

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



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT No. 36





By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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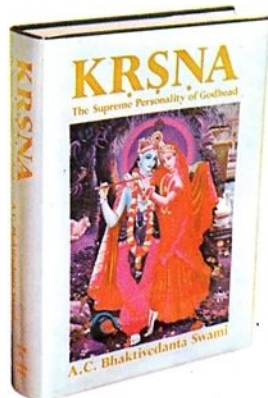
THE NECTAR OF DEVOTION

This book is especially intended for those who are engaged in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The text is flooded with nectarean stories, philosophy and poetic verses about Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees—all taken directly from the Vedic literatures. It is a summary study of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and it teaches us how to stimulate our original love for Kṛṣṇa so that we can enjoy our blissful life.

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 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Tenth Canto is considered the most confidential, since it describes all the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Kṛṣṇa* is a summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The activities of Kṛṣṇa, which appear to be like those of an ordinary human being, can only be properly understood with the help of a bona fide spiritual master fully realized in the knowledge of their transcendental nature. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is such a spiritual master.



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ŚRĪMAD-BHAGAVATAM

The *Vedas* are compared to a desire-tree because they contain all things knowable by mankind about both mundane necessities and spiritual realization. *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* is the mature ripened fruit of this tree. It narrates the transcendental pastimes of the transcendental Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

—3—

TEACHINGS OF LORD CAITANYA

Lord Caitanya, the most munificent incarnation of Godhead, appeared 500 years ago to demonstrate by example how to live the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* in the present age. *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* recounts the words and deeds of this great saint. Lord Caitanya was famous as a scholar and spoke authoritatively on the highest aspects of the science of love of Godhead. He is the divine origin of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and distributed love of God simply by singing the holy names.

—4—

ŚRĪ ISOPANISAD

From the most authoritative sources, the famed 108 Upaniṣads of India, *Śrī Isopaniṣad* supplies revealed evidence that the Personality of Godhead is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of everything that exists. The author's transparent commentaries reveal that the Supreme Lord is "unembodied" and "formless," since His form is not a material form which is subject to birth, disease, old age and death.

THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AS IT IS

Now, for the first time, this renowned scripture is being brought to the West as it is—as taught by Kṛṣṇa Himself and understood by His disciple Arjuna—in a unique translation and commentary. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the supreme authority on the Gītā, and He initially delivered the Gītā so that all persons could reach the perfection of life and be liberated from all suffering. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is passing on Kṛṣṇa’s mercy in its full potency, as it is, so that everyone can attain to his rightful position, full of bliss and knowledge.

From the Introduction: “The perplexities of life appear like a forest fire which takes place without being set by anyone. The man in material perplexities is he who does not understand the problems of life. Out of many many human beings, the Bhagavad-gītā is directed to the one who seeks to understand his position.”

EASY JOURNEY TO OTHER PLANETS

This book is an authentic discussion on the techniques and practice of the yoga system by which one can leave this body for travel to anti-material planets where life is blissful, eternal and full of knowledge.

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS: THE TOPMOST YOGA SYSTEM

This book presents the most authorized process of yoga practice in God realization, without any deviation from the original Vedic scriptural literature. In this present volume, the author forcefully exposes the speculative systems which depart from love of God as the ultimate goal of yoga.

THE FIRST STEP IN GOD REALIZATION

This book marks the continuation of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda’s mighty task of translating all twelve cantos of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The First Step in God Realization comprises the First Chapter of the Second Canto, in which the sage Sūkadeva advises his disciple Mahārāja Parīkṣit to meditate on the universal form of God, in which the entire physical universes are seen as parts of the gigantic body of the Supreme Lord.

THE LORD IN THE HEART

The continuation of Sūkadeva’s teachings: He advises his disciple to go beyond meditation on the universal form, to meditation on the transcendental form of Paramātmā, the localized representation of the Lord who resides in the hearts of all living entities.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement

BACK TO GODHEAD is the only magazine in the Western world to present the authorized, transcendental science of God realization known only to the saints of India’s unbroken disciplic succession.

Each month BACK TO GODHEAD brings you the Hare Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana movement as it spreads throughout the towns and cities of the world, fulfilling the prediction of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu 500 years ago in India.

RECORDS

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WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS?

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness was formed in 1966 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who came from India on the order of his spiritual master to preach love of God to the people of the West. Śrīla Prabhupāda is in a line of disciplic succession going back directly 500 years to the time when Lord Caitanya appeared in India, and from there back still further—5,000 years—to the time when Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa first spoke *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 cooperation 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, and 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, twenty-four hours a day!

Since the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is nonsectarian, 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
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
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His Divine Grace
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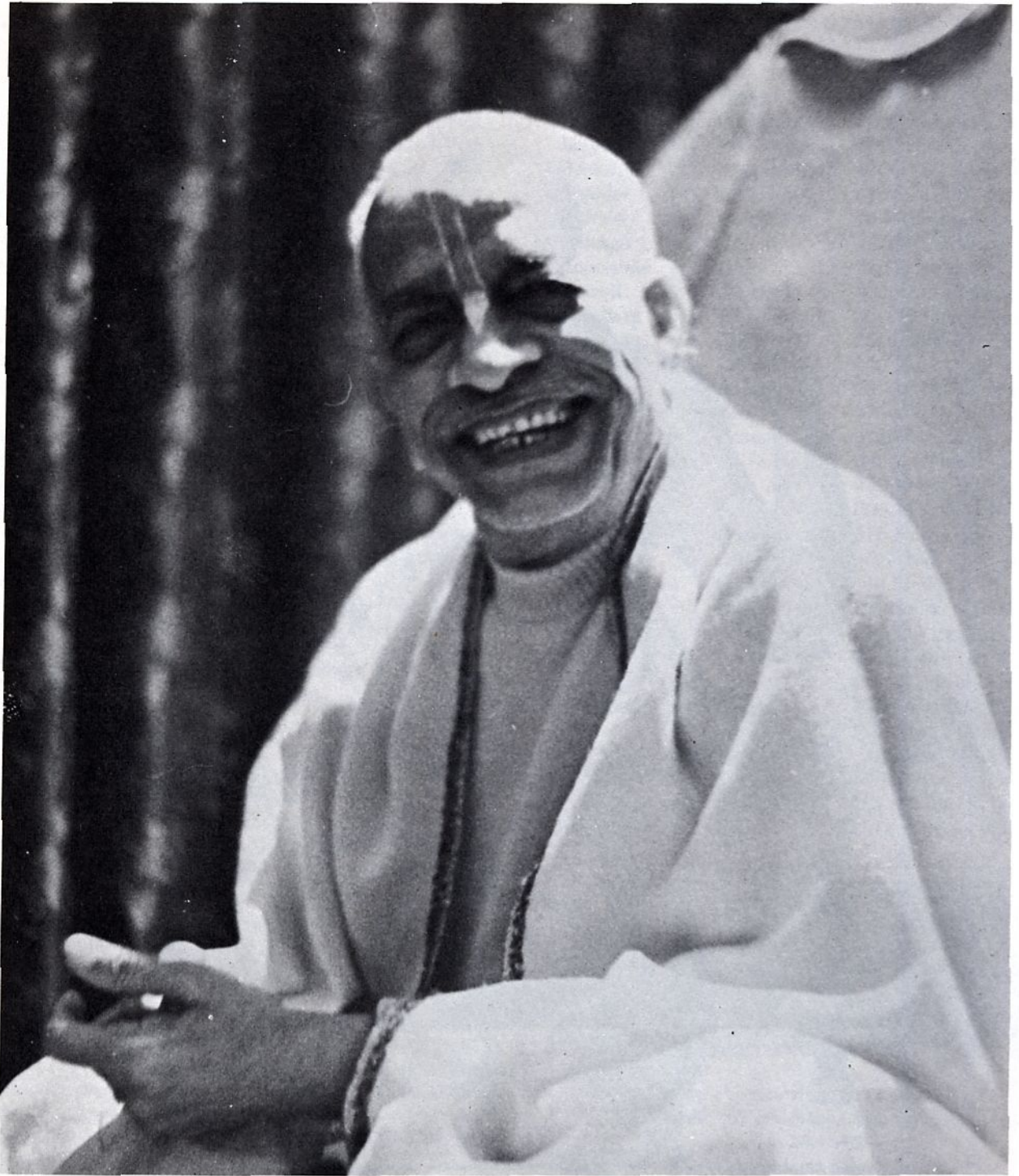
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ŚRĪLA MADHVĀCĀRYA

This great spiritual master in the disciplic succession of Kṛṣṇa consciousness appeared in the Twelfth Century and preached all over India. He was of powerful physique and was a powerful preacher. Madhvācārya always stressed that God and man are separate individual personalities even after liberation, and thus his philosophy is known as *dvaita*, or dual.



**His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

“By the mercy of the spiritual master one is benedicted by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the spiritual master no one can make any advancement. Therefore I should always remember the spiritual master. At least three times a day I should offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master.”

—from *Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam* (Eight Prayers Glorifying the Spiritual Master)
by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

EVERYTHING BELONGS TO KṚṢṆA

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

[Transcribed from tapes of a conversation with disciples, May 10, 1969, Columbus, Ohio]



When I first started going to see my Guru Mahārāj (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī), he said of me, "This boy hears very nicely. He does not go away. So I shall make him a disciple." These very words he said. Actually I did not follow him in the beginning. Philosophically speaking, I was a new boy. I could not follow him, but actually I was so glad to hear him, that's all. (laughs) So that was my qualification, or whatever you may say. I was simply asking when Guru Mahārāj would speak; then I'd sit down and go on hearing. I would understand, or not understand; others would disperse, I'd not disperse. Then at first there was one instance, circumambulation of Old Vṛndāvana. Although I was not initiated then, I was one of the important members. So I thought, "Let me go. What are these people doing circumambulating all over Vṛndāvana?" So I went to Mathurā and then to the Vṛndāvana interior to a place known as Kosi. In that Kosi one of my Godbrothers declared, "Prabhupāda [Bhaktisiddhānta] is going back to Mathurā tomorrow, so he'll speak this evening, and anyone who wants to hear him can stay, and others may prepare to see another temple, which is called Śeṣaśāyī Temple." So although I was new I did not want to see the Śeṣaśāyī Temple. I decided to hear instead. Some of my important Godbrothers were sitting about like this. And I was sitting at his left, but he knew, "This boy is new." Everyone was

gone, all others, (laughs) except a few selected Godbrothers. And he marked, "This boy is interested to hear." So hearing is very important. Hearing, just like Arjuna heard Kṛṣṇa.

Because I was serious in hearing, therefore I am now serious about *kīrtanam*, which means speaking or preaching. Do you understand? So one who is serious about hearing can become a future preacher. *Śravaṇam kīrtanam*. The next stage will develop. If one has actually heard nicely, then he will speak nicely. *Śravaṇam kīrtanam smaraṇam*. Then consciousness will automatically develop, because when you speak or when you hear, unless your mind is concentrated, your consciousness is slight. It cannot rightly hear or speak. *Śravaṇam kīrtanam smaraṇam pāda-sevanam* means that activity begins immediately. Just like Bali Mahārāja—he was giving, giving, giving, giving, giving, giving, and when Vāmandeva said, "Bali Mahārāja, you have lost everything," he said, "Still I have another place for You to place Your foot. Yes, there is a small thing—it is my head." (laughs) So Lord Vāmandeva said, "You have now purchased Me. I shall remain your doorman, standing here always to give you protection." So Kṛṣṇa became purchased by him, and He remained his doorman. *Dvārī* means doorman. Just see His mercy. So by serving Kṛṣṇa no one is loser; he is gainer. Ah, he is gainer, permanently...eternally. And we do not know what is the value of that gain now because we are materially covered.

And what is service? Service in this world is *māyā*. No one will be satisfied. No one. You cannot satisfy; nor will you be satisfied. The best example is in your country. Your President, Mr. Kennedy, gave you the best service, and the result was that you or some of your members killed him. That means his service was not appreciated, although he gave his best service. Similarly, in the material world whatever service you render is spoiling time. But if you render service to Kṛṣṇa, you will be satisfied, Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied, and when Kṛṣṇa is satisfied, everyone will

be satisfied. So take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness service by hearing, by speaking, by remembering, by giving active service, by worshiping, by making friendship and, after all, doing everything for Kṛṣṇa. That is perfection. So engage all your service in the service of Kṛṣṇa. It is very pleasing, encouraging, and enlightening.

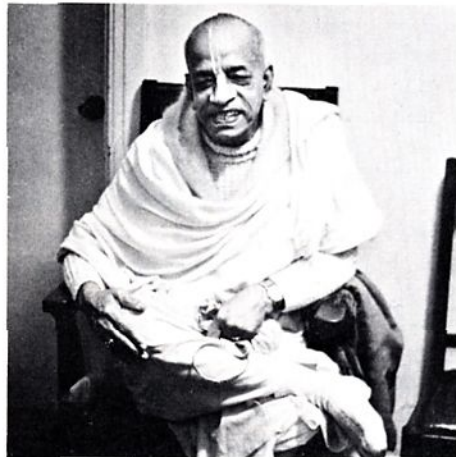
After too much material enjoyment, the next stage is frustration. That stage is coming to your country. Therefore the boys are becoming hippies. After too much material enjoyment, the next stage is—that is natural—frustration. There is a good example in our country. One gentleman, who was a great leader, next to Gandhi, an important political leader and a topmost lawyer, a barrister, was earning \$50,000 monthly. He was a very rich man, and he was making charity and he was also spending like anything...he was drunkard number one, woman hunter number one, etc., because he had money to enjoy everything. But he was not happy. So one day he was sitting with his wife in view of the street, and he was drinking. So his wife asked him, "My dear husband, you are earning so much and spending. People are very much fond of you, a great leader. Why do you always remain morose? What do you want to be? You now have everything." Then at that time one mendicant, a *sannyāsī*, was passing, and so he said, "I want to be like him. Then I'll be happy. I don't want to enjoy. I want to go to beggar life." You see? So that time is coming to your country. These hippies are frustrated. They are giving up everything; we can study their psychic movement. They are not satisfied. That is the main principle. That is natural. To accept adversities voluntarily. So this is frustration. But if you take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness before reaching that point of frustration, then you will reach the real standard of happiness because everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. I shall give you another example. Suppose you have stolen something from somebody's house or some friends. You know you will not be happy possessing that stolen property. But if some day you come to return that thing to its owner, you will be happy. Then you will feel relieved.

Therefore, the real situation is that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. We are artificially enjoying, and so this frustration will come. But if we return everything to Kṛṣṇa before coming to that frustration, then it will be all right. So the best thing

is to return everything to Kṛṣṇa. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then you will not be loser; you'll be gainer just like Bali Mahārāja. Actually if you do not think that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, that it belongs to you, this is *māyā*. It is Kṛṣṇa's property, and you are thinking "mine." Does this land of America belong to you actually? It is stolen property. There is another example. *Hīrā* means diamond, and *khira* means cucumber. One man has stolen a cucumber from the street, and he is captured. Another man has stolen a diamond, and he is also arrested. But for the police both are thieves. If the man says, "Oh, what have I stolen? I have stolen a little cucumber. It is worth nothing, not even two cents or one cent. Why are you arresting me? No. In the eyes of law, he is a thief, and the other is also a thief. Everyone's a thief. Anyone who is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a thief. He'll not be happy. The best thing is to return whatever you possess. "Kṛṣṇa, it is Yours. Take it." Finish with it. Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura has written a song expressing this. Everything we possess in mind, actually we don't possess. Suppose I am "possessing" all this. As soon as I go from this body, all possessions will remain here. I will not take anything. So I don't possess, but in my mind I am thinking, "Oh, this is mine, this is mine. Where is my other box? Why is it not coming?" It is possessed in the mind. If I leave this body, I leave the box here or in Chicago or anywhere else. What is the difference? There is no difference. But because I am possessing in the mind, "Oh that box is mine," therefore I am asking whether it is in Chicago or it is here or there. So possession is in the mind. Actually you don't possess. By that false possessive attitude we have gotten our mind, our body, then the expansions of the body, wife, children, family, society, country. In this way we possess so many things. Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura says, "Now whatever I possess, either in the mind or in the family, or in the society or in the body, whatever I have, I surrender unto my dear Kṛṣṇa. Nandakiśora, O son of Nanda, I give it unto You. Now whatever You like You can do. Either You kill me or protect me, as You like. You are the proprietor. You have the right to do anything." This is surrender. This is full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But that is not possible immediately. Therefore we have to practice. And if we die in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness... according to the particular type of con-

sciousness in which one gives up this body, he's transferred in the next life to the respective position. In this way in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we are able to be with Kṛṣṇa, by practicing always, constantly, that situation of consciousness. Then in the next life, after giving up—Why next life? This life also—one who is always in Kṛṣṇa's service in this life or the next life is with Kṛṣṇa. Any person who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is always with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, though I may not understand that Kṛṣṇa is everywhere.

So you American boys and girls should take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You'll be happy. In your position you should take this up because you are on the top of the material happiness. Now you take it, and you'll be saved. Otherwise this frustration is coming. That will come. Just like that politician—out of frustration he gave up everything. He sacrificed his life for something political. Why was that a sacrifice? You may become a great man of your country in the estimation of your people, but not in the estimation of Kṛṣṇa. You may become a great man in the estimation of your country, but in others' estimation you're an enemy. "Oh that man is dead now. Our enemy is finished." So to another side there is imperfection; not everybody is satisfied by your service, but if you serve Kṛṣṇa everybody is satisfied. If you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and dance, nobody will be dissatisfied. They will say, just as they did in the paper, "The boys are very nice." You see? They were not very sympathetic, but they have remarked, "These boys are very nice."



So at least people will appreciate these boys. They do not smoke, they do not drink, they have no illicit sex life, they do not kill to satisfy the tongue. They are

satisfied with natural food. And their ideals are very good. Who'll deny it? And the asset! They cannot estimate how much the devotee is in contact with Kṛṣṇa the Supreme. They have no estimating power. So they will appreciate these external features. While I was going to Hawaii one clergyman was talking with me, and he said, "Swamiji, I have seen that your disciples have very nice glowing faces." "Yes certainly, they must be making spiritual progress." So it is not difficult. It is very easy. If you take to this, you have everything sublime, and your life becomes sublime. You don't have to give up anything. The material needs are there: eating, sleeping, mating and defending. That is not forbidden. But adjust it for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We cannot allow eating and mating like animals, cats and dogs, no. That is not possible. You'll eat and you'll mate, but just like human beings, civilized men. What is the distinction between animal and man, if we behave like animals? Kṛṣṇa, God, is pure. So if you keep yourself in an impure condition of life then how can you make progress towards purity, the highest perfection of purity? In the Tenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna is accepting Kṛṣṇa as the purest of all: *Param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhagavān*. If you are going to reach the purest of all, how can you remain impure? And this voluntary restraint means *tapasya*. The Sanskrit word *tapasya* means voluntarily restraining or accepting some suffering condition. But that is not actually a suffering condition. Just like a patient. A doctor says, "You cannot take it." But he mentally thinks, "Oh, the doctor has restricted this. I am suffering." Actually he is being cured, but he thinks that he is suffering. And when he's cured, he says, "Oh, the doctor is a good friend. He told me not to indulge in this. Now I am cured." So *tapasya* means voluntarily accepting some so-called suffering. That is required to make advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness: voluntary acceptance of so-called suffering. That suffering is for transcendental realization. That is good. It means your existence will be purified. And to purify existence means to advance in realizing unlimited happiness. And what is the disease? Disease means limitation of eating, limitation of sleeping, limitation of mating, Everything limited. A diseased man cannot have sex life unlimitedly. There is restriction. That restriction is for curing him. And the cure means he enjoys. Whatever

you think is enjoyment must be unlimited. Eternal happiness, unending happiness. So to acquire unending, eternal happiness, if you have to accept some voluntary suffering in this life, you should do that.

So if you like, you can ask some questions. If you go to a person, superior or a spiritual master, then you should ask questions. You should be inquisitive for better understanding. That means you are inquisitive for higher, happy life. So what is your inquisitiveness?

Student: Would you say something about Christ and his relation to Kṛṣṇa?

Prabhupāda: Christ is Kṛṣṇa conscious, that's all. So you become like Christ, Kṛṣṇa conscious. Don't you understand that Christ is fully Kṛṣṇa conscious? You don't understand it? Then you become like Christ, fully Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Lokanātha: What was Arjuna's relation to Kṛṣṇa. I mean as concisely as you can put it.

Prabhupāda: Friendship. There are five kinds of relationships. Just like "God is great." That is simply feeling the greatness of God. And when one feels exactly how God is great, then naturally there will be an inclination to serve God. That is called servitude. First, neutrality, the estimation that is called *śānta-rasa*, neutral, no activity, but simply appreciating that God is great, simply appreciation. And then servitude. When the appreciation is complete: "Ah! Why not serve God? He is so great. He is giving us so many things. Let me return something. Let me do some service." That servitude is further development of the appreciation of the greatness of God. And even further development is friendship. Service means I ask you, "Please give me a glass of water," and you give it to me. And friendship means you are thinking, "How is my friend? Now he may be wanting a glass of water." So before asking, if you give it to me—"I think you may require a glass of water."—that is friendship. Friendship means feeling the friend's welfare always. *Su-ḥṛd*. Friendship is not simply chatting. Friendship means thinking how my friend will be happy. This is friendship. And then that friendship, when further developed, is parenthood. Parents have no other consideration than wanting to see how their child will be happy always. And further development is conjugal love. Just like man and woman, male and female—that love. That love includes everything. So there is appreciation of greatness,

servitude of servant, friendship, maternal love, and finally offering everything to the lover. That is most affectionate stage of love. So in this way we have five kinds of direct relationships. And there are seven kinds of indirect relationships. Those are on the platform of enmity. Just like Kāṁsa. Kāṁsa was thinking of Kṛṣṇa as an enemy. So he was also Kṛṣṇa conscious; he was thinking of how to kill Kṛṣṇa. That is also Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But indirectly. So there are seven indirect *rasas*: ghastly, comic, wonderful, anger, chivalrous, mercy and shocking. In so many ways there are many different relations. Without relationship, nobody can remain. Seven kinds of relationships are indirect. And five kinds of relationships are direct. So we want to be situated in a direct relationship.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: Although the conditioned souls are in an indirect relationship, everyone is in a relationship?

Prabhupāda: Yes, there must be some relationship. Without some relationship one cannot exist. He is part and parcel. Just like persons in the prison house. They are not outside the government; they have a relationship with the government. But that is indirect. The prisoner does not appreciate the service of the government, and the government is bothered by his existence. Instead of receiving some service from him, the state has to spend unnecessarily for him. That is a botheration. So those who are in an indirect relationship with Kṛṣṇa are a botheration. They are simply giving trouble to Kṛṣṇa. But there is a relationship.

Hayagrīva: Is the humorous a direct or indirect?

Prabhupāda: Humor is practically in every direct relationship. And in indirect there is humor also. I am thinking of you as an enemy. That is also another type of humor. (laughs) Yes.

Pradyumna: Do the five direct *rasas* take place between *jīva* souls also when there is—

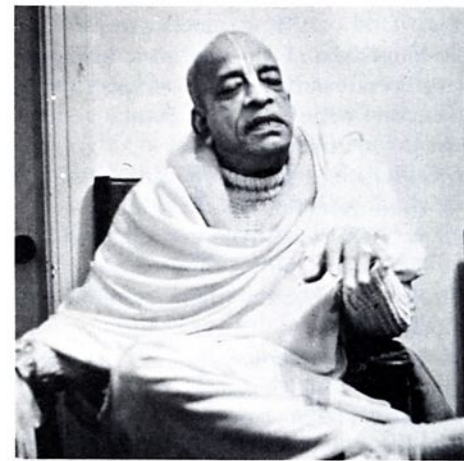
Prabhupāda: Everything is for *jīva* souls. All relationships. And Kṛṣṇa is one, the Supreme. And all the *jīva* souls are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the eternal relationship is there. Now they're exhibited in this dual kind of humor, either directly or indirectly. *Jīva* soul, the part and parcel, cannot be separated from the Supreme. The sun and the sunlight, the electric bulb and the diffusion of light, cannot be separated. But this portion is covered, and it

appears to be darkness. So when it is covered, that is called *māyā*. When one thinks that he has no relationship with God, or "I am God; there is no God," this is *māyā*. He is covered. He cannot see. So he has to be treated by this Kṛṣṇa consciousness treatment, and *māyā* will go, separated, and he will see, "Ah yes! I am part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa." Then he comes to the direct relationship. There are spiritualists or transcendentalists who claim that there is no God, or "I am God," or that there is only void. All these are disturbing positions, different symptoms of this disease of *māyā*. It is a disease. How can one think that he is God? That means he does not know what is God. If I say here that I am President Nixon, will you accept it? Will you accept it? Any one of you, if I say that I am President Nixon, will you accept? Why? Why?

Student: I don't know.

Prabhupāda: What? Why? Why do you not accept me? I say, "I am President Nixon." Why do you not accept? Why?

Student: I would say you are, if you say you are. (everyone laughs)



Prabhupāda: That means you are not rational. You have seen that you do not accept me as President. Yes, that is one thing. At least you are not insane. So if I say, "I am God" and you accept me, then how much more insane you are. Just try to understand how much insanity is there. One is claiming that "I am God," and one is accepting that he is God. This is insanity.

Student: Are we not all one?

Prabhupāda: One, that is a different thing. Are you not one with President Nixon?

Student: Yes. He's a human being.

Prabhupāda: That is all right. He is American; he is a human being. In so many qualities you are one. But you cannot

claim that you are President Nixon. *Paraṁ brahman*. *Paraṁ* means the chief. We are all *brahman*. *Aham brahmāsmi*. Every living entity is *Brahman*. But Kṛṣṇa is the chief *Brahman*. Just like you are all Americans, but your President is the chief American. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is the chief *Brahman*. You are all *brahman*, but He is the chief *Brahman*. Is it clear? You should understand in that way. In so many respects and qualities you are one with God, but that does not mean that you are God. God is one. Just like in spite of your becoming an American or a human being, you do not identify yourself with President Nixon because you have full knowledge of President Nixon and yourself. And as soon as you say, "I am God," that means that you have not full knowledge of God. You're insane. You do not know what God is. That very assertion immediately shows that you know nothing about God. God is so great, but you are claiming that greatness. That means you do not know how great He is. A tiny factor claims that he is God without having that greatness. That means insanity, the same as if you claim that you are President Nixon. But how great God is! How much greater than President Nixon! Do you deny being one with President Nixon and accept yourself to be one with God? How insane you are. Just try to understand. Yes?

Hṛṣīkeśa: I have read in *Bhagavad-gītā* that he who knows the Self does not do action nor cause action to be done. So, what is the soul's, the spirit soul's, relationship to actions performed both in material consciousness?

Prabhupāda: Material consciousness means forgetting God. When one forgets God, that is material consciousness. Material consciousness is called *māyā*. Actually one should not forget, but if he forgets somehow or other, that is material consciousness. Naturally, nobody forgets his father and mother, but if somehow or other he forgets, that is a special circumstance, and that is called *māyā*, illusion. Just like any one of you who are existing must have a father and mother. That is a fact. Without father and mother your existence cannot be. Now, if you cannot say who is your father and mother, if you do not know, this forgetfulness is called *māyā*. Actually, it should not happen, but somehow or other if you are asked who are your parents, you cannot say. This is called *māyā*. But there must be some father and mother. Without a father and mother there cannot



be an existence. You cannot deny that. You may not know who are your father and mother; that is a different thing. But you cannot say, "Oh, I have no father and mother." So this denial—"I don't believe in God or His existence."—is like forgetting your father and mother. That is *māyā*. And that is material consciousness. They deny God in different ways. "There is no God." That is denial. "I don't believe in God." That is also denial. "God is impersonal, void," or however you say it, that is all insanity, *māyā*. *Māyā* means insanity, for when a man becomes insane that is false; it is expected that he should not be insane. *Māyā* means insanity, forgetfulness of God. And by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness treatment, one can come to his original consciousness and become a cured man. Actually, *māyā* means that which has no existence. *Māyā* has no existence, but sometimes it is there, just like the clouds in the sky. The covering is not reality. Reality is the clear sky. This is temporary, illusory. If I see the cloud only and if I think there is no sun, no illumination or no clear sky, that is insanity. Because I cannot see under certain circumstances, I deny it, and that is my insanity. Therefore you have to approach the man who knows that there is sunlight, there is sun, and there is clear sky. You require all this education, knowledge. By knowledge, one transcends *māyā* or material existence. What is the difference between an ordinary man and a Kṛṣṇa conscious man? He also is living in this world, in this apartment and using everything that is being utilized by others. He is also eating and sleeping, but what is the difference? The difference is that he accepts that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. Others do not. That's all. Everything actually belongs to Kṛṣṇa. Others do not know. They think

it belongs to them, or "This is my nation, this is my country, this that." So many things they manufacture, but we know the simple truth: everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. So let everything be offered to Kṛṣṇa. That's all.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: We understand that under material consciousness the living entity is being forced to act.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: His actions are quite automatic under the laws of material nature.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Action is there. Because you are a living entity, you are active.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: Yes, but they're being dictated.

Prabhupāda: Yes, just like a man in fever is talking nonsense.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: Yes.

Prabhupāda: But this is due to fever.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: In Kṛṣṇa consciousness are the actions of the *jīva* similarly controlled by Kṛṣṇa's superior energy?

Prabhupāda: Yes, certainly.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: But everything is being ultimately controlled by Kṛṣṇa, either by inferior energy or by superior energy.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Kīrtanānanda Mahārāja: So these activities are never independent.

Prabhupāda: Never, never, never. That is his insanity. Anyway, as soon as one thinks, "I am independent," that is another insanity. He is under control. Just like a man is thinking, "I don't care for the state laws." He's insane. He will be *forced* to accept state laws in the prison house by the police. But he thinks, "Oh, I am a prisoner, but I am still independent." He is slapped by the police, but he still says, "I am independent. Go on slapping." That is insanity. Is it not insanity? The police slap him, and he says, "I am independent." Do you think that is independence? That is the sort of independence we are having. We are always kicked by *māyā*, yet we are thinking ourselves independent. This is insanity. We do not think how we are independent. One is servant of his senses, he cannot refrain from enjoying his senses for an hour, and he is thinking himself independent. That means he is insane. He cannot think properly. Where is his independence? He cannot be independent. He is born dependent; he is part and parcel of God. His constitutional position is dependent. The child might

declare independence, but what is the meaning of that independence? Danger, that is all. He is simply inviting dangers. A child says, "Oh, I don't care for my parents. I shall cross the ocean; I shall go everywhere." So if he is allowed to do that, then he's simply inviting dangers. And if he remains under the protection of the parents, he is always safe. So these living entities declaring independence are insane and are suffering from different kinds of insanity. They cannot be independent. Let them think very deeply, but they cannot be independent. They are thinking themselves independent of God, but they are dependent on their senses, that's all. And some intoxication. They voluntarily accept dependence of something—*māyā*. That's all. Who is independent? Is there anyone independent? Nobody is independent. To think of independence is *māyā*. The best thing is that since I am dependent, let me remain dependent properly. Then I am protected. So is your question answered? Material consciousness means thinking oneself falsely independent. That is material consciousness. Falsely. He is not independent, but he is thinking falsely, "I am independent." This is *māyā*. Just like in a dream, he is falsely thinking there is a tiger. There is no tiger, but he is actuated by this false impression: "Oh, the tiger is eating me! He has attacked me! Save me!" So this material existence means that because he is insane he is thinking there are so many problems. "The tiger is there! He is attacking me!" This, that, oh, so many, he is creating so many things. But they're all false. But he is attacked by that false hallucination. That's all. This is *māyā*. Everyone is thinking, "Oh, there are so many problems I have to solve; I have to make this much. I have this—" But he actually has no problems. His only problem is how to accept Kṛṣṇa. That's all. And Kṛṣṇa is so kind He says, "Yes, you accept Me. Simply chant 'Kṛṣṇa'; I am yours. That's all." But I am so unfortunate that I cannot chant it. All problems are solved simply by chanting Kṛṣṇa. *Etādṛṣī tava kṛpā bhagavan*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, "O Kṛṣṇa, You are so kind that You have come to me in the sound vibration 'Kṛṣṇa.' I can very easily chant, and You will remain with me. But I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction even for this." When you see people and tell them, "Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and you'll get everything," they'll not believe it. And if you say, "I'll press your nose, you pay me

\$50, and I'll give you some nice *mantra*. And you move your head like this, your leg like this," then they will say, "Oh! Here is something!" (laughter) "So this Swamiji says simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa! What is this?" Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, "You have become so easily available in this age, but I am so unfortunate that I cannot accept this." This Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so easily being distributed, but they are so unfortunate that they cannot accept. Just see. And if you give them a bluff, if you cheat them: "Ah, yes, welcome!" Yes. They welcome it, and cheaters are always ready. "Customers are being cheated, so let me take advantage of it." My Guru Mahārāj used to say that this world is the society of the cheaters and the cheated. You have the association of cheaters and cheated. So we want to save people from this society of cheaters and cheated.

Hṛṣīkeśa: Prabhu-pad, often I would be performing, doing something, some activity during our day, and so many things will go wrong, and I'll become frustrated.

Prabhupāda: When one is in a profession, there may be something wrong. That doesn't matter. But you try to discharge your duties rightly, whatever you are prescribed to do. Then everything will come to the right point. Your only business is to follow the four principles of the regulated way of life and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, sixteen rounds. So there may sometimes be a mistake. That will be corrected automatically because we are coming from a different platform. It is also said in *Bhagavad-gītā*: *api cet-sudurācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk sādhuḥ eva sa mantavyaḥ*. "Although one is found committing mistakes or doing something wrong, because he is sticking to this principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is a *sādhu*." *Sādhu* means holy man. He is holy. He is not doing any wrong consciously, but due to habit. Suppose, just like most of you, in your former life you were smoking or taking intoxication. But by some influence, if you sometimes again take to it, you may be conscious, "Oh I have done wrong." But that is excused if you have done so unconsciously. But if you think, "Now that I am Kṛṣṇa conscious, whatever I do is all right," then it is bad. But if accidentally it happens, that is excused. So an accidental mistake is not dangerous, but a willful neglect is dangerous. We should be very careful always so that accidental mistakes also may not take place. But if they take place, they will be excused.

Student: Can *haṭha-yoga* hinder or help Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Prabhupāda: Hinder. Because it is useless, simply wasting time. You cannot follow the rules and regulations. You are simply bluffed. Do you know what are the rules and regulations of *haṭha-yoga*? Actually? You have to select a secluded place. Actually it is not practiced in an assembly of so many men, but they go to a *haṭha-yoga* class where there are hundreds of members practicing. And someone is collecting money, five dollars for a seat, and you are thinking, "Oh I am practicing." That is useless, a waste of time and money. *Haṭha-yoga* is not practiced in that way. You have to practice in a secluded place, alone. Do you do that?

Student: No, I guess I don't.

Prabhupāda: It is very difficult in this age. Then you have to restrain yourself in so many things, completely free from sex life. You have to eat under certain directions. You have to—so many things. These rules are not followed. Simply they have some bodily gymnastics, sitting postures, and they are thinking, "I will practice." No, that is just one of the items. So all the items cannot be observed in this age. Therefore, it is wasting time. And what is the real *yoga* practice? That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: "Of all *yogīs*, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all." This is the goal of *yoga* practice. So that is possible very easily by this movement, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, not by any other process. The ultimate goal is here. One should be always abiding with God, worshiping Him in loving transcendental service and should be intimately united with Him. *Intimately*. This "intimately" refers to the five kinds of relationships. That is the perfection of *yoga*. Kṛṣṇa advised *yoga* practice. *Sāṅkhya-yoga*. So you read about *sāṅkhya-yoga* in chapter six of *Bhagavad-gītā* in the forty-seventh verse. This is the version.

Student: There is no value in keeping the body fit through exercises?

Prabhupāda: Yes, you can become very healthy, but does that mean that health is the perfection of life? Do you mean to say that if one has a healthy life, he will not die? He will not change his body? So health is required, but health is not the ultimate goal of life. The ultimate goal of life is here.

Lokanātha: Buddha taught very similar things to what the *Gītā* taught also, didn't

he? Are there agreements in certain places, what Buddha teaches and what the *Gītā* teaches?

Prabhupāda: Do you follow Buddha?

Lokanātha: No.

Prabhupāda: You simply talk of him? Practice like Buddha and appreciate him. Give up everything like Buddha and meditate. But that you will not do. Then what

is the useless talking about? You just talk. Do something! Either you believe Buddha or Jesus Christ or Kṛṣṇa. Do something! Don't talk, simply. Lord Buddha is very nice. He gave up his kingdom. He led a full life; he was a prince. He thought it was all nonsense, "Let me meditate." So do like that. We won't do anything. That is the disease. We talk much about this, that,

this, that. Do anything, but do it perfectly! Jack of all trades, master of none—that is no good. Be master of something! It doesn't matter. Either you follow Lord Jesus Christ or Lord Buddha, or Kṛṣṇa, it doesn't matter much. But do it perfectly. That is all we request. END

THE PLATFORM OF REAL BLISS

by Jayādvaita dāsa Brahmācārī (ISKCON—Boston)

Kṛṣṇa is the all-blissful Supreme Personality of Godhead, and we are all constitutionally His eternally blissful servitors. Unfortunately we have forgotten this fact, and thus we have fallen into material consciousness.

Prahlāda Mahārāja said to his father, "My dear father, I think you do not know

what the success of life really is." People do not know how to be actually successful in life. Everyone is interested in his own personal enjoyment, but no one really knows where real pleasure is available. Everyone is supposed to be concerned with his own self-interest, but no one knows what his self-interest actually is.

Prahlāda's father, Hiranyakaśipu, was a greatly powerful atheist king, and he perfectly displayed the character of materialistic, or "demonic," consciousness. All of his energy was devoted to obtaining increased bodily pleasure. And, of course, he was hoping that his five-year-old son Prahlāda would follow in his footsteps. But Prahlāda was not interested in material affairs. When his father inquired from him what was the best thing that he had learned from his teachers, Prahlāda replied that he had not learned anything of any



value from them. By the grace of the great sage Nārada Muni, Prahlāda had obtained the rare opportunity for developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he was therefore completely disinterested in material happiness. Instead of working very hard in school, Prahlāda was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing, and, to the dismay of the teachers, all the other young children joined with him.

The person who has tasted the bliss of Kṛṣṇa consciousness soon loses all interest in material pleasure. As his consciousness becomes cleansed by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, he comes in contact with superior spiritual pleasure. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*: The person who is in spiritual consciousness is jolly. He is completely satisfied by spiritual pleasure and therefore fails to display the symptoms of material hankering. He does not lament for anything.

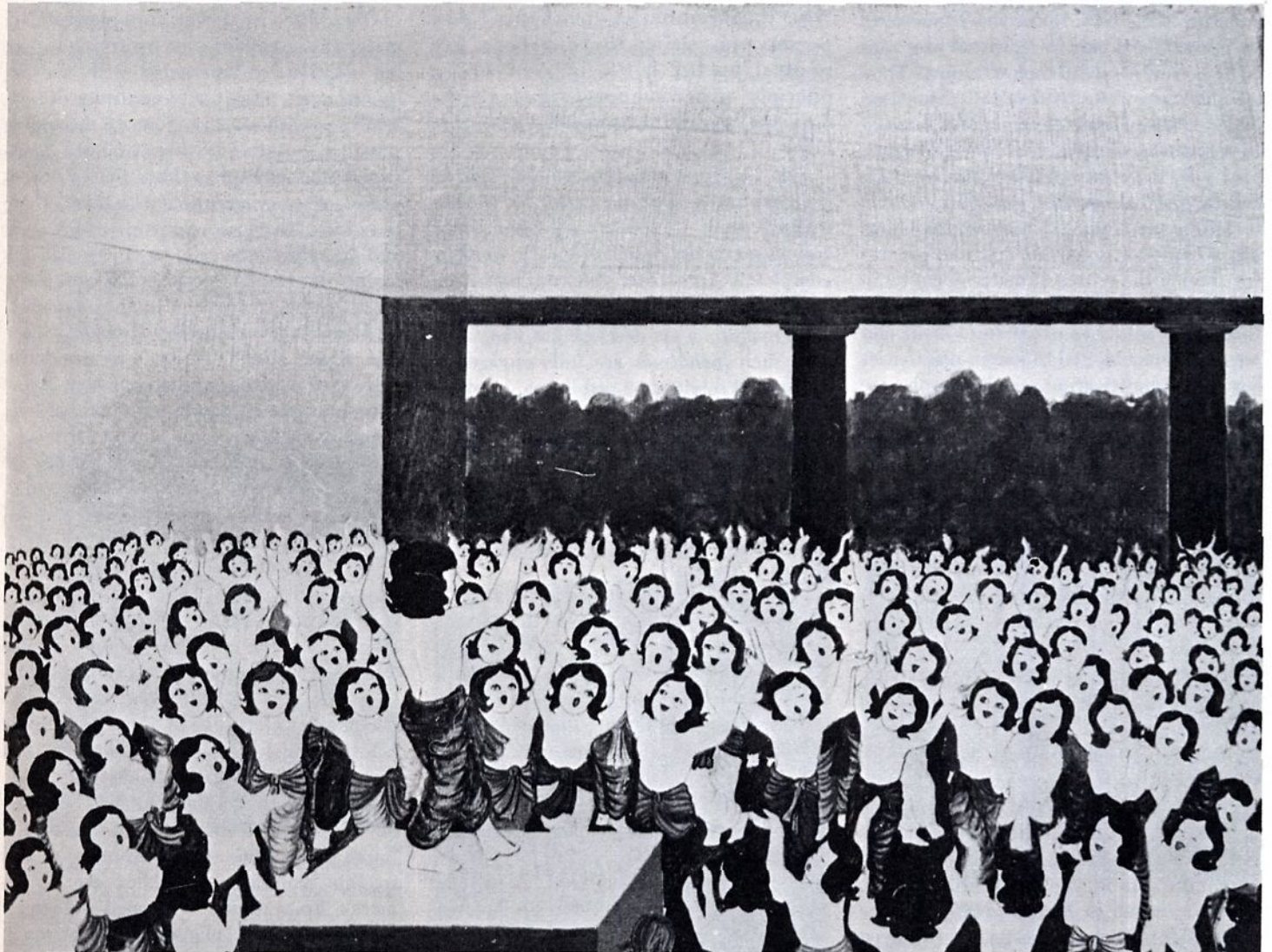
In the material conception of life, we

are engaged in trying to get pleasure from dead objects through our temporary and limited senses, and thus we obtain only flickering happiness. We are dependent on material conditions for our happiness, and thus it is inevitable that we are always hankering to have something or lamenting because we have lost something. We see a beautiful girl or boy and our mind becomes dominated by strong hankering, or we lose our girl friend or boy friend, and lamentation is the immediate result. Despite such circumstances we are thinking that we have control over events in this world, not realizing that we are actually under the control of our senses. The fact that we do not recognize that we are controlled is an indication of the extent to which our originally pure consciousness is contaminated by the material atmosphere.

Under the control of the illusory energy, we are thinking that we are enjoying great

sense pleasure, but we do not know that this is not real pleasure. The materialistic person is under the false conception that there is no difference between his body and his self. He is thinking himself identical with his body, and therefore he is fully engaging himself in trying to satisfy his bodily desires by the four activities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending.

The lower animals are guided by this conception, and they engage themselves in these activities without any knowledge of higher spiritual principles. But human beings, endowed with the rare facility for developing spiritual consciousness, should not limit their activities to these four animal propensities. The civilized person should use the developed consciousness afforded by the human form of life, not to pursue bodily sense pleasure in the same manner as the animals, but to understand his eternal relationship with the



Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. This is the only way real pleasure is available to him, and this is the perfection of life.

This perfection is only available by the grace of a bona fide spiritual master who is a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. One may understand that there is a difference between the temporary material body and the permanent spiritual soul, but without the guidance of the bona fide spiritual master, it is not possible to halt materialistic activities and to engage in positive spiritual life.

No one can approach the Absolute Truth by the power of his own mundane speculative faculties; it is not possible. Our mind and intelligence are limited and imperfect, and by the agency of such limited organs no one can approach the unlimited transcendental person.

Those persons who are trying to know the Absolute Truth by speculation, formulating their own ideas and concocting their own formulas for spiritual life, cannot be successful in their attempt. They become easy victims for so-called spiritual masters whose mastery is actually limited to the financial sphere. In their attempt to reach the transcendental platform by mental speculation, they may philosophize that they are God, but because they have not accepted a bona fide spiritual process for freeing the senses of material contamination, these so-called Gods are unable to achieve actual spiritual enjoyment and are therefore addicted to material activities for sense gratification. Such persons are pleased to accept any man as their spiritual master, provided such "spiritual master" agrees to make no attempt to limit the disciple's sense-gratificatory activities. Those who have independently reached the faulty conclusion that the Absolute Truth is void or impersonal are in the same position; though they may say that everything is one, they are nevertheless addicted to material sense gratification.

In order to be successful in spiritual life, one has to accept a bona fide spiritual master and agree to abide by his instructions. If one is determined to act in accordance with his own concocted formulas, there is no use in accepting a spiritual master just for the purpose of show. By definition, the disciple must be willing to accept the authority of the spiritual master. It is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* that the bona fide spiritual master can impart transcendental knowledge to his student

because he has seen the truth. The student should therefore approach the spiritual master with an attitude of submission. A person who adopts this method has no need to continue speculating about the truth. When one approaches the spiritual master with service and submissive questions, the Absolute Truth is available to him. The spiritual master instructs the disciple in such a way that the disciple can reach the perfection of life without any doubt, and one should therefore follow the spiritual master's order without hesitation.

The spiritual master is the representative of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore his words of instruction always agree with the words of the Supreme Lord, which are found in the bona fide scriptures. The Supreme Lord instructs in *Bhagavad-gītā* that one should surrender unto Him and become His devotee, and the bona fide spiritual master instructs the disciple in the same way: "One should surrender unto Kṛṣṇa." Any person who claims to be a bona fide spiritual teacher but is opposed to the principle of unconditional service to the Supreme Lord must be rejected at once as bogus.

The spiritual master cannot be an ordinary man, but he must be a self-realized soul, a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa coming in disciplic succession. He must be completely free from the contamination of the material energy. He must be a great soul, *mahātmā*. As described in *Bhagavad-gītā*, such *mahātmās* are fully engaged in devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, knowing Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible. They do not regard the Supreme as impersonal; they are in eternal association with Lord Kṛṣṇa in His eternal transcendental form and are always engaged in chanting the glories of the Lord.

A great soul is very rare, and it is he only who is able to give the sincere searcher the unsurpassable gift of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The conditioned souls have forgotten Lord Kṛṣṇa and are engaged in serving their senses, but by the grace of the bona fide spiritual master one's original spiritual position of loving service to Kṛṣṇa can be revived, and by this service one can experience the highest spiritual bliss.

The pleasure derived from devotional service is so great that the pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa reject all other kinds of happiness. Prahlāda Mahārāja therefore

prayed to the Lord, "My dear Lord, I repeatedly pray unto Your lotus feet that I may simply be stronger in devotional service. I simply pray that my Kṛṣṇa consciousness may be more strong and steady, because happiness derived out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service is so powerful that with it one can have all the other perfections of religiousness, economic development, sense gratification and even the attainment of liberation from material existence." Frustrated by the experience of incessant material misery, unhappy persons sometimes try to become liberated from such misery by attempting to merge with the Supreme Absolute Truth. But it is confirmed by the great authority Bilva-maṅgala Ṭhākura that for one who is devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa in His personal form, liberation from material misery "stands at his doorstep with folded hands." Such liberation is automatically achieved by one who becomes a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

One who is trying for pleasure by materialistic activities or by trying to lose his identity by "merging" with the Supreme must perpetually continue in such activities without any hope of becoming satisfied, but the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa experience such great bliss that all other pleasures seem insignificant to them. There is nothing that can compare to this bliss, and therefore one who is engaged in the loving devotional service of Kṛṣṇa easily gives up the meager and temporary enjoyment of material sense-gratificatory activities. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so wonderful that even a drop of happiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness surpasses an ocean of happiness derived from any other activities.

This great transcendental bliss can be experienced by anyone who is engaged in devotional service under the direction of the spiritual master, and therefore devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the perfection of existence. This devotional service is very rare, but in this age it is easily attained by the causeless mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, and He has descended personally from His transcendental abode to freely distribute love of Godhead to the unfortunate souls who have fallen into this material world. The Supreme Lord has no obligation to descend to this material world, but due to His mercy upon the conditioned souls, He appeared on this planet 500 years ago in order to indicate to everyone by His per-

sonal example that the only possible way to achieve spiritual life in this age is by chanting the transcendental names of God. The most potent chant is Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. He kindly descended Himself and described the full science of devotional service to His disciples, and He personally propagated the Hare Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana* movement.

Even a drop of happiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness surpasses an ocean of happiness derived from any other activities, and there is an ocean of Kṛṣṇa conscious happiness. This transcendental ocean of bliss is not only unlimited, but it is always increasing. We have no experience on the material platform of an ocean which increases, but the unlimited ocean of spiritual bliss can be unlimitedly increased by the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It is by the grace of Lord Caitanya that His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada has come to America to spread this *saṅkīrtana* movement, at a time when it is very much required. Although the Western countries are economically and technologically prosperous, their citizens are nevertheless experiencing great anxiety and frustration due to widespread spiritual poverty, and there is no place where one can receive instruction in spiritual science. The transcendental science of

Kṛṣṇa consciousness which Śrīla Prabhupada has brought to this country is therefore a most rare and valuable commodity.

There is a story that one devotee of Lord Śiva was informed by Lord Śiva that Sanātana Gosvāmī, a great Kṛṣṇa conscious saint, had in his possession something very valuable. This devotee therefore went to Sanātana and requested that he give him the most valuable thing that he had. Sanātana Gosvāmī told him that he had a touchstone—a stone capable of transforming iron into gold—lying in a pile of garbage. Directed by Sanātana Gosvāmī, the devotee searched through the garbage and found the touchstone. A few experiments quickly revealed that the stone was indeed capable of changing iron into gold, and so the devotee went away with great satisfaction. But as he was walking on the road, he thought, “Sanātana Gosvāmī has left this valuable touchstone in a pile of garbage, and he seems not to care about it at all. He must have something even more valuable.” He therefore approached Sanātana again: “You must have something more valuable than this stone; please give it to me.” And so Sanātana Gosvāmī gave him the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* to chant.

This same Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is being offered freely to everyone by our spiritual master His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, and the most

intelligent people will take to this chanting process. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so valuable and rare that if a man has a million dollars, he will still be unable to purchase Kṛṣṇa consciousness anywhere. Under the spell of illusion, we are thinking that material advancement is the goal of life, but we do not know that by this process no one is enjoying real happiness. The temporary material happiness of this world becomes insignificant when compared to the unlimited spiritual pleasure available from Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and this is a fact which will be readily confirmed by any one of the steadily increasing number of devotees who have taken to this transcendental process. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the scientific method recommended in the Vedic literature for reviving our dormant love of God, and when we are fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we can become free from all material distress and resume our eternal association with the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual sky. Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement makes this spiritual perfection available to everyone, and it is therefore the prime benediction for all living entities. It is the priceless gift now made available to people all over the world by the causeless mercy of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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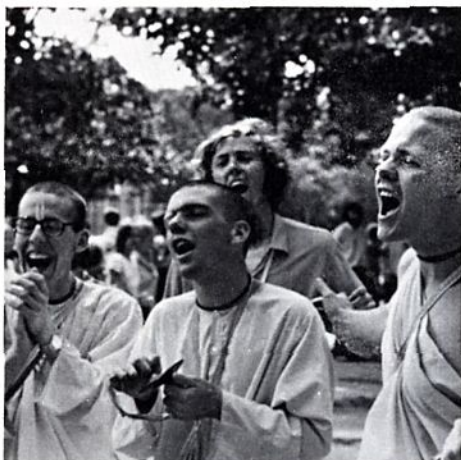
A DAY AT ISKCON BOSTON

Spiritual life is blissful, but it is not whimsical. The regulative principles of



bhakti-yoga (the *yoga* of devotional service), as defined by the spiritual master and the authorized scriptures, form the standard way for the conditioned soul to come to the purified stage of spiritual

existence, and one must first reach that joyful stage of purification before he can serve Kṛṣṇa in spontaneous love. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness *bhakti* schedule in Boston is rigidly followed. The day is filled with various activities, especially *saṅkīrtana* (the public chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa), the print-



ing of the spiritual master’s literature, and the worship of the Deity in the temple.

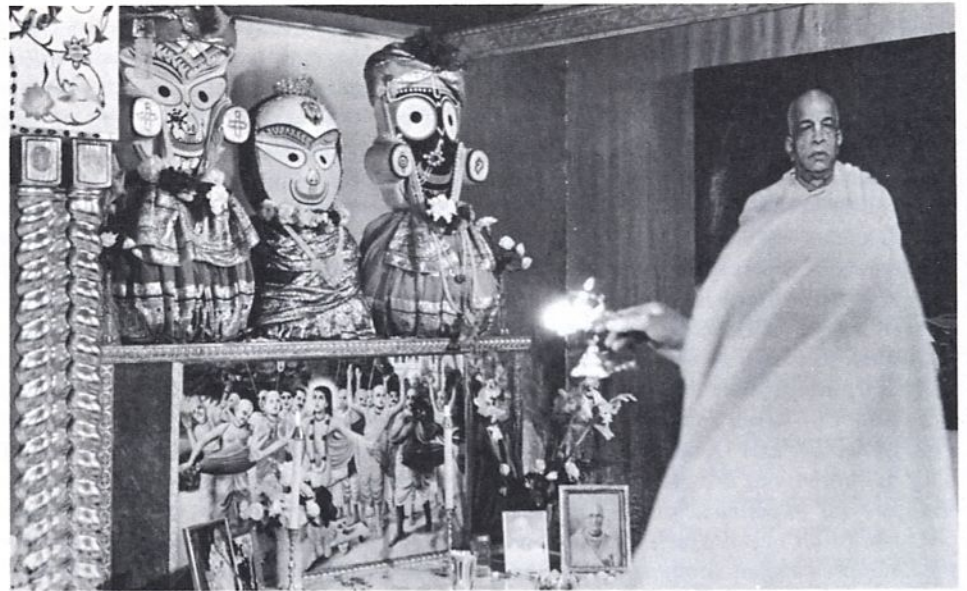
At 3:30 A.M. the *brahmachārīs*, single celibate students, are awakened by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and brought to their feet. Some devotees are awake long



before 3:30. As early as 3:00 A.M., the *pūjārī* (caretaker of the Deities) is up doing her duties, and designated press men

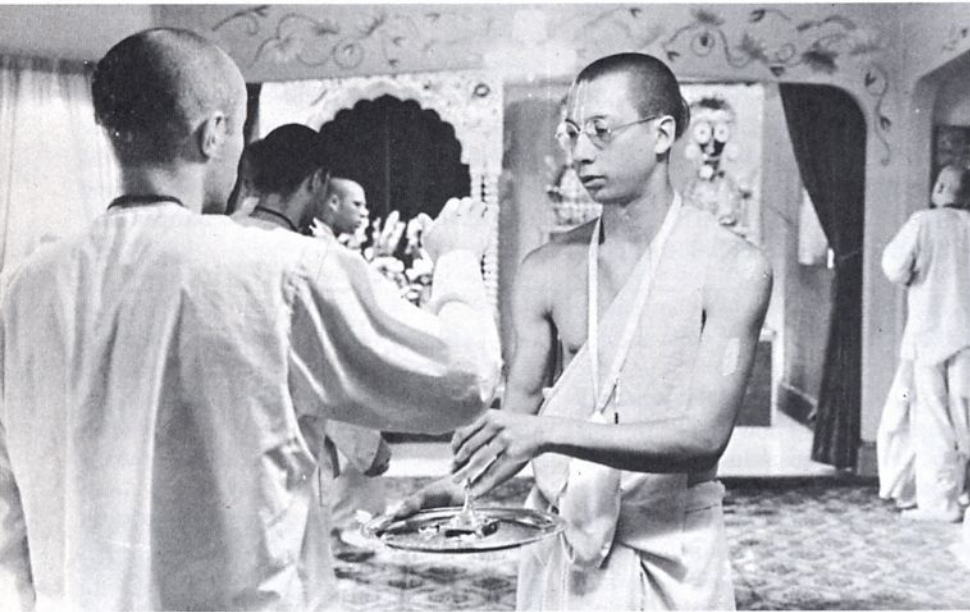
are working transcendental night shifts on the IBM composing machine which is putting out an unlimited stock of Sanskrit literature. At 3:30 A.M., the cooks begin preparing foodstuffs which will be offered to the Deities in the temple at the 4:30 A.M. ceremony. Also at 4:00, girls start making flower garlands for the Deities. And several days a week the temple vehicle starts out early in the morning to purchase flowers to adorn the Deities.

The goal of all these activities is to realize Kṛṣṇa. It is stated in the scriptures that if one not only recognizes that God is great but personally engages in His service, then he is the perfect *yogī* and is most intimately linked with the Supreme. At 4:30 the Supreme Lord is glorified in the form of His Deity incarnation. By His mercy the Lord appears in the Deity form of stone or wood, and the devotee is thus able to perform loving service to the



Absolute Truth, who so kindly accepts being bathed and being dressed and fed. During the morning *kīrtana* ceremony, praises are sung to Kṛṣṇa and the *guru*, and

especially the *mahāmantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is chanted. At 7:30 there is break-

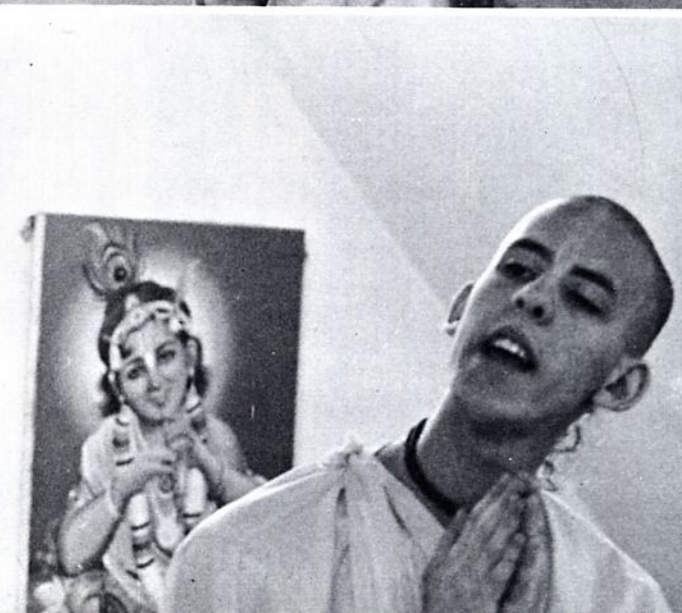
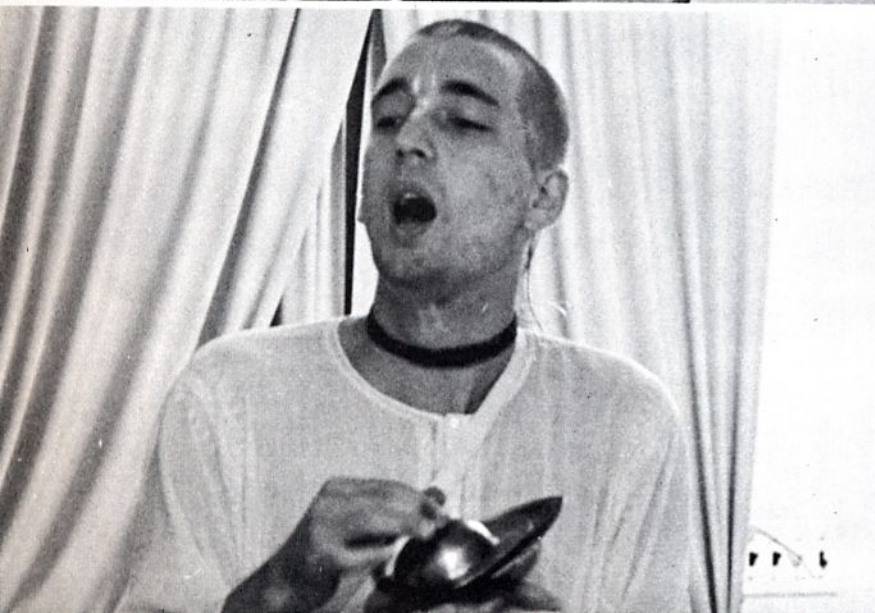
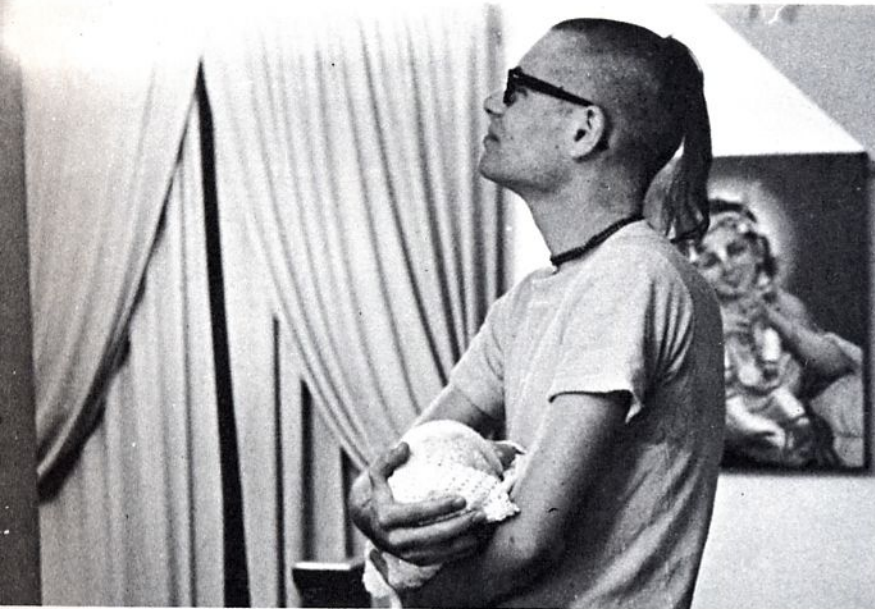




fast and then cleanup until 9:30, when there is a *Bhagavad-gītā* class. The public is invited to take part in this program, beginning from the seven o'clock service.

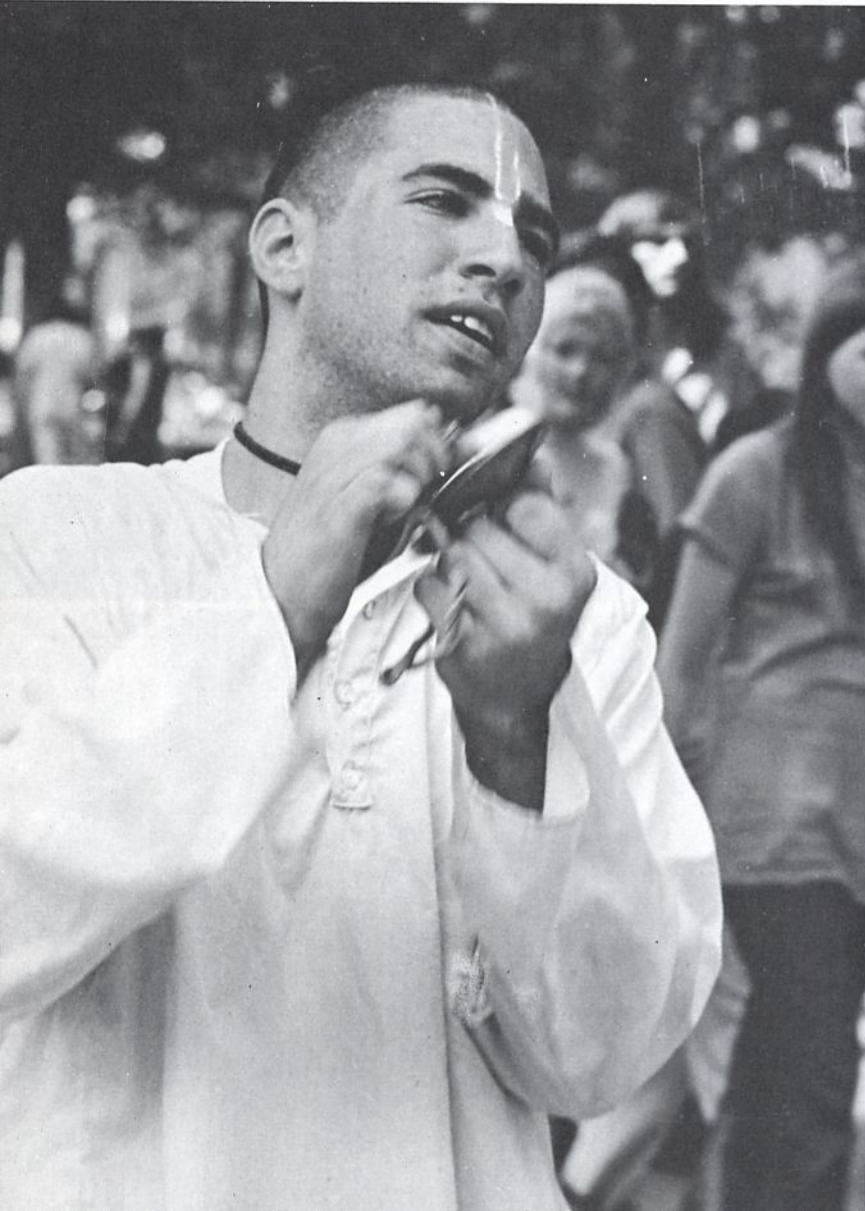
Anyone who participates in this program gains great spiritual benefit. It is stated in *The Nectar of Devotion*: "Persons who are impelled by pure devotional service in

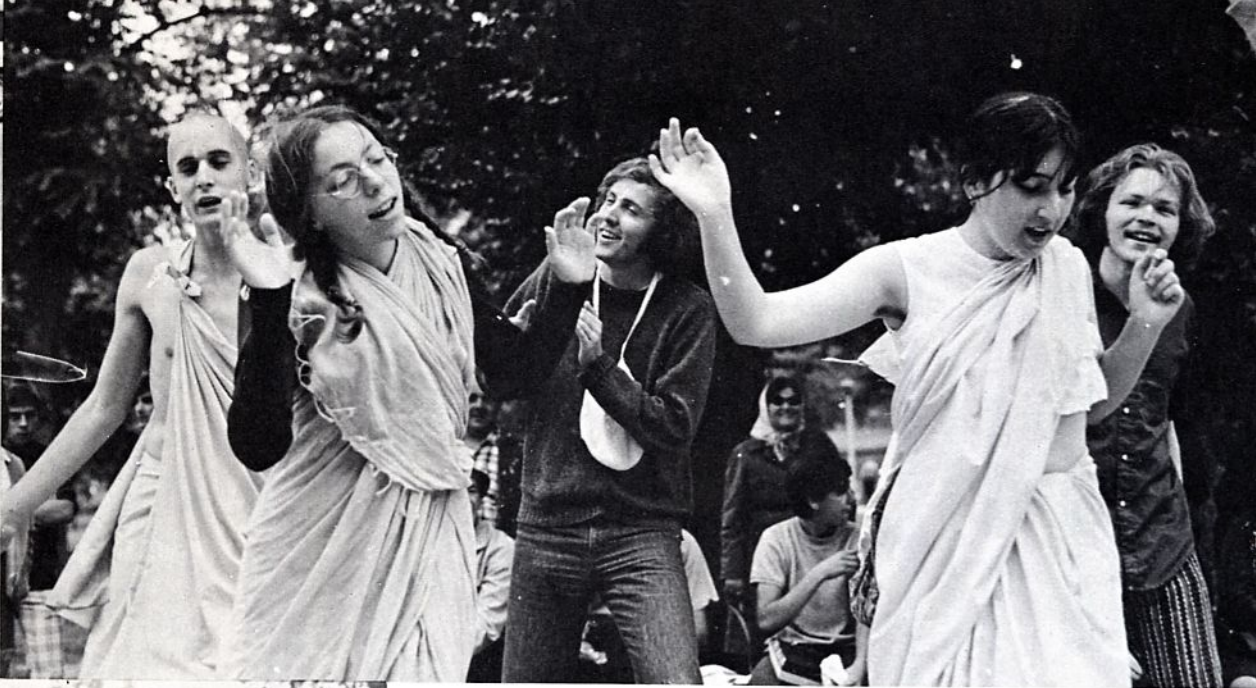
Kṛṣṇa consciousness and who therefore go to see the Deities of Viṣṇu in the temple will surely get relief from entering again into the prison house of a mother's womb."





The *saṅkīrtana* party, with all paraphernalia for a full day of chanting, leaves at 11:00 in the *saṅkīrtana* van. The devotees chant throughout the day in the parks and streets of Boston. In this age, *saṅkīrtana* is especially





recommended as the highest welfare work. The distribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the living entities who have forgotten Kṛṣṇa is a far greater service than the patchwork of material welfare work, altruism, etc.





The ISKCON press is on a special schedule. All phases of transcendental printing go on at the Boston center, beginning from receipt from the spiritual master of dictaphone tapes for a book such as *The Nectar of Devotion*. The tapes are typed out, edited by English and Sanskrit editors, composed and made ready for print, then printed, bound, and distributed to Kṛṣṇa consciousness centers all over the world. Illustrations for these books are done by a team of artists working under the direct order of His Divine Grace. Prabhupāda has called the press his heart. Press workers follow the temple schedule as closely as possible while putting in long hours of work on this special mission of the spiritual master.

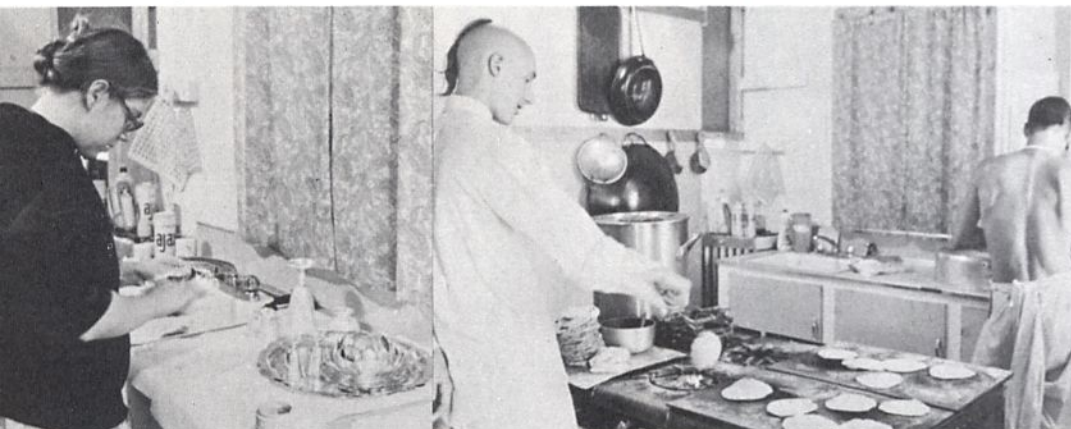


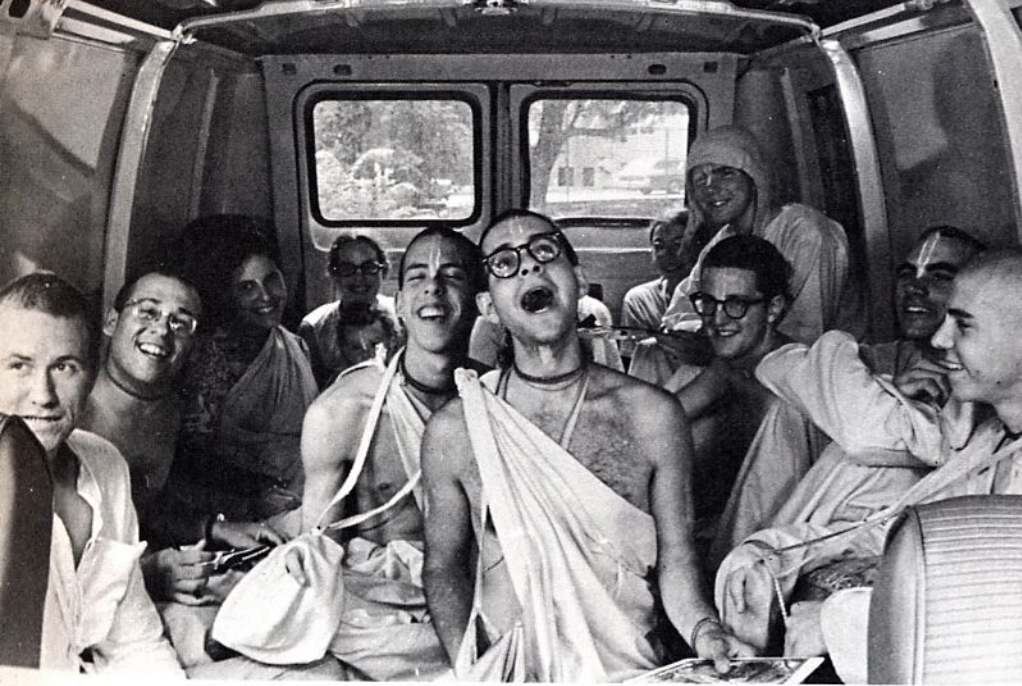
The offering to the Deity in the temple is at 11:30. Food is prepared with the consciousness that it is not primarily for the devotees but is for Kṛṣṇa in His Deity incarnation. Prayers to the spiritual master are sung before the Deity, and then the

offered food is to be taken as *prasādam*, or divine remnants first accepted by God Himself. All food taken at the temple is first offered in this way. So every activity, even eating, is calculated to increase spiritual strength. One simply has to apply



his body and mind to Kṛṣṇa's service, and he will thus become cleansed of material desires to satisfy himself and will instead try to please the Supreme directly.



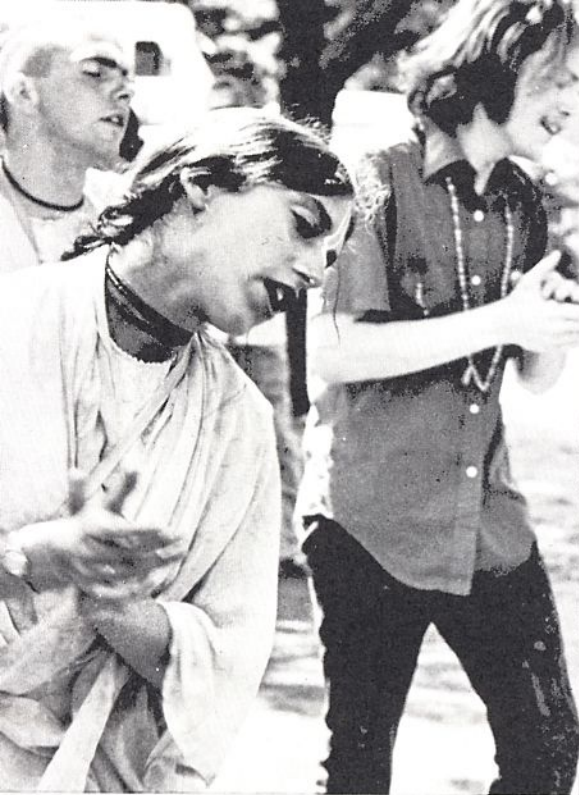


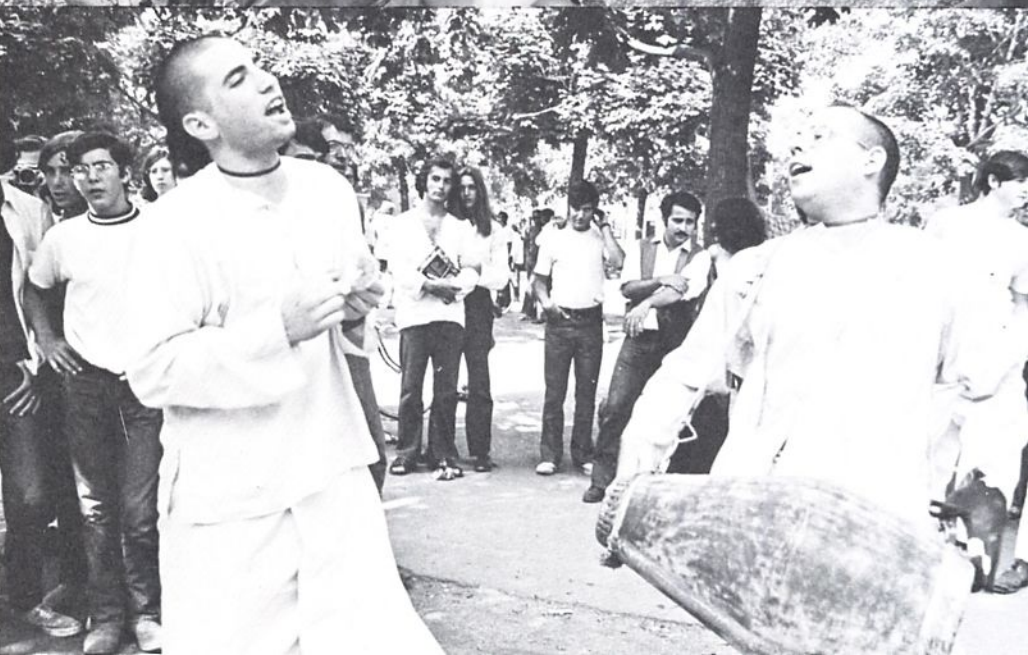
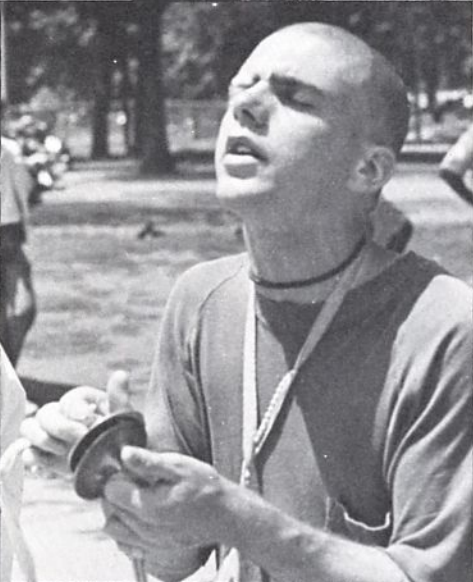
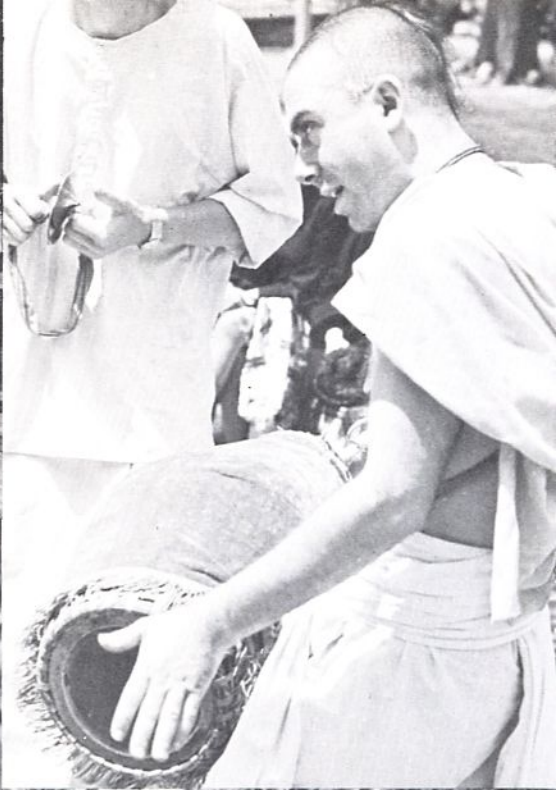
At noon the *sañkīrtana* truck takes out several more devotees, who join the *sañkīrtana* party which has already left at

11:00. *Prasādam* is brought to them in the field, where, according to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they are doing the highest work. After the

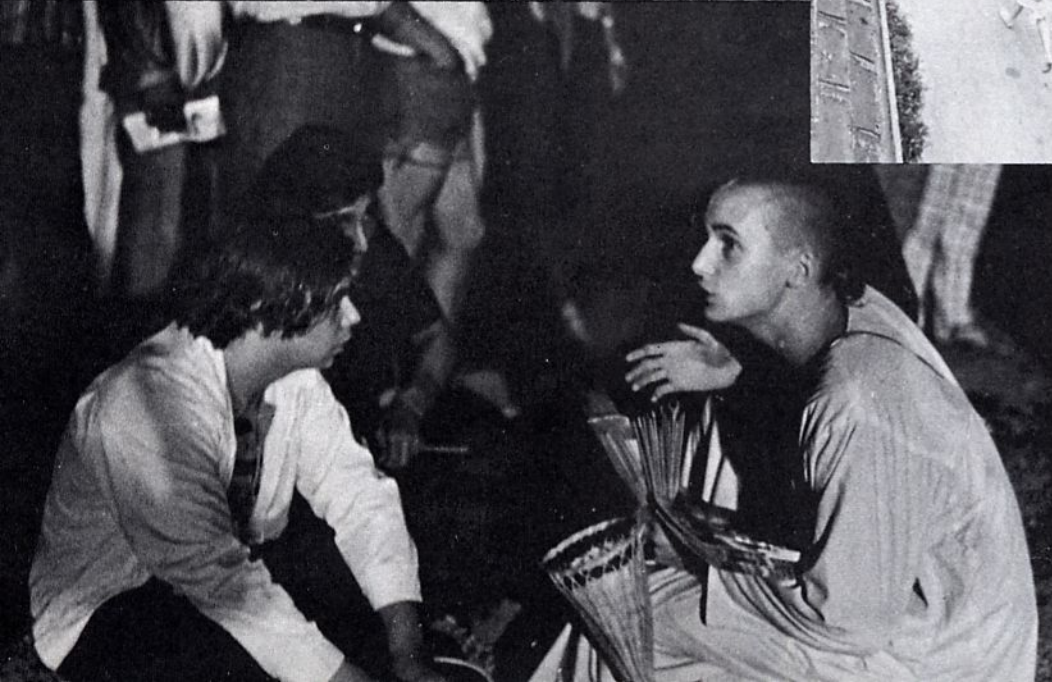
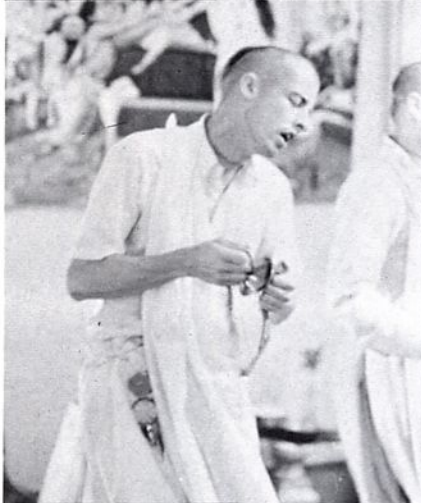
devotees take *prasādam*, the ecstatic chanting party continues, and chanting and distribution of literature go on until 6:00.







Every evening at 6:30, all the Boston devotees, numbering about forty, join for evening *prasādam*, along with as many as twenty guests, most of whom are attracted during the day by the *saṅkīrtana* chanting in the streets. After taking plenty of delicious *prasādam*, all are invited to attend the ecstatic 7 P.M. *ārātrika* worship in the temple. There, before the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Lord Jagannātha (spiritual forms of Kṛṣṇa and His expansions), the devotees ecstatically sing the holy names and dance, accompanied by *mṛdaṅga* drums, *karatālas* and harmonium. This transcendental chanting, performed with sincerity, cleanses the heart of all material anxiety and brings complete relief to any person who takes part. Following *ārātrika* a forty-minute *Bhagavad-gītā* class is held, following which guests and devotees ask questions which are answered on the authority of the spiritual master and the Vedic scriptures. Hearing of the topics of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very important in the process of *bhakti*:



simply by hearing from the proper Vedic authority, one can advance toward attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

All these activities are authorized by the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is a pure devotee of the Supreme Lord and who is himself authorized by a chain of spiritual masters in a disciplic succession going back to the time of the creation of the universe. Lord Caitanya, the *avatāra* who 500 years ago preached exclu-



that the boys and girls who engage six hours daily in this *sañkīrtana* activity are automatically freed from the immoral practices of this age and are situated in the ocean of transcendental bliss.

All devotees take rest by 10:00 P.M. It is stated in the Vedic scriptures that the passing of a day means that one day has been taken from our life's duration, and all the money in the world cannot buy back that time. Time takes away our life day by day until finally there is nothing left but death. That is the predicament for all who spend their time in bodily, material consciousness, forgetful of their eternal relationship with God. But the time of those devotees who constantly engage in transcendental loving service can never be taken away, nor at death can such devotees be forced to give up their God consciousness. A day at ISKCON in the eternal devotional service of the Lord's pure devotee is counted permanently as an asset toward the ultimate goal of attaining the kingdom of God.

END

sive engagement in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa for all peoples, prayed as follows: "One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street, more tolerant than the tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly." Thus the chanters do not hesitate to chant anywhere and everywhere for the benefit of all. One can understand



Note: This is the first part of "Chant," a lengthy four-part poem. Part One traces the activities of the spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, from his landing in New York in 1965 to the end of 1969, four short

years packed with transcendental events so numerous that only the most memorable are recorded. There is nothing concocted or exaggerated in this section. The events recorded are only those the author personally witnessed or experienced. Who

could begin to chant all the glories of the spiritual master? The grammatical form utilized in this section, a long series of pronoun clauses, was developed a century ago by Whitman in "Recorders' Ages Hence," a *Calamus* poem.

CHANT (Part 1)

by Hayagrīva dāsa Adhikārī

(ISKCON—New Vr̄ndāvana)

nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale śrīmate bhakti-vedānta-svāmin itī nāmīne.

I offer my humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace Prabhupada A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter of the lotus feet of that ever-youthful, beautiful, transcendental Lord, who, alone, in his seventieth year, threw family, society, friendship, love to the wind, left mother India and set sail around the earth to foreign, unknown shores because his spiritual master spoke to him in a dream, who carried the glorious message of the munificent Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to a nation plagued with the leprosy of voidism and impersonalism, who brought an ageless message of love of Godhead, who landed in Manhattan with saffron robes, a suitcase and seven dollars and wondered at *māyā's* skyscrapers and empty, noisy dreams, who, with white, pointed holyman shoes, walked through the snow to Times Square and laughed at Kali's cinema ads, who accepted residence with hashish-yogīs who believed they were moving the sun and moon, who played cymbals and chanted *Govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*, "I worship Govinda the Primeval Lord," explaining to void-meditators that Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body is unlimited, that He can extend His hand to all parts of His creation, that any one part of His body can perform all the actions of all the other parts, and that simply by glancing at nature He impregnated her with countless living entities and set the cosmic systems spinning and struck up the song of the universe, who journeyed downtown, out of compassion, and set up quarters in Lower East Side narrow mice-ridden storefront and trusted Kṛṣṇa to bring next month's rent, who opened the storefront doors even to Bowery derelicts and clashed cymbals and chanted Sanskrit hymns to God, whose vibrations caught the ears of young psychedelic middle-class renegades searching for alternatives to their legacy of lies and materialism, who had and everlastingly has infinite mercy, delivering it free of charge, a matchless gift, to whomever stops to hear, who never, to my knowledge, turned one soul away, who effused them all with kindness, affection, truth, who had mercy on my soul one bright July morning amidst the roaring Manhattan traffic of Houston and Bowery

(Most holy spot! Transformed to Vaikuṅṭha by his feet! Bowery transformed to Vaikuṅṭha!),

who lectured every morning on Second Avenue and as the gold of dawn lit his face played cymbals and chanted softly, careful not to awake the neighbors lest they pour hot water through the floorboards,

who opened *Bhagavad-gītā* and explained Śrī Kṛṣṇa's message verse by verse and set His names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare—on the lips of the young,

who, by contact only, warmed their hearts and lit the fires of love of God in their souls and smeared their eyes with the ointment of devotion,

who defied cheap popular adoration by truthfully telling the youth of America that to have Kṛṣṇa the soul must be pure, free of everything,

who supplanted the old white-bearded Judaic-Christian God with a beautiful, blue adolescent Boy and evoked *gopī*-tears from the eyes of men,

who led his flock to Washington Square to chant, was invited off the grass by the cops, sat complacently anyway on the asphalt and Hare Kṛṣṇa'd as nervous sailors flicked their cigarets,

who initiated his first dozen disciples with a fire sacrifice in his apartment, told them their real, spiritual names, chanted their beads, threw rice and ghee in the flames (*Svāhā!*) and sat smiling amidst the smoke as they coughed and ran to open the windows,

who listened, tolerant, to the threats of Jewish, Catholic and Protestant mothers accusing him of stealing their sons, and offered them bananas, apples, dates and tangerines and charmed them with his smile,

who every Sunday afternoon for a month sat down on the ground in Tompkins Square Park, pounded a bongo and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa three hours straight while dancing angels dropped exhausted and Lower East Side Ukrainians and Poles stared uncomprehendingly and grumbled,

who delivered a beautiful lecture on the spiritualization of energy to a thousand empty seats in midtown's Judson Hall while across the street hundreds flocked to hear the Boston Pops at Carnegie,

who patiently endured the red tape visa harrassment of immigration offices and allayed the fears of his children as they swore to follow him to India,

who, on a sudden invitation, jumped a jet to Frisco, telling his New York disciples he'd return in a fortnight, and after four months' absence laughed, "You have not reckoned a day of Brahmā."

who lectured a thousand Hell's Angels, hippies and teenieboppers

in the strobe-flashing Avalon ballroom on the glories of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtan* movement and, hands upraised, danced with poet Ginsberg, Moby Grape, Grateful Dead and Big Brother to Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa as Tim Leary looked on benevolently,

who chanted and danced in a ring with longhair boys, girls, beads, beards and headbands below the shadow of Hippie Hill in Golden Gate Park on bright March and April afternoons,

who lectured at Frisco Christian Yoga societies, to hippies in the Panhandle, to pacifists at Berkeley, to yellow, red, white and black nationalists, to anyone, everyone and no one in the streets and parks of Saint Francis,

who taught the students of Palo Alto a new dance—the "swami"—which in fervor surpassed the frug and watusi,

who led a nighttime firelit *kīrtan* at Frisco beach, roasted potatoes and sang starlit hymns to Nārada Muni,

who sauntered through Muir woods contemplating the redwoods and reflecting how tired their souls must be for having to stand so long without Kṛṣṇa,

who, back in Manhattan, wore his body down chanting and glorifying the transcendental blue body of Kṛṣṇa, cooking and writing for Kṛṣṇa, and suffered a stroke that would have killed a mere man, left his body and then returned with the names of his love on his lips,

who sang to Yamarāj, Death, as he stood before him, sang songs of love to the lotus-eyed Boy with pink bottom'd feet,

who, in Beth-Israel Hospital, sat like a helpless child as demonic needles came at him, tolerated them and listened to the Western diagnosis: "Tell him to take it easy. The old man prays too much,"

who, after five days, baffled obscene doctors by walking out the sickward's pea-green walls to recuperate across country in the dazzling Pacific sands of Stinson beach,

who sat amidst a labyrinth of kelp horns and sea shells proclaiming that there are only devotees and demons, naught between,

who composed Sanskrit odes to the Primeval Spirit whose eternal teenage lips play a flute,

who wept in a Frisco storefront—"Take to this process. I may be with you or not, but it is eternal."—and bade farewell to his students who thought he was going to India to die,

who bathed in the sun wearing a turban and flying on a carpet as the Pacific crashed in his ears—"All glories to the assembled devotees! All glories to the Pacific Ocean!"—and finally, following the sun, whizzed to Delhi, Vṛndāvana and Calcutta to Ayur-Vedic physicians,

who bathed in the Yamunā, where Lord Kṛṣṇa played His water games, and lived in Rādhā-Dāmodar Temple, where repose the *samādhis* of Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī,

who travelled through India, defying pneumonia, looking for a house for his American children,

who returned to the U.S. via Japan, trying to see the mayor of Tokyo to institute the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a glass American-made skyscraper,

who finally proclaimed the Japanese "not ready," and returned to a deluge of tears and flowers in Frisco airport,

who, surpassing the Chinese, instituted a yearly festival of Jagannātha love down Haight Street through Golden

Gate to the beach, nine miles, and led twenty thousand before the cart of Kṛṣṇa, Subhadrā and Balarāma,

who bowed to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Seattle and sat in new glory on the New York Vyāsāsana, the floating dais of praise, as his children fell at his feet,

who forgave his renegade disciples in Montreal with a garland of roses and a shower of tears,

who told golden beachboys in Honolulu and Kaaawa, Oahu that sun, beach and palm worship is all *māyā*, that golden flesh, after all, is just a bag covering blood, bone, stool, puss, bile, urine and guts, all rotting moment by moment,

who danced to Kṛṣṇa beneath the sun in L.A. and beneath the red, white and blue flashing neon illusions of Hollywood Blvd., Kali-yuga plastic America, and beneath the moon danced to Govinda and Rādhārāṇī in a Manhattan alley, searching for a possible temple,

who proclaimed natural vegetarian prasādamism to the nation's hamburger stands, the cow-eaters of America, the pig-eaters, bird-eaters, fish-eaters, lamb-eaters, threatening them with endless rebirths as tigers,

who declared that Colonel Sanders of the Fried Chickens of Kentucky would have to undergo a chicken-birth-life-and-death for every chicken smeared with his recipe making its saucy way into the all-devouring mouths of the American karmavores,

who burst two thousand Ohio State students out their skins and jumped for joy on his dais in the All-American City,

who, lauding the "big *mṛdaṅgam*," bought a press, said, "This is my heart," and printed his own books in Boston,

who, having chanted six years in temples of Vṛndāvana, India, where Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet danced, walked two miles up a West Virginia dirt road, stopping only once briefly for breath, and founded New Vṛndāvana in the locust-flower'd hills,

who lived there in a shack, sauntered on morning walks through the locusts and maples and blessed the dandelions, blackberries and pokeweed with his gaze,

who sat quietly beneath a persimmon tree reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and musing over the Appalachians,

who boarded the jet age from New York to Hamburg, carrying over the Atlantic real Aryan Vedic civilization in his head and magic mantras on his lips, the Paramhansa on Lufthansa, descending on Europe on his silver swan, singing songs of Kṛṣṇa-love for fractured Germany,

who, not knowing one word of German, lectured on ecstasy in a little storefront temple on Eppendorfer Weg, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa uber alles,

who defined real Aryanism—life according to spirit, not to flesh—to rapt disciples following him on a vigorous morning walk amidst cold, implacable North German beer consciousness, sausages and Volkswagens,

who sat before an Elbe sunset, holding up a picture of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa dancing on the lotus shaped Vaikuṅṭha planet, and who smiled and transformed the Elbe into the Yamunā,

who descended on London reporters like a thundercloud and deluged them with the Absolute Truth—"I have come to teach what you have forgot." "Which is?" "God."

who sang "*Bhaja Govindam*" to this century's British bards, the Beatles—"What are you doing? Your philosophical

speculation and grammatical word jugglery will not save you at the moment of death, so *bhaja Govinda*, just worship Kṛṣṇa,” and struck up a new song in George’s heart,
 who shouted down the new crows in London’s Conway Hall and continued playing cymbals as their wings fluttered,
 who founded a six-story Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple a block away from a storehouse of ravaged Indian treasures, the British Museum, and despite a Gandhi exhibition began the Vaiṣṇava colonization of England,
 who buried his head in flowers and danced in ecstasy before the Lord,
 who saw Arjuna throw down his bow at Kurukṣetra and Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass through Mathurā with Their cows and boy friends as the city girls showered Them with flowers from their balconies,
 and who at this moment deluges the blazing fire of the soul trapped in materials and drowns the conflagration of even the most obdurate (my own!) soul entangled in the great chain fire of action and reaction,
 who even now insists on wishing me well despite my pigheaded gnawing at o’erchewed stool,
 who knows the innate sweetness of the soul in love with Kṛṣṇa and who delivers that love with truth, who draws it out the timid soul with truth and who demands its flourishing and wishes it well,
 who resides at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa eternally, who is His ambassador on earth, transmitting His message infallibly,
 who views this universe to be no more significant than water in a calf’s hoofprint,
 who floats upon the tossing ocean of material and looks with compassion upon the countless dynasties of suffering souls struggling below,
 who hears the discordant sounds of Kali’s millennia and blends

them in harmony to one song that anyone can sing,
 who must play in the starry sandbox of the universe like a child with his toys,
 who must laugh at the *māyā* karmaval, the vast play of illusion, of America, of the world,
 who must talk to Kṛṣṇa alone at night, sitting on his bed, conferring, listening carefully to His advice,
 who perpetually receives the waters of benediction from the ocean of mercy and who pours them forth in torrents to extinguish the flames of materialism,
 who, always engaged in chanting and celebrating the message of Lord Caitanya, sometimes dances in ecstasy and trembles and quivers in his trance,
 who, with his disciples, untiringly worships Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Their temple,
 who is always offering food to Kṛṣṇa and who derives great satisfaction in seeing his disciples eat *bhagavat-prasādam*, the delicious mercy of the Lord,
 who is eternally eager to chant and preach the glories of the loving exchanges between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī and who aspires to relish these pastimes at every moment,
 who expertly assists the *gopīs*, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental cowherd girl friends engaged in the perfection of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugal love affairs, who makes various tasteful arrangements for Them,
 who, as all scriptures reveal, should be honored as highly as the Supreme and Almighty Lord, for he is the Great God’s most confidential servitor,
 whose mercy enables me to receive the benediction of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and without whose mercy I cannot advance on the spiritual path, and who is therefore worthy of my perpetual obeisances and my worship.

END

HOW TO GET OUT OF THE CLUTCHES OF MĀYĀ by Satsvarūpa dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—Boston)

The Sanskrit word *māyā* means that which is not. In other words, it is illusion. For example, if a servant of a king thinks that he is the king, that is illusion. Generally, it is the illusion of all human beings that they are the lords of all they survey. But the actual fact is that they are under the grip of strict laws. They are trying to exploit the resources of material nature, but are becoming more entangled in nature’s complexities. Since this *māyā* is illusion, or unreality, it can be stopped simply by reviving the real, original nature of the human being. This is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the mistaken idea that we have of ourselves and of our environment makes it impossible for us to enjoy our real, eternal nature. Moreover, once into the predicament of being under illusion, it is very difficult to get out of it.

On hearing the description of our entanglement in *māyā*’s clutches, one might well ask, “How did we ever get into such a complicated predicament in the first place?” Another fair question is, “Why should God put anyone into the illusion that he is something which he is not?” The third question to be answered is, “How can one actually get out of *māyā*?” We fall into *māyā* because we are forgetful of our real selves. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada has explained that it is not very important to trace out when this happened. When people hear of the kingdom of God and of the original nature, blissful, eternal and full of life, they ask, “If it were so nice, why would I leave?” The answer to the question of when we fell is there in the Vedic literature. Specifically, in the Seventh Chapter, twenty-seventh verse, of

Bhagavad-gītā, it is stated that we are born into this material world of delusion when we are overcome by our desire to be God and by our hatred of Him. As for the time when we fell, it is untraceably long ago, so long that it is called a time immemorial. But more important than tracing out just when we fell is finding out how we can be rescued from our present fallen state. In other words, if one is now very poor, it is not important that he was once rich. Or if one says, “Once I had much butter,” but now he does not have butter, the important thing is that now he has no butter. Similarly, we can observe that we are now in illusion. Some may think that these statements are word jugglery. Often a person tells us, “Never mind spiritual consciousness. I am already completely liberated. Do not call this illusion—I am happy here.” But let us examine the real nature of the material world, the kingdom of *māyā*.

Māyā means to live in this material world and to think that it is one’s

permanent place and that one can become happy here. Ask a person living in this *māyā*, "Are you happy?" and he may answer, "Yes, I am happy." But what is this happiness? Ask him further, "Do you like to grow old?"

"No," he'll answer.

Then, "Do you like disease?"

"No."

"Do you like to die?"

"No." Then where is happiness? As long as we have to suffer these very basic defects to life, there can be no happiness.

The way out of *māyā* is the process of self-realization. By understanding who we are and understanding our relationship to God, we can understand that we are in *māyā* and that it is no good. Self-realization and God realization begin with dissatisfaction. When we are dissatisfied, then we can search out liberation in our original state. By finding out our true nature, we can become free from the miseries of *māyā*. But we must not think that we are happy in *māyā*. To accuse the transcendentalist or spiritualist of being morbid because of his extreme criticism of the material world and its attractions is false. Rather, it is morbid to think that this life, which leads only to death, is everything. It is morbid to think that one is enjoying his body and its sensual pleasures when every day one can see side by side a beautiful young girl and a decrepit old woman and observe how quickly the change takes place. It is morbid to try to squeeze pleasure out of the body, mistaking the body for the real self. To treat the body as the self is as foolish as to try to eat by putting foodstuffs in one's ear rather than one's mouth. We can see from common affairs or learn from the *Gītā* that we constantly change our body, but the real self exists eternally. The craziness of thinking that our eternal self is the temporary body is *māyā*. But because the majority of people are in *māyā* consciousness, this has become the standard of sanity in modern civilization. The proper use of the human form of life is to inquire with dissatisfaction about this state of suffering in *māyā*. Usually when someone is afflicted with a disease, he will say with a feeling of dull resignation, "All right, let me go to the doctor." But one who inquires, "Why do I have to suffer? Who am I? Why must I endure disease and old age?" is intelligent. When such a process of inquiry begins, the sincere, determined searcher finally ends with God.

These are not questions of mental

exercise or philosophical speculation. Rather, the inquiries, "Who am I? What am I meant to do? Where do I go after death?" are questions that are dormant and natural in all living entities. These questions are asked by intelligent men, and the real answers to these inquiries satisfy the innermost need of the soul. Of course, one may ask such questions without sincerity, or one may ask them of someone who is not an authorized spiritual master, and so one may go on suffering birth after birth because it is very difficult to free oneself from the stringent laws of material nature. Therefore, among the qualifications of a devotee is gravity. One should listen seriously when questions about suffering in life are discussed, and one should not think that simply because one is young or intoxicated, there are actually no problems. The problems of birth, death, disease and old age cannot be done away with by medicine or technology or poetry or philosophy, nor should one think that one can become God and thus become free from material nature's stringent laws. Actually it is very simple: *māyā* is there because of our false consciousness. And it can be removed as soon as the consciousness is changed to reality. If a servant is trying to act as king, he will be frustrated because his real position is servant. But if he lives as a servant, he can enjoy all the facilities of his real position, without the anxieties of trying to be something he is not. Therefore, everyone should understand that this material life is a diseased state and that because we are diseased, we cannot enjoy. We must first become well. We must first get out of *māyā*. Anyone who is teaching a process whereby people can enjoy without changing from bodily consciousness to real or spiritual consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is cheating, just as a doctor cheats if he tells an ailing patient, "Please get up and enjoy." No! The true doctor who has diagnosed an illness, says to the person, "You cannot enjoy now; you must lie in bed, take these medicines, and when you become well, then you can enjoy."

Māyā traps us by offering us allurements in the way of sensual pleasures and by confining us to designations of the ego. By surrender to Kṛṣṇa these attractions vanish before the superior attractions of true spiritual life. Of the sensual pleasures, the chief is sex life. The difficulty with sex life is that it necessitates trying to enjoy on the bodily platform, whereas our real nature is not satisfied by the

sexual act, but is left unsatiated, just as a hungry man is left unsatisfied if one buys him expensive clothes or takes him to see a movie. Impetuously, madly, one thinks that he can become happy by sex life, but after repeated attempts, the complete satisfaction is still not attained. The satisfaction is only flickering. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that by engagement in illicit association with women a man loses the qualities of truthfulness, cleanliness, mercifulness, gravity, spiritual intelligence, shyness, austerity, fame, forgiveness, control of the mind and senses, and fortune. Even when a man has sex with his wife and decides to raise a family, he becomes trapped in a desire to maintain economic status and social prestige and to elevate the material standard of his family. In this way *māyā* manipulates a man by his attraction for sex and leads him away from all possibilities of taking to the path of self-realization and real eternal enjoyment. We must understand that although *māyā* is dictating, we are victimized only because of misuse of our own free will.

THE CALL OF KṚṢṆA

Opposed to *māyā*'s dictation is the call of Kṛṣṇa, coming through the spiritual master or pure devotee. Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of scriptures and in the form of His instructions carried by pure devotees. The devotees always seek to call back the lost souls from the kingdom of *māyā* to where they can enjoy their real nature. The human being has wandered through many species of life—animal life, plant life, and all other lower forms of life—and in most forms of life one is unable to free himself from the experience of repeated miseries. The human form of life, however, is a special advantage for getting out of this entanglement. Therefore, it is imperative that we hear and take to a practical path before death comes.

The chief symptoms of the disease of *māyā* are desire for sex life and false identification. The ideas that one is an American or a Russian or a black man or a white man are designations that cover one's real self. Our real self is spirit soul, part and parcel of God. These other things are only the outer coverings and are not our ultimate identity. It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that a person who thinks that he is his body, which is made of air and bile, or who thinks that the

land of his birth is worshipable, is no better than a cow or an elephant. We will only be Americans or Russians for this one body, and at the time of death we do not know where we will go. To cling to that false identification is also *māyā*, or "that which is not." Rather, we should put our energies into finding our real, eternal nature, which continues from one body to another. Actually I do not even belong to the human race; it is only a temporary designation. I am now wearing a shirt and pants, but I do not think that my shirt and pants are my real self. When the shirt and pants wear out, then I get new ones. But my self will continue. Similarly, I am not my car when I drive in my car.

In forgetfulness of our real Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we are trying to enjoy in a false way in terms of bodily pleasure and false designation, and we do not find real happiness because we are without Kṛṣṇa, who is our true and dearest friend. To understand that we are not the lords of all we survey, we do not need to inquire into scriptures. Simply by common affairs, anyone can see it. One may think that he is free, just as a cow on the end of a long rope with a ring in his nose may think himself free because he has a long rope, but eventually he sees that he is not free. When one comes to the conclusion that he is under the stringent laws of material nature, that he is in fact bound up by limiting conditions and limiting senses, and that he is not satisfied by any amount of sensual enjoyment, and when he can conclude that his position is temporary although he desires an eternally happy position, then he can seek out something greater, and he can inquire about God, the controller.

MISUSE OF FREE WILL

Let us examine the intents of the controller. Why is He putting the living entities under the stringent laws of material nature? Kṛṣṇa says that all the living entities who are struggling in the material nature are His parts and parcels. Therefore one might ask why He doesn't stop this struggle at once and simply bring the souls out of their illusion. The answer is that although the Supreme Lord is full of compassion for His parts and parcels, they are eternally individuals by His divine will, and thus each individual has a minute amount of free will. His free will is such

that he can decide either to be in *māyā* or to be with Kṛṣṇa. Once he decides to be in *māyā*, his free will stops, and *māyā* acts upon him. For example, one can decide whether or not to put his finger in a flame, but once he puts his finger in the flame, the flame will act and burn him. That action of the flame is called the material nature. The individual spirit souls are just like Kṛṣṇa and are originally intended to be with Him in spiritual bliss, yet because they are small, they are prone to come under the jurisdiction of material nature. Kṛṣṇa Himself never comes under the influence of *māyā* because He is the controller of *māyā*. So why has He set up this material nature? Because the living entities desire it. The example is given of a child who sees her mother cooking in the kitchen and becomes envious of the mother's superior position. The child declares to the mother, "No, I will be the cook. I will be the cook." The mother, just out of a desire to quiet the child, may give her a toy kitchen set and let the child think that she is actually cooking. Another example is that when serious men are discussing something and a little child is in the room causing a disturbance, the child is put out of the room. Once the living entity becomes envious of God, then he is removed from His association and put into the material world where he himself can act as God. He must, however, come under the material laws. This is actually the reality under which we are all existing.

Influenced by *māyā*, we forget our real position. A perfect example of the total forgetfulness to which one may come when he is put under the spell of the illusory nature of God was displayed by the demigod Indra when he was cursed by his spiritual master to become a pig on earth due to acting licentiously in the heavenly planets. When Indra was thus degraded to take the body of a pig, he took up his piggish activities and soon lived on a farm with a she-pig and piglets. After some time, the spiritual master returned to retrieve Indra, but Indra as a pig refused to be liberated to his former grand position, thinking in delusion that he had so many responsibilities. He refused his spiritual master: "No. I cannot go to heaven. Why are you saying that I am Indra? I am not Indra. I am a pig. I have so many responsibilities; I cannot leave. I am happy. I have my wife. I have my piglets. I have my stools." This is the influence of *māyā*.

Although it seems to be a punishment,

māyā also means God's grace. If someone does not want the topmost spiritual life, the opportunity to go back to Godhead, but instead desires to cultivate ignorance, then he is put under the agency of *māyā* so that he can try for happiness in the material world. The basic idea is that anyone who is born into a body has made a foolish choice; being born into the material world certifies one as a fool.

AFTER DISSATISFACTION

The signs of return to sanity are dissatisfaction and inquiry. Dissatisfaction refers to the realization that all is not well. Why must I grow old and diseased? Why must I die? After dissatisfaction comes the desire to inquire, to find a solution. The materialist is also seeking his solution to happiness, but his efforts are all patchwork. He tries to repair his body by going to a hospital, but soon the body will end. The real solution to bodily miseries is liberation from bodily existence. This spiritual knowledge solves things once and for all. When one realizes that this material world is useless to him, then he can come out of *māyā*. Everyone born into a body is in *māyā*, but by dissatisfaction and inquiry one may escape from *māyā*'s clutches. The process to do this is God consciousness or self-realization. Therefore, the first step out of *māyā* is to realize that one is in *māyā*. This is not ignorance. This is intelligence: Ignorance is to think that one is living in reality within material life.

Prabhupāda refers to the material world as the world of names. To a transcendentalist, buildings, machines, war, peace, politics and family are all just names, like the babble of waves at sea. The way out of *māyā* is not through mental efforts. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated by Kṛṣṇa, "My divine energy, *māyā*, is very difficult to surmount, but for one who has surrendered, it is very easy."

The way to get out of *māyā* is outlined by the Supreme Lord Himself in His incarnation as Kapiladeva. In the Third Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Devahuti, the mother of Kapila, asks Him questions exactly to this point: "How can there be any freedom for the soul as long as the material nature acts on him and binds him?" The living entity may desire freedom from the contamination of matter, but he is not given release. Once he desires to come into the material world, then he

is already conditioned by it, and he has no opportunity to get control of it. *Bhagavad-gītā* says that it is very difficult to get out of the clutches of material nature. Mental speculators, concocting in different ways, try to think that everything is void, that there is no God, and that even if there is a spiritual background of everything, it is impersonal. This speculation may go on, but actually it is very difficult to get out of the clutches of material nature. Devahuti asks, "One may speculate in many ways, but where is the chance of liberation as long as one is under the spell of material nature?" The answer is given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that only one who has surrendered himself unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord can be freed from the clutches of *māyā*. When one gradually comes to the point of surrender, he can ask such an intelligent question: "How can one be liberated, how can one be in a pure state of spiritual existence, as long as he is strongly held by the modes of nature?" This is also an indication to the false meditators who artificially think that they are the Supreme Spirit and that they are controlling the activities of material nature. They may think, "Under my direction the sun is moving; under my direction the moon is rising," and they may think that they can become free by such meditation. But it is seen that three minutes after their meditation, they are immediately captured by the modes of material nature, and they become thirsty: "I want to smoke or drink." So they are under the strong grip of the material nature, although they are thinking that they are separated from the clutches of *māyā*. Such a person sometimes thinks that everything is void and that there are no sinful or pious activities. But actually these are just atheistic inventions. The truth is that unless a living entity surrenders unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead as instructed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, there is no liberation or freedom from the clutches of matter. That is the transcendental fact.

When one misuses his free will and challenges, "Why shall Kṛṣṇa be the all-in-all? I am as good as Kṛṣṇa," then desire and envy of Kṛṣṇa bring about his material bondage. One may be a philosopher or a salvationist or a voidist and think that he

is the Supreme and that he is everything, but as long as he has this desire or thinks that there is no God, the cause of his bondage remains, and there is no question of liberation.

SURRENDER UNTO KṚṢṆA

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda writes in this regard, "Theoretically one may analyze things and say that by knowledge he has become freed and so on, but actually as long as the cause is there, he is not free. The *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms that after performing speculative activities for many, many births, when one actually comes to his real consciousness and surrenders unto the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, then his fulfillment of research in knowledge is actually achieved. There is a gulf of difference between theoretical freedom and actual freedom from material bondage." So if one gives up the auspicious path of devotional service and tries to know things by speculation, he is wasting his valuable time. The labor of speculation is ended only by exhaustion, and the result is only labor. It is like husking the skin of an empty paddy; there is no benefit because the rice is already gone. To get out of *māyā*, one has to nullify the cause of entanglement, and then the effect will be different. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead says, "One can get liberation only by seriously discharging devotional service unto Me. One must hear for a long time about Me or from Me and execute one's prescribed duties without reaction. One will thus become freed from the contamination of matter."

It is not that one has to leave the material world. One can remain in association with matter and still remain unaffected, if he is performing service to Kṛṣṇa. If someone is in connection with the police department, that does not mean that he is a criminal. As long as one does not commit criminal acts, even though there is a police department, he is not punished. Similarly, the liberated soul is not affected, although he is in the material nature. Even the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes into association with matter when He descends, but He is not affected. So we can exist side by side with matter, but by using it

for Kṛṣṇa we are unaffected. This is called liberation and is achieved simply by engaging in devotional service.

One must perform his prescribed duties in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One does not have to change his duties; he just should perform them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The criterion for success is whether by one's profession or occupation the Supreme Personality of Godhead is satisfied. Everyone has some duty to perform, and its perfection is achieved if Kṛṣṇa is satisfied by one's acts. For example, Arjuna was a warrior. His prescribed duty was fighting, so the perfection of his fighting was tested by the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa wanted him to fight, and as long as Arjuna was not willing to fight, he did not reach perfection. If a man wants to achieve perfection, then he should discharge his prescribed duties for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. All actions should be performed as a sacrifice for Kṛṣṇa. In this age especially, one simply has to chant the names of God to achieve the perfection of sacrifice. By chanting, hearing and associating with devotees, one can bring this about. When one is fixed in serious devotional service and acts in that way, then he has no reaction and is freed from all contamination of the influence of the three modes of material nature. By continuous and regular hearing of the holy names and pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, the effects of contamination, such as lust and greed to enjoy and lord it over the material nature, are diminished, and one becomes situated in the mode of goodness. In that way he becomes fixed on the transcendental platform. To remain on the transcendental platform is to be liberated from material entanglement. That is the way in which to get out of the clutches of *māyā*. The personification of *māyā*, Māyādevī, the superintendent of the material world, performs the thankless duty of punishing all living entities who have the enjoying mentality, but she herself, as a servant of Kṛṣṇa, becomes pleased when someone finally gets out of her clutches, and according to Prabhupada, she exclaims, "Ah, you have triumphed." So everyone becomes happy when a soul becomes freed from *māyā* and joins the association of Kṛṣṇa in the kingdom of God. That kingdom of God begins as soon as one begins serious devotional service. END

HARIDĀSA ṬHĀKUR: NĀMĀCĀRYA

by Uddhava dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—Boston)

Nāmācārya is a compound of two Sanskrit nouns. *Nāma* is used in connection with the holy name of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and *ācārya* means one who teaches by example. So one who is considered the spiritual master of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is called *nāmācārya*. Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Godhead, awarded this title to one of His intimate disciples, Haridāsa Ṭhākur.

Little is known about the birth of Haridāsa Ṭhākur except that by the will of Godhead he appeared in the late 1400's in a village of Buddana as the child of a family of Mohammedans. History does not relate to us any of the childhood pastimes of Haridāsa's life, but it is understood that at an early age he must have received the mercy of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa because in his teens, to the dismay of his kinsmen, he renounced all conventions of Mohammedan religion and society. With shaved head and the simple clothing of a mendicant, Haridāsa left the home of his parents for good and resumed his eternal position as a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

Haridāsa's renunciation of the Moslem faith in favor of devotional service to the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is often mistaken by sectarians to be the Supreme Deity of the Hindu faith, is significant because if we are to come to an understanding of the purity of Haridāsa's activities, we must first note the difference between mundane religious activities and transcendental loving service to God. Those who are engaged in the process of religion may be classified in three groups, according to their realization of the presence of the Supreme Lord. First, there are those who are *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*. Next, above them, are the *madhyam-adhikārīs*. And finally there are the *uttama-adhikārīs*. The *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* is characterized by the activities of going to a place of worship such as a church, temple or mosque and performing a particular type of religious function determined by an established formula. This type of religious person considers one type of religion to be better than another. The *madhyam-adhikārī* is characterized by four principles: 1) He sees first of all the Supreme Lord. 2) He sees next the devotees. 3) He sees next the

innocent, those who have no knowledge of the Lord. 4) Lastly, he sees the atheists. The *madhyam-adhikārī* behaves differently toward each of the above four persons. He adores the Lord and desires the association of the devotees of the Lord. He tries to inform the innocent about the Lord, and he completely avoids the atheists.

If we were to try to explain Haridāsa's change of heart in terms of the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* level of religious activity, then quite probably we would come to the conclusion that Haridāsa thought that the practices of the Mohammedans were not as cogent as those of the *brāhmaṇas*. This reasoning, however, is not substantiated by the activities of Haridāsa after his renunciation. Although he left the association of his fanatical elders and took up the life of a *brāhmaṇa*, Haridāsa did not adhere strictly to the separate line of the *brāhmaṇas* hated the sight of him. "Haridāsa does not follow the principles of *śāstra*," they said, "nor does he take part in any of our philosophical discussions. He simply idles away his time in a secluded cave muttering the same thing over and over. Besides, he was born in a family of untouchables." We will learn later that it was just these caste *brāhmaṇas* who tried to plot the defeat of Haridāsa Ṭhākur.

The activities of Haridāsa Ṭhākur were not on the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* level. Nor will the activities of Haridāsa permit us to explain away his renunciation on the principles of the *madhyam-adhikārī* stage of consciousness. Haridāsa, of course, adored the Supreme Lord, but he did not make a formal practice of associating exclusively with devotees or preaching this love solely to the innocent. Haridāsa would associate with whomever chanced his way, and no matter who that person was, devotee or demon, Haridāsa would at once engage him in talks about Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. We find a description of the mentality of Haridāsa, called the *uttama-adhikārī* level, in the sixth verse of Śrī *Īsopaniṣad*:

yas tu sarvāṇi bhūtāny
ātmany evānupaśyati
sarva-bhūteṣu cātmanam
tato na vijugupsate

"A person who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and sees all entities as His parts and parcels, and who sees the Supreme Lord within everything, never hates anything nor any living being."

Haridāsa left the home of his kinsmen not out of religious sentiment nor out of disgust for their ignorance of spiritual matters. He left wholly out of love for the Supreme Lord because that was his natural position. Haridāsa displayed in full the consciousness of an *uttama-adhikārī*. He felt equally at home in the company of devotees and in the company of demons. The *uttama-adhikārī* does not see any difference between a vastly learned *brāhmaṇa* and a dog. He realizes that both are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, and his love for them is equal because of this knowledge of the spiritual identity of both. So Haridāsa's renunciation cannot be classified as an ordinary change of faith, as we so often experience in our limited spheres of activity. Haridāsa simply realized his true position in relation to the Supreme Lord and did his utmost to behave according to *sanātana-dharma*.

THE ETERNAL RELIGION

Sanātana-dharma means eternal religion. This *sanātana-dharma* or loving service to Godhead cannot be taken away from the living entities, just as light and heat cannot be taken away from fire. When we speak of the living entities, we should try to understand that they have an eternal position called *sanātana-dharma*. It is accepted as a scientific fact that matter contains an immeasurable quantity of potential energy because of the arrangement of its parts. When this energy becomes manifest, it is called kinetic energy. An example is that light and heat are present within the wood, as potential energy, but when they come out it is called kinetic energy. *Sanātana-dharma* is there within the living entity, and when it comes out, it is called devotional service. Haridāsa's only activity, then, was to chant loudly the names of his most beloved Lord. He would most often be found in his secluded cave on the bank of the Ganges near the city of Fulia, attending to his duty of chanting the names 300,000 times each day.

Haridāsa was well visited by all pious persons, and whenever they chanced upon him he would be displaying the bodily

symptoms of *anubhāva*. These symptoms of *anubhāva* are described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* as follows: 1) dancing, 2) rolling on the ground, 3) singing loudly, 4) stretching the body, 5) crying loudly, 6) yawning, 7) breathing heavily, 8) neglecting the presence of others, 9) drooling, 10) laughing like a madman, 11) reeling the head, and 12) belching. (These twelve items are discussed in Chapter Twenty-seven of *The Nectar of Devotion*, a summary study of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.) The great saints who came to that spot would at once fall into an ecstatic trance upon seeing the person of Haridāsa laughing like a madman, rolling upon the ground or loudly crying. At all times he completely displayed the symptoms of one whose mind was merged in transcendence. In the Second Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna asks about the characteristics of a person whose mind is merged in transcendence. Lord Kṛṣṇa replies that one who finds satisfaction in the self alone, who is free from attachment, fear and anger, and who renounces engagements with sense objects is just such a person. Lord Kṛṣṇa further declares, "One who restrains his senses and fixes his consciousness upon Me is known as a man of steady intelligence." (Bg. 2.61) The purport is that material desires are very strong because the senses need engagements. One should, however, overcome sense desires by thinking of Kṛṣṇa. When one has a taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he automatically loses his taste for sense enjoyment because of its inferior nature. This is exactly what was constantly being displayed in the person of Haridāsa.

The great saint Haridāsa passed some time in this way on the bank of the Ganges, and his popularity grew and was spread to all parts of the country. Great holy men came from all quarters just to gain sight of him. The caste *brāhmaṇas*, however, became very jealous of Haridāsa's reputation, and they began to complain to the local magistrate of the government. (At this time Bengal was under the rule of the Mohammedans.) The *Kazi* took notice of the activities of Haridāsa, and he decided that he should report them to the Governor of the province. Since Haridāsa was born a Mohammedan but was acting as a lower-caste Hindu, the Governor, upon hearing of Haridāsa, ordered his immediate arrest and dispatched a band of soldiers to fetch him. Haridāsa offered to return

peacefully with the soldiers since he had no fear of death. But all the good people who enjoyed the association of Haridāsa became terrified for his life.

The Hindu leaders of the time were being kept in prison, and when they heard that Haridāsa had been arrested, they became anxious to catch sight of him. They thought that simply by seeing the great saint, their troubles would be vanquished. When Haridāsa entered the prison, he saw the prisoners in their state of consciousness and said to them, "May you all remain in this present condition." Confusion covered their faces, so Haridāsa explained, "My veiled benediction is rightly meant, for all of you just now are thinking of Kṛṣṇa. Your minds should always be fixed on His lotus feet. If you return into the world, your minds may become distracted from Kṛṣṇa, and you may become worldly-minded once again. I do not wish for you to remain in your present state of captivity, but just chant the name of Kṛṣṇa always and never forget Him, no matter what may happen to you." After blessing the prisoners in this manner, Haridāsa presented himself before the Governor.

The Governor was amazed at Haridāsa's personal beauty, and with great respect he offered him a nice seat and kindly questioned him: "My dear brother, why do you act in such a way? By God's grace you have been born a Mohammedan, but now you have renounced this birth for a lesser position. Please accept once more the religion of your kin and ask for God's forgiveness." Haridāsa burst into loud laughter and said that the governor was speaking as one who is deluded by material nature. Differences between Mohammedan and *brāhmaṇa* exist in name only. God Himself stands apart from such party feelings. He only requests through the agency of different scriptures that one should develop love for Him. "So," Haridāsa said, "I am acting in accordance with all religions in declaring this love of God as the highest aim of all. If there is anything amiss in my conduct, then please by all means punish me."

HIS IMMORTAL WORDS

These sweet words pleased the ecclesiastics who heard him, except for one, who was of a demoniac disposition. He said to the Governor, "Punish this evil person before the good name of our race falls into

ruin." So the Governor tried once more to convince Haridāsa to accept the religion of his birth and denounce his present activities. Haridāsa answered with the immortal words that stand as a pinnacle of determination for chanting the holy name: "No one can do anything else than what Godhead directs. If my body be hacked to pieces, if life itself shall desert me, still I will not give up the practice of chanting the holy name." The assembly was quick to the verdict: "Let Haridāsa be whipped at the twenty-two marketplaces of the city."

THE BEATING

Strong deputies seized Haridāsa and carried him into the streets. The beating began, and all saintly people were shocked. They begged for the release of Haridāsa, who was still chanting sweetly the names of Kṛṣṇa. From one marketplace to another they beat him, but the name of Kṛṣṇa never left Haridāsa's lips. One deputy would do the whipping until he was exhausted, and then another would take over until he also was exhausted. In this way the punishment continued until the twenty-second marketplace was reached. The deputies, in dismay, said, "Haridāsa, you will be the death of us. We beat you until our arms are exhausted, and still you do not die. But what's worse, from time to time you even smile."

On hearing these frustrated statements, Haridāsa simply replied, "If my presence on this earth is all that's troubling you, then I'll leave at once." Haridāsa then fell into an ecstatic trance, immersed in love of Kṛṣṇa. The deputies thought that he was dead, and they approached to dispose of his body. They thought that Haridāsa should not be awarded a burial, so they decided to throw him in the river. Haridāsa's body was thereupon thrown in the sacred Ganges, and soon he regained consciousness and found himself on shore. A crowd of saintly people surrounded him with chanting of the holy name, and Haridāsa began to dance as everyone sang the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

It is worthwhile to note that all through the terrible beatings, Haridāsa never showed signs of suffering pain. Only signs of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa manifested themselves on his face. Verse nine of Chapter Six of *Bhagavad-gītā* says, "A person is still further advanced when he regards all—the

honest well-wisher, friends and enemies, the envious, the pious, the sinner, and those who are indifferent and impartial—with an equal mind.” Haridāsa never for a moment felt at all hostile toward those who had brought this seeming calamity upon him because he understood that everything happens by the will of God. The only feeling Haridāsa had toward his punishers was compassion for them. He considered them to be deluded men with no knowledge of the real self.

The question may be raised that if Haridāsa was such a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa, why then did Kṛṣṇa permit such a mishap? First of all, it may be replied, the pastimes of Haridāsa are not to be considered part of this mortal world. It is stated in the *Nārada-pañcarātra* that by concentrating one’s attention on the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa, who is all-pervading and beyond time and space, one becomes absorbed in thinking of Kṛṣṇa and then attains the

happy state of transcendental association with Him. Because of his constant remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, Haridāsa never had to go through the tribulations of this mundane existence. He was always completely absorbed in the transcendental atmosphere where material sufferings have no jurisdiction. In this material world, if a king sends his representative to an unfriendly state and that representative is insulted, the king receives the insult as malice against his own self. Likewise, when Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee is affronted, this is blasphemy against the Supreme Lord Himself. It is understood that those wicked deputies who beat the body of Haridāsa were beating the Supreme Lord Himself. Some days elapsed after the beating of Haridāsa, and he met with the fortunate opportunity to gain association with the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The Lord appeared before Haridāsa and displayed on His beautiful person countless

cuts and bruises. Haridāsa became confused, so Lord Caitanya explained to him, “Because you are My pure devotee, I have accepted all of the pain of your whipping.” Haridāsa immediately fell on the ground mortified, but Lord Caitanya smiled very pleasingly.

ABOVE THE SECTARIAN

Haridāsa lived up to the standard of a *nāmācārya*, so we should follow his great example and renounce all mundane sectarian views. God does not claim that He is Hindu, that He is Christian or that He is Moslem. God stands above all the subtlety of mundane concoction. He is interested in our love for Him, which requires no mundane qualification. Simply by following the example of *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, anyone can gain the greatest benefit of developing love for God. END



“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: He whose mind is fixed on My personal form, always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith, is considered by Me to be most perfect.” (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 12.2)



On the back cover :

Śrī Balarāma is shown killing the Pralambāsura demon with one blow of His fist. When Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, displays His eternal transcendental pastimes, He is always accompanied by His immediate expansion, Balarāma, who appears as Kṛṣṇa's older brother. Balarāma's mission is identical with Kṛṣṇa's, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: "In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, I advent myself millennium after millennium." This is an illustration from *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

