some time, and at another point it disappears due to the decomposition of matter, and in that way matter is coming together to produce this phenomena called consciousness and then disassociating again. Granting this to be true, where is the cause for lamentation? Does the wise man lament over some changes in inert matter? If all of these bodies on the battlefield are but a lump of chemicals, then why all the concern, for in battle who would withhold some chemicals in order to achieve victory? According to this theory there are so many entities generated out of matter every instant, and so many other entities are simultaneously annihilated. So why is this a cause for lamentation and the abandonment of one’s prescribed duty? Whether one accepts the Vedic conclusion that the soul is an atomic fragment of the supreme consciousness eternally or thinks that it is just a bunch of chemicals, there is no cause for lamentation or the abandonment of duty, what to speak of a duty being personally directed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is making it clear to Arjuna that He does not accept this atheistic philosophy and that neither should he, and that it behooves him to carry out his duty in the tradition of all great Vedic warriors. “O descendant of Bharata, he who dwells in the body is eternal and can never be slain. Therefore you need not grieve for any creature. Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat, and, by so doing, you shall never incur sin.” (*Gītā* 2.30, 38) Kṛṣṇa here definitely

asserts that there is no cause for lamentation because in fact no one can be slain. Secondly, Arjuna should fight simply for the sake of fighting because Kṛṣṇa is requesting this. The materialistic man is forever bewildered, being concerned with victory, gain and happiness, but the devotee is not concerned with these things. Happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat are the same to him. Whatever Kṛṣṇa desires—that is the devotee’s rule. It is not that he will be Kṛṣṇa’s devotee when he is victorious or when there is some gain. That is not devotion; that is business. Unfortunately most people, even most religious people, simply want to do business with God. “Give me this day, and I will do such and such.” That is not love of God, that is love of whatever one is bargaining for. Whatever condition Kṛṣṇa wants, even if Kṛṣṇa wants to send the devotee to hell, the devotee also desires. It is known as “dovetailing desire” when one makes Kṛṣṇa’s desire his desire. “Do thou fight for the sake of fighting” simply because Kṛṣṇa has willed it. Kṛṣṇa is Supreme, and His reasons for desiring anything are supreme. So we can rest assured that there is divine justice in the battle, just as we understand that when the surgeon amputates an infected limb, it is not violence but mercy. Kṛṣṇa is perfect, and whatever He does is perfect. Actually, Kṛṣṇa favors no one, not even his devotee, because Kṛṣṇa claims all living entities as His children. Thus we can rest assured that whatever Kṛṣṇa is ordering is best for everyone concerned.

The first 38 verses of Chapter Two deal with what is called *sāṅkhya* philosophy, or with the analytical study of matter. By means of this analytical study, Kṛṣṇa has shown Arjuna that the living entity is eternally part and parcel of Himself and that any impurity concerning this knowledge is temporary or illusory. Now the same thing will be shown by means of *yoga*, namely that one can come into perfect understanding of his relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa by means of *yoga*, or renounced work. It says in verse 40 that even a little advancement on this path can protect one from the greatest harm.

There are two main points one should note about this type of *yoga*: the first is that one must work. It will be more elaborately explained in the Third and Fourth Chapters that work is necessary, but here Kṛṣṇa is briefly outlining the fact that renounced work is superior to in-

action, but not work for the fruits of one’s action. Verse 47 states, “You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Neither consider yourself the cause of action, nor be attached to inaction.” Actually there are three concepts here: one is prescribed action, called *karma*; the second is prohibited action, called *vikarma*; and the third is inaction, or the failure to perform prescribed action. One of these is auspicious, and the other two are inauspicious; one will help one to advance spiritually, and the other two will degrade him. Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to fight according to his *karma*, or prescribed duty, but not to be anxious about the results, either success or failure. Simply “fight for the sake of fighting” for Kṛṣṇa.

Verse 51 states, “The wise, engaged in devotional service, take refuge in the Lord and free themselves from the cycle of birth and death by renouncing the fruits of action in the material world. In this way they can attain that state beyond all miseries.” Whereas the atheists are always anxious, those in devotional service take refuge at the lotus feet of the Lord. If one knows that the Lord is the factual doer of every action and is the proprietor of every result, where is there room for either pride or despondency? The Lord is the supreme enjoyer, enjoying the fruits of all actions; therefore it is said that He takes as much pleasure in the sting of an arrow that pierces His transcendental foot as He does in the love bites of His lovers in the bowers of Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa, as the supreme enjoyer, takes transcendental pleasure in all the actions of His devotees, as long as they are dedicated to Him in love. That is the only qualification. He has nothing to fear, nothing to gain and nothing to lose, but He is always reciprocating with the devotee who is working on His account. That is the first half of *yoga*—to be engaged for the Lord. And the second half automatically follows, namely that one withdraws his senses from the multitudinous sense objects. “One who is able to withdraw his senses from sense objects, as the tortoise draws his limbs within its shell, is to be understood as truly situated in knowledge.” (58) Without sense control, no *yoga* system can be complete. We can see today that there are so many so-called *yoga* societies where they are sitting this way or that, or pushing their noses, exercising and reducing, but where is the spiritual progress. Where is the love of

Godhead? When Lord Jesus was once journeying down the road, he saw a fig tree in the distance and went in search of some figs, for he was hungry. But when he came close he saw that there were no figs, only leaves, and so he cursed the fig tree, and it withered up and died. So we must produce fruit. It is not enough simply to have a form of godliness. There must be some fruit, and that fruit is love of Godhead. Unless we develop that dormant love of Godhead, which is within all of us, we will be cursed. Why? Because we have been given this valuable form of life, this human body. If we are simply wasting it on the objects of the senses, then we are *krpaṇas*, misers. We are lower than dogs, for at least the dogs are following their nature. But since we have this dormant tendency to love God, and we are not following it out, we are not as advanced as the dogs.

Why control the senses? Because that dormant love of God cannot develop until my senses are controlled. In the Vedic literature it is said that the individual is a passenger in the car of the material body.

Intelligence is the driver, and mind is the driving instrument, but the horses pulling the car are the senses. These senses are wild horses, pulling in so many ways uncontrollably, and unless they are controlled by the tight rein of the mind, there is no possibility of gaining that equilibrium known as peace. Actual advancement is dependent on remembering our original position as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Revival of that memory of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is explained in verses 62-63: "While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool." So it is not possible to revive that memory of Kṛṣṇa consciousness until the senses are controlled; nor is it possible to develop attachment for Kṛṣṇa unless we are detached from matter.

But detachment from matter and attachment for Kṛṣṇa can at once be accomplished by devotional service. The purest, simplest form of devotional service, especially benedicted for this age, is the chanting of this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. It is the special mercy Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself, that in this Iron Age of Kali, an age of quarrel and destruction, He has especially empowered His name with His full potency, so that by associating with the holy name of Kṛṣṇa one actually associates with Kṛṣṇa. There is no need to wait for death to be with Kṛṣṇa; we can be with Kṛṣṇa every instant through His name. We can also be with Him via His form, pastimes and qualities because they pertain to Kṛṣṇa and are absolute. On the transcendental plane there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His name, fame, form, associates and entourage. If we will simply associate with Kṛṣṇa, then our consciousness becomes Kṛṣṇized, and our life becomes sublime.

THE GURU: VIA MEDIA TO GOD

—by Hayagrīvādās Adhikārī (ISKCON—New Vr̥ndāvana)

It is always best to assume that we are in the modes of ignorance, and at least we will be right on that point. When knowledge is staggeringly finite, humility is the best policy. On the spiritual path one tries to make progress to the modes of goodness and then transcend, for it is not always possible to transcend the modes all at once. God alone is perfect, and we are always imperfect, even in our so-called liberated state. It is because we are imperfect that we have to take shelter of the perfect.

Lord Caitanya advises that we take shelter of a *sādhu*, who is a holy man of spotless character, *śāstra*, which is scripture, and *guru*, who is the perfect spiritual master. The scriptures should be the guidelines for the other two. The *guru* is liberated because he follows scriptures, and the *sādhu* is pure and honest because he accepts scriptural principles. The insistence on the authority of the scripture is to discourage people from inventing their own religions and to warn others against following such fabricators.

Actually, only God can establish a religion that is bona fide. Religion refers

to man's relationship with God or the Supreme Absolute Truth; it is neither a mere ritual, nor a set of regulations, nor a conglomeration of mental speculations concocted by man. Actual religion is to know God and one's relationship to Him. And this is not possible unless God reveals who and what He is and reveals man's relationship to Him. It is not that we can artificially say, "Oh, I think God is this, so I think if I do this or this I will become God, and then I'll be happy." One who invents in this way may be well intentioned, but he is actually misguiding himself and others.

The purpose of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is to reveal to man what God is and to establish man's relationship with God. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "In order to deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent My self millennium after millennium." (*Gītā* 4.8) The *Gītā* is like a play enacted for this purpose. Arjuna, who is actually an elevated devotee, puts himself on the level of an ignorant man in order that Kṛṣṇa may reveal His Divine Self to him and enunciate the *dharma* of Kali

Yuga. In the beginning of the Eleventh Chapter, Arjuna requests, "If You think, my Lord, that I am able to behold Your cosmic form, O Lord of all mystic powers, then please reveal to me Your universal Self." (*Gītā* 11.4) Kṛṣṇa then reveals to Arjuna "whatever you want to see," contained in His body all at once. He shows him "hundreds of thousands of varied divine forms, multicolored like the sea." In an attempt to describe this unprecedented sight, Sañjaya said, "If the radiance of thousands of suns were to burst forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the mighty splendor of the Lord." (*Gītā* 11.12) Actually, the form revealed on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, which is called the *viśva-rūpa* or universal form, is not the ultimate form of the Lord. Arjuna, being Kṛṣṇa's devotee, knew that this form was not ultimate. The *viśva-rūpa* is a material form revealed in the material universe to those who cannot easily accept the personal two-armed form of the Lord as ultimate. Therefore, the Lord reveals Himself impersonally as the cosmos, containing all varieties of living beings, mountains, forests, earths, planets and so on. This was

revealed as an example whereby man can have some criteria for verifying an incarnation of the Lord. If someone is claiming to be God and is trying to establish a religion, then one has the right, like Arjuna, to request to see his universal form. If he reveals this universal form, then one would have no doubts about offering him worship. It is not that Kṛṣṇa played word games with Arjuna by telling him, "This is My universal form that is before you, O Arjuna, but you cannot see it now because your vision is faulty." No, Arjuna requested to see the vision, and Kṛṣṇa delivered it immediately. Our vision of God is not dependent on our limited perception, otherwise we would never see Him. Kṛṣṇa delivered not only the vision but the means whereby Arjuna was to see it. "But you cannot see Me with your present eyes. Therefore do I give you divine eyes, so that you can behold My mystic opulence." (*Gītā* 11.8)

Actually Arjuna was not interested in seeing this form, for being a pure devotee he was interested only in the personal two-armed form of Kṛṣṇa. It is not possible to render service or enter into a loving relationship with the *viśva-rūpa*. Upon seeing this form, Arjuna, though a great warrior, trembled and lost all equilibrium, being unable to understand the fierce form displayed. Therefore, after the *viśva-rūpa* was revealed to him, Arjuna requested to see once again God's personal form. "After seeing this universal form which I have never seen before I am gladdened, but at the same time my mind is disturbed with fear. Therefore please reveal Your form as the Personality of Godhead." (*Gītā* 11.45) Then Kṛṣṇa returned to His human-like form, which "even the demigods are ever eager to see." Thus the *viśva-rūpa* is a revelation to show man the extent and opulence of the Supreme and to give him a guideline with which to reject imposters who claim to be God without having the powers of the Supreme.

The rest of the *Gītā* is devoted to the outlining of the various paths wherein one can enter into a relationship with Kṛṣṇa by means of meditation on the Supersoul within the heart, study of the scriptures (*jñāna-yoga*), work in a spirit of renunciation (*karma-yoga*), and the culmination, devotional service unto the Lord (*bhakti-yoga*). Thus, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa establishes a science of religion by showing what God is and how man can relate to Him and ultimately attain Him.

Only God is able to establish religion in this way, and because of this Lord Kṛṣṇa is called the *guru* of *gurus* by Śaṅkarācārya. This means that spiritual masters acknowledge Him to be the ultimate authority. One is not really a *guru* if he doesn't follow the *śāstras* for guidance, for by manufacturing his own way he is liable to mislead others. A *guru* is not a man who writes his own scriptures and gathers disciples for his own glorification. When Sanātana Gosvāmī asked Lord Caitanya how one can know whether or not the *guru* is a bona fide *avatāra*, Lord Caitanya answered, "The medium is *śāstra*. The medium is *guru*."

Whether the *guru* is a genuine *avatāra* must be determined through the *śāstras*. An incarnation never says, "I am an incarnation." Nor does an *avatāra* canvass for students. Because of his superior qualities, he is automatically accepted. The scriptures give evidence that at such and such a time an *avatāra* will descend from Kṛṣṇa's abode, his father's name will be this, his birthplace will be that, and so on. All these evidences were given in the *śāstras* for Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but Caitanya never claimed to be an *avatāra*, although He is the Supreme Godhead Himself.

Aside from being foretold by scriptures, a *guru* can be verified by *paramparā*. That is to say he himself may not be mentioned in the scriptures, but he must follow in a line of disciples from an *avatāra* who is mentioned. For example, our spiritual master is in the disciplic succession stemming from Lord Caitanya in the Fifteenth Century. Of course, Lord Caitanya, being an *avatāra*, could have begun His own disciplic succession, but He accepted the succession coming from Lord Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, etc.

The *guru* never contradicts scripture. This means that he never contradicts Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Offer Me fruits and grains," the *guru* does not say that one should offer Him meat, eggs and wine. When Kṛṣṇa says, "Worship Me," the *guru* does not say worship the void. When Kṛṣṇa says, "Surrender unto Me," the *guru* does not say surrender unto one's own mental speculations. Like the wheels of a train, *guru* and Kṛṣṇa run down the same track.

One may ask, "Why is the *guru* necessary? Isn't scripture enough?" Actually the Protestant movements within Catholicism asked this very question, and they ulti-

mately rejected the Pope as their *guru* and relied completely upon individual interpretation of the Bible. Before this, the Church of Rome had remained unified for 1500 years, but as soon as they rejected their unifying head, the Pope, they did not simply splinter into two or three groups but into hundreds and hundreds of various Protestant sects. Christianity lost its power due to this faction.

The rejection of the Pope by the Protestants may be justified, for since the time of Peter the divine powers of the Papacy have been steadily declining due to corruption, and during the Babylonian Captivity the line of disciplic succession was broken. Granted, the Catholic Church has been plagued with nepotism and simony, but this does not mean that the process of disciplic succession under a singular head should be rejected per se. The Pope or *guru* should be rejected, however, if he contradicts scripture or the divine holy sages (*sādhus*) who write scripture under the dictations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Factually the Protestants argued that because the Pope and the Church had, in their worldliness, deviated from the message of Christ, they were fully justified in rejecting them and relying solely upon scriptures.

This is an understandable course but a very dangerous one, especially when one is following the Bible for scripture. The Bible is filled with many allegories, proverbs, metaphors, parables and paradoxes and consequently can be interpreted in infinite ways. Therefore, Protestantism, with the doctrine of individual interpretation, could not remain unified. In *The Everlasting Gosple*, William Blake poked fun at the inevitable diversity of Biblical interpretation in this way:

The Vision of Christ that thou dost see

Is my vision's greatest enemy.

Thine has a great hook nose like thine,

Mine has a snub nose like to mine.

Thine is the friend of all mankind;

Mine speaks in parables to the blind.

Thine loves the same world that mine hates;

Thy heaven doors are my hell gates.

.....

Both read the Bible day and night,

But thou read'st black where I read white.

Due to imperfect senses and due to a

tendency to cheat, which are characteristic of every man, the scriptures are better received through a perfectly realized medium. If one wants to study chemistry, mathematics, geography or physics, he does not simply check a chemistry or physics book out of the library and sit down and begin reading. No, he buys the books, attends the lectures in the university, takes notes of the professor's lectures, does the assigned reading, takes the examination, and finally writes a thesis under the guidance of his professor. If mundane science is so difficult that one needs a teacher in addition to the textbooks, how much more does one need a teacher for the supreme science—the science of God. Not to speak of physics or chemistry, if one wants to learn how to drive a car, he does not simply sit down with a textbook. He has someone who knows how to drive a car teach him. If a teacher is needed just to learn about a mundane exterior process, how much more does one need a teacher to understand the mystical interior process of self-realization? So just as professors and textbooks are necessary for the understanding of a material science, the *guru* and scriptures are necessary for the understanding of the spiritual science of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” (*Gītā* 4.34)

Personally I have had practical experience in trying to understand the *Bhagavad-gītā* both alone and with a *guru*. When I was teaching at Ohio State University in 1964, my officemate, Dr. Mohan Lal Sharma, who was Punjabi, gave me a number of Hindu scriptures to read. We were both interested in the literature of Nineteenth Century American Transcendentalism (Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne), and in order to show me a mystical background that extended beyond the Bible, he loaned me a copy of *Bhagavad-gītā* and Śaṅkarācārya's *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*. I read the *Gītā* twice and was very interested, but somehow or other I could not understand the meaning of Kṛṣṇa either as a person or a force. Śaṅkarācārya made much better sense to me because he insisted on the Self much as Whitman did, but I misinterpreted this to mean my own finite self in perfection. After all,

according to Śaṅkara, nothing exists but the Self. I was right in the sense that I did not exist apart from the Self, but I was wrong in relegating the Self to my own finitude. When I read in *Bhagavad-gītā* that Lord Kṛṣṇa said that He was the Self seated in the hearts of all, I identified this Self with the Self in Śaṅkara and so considered Kṛṣṇa to be none other than a personified spokesman for my own finite self. The idea that Kṛṣṇa was God delivering a message to me, a finite creature who was but a part of Him, never crossed my mind.

In 1965, in New York, I re-read *Gītā* for the third time in a different translation, and just because there was a cover picture of Kṛṣṇa standing in a chariot and instructing Arjuna, I conceptualized Kṛṣṇa to be the higher Self that was within me instructing the lower self. In both cases, I was relegating the Infinite to my own finitude. I remembered nothing about the first reading, and the second reading left me so dissatisfied that I put the book aside for the Zen Teaching of Huang Po. Because I could not superimpose the Personality of Kṛṣṇa on my own finite personality, I found impersonal discourses in terms of the one mind to have more meaning. But this only carried me so far, and I got very tired of walking down St. Mark's Place saying to myself, “That which you see before you is the one mind—begin to reason about it and you at once fall into error.” As a *mantra*, this has limitations. At this point, I felt a sudden urge, a deep need, to find someone who could teach me something about realization.

Feeling I had exhausted all American literary and psychedelic possibilities, I left for India in 1965 with some vague notions of finding a *guru* who could direct me. I only emerged from this trip in 1966 with the conviction that India didn't have the answer and that she was only capable of giving me the dysentery. However, on the trip I read *Bhagavad-gītā* again and was told by a Nepalese boy who played a flute that wherever the flute is played Kṛṣṇa is present. Although he called himself a Buddhist, his eyes lit up when he spoke of Kṛṣṇa, and it was obvious that Kṛṣṇa was much more real to him than the Tathāgatas of the *Sūtras*, which he probably never read. And when in India, while trying to sleep on a train from Bombay to Delhi that stopped at every station where the sounds of hawkers, music and cows would awaken me, I somehow strongly

felt that the sounds I was hearing were weaving themselves into a song which was the song of *Bhagavad-gītā*. This was a song not only of India, but of the entire creation. Somehow or other, I realized the *Gītā*, but not Bhagavān. I heard the song, but knew nothing of the singer. Kṛṣṇa was still a perplexing question mark that I preferred not to give much thought to.

It was only after I returned from India that I met His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda walking down Houston Street near Second Avenue. After listening to him talk about the *Bhagavad-gītā* every morning for several months, Kṛṣṇa suddenly became more than a name in a book. He became that person for whom I have always yearned.

I feel safe in saying that the *Gītā* would have always remained enigmatic to me had not the explanations of the spiritual master and the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* which he delivered to me opened that locked door. Actually we are all prisoners of conditioned life, and no amount of literature within the prison can free us. We can only be freed by someone from the outside. Then once freed we can read these great literatures in their true light.

Guru, sādhu, śāstra. These can always be compared, and they should never contradict. The *sādhus* are the servants of the Lord. And the scriptures are the words of the Lord. They do not contradict because Kṛṣṇa is the center of all of them. The Protestants used to complain that the Pope came between the individual and God and obscured God. But this is not the case with the real *guru*. The real *guru* is a transparent medium through which God is perceived. He actually delivers his disciples to God. He is likened to a cowherd boy who leads the cows down to the water. Once the cows are at the reservoir, they drink of the waters of the Lord themselves. In the same way the *guru* leads the soul out of the slum of conditioned life, down the narrow streets of purification, on to the broad avenues of the *dharma*, into the heavenly city of God. Therefore the *śāstras* say, “By the grace of Kṛṣṇa one gets *guru*, and by the grace of *guru* one gets Kṛṣṇa.” When Kṛṣṇa sees that a student is sincere, He sends the spiritual master who can instruct him in the ways of purification so that finally he may be able to attain ultimate happiness—the re-establishment of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

NONVIOLENCE

—by *Dāmodara dās Adhikārī* (ISKCON—Washington, D.C.)

War is inevitable: an eye for an eye, dog eat dog, kill or be killed. Human history is a history of wars. Lust, anger and greed run amok in our minds, and for the sake of power and increased facilities for sense gratification, we become less than the animals. War is misery; and after victory there is still more misery, for the victor must protect himself against new opponents.

Violence does not necessarily mean political warfare. It can be seen in smaller groups as well, in wars of minds, personalities and egos. Each combatant is trying to successfully lord it over the others, hoping he can thereby satisfy himself. Even within the individual there is war, as he strives to overcome his conflicting desires. Even the millions of viruses, bacilli, and microbes within the body are engaged in a fierce struggle to gain predominance. Just to walk outside on a cold, rainy day is to participate in another war, defending ourselves against the attacks of an unfriendly environment. Where does it end? Death itself is the greatest opponent, the fact that frustrates a lifetime of aspirations. Who can conquer death? No one. Material life is war, and from the very beginning of hostilities, our defeat is sure. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (11:27): “For one who has taken his birth, death is certain; and for one who is dead, birth is certain.” So it is not so that when death comes we can at last have peace. No, not at all. That is just the beginning of more conflict and misery. The mothers of the war dead may wail for peace, the poets may sing the longing for peace in their funeral dirges of a war-torn world; but as long as there is birth and death, there must be war. And love, unless directed toward the all-blissful resolution of all struggles, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, cannot end this war.

Kṛṣṇa has kindly spoken the *Bhagavad-gītā* to His friend Arjuna, just for our sake. He tells us how to achieve actual nonviolence, how to be liberated in the supreme peace, *Brahman-nirvāṇa*. Oddly enough, however, He is simultaneously telling Arjuna to engage in fighting as a warrior on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Even more baffling to us, He is asking him to kill his teacher, his cousins, and other intimate and venerated associates! At this point, we might well conclude that we have come to the wrong place to study

nonviolence. It is the assurance of all Vedic authorities, however, that nonviolence can be achieved by following the *Bhagavad-gītā*, so let us take the counsel of these great souls.

Arjuna offers the best arguments for nonparticipation in the fighting. He pleads that he has no desire to enjoy the fruits of victory, especially when those with whom he would want to share the fruits will be dead. He states that he cannot contradict the will of the revered persons standing against him. He says that it is sinful to kill them and that their greed is no excuse for his sinking to their level. Arjuna thinks that the family, with so many of its members destroyed, will become corrupt and irreligious, polluting the community. He concludes that he would rather be killed unresisting than engage in killing.

Arjuna declares: “Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing ourselves to commit great sinful acts, driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness.” (*Gītā*, 1:45)

He throws down his bow and arrows and announces his plan to become a beggar, hoping thereby to practice a non-violent life. This is what we would expect from a spiritually advanced person like Arjuna, but Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, exhorts him to fight. Throughout the entire *Gītā*, He repeatedly encourages Arjuna to do battle.

What’s more, in the most spectacular section of the *Gītā*, the Eleventh Chapter, Kṛṣṇa reveals His universal form to Arjuna, who exclaims in terror as he sees the soldiers on the warfield being killed by the all-pervading person: “Every one of them is rushing into Your mouths, his head smashed by Your fearful teeth. And some I see being attacked between the teeth as well....I see You devouring all people in Your blazing mouths and covering all the universe by Your immeasurable rays. Scorching the worlds, You are manifest.” (*Gītā*, 11:27) So it seems that, of all destructive persons, Lord Kṛṣṇa is supreme. And yet another name of His is Hari, which means one who can rescue us from the miseries of material life. How is it that He who is supremely violent can also be supremely peaceful?

The key to understanding this transcendental point is knowledge of the difference

between matter and spirit. In our present situation, this refers to the difference between the body and the person. The person, or spirit soul, is not the same as his material body. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the person is a *spiritual* body covered up by a series of layers called false ego, intelligence, mind and body. The violence rejected by Arjuna and then shown to be inevitable by Kṛṣṇa takes place on the bodily level. Kṛṣṇa wastes no time telling this to His friend:

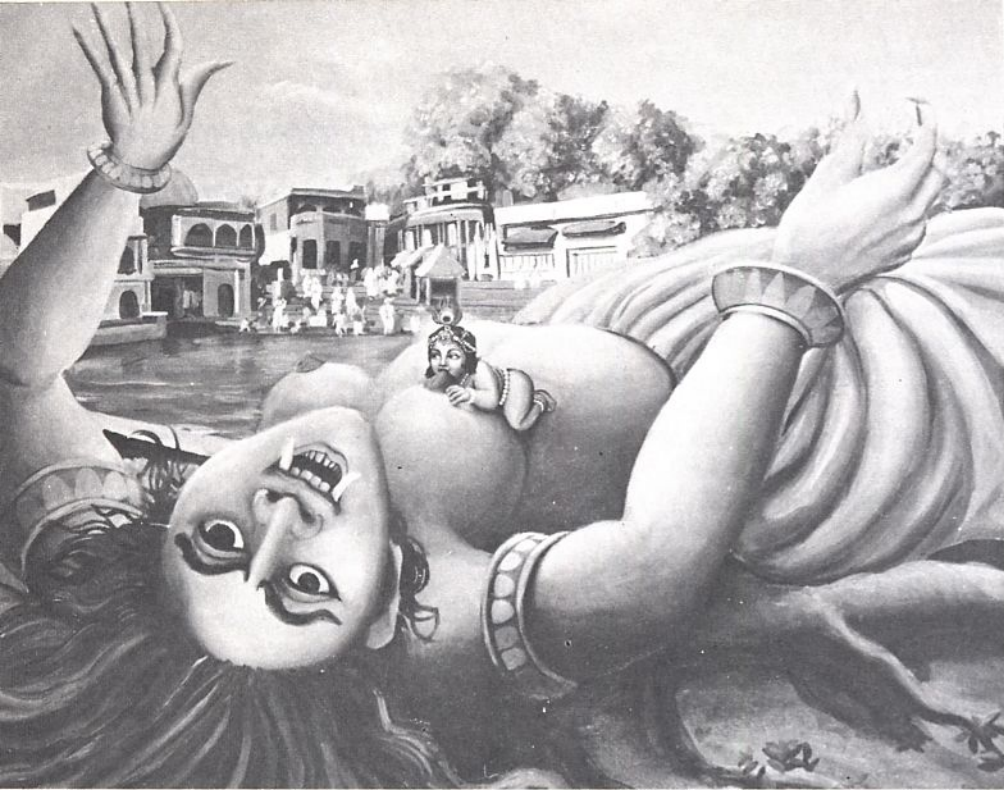
“No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul. Only the material body of the indestructible, immeasurable and eternal living entity is subject to destruction; therefore, fight, O descendent of Bharata.” (*Gītā*, 11:17-18)

We must remember that Kṛṣṇa is not an ordinary general building morale in his troops. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is not concerned with material victories or defeats. His only concern is that all living entities come back to Him and enjoy with Him.

“The self slays not nor is slain,” says Kṛṣṇa. And by His instructions, Kṛṣṇa begins to turn Arjuna’s consciousness from a limited vision of a grassy plain filled with temporary bodies to a sublime understanding of spiritual activity—developing the life of the eternal body in peaceful devotional service to Him. “Free from attachment and aversion,” Arjuna will ride into battle, knowing that his apparent violence is really nonviolence. Following the Supreme Lord’s order, he is beyond the actions and reactions of the material nature, so he is doing no violence to himself; and inasmuch as all the warriors have been already vanquished by Kṛṣṇa in His form as inevitable time, Arjuna is only acting as Kṛṣṇa’s instrument. It would be absurd to consider this attitude as being on the same level as the Nazi Eichmann’s statement, “I just followed orders.” Eichmann followed Hitler, the dying politician, and Arjuna is following Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme eternal Person. The difference is obvious.

Yet it cannot be denied that swords and bows and arrows were being used, blood was flowing, and material bodies were dying on the battlefield. In a material sense, it certainly was violent. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda explains this nicely in his purports of *The Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*:

“For the administration of justice, so-called violence is permitted. A surgical



Those enemies of the Lord who are personally killed by Him gain eternal salvation.

operation is not meant to kill the patient, but is for his cure.”

Still, this nonviolence is not what we have been accustomed to call nonviolence. Our acquaintance with the doctrine has been by way of an ethical, moral arrangement. Although the basis of this arrangement is material consciousness, at least it is the most justifiable aspect of materialism, the mode of goodness. Relative goodness, however, can easily blind us to the persistent violence of the world of birth and death. The humanitarian is kindly toward all those living beings of his species, but he does not hesitate to eat a cow or a chicken and burp complacently. Would he eat a human? No. Why does he eat a chicken? Because he is not broadminded enough to extend his magnanimity to communities with bodies unlike his. In other words, he claims to be philanthropic, but actually he is selfish. He is helping out the people who are like him and eating the people who are not like him.

So, in response to this particular problem, we find that many people have at least become vegetarians, which is certainly laudable. But there is still a problem. It is not that easy to jump out of *māyā*'s stringent punitive system. Even if we restrict our diet to vegetables, fruits and grains, we must accept a reaction from killing a potato or hurting an apple tree, because even these nonmoving living entities are people; they just have simpler bodies than you or I. They have life, and

they can feel pain. So we still are left with our hands dirtied by violence, in spite of our good intentions.

Similarly, in politics, many have tried nonviolence as a means toward their particular ends. Gandhi is the most familiar example. But in the last days of his life Gandhi was distraught because his passive resistance had simply engendered violence, even among his own followers; and he himself was killed by an assassin's bullet.

Even though such material nonviolence is pathetic in its failure to achieve its avowed purpose of peace, Kṛṣṇa does advocate nonviolence of this more generally recognized variety as a code of conduct. In the seventh verse of the Thirteenth Chapter of the *Gītā*, He mentions it, along with humility, pridelessness, tolerance, simplicity, and other good character traits, in “an aggregate called knowledge.” So Lord Kṛṣṇa certainly has a high regard for nonviolence. But let us look at Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to the verse to clarify the concept:

“Nonviolence is generally taken to mean not killing or destroying the body; but actually nonviolence means not to put others into distress. People in general are trapped by ignorance in the material concept of life, and they perpetually suffer material pains. So, without elevating people to spiritual knowledge, one is practicing violence. One should try his best to distribute real knowledge to the people, so that they may become enlightened and

leave this material entanglement. That is nonviolence.”

So ours is not a passive process. A devotee does not want to disturb other people. He does not want to hurt them. He wants to help them get out of suffering. He offers vegetarian foodstuffs to the Supreme Lord, and even though there is some killing and pain involved, the offering enables the plant to advance to a higher stage of life in his next birth. As for humans, he asks them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and feel the bliss of association with the Lord. Now, Arjuna was asked by Kṛṣṇa to kill, but that was an extraordinary circumstance. Since the Supreme Personality of Godhead was personally present on the battlefield, all who died there in His presence were liberated from the material world. So there is no question of violence. Kṛṣṇa gave them the greatest gift.

Nonviolence, as also humility, tolerance, etc., is not meant to be taken as an isolated aspect of moral behavior. It is one facet of a transcendental process of purification from material contamination. Part of that material contamination is the mode of goodness; so the *yogī* should be able, when the occasion arises, to reject even moral behavior and do what is necessary to serve Kṛṣṇa. Devotees are usually vegetarian, but if they must eat a dog to stay alive to serve Kṛṣṇa, then they will eat a dog. It is not recommended to eat dogs, however, and similarly it is not recommended to be violent in a bodily sense. Actually it is possible to become completely liberated from attachment to sense gratification only after the point of being elevated to the material mode of goodness. Sūta Gosvāmī says in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, “As soon as loving service is irrevocably fixed in one's heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from one's heart, and one becomes fixed in the mode of goodness which makes him completely happy. When a person of enlivened mind is thus affected by the contact of devotional service to the Lord, he can, in the stage of liberation from all material association, gain positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead.”

Development of the mode of goodness may make a person completely happy on the material platform, but we can understand from the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic sources that this happiness is still on the temporary platform, and, conditioned by material happiness in the mode of

goodness, one is obligated to continue in the material struggle for existence. However, if one can understand Kṛṣṇa by contact with devotional service, he becomes eligible to escape entirely from the conflicts and miseries of the material world and return to his eternal position in the spiritual world. So the separate cultivation of nonviolence, or any other individual quality in the mode of goodness, is of no particular value. Nonviolence should be understood as merely a small part of a transcendental whole. If one takes to the process of devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he automatically develops all the transcendental qualities characteristic of the modes of goodness and can, in addition, free himself from all material conditioning. We must not be misled. Śrīla Prabhupāda clarifies this in *The Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*: “To pursue the transcendental path is more or less to declare war on illusory energy.”

Kṛṣṇa is supremely destructive. In His form as material time, He is killing millions of bodies daily. But that is all part of our desire; and part of His subsequent plan is to show us that real enjoyment is enjoyment according to His desire, not according to our plan for satisfying a miserable material body. So in the end, Kṛṣṇa’s activities are all nonviolent because His only purpose is to give peace. (The only place where there is no war is in the spiritual sky, where Kṛṣṇa has His abode.)

We must declare war on *māyā*, or illusion, and on her influence over our activities, if we are to become purified. Once having attained Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, there is no more war. The pure devotee is not touched by *māyā*. He sees how the material nature is serving Kṛṣṇa nicely, deluding the fallen souls again and again until they slowly learn to take shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and become freed from *māyā*’s laws.

Our present separation from Kṛṣṇa is not caused by innocence or lack of knowledge. We are aware of what we’re doing. We *envy* Kṛṣṇa. We hate Him, and the thought of bowing down to Him; we want to *be* Kṛṣṇa. We are rebellious criminals; this world is a jailhouse where we continually riot, living like dogs and hogs.

To get out, we have to listen to the spiritual master, who is sometimes compared to a king visiting a penitentiary—he is not subject to its laws. But many people are trying to get out the wrong way. They are accepting the advice of puffed-up

philosophers who claim it is possible to storm the gates separating them from the world of freedom. These philosophers are telling the inmates, “You are God. Everything is perfect. Everything is love. It doesn’t make any difference. Nothing exists. We are all one. Do whatever you want to do.” Of course, such philosophers used to live very strict lives, reading difficult literature, restraining their diet and their sex life, in order to be always situated in the highest aspect of this kind of consciousness, which is called merging with God. Actually they are no different from the usual egotistical inmates of the cosmic prisonhouse, but they have rarified their egotism to an amazing extent. The inmates in general, however, do not have the ability to do this, and the result is that their envy of God, instead of being controlled, becomes whipped up by the philosophers’ statements, and they indulge in an unrestricted riot of sense gratification, imagining that thereby they can get out of the grey walls of the prison.

These philosophers, who maintain that God is impersonal energy or impersonal nothingness and that everything and everyone is therefore God, are murderers. They are not murdering bodies; they are murdering souls, people. They are casting souls down and down, farther into hell, by their demonic doctrines of rebellion against Kṛṣṇa. So if we are looking for real violence, we can find it here. Of course, these persons are very often outwardly gentle and magnanimous, dressed in robes, calling themselves holy men, revered by crowds of followers. But what they most seek after is nothing but spiritual suicide, annihilation of their personality in the radiance of the supreme. Violence means destruction, and the worst form of violence is destruction of reality, or the spirit. To think of myself as God is to commit violence, both to myself and others.

The pathway to this violence is material. A man may take up religion in order to get some material benefit, a business deal with God—it’s common enough. Then, having achieved his economic benefit, he can take up advanced sense gratification. And finally, after having been through all the “kicks” of *māyā*, he tires of it all and seeks liberation from matter. He is then ready to listen to the philosopher who will tell him he is God.

The fighting ends when one surrenders to Kṛṣṇa or His representative. We must admit: “I am not God, I am fool number

one.” That is self realization. “I am lower than the straw in the street. I am the most fallen, so please, Kṛṣṇa, come to me first.” Kṛṣṇa is beyond us, inexplicable; if we surrender to His grace, then He will gladly pull us out of the material mire and wash us in the ocean of spiritual bliss.

What is the fighting about? We are fighting against ourselves and against God. How silly it is. Kṛṣṇa has won anyway. He has killed our bodies millions of times, in hopes that we’ll learn something from it. So let’s give up this vain fighting! Surrender to Kṛṣṇa! Then there will be peace.

After the Battle of Kurukṣetra, when the great devotee Bhīṣmadeva was lying on a bed of arrows, ready to give up his body, he spoke many verses to the Lord, who was next to Him. In one verse, Bhīṣma says: “Let Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who awards salvation to others, become my ultimate destination. Being wounded by my arrows, His shield was scattered and His body was smeared with blood from the wounds, and He therefore moved towards me in an angry mood as if he were my aggressor.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1:9:38)

In the previous verse, Bhīṣmadeva had said that Kṛṣṇa ran at him “just like a lion goes to kill an elephant.” This is actual nonviolence, because Bhīṣma’s mind was always fixed on the form of the all blissful Lord. Bhīṣma wanted to see Kṛṣṇa as a valiant warrior, so Kṛṣṇa, out of His boundless mercy, gave to His pure devotee what the devotee wanted.

If we follow Bhīṣmadeva, we will have peace. The following is a description from the authoritative scripture *Brahma-saṁhitā* of the peaceful atmosphere of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal spiritual planet, Goloka, the ultimate destination of the devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead:

“In Kṛṣṇa’s abode the ground is made of touchstone, and the trees are all desire trees, giving any fruit that you desire for Kṛṣṇa. And the cows that they have are all surabhi, giving fountains and fountains of milk endlessly. And Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are seated on a throne decorated with all valuable jewels. They are served by hundreds of thousands of girls who are all goddesses of fortune. I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the source of all sources.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā*, 5:29)

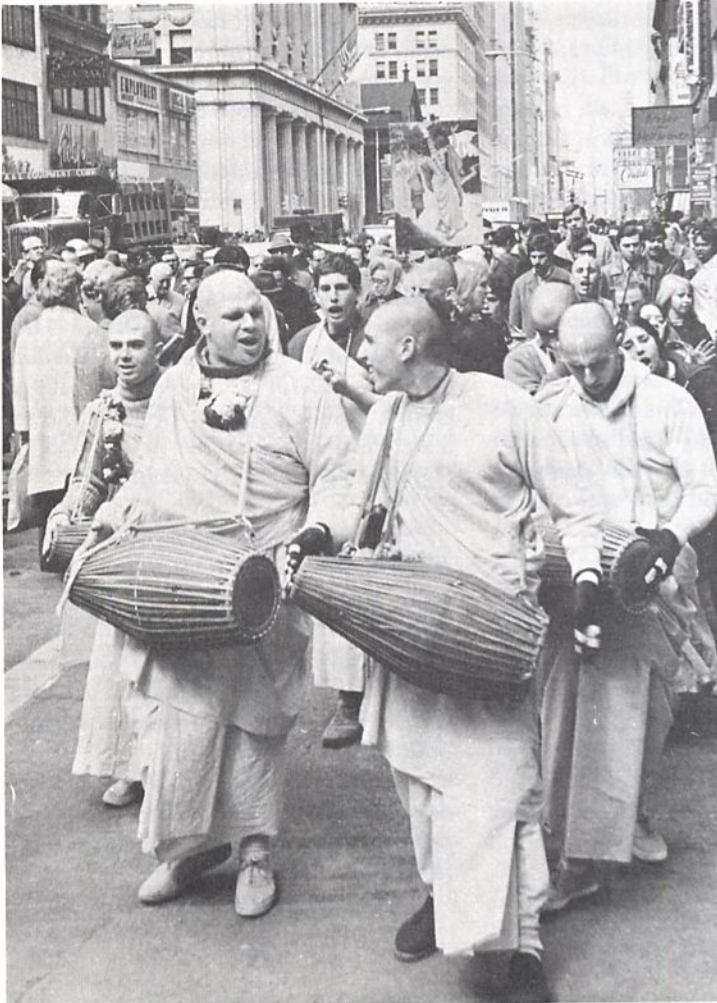
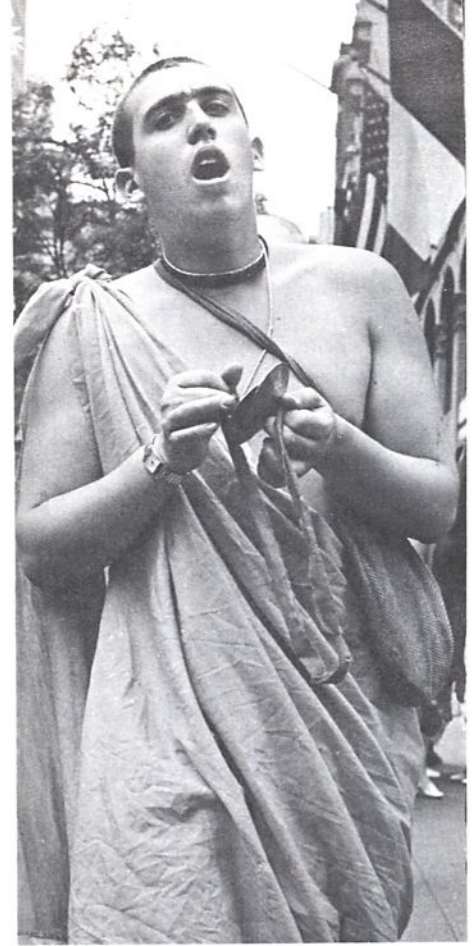


SANKIRTAN

Sometimes friends look at pictures of *saṅkīrtana* which are gathered from various cities, and they become curious to recognize the locale: "Oh, that is downtown New York." "That must be Seattle." "There is Vancouver." "There's Hawaii." But as long as there are devotees chanting the holy names of God, it is misleading to say that they are in New York or Seattle or Vancouver or Hawaii. The version of the Vedic literatures is that the chanters of the name of God become immediately situated in the spiritual sky. Our real self is not our body; real life is proven by consciousness, which is a symptom of the spirit soul. (For example, at the time of

death, the body is still there, but bereft of consciousness it is considered lifeless.) The real self, spirit soul, has his eternal abode in the kingdom of God, and he can go there when he becomes purified and develops his love for God. This abode of God cannot be reached by a mundane geographical journey or by purchasing an airplane ticket, but one does not have to wait until the time of death to experience the spiritual sky. By purifying the senses of his present body, one can feel his

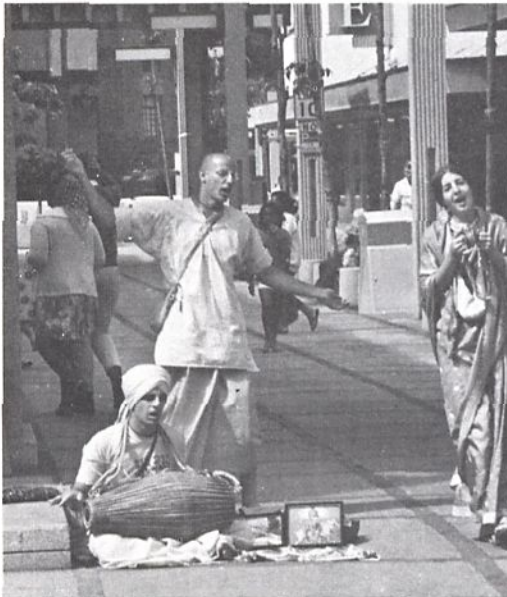
On these pages: mahā saṅkīrtana in New York City, with blissful New York and Boston devotees.

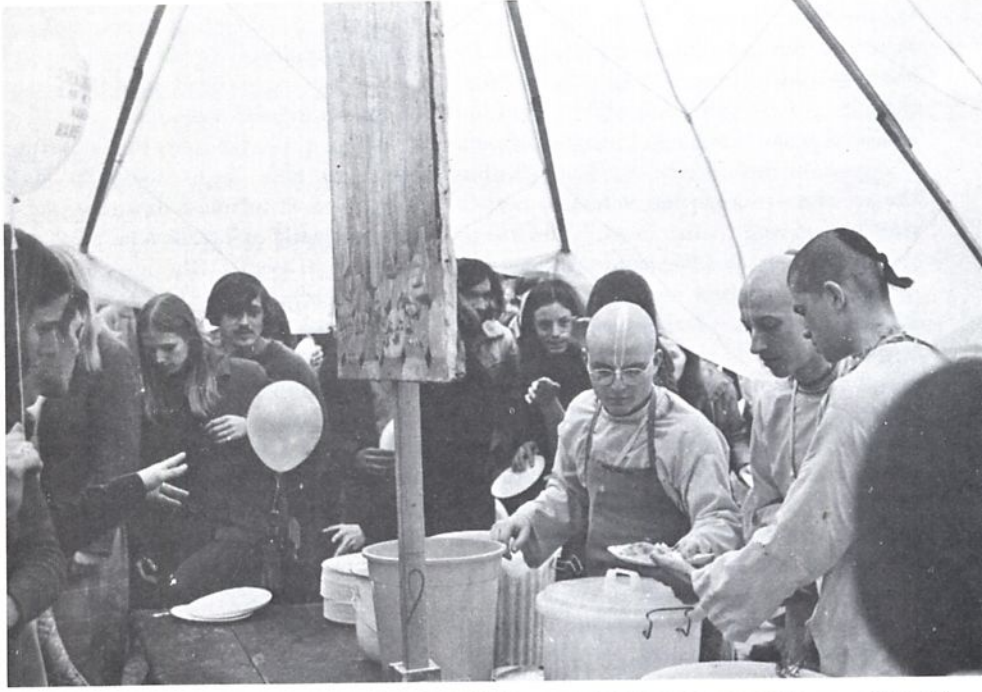
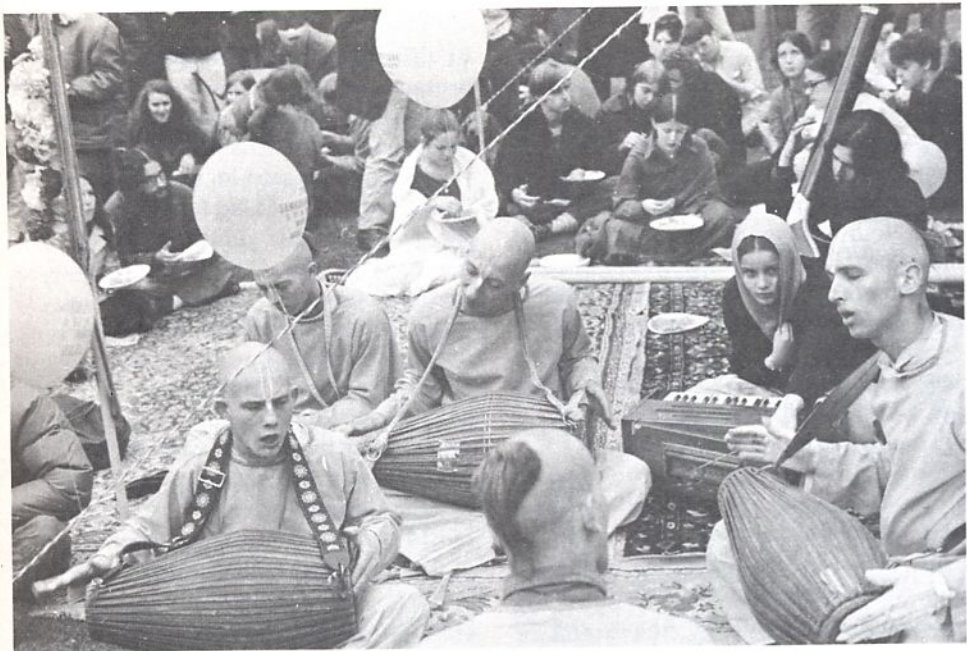




original nature, which is *sac-cid-ānanda*, eternity, bliss and knowledge. This is most easily done by chanting the holy names of God, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has declared, "I am not in the heart of the *yogī*, and I am not in the forest where the sages are meditating, but I am present where My devotees are chanting My glories." When His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda visits any city and gives instructions in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that city becomes a place of holy pilgrimage. Similarly, when his disciples who are sincerely following the regulative principles of devotional life chant in the streets of New York or Hawaii, those streets lose their mundane identification and become holy sites because of the fully empowered appearance of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, in His sound incarnation. In other words, because God appears in His name, wherever the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is carried on, the atmosphere becomes purified and transcendental. The *saṅkīrtana* party is a transcendental festival for all people, inviting them to enter the spiritual sky in fully blissful consciousness. Everyone can achieve love for God, and this can be practically experienced by the practice of *saṅkīrtana*. Anyone can then experience that he is not a part of Broadway or Hollywood Boulevard or Waikiki, which are temporary places soon to perish, nor is one ultimately a part of Christianity or Hinduism or any national or racial designation, which are subject to change with the change of the body. One's pure self is eternally the servant of God, and to be engaged in the loving service of God is our natural eternal activity.

On the left: ecstatic *saṅkīrtana* in Hawaii and on the right: *mahā saṅkīrtana*, with devotees from the Seattle and Vancouver temples.





THE PRAYERS OF AKRŪRA

—by Satsvarūpa dās Adhikārī
(ISKCON—Boston)

Akrūra, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, achieved perfection by his notable prayers. In his book *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda describes nine processes of realizing God. It is said that perfection of human life and entrance into the spiritual kingdom are guaranteed by execution of any or all of the nine items of devotional activity, and it is recommended that we execute these processes, following in the footsteps of great devotees. A partial list of the nine great devotees who achieved success simply by perfecting one process reads as follows: Mahārāja Parīkṣit achieved perfection by hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Śukadeva Gosvāmī achieved perfection by reciting the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Akṛūra, the charioteer of Kṛṣṇa, achieved perfection by praying to the Lord." The Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the transcendental literature containing the most full descriptions of the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, includes Akṛūra's long prayer, composed spontaneously in the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead when Akṛūra was carrying Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma by chariot from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā. The circumstances under which he prayed are very wonderful because they involve the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa was raised incognito as a cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana in order to prevent His being killed by His uncle, Kaṁsa, who had heard an omen that the child had come into the world to kill him. When Kṛṣṇa was sixteen, the sage Nārada went before Kaṁsa and revealed to him Kṛṣṇa's real identity and whereabouts. In fear of his life, the demon Kaṁsa then arranged for the killing of Kṛṣṇa and His elder brother Balarāma. Kaṁsa was the ruler of Mathurā Province, and he at once arranged for a gala wrestling match and ritualistic sacrifice to be performed in the heart of the city. Kaṁsa called for Akṛūra and asked him to go to Vṛndāvana to invite Kṛṣṇa and His father, Nanda Mahārāja, and the cowherd men to join in the festivities at Mathurā. Kaṁsa was the ruler of all the citizens of Mathurā, and

he considered Akṛūra to be his trustworthy agent. On the instructions of Kaṁsa, Akṛūra set out for Vṛndāvana in his chariot, thinking that although he was on a mission for Kṛṣṇa's enemy Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa, as Supersoul present in everyone's heart, would know his real feeling. Akṛūra was a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and as he traveled all day in his chariot he remained wrapped in thought, anticipating the sight of the beloved Supreme Lord. He was certain that simply seeing the Lord would cleanse him of all sinful reactions and make his life perfect.

Just outside of Vṛndāvana he observed the footprints of Kṛṣṇa, which are decorated by special markings—a lotus flower, a rod, a flag and an umbrella. Akṛūra lost all mental equilibrium at the sight of the actual footprints of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he jumped out of his chariot and fell onto the ground, shedding tears and crying, "How wonderful it is! How wonderful it is!"—touching his head onto the footprints of the Supreme Lord.

When they learned that Akṛūra had come to take Kṛṣṇa away to Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa's most intimate devotees, the *gopīs*, cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana, were put into madness of grief at the idea of separation from their beloved. They cried out against the cruelty of providence and also expressed displeasure with Akṛūra: "You are cruel, although your name is not cruel." (*Akrūra* means "not cruel.") Kṛṣṇa and His brother Balarāma, as well as His father and mother, Nanda and Yaśodā, and many of the cowherd men, accepted the invitation to attend the wrestling match in Mathurā, and thus they prepared to go, bringing offerings of butter and milk products. Akṛūra took Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in his chariot and, despite the *gopīs'* blocking his way in a desperate attempt to keep Kṛṣṇa from leaving, set out on the journey to Mathurā bearing his two glorious passengers.

It is described that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma asked Akṛūra to stop the chariot after some time so that They might bathe in the River Yamunā. When They had finished Their bathing, Akṛūra requested that he might bathe also. While Rāma and Kṛṣṇa waited on the chariot, Akṛūra entered the water of the river. To his surprise, however, he saw the two brothers, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, within the water of the Yamunā. He was certainly confused, since he had just left Them sitting in the chariot. Akṛūra at once emerged, returned

to the chariot and, indeed, saw the two brothers seated as before. He was then doubtful as to what he had seen in the water, and he returned to the river. This time he saw Kṛṣṇa in the water in His expansion-form of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the source of the universe, and he saw Balarāma as the white Ananta, or snake incarnation, which is always present with Viṣṇu, serving as His hood or couch while the Lord is resting on the causal water. It is described that Akṛūra saw "the four-handed Supreme Personality of Godhead, smiling very beautifully with His beautiful face. He was very pleasing to all and was looking toward everyone. Surrounding His Lordship were His intimate associates like the four Kumāras, demigods like Śiva and Brahmā, and devotees like Nārada and Prahādā—all offering prayers to the Lord." Seeing the situation of the Personality of Godhead, Akṛūra was overwhelmed with great devotion, and he experienced transcendental shivering in his body. Maintaining his pure consciousness, however, he bowed his head before the Lord and, with folded hands and faltering voice, began to compose his prayers: "My dear Lord, I pay my respectful obeisances unto You because You are the supreme cause of all causes and the original inexhaustible personality, Nārāyaṇa."

Akrūra first acknowledged Kṛṣṇa to be the source of all sources. Certainly this must be a quality of God. Scrutinize any object in the material or spiritual worlds and trace out its origin or source—ultimately all things go back to one absolute source, or God. As the controller, He controls all other sources; all sources emanate from Him, and He Himself needs no source other than Himself. This is not offered as a research proposition, but is to be accepted as the Vedic conclusion. That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the source of all sources, although inconceivable, can be accepted on the strength of higher authorities. Just as if one wants to know who one's father is, the only authority for that information is his mother, the authority for transcendental knowledge is the *Veda*, scripture. Transcendental knowledge originates from the Personality of the Absolute Truth and descends through His pure devotees.

As the source of all sources, God is also the source of knowledge about Himself. Man cannot know the source of all sources by his speculative mental power. It is not a matter for research. It is said in

the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that if one rides on the airplane which runs at the speed of mind (it can take you to India in a second), and if one travels at that speed for millions of years, he will find the spiritual sky to be unlimited. It is not possible even to approach it. If we attempt to reach this knowledge of the cause of all causes by inductive reasoning, we cannot reach the goal. We will go on experimenting, thinking, "There may be some cause existing somewhere which I have not traced back to God." In Sanskrit this is called *āroha*, or the ascending process, and it cannot work for reaching transcendental knowledge. But it is said in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, "Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes." *Brahma-saṁhitā* is an authoritative scripture and is accepted by the disciplic line of spiritual masters. Although Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to understand, one can very easily learn about Kṛṣṇa from the authentic *śāstras* and from the devotee of Kṛṣṇa. As the cause of all causes, God is also the cause of bringing the Vedic literature into the world, and He is the cause of the pure devotees who move among fallen souls distributing love of Kṛṣṇa. And because He Himself is beyond any cause, the Lord bestows causeless mercy upon the living entity. Causeless mercy does not depend on the qualification of he who is receiving it. Kṛṣṇa's mercy is called causeless because it is not given for any return benefit, but only out of love, whereas in the material world there is always motive or cause. Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's devotees are causeless in their mercy. So Akrūra's prayers, although moved by the deepest needs of the heart, are based on the version of the Supreme Lord, as He is, as revealed by scripture and by His pure devotees from time immemorial.

Akrūra prays, "You are the original inexhaustible personality." God is a person; one cannot pray to imperson, and void cannot respond to one's prayers. Because they are under the influence of the stringent laws of the material energy, the impersonalists find this sublime faith in the Supreme Person to be very distasteful. The impersonalist philosophers think in a material way about the Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa, and they conclude that He cannot be the Absolute Truth. They understand the last word in

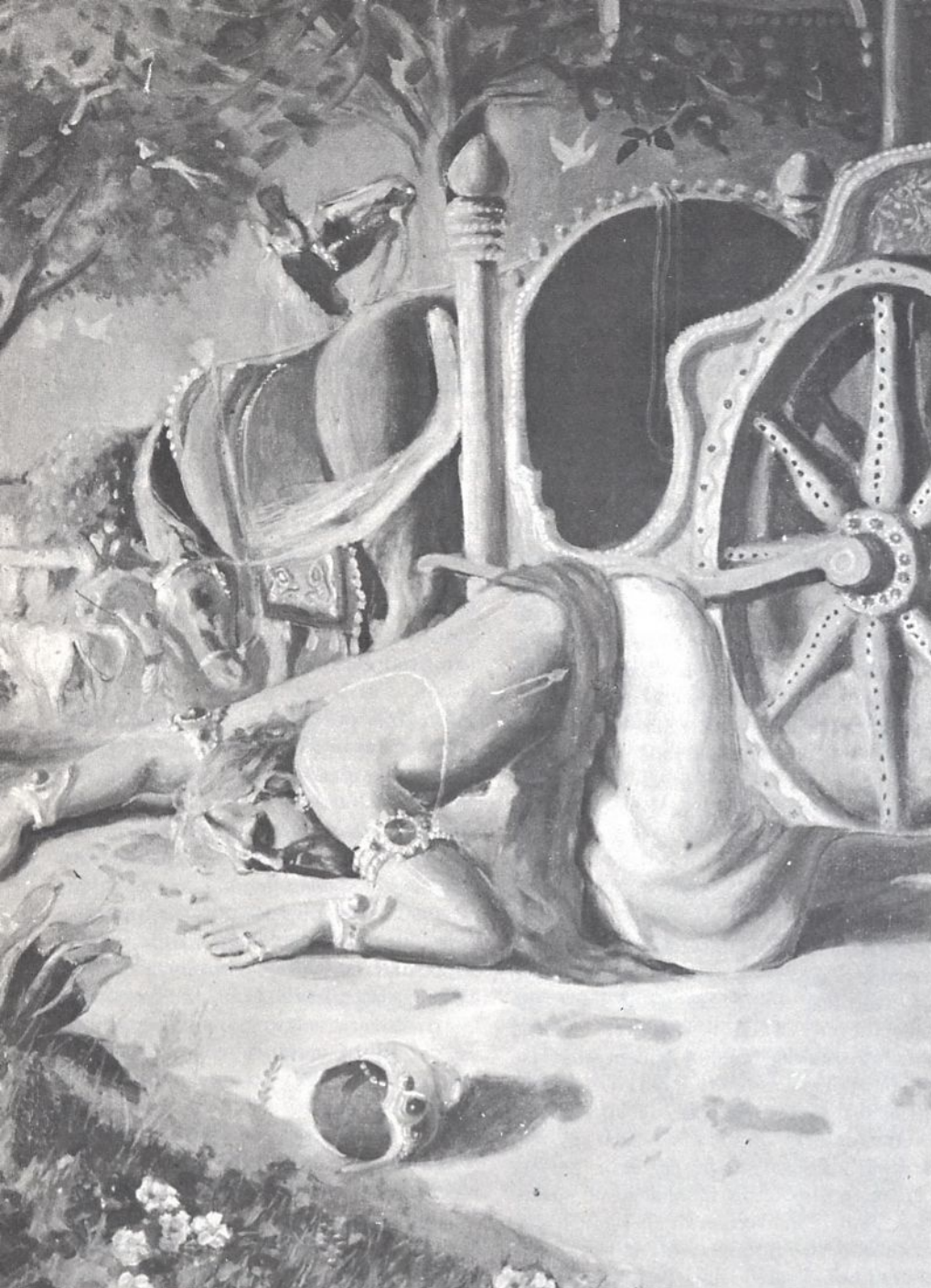
the Absolute Truth to be the impersonal eternal spirit, Brahman. They understand the Absolute Truth to be distributed everywhere as impersonal. To them, personal identity means materialism, falseness and illusion. They wish to merge with the Brahman. But according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, that Brahman is but the effulgence of the Supreme Person: ". . . and I [Kṛṣṇa] am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal and imperishable, eternal, the constitutional position of ultimate happiness." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.27) That the Absolute Truth is a person is affirmed throughout the Vedic literature: "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." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.27) "O my Lord, O primeval philosopher, maintainer of the universe, O regulating principle, destination of the pure devotees, well-wisher of the progenitors of mankind, please remove the effulgence of Your transcendental rays so that I can see Your form of bliss. You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the sun, as am I." (*Śrī Īśopaniṣad*, Mantra 16)

He is the chief person, infallible, and His body is nondifferent from His soul. He is a person unlike ourselves, who are but parts and parcels of the whole. Because the Absolute Truth has to be inexhaustible, the impersonalists with their material way of thinking cannot accept that He can be a person. But although every person in the material world is mortal and subject to the defects of illusion, cheating, and limited knowledge, Kṛṣṇa is a perfect person, possessed of inexhaustible potencies. That is the verdict of all Vedic literatures and the direction of all scriptures. He did not exhaust Himself by creation of the material cosmos. Although He has distributed Himself everywhere, His personality has not become lost. That distribution of Himself is not a very difficult job for God. Even the sun, a material object, has been distributing unlimited energy for countless years, and it has not become diminished in heat or bereft of its individuality. If we take a piece of paper and rip it into tiny pieces, we may say that the identity of the whole paper is lost, but in the realm of Absolute, Kṛṣṇa is distributed and yet remains aloof from that distribution. Although nondifferent from the creation which is His energy, He is whole and separate from it. This is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "In My tran-

scendental form I pervade all this creation. All things are resting in Me, but I am not in them. Again, everything that is created does not rest on Me. Behold My mystic opulence: Although I am the maintainer of all living entities, and although I am everywhere, still My Self is the very source of creation." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.4-5) Although all creation, spiritual and material, is Kṛṣṇa's energy and His energy is nondifferent from Himself, He is aloof from everything and is the eternally enjoying Original Personality. This is the sublime doctrine of simultaneous oneness and difference expounded by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Similarly, the living entity, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, is also one of the energies of Kṛṣṇa and is qualitatively nondifferent from Him. But at no time can any of the qualitatively equal parts become quantitatively equal to or greater than the whole.

Akrūra's prayers continue thus: "You are the cause of all causes. The elements of this cosmic manifestation—earth, fire, air, sky, egoism and the total material energy, as well as nature, the marginal energy, the living entities, mind, senses, sense objects, and the demigods who control the affairs of this cosmic manifestation—all are produced from Your body. You are the Supersoul of everything, but no one knows Your transcendental form. Everyone who is in this material world is influenced by the modes of material nature. Demigods like Lord Brahmā who are covered by the influence of material nature do not exactly know Your transcendental existence, which is beyond the cosmic manifestation and the three modes of material nature."

Akrūra's prayers of personal expression concur with the version of the standard Vedic literatures. Knowledge of the spiritual sky or of the Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot be concocted or self-made. It is stated that for such knowledge we have to take assistance from the *Vedas*. That Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as accepted by Akrūra, is confirmed by the highest authority, the *Vedas*. All classes of transcendentalists who accept the authority of the *Vedas*, even the impersonalists generally known as *Vedāntists* who are led by Śaṅkarācārya, accept Kṛṣṇa as the highest authority. Although Śaṅkarācārya is supposed to be an impersonalist, in his commentary to the *Bhagavad-gītā* he reveals himself to be a covered personalist. He writes as follows: "Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Person-



How wonderful it is! How wonderful it is!

ality of Godhead, is beyond this cosmic manifestation." This is what Akrūra also prays as he beholds the transcendental form of Śrī Viṣṇu reclining on the snake-couch of Śeṣa Ananta on the Causal Ocean.

Beholding Viṣṇu, Akrūra beholds the spiritual form of the Absolute Truth. Very beautiful in bodily feature and surrounded by hosts of devotees and demigods, Kṛṣṇa, or God, is the chief person, the source of all persons, and yet He is not like one of the *jīva* souls who are under the influence of the limiting material energy. He is not covered up; His spirit is not engaged in a

body of matter which grows old and is subject to disease and death. There is no difference between His inside and His outside.

Viṣṇu is the controller of this material world, and unlike the countless living entities who pervade all the material planets in the bodies of germs and in gigantic bodies, He is not controlled by time, and He is not subject to transmigration in different deteriorating bodies. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the

Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millenium in My original transcendental form." (Bg. 4.6) Kṛṣṇa does everything at His own will, and by that will He sometimes appears in the material world. Nevertheless, He remains unaffected by its material laws, just as a king visiting a prison is not affected by the laws of the prison.

"Except for You," Akrūra prays, "everyone is being carried away by the waves of material nature." The material nature is so powerful that even the demigods like Brahmā are in illusion and do not have knowledge of the spiritual sky and of the nature of the spiritual Personality of Godhead. But by the mercy of the Supreme, if anyone in any species of life surrenders to Him sincerely, he is freed from the deluding energy (*māyā*) and from the stringent laws of nature, and he can be brought up to the spiritual level. This was the special benediction of Lord Caitanya for the especially fallen souls of the present age. Simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, the unfortunate souls of Kali-yuga can cross over millions of births of wandering and attain a spiritual status beyond the material modes. This is achieved simply by switching their dependence from dependence on matter and the energy of illusion to dependence on Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual energy. And this is done by the guidance of the expert pure devotee or spiritual master. Following the spiritual master and transferring from dependence on illusion to dependence on Kṛṣṇa is the practical experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Akrūra prays that the Lord is the universal form. "My dear Lord, the fire is Your mouth, the earth is Your feet, the sun is Your eye, the sky is Your navel, the directions are Your ears, space is Your head, the demigods are Your arms, the oceans and seas are Your abdomen, and the winds and air are Your strength and vitality. All the plants and herbs are the hair on Your body, the clouds are the hair on Your head, the mountains are Your bones and nails, and the days and nights are the twinkling of Your eyelids."

Akrūra pays his obeisances to all the different incarnations, such as the fish incarnation, Lord Rāma, Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, Lord Vāmanadeva, Lord Buddha and Lord Kalki.

Finally Akrūra admits that he himself is helplessly in illusion regarding spiritual knowledge: “My dear Lord, I am also no different from these conditioned souls. I am falsely thinking myself happy by possessing my home, wife, children, property and effects; in this way I am acting as if in a dreamland because none of these are permanent. I am a fool to be always absorbed in such thoughts, accepting them as permanent and true. My dear Lord, on account of my false identification, I have accepted this nonpermanent material body, which is a source of all kinds of miserable conditions. Being bewildered by such a false concept of life, I am always absorbed in thoughts of duality, and I have forgotten You, who are the reservoir of all transcendental pleasure. I am bereft of Your transcendental association, just like a foolish creature who leaves a lush oasis to search for water in the desert. The conditioned souls want to quench their thirst, but they do not know where to find water. They give up a spot where there is actually a reservoir of water and run into the desert, where there is no water. My dear Lord, I am completely incapable of controlling my mind, which is now driven by unbridled senses, attracted by fruitive activities and their results. My dear Lord, Your lotus feet cannot be appreciated by any person in the conditional stage of material existence, but somehow or other I have come near Your lotus feet, and I consider this to be Your causeless mercy upon me. You can act in any way You please because You are the supreme controller. I can thus understand that it is only by Your causeless mercy that when a person becomes eligible to be delivered from the path of repetition of birth and death he becomes attached to Your causeless devotional service.”

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that while Akrūra was offering his nice prayers to the Supreme Lord, the Lord disappeared from the vision, just as a dramatic actor changes his dress and assumes his original feature. After the disappearance of the Viṣṇu form, Akrūra came out of the water and walked back to the chariot where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were sitting. Upon seeing Them, Akrūra was struck with wonder. Kṛṣṇa then asked him whether he had seen something wonderful in the water or in space, and Akrūra said, “My dear Lord, all wonderful things that are hap-

pening within this world, either in the sky or in the water or on the land, are factually appearing in Your universal form. When I have seen You, what wonderful things remain to be seen? There cannot be anything more wonderful than Your transcendental form.” Kṛṣṇa had seen that Akrūra, approaching from the water, was dumbstruck, and therefore He had asked him, “Have you seen anything wonderful?” But Akrūra’s expression indicated that there was nothing more wonderful to be seen than the original form of Kṛṣṇa.

Akrūra had seen Kṛṣṇa’s universal form, and yet upon seeing the original form of Kṛṣṇa seated on the chariot as a cowherd boy with two arms holding a flute, Kṛṣṇa in a bluish hue, wearing beautiful garments and a peacock feather, His hair decorated with flowers, a flower garland around His neck, and accompanied by His brother Balarāma, who wore blue clothing and whose complexion was whitish, Akrūra felt that this was the greatest thing and that what he had just seen in the water could not compare to it. The devotee Arjuna expressed the same feeling after Kṛṣṇa revealed the universal form to him on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. After seeing this manifestation, which contained the entire material cosmos, consisting of time and space and innumerable forms, Arjuna requested that he again be allowed to see the original form of Kṛṣṇa. It is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that Kṛṣṇa, having frightened Arjuna with His universal form, displayed His real four-handed form and at last showed Him His two-handed feature, thus encouraging the fearful Arjuna. When Arjuna thus saw Kṛṣṇa in His original aspect he said, “Seeing this humanlike form so very beautiful, I am now settled in mind and am restored to my original nature.”

The statement of the Vedic literature is that one who knows Kṛṣṇa knows everything, and once one has seen Kṛṣṇa he has seen everything wonderful. The appreciation of Kṛṣṇa in His original form is the highest perfection of spiritual life, beyond awe of His multipotencies, the cosmic manifestation or universal form, the impersonal Brahman, and even the Viṣṇu form.

Akrūra could see this original form, but others cannot. The ability to see Kṛṣṇa is proportionate to the service offered to the Lord; in that proportion He reciprocates.

For example, even in our material world everyone is serving something. The materialists are serving *māyā*, the illusory energy, and therefore they see only *māyā*, not Kṛṣṇa. The impersonalists are serving that concept of Kṛṣṇa which is imperceivable, and therefore they cannot perceive Him. The most recognized transcendentalist, however, is the *Bhāgavata*, or devotee, who is serving the personal form of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore knowledge of how to discriminate between matter and spirit is not sufficient; one must *serve* the Supreme Spirit, Kṛṣṇa.

Akrūra’s prayers began with philosophical glorification of the Supreme Lord as the total origin and cause of everything and the energetic source of all energy, and the prayers end with the fervent, personal plea that the Lord allow the individual devotee to become attached to His lotus feet in an attitude of loving service. It is very significant that an elevated devotee of Godhead like Akrūra does not pray that the Lord grant him material benefits such as daily sustenance, a wife, wealth and good health. (These are already granted by the Lord in accordance with the form of species of body in which one is appearing in this material world.) Nor does the pure devotee pray to God for improvement of the material welfare of the people in terms of temporary prosperity or advancement of the national cause, nor does he pray for temporary cessation of a particular war while neglecting to pray for the solution to all war—the world-wide development of God consciousness. It is stated by the Vedic scriptures that the highest benefit will be derived by all living entities when they submissively hear about and glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When one praises the naturally praiseworthy glories of God according to authoritative understanding of His transcendental qualities, and when others give their submissive aural reception to these prayers or chants or glorification, then it is guaranteed that all involved will move very quickly toward the perfection of life, love of Godhead, and then follows an eternal life of bliss and knowledge in the association of Kṛṣṇa.

The painting on the cover shows Akrūra in the Yamunā River, offering his prayers to Lord Viṣṇu, who is being worshiped by great sages and demigods.

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR MANKIND IN THIS AGE

—by Jananibas dās Brahmācārī (ISKCON—Columbus)

Let me first offer my obeisances to my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrajakācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Gosvāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda, the ācārya for this age, who has opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge, having rescued me from the fires of material birth and death. Let me also offer my most humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is more magnanimous than any *avatāra*, even Kṛṣṇa Himself, because He is bestowing freely what no one else has ever given, pure love of Kṛṣṇa. Let me offer my obeisances to the Supreme Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa, who is the well-wisher for the cows and the *brāhmaṇas* as well as for all living entities in general. Let me offer my repeated obeisances to Govinda, who is the pleasure reservoir of all the senses.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the absolute necessity for mankind in this age. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only science that is informing us of our true, eternal position as spirit souls, living entities, constitutionally part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa. It is presenting the problem of our suffering clearly: we have desired to enjoy independently of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore He has put the eternal spirit soul in the temporary material body where he can enjoy all he likes. Kṛṣṇa consciousness gives absolute solution to all suffering; through devotional service to the Supreme Lord, the soul, conditioned by material energy, can get rid of lustful contamination and then go back to home, back to Godhead, and return to his original, blissful, constitutional position.

Let us examine how we know the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter 10, verse 3, Kṛṣṇa says, “He who knows Me as the unborn, as the beginningless, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds—he, undeluded among men, is freed from all sins.” In Chapter 10, verse 12, Arjuna says, “You are the Supreme *Brahman*, the ultimate, the supreme abode and purifier, the Absolute Truth and the eternal Divine Person. You are the primal God, transcendental

and original, and You are the unborn and all-pervading beauty.” So Arjuna accepts Kṛṣṇa as God. But who is Arjuna who declares this? We learn in *Mahābhārata*, in which *Bhagavad-gītā* appears, that Arjuna is a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. What is a pure devotee? A pure devotee is an individual fully engaged in *bhakti-yoga*, the *yoga* of devotion or of love. This means he renders uninterrupted, unmotivated devotional service to the Lord. For a pure devotee, there is not a moment’s lapse in his unqualified loving consideration of the Lord. A devotee is not engaging in *bhakti* for any selfish reason. He wants nothing for himself and everything for the Supreme Self. And because of the unstinting affection the devotee gives to the Lord, Kṛṣṇa reveals His personal form, paraphernalia and pastimes to the devotee.

Arjuna, then, has received knowledge by revelation from Kṛṣṇa Himself that He is the Personality of Godhead. We shall see that an ordinary man cannot sanely make this claim to another man, because he does not possess the required opulences or qualifications of the Personality of Godhead.

We learn in *Mahābhārata* that Arjuna was a pure devotee whose realization of Self was taken away; he was put into gross ignorance during the Battle of Kurukṣetra so that *Bhagavad-gītā* could be delivered to him by Kṛṣṇa, who advented Himself on earth at that time. So in Chapter 10, verse 3, Kṛṣṇa says that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and in verse 12 Arjuna concurs. But this is not simply a private agreement between friends. In verse 13, Arjuna says, “All the great sages such as Nārada, Devala, and Vyāsa proclaim this of You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me.”

The goal of spiritual realization is only one, love of God; the *Vedas* and all Vedic literature stands as a single comprehensive whole towards this transcendental understanding. All the sacrifices of the *Vedas* are finally aimed at the Supreme Person, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. The essence of the *Vedas* is presented in the *Vedānta-sūtra* as the complete exposition of the Absolute Truth, and *Vedānta* is accepted by all classes of

transcendental scholars. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, “I am seated in everyone’s heart; I am the compiler of *Vedānta*, and I know *Veda* as it is.” The goal of Vedāntic study, therefore, is to know the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, and this is also confirmed by the leading ācārya of the impersonal school, Śāṅkarācārya, who wrote in his commentary of the *Gītā*: “Nārāyaṇa [Kṛṣṇa] is alone above the cosmic manifestation . . . Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” The sage Parāśara declared that the Personality of Godhead can be defined as possessing in full the six opulences of all wealth, all strength, all knowledge, all fame, all beauty and all renunciation, and in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the activities of Kṛṣṇa reveal that He possesses these opulences in full, and His activities cannot be imitated by any man claiming to be God for gathering the cheap adoration of the public.

We must investigate how *Bhagavad-gītā* is authoritative and who are these sages Arjuna mentions. The means to understanding this authority is called *sampradāya*. *Sampradāya* refers to the chain of disciplic succession. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter 4, verse 1, it is stated, “The Blessed Lord said, ‘I instructed this imperishable science of *yoga* to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of Mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.’” Verse 2 continues, “This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost.” Verse 3 goes on, “That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend; therefore you can understand the transcendental mystery of this science.”

This science of *Bhagavad-gītā* is coming down to us through *sampradāya*, through a chain of spiritual masters. The bona fide spiritual master is such that he never deviates from the instructions of the previous ācārya. What was first spoken by the supreme authority, that is, the word of God, is being carried down perfectly by the disciplic succession with all care not to adulterate or malinterpret it. In Chapter 4, verse 34 of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Supreme Lord says, “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire

from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth." There is, then, a succession of spiritual masters, self-realized individuals known as *Brahma-mādhva-gauḍīya sam-pradāya* of which the present *ācārya* (divine representative) is His Divine Grace Tridaṇḍī Gosvāmī Om Viṣṇupāda 108 Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Gosvāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda. He is known to his many disciples as Prabhupāda, meaning the master at whose lotus feet all other masters must pay homage. Śrīla Prabhupāda has seen the truth. He is a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He renders uninterrupted, unmotivated transcendental loving service to the Supreme Person. The truth that he sees is the same Eternal Truth spoken of by Arjuna, Nārada, Asita, Devala, Vyāsadeva and so many other liberated souls, and because he sees the Supreme Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa, he can impart this knowledge to others. The teachings that His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda imparts today are the same undistorted teachings of his spiritual master. His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda, who speaks only the word of his spiritual master, who is speaking only his spiritual master's, etc., in a line of succession traceable to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Veda means knowledge. The *Vedas* are understood to have been revealed by Kṛṣṇa to the heart of Brahmā, the demigod empowered with the ability to create this material universe. Lord Brahmā gave this Vedic knowledge to Nārada Muni. Approximately 5,000 years ago, Nārada Muni gave this Vedic knowledge to Vyāsadeva. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. This incarnation of God played the part of a disciple and became instructed in *Veda*. We must understand that Śrīla Vyāsadeva, as God, already knew this Vedic knowledge. Still he came to earth and learned it. Why is this? This is part of the Lord's pastimes. In Chapter 9, verse 11 of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "The foolish mock at Me, at My descending like a human being. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be." In Chapter 4, verse 7, the Lord says, "Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise in irreligion—at that time I descend My Self."

Although the Lord descends to this material world and plays with us as a human being, He is still the Supreme Lord. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who was given Vedic knowledge on the earth planet by Nārada Muni. He descended at a time when men were degenerating. Their minds and memories were becoming more and more deficient, their lifetimes shorter, etc. However, before this time the *Vedas* were given orally and remembered word for word by the farther-reaching minds of men who had highly developed memories. Due to the degeneration of man's memory, Śrīla Vyāsadeva divided the *Veda* into four *Vedas* and put them in book form: the *Ṛk*, *Sāma*, *Yajus* and *Atharva Vedas*. He also compiled the *Mahābhārata*, in which *Bhagavad-gītā* appears, and in the mature stage of his realization he compiled the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* containing the direct pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Vyāsadeva is recognized as an incarnation of the Lord by all the great realized souls as well as by scripture. The word that he set down 5,000 years ago is recognized as the supreme authority on all matters, and it has come to us through the chain of disciplic succession culminating today in His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, who is the *ācārya* for this age. His Divine Grace speaks only according to the scriptural authority, and the teaching he gives is identical with that of every other *ācārya* in the chain going back to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of the Lord. That is the basis for authoritative knowledge of Absolute Truth.

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter 18, verse 64, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, "Because you are My very dear friend, I am speaking to you the most confidential part of knowledge. Hear this from Me, for it is for your benefit." And in Chapter 11, verse 54, the Lord says, "My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you; and I can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding." Arjuna, engaged in undivided devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, His very dear friend, is a pure devotee of the Lord. And by dint of such qualification he is viewing the Supreme Absolute Truth. This Supreme Truth can only be understood by devotional service. And the pure devotee, the *ācārya* in the disciplic succession, is the representative devotee for teaching

this word of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore we must understand this word only as it comes from the *ācārya* and none other.

There are many, many individuals translating *Bhagavad-gītā* from Sanskrit into English, but only one is a pure devotee. All the others are academicians, impersonalists, puffed-up scholars, etc. Only one person is following the *Gītā* perfectly. This is His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda. Because he is practicing Kṛṣṇa's word perfectly and is a realized soul of the highest degree, his word is as good as the Lord's word.

In the Second Chapter of *Gītā* the Lord tells the preliminary understanding of all spiritual life, as He introduces knowledge of the eternal individual self and its relationship to the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord says, "That which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul." (2:17) In his purport to this sloka, Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "This verse more clearly explains the real nature of the soul, which is spread all over the body. Anyone can understand what is spread all over the body. It is consciousness. Everyone is conscious about the pains and pleasures of the body in part. This spreading of consciousness is limited within one's own body. The pains and pleasures of one body are unknown to another. Therefore, each and every body contains an individual soul, and the symptom of the soul's presence is perceived as individual consciousness."

Now in the 7th Chapter, 5th verse, the Lord says, "Besides this inferior nature, O mighty Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine which are all living entities who are struggling with material Nature and which sustains the universe." Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to this verse reads, "Here it is clearly mentioned that living entities belong to the superior nature (or energy) of the Supreme Lord. The inferior energy is manifested in different elements, namely earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, intelligence, and false ego. Both forms of material Nature, namely gross (earth, etc.) and subtle (mind, etc.), are products of the inferior energy. The living entities, who are exploiting these inferior energies for different purposes, are the superior energy of the Supreme Lord. Energies are always controlled by the Lord; they have no independent existence. They are never equally powerful, as men with a poor fund of

knowledge think. The difference between the living entities and the Lord is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as follows: 'O Thou Supreme Eternal! If the embodied living entities were eternally all-pervading like You, then they would not be under Your control. But if the living entities are accepted as minute energies of Your Lordship, then they are at once subjected to Your supreme control. Therefore real liberation entails surrender by the living entities to Your control, and that surrender will make them happy. In that constitutional position only can they be controllers. Therefore, men with limited knowledge who advocate the monistic theory that God and the living entities are equal in all respects are actually misleading themselves and others.'

We understand the living entity, then, to be soul, consciousness, reincarnated in many bodies through many different births. The soul is of a superior nature to the body. Its nature is that it is spirit. Everyone can see that the gross physical body is good for eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. And that is all. Subtler still is the spirit soul which is situated within the body, pervades it with consciousness, and leaves it to enter a new body at death. The spirit soul is entirely under the control of Kṛṣṇa, and the distinction is always there in transcendental life. Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, is the whole, the individual living beings are His parts and parcels, and the impersonal aspect of spirit, *Brahman*, is also subordinate to His personality.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* is given by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, just before the great battle between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas 5,000 years ago. The Pāṇḍavas are sons of Pāṇḍu, and their cousins and brothers are known as Kurus, whose father, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, challenged the Vedic scriptural injunction and denied the Pāṇḍavas a share in his inheritance. The Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, was present on earth in His original form during those years, and He tried to prevent a war. But since the living beings wanted to fight, the all-merciful Lord gave them their opportunity. So on this battlefield, Arjuna, a Pāṇḍava, was put into ignorance so that Kṛṣṇa, his friend, could speak to him the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Arjuna had been an archer of great reputation, but when he observed the soldiers lined up to fight, he saw his relatives, teachers and friends on the opposite side, and in ignorance, he

grew terribly fearful that he would have to fight against his endeared ones. When the Lord saw this, He said, "My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the progressive values of life. They do not lead to higher planets, but to infamy." That is the 2nd verse of the 2nd Chapter, and the Lord goes on to re-enlighten Arjuna of his true, eternal nature.

In Chapter 2, verse 20, the Lord says, "For the soul there is neither birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." Then in sloka 21: "O Partha, how can a person who knows that the soul is indestructible, unborn, eternal, and immutable kill anyone, or cause anyone to kill?" Now the question should arise, "How is the soul situated, and what does it do?"

In sloka 25 of Chapter 2, the Lord describes the soul as invisible, inconceivable, immutable, and unchangeable. Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport says, "As described above, the magnitude of the soul is such that, for our material calculation, he cannot be detected even by the most powerful microscope; therefore, he is invisible. As far as his existence is concerned, no one can establish his stability beyond the proof of *śruti*, or Vedic wisdom. We have to accept this truth because there is no other source for understanding the existence of the soul, although it is a fact by perception. There are many things we have to accept solely on grounds of superior authority. No one can deny the existence of the father, based upon the authority of his mother; there is no other source of understanding the identity of the father, except on the authority of the mother. Similarly, there is no other source of understanding the existence of the soul except by studying the *Vedas*. In other words, the soul is inconceivable to human experimental knowledge. Unlike the bodily changes, there is no change for the soul. As eternally unchangeable, he remains atomic always in comparison to the infinite Supreme Soul. The Supreme Soul is infinite, and the atomic soul is infinitesimal."

In Chapter 15 of the *Gītā*, verse 7, the Supreme Lord says, "The living entities in this conditional world are My living fragmental parts, and they are eternal. But due to conditioned life, they are

struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind." Here it is stated by the Supreme Person Himself that the living entity is eternally fragmented. He is not the same as God, as the monistic theory holds. He is His-fragmental part and parcel—eternally. Then in sloka number 8, the Lord says, "The living entity in the material world carries his different conceptions of life, as the air carries different aromas. Thus does he take one kind of body and again quits it to take another." The purport states, "Here the living entity is described as *īśvara*, the controller of his own body. If he likes, he can change his body to a higher grade, and if he likes he can move to a lower class. Minute independence is there. The change of his body depends on him. The process is that, at the time of death, the consciousness he has created will carry him on to the next type of body. If he has made his consciousness cat-like or dog-like, he is sure to change from his human body to a cat's or a dog's body. And if he has fixed his consciousness to godly qualities, he will change his body into the form of a demigod. And if he changes his consciousness into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he will be transferred to the Kṛṣṇaloka (the planet of Kṛṣṇa) in the spiritual world." Then in verse 9, "The living entity, thus taking another gross body, obtains a particular type of ear, sense of touch, tongue, and nose, centered about the mind. He thus enjoys a particular set of sense objects." Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport says, "Consciousness is originally pure, like water. But if we mix water with a certain color, it changes. Similarly, consciousness is pure, for the spirit soul is pure. But consciousness is changed according to the association of the material qualities. Real consciousness is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When, therefore, one is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is his pure life. Otherwise, if his consciousness is adulterated with some type of mentality, in the next life he gets a corresponding body." Therefore, in answer to the question of what the atomic soul is to do, the answer is that as part and parcel of the Supreme Soul, he is to serve the whole, and in serving, his own pleasure is also derived.

THE INTELLIGENCE TO LOVE KṚṢṆA

—by Jayadvaita dās Brahmācārī (ISKCON—Boston)

“Intelligent persons who are endeavoring for liberation from old age and death take refuge in Me in devotional service. They are actually Brahman because they entirely know everything about transcendental activities.”

—*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.29

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is meant for the most intelligent persons. Although it is available for everyone, those who are not intelligent will not be interested in this transcendental movement, but will continue to engage their energy in the pursuit of the flickering, illusory happiness of the material platform of activities. Despite any material qualifications they may have, they are wasting the opportunity afforded by this human form because they have not taken the opportunity to learn about spiritual life.

The human form is specifically meant for self-realization. Eating, sleeping, mating and defending are the sole activities of the animals, and these activities are carried on by human beings as well. Because the animal is limited in intelligence, his activities cannot extend beyond the limit of these four divisions of bodily necessities. The animals must therefore continue to engage in their pastimes of sense gratification, without any thought of understanding what is spirit and what is matter. But because human beings have a more highly developed consciousness, they can try to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Animals will not be interested in the discussions of *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literatures, but human beings should give attention to this literature, for it offers complete knowledge concerning the perfection of individual existence. Our present existence is characterized by the four inevitable miseries of birth, death, old age, and disease. We are trying to enjoy life by accumulation of wealth, fame, education, etc., but all of these acquisitions bring only temporary happiness. Despite great material advancement in the fields of science, politics, education, economics, etc., we have still been unable to conquer these four material miseries, and therefore all of our enjoyment must come to an end. A person may be very beautiful, very well-educated, very wealthy, or very famous, but with the inevitable advent of old age he must become miserable, and whatever enjoyment is left to him must be abruptly

ended by the arrival of death.

Although we wish to go on enjoying unrestrictedly, old age and death are inevitable. Why? The *Vedānta-sūtras* instruct us that human life is meant for solving this problem, and the answers are to be found in the Vedic literature. *Bhagavad-gītā* gives us information that our suffering is due to being situated on the bodily platform of life. We are thinking that our bodily existence is our real existence, and we have no knowledge that our actual identity is spirit soul. This is explained in the Second Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Our real position is transcendental to all material conditions. “For the soul there is never birth or death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.” (Bg. 2.20) So, actually, I am not this body. This body is temporary, while I am eternal; but because I am falsely identifying myself with the bodily existence, I must suffer from the miseries of material duality. As pure spirit soul, it is my original constitutional position to enjoy eternal life, but in material life I am always subject to the changes of body which must take place in the material world. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, in his purport of *The Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, has written: “Change of body by the atomic individual soul is an accepted fact. Even some of the modern scientists who do not believe in the existence of the soul...have to accept continuous changes of body which appear from childhood to boyhood, and from boyhood to youth, and again from youth to old age. From old age, the change is transferred to another body.”

The materialistic person tries to establish a permanent settlement in the material world. “The demoniac person thinks: ‘So much wealth do I have today, and I will gain more according to my schemes. So much is mine now, and it will increase in the future, more and more. He is my enemy, and I have killed him, and my other enemy will also be killed. I am the Lord of everything; I am the enjoyer. I am perfect, powerful and happy. I am the richest man, surrounded by aristocratic relatives. There is none so powerful and happy as I am. I shall perform sacrifices, I shall make some charity, and thus I shall

rejoice.’ In this way, such persons are deluded by ignorance.” (Bg. 16.13-15) The materialistic person, although he may be rejoicing in material opulence, is nonetheless not exempted from the miseries of old age and death. Therefore, rather than persisting in a false spirit of enjoyment under the miserable conditions of material life, intelligent persons try for liberation from those miseries.

By careful analysis one can understand that although his body is constantly changing, he is eternal. This understanding is expressed by the Vedic aphorism *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*, “I am not this body; I am spirit soul.” This is the beginning of liberation. A self-realized person knows that he is eternal spirit soul and is therefore transcendental to all material conditions. But although a living entity may realize that he is Brahman, spirit soul, such realization is not sufficient for gaining steady liberation from the clutches of the material energy. One may understand that he is Brahman, but unless he then engages himself in the activities of Brahman, he will not be able to maintain a transcendental position.

According to the laws of nature, the materialistic person who has no knowledge of the spirit soul is obliged to act on the bodily platform of sense gratification; his anxiety is increased to an unlimited extent by his misguided attempts to satisfy the insatiable desires of his senses. The person who knows that he is an eternal spiritual entity distinct from his temporary material covering may understand the futility of such engagement in fruitive action for the sake of sense gratification, but nevertheless he must also continue to act. “Even a man of knowledge acts according to his own nature, for everyone follows his nature. What can repression accomplish?” (Bg. 3.33) Even a person who has gained the understanding that he is different from his temporary material body must nonetheless continue to act according to his nature, as it is the constitution of the spirit soul itself to be always active. But one must know how to act in such a way that his activities do not obligate him to continue in the entanglement of materialism. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Intelligent persons who are endeavoring for liberation from old age and death take refuge in Me in devotional service.” One should engage one’s senses in the service of the master of the senses, Kṛṣṇa. This devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is recommended in all the Vedic literatures as the eternal activity of the living entity.

As explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the living entity is the eternal part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore his eternal constitutional position is that he is the servant of the Supreme Lord. Because the conditioned living entities are adverse to this principle of service to the Supreme Person, preferring to adopt an attitude of so-called independence, they have become entangled in the complexities of service to the material nature; and old age and death are the rewards for the living entities who foolishly indulge in such misdirected service.

The solution to the ever-present problems of material misery is not to try to artificially renounce activity, but to revive our dormant love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to perform all activities on His behalf. It is stated in the Vedic literature that in this current age of quarrel and dissension, the only practical process for reviving this transcendental attitude of loving service towards the Supreme Lord is the method of chanting His holy names. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great apostle of love of Godhead, has declared that this chanting process cleanses the heart of all material dirt accumulated for years together. Thus the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death, becomes extinguished. And the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* informs us that in this age, persons who are endowed with sufficient brain substance will participate in this *saṅkīrtana* movement of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. By this chanting process, one's consciousness becomes purified, and in purified consciousness one can engage himself in transcendental activities in service of the Supreme Lord.

It is not practical to artificially renounce activity, but to become free from material limitations one should adopt the authorized process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One should revive one's dormant love for God and perform all activities on His behalf. It is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that there is no material reaction to such activities performed in Kṛṣṇa's service, and one who becomes conscious of Kṛṣṇa passes over all the obstacles of conditioned life. The intelligent person who understands the uselessness of material activities and understands that he is Brahman, pure spirit soul, should engage in the pure spiritual activity of transcendental service to the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The impersonalist philosophers do not accept this proposal of transcendental service to the Supreme Person because they refuse to admit the personal identity of of the Absolute. They obstinately insist that the impersonal Brahman, the manifestation of undifferentiated spiritual energy, is the ultimate feature of the Absolute Truth, although authoritative Vedic literatures such as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Brahma-saṁhitā* inform us that this impersonal Brahman is actually the personal ray of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The aim of the impersonalists is to annihilate their individual identity by merging with the impersonal effulgence; but, because neither knowledge nor activity is possible without the existence of individual identity, if they achieve their desired goal they immediately become ineligible to understand anything about the transcendental activities of the spiritual world. In addition, it is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that for those whose minds are attached to the nonmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. Therefore intelligent persons who are endeavoring for liberation will reject the difficult and limiting path of trying to merge with the impersonal effulgence of the Supreme, but will instead engage themselves in loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

People who are too attached to the material concept of life will also neglect this proposal of devotional service to the Supreme Lord, because they cannot understand how the Supreme can be a person. In the materialistic concept of life, the body is temporary, full of ignorance, and full of misery, and persons who are too absorbed in materialism cannot conceive of a transcendental body which is exactly the opposite.

Actually, the Supreme is a transcendental person, and He has a spiritual body which is eternal, full of bliss and knowledge. And, because the living entity is part and parcel of this Supreme Person, he also has a similar spiritual body, which is unaffected by the material energy although temporarily covered by it. As the transcendental body of the Supreme Lord is not subject to the material conditions of birth, death, disease, and old age, similarly the original spiritual body of the living entity is not subject to these fourfold miseries.

The transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa can only be understood by His devotees; others

cannot understand. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: "One can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He is only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of the Supreme Lord by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God. Though engaged in all kinds of activities, by My mercy, the pure devotee reaches the spiritual kingdom in the end, without any pain." (Bg. 18.55-56)

By engaging in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord, one can attain to the spiritual kingdom. Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead is a person, He has His form, His abode, His activities, His associates, His pastimes—but these are all transcendental. The material world with which we are currently associated is merely a perverted reflection of the transcendental abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the material activities in which we are currently engaged are a perverted reflection of spiritual activities in relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

The Lord is eternally present in His transcendental abode, enjoying variegated spiritual pastimes in association with those eternally liberated souls who are His devotees. This abode of the Supreme Lord is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* as being without need of sun, moon or electricity, and in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is more explicitly described: There are palaces made of touchstone, and the trees are all desire trees. Although these trees can grant the fulfillment of all desires, the devotees in the Supreme Lord's abode do not have any desires to fulfill—yet still they have variegated transcendental desires for serving their Supreme Lord. The Lord is eternally present on His supreme planet, enjoying transcendental pastimes as a cowherd boy, and He is always surrounded by hundreds and thousands of goddesses of fortune who serve Him with great reverence and affection. The *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms that when one develops pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he becomes eligible to enter into this spiritual world, and it is also stated there that one who attains to the abode of the Supreme Lord is never required to return again to this miserable material existence.

Intelligent persons who are endeavoring for liberation from the miserable conditions of material life can, taking shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Kṛṣṇa in devotional service, relish transcendental activities in eternal exchange of love with Him. END

THE MAHĀMANTRA AND THE GERMAN EXPEDITION

—by Gurudās Adhikārī (ISKCON—London)

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the golden *avatāra*, the embodiment of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the aspect of a devotee, appeared 484 years ago to deliver the pure essence of the Vedic literatures to the entities of this Age of Quarrel. He brought God consciousness from behind locked doors into the streets and into the hearts of everyone. He showed the importance of sincerity in our service to God. This eternal loving service is the highest religion, over and above any limited sectarian faith.

Five centuries ago, people came from everywhere to join Him in singing the holy names, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma.” He walked throughout India, and everyone who came to chant with Him experienced God dancing on their tongues: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Many people became overwhelmed with

happiness and felt, “I must give this to my friends.” Although He agreed that this was a nice proposal, Lord Caitanya insisted that it must be given in its pure and unpolluted form. For this reason He taught the six great Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana how to impart this love of Kṛṣṇa purely, and thus they instructed the impeccable *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*. Today these scriptures have reached us without adulteration through the *paramparā* disciplic line, which hands us the precious fruit from the top of the Vedic tree, branch by branch, each spiritual master cradling the fruit so as not to damage it. This line of teacher-disciple is alive today in His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Gosvāmī Prābhupāda, who, at the request of his spiritual master, has brought this divine message of singing, dancing and offering spiritual foodstuffs to the glory of the Lord.

On request of Śrīla Prābhupāda, his disciples are carrying this joyous spiritual plan to everyone they meet, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu that the holy names will be sung in every town and village.

The ways of illusion are very deceiving, like the shifting sands, but this *mahāmantra* can solidify and pacify the restless mind and body, and in this way the years of collected dust covering the soul are swept away. “When one is enlightened with the knowledge by which nescience is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up the daytime. When one’s intelligence, mind, faith and refuge are all fixed in the Supreme, then one becomes fully cleansed of misgivings through complete knowledge and thus proceeds straight on the path of liberation.” (Bg. 5.16-17)

“Haribol!” is now being heard in the

The most ecstatic group in the world—the London devotees, on Oxford Street.



streets of London, the concertgebouw of Holland, on the riverbanks of Paris, and in the sin-filled Raperbahn of Hamburg. This process, called *bhakti-yoga*, is for everyone, everywhere, irrespective of birth or material qualifications. Simply serve with your God-given talents, be sincere in chanting the holy names, and soon all entanglements will fall away. The devotees are overjoyed at the prospect that Śrīla Prabhupāda may be pleased with our minute service. And when we serve sincerely, others see the results and feel, "Oh, I would like to serve also." With this feeling, all temporary nonsense falls away.

George Harrison also wants to join us in serving Śrīla Prabhupāda. So we sang together in his house and constructed an altar and sang again, and the whole atmosphere was transformed; ecstatic tears flowed from all eyes, and we offered holy *prasādam* and partook of the remnants, and everyone experienced a little more of the unending bliss of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. When George asked how this feeling could go on and on, we told of chanting all the time and serving with our natural talents. He knew his engagement to be music and so decided we must record "Hare Kṛṣṇa" so others could experience this bliss.

It was done in 1968 at E.M.I. studios, and the holy sounds reached around the world to the mountains of Mexico, the fjords of Norway, the shores of Italy, and behind the Iron Curtain, where the record became the number one hit in Yugoslavia, what to speak of all other universes, both

spiritual and mundane. Amid the glitter of temporary sense indulgence, this pure sound was heard. The music industry had never encountered a sound as simple or as happy. The president of Capitol Records wrote: "Dear George, I am hooked on 'Hare Kṛṣṇa.'" At their jobs, both young and old would sing along, many not realizing that they were singing, so deeply had the sound penetrated.

All glories to Lord Kṛṣṇa! May we serve You, Kṛṣṇa! My heart, once dirty, now cries like a child to be clean again. Even the young gang members stalking the streets would see us and sing, maybe mocking "Hare Kṛṣṇa" at first, as the children mocked Lord Caitanya, who merely covered His ears, pretending to be bothered by their mocking cries of Hare Kṛṣṇa so that they would chant the holy names more. Lord Caitanya's message is in the *saṅkīrtana* parties, in which devotees come together in groups and sing and dance the *mahāmantra* in the villages and towns. *Pritivitaj jata nagar ādi grām. Sarvatra prachar haibe mor Nām:* "In every town and village, My name will be sung by all creatures." This is our movement. We do not keep the precious jewel just for our own benefit. No, we distribute it freely. As the powers of purification and liberation lie in these sixteen words—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—why should we keep this to ourselves?

Many people from all parts of the world

were exposed to Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the recording media and invited us to chant and speak on Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy. When there came the opportunity to go to Germany, we accepted the invitation, as some of our sincere Godbrothers were already there to begin a new Kṛṣṇa consciousness center. Joining with them, we chanted in colleges and clubs, stores and marketplaces. The first night we chanted in the Star Club in the famed sin-filled Raperbahn and changed the atmosphere. The next day we chanted in the marketplace of Kiel, passing out literature announcing a Kṛṣṇa consciousness concert that night at the university and selling the German edition of "Back to Godhead," called "Zuruck zur Gottheit."

The next day we had the transcendental pleasure of witnessing the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple come to life in Hamburg. The installation ceremony of the Deities was relished by all, and nice *prasādam* was offered.

Then again the next day off to Munden and Hereford, walking into the dens of apathetic youth to whom sex and intoxicants are the only outlets to their searchings. At one engagement we turned off the red lights of passion and darkness, put the house lights on, and began to chant, and we jumped into the audience singing (for no one is merely the audience). In this process we are simply a room full of spirit souls singing to our beloved One, Lord Kṛṣṇa, crying for our divine father, mother, friend, advisor, protector, confi-



dante, saviour; everything that we love and relate to personally is enclosed in this transcendental name. We all started jumping and crying Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, and then the chant ended. We paid our obeisances to Śrīla Prabhupāda and started to leave, but they wanted more. So we chanted more, and again we went to leave, but still they wanted more chanting. So again we began holy *saṅkīrtana*, and they were jumping and shouting, "Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa!" Everything is purified by association with *saṅkīrtana*. "Glory to the Śrī Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtanam* which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years together. Thus the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death, is extinguished. This *saṅkīrtana* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge, it increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it helps to have a taste of the full nectar for which we are always anxious."

We invite everyone to join with us when you see us in the streets. If you haven't experienced this yet, you soon will, for these holy names will be sung in your town or village, as prophesized by Lord Caitanya.

Please join with us in glorifying the Lord of the universes by singing His names.

"O my Lord, You are so kind that in Your name You are my constant companion."

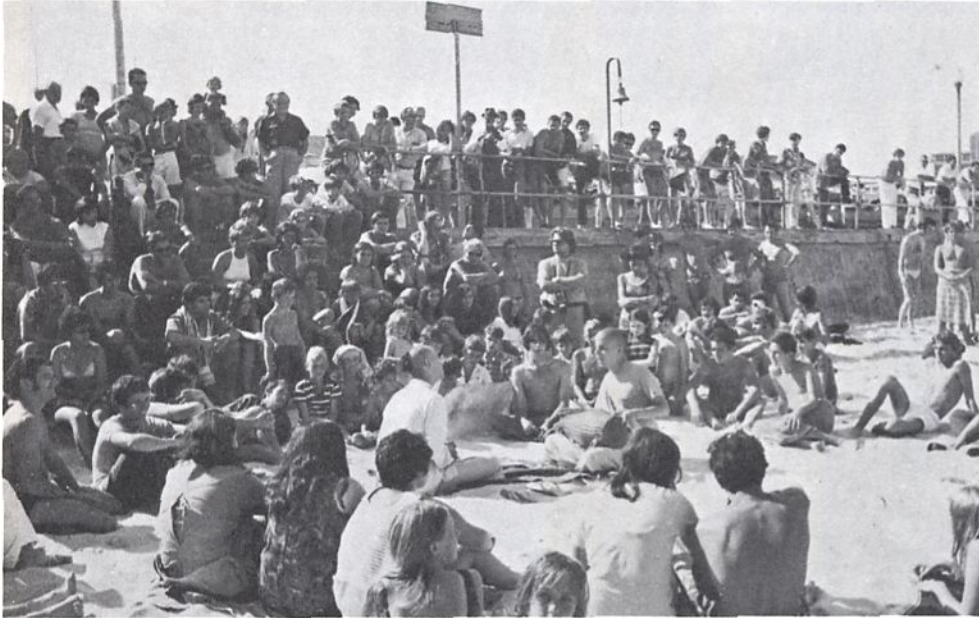


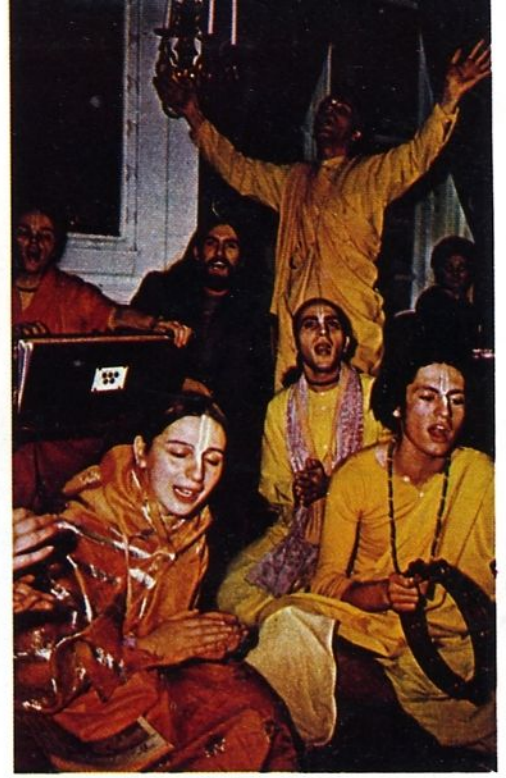
ISKCON

AROUND THE WORLD

In no country is Kṛṣṇa foreign. The chanting of God's holy names is natural to every land. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord Himself declares, "I am the father of all living entities." Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa cannot be foreign or alien anywhere, it is not surprising that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is attracting sincere souls all over the world. Because God consciousness is dormant in the hearts of all living entities, glorification of God is therefore the only totally universal movement. ISKCON's temples in Tokyo, Sydney, London and Paris, staffed mostly by American students of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, have met with instant success simply by *saṅkīrtana*. His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the spiritual master of our spiritual master, said that when there is fire in a house, because of the urgency of the message, one can make himself understood by the residents of the house, even in a foreign language. Indeed, if during a fire one wanted to first learn the language of the residents, all would be finished. Similarly, time is short in the human form of life, and the prime necessity of life is to develop loving service to God. Therefore, the Hare Kṛṣṇa chanters are being nicely understood even in so-called foreign cultures. The devotees of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda are distributing this bliss free of charge to all who will take it.

Pictures: left, Sydney, Australia; right, England; below, Tokyo.





The occasion of the *saṅkīrtana* pictured above was a press conference held in Paris by George Harrison, who helped Śrīla Prabhupada's disciples find a suitable temple location in the French capital. Joyous *saṅkīrtana* festivals are now held daily in the streets and universities of Paris.





*veṇuṁ kvaṇantam aravinda-dalāyatākṣaṁ
 barhāvataṁsam asitāmbuda-sundarāṅgam
 kandarpa-koṭi-kamanīya-viśeṣa-śobhaṁ
 govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi.*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept in playing on His flute, with blooming eyes like lotus petals, with head decked with peacock feathers, with the figure of beauty tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and His unique loveliness charming millions of cupids.

*aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛttimanti
 paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciraṁ jaganti
 ānanda-cinmaya-sad-ujjala-vigrahasya
 govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi.*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose transcendental form is full of bliss, truth and substantiality and is thus full of the most dazzling splendor. Each of the limbs of that transcendental figure possesses in himself the full-fledged functions of all the organs and eternally sees, maintains and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane.