

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

# BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No. 38





## By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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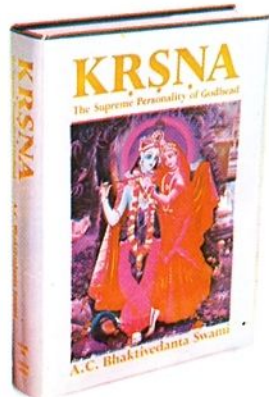
### THE NECTAR OF DEVOTION

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.



—2—

### 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 IṢOPANISAD

From the most authoritative sources, the famed 108 Upaniṣads of India, *Śrī Iṣopaniṣad* 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 Śukadeva 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 Sukadeva'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.

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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, 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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A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

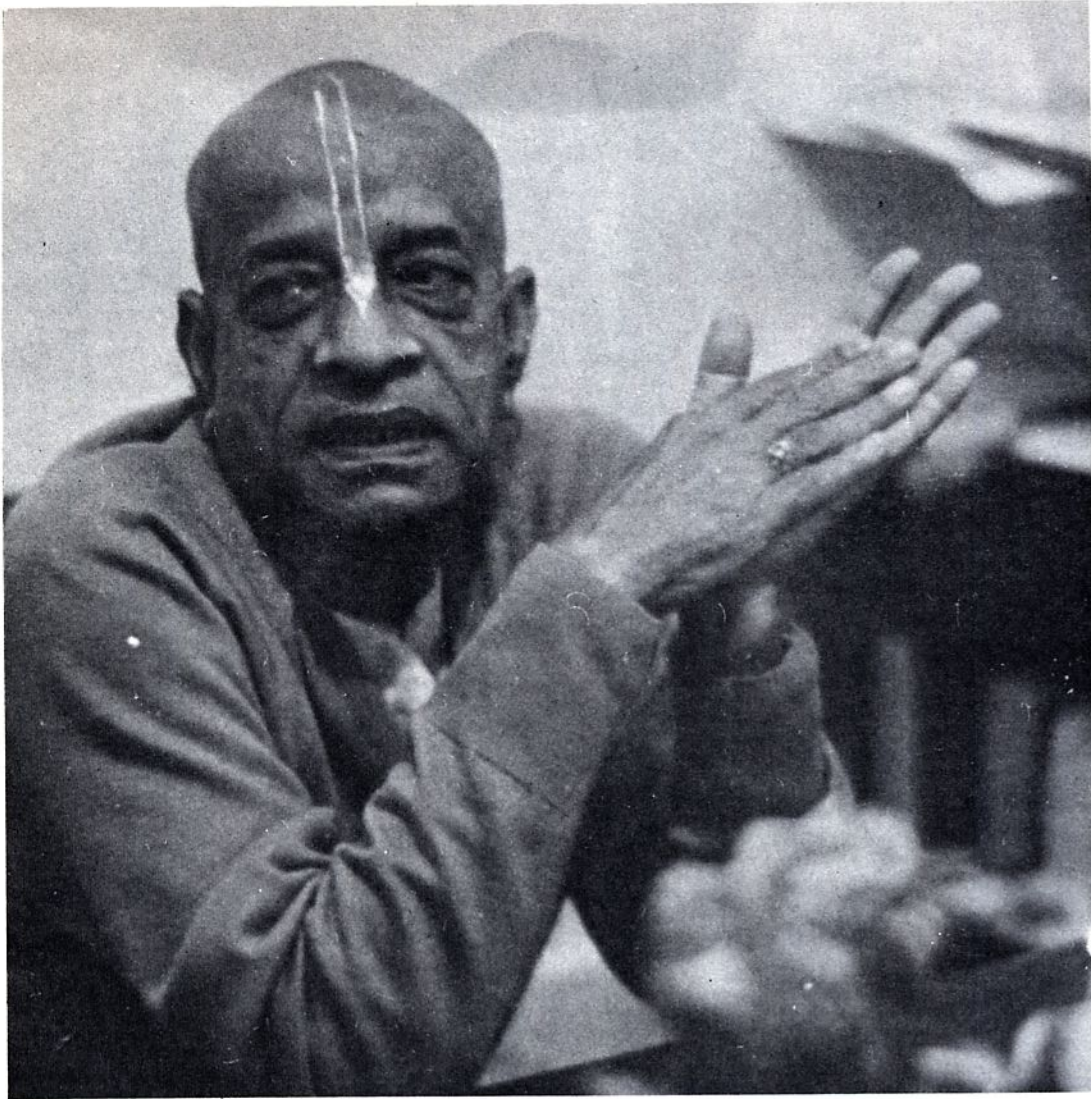
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Lord Brahmā, the spiritual master of Nārada Muni, is the first living entity within the universe. He received all Vedic information from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who directly imparted the transcendental knowledge from within his heart.



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

*Founder-Ācārya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness*

### AN ANCIENT SCIENCE FOR MODERN AMERICA

by His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami  
Prabhupāda

*Vedānta* means the ultimate goal of knowledge. Formerly there was only one Vedic literature, known as the *Atharva-veda*. In the *Atharva-veda* Kṛṣṇa's name is mentioned, and He is described as the son of Devakī. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has quoted from *Atharva-veda* in his commentary on *Brahma-saṁhitā*. *Atharva-veda* is the original *Veda*.

Kali-yuga is considered to be very contaminated, for three fourths of the population is impious in this age, and officially only one fourth is pious, and that is also dwindling due to the strong influence of Kali; so before the beginning of this age,

as a favor to the people, Vyāsadeva divided the original *Atharva-veda* into four parts, *Atharva-veda*, *Ṛg-veda*, *Sāma-veda* and *Yajur-veda*. Then he explained the *Vedas* by eighteen *Purāṇas*. Then he summarized the purpose of the *Vedas* in a historical form, the *Mahābhārata*, taking advantage of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and gave it to the less intelligent human beings, to *strī-śūdra-dvijabandhu*. *Strī* means woman, *śūdra* means the working class of man, and *dvijabandhu* refers to those who are born in a high family like *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya* and *vaiśyas*, but who are not actually qualified for their high position. For

instance, in India there are many so-called *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas*. But today if one reads the *Mahābhārata* he will find that it is difficult even for the greatest scholar of this age.

For instance, *Bhagavad-gītā* is set up in the *Mahābhārata*, and originally it was meant for the less intelligent. So one can just try to imagine what class of men existed in those days. *Bhagavad-gītā* is such a lofty philosophical spiritual treatise, but it was taught to Arjuna in the battlefield. How much time can a person spare in a battlefield? And at the time he was about to fight and was deliberating, "Oh, why should I fight?" So some instruction was given by Kṛṣṇa in half an hour, or at most one hour. And Arjuna understood the

whole *Bhagavad-gītā*. So what kind of man was Arjuna? This is the very *Bhagavad-gītā* that even great scholars of this age cannot understand, and Arjuna understood it within half an hour. We can hardly imagine what class of men was present at that time. Arjuna was not even a *brāhmaṇa*. He was a military man, and a military man is not expected to be very scholarly, though he knows his own work.

In this way the *Vedas* were distributed in several forms and divisions so that people could take advantage of them. Formerly the *Vedas* were not in written language, being what is called *śruti*. *Śruti* refers to that knowledge which is learned simply by hearing. There was no need of noting down or cramming; they were so intelligent. The *brahmacārī* system was so nice that students became very fertile in the brain and very receptive. For instance, even recently Lord Caitanya produced a hundred *ślokas* immediately after hearing them from Keśava Kāśmīrī. Although Keśava Kāśmīrī was a very learned scholar and Lord Caitanya was only a sixteen-year-old boy, Lord Caitanya told Keśava Kāśmīrī, "I have heard that you are a great scholar, so please compose some nice verses in praise of Mother Ganges." So he immediately composed a hundred verses, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu heard them and said, "Will you explain the sixty-fourth verse? Why have you said *bhavānī-bhartuḥ*?" *Bhavānī* means the wife of Lord Śiva, and *bhartā* means husband. Caitanya Mahāprabhu pointed out that since *bhavānī* means Lord Śiva's wife, it was redundant to mention *bhartā*, husband. That means that she has another husband. This was a poetical fault. So he was astonished that a sixteen-year-old boy, a grammar student, could point out his mistake, and he felt defeated. Formerly, two scholars would argue, and if one were defeated he would accept the other as spiritual master and become his disciple. That was the challenge. It was not like nowadays, for now we go on talking for hours, and although someone is defeated he'll never accept it.

#### THE HIGHEST TECHNOLOGY

Vedic literature is a vast literature, and it is complete. Every religion, every human society accepts God, or at least appreciates Him and says God is great, but no one knows how great God is. That information

is available in the *Vedas*. In school, children may use a pocket dictionary, which gives brief definitions, but if they use a big dictionary, just like the *International Dictionary* or the *Complete Oxford English Dictionary* of many volumes, they will see that the descriptions are more complete and vivid for any given word. So those who are actually interested in the science of God will find ample opportunity in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. It is not that we are decrying any other religion. No. This is a postgraduate study of higher consciousness or God consciousness. Therefore there is no objection to any religious group coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Many students from India come to America for higher study in technology, so we are offering the higher study of learning how to love God. That is our program. *Sa vai puṁsaṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*.

The test of first-class religion is whether or not the followers are developing love of God. It doesn't matter what that religion is. It may be Christian, Hindu or Mohammedan. If one is developing love of God, then his system of religion is first class. Of course every system of religion is nice, but as mentioned before, some are more complete. *Deśa-kāla-pārta*. *Deśa* means country, and *kāla* means time, and *pārta* means the receiver or the student. The Christian religion was taught in a different time. Now people are more advanced in education. And it was preached in a desert; the people were not very prosperous at that time. So they have some description of God. But *Vedānta* was compiled under different circumstances for a different audience and with a different view. *Vedānta* means to know God. *Vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyāḥ*. *Veda* means Knowledge, Ultimate Knowledge, which is to know God or Kṛṣṇa. That is perfection of knowledge. *Bahūnām janmanām ante*. After many, many births and cultivation of knowledge, when one comes to the point of understanding God or Kṛṣṇa, that is perfection. *Bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān māṁ prapadyate*. God is full of joyfulness, pleasure; He is the reservoir of pleasure. We are hankering after pleasure, but somehow or other we are already connected with the supreme pleasure. Everyone is connected. I am sitting here and you are sitting here, but without being connected with God we cannot sit even for a moment. God's energies are working at all moments, otherwise the whole ma-

terial world would be vanquished. So it is by the mercy of God. I am now speaking to you, but within a twinkling of the eye the whole body may be paralyzed immediately. Factually we are living at the present moment by the mercy of God. I am speaking to you by the mercy of God, and you are hearing by the mercy of God. The mercy of God is there. The prisoner is living at the cost of the government, even though he is in prison. Similarly, although we are in this conditional stage of life, we are living by the mercy of God. God's mercy is there even if we are against Him, so how much more will His mercy be bestowed upon us when we are His devotees.

Therefore we should read this Vedic literature, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*—there are volumes and volumes. One cannot even finish reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in his whole life. These literatures are meant for human society, for advanced human society. One should therefore take advantage and make his life sublime. *Labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu sambhavānte*. This life is obtained after many, many millions of births. That we do not know. Modern education, university education, is lacking here. They are simply after technology. Technology is good, for technology has produced this microphone, but don't forget the real technology of life, how to understand God, how to love God. That is real technology. This other technology will be finished as soon as this body is finished. And if, by chance, my next life is something other than human life, then I will have no concern with technology.

#### CLEANSING THE HEART

Those who are intelligent should therefore try to know themselves, what is God, what is man, what is man's relationship to God, what is this world, how it is working, what is this time, what are our activities. These are subjects for real knowledge, and these things can be learned in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. And by chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra one can become fit to receive this knowledge because it will cleanse the heart of all contaminated dust and garbage. *Paraṁ vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*. By hearing of Kṛṣṇa and His words, His message, the garbage of the heart will be cleansed and one will be able to see the situation of everything in true

perspective. And then if one cultivates this knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his life will be successful and sublime.

I have come to America with a mission, and I think my mission will be successful. I thought that in India it would not be possible, but now, whenever I go to some American university, the Indian students take this as a trifle because they have rejected it. They want to imitate. Overnight they want to be technicians like Americans. So when they see that I have brought the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to America, and that the American boys are chanting and dancing, they not only become surprised, but sorry that what they have rejected is being introduced and accepted here. So India's position is not very nice because they are imitating. They are neither this way or that way. They are suffering. If a person tries to step on two boards at a time, he will drown. Indians are trying to imitate the Western technological, economic developments, but the people are not fit for that purpose. They are by nature Kṛṣṇa conscious, and the modern leaders and government are trying to cut them down. So they are perplexed.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE GĪTĀ

But America is not poverty-stricken; it is rich; there is enough land and enough production, so everyone should be very satisfied and begin to make progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Americans have no economic problem, and yet they are searching after something. Somehow or other they are not satisfied with the Christian religion. On one hand, no one follows the principles, and on the other, it is not a complete science for modern America. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness is complete. *Bhagavad-gītā* is a complete science delivered by Kṛṣṇa 5,000 years ago on this earth, and before that to the sun-god, as is stated at the beginning of the Fourth Chapter: The Blessed Lord said: "I instructed this imperishable science of *yoga* to the sun-god Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of Mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku." Herein we find the history of the *Bhagavad-gītā* traced from a remote time, when it was delivered to the kings of all planets. The royal order is especially dedicated to the protection of the inhabitants, and thus its members should also understand the science of the *Bhagavad-*

*gītā*, in order to rule the citizens and protect them from the onslaught of the material bondage to lust. Human life is meant for cultivation of spiritual knowledge, in eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the executive heads of all states and all planets are obliged to impart this lesson to the citizens, by education, culture, and devotion.

Therefore this science of *Bhagavad-gītā* is not a new presentation. Just from these words we can understand that it was instructed to the sun-god Vivasvān. Just as this country's executive head is called the President, similarly, there is a President or chief executive head also in the sun, and the present President's name is Vivasvān. So everything is in full detail. This is called Vedic literature. Vedic literature is not concerned only with this planet; it deals with all the universal planets. For instance, Kṛṣṇa says that in the beginning He explained this science of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the predominating deity of the sun, whose name is Vivasvān. So do you think that Kṛṣṇa is playing a joke or lying? No, that is not possible. He actually spoke to the god of the sun. Rascals and fools may think of Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary man, but in India the great *ācāryas*, like Śāṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *ācāryas* who are guiding the whole destiny of the Hindu world, all accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So whatever Kṛṣṇa is speaking is right. Now, if Kṛṣṇa told this science to the sun-god, and the sun-god told it to his son Manu, then just imagine how old the science of *Bhagavad-gītā* is. Apart from the sun-god's duration of age, if we simply take the present age of the Vaivasvata Manu, which is 71 multiplied by 4,300,000 years, or three hundred and five million, three hundred thousand years, we will see that it is a very long duration of life. Now at the present moment the age of the Vaivasvata Manu is half finished. That means 152,650,000 years since *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken to Vivasvān.

So *Bhagavad-gītā* is not a new thing; it is not a new adventure. And obviously the Person who spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* to the sun-god did not leave a work which is to be distorted and interpreted by mundane man. He did not leave something that would require their interpolations for understanding. Must such a great Personality, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, tell something which has to be understood

through the interpretations of a mundane scholar? Is this reasonable? No. Whatever He spoke is complete and clear. There is no question of interpreting it in a different way. For instance, the Blessed Lord said: "I instructed this imperishable science of *yoga* to the sun-god Vivasvān." What is the difficulty there? Is there any word which we cannot understand? Is there anyone who cannot understand these lines? It is clear. The Blessed Lord said: "I instructed this imperishable science of *yoga* to the sun-god Vivasvān." Everyone can understand that Kṛṣṇa instructed this science of *Bhagavad-gītā* or the *yoga* of *Bhagavad-gītā* to the sun-god, whose name is Vivasvān. It is clear. How can we interpret this? But if I think that Kṛṣṇa is an ordinary man and therefore would have difficulty speaking to the sun-god Vivasvān, then an interpretation is required. But that sort of thinking is not bona fide; if one wants to study *Bhagavad-gītā* he has to take the words of *Bhagavad-gītā*. "The Blessed Lord." He is Lord. He can speak to the sun-god. The Lord is not like an ordinary man. Do we think that just because we cannot speak to the sun-god, Kṛṣṇa cannot? That is our foolishness. Why should we calculate Kṛṣṇa's activities with our activities? Therefore, all the commentators who think that Kṛṣṇa is an ordinary man are null and void. Their commentaries should not be accepted. All the commentaries in the market are simply presentations of the particular commentator's personal view. That is not *Bhagavad-gītā*. If one wants to understand *Bhagavad-gītā*, then he should understand it as it was spoken and not interpret it in his own way.

#### GOD IS NOT CHEAP

Now, because an ordinary man might doubt that Kṛṣṇa could speak to the sun-god, the next verse gives a fuller explanation. Because Arjuna is taking instructions from Kṛṣṇa, he knows who Kṛṣṇa is, otherwise he would not have accepted Him as his spiritual master. But because others would doubt that Kṛṣṇa spoke to the sun-god, Arjuna said, "The sun-god Vivasvān is senior by birth to You. How am I to understand that in the beginning You instructed this science to him?" Arjuna is taking our position. People are thinking of Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary person; therefore Arjuna is trying to clear up that point and show that Kṛṣṇa is not an ordinary person



but the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The sun-god, Vivasvān, is the father of Manu, and Manu's age we cannot calculate. So how is it possible for an ordinary man to speak to Vivasvān? That point is being cleared. So what is Kṛṣṇa's reply? The Blessed Lord said, "Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot." That is the difference between God and man. We cannot even remember what we did at this time yesterday. That is our nature: to commit mistakes, to forget, to be illusioned, to be cheated, and to have imperfect senses. These are our qualifications. Whoever is in this material world is subjected to be illusioned, and he has a cheating propensity. For instance, a mundane scholar, whom I do not wish to name, admits in his introduction that it is very difficult to interpret *Bhagavad-gītā* in one's own way because it is so tightly composed. Actually, it is so. Unless one contradicts himself, he cannot interpret *Bhagavad-gītā* according to his own whims.

Arjuna, therefore, clears up the misconception that Kṛṣṇa, the speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā*, is an ordinary man. It is also in the Fourth Chapter that Kṛṣṇa tells him: *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glāṇir bhavati bhārata abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham*. "Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice and a predominant rise of irreligion, at that time I descend Myself." (Bg. 4.7) Kṛṣṇa appears and we also appear, but our appearance and Kṛṣṇa's appearance are different. We have appeared in this world forced by our *karma*, according to our past deeds. For instance, every one of us has different bodily features. Why? The body is made according to *karma*; that is the explanation of the difference. Although we cannot know, we can understand that our mentalities differ. We all act in different ways. Therefore we are forced to accept certain types of bodies according to our own *karma*. But this is not the case with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa does not change His body, but we change our bodies; forgetfulness means change of body. We had some types of bodies in our previous lives, but we have forgotten them. Not to speak of our last birth, we cannot even remember our childhood when we were three or four years old. We did so many things, but do we remember them? No, because we have changed our bodies—that child body is gone; therefore we have forgotten. We are changing bodies every

second, every minute, and therefore we are forgetting every minute. But Kṛṣṇa does not forget, and this means that He does not change bodies; His body is eternal. This is pure understanding of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says, "Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them." Ah, many, many thousands and thousands of times Kṛṣṇa has appeared in this world, and He remembers everything, but I cannot even remember my childhood. So, how can I become one with Kṛṣṇa? These *māyāvādī* philosophers are declaring that they are God, but what is their qualification that they can become God? God is not such a cheap thing. People have assumed that everyone can become God. That every one of us is God is another illusion, another *māyā* concocted because we do not know what God is. Here is God. He says, "Many, many millions of years ago I spoke to the sun-god. I remember it." This is God; the simple truth.

#### THE SYMPTOMS OF GOD

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* we have information of many, many incarnations of the Lord. It is stated there: "I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is the original person—absolute, infallible, without beginning, although expanded into unlimited forms, still the same original, the oldest—and the person always appearing as a fresh youth. Such eternal, blissful, all-knowing forms of the Lord are usually understood by the best Vedic scholars, but they are always manifest to pure, unalloyed devotees." Kṛṣṇa can expand Himself. That is God. Suppose a man is away and is wanted by some relative at home. If someone inquires whether Mr. Such and Such is at home, he is told, "No, he is not at home." Kṛṣṇa is not like that. *Kṛṣṇa, Goloka eva nivasati akhilātma-bhūtaḥ*. He is present everywhere. It is not that because Kṛṣṇa was speaking with Arjuna in the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, He was not present in Goloka or in Vaikuṅṭha. He is not only in Goloka, Vaikuṅṭha—He is everywhere, as is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa is also here. Now, *īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*. Kṛṣṇa is in everyone's heart. Therefore *advaitam acyutam anādim anantā-rūpaṁ*. *Ananta* means unlimited. But one, *advaita*. There is no difference. As a crude example, unlimited factories are running on electricity, and different

types of work are utilizing electric energy, but the electricity is one. Similarly, God is one, but He can expand. That is His potency.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Thirteenth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa says *idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetraṁ ity abhidhīyate etad yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetrajña itī tad-vidaḥ*. (Bg., 13.3) "The living entity is the proprietor or the knower of the particular body." But He says again, *kṣetrajñaṁ cāpi mām viddhi*. "I am also the knower of this particular body." *Sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata*: "I am the knower in all bodies." So He is in every body, in every atom. That is Kṛṣṇa. Now I am living in my body, and if there is pain here, I can understand that here is a pain, but if there is some pain in another's body, I cannot understand it. Therefore, I am different from others. But Kṛṣṇa can understand what is pain and pleasure in my body and what is pain and pleasure in everyone else's body as well. That is Kṛṣṇa. *Sarva-kṣetre*, ah, that is God! Not that simply by thinking that I am God, I become God. How can anyone become God? Can a self-proclaimed God tell me what another person is thinking? No. Then what kind of God is he? Don't accept a cheap God; know the symptoms of God.

#### OUR DORMANT RELATIONSHIP

*Advaitam acyutam ananta-rūpam*. He is an *ananta*, unlimited. In the *Vedas* it is stated, *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*. There are unlimited living entities, unlimited eternals, but there is one Supreme *cetana*, one supreme eternal, supreme entity. And what is the difference between the singular entity and the plural entities? That is also answered: *eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*. That singular entity is supplying all necessities to all the plural entities. Can't we see how God is supplying all the necessities of life to the birds, beasts and everyone? But because we are civilized we do not acknowledge this. The birds and animals also do not acknowledge this, but should we become just like animals, denying the existence of God, the authority of God? We are taking advantage. If Kṛṣṇa does not supply us this sunlight, we will die. But He gives it, and He does not charge anything. And because we are human beings, we should try to repay. "Oh, Kṛṣṇa is giving me so much facility. Let me render some service unto Him." This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, ac-

knowledging. "O God, You are so kind. You are giving us so many things, so I am offering this fruit. It is Your fruit, I know, but still, please accept." If one can do this, then one becomes a great Kṛṣṇa-conscious personality, and Kṛṣṇa says, *patraṁ puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati*. (Bg. 9.20)

Kṛṣṇa does not want anything from anyone; Kṛṣṇa is complete in Himself. He can produce countless nice things. He is not begging, but still He is expecting something because He is supplying so many things. Isn't something expected? "Ah, I give so many things to my friend, but he does not offer me anything." Kṛṣṇa is complete in Himself, but He says, *patraṁ puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati*. "Anyone who offers Me a little fruit, a little water and a little leaf, I accept it because he has brought it with devotional love." If Kṛṣṇa accepts our offering, then our life becomes sublime. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness; we simply have to acknowledge. We are getting so many facilities from Kṛṣṇa. He is sitting in our heart and supplying all necessities, giving sunlight, moonlight, giving seasonal rains, food, flowers, grains. And we are so ungrateful that we do not acknowledge. And when Christians go to church, they say, "Oh, God, give us our daily bread." That is all right; Kṛṣṇa is supplying bread, otherwise wherefrom are we getting bread? We cannot manufacture bread in the factory. Or wheat, or rice. We can manufacture some iron tools, that's all. Not eatables. That is not possible. Grains and good eatables are supplied by Kṛṣṇa. So we must try to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, God consciousness, in this way, and then our dormant relationship with God will be revived.

## THE CENTRAL POINT

*Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. Lord Caitanya has said that by revival of Kṛṣṇa consciousness the dirty things accumulated in our heart will be dissipated immediately. Then we shall see—"Oh, this is my position! I am Kṛṣṇa's, and Kṛṣṇa is mine." So although Kṛṣṇa is present everywhere, as it is stated here, Kṛṣṇa is the original father. *Anādi* means the original personality. We find in the *Bhagavad-gītā: sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ tāsāṁ brahma mahad-yonir ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*. (Bg. 14.4) "In every species of life, in all types of forms of life, the

mother is this material nature, and I am the seed-giving father." The father is the seed-giving agent, and the mother gives the body.

So this material nature is our mother. According to the Vedic conception, there are seven kinds of mother, not just one. 1) *Ādau mātā*—the real mother from whom I have taken birth. 2) *Guror patnī*—the wife of the spiritual master. 3) *brāhmaṇī*—the wife of a *brāhmaṇa*, learned scholar, who is also a *guru* because from a learned scholar we learn so many things. 4) *rājapatnikā*—the queen. Now there is no king and queen, but formerly there were. The queen is also a mother because the king is father since he gives protection to the citizens. 5) *dhenu*—the cow is our mother. Why? It supplies milk. Yet cows are being butchered. That's not good—killing mother. 6) *dhātṛ*—material nature is also mother because by the material nature we get these bodies, and 7) the earth, for the earth gives us all our resources.

So if we study Vedic literature very nicely and try to understand it, then our life will be sublime. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is giving all the authoritative information from Vedic literature. We are not manufacturing anything. We are not empiric philosophers presenting some mental concoction. Therefore we have presented *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. This is our business, just like a postman's business is to deliver it as it is. Similarly, our business is to present Kṛṣṇa's message as it is. This is the duty of the spiritual master. A spiritual master is not grown like a tree; he is carrying the message from higher authorities, as Kṛṣṇa states: "I told this message to Vivasvān, the sun-god. He told it to his son Ikṣvāku." So there is no difficulty in administering this Vedic message to the world provided we simply carry the same message as it was delivered by Kṛṣṇa unto Arjuna. That's not very difficult. Anyone can do it. Simply try to understand *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and distribute it. "Kṛṣṇa says this—that's all." We don't have to comment or add anything. Of course to present it we can speak something, but the central point should not be missed. Then people will be benefitted, for they will receive the message as it is.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *Āmārajñāya guru haiya tārasarva-des*. "Every one of you become a spiritual master." Not one or two, but everyone. Is being a spiritual master a very difficult job? No. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says *Āmār ājñāya*. "Just try to carry out My order, that's all. Then you

become spiritual master." But if we interpolate, if we add some rubbish to show off our education, then it will be immediately spoiled. And if we present it as it is, then it's pure.

## ANCIENT SCIENCE, ALWAYS NEW

*Avaiṣṇava mukhodgiraṇa puta hari-kathāmṛta śravanam na kartavyam sarpo-cchiṣṭa payaḥ yathā*. This message of *Bhagavad-gītā* is *Hari-kathā*. *Hari* means the Supreme Lord, His word. One is warned not to try to hear this message of Hari or the Supreme Lord from rascal nondevotees. Why? Milk is a very nutritious food, but if a little milk is touched by the tongue of a serpent, it is all spoiled. Therefore this *paramparā* system: *evam paramparā-prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ*. "The Blessed Lord told it to Vivasvān, Vivasvān told Manu, etc." *Rājarṣayaḥ*. Formerly the kings were given the instruction because they were responsible for the citizens' spiritual life, not only for material prosperity. That is the verdict of Vedic literature. The father is responsible, the teacher is responsible, the king is responsible, and the husband is responsible for the development of the spiritual life of their dependents. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that if you cannot develop the spiritual life of your dependent, then don't become a spiritual master, don't become a teacher, don't become a father, don't become a husband. These things are restricted.

Try to understand this Vedic science. *Bhagavad-gītā* is the essence of Vedic knowledge, and it is being spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, Kṛṣṇa. If we try to understand it as it is, then our lives become sublime and we will feel joyful always, *ānandamayo bhyāsāt*. By nature we are joyful, but what is that nature? That's spiritual nature, not material nature. *Manaḥ sathāni indriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati*. If we remain in material nature, then our struggle for existence will continue. It will never stop. But if we take to this spiritual nature, Brahman nature, then we will immediately become joyful. Everyone is hankering after joy and happiness. This is the way, this Vedic knowledge which is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is an ancient science which is eternally new. Modern America has reached a stage of civilization where it is ready to ask important questions. This science, as always, is ready with the answers. END

# KARMAYOGA— ACTION IN KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

by Kīrtanānanda Śwami (ISKCON—Calcutta)

[Editor's note: This is the fifth of a series of eighteen essays on the chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*.]  
page 9 col 1

As the Fifth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* opens, Arjuna is asking Kṛṣṇa practically the same question he asked at the beginning of the Third Chapter, namely whether there is a difference between renounced action and inaction or between knowledge and devotional service, and if so, which is better. He says that he is confused: "Now will You kindly tell me definitely which of the two is more beneficial." One may wonder why such a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa should be confused after so much instruction from the Supreme Person, how after listening to the close reasoning of the Third and Fourth Chapters Arjuna still has question in his mind. But we must keep in mind that Arjuna is not simply asking questions for his own sake; actually, Arjuna is an eternally liberated associate of Kṛṣṇa's. As such, there is no question in his mind, but because Arjuna has been placed in the position of ignorance by Kṛṣṇa's *yogamāyā* for the benefit of the conditioned soul, he is, therefore, asking the questions on the part of the conditioned soul. Therefore he is repeating them in so many ways so that Kṛṣṇa can have a chance to explain still more elaborately, just to erase every possibility of doubt. Repetition of a thing is necessary to understand it perfectly.

## WORK IN DEVOTION

In the Second Chapter preliminary knowledge of the soul and its entanglement in the body were explained; how to get out of this entanglement by the method of *buddhi-yoga* was also explained therein. In the Third Chapter it was explained that a person who is on the platform of knowledge no longer has any duty to perform; and in the Fourth Chapter the Lord told Arjuna that all kinds of sacrificial work culminate in knowledge. However, at the end of the Fourth Chapter the Lord advised Arjuna to wake up and fight, being situated in perfect knowledge. Therefore by simultaneously stressing the importance of work in devotion and inaction through knowledge, Kṛṣṇa has perplexed Arjuna and confused his determi-

nation. Arjuna understands that renunciation in knowledge involves cessation of all kinds of work involving sense gratificatory activities, but if one performs work in devotional service, how is work stopped? In other words, Arjuna has not quite understood that work in knowledge is as good as renunciation or inactive knowledge, that work in devotional service, because it is nonreactive, is transcendently the same in result as inaction in knowledge. So Kṛṣṇa will more elaborately explain that these two are actually one.

In the second verse Kṛṣṇa says: "The renunciation of work and work in devotion are both good for liberation. But, of the two, work in devotional service is better than renunciation of work." Fruitive activities are the cause of material bondage, and action performed for Kṛṣṇa is the cause of liberation. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* this is confirmed as follows: "People are mad after sense gratification, and they do not know that this present body, which is full of miseries, is a result of one's fruitive activities in the past. Although this body is temporary, it is always giving one trouble in many ways, and therefore to act for sense gratification is not good. One is considered to be a failure in life as long as he makes no inquiry about the nature of fruitive results, for as long as one is engrossed in the consciousness of sense gratification, one has to transmigrate from one body to another. Although the mind may be engrossed in fruitive activities and influenced by ignorance, one must develop a love for devotional service to Vāsudeva. Only then can one have the opportunity to get out of the bondage of material existence." (Bhāg., 5.5.4-6)

## THE PURIFYING PROCESS

Therefore simply to have theoretical knowledge that "I am not this body" is not sufficient for liberation. Factual liberation means to know that the spirit soul is different from the body and then to act on that knowledge. Simply knowing theoretically that "I am not this body" is theoretical liberation, but real liberation means acting as if I am not this body. *Aham brahmāsmi*: "I am Brahman." Liberation is a matter of activity, because constitutionally the spirit soul is always

active. The spirit soul is never inactive at any point, either before or after liberation. Therefore one who only knows theoretically that "I am not this body" and never acts on that platform, is not factually liberated. But one who acts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or acts in knowledge that *aham brahmāsmi*, is of course liberated from the very beginning; and the action itself, which is performed as a sacrifice for Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, is itself the purifying process, purifying the consciousness of all the dirty things accumulated for millions and millions of births.

As Kṛṣṇa will tell Arjuna at the beginning of the next chapter, the real *sannyāsī*, or person truly situated in renunciation, is not he who lights no sacrificial fire, or does no work, but he who is unattached to the fruits of his action; that is, he who does everything as an offering to the Lord. Renunciation becomes complete when it is in the knowledge that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa and that therefore I must use everything as if it is Kṛṣṇa's. This is action based on knowledge. Similarly, it is the conclusion of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that renunciation of things related to the Supreme, simply for the cause of liberation, even though those things appear material, is incomplete renunciation. Real renunciation means to renounce this idea of "I" and "mine." This is called false ego. Real ego is all right—the sense of identity with Kṛṣṇa: "I am Kṛṣṇa's"—but false ego means to claim Kṛṣṇa's property as our own. Actually everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, but I am making a false claim: therefore the only thing I can possibly renounce is this false claim—everything else is Kṛṣṇa's.

## THE SOUL OF EXISTENCE

The conclusion of knowledge is service. This perfect form of action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is far better than any amount of artificial renunciation by a *sannyāsī* or renounced person of the impersonalist school. So as long as one has not engaged his energies, both personal and extended, in the service of Kṛṣṇa, his renunciation is incomplete, and his knowledge is incomplete. Kṛṣṇa says: "Only the ignorant speak of *karma-yoga* and devotional service as being different from the analytical study of the material world [*sāṅkhya*]. Those who are actually learned say that he who applies himself well to one of these paths achieves the results of both." (4) Actually

Kṛṣṇa had already stated this in the 39th verse of the Second Chapter, and again in the third verse of the Third Chapter. Both of these paths are ultimately the same, Kṛṣṇa said, because the goal is the same. The aim of the analytical study of the material world is to find out the soul of existence, Kṛṣṇa, or the Supersoul; so by this speculative process one comes gradually to the conclusion, as explained in the Seventh Chapter, that Kṛṣṇa is everything; and when one understands that He is everything, there is nothing else to do but to surrender in full devotional service. So the real student of *sāṅkhya* philosophy ultimately finds the root of the material world, Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, and then in perfect knowledge engages himself in the service of the Lord; whereas the *bhakta* engages in the service of the Lord from the very beginning. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa says that devotional service is better, although in essence there is no difference in the two. But as long as one is not engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa and does not know that the two are one in conclusion, he has neither satisfied the demands of knowledge or service. So Kṛṣṇa repeats this statement in the fifth verse. "One who knows that the position reached by means of renunciation can also be attained by devotional service, and who therefore sees that *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* are on the same level, sees things as they are."

Kṛṣṇa has therefore established the point that the paths are the same because the goal is the same. In either case if one completes the course, one achieves Kṛṣṇa; of that there is no doubt. But of the two, Kṛṣṇa has also made clear that one is better. The second verse clearly states: "Of the two, work in devotional service is better than renunciation of works." Similarly, in the 47th verse of the Sixth Chapter Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that of all *yogīs* "He who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service is most intimately united with Me." And if we will recall the 7th verse of the Third Chapter: "He who controls the senses by the mind and engages his active organs in works of devotion without attachment is by far superior." So this conclusion that work in devotional service is superior to mere renunciation in so-called knowledge cannot be overlooked. Work in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is automatically perfect knowledge, but mere renunciation of work is not necessarily Kṛṣṇa consciousness. After all, Arjuna wanted to

renounce fighting and go to the forest for meditation, and Lord Kṛṣṇa heartily disapproved.

In the 6th-11th verses Kṛṣṇa explains exactly why this is so. Verse 6 says: "Unless one is engaged in the devotional service of the Lord, mere renunciation of activities cannot make one happy. The sage, purified by the works of devotion, achieves the Supreme without delay." As explained in this and the subsequent verses, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a process of purification. And what is that purification? It is a clearing away of the material contamination. And what is that material contamination? It is action from time immemorial based on the principles of sense gratification, action based on the concept of "I" and "mine," and action, predicating the false ego, based on "I am lord of all I survey." This is the condition that we have inherited, and since time immemorial we have been carrying out these activities; and now to simply try to stop them cold with nothing to replace them will not help us. Kṛṣṇa says that it is not possible to stop action, for even the maintenance of the body requires action. Just as a giant rolling stone may not be stopped dead in its course, but with a very little effort its direction can be changed, so too activity cannot be stopped, but the direction can be changed, and that change is called purification, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "Formerly I have been engaged in all these activities for my sense gratification. Now let me do them for the satisfaction of Hṛṣīkeṣa, Kṛṣṇa, the proprietor of all senses. Gratifying my senses will simply bind me further in the slavery of material bondage, but satisfying Kṛṣṇa will release me at once and forever." So in the eighth and ninth verses it says that "A person in the divine consciousness, although engaged in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving about, sleeping, and breathing, always knows within himself that he actually does nothing at all." And the tenth verse says that such a person is unaffected by the sinful or pious reactions of his deeds, "as the lotus leaf is untouched by water."

#### THE PLEASURE WITHIN

In all the Vedic hymns it is indicated that everything in the material world is a manifestation of Brahman and that all the effects are but differently manifested and are nondifferent from the cause. Similarly,

in *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* it is stated that everything is related to the Supreme Brahman, or Kṛṣṇa, and thus everything belongs to Him only. One who knows perfectly well that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, that He is the ultimate proprietor of everything, and that everything is engaged in His service, naturally has nothing to do with the results of his activities, whether virtuous or sinful, exactly as the lotus leaf, although remaining in the water, is never wet. Therefore Kṛṣṇa's instructions throughout *Bhagavad-gītā* are "unto Me," "surrender to Me," "think of Me," "be devoted to Me." Always unto "Me," Kṛṣṇa. The conclusion is that such a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is already liberated, free from the concept of the material body and senses, for he knows that even this body belongs to Kṛṣṇa and should therefore be engaged cent percent in the service of Kṛṣṇa. And what is the position of a person so purified? Kṛṣṇa says in verse 17: "When one's intelligence, mind, faith, and refuge are all fixed in the Supreme, then one becomes fully cleansed of misgivings through complete knowledge and thus proceeds straight on the path of liberation."

Because the devotee's every action is dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, naturally his intelligence, his mind, and his faith and refuge are all fixed in the Supreme. In such a happy condition one becomes fully cleansed of all misgivings through complete knowledge. Misgivings mean doubts. There are so many doubts that beset the struggling neophyte—the senses are so strong, Kṛṣṇa asserts at one point, that they carry away the mind of even an intelligent man. But because one has acted only for Kṛṣṇa, he is said to be steady, and therefore in possession of real knowledge: *aham brahmāsmi*, "I am not this body; I am part and parcel of the Supreme, Kṛṣṇa." Everything is a manifestation of that Supreme Spirit; therefore one proceeds straight on the path of liberation. Liberated from what? Liberated from this material body, or bodily conception of existence. Verse 21 says: "Such a liberated person is not attracted to material sense pleasure, but is always in trance, enjoying the pleasure within. In this way, the self-realized person enjoys unlimited happiness, for he concentrates on the Supreme."

Material bondage means that I am in bondage to my senses, and that they are forcing me to act other than I might want to. Just as Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa what it is

that forces a man to commit sin, even against his will; and just as St. Paul confessed, "That which I would do, I do not, and that which I do, I would not." So even where the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. The senses are constantly dictating to us: "Now feed me." Actually, as it is explained in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, everything in the material world is "food and looking for food." All living entities are food for some other living entity, and similarly they are preying on some poor creature. Similarly, each of the senses is looking for its food, and the objects of the senses are its food, the only difference being that the senses are never satiated, any more than a fire is extinguished by a lavish supply of gasoline. Therefore it is said that the senses are on fire; taste is on fire; sight is on fire; touch is on fire; hearing is on fire; smelling is on fire; and finally, the mind itself is on fire. Everything is on fire, and the only thing that can extinguish it is the mercy of the spiritual master, which is likened to the gentle action of the rain that can extinguish any forest fire: *saṁsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka*.

Twenty-four hours a day the conditioned soul is being kicked by material nature in the form of lust: first kicked by the party of lust for some pleasant sight, or some pleasant sound, or being forced to go here or go there in search of some satisfaction, some intoxication, or some sex pleasure; and then if one is not satisfied, which one never is, he is angry. So on the rebound he is kicked by the party of anger. First lust, then anger; that is the cosmic football game being played at the expense of the forgetful living entity under the stringent rules of material nature. But by the grace of the bona fide spiritual master, one can immediately be freed from this bondage simply by following in the footsteps of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa is the original spiritual master, and Arjuna is the original student, and the key to success in self-realization is to hear in the same way that Arjuna heard. The spiritual master is the actual representative of Kṛṣṇa because he speaks nothing but what Kṛṣṇa spoke. Anyone who adds to or takes away from what Kṛṣṇa said cannot be bona fide, and one who wants to "interpret" Kṛṣṇa's words is the greatest pretender. Kṛṣṇa's words are Absolute and need no interpretation. After all, what kind of ego is it that thinks, "I can improve on or explain the message of the Supreme Person"? Are we to suppose that He was not capable of

saying it another way if it would have been clearer? This is sheer madness. Furthermore, we have the absolute check of Arjuna. How did Arjuna understand Kṛṣṇa? So the spiritual master, who is presenting the words of Kṛṣṇa exactly as Kṛṣṇa spoke them and exactly as Arjuna understood them, is a bona fide spiritual master, and as such, it is he alone who can deliver the fallen soul from its pitiable condition.

## STANDARDS OF PLEASURE

So in this 21st verse Kṛṣṇa is explaining the characteristics of the liberated soul. A person situated in transcendence is not attracted, Kṛṣṇa says, by the pleasures of the material world, for he is always in "trance." That trance does not mean sleep or some unconscious state, but steadiness of mind, a mind fixed on the Supersoul, or supreme goal Kṛṣṇa. In that condition, the verse says, one is always enjoying the pleasure within. Unlimited happiness is his, it says, because Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasure. The name Kṛṣṇa means all-attractive, and by His omnipotence He has endowed His name with full potency so that in the name of Kṛṣṇa we can attain all pleasure; simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare one has access to all pleasure.

Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all opulence, all beauty, all wealth, all fame, all strength, all knowledge, and all renunciation. Thus He is the reservoir of all pleasure. Whatever pleasure there appears to be in the material world variously reflected, it is but a reflection of this supreme pleasure, Kṛṣṇa. So the devotee who is merged in the thought of Kṛṣṇa is drinking deeply at that pleasure well, and because he is obtaining some higher pleasure, he has no desire for a lesser pleasure. Actually, we are all seeking pleasure, and we must go where we find pleasure. Therefore if a man is not finding pleasure in Kṛṣṇa he will seek it elsewhere; that is for certain. Similarly, if a man is finding pleasure in Kṛṣṇa, he will not seek it elsewhere. So verse 22 says, "An intelligent person does not take part in the sources of misery, which are due to contact with the material senses. O son of Kuntī, such pleasures have a beginning and an end, and so the wise man does not delight in them." How can sensory contacts, which are temporary

and ephemeral, compare to the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, which is eternal, always blissful, and fully cognizant? In the Eighteenth Chapter Kṛṣṇa says that there is a happiness "which at the beginning may be like poison, but at the end is like nectar." And similarly, there is another pleasure, which "appears at the beginning like nectar, but at the end is like poison."

## THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE

Because sensory pleasures are all temporary, in the end they leave nothing but ashes in the mouth. They are like poison, and so the wise have nothing to do with them. And here it is clearly stated that a person who is liberated, and in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, has no desire for them. It is not simply that he refrains from them, but he has actually lost the taste. That means that he is actually drinking of the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. It is something like being asked to eat a second time after being fully satisfied by good food. Śrī Yāmunācārya, a great devotee in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, said: "Since I have been engaged in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa, realizing every new encouragement in the matter of self pleasure, whenever I think of sex pleasure I spit at the thought, and my mouth becomes bitter with distaste." A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa that he has no taste for sense pleasure, not even the highest form of material pleasure, sex pleasure. Actually, the whole world is moving under the spell of this sex motivation, but a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is free from such bondage and works with greater vigor as a result. This is the test of spiritual progress, namely, how much am I becoming detached from matter, or how much taste do I have for sense pleasure? Just as the test for a man's recovery from disease is the gradual decrease in fever, so when the fever of sense gratification goes down one knows well that he is making advancement. So as long as I am still feeling some desire for material sense pleasure, I should know well that I am not yet fully situated in that transcendental position of drinking freely from the well of Kṛṣṇa, for when that day comes, certainly I will spit at the highest conceptions of this material world.

In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is stated, "My dear sons there is no reason to work very hard for sense pleasures in this life. Such pleasures are available to the stool-eaters

[hogs]. Rather, you should undergo penance in this life whereby your existence will be purified, and as a result you will be able to enjoy unlimited transcendental bliss.” So by this process of purification, by acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one comes to the position of the healthy life, of actually feeling the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, or transcendental bliss. This process of purification, or action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is at once both the path and the goal. As Kṛṣṇa says in the last verse of the chapter, “The sages, knowing Me as the ultimate purpose of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attain peace from the pangs of material miseries.” No one is free from the pangs of material miseries, just as no one is free from the demands of the senses, but by knowing Kṛṣṇa as the ultimate purpose of all sacrifice and austerities, one can engage in the

transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa and thereby be completely released.

#### TRANSCENDENTAL SERVICE

Under the spell of illusion, living entities are trying to be lords of all they survey, but actually they are dominated by the material energy of the Lord. The Lord is the master of the material energy, as He is of all energies, and the conditioned souls are under the stringent rules of this material nature. Unless and until one understands these bare facts it is not possible to achieve peace in this world, either individually or collectively. This is the sense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme predominator, and that all living entities, including the great demigods, are His subordinates. One can attain perfect peace only in complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But by cultivation of this Kṛṣṇa

consciousness, of this consciousness that “Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme and I am His servant,” one comes into a position to understand that Kṛṣṇa is the well-wisher and benefactor of all living entities, and thereby attains peace. Actually, Kṛṣṇa as the supreme predominator is not in need of anything. He is full of all opulence. Therefore, He needs nothing from His creation; but His creation is always dependent on Him. He is in a position to supply everything. Because we are His parts and parcels, it is our position to render transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa, and actually Kṛṣṇa is supplying everything to us. In this transcendental exchange of love we can know Kṛṣṇa as the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

END

## TRUE HAPPINESS MUST BE ETERNAL

### by Upendra dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—Sydney)

*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* is one of the oldest Vedic scriptures, and it is accepted by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu (an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa Himself who appeared 484 years ago) as the essence of Vaiṣṇava (Kṛṣṇa conscious) philosophy. The first verse of the Fifth Chapter of *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* reads: “Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal, blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the Prime Cause of all causes.” And in the thirty-eighth verse of the same chapter: “I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself, with inconceivable, innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.”

“*Govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi.*” Our program in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to worship the Supreme Lord, Govinda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those who are serious about *yoga* or spiritual life must necessarily go to the *yoga* authorities for genuine spiritual knowledge. Just as, if one wants to be a doctor, one must study with a doctor, similarly, to have spiritual realization one must associate with those who are accepted as *mahātmās*, great souls. The qualifications of such great souls

are described by Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Nine, verse 14, to quote one of many verses which confirm the same principle: “They are always engaged in chanting My glories. Endeavoring with great determination, offering homage unto Me, they worship Me with devotion.” In the Western world there is one such *mahātmā*, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. My preceptor, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is all that I know, and hence all that I can relate to you is simply what I have heard from his pure lips.

In the material world, whether one is American or Australian, communist or capitalist, Christian or Jew, black or white, there is one common platform: everyone wants to be happy. From the *Vedas* we learn that there are two processes to gain happiness: the material and the spiritual. It is self-evident that material life cannot give us happiness. There is no use arguing that a materialistic man can be happy, at least according to the definition of *true* happiness given in the Vedic texts. According to the Vedic definition, true happiness must be eternal; it must have a permanent basis. It cannot be limited in any way. Happiness in the material world, however is always limited by unavoidable material miseries. These miseries are of three kinds:

*adhyātmic*, *adhibhautic*, and *adhidaivic*. *Adhyātmic* miseries pertain to the body and mind. For example, sometimes our metabolism is upset, or there is sometimes fear, bodily pain, etc. Sometimes we suffer great losses, and this results in mental distress. *Adhibhautic* suffering is due to other living entities. For example there are miseries caused by germs, mosquitos, bedbugs, and human enemies also. This is called *adhibhautic* suffering. *Adhidaivic* suffering is due to the laws of providence or material nature. For example there are calamities caused by earthquakes, storms, hurricanes, volcanoes, etc. Sometimes there is too much heat, and sometimes there is too much cold. These are called *adhidaivic* miseries.

We are all trying to adjust to these problems of life. The whole social structure of human civilization is meant for getting relief from these three types of miseries. And every day one will hear so many prescriptions for relief: “Take Anacin and get fast, fast, fast relief!” “Things go better with Coca-Cola.” The merchants have their prescriptions, the philosophers give their advice for relief, the politicians promise cessation of troubles, and even the atheists have some opinion on how to get relief from material complexity.

Sometimes mere freedom from problems and miseries is taken to be happiness; that is, one may say, “If I can just get rid of my toothache, then I will be happy,” or

“If I can just pay the debts for my car, then I will be happy,” and so on. This sort of happiness is likened to that of a man tied to a dunking stool. In colonial America a public offender would sometimes be punished by being tied to a dunking stool, dunked in a tank of water until his lungs almost burst, and then raised up again for a breath of air. The pleasure derived from this gasp of air is likened to the pleasure available in the material world. The person is thinking, “Ah, at last—air! How nice!” But no sooner does he swallow the air than down again he goes for another turn; and likewise our insignificant pleasures are quickly forgotten as we, time and again, are plunged into the ocean of incessant material complexities. True happiness, true freedom, is to be free from this punishment altogether.

There are those who will say, “Ah! These Hare Kṛṣṇa people are just escapists. They cannot face up to life.” And our reply is simply, “Yes, we *are* escapists. You stay here; we will leave!” And as for facing up to life: My friends, is this life? In this world there is death at every step. Every time a day goes by we are not one day older, but one day closer to death. The whole world is struggling hard to live off one another. This is a proven fact. So, according to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all one needs to do to get out of this illusory suffering is to change one’s consciousness. That is all. All suffering is due to a lack of knowledge. And, as stated before, knowledge can be achieved by associating with authorities.

As soon as our original consciousness becomes polluted by material enjoyment, i.e., as soon as we desire to “lord it over” matter, then our troubles begin. Everyone from the smallest ant to Brahmā, the engineer of this particular universe, is trying to become the lord or controller. For example, in the United States there is regular competition for the presidential position. The various candidates promise solutions to problems in return for votes, but actually what they really want is position, power. This is *māyā*, illusion.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the opposite. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness, under the guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master, we are trying to become the servants of the servant of the servant—one hundred times the servant of the servant—of Kṛṣṇa. Modern thinking might dictate that this is slave mentality. But no, it is not slave

mentality; it is our constitutional position. Whether I am Christian, Jew or atheist, still I must serve. I serve my country or my family or my pets, or when I am hungry I serve my stomach; and ultimately I must serve the stringent laws of material nature—birth, death, disease and old age. So we are always servants. But under the illusion of being masters of this world, we have become servants of our senses. What a nasty position!

One should just agree to become a servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa because, as stated above, servants we all must be. We are serving our lust, avarice, anger, greed, etc., and in the higher stages we are servants of humanity or the state or our country. But underneath the desire to serve one’s country, society or whatever, the actual purpose is to become the master. This is *māyā*, illusion, again.

There is absolutely no doubt. No one can say that he is free, that he is master. If one thinks like that, then that is *māyā*. Just serving the senses does not solve our miseries. The intoxications of wine, women, drugs, cinemas, novels, etc., are all artificial; there must always be “comedowns”; and “I am servant” always remains.

Why all this trouble? We are forced to serve something or someone that we don’t want to serve, but still we are reluctant to serve Kṛṣṇa. I remember once in our Seattle center one boy asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, “How come I don’t feel like bowing down to you or to Kṛṣṇa?” Śrīla Prabhupāda answered, “That is your disease. You are thinking that you are better than everyone or at least that no one is better than you, and so you will not bend. That is your skin disease.” There is a disease called yellow jaundice, and in India that disease is so dangerous that sometimes people die from it. But the cure is simple: sugar. A patient suffering from jaundice takes sugar as his medicine. One symptom of jaundice, however, is that to a person afflicted with this disease, sugar tastes so bitter that he wants to spit it out. But if he just goes on taking his medicine, then he becomes cured and again tastes this sugar medicine as sweet. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is sometimes like that for those of us who are suffering from the “skin disease” of thinking ourselves to be Australian, American, etc., or in other words of identifying with the material body. Afflicted by such a spiritual sickness, we really can’t appreciate genuine spiritual pleasure. “I have tried chanting

Hare Kṛṣṇa,” a person might say, “and of course it doesn’t do anything for me.” But if that person would just use his intelligence enough to take the spiritual medicine (the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa) and eat the prescribed diet (*prasādam*, food offered to Kṛṣṇa), then very shortly he would taste his medicine to be as sweet as nectar.

How should we use our intelligence? An example may be given. We might pass a store and see sweetmeats we like. Our mind says, “Ah, candy! Go purchase some,” and our body obeys. But if we are suffering from an illness, then even though the mind might want some candy, our intelligence tells us no. If we indulge, then the illness will be prolonged or worsened, and so we abstain. Similarly, in the everyday situation of material consciousness, we must use our intelligence to regulate our indulgence in habits of sense gratification. By indulging in intoxication and unrestricted sex life, one may derive some pleasure, but this pleasure is temporary and impure. Although it appears nectarean, it will soon turn to poison. Material consciousness is a disease which is merely worsened by unrestricted sense gratification. The process of treatment recommended by authorities is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and although to some this process is not appealing at first, anyone who accepts it will quickly find it sweet. In *Bhagavad-gītā* we find that although Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, He agreed to serve Arjuna as his chariot driver. This is the sublime relationship between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. If, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, one just becomes a pure lover of Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa will become his servant. This is a very elevated realization.

We must transfer our service attitude so that by our service we can satisfy everyone. This can be easily accomplished by developing our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If one waters the root of a tree, then all the leaves will be nourished automatically. Similarly, if we just try to love Kṛṣṇa and serve the bona fide spiritual master, then, because Kṛṣṇa is the root of everything and we are like leaves, we will be satisfied, everyone else will be satisfied, and it is then that we can truly have universal brotherhood. Sentimental peace moratoriums will never be a solution. They simply waste time. We clamor for brotherhood, but we are not willing to serve the Father. Before there can be peace on earth there must be peace in the heart. No number of committee meetings or United Nations assemblies will

bring about the peace for which we are all anxious. Kṛṣṇa is peace eternal, and if one just makes the connection with Him through a bona fide spiritual master such as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, then one will have peace and will be able to transmit that peace to others.

There is a prayer that says: "So long have I served my senses. Even what I should not have done I have done by the dictation of lust." When one is a slave to lust, then he is forced to do things he would not ordinarily do. Someone might say, "You have served your senses. That is all right. Go on—enjoy your senses." But the prayer continues: "I have served so much, but I find that my senses are still not satisfied. My senses are not satisfied, I am not satisfied, nor will my senses give me relief from their service." An example of this is a recent headline in an Australian newspaper: "Man 80 Years Old Married 75 Times." The senses are not satisfied, even at the point of death. That is the real problem of life.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that we have been servants of our senses in life after life, transmigrating through 8,400,000 species. Now we should just surrender unto Him, and He will take care of us. By the dictation of the senses we commit so many sinful activities. According to one's activities or work, one gets a

particular type of body. There are different bodies due to different types of sense gratification. The hog, for example, making no distinction between mother, sister, etc., simply has sex with anyone; and the senses in all species are so strong that this goes on even in human society. The threefold miseries from which we are trying to free ourselves are due to love of the senses of the material body, but Kṛṣṇa is the real object of love. Just transfer your love to Kṛṣṇa. Give up trying to satisfy the bodily senses, and just try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. As soon as you change, gradually Kṛṣṇa will reveal Himself to you and will exchange service with you. Then you will be fully satisfied.

Please, my friends, try to understand this sublime benediction. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and gradually develop love for Kṛṣṇa. All your troubles will be gone. Kṛṣṇa is beyond the senses and the mind, but if you chant sincerely, then He will reveal Himself to you. It is not a question of belief. God exists! It is just a matter of having eyes to see Him. Under the expert guidance of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, our beloved spiritual master, we are developing those eyes. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a blind sentiment; we have a vast philosophical background.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a tower of Babel to Kṛṣṇa. There are two processes

in spiritual life, the ascending and the descending. Through the ascending process one tries to construct a ladder up to Kṛṣṇa by processes of *yoga*, meditation, word jugglery, logic, dry philosophy, etc. However, sincere Kṛṣṇa is *acyuta*, unapproachable, that process will never be successful. But if the unapproachable Kṛṣṇa wants to come to us, then nothing can stop Him. That is called the descending process, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa is presenting Himself to you and I through the authorized disciplic chain of Vedic teachers. This is the oldest family tree in the universe. Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (which is non-different from Kṛṣṇa Himself) is coming down to us without any tinge of contamination through this unbroken disciplic succession, and His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the contemporary representative of this line.

Please do not dismiss Kṛṣṇa consciousness as foreign or esoteric. Try to scrutinizingly study this movement, and, more than anything, *chant—chant Hare Kṛṣṇa!* As the *yoga* authorities confirm in the *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāna*: *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāma eva kevalam/kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*: In this age of Kali (quarrel and hypocrisy) the best means of God realization is the chanting of the holy name of God, and there is no other alternative. **END**







A sincere disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda can do tremendous good for humanity by teaching every person of his eternal relation with the Supreme Lord.

Downtown in Sydney, Australia, the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees blissfully execute the divine order of the spiritual master: "Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and be happy."

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda: "One should act with no goal in life save and except to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, just to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. And while acting in such a way one should think of Kṛṣṇa only: 'I have been appointed to discharge this particular duty by Kṛṣṇa.'"



# THE SPIRITUAL MASTER: EMISSARY OF THE SUPREME PERSON

by Hayagrīva dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—New Vṛndāvana)

*Guru-kṛṣṇa-kṛpāyā pāya bhakti-latā bīja.*  
(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*)

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Śrīla Prabhupāda, once said that religion without philosophy is fanaticism and philosophy without religion is mental speculation. For a sincere student engaged in God realization, major philosophical points should be understood in the light of the *guru*, scripture and practical devotional service. One of the first points to understand is the position of the spiritual master. How is he related to Kṛṣṇa? Is he Kṛṣṇa? Is he an ordinary man? How should the disciple approach him? How can one know that the spiritual master is bona fide? What is the duty of the spiritual master? What are his symptoms? These and other questions concerning the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa are discussed herein by way of authoritative evidence compiled from the writings of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the spiritual master himself. (Page references are given for his books.) In addition to rendering devotional service to Kṛṣṇa through the spiritual master, the student should come to a philosophical understanding—based on scripture—of his own identity and the identity of the Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His emissary, the bona fide spiritual master. This understanding should correlate with the basic teachings of the spiritual master and other great saints and sages.

## THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

In the Fourth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna that one should learn the Absolute Truth by approaching a spiritual master. “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master, Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” (Bg. 4.34) As a result of approaching a spiritual master, the disciple is benedicted with the truth by the mercy of the spiritual master. And what is the ultimate truth to be realized? It is this: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or, as stated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in

*Bhagavad-gītā*: “And when you have thus learned the truth, you will know that all living beings are My parts and parcels—and that they are in Me, and are Mine.” (Bg. 4.35) What is the result of this knowledge? Śrī Kṛṣṇa also gives this information: “He who knows in truth this glory and power of Mine engages in unalloyed devotional service; of this there is no doubt. I am the source of everything; from Me the entire creation flows. Knowing this, the wise worship Me with all their hearts. Their thoughts dwell in Me, their lives are surrendered to Me, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss enlightening one another and conversing about Me.” (Bg. 10.7-9)

## DEFINITION OF KṚṢṆA

One will never make a mistake about the identity of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa if one has a good idea of what is meant by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “When we speak of Kṛṣṇa we refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, along with His many expansions. He is expanded by His plenary parts and parcels, His differentiated parts and parcels and His different energies. Kṛṣṇa, in other words, means everything and includes everything. Generally, however, we should understand Kṛṣṇa to mean Kṛṣṇa and His personal expansions. Kṛṣṇa expands Himself as Baladeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Rāma, Nṛsimha and Varāha, as well as many other incarnations and innumerable Viṣṇu expansions. These are described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to be as numerous as the uncountable waves. So Kṛṣṇa includes all such expansions, as well as His pure devotees.” (*The Nectar of Devotion*, xxi) Thus the pure devotees, some of whom are spiritual masters, are part of the internal energy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but they are certainly not the totality of His internal energy. They are subordinate. “The relationship of the living entities, therefore, is to be always subordinate to the Supreme Lord, as with the master and the servant, or the teacher and the taught.” (Bg., p. 71)

No one knows the extent of the energy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, not even His pure devotees. As is stated by the Lord Himself:

“Neither the hosts of demigods nor the great sages know My origin; for, in every respect, I am the source of the demigods and the sages.” (Bg. 10.2) Although no one can understand the extent of the Lord’s glory, nor of the origin of the Lord, who has no beginning, still it is stated, “The devotees of the Lord surrender unto Kṛṣṇa and are thus able to understand Him.” (Bg., p. 209) Thus by “Kṛṣṇa” we refer to the Supreme Entity and His activities. “. . . In the Vedic literature, whether the *Upaniṣads* or the *Vedānta-sūtras* or the *Bhagavad-gītā* or the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in every scripture it is declared that the Lord is the sentient Being, supreme over all other living entities. And His glorious activities are identical with Himself.” (*Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, p. 93)

## THE SPIRITUAL MASTER: KṚṢṆA’S REPRESENTATIVE

It is important to understand the position of the spiritual master as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee. The disciple is enjoined by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa to worship the spiritual master as he would worship the Supreme Lord Himself: “Sage Prabuddha continued to speak to the King as follows: ‘My dear King, a disciple has to accept the spiritual master not only as spiritual master, but also as the representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Supersoul. In other words, the disciple should accept the spiritual master as God because he is the external manifestation of Kṛṣṇa.’ ” (NOD, 59) The Spiritual master is stated here to be the representative of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Supersoul. It is clearly not stated that he is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa or the Supersoul, but that he represents them as a viceroy represents a king. “One can know God and one’s relationship with God only when one actually meets a representative of God. A representative of God never claims that he is God, although he is paid all the respect ordinarily paid to God because he has knowledge of God. One has to learn the distinction between God and the living entity.” (Bg., p.144)

Although it is stated that the spiritual master is “the external manifestation of Kṛṣṇa,” he should not be considered mundane or material. “. . . Lord Caitanya states that it is a fortunate person who comes in contact with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. One who is serious about spiritual life is given by

Kṛṣṇa the intelligence to come in contact with a bona fide spiritual master, and then by the grace of the spiritual master one becomes advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In this way the whole jurisdiction of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is directly under the spiritual energy—Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master. This has nothing to do with the material world.” (NOD, *xxi*) By “external manifestation” it is meant that the spiritual master can be perceived as being in the material world by the conditioned souls whom he deigns to liberate.

The followers of Ramakrishna and Meher Baba, as well as adherents of other cults generally found in India, proclaim their spiritual masters to be God Himself. Usually a spiritual master does not contradict this flattery because in this age of Kali there are many pseudo-spiritual masters who claim to be God. But we do not understand the position of the bona fide spiritual master to be cent percent identical with that of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For example, in our daily prayer to the spiritual master (*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*) we offer our respectful obeisances to our spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda “who is most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter of His lotus feet.” Śrīla Prabhupāda is most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth because he has indeed taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord. “The definition of a pure devotee, as given by Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, can be summarized thus: his service is favorable and is always in relation to Kṛṣṇa.” (NOD, *xxxii*) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself states that one who explains the science of *Bhagavad-gītā* is most dear to Him: “There is no servant in the world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” (Bg., 18.69) In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the position of the pure devotee is further explained: “The *asuras* [demons] are gradually rectified into God consciousness by the mercy of the Lord’s liberated servitors in different countries and climates according to the supreme will. Such devotees of God are very confidential associates of the Lord, and when they come to save the human society from the dangers of godlessness, they are known sometimes as the powerful incarnation of the Lord, the Son of the Lord, the servant of the Lord or the associate of the Lord, but none of them declare falsely that they are themselves God. This blasphemy is declared by the

*asuras*, and the demoniac followers of such *asuras* also accept a pretender as God or His incarnation.” (Bhāg., Canto I, p.123-124)

When does one know that one is declaring himself falsely to be God, or when does one know whether the followers of the spiritual master are declaring their spiritual master falsely to be God? The criterion for the acceptance of an incarnation of the Lord Himself is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “In the revealed scriptures there is definite information of these incarnations of God. One cannot be accepted as God or as an incarnation of God without reference to the above-mentioned revealed scriptures.” (Bhāg., Canto I, p. 124) A list of incarnations can be found in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, Third Chapter, and for this *yuga* or age these include only Buddha and the Kalki *avatāra* yet to come. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, is also mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.32).

The distinction is always made between the devotee of God and God Himself, but a neophyte servant of the devotees should respect the servants of God as God. “These servants of God are to be respected as God by the devotees who actually want to go back to Godhead. Such servants of God are called *mahātmās* [great souls] or *tīrthas* [saints able to deliver fallen souls], and they make various propaganda according to the particular time and space. The standard quality of the servants of God is that they canvass people to become devotees of the Lord, and they never tolerate the blasphemy of being called God. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was God Himself according to the authoritative indications of the revealed scriptures, but He played the part of a devotee. When a person knew Him to be God Himself and addressed Him as God, He used to block His ears with His hands and murmur the name of the Lord Viṣṇu. He strongly protested being called God, although undoubtedly He was God Himself. This behavior of the Lord is just to warn unscrupulous men who take false pleasure in being called God.” (Bhāg., Canto I, p.124)

#### THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

What is the position of the bona fide spiritual master in relation to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa? This position is hinted at by Śrīla

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his *Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam*:

*nikuñjayūno ratikeli-siddhyair  
yā yālibhir yuktir apekṣaṇīyā  
tatratīdākṣādāti-vallabhasya  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“The spiritual master is very much expert in assisting the *gopīs* who are engaged in the perfection of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugal love affairs. At different times they make different tasteful arrangements for such spiritual exchanges, and the spiritual master is there to assist in the affairs. I offer my most humble obeisances unto his lotus feet.” The *Gurvaṣṭakam* gives further reason why the spiritual master should be worshiped and honored as much as the Supreme Lord:

*sāḥkṣādd hari-tvena samasta-śāstrair  
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhīḥ  
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“The spiritual master is honored as much as the Supreme Lord because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and is followed by all authorities. Therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who is a bona fide representative of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

So the function of the spiritual master should be clearly understood. The spiritual master serves the Supreme Lord directly in the spiritual sky and is a most confidential servitor of the Supreme Lord. The conditioned soul cannot approach the Supreme Lord directly, for the Supreme Lord cannot be perceived by the blunt material senses. “Vyāsa was the spiritual master of Sañjaya, and he admits that it was by his mercy that he could understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This means that one has to understand Kṛṣṇa directly, but through the medium of the spiritual master. The spiritual master is the transparent medium, although it is true the experience is still direct. This is the mystery of disciplic succession.” (Bg., p.316)

Out of mercy for the conditioned souls, the Supreme Lord sends His representative, the spiritual master, who is His external manifestation in the material world, and the conditioned soul is thus enabled to serve the Supreme Lord by serving and worshiping the spiritual master. As men-

tioned before, although called the “external manifestation,” the spiritual master is a purely transcendental person in the spiritual universe, and thus he represents the internal potency of the Lord.

What is the specific function of these emissaries in the material world? “These servants of God come with the mission of life to propagate God consciousness in human society. Intelligent persons should cooperate with them in every respect. By serving the servant of God, one can please God more than directly serving the Lord. The Lord is more pleased when He sees that His servants are properly respected because such servants of God who risk everything for the service of the Lord are very, very dear to the Lord. The Lord declares in *Bhagavad-gītā* that no one is dearer to Him than those who risk everything for the preaching work of God’s glory. By serving the servants of the Lord, gradually one gets the quality of such servants, and this particular qualification of serving the servant of God makes one qualified with the urge for hearing the glorification of God. This eagerness for hearing about God is the first qualification of a devotee eligible for entering into the kingdom of God.” (Bhāg., Canto I, p.124)

#### WORSHIP OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself proclaims that worship of His pure devotee is higher than worship of Himself. In the *Padma Purāṇa* there is a statement praising the service of Vaiṣṇavas or devotees in which Lord Śiva tells Pārvatī: “My dear Pārvatī, there are different methods of worship, and out of all such methods the worship of the Supreme Person is considered to be the highest. But even higher than the worship of the Lord is the worship of the Lord’s devotees.” (NOD, 103) A similar statement is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāg. 3.7.19): “Let me become a sincere servant of the devotees because by serving them one can achieve unalloyed devotional service unto the lotus feet of the Lord. The service of devotees diminishes all miserable material conditions and develops within one a deep devotional love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (NOD, 103)

Worship of the spiritual master goes directly to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and this is the method of the disciplic succession. Everything, for instance, offered to the spiritual

master is offered by the spiritual master to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa through his spiritual master. For instance, whatever is offered with love and devotion to Śrīla Prabhupāda is offered by Śrīla Prabhupāda to his spiritual master, who offers it to his spiritual master, etc., on to the Supreme Person, the Original Spiritual Master, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is the method of approaching the Supreme Lord, and this is the purpose of *paramparā*, disciplic succession. Thus it is stated: “The attitude of the disciple should always be to satisfy the bona fide spiritual master. Then it will be very easy for him to understand spiritual knowledge. This is confirmed in the *Vedas*, and it will be further explained by Rūpa Gosvāmī that, for a person who has unflinching faith in God and the spiritual master, everything becomes revealed very easily.” (NOD, 59)

#### THE SPIRITUAL MASTER AND KṚṢṆA: ONENESS AND DIFFERENCE

Some confusion, however, may result from the following quote, a statement of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s: “My dear Uddhava, the spiritual master must be accepted not only as My representative but as My very self. He must never be considered on the same level with an ordinary human being. One should never be envious of the spiritual master, as one may be envious of an ordinary man. The spiritual master should always be seen as the representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and by serving the spiritual master, one is able to serve all the demigods.” (NOD, 59) The point here is that the spiritual master should never be considered to be an ordinary man because he is part of the internal potencies of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as was stated earlier (NOD, *xxi*). As such, he shares the Lord’s opulences. “The Supreme Lord is full in six opulences; and when a devotee approaches Him, there is reciprocation with these opulences. The servant of the king enjoys an almost equal level with the king.” (Bg., p. 271)

The spiritual master is eternally perfect, and his self is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s very self in the sense that the self of the spiritual master is in perfect harmony with the Supreme Self. It may here be recalled that Kṛṣṇa is the Self in the hearts of all: “I am the Self, O conqueror of sleep, seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all

beings.” (Bg. 10.20) Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Self seated in the hearts of all living entities throughout the entire creation, He exists independent of them. “In My transcendental form I pervade all this creation. All things are resting in Me, but I am not in them. Again, everything that is created does not rest on Me. Behold My mystic opulence: Although I am the maintainer of all living entities, and although I am everywhere, still My Self is the very source of creation.” (Bg. 9.4-5) This is the sublime philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*: the Lord is simultaneously, inconceivably one with all living entities and yet different from them. Śrīla Prabhupāda, in a letter to a disciple, explained this philosophy very clearly: “Just as fire and heat cannot be separate and in one sense both can be called fire, still heat is not fire. Another example, electricity and the powerhouse; although practically one and the same, still the powerhouse is not electricity. On the whole, the power and the powerful, although sometimes indistinguishable, still are different. That is the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* propounded by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. As such, the spiritual master is the Mercy Representative of Kṛṣṇa. As Mercy Representative, he is worshiped by the disciples as Kṛṣṇa, but at the same time he is not identical with Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa is the Master Kṛṣṇa, whereas the spiritual master is the Servant Kṛṣṇa. As it is said by Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one, still, in order to serve, Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure potency, Rādhārāṇī, appears separately. Therefore the conclusion is that the spiritual master as Servant Kṛṣṇa is always respected as good as Kṛṣṇa, but he is never identified with Kṛṣṇa, which is Māyāvādī philosophy.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter, 8/29/70)

Although Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Self seated in the hearts of all, all creatures are not accepted as spiritual masters because they are not always in harmony with the Supreme Self. There are degrees of perfection involved. The bona fide spiritual master is known as *nitya-siddha*, and the conditioned living entities are known as *nitya-baddha*. “Persons who have achieved eternal, blissful life exactly on the level of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and who are able to attract Lord Kṛṣṇa by their transcendental loving service, are called eternally perfect. The technical name is *nitya-siddha*. There are two classes of living entities—namely,

*nitya-siddha* and *nitya-baddha*. The distinction is that the *nitya-siddhas* are eternally Kṛṣṇa conscious without any forgetfulness, whereas the *nitya-baddhas*, or eternally conditioned souls, are forgetful of their relationship with Kṛṣṇa. The position of the *nitya-siddhas* is explained in the *Padma Purāna* in connection with the narration of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and Satyabhāmā Devī. The Lord tells Satyabhāmā : “My dear Satyabhāmā Devī, I have descended to this earthly planet by the request of Lord Brahmā and other demigods. Those who are born into this family of Yadu are all My eternal associates. My dear wife, you should not consider that My associates are ever separated from Me; they are My personal expansions, and almost as powerful as I am. Because of their transcendental qualities, they are very, very dear to Me, as I am very, very dear to them.” (NOD, 211-212) The spiritual master is certainly a *nitya-siddha*, but one who claims the spiritual master to be Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is committing a great offense. “As is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by the Lord Himself, His birth, deeds and activities are all transcendental. Similarly, the birth, deeds and activities of the associates of the Lord are also transcendental. And, as it is an offense to consider oneself to be Kṛṣṇa, so it is offensive to consider oneself to be Yaśodā, Nanda, or any other associate of the Lord. We should always remember that they are transcendental; they are never conditioned souls. It is described that Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Kāṁsa, has sixty-four transcendental qualities, and all of the ever-liberated souls who accompany the Lord have the first fifty-five of the qualities, without any doubt. Such devotees are related to the Supreme Personality in any of five transcendental mellows—namely, neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood and conjugal love. These relationships with the Lord are eternal, and therefore *nitya-siddha* devotees do not have to strive to attain the perfectional stage by executing regulative devotional principles. They are eternally qualified to serve Kṛṣṇa.” (NOD, 213)

Thus the spiritual master is not to be considered an ordinary man, but an eternally transcendental personality like Yaśodā and Nanda. As such he has the first fifty-five of the sixty-four transcendental qualities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. But he does not have them in full. “As parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord,

the individual living entities can also possess all of these qualities in minute quantities, provided they become pure devotees of the Lord. In other words, all of the above transcendental qualities can be present in the devotees in minute quantity, whereas the qualities in fullness are always present in the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (NOD, 157)

The Supreme Lord and the spiritual master have been likened unto two rails of the same track. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said: “By the mercy of the spiritual master who is a pure devotee and by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa one can achieve the platform of devotional service. There is no other way.” (NOD, 13) By the grace of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one gets a bona fide spiritual master, and by the grace of the bona fide spiritual master one gets Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master work conjointly to bring the conditioned soul to full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The spiritual master as the external manifestation works from without, and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa works from within. The spiritual master is supplemented by *sāstra*, scripture, and *sādhu*, holy sages. None of these are ever in contradiction. “To err is human: A conditioned soul is very often apt to commit mistakes, and the only remedial measure for such unknown sins is to give oneself up to the lotus feet of the Lord, that He may guide the devotee. The Lord takes this charge for the fully surrendered souls, and thus all problems are solved simply by surrendering oneself unto the Lord and acting in terms of the Lord’s directions. Such directions are given to the sincere devotee in two ways. One is by means of the saints, scriptures, and spiritual master; and the other is by the Lord Himself, residing within the heart of everyone. Thus the devotee is protected in all respects.” (Śrī Īsopaniṣad, p. 97) In themselves, the scriptures cannot lead one to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for without the guidance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul within and as the spiritual master from without, the scriptures remain contradictory and enigmatic. “One can understand the Vedic *mantras* only by the grace of the Lord and the spiritual master. If one takes shelter of a bona fide spiritual master, it is to be understood that he has obtained the grace of the Lord. The Lord appears as the spiritual master for the devotee. And so the spiritual master, the Vedic injunctions, and the Lord Himself from within all guide the devotee in full strength, and

there is no chance of such a devotee falling again into the mire of material illusion.” (Śrī Īsopaniṣad, p. 97) As stated in the *Gurvaṣṭakam*:

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasado  
yasyāprasādānna-gatiḥ kuto 'pi  
dhyāyam stuvāns tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam  
vande guroḥśrī-caranaravindam*

“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 my spiritual master.”

To say that the spiritual master and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are one is to say that they are one in purpose. They are in total agreement. The Supreme Lord says surrender unto Me, and the spiritual master says surrender unto Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They are one in that sense. They are not one in the impersonalist sense of being merged. In conversation, Śrīla Prabhupāda has said: “Merging does not mean losing individuality. Just like a green bird enters a green tree. . . it appears to be merging, but the bird has not lost his individuality. Our proposition, *bhakti-mārga*, is to keep individuality and agree. Our surrender means we agree with Kṛṣṇa in everything although we are individual. . . Like Arjuna—first he decided not to fight, but then he agreed: *kariṣye vacanaṁ tava*. This agreement—this is oneness. That oneness—not to lose individuality. . . Merging means merging in that total agreement. That is liberation. Totally, without any disagreement. And that is the perfection: to keep individuality and agree with God in total agreement. . . So those who are trained fully to agree with Kṛṣṇa are accepted as associates.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, *Back to Godhead*, No. 28, p.8)

The original spiritual master is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, and the disciplic succession comes from Him. “The path of spiritual realization is undoubtedly difficult. The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself. Nobody can be a bona fide spiritual master without following this principle of disciplic succession. The Lord is the original Spiritual Master, and a person in the disciplic succession can convey the

message of the Lord as it is to his disciple. No one can be spiritually realized by manufacturing his own process, as is the fashion of foolish pretenders.” (Bg., p.130)

Thus the spiritual master who proclaims to be Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or disciples who proclaim their spiritual master to be Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, are to be immediately rejected. Śrīla Prabhupāda has stated that the test of the spiritual master is that he speaks of nothing but surrender and devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “It is the duty of the *ācārya*, the spiritual master, to find the ways and means for his disciple to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa.” (NOD, 20) This is the actual duty of the bona fide spiritual master. Who may become a spiritual master? How does one get to be spiritual master? “Whatever he may be, whatever position he may have, if a person is fully conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can become a bona fide spiritual master, initiator, or teacher of the science. In other words, the capability of becoming a bona fide spiritual master depends on his sufficient knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa consciousness; it does not depend on a particular position in society or of birth.” (TLC, 266) Śrīla Prabhupāda further outlines his specific qualification. “The qualification of a spiritual master is that he must have realized the conclusion of the scriptures by deliberation and arguments and thus be able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, are to be understood as bona fide spiritual masters. Everyone should try to find such a bona fide spiritual master in order to fulfill his mission of life, which is to transfer himself to the plane of spiritual bliss.” (NOD, 58) Such a qualified spiritual master can be immediately recognized by his symptoms: “The *mahātmā*, or great soul, cannot be manufactured by rubber-stamping an ordinary man. His symptoms are described here (*Gītā*. 9.14): A *mahātmā* is always engaged in chanting the glories of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.” (Bg. p. 201)

#### MĀYĀVĀDĪ IMPERSONALISTS: PSEUDO SPIRITUAL MASTERS

The Māyāvādī spiritual masters and their followers proclaim that by surrendering to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa one can become

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Under the guise of glorifying the spiritual master, such Māyāvādī disciples declare the spiritual master to be Kṛṣṇa Himself. Thus they await the day that they can become *ācārya* in the disciplic succession and thus become Kṛṣṇa Himself. A bona fide spiritual master will reject such disciples. “Those who are under the spell of the material energy, instead of following the instructions of the disciplic succession, try to manufacture something of their own, and thereby step outside the sphere of *Vedānta* study. A bona fide spiritual master must always condemn such independent mental speculators. If the bona fide spiritual master directly points out the foolishness of a disciple, that should not be taken as otherwise.” (TLC, 169)

We have already quoted the example in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in which Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, although the Supreme Lord Himself, covered His ears with His hands and shouted the name Viṣṇu loudly when His disciples called Him Kṛṣṇa. “Caitanya’s philosophy is: one should give up everything and worship God, Kṛṣṇa. The difference is that Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, spoke the same words, indicating Himself, and the Māyāvādī philosophers misunderstood Him. Therefore Lord Caitanya indicated the same thing: one should not declare himself to be as good as Kṛṣṇa, but should worship Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord.” (TLC, 159)

Actually a disciple who, out of sentiment or fanaticism, proclaims a bona fide spiritual master to be Kṛṣṇa Himself is committing the greatest injury to the spiritual master. The bona fide spiritual master instructs that one should approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa through the bona fide representative of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the pure devotee. He instructs that one cannot approach Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly. If the spiritual master is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, as the Māyāvādī followers of the spiritual master may maintain, then these followers are actually approaching Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly. Thus they distort and twist the teachings of the spiritual master under the guise of glorifying him. The actual motive behind such false glorification should be understood as asuric. As stated before, none of the devotees declare themselves to be God, but “This blasphemy is declared by the *asuras*, and the demoniac followers of

such *asuras* also accept pretenders as God or His incarnation.” (Bhāg., Canto I, 123) The motives of the Māyāvādī are themselves asuric. Actually every conditioned soul is a Māyāvādī, otherwise the soul wouldn’t be conditioned. When Śrīla Prabhupāda first began lecturing in New York in 1966, he would often attack the Māyāvādī impersonalists in his talks, and not understanding this I joked with a friend: “Māyāvādī? When was the last time you saw a Māyāvādī?” None of us could understand who Śrīla Prabhupāda was talking about; we all thought that the Māyāvādīs were a little group of philosophers in India against whom Śrīla Prabhupāda was waging theologic battle. But actually we were all Māyāvādīs. Now we are daily praying:

*namas te sārvasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe  
nirviṣeṣa-śūnyavādī-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe.*

“Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

The Māyāvādī, being envious of God, wants to be God. Therefore he is thrown by Lord Kṛṣṇa into the material world where he can try to lord it over material nature. “The impersonalist philosophers are in one sense like the enemies of the Lord because the out-and-out enemies of the Lord and the impersonalists are both allowed to enter only into the impersonal effulgence of the *brahmajyoti*. So it is to be understood that they are of similar classification. And actually the impersonalists are enemies of God because they cannot tolerate the unparalleled opulence of the Lord. They try always to place themselves on the same level with the Lord. That is due to their envious attitude. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has proclaimed the impersonalists to be offenders of the Lord.” (NOD, 123)

The Māyāvādī spiritual master claims, “I am Kṛṣṇa. Just surrender to me and you can become Kṛṣṇa too.” Or the Māyāvādī disciples claim, “Our *guru* is Kṛṣṇa. Just surrender to him and you’ll become Kṛṣṇa too.” Or they claim, “We are all Kṛṣṇa. We have just forgotten, that’s all.” These impersonalists may set up their own Kṛṣṇa and proclaim that He is talking to them directly. “There are many so-called devotees who artificially think of Kṛṣṇa’s



pastimes, which are known as *aṣṭa-kālika-līlā*. Sometimes one may artificially imitate these, pretending that Kṛṣṇa is talking with him in the form of a boy, or else one may pretend that Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa both have come to him and are talking with him. Such characteristics are sometimes exhibited by the impersonalist class of men, and they may captivate some innocent persons who have no knowledge in the science of devotional service. However, as soon as an experienced devotee sees all of these caricatures, he can immediately evaluate such rascaldom. If such a pretender is sometimes seen possessing imitative attachment to Kṛṣṇa, that will not be accepted as real attachment.” (NOD, 143) Thus such Māyāvādī impersonalists who proclaim their spiritual master and themselves to be Kṛṣṇa simply propitiate their conditioning life after life.

The impersonalists discourage direct discussion of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes. “Impersonalists do not directly derive the transcendental pleasure of association with the Lord by hearing of His pastimes. As such, the impersonalists cannot derive any

relishable transcendental pleasure from the topics of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in which the Lord is personally talking with Arjuna. The basic principle of their impersonal attitude does not allow them the transcendental pleasure which is relished by a devotee whose basic principle of understanding is the Supreme Person.” (NOD, 290-291)

The Māyāvādī impersonalists who envy the Lord and who actually want to be the Lord are in reality not spiritualists at all, but materialists. “Because the impersonalists cannot appreciate the spiritual happiness of association and the exchange of loving affairs with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, their ultimate goal is to become one with the Lord. This concept is simply an extension of the material idea. In the material world, everyone is trying to be the topmost headman amongst all his fellow men or neighbors. Either communally, socially or nationally, everyone is competing to be greater than all others, in the material concept of life. This greatness can be extended to the unlimited, so that one actually wants to become one

with the greatest of all, the Supreme Lord. This is also a material concept, although maybe a little more advanced.” (NOD, 32) It is also to be understood that the impersonalists are not really in a relationship with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa at all, for “In relationship with Kṛṣṇa there is no question of impersonalism.” (NOD, 251)

#### THE REAL SPEAKER OF BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

Generally the impersonalists like to maintain that I am God, you are God, everyone is God, etc., and their conception of God ends there. Such a philosophy excludes all morality: since I am God, and you are God and we are all God, we can act in any way we please. They deny Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a person, and boldly proclaim that He is not actually the speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly tells Arjuna: “Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, engage your body in My service and surrender unto Me. Completely absorbed in

Me, surely will you come to Me.” (Bg. 9.34) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is actually standing in person before Arjuna and is telling Arjuna to concentrate on Him, to be devoted to Him, to worship Him and to revere Him, and yet the impersonalist commentators write: “It is not the personal Kṛṣṇa to whom we have to give ourselves up to ultimately, but the unborn, beginningless eternal who speaks through Kṛṣṇa.” (Commentary on Bg. 9.34 by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan)

Thus the Māyāvādī impersonalists set up their own teachers and ultimately their own selves as the speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā*, but we receive different information from a pure devotee of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa: “The *Bhagavad-gītā* also should be accepted as it is directed by the Speaker Himself. The speaker is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is mentioned on every page as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or ‘Bhagavān.’ *Bhagavān* sometimes means any powerful person or demigod, but here it means Kṛṣṇa.” (Bg. p.23) The words “*Bhagavad-gītā*” actually mean “The Song of the Lord,” for it is sung by the Lord to Arjuna. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s statements are prefaced with the Sanskrit words *śrī bhagavān uvāca*, which means “Śrī Bhagavān said.” Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the Sanskrit word *bhagavān* in this way: “The Sanskrit word *bhagavān* is explained by the great authority Parāśara Muni, the father of Vyāsadeva. The Supreme Personality who possesses all riches, entire strength, entire fame, entire beauty, entire knowledge, and entire renunciation is called Bhagavān. There are many persons who are very rich, very powerful, very beautiful, very famous, very learned, and very much detached—but no one can claim that he is possessor of all these opulences entirely. Such a claim is applicable to Kṛṣṇa only, and as such He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No living entity, including Brahmā, can possess such opulence—neither Lord Śiva, nor even Nārāyaṇa can possess such opulence as fully as Kṛṣṇa. By analytical study of such possessions, it is concluded in the *Brahma-samhitā* by Lord Brahmā himself that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Nobody is equal to or above Him. He is the primeval Lord, or Bhagavān,

known as Govinda, and He is the Supreme Cause of all causes.” (Bg., p.62)

It has been said that the spiritual master is the “representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Supersoul” (NOD, 59), but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is “the Source of both Supersoul and the impersonal Brahman.” (Bg., p.63) Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described in detail throughout Vedic literatures as a beautiful blue boy who plays a flute, and we should know it for certain that it is He and He alone who is the speaker of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who envy Him cannot actually know *Bhagavad-gītā*, although they may make a show of studying it. “In studying the *Bhagavad-gītā*, one should not think that he is the equal of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who wants to understand the *Bhagavad-gītā* should accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Otherwise it is very hard to understand, and it becomes a great mystery.” (Bg., p.25) Again, Śrīla Prabhupāda says: “Those who are envious of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead have no bona fide access to this great literature. The nondevotee’s approach to the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* is something like a bee licking on a bottle. Similarly, the mysticism of the *Bhagavad-gītā* can be understood only by devotees, and no one else can taste it, as is stated in the Fourth Chapter of the book. Nor can the *Gītā* be touched by persons who envy the very existence of the Lord. Therefore the Māyāvādī explanation of the *Gītā* is a most misleading presentation of the whole truth. Lord Caitanya has forbidden us to read commentaries made by the Māyāvādīs, and warns that one who takes to an understanding of the Māyāvādī philosophy loses all power to understand the real mystery of the *Gītā*.” (Bg., p.69)

#### THE SPIRITUAL MASTER AS PURE DEVOTEE

It is the pure devotee who is in a unique position to understand and explain *Bhagavad-gītā* and the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for he knows *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. “. . .By devotional service the

Supreme Truth, which is the Personality of Godhead, is pleased; and He reveals Himself to the heart of the pure devotee by His inconceivable potency. The pure devotee always has Kṛṣṇa within his heart, and therefore he is just like the sun that dissipates the darkness of ignorance. This is special mercy rendered to the pure devotee by the Supreme Lord.” (Bg., p.213) His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has proved beyond all comparison in this contemporary world that he is a pure devotee of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His characteristics are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.9) where Śrīla Prabhupāda himself writes in a purport: “Pure devotees, whose characteristics are mentioned here, engage themselves fully in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Their minds cannot be diverted from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Their talks are solely transcendental. Twenty-four hours daily, they glorify the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Their hearts and souls constantly submerged in Kṛṣṇa, they take pleasure in discussing Him with other devotees. In the preliminary stage of devotional service they relish transcendental pleasure from the service itself; and in the mature stage they are situated in love of God and can relish the highest perfection which is exhibited by the Lord in His abode.” (Bg., p.212)

Thus the position of the Lord and His pure devotee should be understood by the neophyte wishing to make progress on the road back to Godhead. The platform of real progress can be reached when one agrees to follow submissively in the spiritual master’s footsteps. The following is not very difficult, and if one follows sincerely he will transmit the greatest benefit to all conditioned souls. “If the disciple follows in the footsteps of his spiritual master and chants the holy name with equal respect, that becomes the worship of the transcendental name. When the transcendental name becomes worshiped by the devotee, and when he is perfectly qualified in chanting such transcendental vibration of the holy name, he is quite fit to become a spiritual master for delivering all the people of the world.” (TLC, 173)

All glory to Śrīla Prabhupāda and the munificent Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu!END



# TEMPLE WORSHIP

by Satsvarūpa dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—Boston)



There have been many newspaper and magazine articles written about visits to the temples of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Often, a mundane newswriter reports entering a room filled with sweet aromatic incense and seeing colorful brass and wooden Deities on an altar surrounded by flowers, paintings and other paraphernalia. The newspaper reporters usually misunderstand that they are experiencing an oriental ritual in worship of Eastern gods. They do not attribute great significance to the chanting of the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare; they report only that it is repetitious or loud. They cannot convey the real transcendental meaning of the temple in terms of the devotees, the Supreme Lord and devotional service. What, then, according to transcendental authorities, is the purpose of the temple? What are the Deities? What is the meaning of *kīrtana*, the dancing, singing and playing on musical

instruments? What is the purpose of the activities going on in the temple?

The temples of Kṛṣṇa in India are like kings' palaces, and the Supreme Lord who is staying there in the Deity form is considered to be the proprietor. Although the Supreme Lord does not need an opulent temple, the devotees take pleasure in keeping the temple clean and in worshiping the Lord in an opulent manner, and the Lord appreciates this service. Once a devotee asked His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupāda about the dressing of the Jagannātha Deities, and he replied in a letter: "Clothing is already painted on the Jagannāthas even if there is no cloth supplied, but even if Kṛṣṇa is naked, that does not make any difference. But when we dress Him, our service is appreciated. On Kṛṣṇa's side, naked or dressed, He is Kṛṣṇa. And from our side, if we nicely dress Kṛṣṇa and we nicely feed Him, He appreciates our service, and we are certainly benefitted. Kṛṣṇa is the same. He does not need us to dress

Him or to feed Him, but the more we serve by dressing and feeding and caring for Him, the more He appreciates the service, and the more we become Kṛṣṇa conscious."

The Supreme Lord is not in need of big temples, and similarly the pure devotees do not need an opulent setting in which to worship. Pure devotees are prepared to live on a footpath or sleep under a tree if Kṛṣṇa desires. Therefore, the temple is meant not for the Lord or the devotees but for the people in general, and especially for householders. In the Second Canto, Third Chapter, of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which our spiritual master has published as a book entitled *Pure Devotional Service: The Change in Heart*, it is stated in the purport to the twenty-second verse: "Attention engaged in the service of the Lord, especially in dressing and decorating the temple, accompanied by musical *kīrtana* and spiritual instructions from the scriptures, can alone save the common man from the hellish cine-

ma attractions and the rubbish sex-songs broadcast everywhere by radios. If one is unable to maintain a temple at home, he should go to another's temple where the performances are regularly executed. Visiting the temple and looking at the profusely decorated forms of the Lord, well dressed and in a well-decorated sanctified temple, naturally infuses the mundane mind with spiritual inspiration. People should visit holy places like Vṛndāvana where such temples and worship of the Deities are specifically maintained. Formerly all rich men like kings and rich merchants constructed such temples under the directions of expert devotees of the

Lord, like the six Gosvāmīs, and it is the duty of the common man to take advantage of these temples and festivals observed in the holy pilgrimages by following in the footsteps of great devotees. One should not visit all these temples with sightseeing in mind, but one must go to them guided by the proper men who know the science."

The Deities are not idols. They are incarnations of Kṛṣṇa appearing in material elements. This is explained in Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to Mantra Five of *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*: "Because He is full of inconceivable potencies, God can accept our service through any sort of medium, and He can convert His different potencies

according to His own will. The unbelievers argue that the Lord cannot incarnate Himself or that He descends in a form of material energy. This argument is nullified if we accept His inconceivable potencies as realities. Even if He appears before us in the form of material energy, it is quite possible for him to convert the material energy into spiritual. The source of the energies being one and the same, Kṛṣṇa, the energies can be utilized simply according to the will of that energetic source. For example, the Lord appears in the form of *arcā*, or Deities supposedly made of earth or stone. These forms, engraved from wood or stone or any other matter,



are not idols, however, as is held by the iconoclasts." The proper understanding, then, is that because we cannot see the spiritual form of the Supreme Lord with our present senses, He may choose to appear in this material world in a form made of the material elements. But since He is the controller of both the material and spiritual energies, when He appears in such a form, it is no longer considered material. After all, since He is the supreme controller, who can restrict Him from coming in whatever form He chooses? The Lord is so pliable that He has agreed to appear before the neophyte devotees in the Deity form so that they may worship



Him, feed Him and dress Him, and in this form the Lord will accept what they offer.

The form of the Deity is not fashioned in terms of the whim of the worshiper. It is eternal with all its paraphernalia, and this can actually be felt by a sincere devotee, but not by an atheist. For His devotee the Supreme Lord is always within reach in the Deity incarnation, whereas for the unsundered soul He is far away and cannot be approached. The eternal identity of the Deity is confirmed by the authority of spiritual masters who are able to see past the material energy to the spiritual form of the Lord in His incarnation as Jagannātha or Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, one who is sincerely looking for spiritual union with the Supreme Lord will not refuse to worship His authorized forms in the temple.

Deity worship is especially recommended for householders, those entangled in the material complications of family life. This is stated in *Pure Devotional Service: The Change in Heart*: "Engagement in the worship of the Deity, under the direction of the bona fide spiritual master, will greatly help the householders to purify their existence and make rapid progress in spiritual knowledge. Simple theoretical book knowledge is not sufficient for the neophyte devotee. Book

knowledge is theoretical, whereas the *arcanā* process is practical. Spiritual knowledge must be developed by a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge, and that is the guaranteed way for the attainment of spiritual perfection. The training of a neophyte in devotional service completely depends on the expert spiritual master who knows how to lead his disciple to make gradual progress back home, back to Godhead."

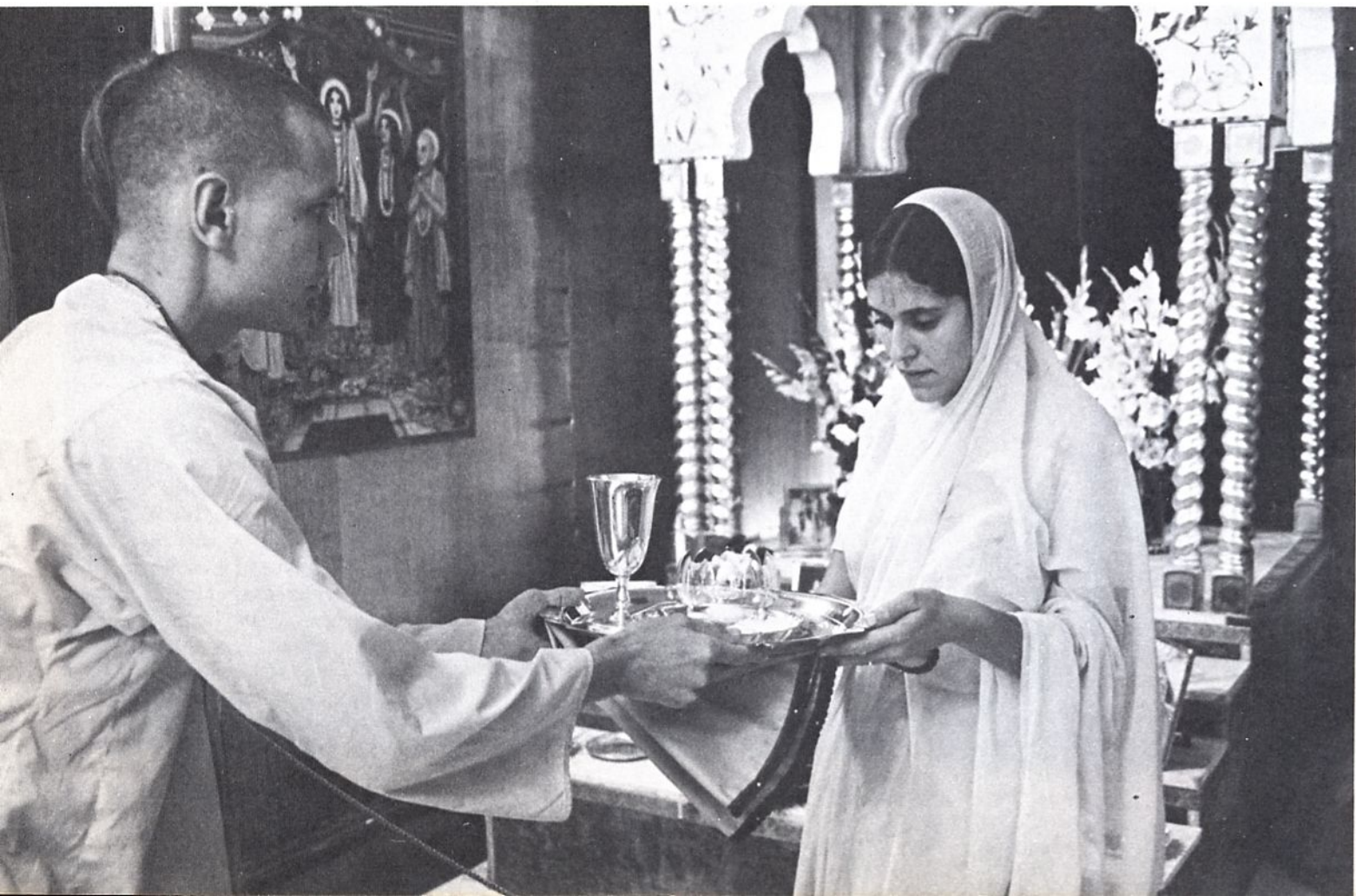
The temple itself is not located in the mundane world. Our spiritual master has declared, "This temple is not in Boston, and that temple is not in New York. They are in Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual planets." The nondevotees argue that there is nothing special about the temple because God is everywhere. But the devotees of the Lord like to gather in the temple, which, because everything there is done in a manner conducive to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is an entirely transcendental place. It is said in the *sāstras* that although he who lives in the forest is in the mode of goodness, he who lives in the city is in the mode of passion, and he who lives in the liquor shop is in the mode of ignorance, a temple is transcendental. Who, then, can object to going to the temple to see the beautiful form of the Lord surrounded by decorations and flowers? The Deities are honored in special

ceremonies such as Jhulana-yātra, at which time They are swung on a swing, the Jagannātha Cart Festival, when the Deities are taken outside and wheeled on carts to the sea, and special festivals when the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities are taken on processions in beautifully decorated carts. Since the essence of religion is to glorify God, then who can object to these transcendental ceremonies, which spread spiritual emotions to all who take part, even by offering a small flower to the Deities? Our spiritual master has stated that if one simply comes to the temple, even not understanding the spiritual nature of the form of God in the Deity, but merely appreciating the beautiful setting of the altar, and if one comes again another time and remarks, "Yes, this is very pretty; this is beautiful," then, due to his appreciation of Kṛṣṇa, he will become a devotee. In fact, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Second Canto, Chapter Three, verse 22, states: "The eyes which do not look at the symbolical representations of the Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu are like the eyes printed on the plumes of a peacock, and the legs which do not move to the holy places where the Lord is remembered are considered to be like tree trunks."



The Deities are regularly worshiped by a performance called *ārātrika*, which is an offering of foodstuffs, incense, flowers, a waving handkerchief, a fan and a lamp. In the ISKCON temples the Deities are worshiped with *ārātrika* early in the morning,

at 4 a.m. Then at 8 a.m. the altar is decorated and breakfast offered. At 11:30 there is again an offering of foodstuffs. At 5 p.m. the temple is opened after the Deities have rested from one to four. Then there is another *ārātrika* ceremony. In the





morning fruit and milk are offered to the Deities, and at noon *dahl* and *chapatis* and many other varieties of foodstuffs are offered. At dusk there is *ārātrika* and again at 9 p.m. an offering of *puris*, vegetables, milk and sweetmeats, and after this

final *ārātrika* the Deities finally rest.

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur has written a song of prayer for the *ārātrika* ceremony in honor of the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa in the appearance of a devotee. His song is as follows:

“Everyone come see all the glories of the beautiful *ārati* ceremony of Lord Caitanya. This *ārātrika* ceremony on the bank of the Ganges to receive Lord Caitanya is so beautiful that it will attract the minds of all the people of the world. Come see how Lord Caitanya is seated on the jeweled throne. To offer *ārātrika* to Lord Caitanya, all the demigods have come, headed by Lord Brahmā. See Nityānanda Prabhu on the right side of Lord Caitanya, and on the left side Śrī Gadādhara. Nearby is Advaita Prabhu, as well as Śrī Śrīvāsa, who is bearing the umbrella above Lord Caitanya’s head. Listen to the sounding of the conchshells, the ringing bells and the *kāratals*. All these sounds, along with that of the sweet *mṛdaṅga*, are very relishable to hear.”

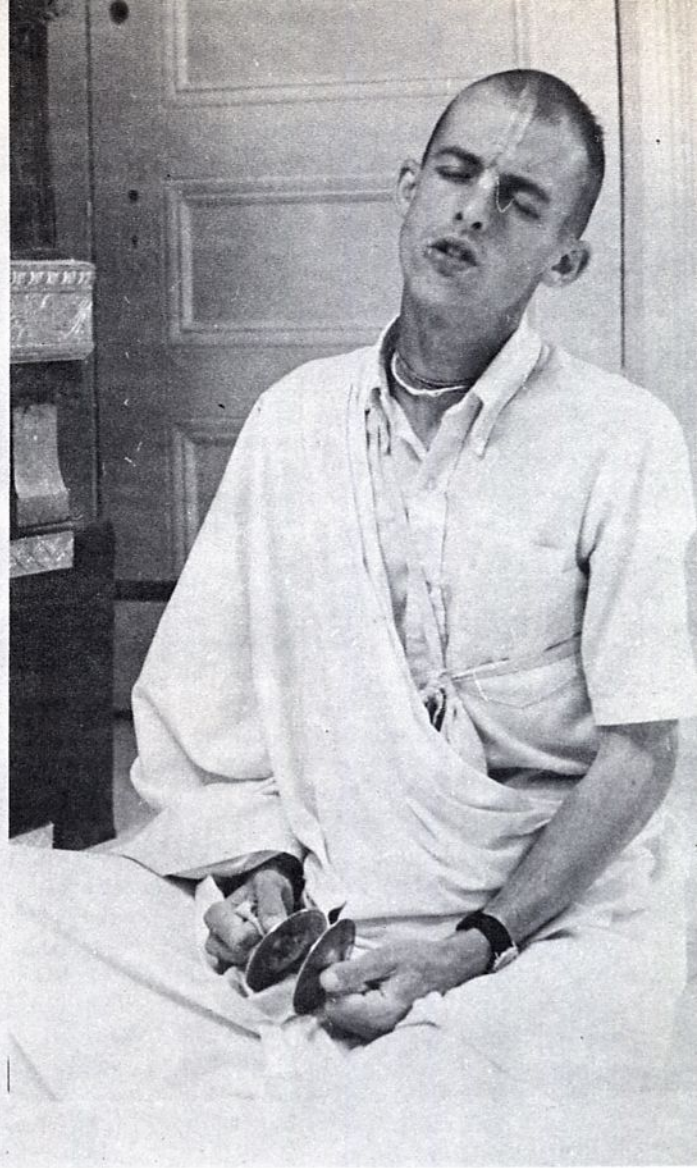
This worship of Lord Caitanya can be performed with a painting of the *Pañcattva* as shown here. His Divine Grace has said that in this age all that one needs to achieve spiritual perfection is to sit before this picture and chant before the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Prabhupāda has authorized this form of temple worship, and anyone who takes part will feel natural bliss. All activities and paraphernalia in temple life become meaningful by the grace of the spiritual master. Without the mercy of a spiritual master, one cannot receive devotional service in one’s heart. The progress of a neophyte devotee completely depends on the spiritual master who knows how to lead his disciple back





to Godhead. The spiritual master teaches the neophyte devotee all the rules of Deity worship, and it is his duty to help his disciple fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. It is said in the third verse of Śrīla Viśvanatha Cakravartī's *Śrī Gurv-āṣṭakam*: "The spiritual master is always engaged along with his disciples in the temple worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master."

As far as the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is concerned, it is the prime benediction of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and therefore the temples vibrate with the transcendental sound of the holy names. The chanting is purely spiritual; it is the cry of the individual soul for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, like the cry of a child for its mother. Chanting the *mahāmantra* is the prescribed method of worship for this age. "In this age the sacrifice of holding congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord is the prescribed method." (Bhaktivedanta purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.1.14).



The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is eternal, beyond history, but it was first delivered to this planet by the great sage Nārada Muni, and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is accepted by the Brahma-sampradāya (the disciplic succession of Kṛṣṇa conscious spiritual masters) as Kṛṣṇa Himself, gave special impetus to this movement. Lord Caitanya gave evidence from the *Bṛhan-Nārādīya Purāṇa* concerning chanting in this present age: *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*: “Chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name! There is no other means of success in God realization for this age of Kali.” In the age of Kali, the age of quarrel and hypocrisy, it is not possible to perform difficult penances or austerities in order to obtain spiritual life. “In this iron age of quarrel, men almost always have short lives. O learned one, not only that, but they are also very lazy, misguided, unlucky, and above all, always disturbed.” (Bhāg. 1.1. 10) “[But] living beings who are entangled

in the meshes of birth and death can be freed immediately by even unconsciously chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is feared even by fear personified.” (Bhāg. 1.1.14) We cannot overestimate the benefit made available to the average man in the age of Kali by the congregational chanting and Deity worship afforded by the ISKCON temples.

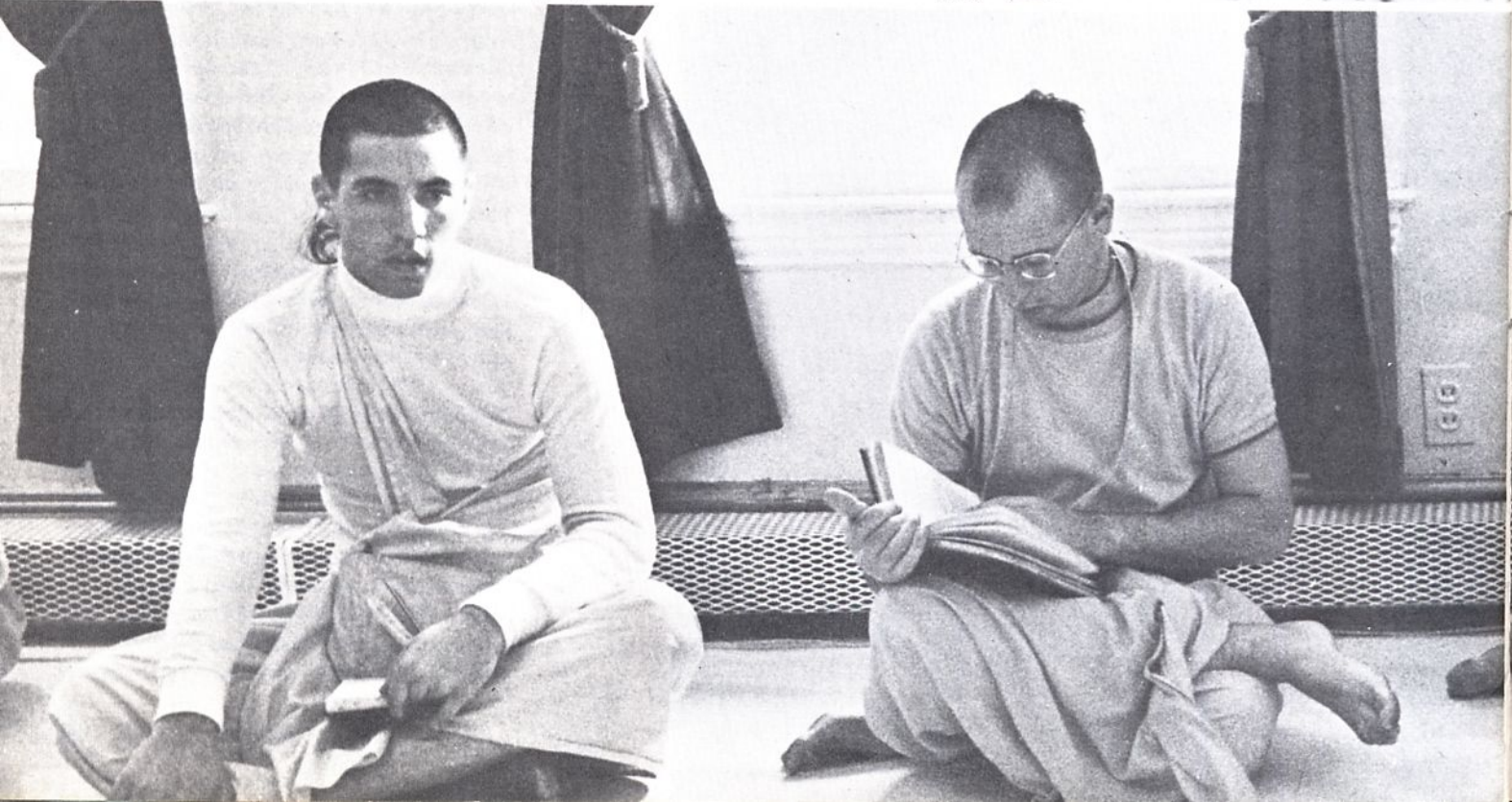
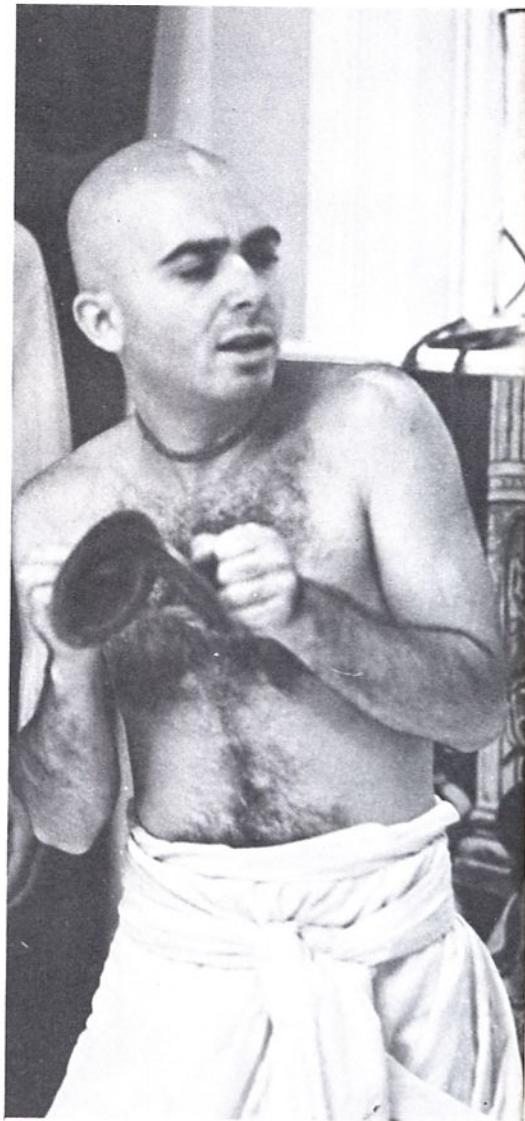
The chanting is glorification of God. There is a difference between American food and Indian food, yet the purpose of both is the same: to satisfy our hunger. Similarly, there are different rituals in churches and temples, but the goal is the same: to achieve love of God. If the goal is otherwise, then that is not real religion. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is the essence of religion—to glorify God. Who can object? And what is the harm in chanting? The chanting is a prayer to the Supreme Lord to please take the chanter out of the inferior energy, into the spiritual. It is a plea for transcendental loving service unto God. Once, when asked what a man should pray for, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda answered, “We should pray, ‘Dear God, please let me love you.’” And so the musical instruments, *mṛdaṅga* drums and hand cymbals are used in glorification of God, and the dancing is a beginning stage of ecstasy. Anyone may take part in the chanting, even a child. It is so nice.

The temple is also used for lectures and classes in the transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Due to the unbreak-

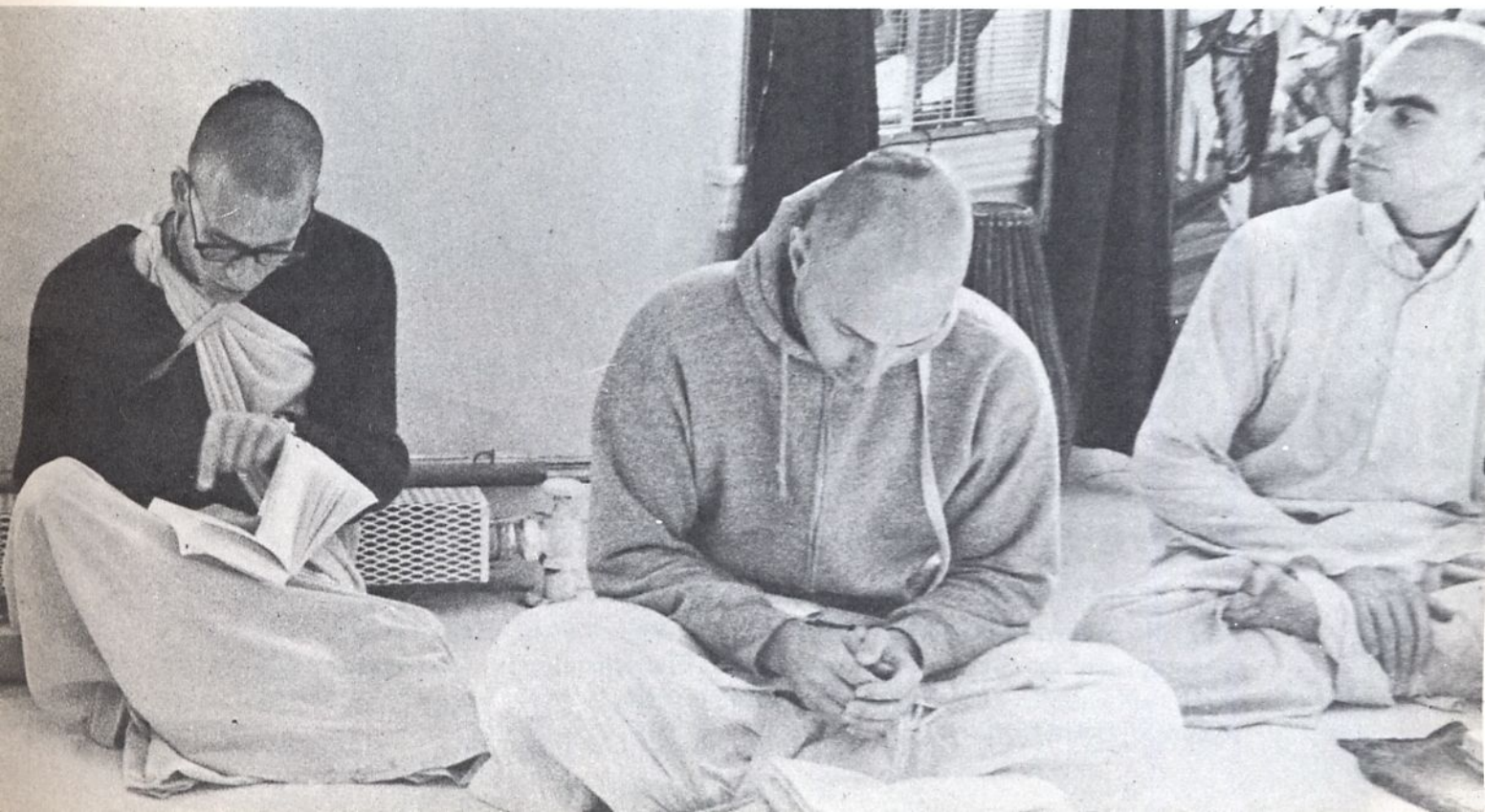
able system of disciplic succession, the scriptural elaborations and expositions on the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (as found in *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Upaniṣads*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, etc.) are the most voluminous, exacting and consistent of any religious culture in the world. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service unto God, is the king of knowledge. This science teaches one that the material body is merely temporary, whereas one’s real identity is as an eternal, blissful spirit soul who is a part and parcel of God. It teaches us our eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead as His eternal servants. In daily classes on the Vedic literatures, perfect knowledge is received by submissive aural reception. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.2.18: “If a candidate for devotional service regularly attends classes in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or renders service unto pure devotees, all that is inauspicious in his heart becomes destroyed almost to nil, and thus loving service unto the Personality of Godhead . . . comes to be an irrevocable fact.”

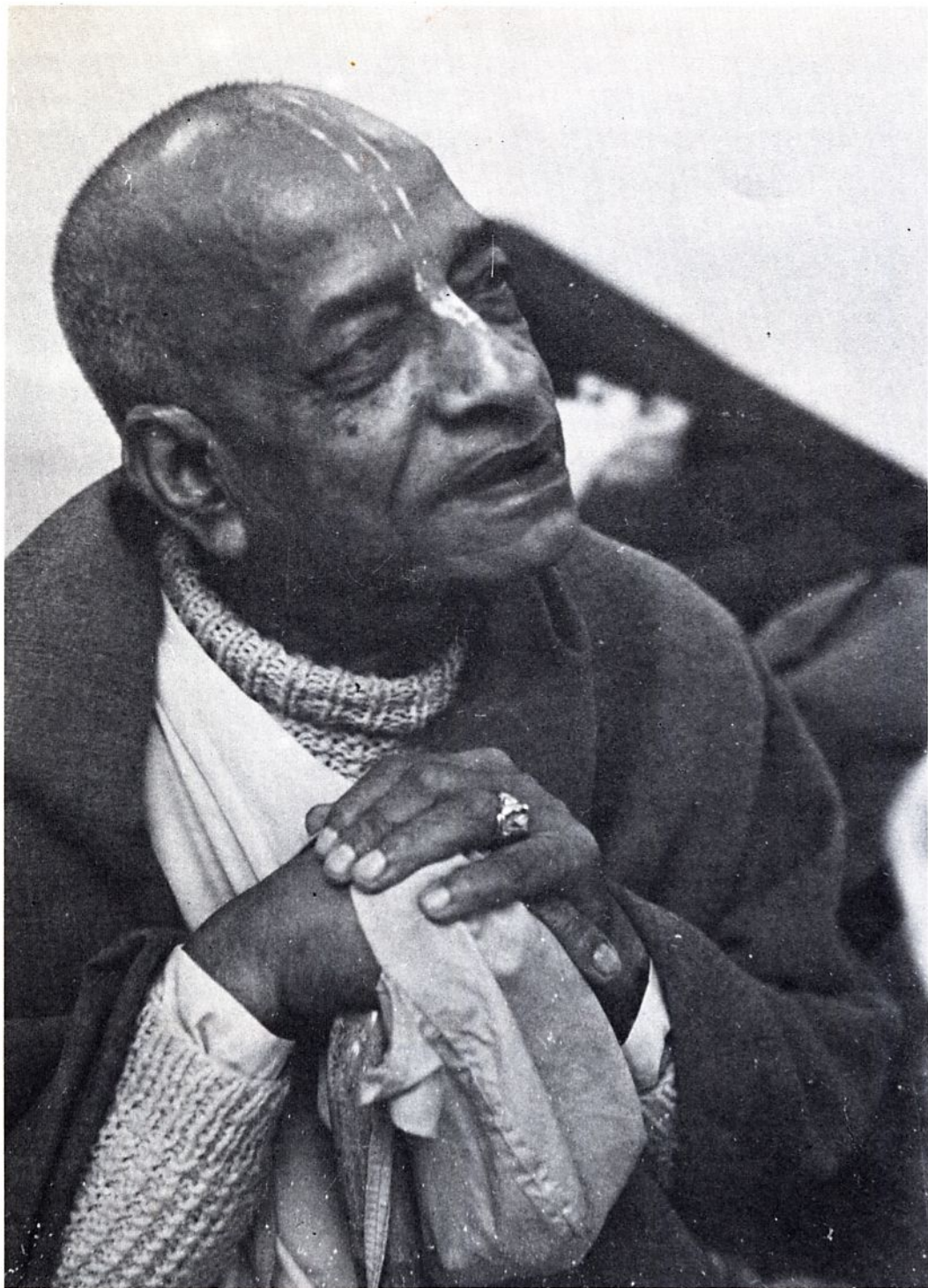
The disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda are so fortunate that they can partake in the transcendental activities in the temple, and we all acknowledge that the pure devotee has given us all means to reach Kṛṣṇa. As disciples, we invite everyone to come to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness temples and take part in the feasts, classes and other programs.

END









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

*sākṣāddhari-tvena samasta-sāstrair  
uktas tathā bhāvya eva sadbhiḥ  
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya  
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

(The spiritual master is honored as much as the Supreme Lord because of his being the most confidential servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all revealed scriptures and is followed by all authorities. Therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is a bona fide representative of Śrī Hari [Kṛṣṇa].)



**Kṛṣṇa's Favorite Plant: Tulasī**

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is very fond of tulasī leaves and buds; if someone sows a *tulasī* tree somewhere, he becomes devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa. And when the *tulasī* leaves are offered in devotion at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, there is the full development of love of Godhead."

*The Nectar of Devotion* page 101

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Mahā-Viṣṇu, a part of a part of Kṛṣṇa, lies down in a corner of the spiritual sky, and from His breathing all the universes come out like golden balls, and in each universe He further expands as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and from the stem of a lotus growing from His navel, Lord Brahmā, the first living entity is born. . .