

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



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No. 40



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Anila Dasa



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

KṚṢṆA, The Supreme Personality of Godhead The supremely rich, powerful, famous and beautiful Personality of Godhead, who is free from all material attachment, is now available in book form. *KṚṢṆA, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, 750 pages of transcendental reading matter, opulently illustrated with 82 full-color plates, presents the eternal, blissful pastimes of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are revealed in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the ripened fruit of all the Sanskrit Vedic literatures.

The activities of Kṛṣṇa, which appear to be like those of an ordinary man, can only be properly understood with the help of a bona fide spiritual master fully realized in the knowledge of the transcendental nature. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is such a spiritual master. *KṚṢṆA, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, potent in message and rich in design, offers mankind the opportunity to attain the highest benefit by understanding the true nature of the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Everyone would do well to procure this deluxe two-volume set to read and keep at home as a great treasure.

THE NECTAR OF DEVOTION Our loving propensity expands just as a vibration of light or air expands, but we do not know where it ends. The root cause of all despondency is that our dormant loving propensity has not been fulfilled despite our great advancement in the materialistic way of life. Our love can be fully satisfied only when it is reposed in Kṛṣṇa, and in this way it is very easy to immediately and simultaneously love every living being. This is the science of *The Nectar of Devotion*, which teaches us how to stimulate our original love for Kṛṣṇa and thus enjoy our blissful life.

TEACHINGS OF LORD CAITANYA The conditioned soul, being engrossed in the material body, increases the pages of the history of material activity. The teachings of Lord Caitanya,

who is the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing in the role of His own devotee, can help human society to stop such unnecessary and temporary activities and can elevate one to the topmost platform of spiritual activities, which begin after liberation from material bondage. *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, the instructions of this most munificent incarnation of the Supreme Lord, thus opens the field of activities of the pure soul. Such liberated activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are the goal of human perfection.

ŚRĪ ĪSOPANIṢAD The knowledge that brings one nearer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. All the major scriptures of the world indicate that Godhead, or the Absolute Truth, is not impersonal, but is a person. From the most authoritative sources, the famed 108 *Upaniṣads* of India, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* supplies revealed evidence that the Personality of Godhead is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of everything that exists. The author's lucid 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.

In the present age of discord, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* revives the dormant hope of all living beings—to transcend this conditioned state and gain the eternal, blissful association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

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 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the supreme authority on the *Gītā*, and He initially delivered the *Gītā* so that all persons—workers, students, philosophers, and yogīs—could reach

Try to Understand the Basic Principles of the Great Movement "Kṛṣṇa Consciousness"

the perfection of life and be liberated from all suffering. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is passing on Kṛṣṇa's teaching 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."

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

CANTO ONE—CREATION The science of God is greater than all other sciences, and this spiritual technology is rationally and authoritatively explained in the 18,000 verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, India's sublime contribution of culture, philosophy, politics, sociology, religion and love. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has undertaken the mighty task of rendering this supremely potent work into the English language along with Sanskrit transliterations, word-for-word synonyms and elaborate English purports. Thus in each verse one will find new enlightenment regarding the Absolute Truth, the origin of all emanations. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is an important cultural presentation for the respiritualization of the entire human society.

The first of the twelve cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, entitled "Creation," was written, edited, published and distributed in India by His Divine Grace prior to his coming to the Western world. The first two of the three volumes which comprise the First Canto are now unavailable until reprinting, but Volume Three is available in limited quantity.

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

CANTO TWO—THE COSMIC MANIFESTATION The Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes the purpose of the entire *Bhāgavatam* and the different symptoms of this purpose. The ten chapters of the Second Canto are now being published in serialized small-book form so that one may very carefully study this scientific literature in small installments.

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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*.

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The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is a worldwide community of devotees practicing *bhakti-yoga*, loving service to God. It is an eternal science of God consciousness described in Vedic literatures which were compiled 5,000 years ago. The founder and spiritual master of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a pure devotee representing an unbroken disciplic chain of spiritual masters, came to the United States in 1966 on the order of his spiritual master to preach this science of the spirit soul to the people of the West.

The essence of religion, or, for that matter, the very purpose of life itself, is to develop love of God. We desire to provide for all people the gift of knowing how to love God, and we are dedicated to awakening the love of God which is dormant in the heart of everyone, regardless of race, creed or color. The program offered by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is designed so that each and every person, while remaining in his occupation or station in life, may adopt the simple and direct methods of *bhakti-yoga* (devotion) under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master and offer whatever capacity or talent he has by utilizing it in the service of the Supreme Lord. The writer may write articles for Kṛṣṇa. Householders raise children in the science of God, and husband and wife live in mutual cooperation for spiritual progress. A businessman may enroll as a life member and thus participate in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement without abandoning his occupation.

Only by the recognition of God as the supreme father can there be brotherhood, peace and prosperity. In this materialistic world, the temples of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness are like oases in the desert where parched men may seek the nectar of happiness. We invite one and all to stop at our temples, listed below, and take part in our programs of classes, festivals, chanting, feasting and worship. The temples are open for you. Please visit them and inquire into this sublime and easy process for finding perfect happiness.

HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE

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Amateur and professional photographers who would like to offer photographs of Kṛṣṇa conscious activities for inclusion in *Back to Godhead* are invited to send them to ISKCON Press, 32 Tiffany Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

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

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The Liberation of Balvala. Balvala, a powerful and mischievous demon who used to persecute great saints and sages, was killed by Lord Balarāma, the elder brother of Lord Kṛṣṇa, at the request of the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya. This is an illustration from Volume Two of *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

FOUNDER—ĀCĀRYA OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

*mahāprabhoḥ kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta-
vāditramādyan-manaso rasena
romāñca-kampāśru-taraṅga-bhājo
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

(The spiritual master is always engaged in chanting and hearing the message of Lord Caitanya and sometimes is dancing in ecstasy. Sometimes he feels quivering in his body because of spiritual trance. I offer my respectful obeisances unto such a spiritual master.)

—from Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura



KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS: THE SANKĪRTANA MOVEMENT

by HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is a bona fide religious society strictly following the principles described in the Vedic scriptures and practiced in India for thousands of years. Our basic beliefs are as follows:

1) The Absolute Truth is contained in all the great scriptures of the world, the Bible, Koran, Torah, etc. However, the oldest known revealed scriptures in existence are the Vedic literatures, most notably *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is the literal record of God's actual words.

2) God, or *Kṛṣṇa*, is eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful and all-attractive, the seed-giving father of man and all living entities. He is the sustaining energy of all life, nature and the cosmic situation.

3) Man is actually not his body, but is eternal spirit soul, part and parcel of God, and therefore eternal.

4) That all men are brothers can be practiced only when we realize God as our common father.

5) All our actions should be performed as a sacrifice to the Supreme Lord: "...all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may per-

form, should be done as an offering unto Me." (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.27)

6) The food that sustains us should always be offered to the Lord before eating. In this way He becomes the offering, and such eating purifies us.

7) We can, by sincere cultivation of bona fide spiritual science, attain to the state of pure, unending blissful consciousness, free from anxiety, in this very lifetime.

8) The recommended means to attain the mature stage of love of God in the present age of Kali, or quarrel, is to chant the holy name of the Lord. The easiest method for most people is to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Our basic mission is to propagate the *sankīrtana* movement (chanting of the holy names of God) all around the world, as was recommended by the incarnation of the Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. People in this age are very much reluctant to understand God consciousness because of their unfortunate condition of life. They are working hard day and night simply for sense gratification. But this transcendental vibration of

sañkīrtana will knock at the door of their hearts for spiritual awakening. Therefore, they should be given the chance for this opportunity.

It is not recommended that a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee go into seclusion to chant by himself and thereby gain salvation for himself alone. Our duty and religious obligation is to go out into the streets where the people in general can hear the chanting and see the dancing. We have already seen practically how by this process many, many boys and girls of America and Europe have been saved from the immoral practices of this age and have

now dedicated their lives to the service of Kṛṣṇa.

It is hoped that the government authorities will cooperate with our *sañkīrtana* parties in enabling us to perform *sañkīrtana* on the streets. To do this it is necessary that we be able to chant the names of Kṛṣṇa, dance, play the *mṛdaṅga* drum, request donations for our society's journal, and on occasion, sit down with the *mṛdaṅga* drum. As devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, it is our duty to teach the people how to love God and worship Him in their daily life. This is the aim and destination of human life. END

Authorized Purports on Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya's MEDITATION ON THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda versification by Hayagrīva dāsa Adhikārī

(Śrī Śaṅkarācārya—or Śaṅkara—is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Śiva, as the *Padma Purāṇa* testifies. Appearing in India in the 6th century A.D., he single-handedly drove the Buddhist philosophy out of India and reestablished Vedic culture, all in his short lifetime of 32 years. Although he took up the impersonalist guise to better battle the Buddhists—impersonalism is much akin to Buddhism—the commentary rendered below, as well as other writings, reveal him to be a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śaṅkara's most famous treatise is *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, and his other works include *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* and *Prayers for Kṛṣṇa*.)

-1-

O *Bhagavad-gītā*,
Through Thy eighteen chapters
Thou showerest upon man
The immortal nectar
Of the wisdom of the Absolute.
O blessed *Gītā*,
By Thee, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself
Enlightened Arjuna.
Afterward, the ancient sage Vyāsa
Included Thee in the *Mahābhārata*.
O loving mother,
Destroyer of man's rebirth
Into the darkness of this mortal world,
Upon Thee I meditate.

-2-

Salutations to thee, O Vyāsa,
Thou art of mighty intellect,
And thine eyes
Are large as the petals
Of the full-blown lotus.
It was thou

Who brightened this lamp of wisdom,
Filling it with the oil
Of the *Mahābhārata*.

PURPORT

Śrīmad Śaṅkarācārya was an impersonalist from the materialist point of view. But he never denied the spiritual form known as *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* or the eternal all-blissful form of knowledge which existed before the material creation. When he spoke of Supreme Brahman as impersonal, he did not mean that the Lord's *sac-cid-ānanda* form was to be confused with a material conception of personality. In the very beginning of his commentary on the *Gītā*, he maintains that Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord, is transcendental to the material creation. The Lord existed before the creation as the transcendental personality, and He has nothing to do with material personality. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the same Supreme Personality, and He has no connection with a material body. He descends in His spiritual eternal form, but foolish people mistake His body to be like unto ours. Śaṅkara's preaching of impersonalism is especially meant for teaching foolish persons who consider Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary man composed of matter.

No one would care to read the *Gītā* if it had been spoken by a material man, and certainly Vyāsadeva wouldn't have bothered even to incorporate it into the history of the *Mahābhārata*. According to the above verses, *Mahābhārata* is the history of the ancient world, and Vyāsadeva is the writer of this great epic. *Bhagavad-gītā* is identical with Kṛṣṇa; and because Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead, there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His words. Therefore the *Bhagavad-gītā* is as worshipable as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, both being absolute. One who hears *Bhagavad-gītā* "as is" actually hears the words directly from the lotus lips of the Lord. But unfortunate persons say that the *Gītā* is too antiquated for the modern man who wants to find out God by speculation or meditation.

I salute Thee, O Kṛṣṇa,
 O Thou who art the refuge
 Of ocean-born Lakṣmī
 And all who take refuge
 At Thy lotus feet.
 Thou art indeed
 The wish-fulfilling tree
 For Thy devotee.
 Thy one hand holds a staff
 For driving cows,
 And Thy other hand is raised—
 The thumb touching the tip
 Of Thy forefinger,
 Indicating divine knowledge.
 Salutations to Thee, O Supreme Lord,
 For Thou art the milker
 Of the ambrosia of the *Gītā*.

PURPORT

Śrīmad Śaṅkarācārya explicitly says, “You fools, just worship Govinda and that *Bhagavad-gītā* spoken by Nārāyaṇa Himself,” yet foolish people still conduct their research work to find out Nārāyaṇa; consequently they are wretched and they waste their time for nothing. Nārāyaṇa is never wretched nor *daridra*; rather, He is worshiped by the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, as well as all living entities. Śaṅkara declared himself to be “Brahman,” but he admits Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Personality who is beyond the material creation. He offers his respects to Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Brahman or Param Brahman because He (Kṛṣṇa) is worshipable by everyone. Only the fools and enemies of Kṛṣṇa who cannot understand what *Bhagavad-gītā* is (though they make commentaries on it) say, “It is not the personal Kṛṣṇa to whom we have to surrender ourselves utterly, but to the unborn, beginningless Eternal who speaks through Kṛṣṇa.” Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Whereas Śaṅkara, the greatest of the impersonalists, offers his due respects to Kṛṣṇa and His book *Bhagavad-gītā*, the foolish say that “it is not to the personal Kṛṣṇa.” Such unenlightened people do not know that Kṛṣṇa is absolute and that there is no difference between His inside and outside. The difference of inside and outside is experienced in the dual material world. In the absolute world there is no such difference because in the absolute everything is spiritual (*sac-cid-ānanda*), and Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa belongs to the absolute world. In the absolute world there is only the factual personality, and there is no distinction between body and soul.

-4-

The *Upaniṣads*
 Are as a herd of cows,
 Lord Kṛṣṇa, son of a cowherd,
 Is their milker,
 Arjuna is the calf,
 The supreme nectar of the *Gītā*
 Is the milk,
 And the wise man
 Of purified intellect
 Is the drinker.

Unless one understands spiritual variegatedness, one cannot understand the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is said that Kṛṣṇa's name, form, quality, pastimes, entourage and paraphernalia are all *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*—in short, everything of His transcendental association is of the same composition of spiritual bliss, knowledge and eternity. There is no end to His name, form, etc., unlike the material world where all things have their end. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, only fools deride Him, whereas it is Śaṅkara, the greatest impersonalist, who worships Him, His cows and His pastimes as the son of Vasudeva and pleasure of Devakī.

-5-

Thou son of Vasudeva,
 Destroyer of the demons Kaṁsa and Cāṇūra,
 Thou supreme bliss of Mother Devakī,
 O Thou *guru* of the universe,
 Teacher of the worlds,
 Thee, O Kṛṣṇa, I salute.

PURPORT

Śaṅkara describes Him as the son of Vasudeva and Devakī. Does he mean thereby that he is worshiping an ordinary material man? He worships Kṛṣṇa because he knows that Kṛṣṇa's birth and activities are all supernatural. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4th Chapter), Kṛṣṇa's birth and activities are mysterious and transcendental and therefore only the devotees of Kṛṣṇa can know them perfectly. Śaṅkara was not such a fool that he would accept Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary man and at the same time offer Him all devotional obeisances, knowing Him as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, only by knowing the transcendental birth and activities of Kṛṣṇa can one attain liberation by acquiring a spiritual form like Kṛṣṇa. There are five different kinds of liberations. One who merges into the spiritual auras of Kṛṣṇa, known as impersonal Brahman effulgence, does not fully develop his spiritual body. But one who fully develops his spiritual existence becomes an associate of Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa in different spiritual abodes. One who enters into the abode of Nārāyaṇa develops a spiritual form exactly like Nārāyaṇa (four-handed), and one who enters into the highest spiritual abode of Kṛṣṇa, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, develops a spiritual form of two hands like Kṛṣṇa. Śaṅkara, as an incarnation of Lord Śiva, knows all these spiritual existences, but he did not disclose them to his then Buddhist followers because it was impossible for them to know about the spiritual world. Lord Buddha preached that void is the ultimate goal, so how could his followers understand spiritual variegatedness? Therefore Śaṅkara said *brahma satya jagat mithyā*, or material variegatedness is false but spiritual variegatedness is fact. In the *Padma Purāṇa* Lord Śiva has admitted that he had to preach the philosophy of *māyā* or illusion in the Kali-yuga as another edition of the “void” philosophy of Buddha. He had to do this by the order of the Lord for specific reasons. He, however, disclosed his real mind by recommending that people worship Kṛṣṇa, for no one can be saved simply by mental speculations composed of word jugglery and grammatical maneuvers. Śaṅkara instructs further: *bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam mūḍhamate, prapte sannihite*

marape nahi nahi, rakṣati dukṛñ karape. “You intellectual fools, just worship Govinda, just worship Govinda, just worship Govinda. Your grammatical knowledge and word jugglery will not save you at the time of death.”

—6—

Of that terrifying river
Of the battlefield of Kurukṣetra
Over which the Pāṇḍavas victoriously crossed,
Bhīṣma and Droṇa were as the high banks,
Jayadratha as the river’s water,
The King of Gāndhāra the blue water-lily,
Śalya the shark, Kṛpa the current,
Karṇa the mighty waves,
Aśvatthāmā and Vikarṇa the dread alligators,
And Duryodhana the very whirlpool—
But Thou, O Kṛṣṇa, wast the ferryman!

—7—

May the spotless lotus of the *Mahābhārata*
That grows on the waters
Of the words of Vyāsa
And of which the *Bhagavad-gītā*
Is the irresistably sweet fragrance
And its tales of heroes
The full blown petals
Fully opened by the talk of Lord Hari,
Who destroys the sins
Of *Kali-yuga*,
And on which daily light
The nectar-seeking souls,
As so many bees
Swarming joyously—
May this lotus of the *Mahābhārata*
Bestow on us the highest good.

—8—

Salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa
The embodiment of supreme bliss,
By whose grace and compassion
The dumb become eloquent
And the lame scale mountains—
Him I salute!

PURPORT

Foolish followers of foolish speculators cannot understand the meaning of offering salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of bliss. Śaṅkara himself offered his salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa so that some of his intelligent followers might understand the real fact by the example set by their great master Śaṅkara, the incarnation of Lord Śiva. But there are many obstinant followers of Śaṅkara who refuse to offer their salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and instead mislead innocent persons by injecting materialism into the *Bhagavad-gītā* and confusing innocent readers by their commentaries, and consequently the readers never have the opportunity to become blessed by offering salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the cause of all causes. The greatest

disservice to humanity is to keep mankind in darkness about the science of Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa consciousness by distorting the sense of the *Gītā*.

—9—

Salutations to that supreme shining one
Whom the creator Brahmā, Varuṇa,
Indra, Rudra, Marut and all divine beings
Praise with hymns,
Whose glories are sung
By the verses of the *Vedas*,
Of whom the singers of *Sāma* sing
And of whose glories the *Upaniṣads*
Proclaim in full choir,
Whom the *yogīs* see
With their minds absorbed
In perfect meditation,
And of whom all the hosts
Of gods and demons
Know not the limitations.
To Him, the Supreme God Kṛṣṇa, be all salutations—
Him we salute! Him we salute! Him we salute!

PURPORT

By recitation of the ninth verse of his meditation quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śaṅkara has indicated that Lord Kṛṣṇa is worshipable by one and all, including himself. He gives hints to materialists, impersonalists, mental speculators, “void” philosophers and all other candidates subjected to the punishment of material miseries—just offer salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva, Varuṇa, Indra and all other demigods. He has not mentioned, however, the name of Viṣṇu because Viṣṇu is identical with Kṛṣṇa. The *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* are meant for understanding the process by which one can surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. The *yogīs* try to see Him (Kṛṣṇa) within themselves by meditation. In other words, it is for all the demigods and demons who do not know where the ultimate end is that Śaṅkara teaches, and he especially instructs the demons and the fools to offer salutations to Kṛṣṇa and His words, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, by following in his footsteps. Only by such acts will the demons be benefitted, not by misleading their innocent followers by so-called mental speculations or showbottle meditations. Śaṅkara directly offers salutations to Kṛṣṇa as if to show the fools, who are searching after light, that *here is light like the sun*. But the fallen demons are like owls that will not open their eyes on account of their fear of the sunlight itself. These owls will never open their eyes to see the sublime light of Kṛṣṇa and His words the *Bhagavad-gītā*. They will, however, comment on the *Gītā* with their closed owl-eyes to mislead their unfortunate readers and followers. Śaṅkara, however, discloses the light to his less intelligent followers and shows that *Bhagavad-gītā* and Kṛṣṇa are the only source of light. This is all to teach the sincere seekers of truth to offer salutation to Lord Kṛṣṇa and thus surrender unto Him without misgivings. That is the highest perfection of life, and that is the highest teaching of Śaṅkara, the great learned scholar whose teachings drove the void-philosophy of Buddha out of India, the land of knowledge.
Om Tat Sat.

END

SĀṆKHYA-YOGA

by Kīrtanānanda Swami

In the Sixth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa is explaining how to practice *yoga* by meditation. Although the Lord is recommending the eightfold *yoga* system here, we will also see that in the end it is rejected in favor of *karma-yoga* because it is impractical to perform in this age. In the age of Kali, the present *yuga*, it is said that there is no other practical way than the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So in the very first verse, the Lord points out that a true mystic is one who is unattached to the fruits of action, not one who performs this feat, or doesn't perform that ritual, or is in this stage of life or that order of society. No, it is the qualification that one needs, and that qualification is to have no other desire than to carry out the orders of the Lord. That is the way that Arjuna finally understood Kṛṣṇa, and that is what Lord Caitanya, the highest perfect paradigm of love of God, or devotional service, proclaims: "O Almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor to enjoy beautiful women. Nor do I want any number of followers. What I want only is the causeless mercy of Your devotional service in my life, birth after birth."

In the second verse Kṛṣṇa emphasizes that what links all different *yoga* systems and makes them one is the fact that all end in the Supreme and that all go by the way of controlling the senses. Unless one attains to Kṛṣṇa, there is no perfection, and unless one controls the senses, it is not possible to attain Kṛṣṇa. Now in dealing specifically with the eightfold *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system, Kṛṣṇa is pointing out that it is a gradual process for controlling the senses. As pointed out in the fifth, sixth, and seventh verses, the central point of control is the mind. Kṛṣṇa says: "For he who has conquered his mind, it is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy." The central concept here is control. The mind is something like a blank check; the check itself is of no value—it is only paper—but the account it is written on is worth millions. If it is written on a good account, it is of inestimable value. If not, it is worthless. Similarly, when the mind is engaged in matters of sense gratification, it becomes the greatest cause of bondage, but if the mind is engaged for Kṛṣṇa, then it is the cause for liberation.

Actually the mind is part of the sensory

system, and it is sometimes called the sixth sense. As such, it is the controlling sense. If the controlling force is uncontrolled, where can control come from? Therefore, the whole purpose of the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system is to control the mind by sitting in certain positions, by breath control, etc. Everything is meant to bring the mind under control, for without that there is no possibility of controlling the senses. But for a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because he is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, and always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare and because his mind is thinking, "How can I serve Kṛṣṇa?" and because he is actually engaged in activities in which the mind can be fully engaged, there is no question of the mind's being drawn away to sensory gratification. Therefore the mind and the senses are automatically controlled by Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

As soon as the mind is controlled, one can perceive Paramātmā within, which is the actual goal of meditation, to perceive Kṛṣṇa within, to come under the dictation of Kṛṣṇa within. If I am not controlled by Kṛṣṇa from within, I will certainly be controlled by illusory energy from without. No one can escape the control of Kṛṣṇa, but we may choose the form of control—either His internal superior energy or His external inferior energy. But everyone must serve Kṛṣṇa. That is a fact.

ABSORPTION IN THE SUPREME

As soon as the mind is fixed on Kṛṣṇa, one becomes perfectly situated under His personal control and follows His dictations. The effect of controlling the mind by meditation is that it brings one under the control of Paramātmā, or Supersoul, but because this position is at once reached by one in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, a devotee of the Lord is unaffected by the dualities of the material world, namely distress and happiness, heat and cold, etc. This state is practical *samādhi*, or absorption in the Supreme.

Still, if one is determined to follow the more difficult *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system, starting with the ninth verse and continuing through the eighteenth, the means by which this *yoga* is practiced are given. First one must consider the well-wisher, friend

and enemy, the envious, pious and the sinner all on the same level, with indifference and impartiality. Then he must concentrate his mind on the Supreme Self. He must go to a secluded place and be free from all desires and feelings of possessiveness. These are some of the preliminary prescriptions for controlling the mind. Unless the mind is controlled, there is no possibility of meditation. Unless one can do away with possessiveness, for instance, there will be desire, and the mind cannot attain equilibrium, without which it is impossible to see the Supersoul within. Kṛṣṇa may be realized in different ways—as impersonal Brahman, as localized Paramātmā, or as Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A person who is fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is always engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and as such he knows the Lord as the Supreme Person who possesses all opulences, including the Paramātmā and impersonal features, or His localized expansion and bodily effulgence respectively. So his knowledge is called perfect because it is complete. But the meditator who knows Kṛṣṇa as Paramātmā, and the impersonalist who knows Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Brahman or *brahmajyoti*, are also indirectly Kṛṣṇa conscious. But to be directly Kṛṣṇa conscious is more perfect, just as one who possesses a million dollars is wealthier than the man who possesses one dollar. A dollar is a dollar, that is so; so qualitatively the man with one dollar is as good as the man with a million dollars, but quantitatively they are not the same. Only a fool would say they are. Similarly, we may have knowledge of the infinite particles of Kṛṣṇa's energy, but until we have perfect knowledge of the Supreme Source of all, Kṛṣṇa, our knowledge is not perfect. So the personalist has full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa and all His multi-energies, but the impersonalist or the meditating *yogī* know Kṛṣṇa in part only. Nevertheless, in the Sixth Chapter here one is encouraged to pursue this path in order to come to the ultimate goal, Kṛṣṇa. But it is specifically stated that the mind must be focused on the Supreme, Kṛṣṇa. Unless one thinks of Kṛṣṇa, meditation is not possible.

Perfect concentration of the mind on the Supreme is called *samādhi*, or trance, but this condition is never possible when there is possessiveness. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī puts it this way: "When one is not attached to anything, but at the same time accepts everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, one is rightly situated above possessiveness. On

the other hand, one who rejects everything without knowledge of its relationship to Kṛṣṇa is not as complete in his renunciation." (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*) A person who simply rejects certain things may be making some progress in the sense that he is preventing further entanglement in material existence, but his renunciation is incomplete. But a Kṛṣṇa conscious person from the very beginning engages everything in the service of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he has completed his course in perfect knowledge. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person well knows that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, and thus he is always free from feelings of personal possessiveness. As such, he has no hankering for anything on his own personal account; therefore a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the perfect *yogī*.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR YOGA

The eleventh and twelfth verses lay further qualifications on the aspiring *yogī*. There it is stated that he must not only go to a secluded place, but also to a sacred place; and after following so many restrictions, completely abstaining from sex, he must sit very firmly, just in order to purify the heart. Without purification of the heart, spiritual advancement is not possible. But in this age of Kali, where can one find a secluded, sacred place? Our cities may be full of so many so-called *yoga* societies, and they may be very successful in reducing people who are overweight or in providing some kind of recreation, or even in making one healthy, but as far as self-realization is concerned, they are useless. It is specifically said here that one must sit in a secluded sacred place, and there he must completely control the mind. Therefore in the *Bṛhan-Nārāḍīya Purāṇa* it is said that in the Kali-yuga (the present age) when people in general are short-lived, slow in spiritual realization and always disturbed by various anxieties, the best means of spiritual realization is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. And Lord Caitanya was even more emphatic when He said, repeatedly: *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam/ kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*. "In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy [Kali] the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way! There is no other way! There is no other way!"

The thirteenth and fourteenth verses prescribe further instructions for the *yogī*. He must sit in a certain way to restrain all movement, his eyes must be fixed on the tip of the nose. "Thus, with an unagitated, subdued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life." Therefore it is perfectly clear that without seeing Kṛṣṇa, one is not successful in meditation. Unless one makes Kṛṣṇa the ultimate goal of life, one is not following the *yoga* system. Nor is it possible to follow this *yoga* system with an agitated or roving mind; nor is it possible while engaging in sex life. One has to practice controlling the mind and avoiding all kinds of sense gratification, of which sex is the chief. In the *Yājñavalkya* rules of celibacy, it is said: "The vow of *brahmacārī* is meant to help one completely abstain from sex indulgence in work, words, and mind—at all times, under all circumstances, and in all places." No one can perform correct *yoga* practice while participating in sex life, not even in married life. Therefore in the *varṇāśrama* institution when a boy is five years old he goes to live with the spiritual master, and there he is taught the material and the spiritual sciences, and he is taught to be a *brahmacārī*, to be strictly controlled. Without such practice one cannot make advancement in any *yoga*, whether it be *dhyāna-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *karma-yoga*, or *bhakti-yoga*. However, as prescribed by the authorities, in the school of *bhakti-yoga* one can become a householder, or live in married life according to regulation, and that will also allow one to advance. But in *jñāna-yoga* or *dhyāna-yoga* not even that is possible—householder life is never allowed. Complete abstinence without compromise is required. This is because a person who is actually practicing *bhakti*, while engaged in regulated sex life, dedicates his sex life to Kṛṣṇa. His household life means that he is raising a family for Kṛṣṇa, and thus it is superior to the mundane duality of celibate and married. A devotee of the Lord automatically refrains from sense gratificatory life because of superior taste. This means that he is actually drinking at Kṛṣṇa's reservoir of pleasure.

In the sixteenth verse there is the further prescription that one cannot eat too much or eat too little, or sleep too much or not enough. Without controlling the diet and sleep, meditation will not produce the

desired result. Eating more than required means eating more than is needed to keep body and soul together, and sleeping more than six hours in twenty-four means sleeping too much. Nor is there need to eat animal flesh, because there is an ample supply of palatable vegetables, grains, fruit and milk. And such simple foods are considered to be in the mode of goodness, according to Kṛṣṇa. But a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is automatically controlled in all these things because he does not eat anything which is not first offered to Kṛṣṇa. And what can be offered to Kṛṣṇa is stated in the *Gītā* itself, in the Ninth Chapter, where Kṛṣṇa says that He accepts the gift of one who offers a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a little water, with love and affection. Actually, the real qualification is love and affection, but one who has love and affection naturally only offers the things that Kṛṣṇa likes. Because the devotee's food is first offered to Kṛṣṇa, he is without sinful reactions, as explained in the Third Chapter.

REGULATED LIFE

A person always engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord considers sleep to be his greatest enemy, for it is a waste of time. In this regard his standard is Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who could not sleep more than two hours a day, and often not even that, or he desires to follow the example of Haridās Ṭhākura, who would not even accept food or sleep until he had completed his daily routine of chanting more than three hundred thousand holy names of the Lord. So where one has superior taste there is no question of sense gratification. When one is regulated in all his work, sleep, speech, and all other bodily activities, there is no material contamination or misery. The perfectly regulated life is exemplified by King Ambarīṣa, who first of all engaged his mind on the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa; then, one after another, he engaged his words in describing the transcendental qualities of the Lord, his hands in mopping the temple of the Lord, his ears in hearing of the activities of the Lord, his eyes in seeing the transcendental forms of the Lord, his body in touching the body of the devotee, his sense of smell in smelling the scents of the lotus flowers offered to the Lord, his tongue in tasting the *tulasī* leaf offered at the lotus feet of the Lord, his legs in going

to places of pilgrimage where the temple of the Lord is situated, his head in offering obeisances unto the Lord, and his desires in executing the mission of the Lord. All these transcendental activities are quite befitting a pure devotee, and where they are present, there is no question of sense gratification.

PATANJALI'S VERSION

Such a truly Kṛṣṇa conscious person, always absorbed in Transcendence, in constant undisturbed meditation on his worshipable Lord, is likened in the nineteenth verse to a lamp in a windless place. He does not waver. Indeed, one who is always engaged in the loving service of the Lord becomes steady, and his whole life is passed in *samādhi*. As explained in the 20-23 verses, in that stage he can see the Self by the pure mind, and thus relish and enjoy the Self. "In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain." By practice of *yoga* one can become gradually detached from material existence, and in that detached state, one can be situated in trance or *samādhi*, which means that one has realized the Supersoul or Kṛṣṇa within through transcendental mind and intelligence without any of the misgivings of identifying the self with the Superself. This *yoga* system is more or less based on the principles of the Patañjali *yoga* system. Some try to identify the individual soul with the Supersoul. The monist calls this liberation, but he does not understand the real purpose of the Patañjali system of *yoga*. Patañjali accepts the concept of transcendental pleasure, but the monists do not accept this transcendental pleasure, out of fear of jeopardizing their theory of oneness. The duality of knowledge and knower are not accepted by the nondualists, but in this verse transcendental pleasure—realized through transcendental senses—is a clearly stated fact. This is corroborated by Patañjali Muni, the famous exponent of the *yoga* system. In his *Yoga-sūtras*, Patañjali states that this oneness of the Supreme that the monists talk about is an internal potency of the Lord by which the living entity becomes aware of his constitutional position. Lord Caitanya further explains that real libera-

tion means to clear the mirror of the mind of its impurities. The theory of *nirvāṇa*, when seen as a preliminary condition, corresponds with this principle. *Nirvāṇa* means to clear away the material dust, but after *nirvāṇa* or material cessation, there is a full manifestation of spiritual activities or devotional service to the Lord known as Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the words of the *Bhāgavatam*, this is the "real life of the living entity." *Māyā*, or illusion, is the condition of spiritual life contaminated by material affection. Liberation from this material infection does not mean destruction of the original eternal position of the living entity, but its full manifestation. So transcendental pleasure does not mean void, but real life. This is confirmed in the *Vedānta-sūtras* and will be more vividly described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* beginning with the Seventh Chapter.

THE RESULT OF STEADINESS

In verses 24-27, the concept of determination and steadiness is stressed. There is an old adage that "one finds God quickest whose yearning is strongest," and similarly Kṛṣṇa here is urging that kind of determination. Unless one is determined, there is no possibility of advancement. Similarly, the words "full conviction" are used, and again: "From whatever and wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the Self." So one must "certainly withdraw it." And the result of such steadiness or perseverance is stated in the 29th and 30th verses: "A true *yogī* observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized man sees Me everywhere. For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me." As stated, the end of the *yoga* system is Kṛṣṇa. Unless and until one sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere, until one understands that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person and that everywhere He is expanded by His energy, there is no perfection. But that is not easy to accomplish, and it is only possible by the grace of the Lord and the self-realized devotee.

In the 33rd verse, Arjuna complains to Kṛṣṇa that this system seems to him impractical and impossible to perform. Arjuna was a great soul, a great devotee and intimate friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and

even 5,000 years ago, when the state of Kali-yuga was not advanced, Arjuna said that he did not think that this system was practical. Arjuna had so many great qualifications, including royal birth and sufficient leisure. He was a great warrior and had a long duration of life. He was also extremely intelligent. Still he thought that it was not possible for himself to follow this system of *yoga*. And, as it is confirmed in all *sāstras* or scriptures, this system is not possible for any ordinary man in this present age. Those who are imitating this system in so-called schools and *yoga* societies, although complacent, are certainly worthless as far as spiritual advancement is concerned. They are completely missing the desired goal—Kṛṣṇa. This can be proved by the test which applies equally to all philosophies and all religions—simply, how is one developing love of God. Actually that love is within all of us, but it is covered by material contamination. It is the job of any philosophy or religion to revive it.

ALWAYS THINKING OF KṚṢṆA

Love of God practically expressed is service. Any philosophy or religion which does not lead one to this end is simply bluffing, and any system that leads one to this end is first class. *Yoga* means to link up, and religion comes from two Latin words, *re-legio*, which means to bind back. Kṛṣṇa in the 31st verse says that the end is achieved by one who "remains always in Me in all circumstances." That is the goal of all *yoga* or true religion, and that means that the consciousness is completely submerged in Kṛṣṇa. That is love. How do I know when I am in love with some girl? Simple. I cannot get her out of my mind. Similarly, when we are in love with Kṛṣṇa, we think of Him always. We cannot be without Him for a minute.

The *gopīs* complained that the creator of the universe, Lord Brahmā, was not very intelligent, for the eyes which he designed sometimes blinked, and for that instant Kṛṣṇa was lost to their view. That is real love. Kṛṣṇa says that for such a person "I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me."

In the 37th and 38th verses, Arjuna wants to know about the condition of one who starts on the transcendental path and is deviated for one reason or another before reaching the goal. Does he not become

bereft of material enjoyment and spiritual advancement both? Does not he lose his chance for material happiness and at the same time fail to reach the goal of spiritual success? Arjuna is still not awake to the full import of Kṛṣṇa's teaching that one who thinks of Kṛṣṇa is immediately on the transcendental platform. Thus Kṛṣṇa reassures Arjuna that evil never comes to the man seeking transcendental advancement. Even if he is unsuccessful in one life, in the next he will certainly pick it up at the same point. Material education or learning must be left with the gross body. And it must be totally completed in one lifetime. Unless I complete my doctorate in this life, then in my next I have to start all over again—all those years of study are wasted. But spiritual knowledge is not like that because it is eternal, and therefore I can take it with me in my eternal condition as spirit soul, and when I take another body, that spiritual knowledge is

again displayed from the same point. If I have become 25% Kṛṣṇa conscious in this life, in my next I will begin at 26%. So nothing can ever be lost on the eternal plane. Kṛṣṇa stated in the 40th verse of the Second Chapter that "even a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear." It will be further explained in the 30th verse of the Ninth Chapter that a person who has determined to become Kṛṣṇa conscious is under the protection of Kṛṣṇa's internal energy already, even before the perfectional stage is reached. Therefore even though it takes many births to complete the process, one who has once taken to this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is guaranteed completion or perfection and the attainment of the Supreme Goal. Kṛṣṇa says: "A *yogī* is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances, be a *yogī*."

And of all *yogīs*, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all." In case there is any doubt left in Arjuna's mind, Kṛṣṇa states in the concluding verse of the chapter that the perfection of *yoga* is devotional service, transcendental loving service. *Yoga* means to link up, and Kṛṣṇa says that he is most intimately united with Me who worships in transcendental loving service. The culmination of all kinds of *yoga* practices is *bhakti-yoga*, or love of Kṛṣṇa. Unless and until one comes to that point, he is not in complete knowledge, and his path is unfinished. Therefore Hare Kṛṣṇa is the *yoga* for this age because, like the benediction moon, it is spreading transcendental love of Kṛṣṇa, the end of all *yoga* systems. END

PRASĀDAM—SPIRITUAL FOOD

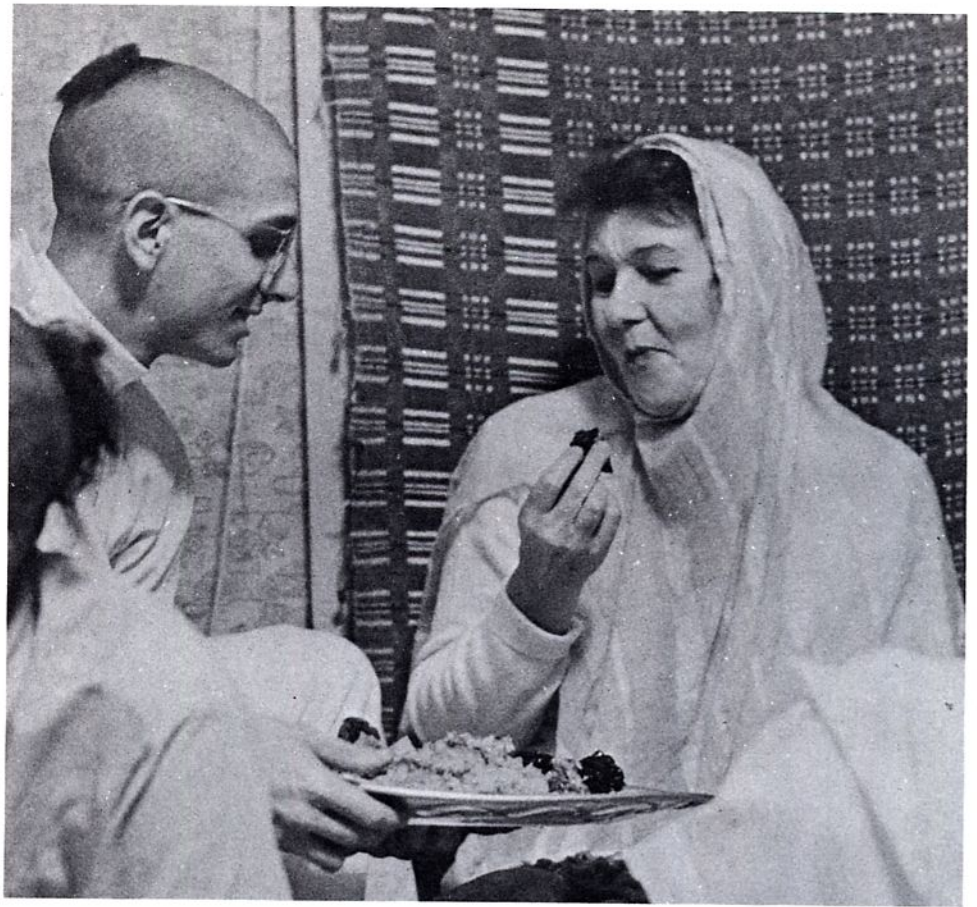


The taking of *prasādam*, spiritual foodstuffs, by the devotee and the distribution

of such foodstuffs to the public is an extremely important part of Kṛṣṇa con-

sciousness. The directions for eating come from the scripture *Bhagavad-gītā*, as trans-

lated in disciplic succession by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, says in the Ninth Chapter of the *Gītā*: "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I accept it." (Bg. 9.26) Accepting this offer by the Supreme Lord, the devotee of Kṛṣṇa follows a pure diet; he eats only food that is first offered to Kṛṣṇa, who is present in His incarnation as the Deity on the altar. According to this verse in *Bhagavad-gītā*, God actually eats foodstuffs which are offered to Him by His devotee. Since Kṛṣṇa has an eternal, blissful body with inconceivable potencies, He is able to eat the offered food simply by hearing the prayers offered by the devotee. (The prayers are offered to the spiritual master, who in turn offers the food to Kṛṣṇa personally.) Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead is absolute, therefore anything directly associated with Him, such as His name, His fame, His devotee, and also foodstuffs offered to and accepted by Him, becomes nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself. Anyone who takes remnants of *prasādam* offered to the Lord engages in





yoga or the process of linking up with God. The proof of these assertions is that anyone who regularly takes *prasādam* will find himself gaining in spiritual strength.

As to what kinds of food are accepted by the Supreme Lord, that information is also available in the *Gītā*. It is stated in the *Gītā* commentary of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, "If one wishes to engage in devotional service to the Supreme, in order to be purified and reach the goal of life—loving service to God—then one should find out what the Lord desires of him. One who loves Kṛṣṇa will give Him whatever He wants. But he should avoid offering anything which is undesirable or unasked for. Thus meat, fish and eggs should not be offered to Kṛṣṇa. If He desired such things as an offering, the Lord would have said so; but instead He clearly requests that a leaf, fruit, flowers and water be given to Him.

And He says of this offering, 'I will accept it.' Therefore we should understand that He will not accept meat, fish and eggs. Vegetables, grains, fruits, milk and water are the proper foods for human beings, as is here prescribed by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Whatever else we may eat cannot be offered to Him, since He will not accept it." One may question, "Why is there a need to feed the Supreme Lord at all? Is He so much in need of food that He has to take offerings from His devotees?" God has no need. He is independent and self-satisfied. It is only out of love for His devotee that He is pleased to accept any offering made to Him. The example is given of a father who accepts a piece of food from his little son. The father is actually the provider of the son's food, and he has no need to accept the food from his son, but if out of affection his son offers him something to taste, then the

father is very, very pleased. That is the way Kṛṣṇa is pleased by His devotees. *Prasādam* is simply the loving exchange between the Lord and His devotee. Anyone who takes advantage of this easy method of *yoga* can benefit more in a minute than he could by years and years of exercises or impersonal meditation.

The sum and substance of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy is to distribute *prasādam*, to perform *saṅkīrtana*—glorification of God by dancing and singing the *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and to hear the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The students of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda are dedicated to serving all living entities through the worldwide dissemination of this joyful transcendental message.

END





“I meditate on Śrī Rādhā and Govinda. The
deked with gems under the desire trees in
female attendants.”—*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*



They are seated on a throne in a mansion be-
s in Vṛndāvana, and are served by Their loving

THE GREAT WATERING OF THE SOUL

by Hayagrīva dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—New Vṛndāvana)

The person who is in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness knows nothing but Kṛṣṇa. Whatever he perceives sensuously, mentally, intellectually, emotionally, or psychically is the Absolute Himself, for his consciousness is steeped in knowledge of the Absolute. One so situated in consciousness of the Divine is neither in want nor afraid of anything. He neither desires heavenly planets nor flees hellish ones. He is with Kṛṣṇa, and so he thinks that every place is as good as the forests of Vṛndāvana where Kṛṣṇa eternally sports. In fact, wherever he remains is Vṛndāvana, just as wherever there are atoms there is the Paramātmā, the Supersoul. The Supersoul lives in the hearts of all beings, and yet He is not subjected to their pleasures and pains. In the same way, a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is always transcendental to the modes of material nature. But in this age of Kali, this Iron Age, an age of spiritual drought, of thunder without rain, persons who are in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness are very rare. Today, there are three billion people on this one planet, and yet out of all these millions and millions it is very difficult to find one person who is actually Kṛṣṇa conscious or even peaceful. It is very seldom that we find one who is peaceful, for without being established in Kṛṣṇa consciousness it is not possible to be peaceful.

LOVE GIVEN FREELY

Seeing the pitiable condition of men in the present day, the compassionate Lord Caitanya, who embodies the Absolute Truth and His internal pleasure potency, freely distributes the means whereby man can be established in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He is giving a free and easy access to this consciousness: love of Godhead. But because it is being given freely and because it is so easy, people are reluctant to take it. His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī used to say that if you take langera mangoes, which are the best quality mangoes in India, very costly and very sweet, and go from door to door to distribute them freely, people will ask, "Why has this man brought these mangoes? Why is he giving them away? There must

be some motive behind it." In this way they will be suspicious and reluctant to accept them. In the same way Lord Caitanya is distributing Kṛṣṇa *premā*, pure love for Kṛṣṇa, which is priceless and very sweet. Yet most people's reactions tend to be skeptical. They say, "Oh he's simply chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. What's there to that? This must be for the foolish who cannot cogitate or speculate or meditate or hyperventilate. Surely this is meant for the feeble-minded." But in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, "Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth." (Bg. 7.3) Therefore the seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a very precious seed, very rare and very valuable. Out of over eight million species of life, only one species here and there has the spiritual fortune to realize the position of the Absolute. Kṛṣṇa says, "I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My eternal creative potency—*māyā*. And so the deluded world knows Me not who am unborn and infallible." (Bg. 7.25)

RELEASE FROM SAMSĀRA

With a little vision we can quickly see that the mass of living entities are wandering aimlessly in these millions of species of life. Lord Kṛṣṇa proclaims, "All living entities are born into delusion overcome by the dualities of desire and hate." (Bg. 7.27) Desire and hate delude the soul into thinking that he is this body and that he can gratify the sensual desires of this body. However, the human life is unique in that it offers an opportunity to the conditioned soul to hurdle himself out of the wheel of *samsāra*, the wheel of birth and death. The spiritual master helps the conditioned soul just as a track coach helps a runner jump hurdles. He gives so many instructions, so many rules and regulations just to train the conditioned soul to become godly. The instructions may appear superstitious or superfluous to the conditioned soul due to his limited range of vision, yet when he is hurdled out of his conditioning he can see how they helped him. The human being is intended to be

trained to be godly. Actually he is part and parcel of God, but due to material contamination he has forgotten. In India, for thousands of years, various methods have been utilized by which the soul's memory can be awakened to the soul's divinity. Lord Caitanya enjoins that the fortunate person with some spiritual assets due to past deeds will seek the association of a pure devotee who knows the methods of awakening and will instruct the conditioned soul in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is received by the mercy of the *guru* or the spiritual master and by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. This mercy is combined: by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, the soul gets *guru*, and by the grace of *guru*, the soul gets Kṛṣṇa.

"When will the day come when I will be established at last in Kṛṣṇa consciousness?" This is an urge felt deep in the soul of all entities. Kṛṣṇa and *guru* survey all beings, and when they will the God consciousness of the individual *jīva* will develop and fructify. All creatures have spiritual eyes within themselves, but these eyes are closed. By the will and mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa they can be opened in a twinkling. They are opened by *śabda*, the transcendental sound incarnation of the Supreme Lord, which pierces the material coverings of all living entities, vibrates into their souls and opens their sleeping spiritual eyes. It is called *mantra*, which means "mind releasing," for it releases the mind from its material shackles. Kṛṣṇa says, "I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness." (Bg. 15.15) Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul within all, and as soon as He sees that one is sincerely seeking the answers to important spiritual questions, then he sends a bona fide *guru* to deliver the *mantra* and teach the *jīva* the process of surrender.

WATERING THE SEED

The seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is within the heart of all living entities, and it is delivered by Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master. What is the duty of one who has the seeds of a very beautiful flower? His duty is not to lock them up in a vault or in a bank, but to sow them in the ground. The seed of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not sown in the earth, but in the heart, within the self. And once the seed is sown it must be nourished by a little water. That

watering process is known as *śravaṇaṁ kīrtanam*, namely hearing the transcendental words of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa and chanting the *mantra*. If the seed is watered in this way, then it will surely grow. One should never stop watering this plant but should nourish it continually, for if one stops watering any plant it will cease to bear fruit and will die. Even if one is highly elevated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he cannot stop this process. Therefore it is recommended that one chant the holy names and read the words of Kṛṣṇa both morning and evening so that the soul's precious plant will not dry up. *Māyā*, forgetfulness, delusion, are so strong that as soon as they see the opportunity, they will say, "Ah, let's send a drought. Now he will surely dry up." Therefore the watering should always be there so that the plant will always grow.

Ordinarily there is a limit to the growth of all plants. A plant or vine will reach a certain height or breadth or length and then stop. But the plant of Kṛṣṇa consciousness grows in such a way that it does not rest on any part of this universe. The creepers and branches of this holy plant never lie dormant, never take shelter, never stop within this material world, for this plant is not satisfied with any facility afforded by any planet in any part of this material universe. If it is constantly watered, its branches will extend beyond sensuality, fruitive action and mental speculation and will pierce the covering of the material universe and burst into the effulgent light of the spiritual sky. In that realm it will pass beyond the self-luminous spheres of opulence, beyond the glorious planets of the salvationists, beyond the galactic potentates, blue, regal Nārāyaṇas, on up, up, up to the ultimate huge whorl of lotus that is the planet of Vṛndāvana. Then the plant will enter that lotus planet and seek shelter under the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and it is there that it will stop to drink the nectar flowing from that Supreme Person, and having drunk that nectar it will issue forth redolent flowers of love, multifarious flowers, eternal flowers, and they will shower the three worlds with their fragrance and petals, and their stamens will pollinate the worlds of men, and their seeds will spread to all corners, and in countless planets new flowers will spring up, and they too, nourished by the waters of the holy name, will foliate that universal path to the nectarean feet of Kṛṣṇa.

So this growth is enabled by the *śabda*,

the sound incarnation which is the life force of the soul. It is the chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa that enables the plant of the soul to penetrate the tenfold coverings of this universe and enter into Virajā, the causal ocean. Attainment of this causal ocean is called *sama*, which is the Buddhist's philosophical perfection. This is the realm of *nirvāṇa*, the extinction of all material existence. Beyond this causal ocean is the Brahmaloḥa, the *paravyoma*, which is the spiritual sky, and the plant of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, penetrating there, passes all Vaikuṅṭha planets en route to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. His feet are the soul's shelter. We have all seen ordinary plants grow and grow and grow, and then, when they reach some shelter, suddenly branch out, expand and bear fruit. In this way, once the plant of Kṛṣṇa consciousness captures Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, it takes shelter, saying, "Now I have finished my journey. Let me flourish here. Let me expand here and issue joyous leaves and flowers." It is there that the soul is satisfied, for it is there that he enjoys Kṛṣṇa's association. It is only when he attains the feet of Kṛṣṇa that he will rest.

HOW IT GROWS

If one pursues the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and reads or hears the transcendental words of Kṛṣṇa, the plant of his soul will surely grow and reach Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and relish them. It is not that Kṛṣṇa is far, far away and we cannot enjoy Him until passing beyond the ten coverings of the material universe, the causal ocean, the *brahmajyoti* and all the Vaikuṅṭha planets. No. Actually we can relish Kṛṣṇa on the journey itself. Otherwise, how did the Gosvāmīs manage to enjoy their devotional life? They were living beneath different trees every night and eating just a few dry scraps of bread, and sometimes they weren't even eating that. And yet they were all joyfully engaged twenty-four hours in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, sometimes dancing and chanting and sometimes reading and writing. Eating, sleeping, defending and mating were of no concern to them. So this is spiritual life. When one is actually elevated in spiritual life, he sees all material things as insignificant. It is said that a man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sees all the possessions of men as mere garbage in the street, all women as his mother, and all living entities as his very self. It is also

said that he sees all the manifold material universes to be of no more significance than rainwater contained in the hoof-print of a cow. This is because one in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is beyond the material conception of the body. He has realized *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*. "I am not this body, I am spirit soul." Kṛṣṇa says, "Those with the vision of eternity can see that the soul is transcendental, eternal and beyond the modes of nature. In spite of his contact with the material body, O Arjuna, he is neither doing anything nor is he entangled. The sky, on account of its subtle nature, does not mix with anything, although all-pervading. So the soul situated in Brahman vision does not mix with the body though situated in that body. As the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness." (Bg. 13.31-33)

PLEASURE OF THE SOUL

If the soul in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has no material activity, then what does he do? He is simply engaged in watering the plant that is in his heart. Kṛṣṇa says, "Those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible. They are always engaged in chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination. Offering homage unto Me, they worship Me with devotion." (Bg. 9.13-14) Once one has the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa indelibly imprinted in his soul, once the eye of the soul has seen His feet and the ears of the soul have heard His voice and the nostrils of the soul have smelled His fragrance and the tongue of the soul has tasted the nectar of His names and the hands of the soul have touched His transcendental body, then all material engagements cease and Kṛṣṇa becomes his all in all. It is at this point that the soul understands that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme pleasure principle and that the pleasures of the soul can be obtained through Him only. Under illusion we think that we are enjoying material nature, but what kind of enjoyment is there? It is temporary; it is fraught with danger; it is incomplete. When one becomes elevated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then he forgets all these material engagements.

Anyone can come to this stage by the chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. The word “Kṛṣṇa” means all-attractive, and when this word vibrates off the tongue, the sleeping soul is jolted wide awake. The word “Hare” refers to the energy of the all-attractive Kṛṣṇa. It is by Mother Hare, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the energy of Kṛṣṇa, that we attain Kṛṣṇa Himself. This is the force that propels the sleeping soul out of the entanglement of material nature. The word “Rāma” means enjoyer. When this word vibrates off the tongue, one actually participates in enjoyment which is beyond human conception and is eternal. Together, in the combination called the *mahāmantra*, chanted by the great saint Śrīla Haridās Thākura, “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare,” they elevate the soul to the highest ecstasy of love for Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya, in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, spoke of the powers of *Hari-kīrtana* or chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa, the *mahā-*

mantra, in this way:

The sound of Kṛṣṇa’s names is ever triumphant,
Polishing bright the mirror of the mind,
Restoring the heart, quenching the great fire
Of worldly life and freely scattering
The moonbeams that nourish the pure lily
Of devotion. As we chant His names,
we wake
The bride of knowledge and inspire
the sea
Of bliss to toss its nectar to all shores
And bathe all souls with love for the Supreme.
O tell me, Lord, when will that time come?
When will my eyes stream tears, my voice tremble,
My skin bristle with ecstatic joy,
My heart swell with bliss to chant

Thy names?

Give me the wealth of love for Thee,
O Lord.
O give it to me! Make me Thy servant,
And as wages give me only love for Thee!

This reciprocal love with Kṛṣṇa, as expressed by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is the highest expression of spiritual consciousness. The life of Caitanya was devoted to *Hari-kīrtana*, the celebration of Kṛṣṇa by chanting His names, and He recommended this method for all men as the most efficient way for the watering of the soul in this dry age. Then let us sound the thunder of *kīrtana* drums and send torrents of His names showering on the heads of all. The thunder rattles our windowpanes now! Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. END

VARṆĀŚRAMA-DHARMA

by Satsvarūpa dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—Boston)

The followers of the supreme will as taught by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* are generally called Hindus. This word Hindu, which has only come from recent times, is a name given by Mohammedans to those followers of the *varṇāśrama-dharma* who used to gather at the Indus River in India. “Indus” became “Hindu” by mispronunciation, so “Hindu” is an empty designation. The religion of the four social orders and four spiritual orders created by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, as revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (Bg. 4.13), is properly named *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Basically, the four orders of social life called *varṇa* are scientifically arranged for the material progress of society, and the four spiritual orders called *āśrama* are designed for natural progress in self-realization. Both the *varṇa* and *āśrama* systems are interrelated; each is dependent on the other. The purpose of this plan, created by the Lord Himself, is to accelerate the transcendental qualities of the individual so that he may gradually realize his spiritual identification and act in order to get free from the material bondage of conditional life. It is a system by which the civilized human being can successfully

perform the human mission, which is to be distinguished from the animal propensities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending.

SPIRITUAL, PEACEFUL LIFE

The *varṇa* system of four castes—*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*—is perfectly organized in material terms in order to allow people to live peacefully and pursue spiritual life while engaged in their regular occupation. In every society there is always a class interested in business and agriculture. According to the Eighteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *vaiśyas*’ duties are “farming, cattle raising, and business.” The *śūdra* class does the labor or serves the other classes. The *kṣatriyas* are the administrators and protectors or policemen. “Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and leadership are the qualities of work for the *kṣatriyas*.” (Bg. 18.43) The *brāhmaṇas* constitute the intelligent class and offer spiritual knowledge and guidance to the people. Whether or not one accepts the names *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*, there is naturally in every society

an intelligent class interested in spiritual understanding and philosophy, a class interested in administration and ruling over others, a class interested in economic development, business and moneymaking, and another class of men who are not intelligent or martial spirited and have no capacity for economic development but who can simply serve others for their own bread. This system has been extant from time immemorial, and it will continue through time immemorial. There is no power which can stop it.

Due to India’s dependency on foreigners and those who are non-*varṇāśrama*, that country is now witnessing the degradation of the caste and order system in the form of the heredity caste system. Because the *varṇāśrama* system is created by God, it will always exist, either in degraded form or in original; it cannot be extinguished. It is like the sun, a creation of God. Either covered by clouds or in a clear sky, the sun will exist. When the *varṇāśrama* system becomes degraded, it appears as the hereditary caste system. The four natural orders are still there, but there is no actual regulation for cooperation between the communities. According to the original system in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, caste is determined not by birth but by qualities. The Vedic literature is perfectly clear on this point. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself used the

phrase *brahma-bandhu*, meaning “relative of a *brāhmaṇa*,” to describe a person who happens to take birth in the family of a *brāhmaṇa* but is not qualified as a *brāhmaṇa*. This was the case with Aśvatthāmā, as described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.36). He was a *brāhmaṇa*’s son, but he killed the five sleeping sons of Draupadī, and therefore Kṛṣṇa said that he should be called a *brahma-bandhu*. As the judgeship is a post for the qualified man, so also the post of a *brāhmaṇa* is attainable by qualification only. By birth alone one cannot become a high court judge, but a qualified person, regardless of birth, is eligible for the post. Similarly, any man who attains the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa* but is born in a lower caste family must be recognized as a factual *brāhmaṇa*. There is an example in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of a student boy who approached a *guru* for instruction. The *guru* asked the boy his family name. On enquiry from his mother, the boy was told, “I do not know. I was a servant girl in my youth and worked in many places. I do not know who was your father.” The boy related this exactly to the sage, and the sage declared: “None but a *brāhmaṇa* could speak as truthfully as this,” and the boy was thereby accepted as a *brāhmaṇa* because of his acting like a *brāhmaṇa*. Similarly, in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, which is the standard literature for regulative behavior in devotional service, it is stated: “As bell metal can be transformed into gold by the proper chemical process, similarly by the bona fide process of initiation any human being can be transformed into a twice-born *brāhmaṇa*.”

NEED FOR BRĀHMAṆAS

It is the Vedic ideal that everyone is trained according to his particular qualities and inclinations. It is necessary in every society that there especially be guides, qualified men whose work is not to put bricks together or anything else, but to simply guide with real intelligence, while the others do work according to their desires. Where there is such guidance, working becomes happy. Kṛṣṇa is the author of the orders, and thus the existence of a guiding class is eternal and natural—but training is needed. In the democratic society, education makes no provision to train *brāhmaṇas* for the role of guides. Although the need for such *brāhmaṇas* is clear, there is no educational

institution to train proper *brāhmaṇas*.

The present Society for Krishna Consciousness is unique in supplying training for boys who are spiritually inclined. Under a bona fide spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, they are being trained in a higher science. Those intellectual persons who have the brahminical qualifications are being restrained as students—they don’t eat meat or take part in intoxication, gambling or illicit sex life. In this way they are becoming an intellectual, purified class. It is said that a true *brāhmaṇa* can sanctify all society. In the conception of the four orders as parts situated on the universal form of the Supreme Lord, the *brāhmaṇas* are said to be the head, the *kṣatriyas* the arms, the *vaiśyas* the waist and the *śūdras* the legs. Just as in our own body, for proper maintenance we require all parts; we cannot say that we do not need the head. We need everything. If there is a body without a head, it is a dead body. Similarly, if there is not a *brāhmaṇa* or intellectual, spiritual part in the society, it is a dead society. If someone is working to understand the Supreme Lord, he is a *brāhmaṇa*. Why should he be called for military action? The arm of the body is needed also. Some military arrangement should be there—but not the *brāhmaṇa*. Where there is no arrangement for protection of *brāhmaṇas*, that society is headless and brainless—dead. And there is no peace in such a society.

PRESENT DEGRADATION

Due to the lack of training of people in the present age and to their practice of the vices of illicit sex, meat eating and intoxication, Lord Caitanya declared that *kalau śūdra-sambhava*—in the age of Kali everyone is a *śūdra*. The Vedic ceremony called Garbhādhāna—in which the man and wife make vows before having sex and declare that they are coming together to have sex in order to produce a Kṛṣṇa conscious child—is no longer observed. And so widespread are illicit connections that no one can know for certain whether he is born of a *brāhmaṇa* or someone else. With the extinguishing of the original *varṇas* and *āśramas*, the entire world has become deplorable, being governed by unwanted men who have no training in religion, politics or social order. In the institution of *varṇāśrama* there are regular

training principles for the different classes of men. Just as now we need engineers and doctors and there are places for properly training them in scientific institutions, so the social orders, the intelligent class, the ruling class, etc., can be properly trained up. This was actually the case in early Vedic times. The duties are described, and the training must be there. With no training, one cannot claim that simply because he is born in a *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya* family, even though he may act as a *śūdra*, he is therefore a *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya*. Such claims have degraded the system and thrown it into chaos, with no peace or prosperity. The result is that there are *śūdras* everywhere; where there should be a *kṣatriya* in the presidential palace and leading the army on the battlefield, there are men who are untrained and unintelligent, who are less than *śūdras*. When there is no provision for training the natural orders, we find that the leadership is ineffective and corrupt. In the Vedic system, because there was proper education, the society was peaceful and so structured that all people were able to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is real human society, where the entire society is making progress toward spiritual realization. Kṛṣṇa advises in *Bhagavad-gītā* that one stay in his own work:

It is better to be engaged in one’s own occupation, even if imperfectly performed, than to accept another’s occupation, even if perfectly done. Prescribed duties, according to one’s nature, are never affected by sinful reactions. (Bg. 18.47)

Working according to his nature, *for the purpose of serving the Lord*, one can attain perfection by that work, no matter how abominable or pleasant it may appear. One should prosecute his work, even if there is some difficulty in it. Of course, even if a man steadfastly performs his work, but does not serve God by his labor, he is doomed by that very steadfast but godless work. The absolute meaning to all work is that one offers the fruits of his work to Kṛṣṇa. This art of working in devotional service can be learned, and that is why the *brāhmaṇas* are there.

A great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the boy Prahlāda Mahārāja, told his school fellows: “What is required is that we change our consciousness from what we are now thinking—that I am the supreme en-

joyer, lord of all I survey—and instead become the loving servants of the actual enjoyer, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa.” This transcendental loving service, a change of consciousness, can be perfectly completed under proper guidance while working at one’s occupational duty. According to Lord Caitanya, everyone must surrender to Kṛṣṇa. As the *varṇa* orders are natural because they are created by God, so they have meaning only when they are utilized for devotional service unto God.

THE ĀSRĀMA

The spiritual impetus in training is *āśrama*. The *āśrama* system is arranged in four stages of life in order for one to reach spiritual perfection. The first stage is *brahmacarya*. *Brahmacarya* means student life or education with the spiritual master. According to the *āśrama* system, at five years of age a boy goes to live at the *guru-kula*, or the place of the *guru*. There, in order to understand spiritual life, all students serve as menial servants of the *guru*. This way is advised by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34): “Just try to know the truth by approaching a self-realized spiritual master with all submission and with inquiries and render service unto him. Such a learned spiritual master initiates knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” By performing this service unto a pure devotee, the *brahmacārī* is making direct service contact with God. Because such pure devotees or spiritual masters have as their only business to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service, to come in contact with them is like an iron rod’s coming in contact with fire—the rod eventually acts like fire itself. Lord Caitanya taught that we should become a servant of the servant of the servant 100 times removed—the more faith in the chain of disciplic succession, the better is the service unto Kṛṣṇa Himself. The *brahmacārī* is trained to be celibate and temperate and to follow the scriptural injunctions for purification of consciousness. Many great personalities from the Vedic literatures, such as Śaṅkara, Nārada, the Kumāras, Bhīṣma, and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, remained unmarried *brahmacārīs* throughout life and devoted their full time to the cause of Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, one must enter *brahmacārī* training, even if he is to be later married, so

that he can learn the principles of restraint. Spiritual life has as its goal the cessation of the round of birth and death in this material world and transferral to the eternal, blissful spiritual world. According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, we are wandering through thousands of species of life, always forgetting Kṛṣṇa, thinking that we are God, the enjoyer, the center, the Lord. So there is no way out of this material condition except hearing from a spiritual master what our actual position is: that we are eternal parts and parcels of God. Then we must act accordingly. This practice of *brahmacarya* inculcates in one the desire for Kṛṣṇa because it restrains the sensual propensities which are the cause of our bondage to the material world.

Sex life, being the apex of pleasure in the material world, is therefore the number one reason for our staying in bondage. Nowadays so many so-called *yogīs* and *ṛṣīs* have come with their teachings, but they are actually enjoyers of the world in the name of *yoga*, as their teaching does not demand that one practice *brahmacarya*. Sex indulgence is not recommended in any standard process of *yoga* meditation or devotional service. Spiritual life means that I am trying to show God my love for Him, not that I am trying to increase my sex enjoyment.

ESSENTIAL TRAINING

Among other things, the *brahmacārī* is required to restrict his sleep. He is expected to rise one and a half hours before sunrise in order to take advantage of the early hours which are said to be the most auspicious for spiritual development. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the habits of a *brahmacārī* are described: “The *brahmacārī* must rise early in the morning, and after placing himself, he should chant the holy name” (Bhaktivedanta Purports, Bhāg. 3.21.45). It is further described that the *brahmacārī*’s body and face should give off a luster:

His body shone most brilliantly; though engaged in austere penance, he was not emaciated because the Lord had cast His affectionate glance at him and he had quaffed with his ears the nectar flowing from the moonlike words of the Lord.

It is the sign of one observing celibacy or

brahmacarya that his face has this luster. If he lives otherwise, the lust will come out from the face and the body; if one is a drunkard or sex monger, it will come out. *Brahmacārī* training is the basis for all other orders as basic training in spiritual life. Whether he goes on to become married and eventually retire from married life, or whether he goes directly to the renounced order or *sannyāsa*, the practice of *brahmacarya* will save him from the pit of entanglement. It fixes him positively in the Absolute Truth.

When the spiritual master understands the qualities of a student, then he decides how he should work, whether as *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*. Thus the student goes into any occupation or spiritual order implanted with the seed of devotional service and the ability to control his senses over the four animal propensities.

MARRIED LIFE

The second *āśrama* order is called *gṛhastha*, the married family man. *Gṛhastha* does not mean married life for indulgence in sex and family affairs. *Gṛhastha* is a bona fide spiritual order. There is another word in Sanskrit, *gṛhamedhī*, which is a description of married life without spiritual goals. Such marriage, in which one uses contraceptive methods in order to enjoy sex life, raises children that come like cats and dogs, and devotes one’s occupational income and energy for elevating the material standard of his family, is a waste of human life. Sex is there, like eating, and there is no bar to Kṛṣṇa consciousness for a married man. If one feels some disturbance in living single, he can get married. Many of the great authorities in the science of God, like Lord Brahmā, Prahāda Mahārāja, Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura and His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, were family men. Marriage in the spiritual order is for the purpose of living peacefully and having children in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Like the *varṇa*, the *āśrama* orders are natural and based on principles of human life in terms of the whole span of life; the goal of *āśrama* is not sense gratification, but liberation from the material condition and attainment of the highest goal. The first part of life, *brahmacarya*, is utilized for development of character and spiritual qualities. Then around age twenty-five, if he has the desire to be married, he may, as the next natural part

of life, accept a wife and beget children. But one should not beget children like cats and dogs. A child should be begotten who can perform duties for God, otherwise there is no need to marry and no need of children. The parents should see to it that the child born of them must not enter the womb of a mother again. The child should be trained for being liberated in that life.

Āśrama teaches that human life is especially meant for being completely devoted to the Lord. Among the duties and responsibilities of the householder is that he takes care of the other spiritual orders. By occupation, the *vaiśyas* produce food for everyone; by spiritual order, the householders feed the others, as far as possible. Also, according to the example of the great devotee Rūpa Gosvāmī, a householder should give at least fifty per cent of his income for propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, twenty-five per cent for his household upkeep, and twenty-five per cent set aside for emergencies. The *gṛhastha* lives as a householder, prosecuting Kṛṣṇa consciousness with every endeavor.

RETIRED LIFE

Let us say that a man lives one hundred years. The first twenty-five years he is student. The years from twenty-five to fifty are good for producing children and so may be spent in householder life. Then after fifty years of age the man is expected to retire and leave his household affairs in the hands of his oldest son. This stage is called *vānaprastha*. He retires and with his wife travels to holy places. Then gradually he leaves his wife in the care of the older children. It is not that the wife is left deserted on the road. According to Vedic civilization the woman is never independent. She is in the hands of her father until she is handed over in marriage, and then she becomes the charge of her husband. When the sons are grownup and it is time for the husband to take *sannyāsa*, he leaves his wife in the charge of his elder sons.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* narrates the history of Kardama Muni, a great *yogī* householder who lived at the dawn of creation and who strictly followed the scriptural injunction by leaving his home to take the renounced life of a wandering *sannyāsī*. His case was most exceptional because after long austerities and practice of *yoga*, Kardama Muni and his wife

Devahūti had been blessed to have born unto them the incarnation of God known as Kapila Deva, who taught the famous Sāṅkhya philosophy to the world. Kardama Muni's exalted position was that God Himself was in his home, as his son. And still, Kardama Muni left his home in strict observance of the injunction that one must spend his last days away from home and without family connection in pursuit of spiritual life. Kapila Deva encouraged His father not to deviate from the scriptures, and He assured him that as Supreme Lord He would always be with His father, residing in his heart. Thus Kardama Muni left his wife in the charge of his son Kapila and became a wandering *sannyāsī* totally dependent on Kṛṣṇa for his food and lodging.

THE RENOUNCED ORDER

Due to the contamination of the present Kali age, Lord Caitanya advised that no one should take *sannyāsa* but that everyone should chant the holy names, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Justifying the wisdom of Lord Caitanya's prohibition of *sannyāsa* is a phenomenon in India involving the cheaters and the cheated. It is known that a certain class of women feel that it is auspicious to have sex with a *sādhu* (holy man) and have a child by him. Women gather at holy places where *sannyāsīs* are known to go for the purpose of seducing them. This practice has become known, and a class of low-bred sensualists have taken to dressing themselves in the saffron robes of *sannyāsīs* and going to those places for the purpose of being seduced by women. Thus the cheaters meet the cheated. Of course, if anyone can actually follow the rules of *sannyāsa* then he must take the renounced order.

Sannyāsa is required so that the materially engrossed householder can get out of his mundane occupations before the time of death. The bona fide *sannyāsī* who has received information from authorized scriptural sources and from a spiritual master in disciple succession must not be merely self-satisfied in that knowledge because he is needed by society at large to go and preach to the people and inject them with the immediacy of eternal spiritual values. If the *sannyāsī* does not teach the common men of their spiritual nature,

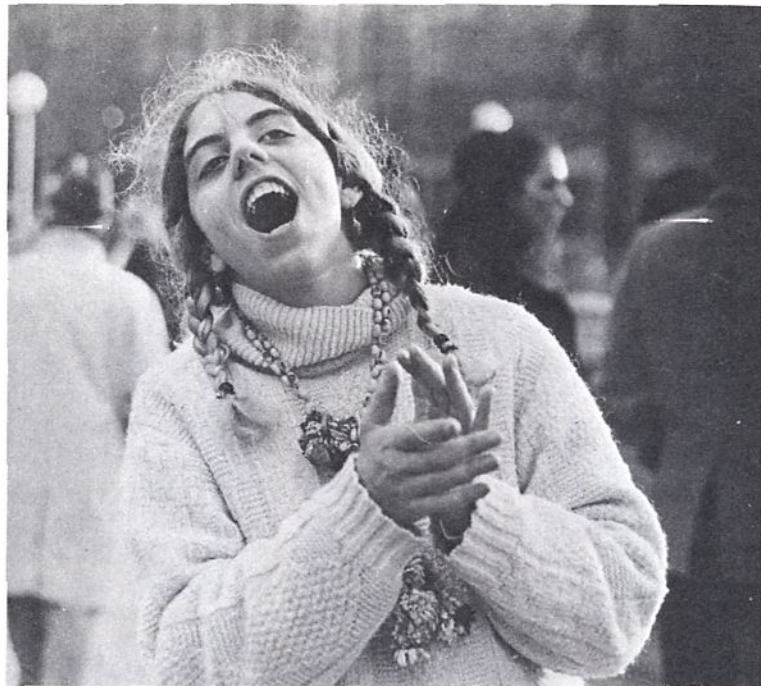
then they will have wasted the human form of life. It is possible, by direct surrender to God, to be factually *sannyāsa* or renounced, even while living at home with wife and children. But the existence of the *sannyāsī* in the renounced order, either as a missionary with a large following, or as a wandering hermit, will culminate in the highest form of human being, the *paramahansa*, or intimate pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, who is without envy and always fixed in ecstatic absorption of love of God.

The four orders and castes of *varṇāśrama-dharma* are meant to perfect human society. The four orders become distinct where there is enlightenment. Such spiritual life is actually the most democratic because God accepts as wonderful whoever surrenders to Him. By the material standard the rich are great. But in spiritual life the most advanced person serves all others and brings them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness the most advanced person gives up everything, whereas in material life the most advanced is greedy, vicious and dangerous to mankind at large. The real democracy we need is democracy of spiritual consciousness—the understanding that all belongs to God and every living being is Kṛṣṇa's beloved creature. Any man who takes up devotional service is to be respected regardless of his position; and at the same time, whatever qualities he displays in terms of work he can use for Kṛṣṇa.

END



Glory to the *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*, which cleanses the heart

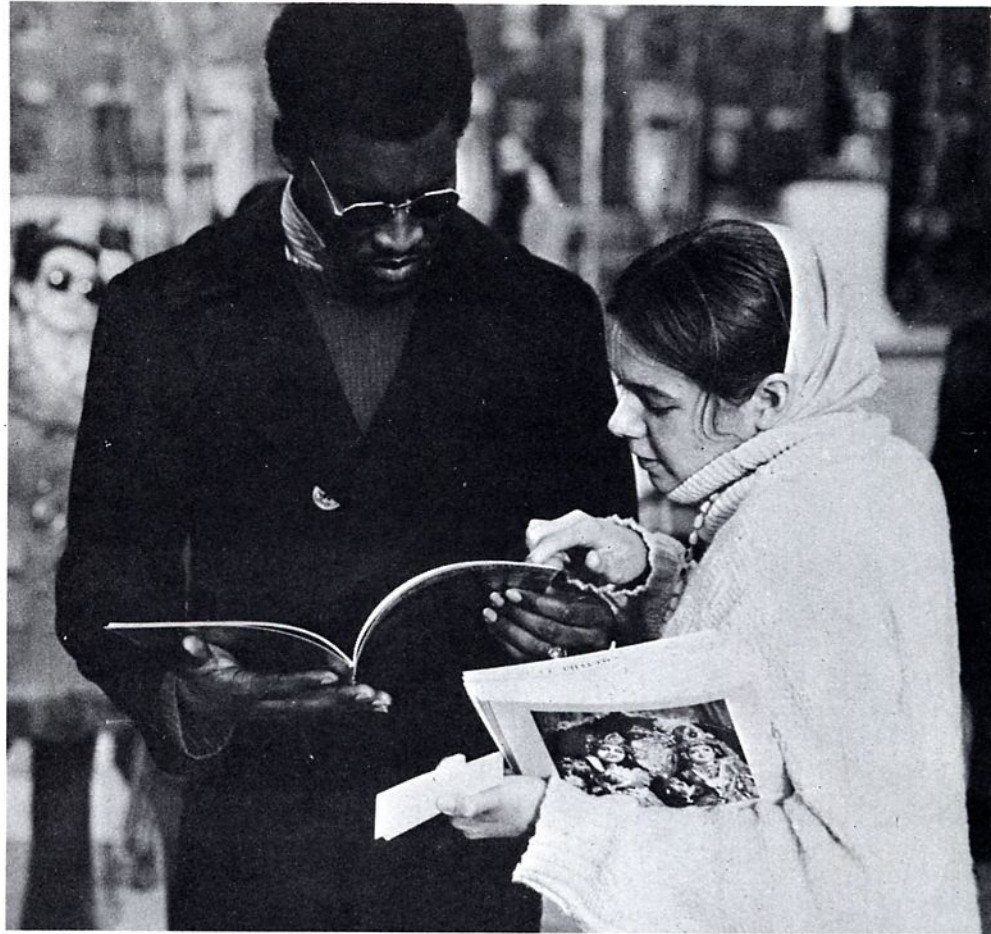


Thus the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death, is extinguished. This *saṅkīrtana* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all

transcendental knowledge, it increases the ocean of transcendental bliss,

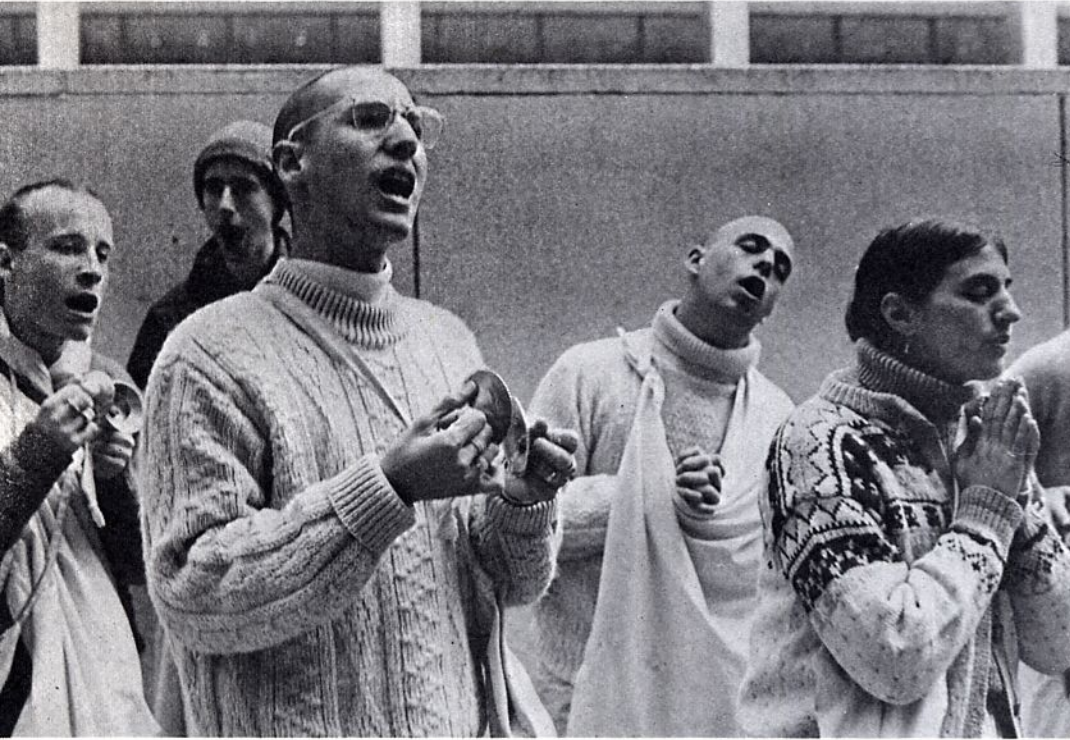


of all the dust accumulated for years together.



and it helps us to have a taste

of the full nectar





for which we are always anxious.

DEVOTIONAL SERVICE: ELEVATION OVER ILLUSION

by Bhagavān dāsa Adhikārī (ISKCON—Detroit)

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to bring about the purification of human consciousness. The human form of life is a rare opportunity which we have now attained out of so many varieties of life. Therefore the opportunity afforded by this human form must be cultured and protected like a rare gem. If it is not, we will lose it by force of the laws of nature and again be subject to birth and death, perhaps in some other species of life. This is confirmed by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

(Bg. 2.22)

The culturing process is like this. All of us, when we are born, are born with impure consciousness. That is to say, we have no understanding of who we are. The modern civilization of today adds a great boost to this ignorance by offering people material knowledge (*avidyā*) and leaving them devoid of the spiritual education needed for the highest advancement of human consciousness. The outcome is that most people go through their lives entirely ignorant of who they are. They are content to think in terms of temporary bodily designations—"I am a parent," "I am a child," "I am a teacher," "I am a well-off or not so well-off businessman," "I am a hippie," etc. These are temporary identities because the pure living entity, the eternal spirit soul residing within the bodily shell, is devoid of such labels. In other words these are all relative truths depending on conditions of time and space which, if varied, would produce for us new designations. For instance, because one happens to be born into a Jewish or Christian family he is called a Jew or a Christian, but if this person were separated from his parents and adopted by others he might be called something else. This is material relativity, and thinking in these terms binds the living entity to the relative cycle of birth and death.

In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we are being taught by our spiritual master, His Divine

Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, not to think along these relative, temporary lines but to seek out the Absolute Truth, that truth which does not depend upon any material consideration. This is called self-realization—to realize that which is our real nature. Those people who engage their consciousness in this way have begun to cultivate the resources of human consciousness.

In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear.

(Bg. 2.40)

All of us have had countless births in the past, and if we are not careful we will have countless births in the future. Therefore, the goal is to break free from the miseries of birth and death, which are concomitant factors of material life, by regaining our eternal spiritual status as servants of the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That is the perfection of human life. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya has instructed that this attitude of rendering loving service to the Lord is the real eternal activity of the living entity. Through this process of devotional service one transcends the material platform of relative truth and becomes situated in absolute knowledge. Just as academic knowledge qualifies a person to attain a position in society, so when one understands the Absolute Truth, he becomes qualified to enter Kṛṣṇa's society, the spiritual kingdom which lies beyond the realm of the material universes.

True knowledge means to realize who we are in relation to Kṛṣṇa. We must know our eternal identity; academic qualifications will not be helpful.

And when you have thus learned the truth, you will know that all living beings are My parts and parcels—and they are in Me and are Mine. (Bg. 4.35)

Therefore the cultivation of human life is to engage in all activities with the consciousness that "I am Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant." Just as the parts of the body

serve the stomach and thus become nourished and healthy, so, since we are parts and parcels of the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa, our eternal function is to render pleasing devotional service to Him and also to those who are His unalloyed, surrendered devotees. Kṛṣṇa is so sublime that He actually gets more pleasure when He sees His pure devotees, the bona fide spiritual masters, being served, than when someone tries to approach Him directly. In the *Ādi Purāṇa* this is stated by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna: "My dear Pārtha, one who claims to be My devotee is not so. Only a person who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee." Therefore, our eternal position is one of servitorship. In the material world everyone serves only in order to get some temporary fruits which are all taken away at the time of death, but for those who accept their spiritual identity as servants of the Lord and His pure devotees, Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

That is the way of the spiritual and godly life, after attaining which a man is not bewildered. Being so situated, even at the hour of death, one can enter into the kingdom of God. (Bg. 2.72)

To end the problems of material life does not mean to try to make this world an eternal paradise, but to reinstate ourselves in devotional service to the Lord, instead of devotional service to this material nature. This can be accomplished by anyone through the simple method of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The chanting is a prayer to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa to engage us in His transcendental loving service. We say loving service because Kṛṣṇa is the perfect master who reciprocates with His servants by taking away all inauspicious things from the mind.

This movement is not in conflict with any religious belief. Our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is simply teaching us how to immerse ourselves in God consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, twenty-four hours a day, not just to serve God once a week or to think, "Oh yes, God exists." Śrīla Prabhupāda is teaching us to meditate on Kṛṣṇa's name, form, pastimes and devotees, even in the sleeping state. That is the process of *bhakti-yoga* or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the sublime meth-

od for cultivating real human consciousness.

Everyone desires to enjoy a complete life of happiness, but most people are misled in this quest by thinking that the body is the target for satisfaction. Actually, however, the body by itself has no qualification to satisfy our desires, but is instead a collapsible trap that ultimately ends in death. The original desire for a joyful life does not come from the body but from the spirit soul, the eternal living entity within the body. Having contacted this material body, we have made a false association which is manifested in the belief that we are the lump of flesh that we see in the mirror. The materialist feels that he can get satisfaction by gratifying the different urges which come from his senses. The intelligent man, however, soon realizes that bodily sense desires are often misleading. The young child will say, "Oh, that flickering substance looks very nice. I think I shall enjoy it." But upon placing his hand in the fire he quickly learns that his senses are not to be trusted. In our conditioned state of existence, we think that our only satisfaction lies on the material platform, and we are constantly fooled in this way. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda states in *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*: "Foolish human beings who are grossly absorbed in the culture of *avidyā* (ignorant material activities) do not mind this cruel process, but, being enamored of the beauty of the illusory energy, they do the same things over repeatedly, not learning any lesson from the law of nature."

MATERIAL SUFFERING

The conditioned living entity constantly places himself in the fire of material sense gratification. This means that everyone who is thinking, "I am this body," is burning with the fire of passion and lust to control, own and manipulate this dull material world. Such illusioned souls try frantically to find some love in this temporary form, and the ultimate end is destruction. The Supreme Personality of Godhead states that they certainly lead a life of sin, "for a person delighting only in the senses lives in vain." (Bg. 3.16) In his purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this further:

Excessive eating, excessive sense grati-

fication, artificial standards of living, and depending too much on others' mercy kill the very vitality of human energy, and thus man's duration of life is shortened. (Bhāg. 1.1.10, purport)

Everyone, no matter what his position in life—whether he be a successful businessman, president, dictator, or a low-grade drunk on the street—suffers in material life. Everyone is forced by the laws of nature to accept death, everyone is forced to accept disease, and everyone is forced to accept old age and birth. This is the real problem of existence. It is not enough to simply think, "How much can I make today at my job? How much sex life can I enjoy? How much food do I need?"

How is it that everyone desires an eternal life of happiness but that the body does not at all permit this? It is because bodily existence is not our real existence. The problem is that the conditioned living entity tries to make the body something which it is not. This body is not the reservoir of all pleasure. When one desires water he must go to a source where there is sufficient water stored up, but in the illusioned state of existence, when one desires pleasure he runs to bodily sense gratification and thus dies of spiritual thirst. An intelligent person who wants the real nectar of existence does not turn to bodily sense pleasure because the body is the reservoir of our misery. The body is simply made of dull, unconscious elements, which are no different from the elements that make up the wood on the floor or the elements that are in dirt. Certainly no one would jump on the floor and embrace it and say, "Oh, I love you." But we try to embrace this body, saying, "Oh, I love you," when that is not what we really desire to contact. Even science tells us that the body, if taken apart and divided into its main constituents, would be worth only \$1.75 on the market. We cannot carry on a conversation with that little bottle of elements. In other words, we are not actually attracted to the material shell of the body but to the life force within the body which makes the entire machinery active. If this is not so, then why is no one attracted to a corpse?

The cause of all disturbance and havoc in the world is this false identification with the body. This misidentification can be immediate, in which case the conditioned soul thinks, "I am this form of flesh and

bones," or it can be extended, in which case one thinks, "I am this country," "I am this race," "I am this husband-wife relationship," "I am this business firm," etc. All this is false identification. Actually we are none of these things. To say that we are Americans or Indians is false. We are pure spirit souls, parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and our true identity, our true existence, is that we are His eternal servitors. One's identity in material life is designated by the service that one renders, but everyone's real service is simply to surrender everything to the Supreme Lord, and when we exist in that state of consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we become fully satisfied.

O best of the Kuru dynasty, without sacrifice one can never live happily on this planet or in this life. What then of the next? (Bg. 4.31)

It makes no difference what one's material designations are—the point is that with one's working energy one should please the Supreme Lord. When man's interest is in temporary bodily designations, how can he expect to have a united cooperative planet? We are busy trying to think of ways to maintain and increase the false prestige of bodily labels while with equal skill we are forgetting where everyone's personality came from to begin with.

It is important for those who have taken the human form of life to realize that all living entities have the *absolute identity* of being eternal servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To serve the Lord means to serve the Lord's unalloyed devotees. That is the real method of spiritual life. In our wretched conditioned state, how can we know for sure what Kṛṣṇa desires from us unless we go to one who knows perfectly well what will please the Lord? So we should scrutinizingly search out one who has no other business than to please the Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa Himself states this in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

Just try to learn the truth by approaching the 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)

When one finds such a pure devotee, all

material opulences, fame, possessions, etc., become insignificant compared to a moment's association with him. The pure devotee of the Lord has the power to lift one to the platform of transcendental loving service to the Lord and thereby alleviate the fears, anxieties and burdens of illusory material existence. Just as the sun draws moisture from a contaminated place and purifies it, so the pure devotee purifies our material consciousness by showing us how to serve Kṛṣṇa and thereby perfect our lives. The power of this association is confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya:

O Sūta Gosvāmī, the great sages who have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord can at once sanctify others who may come in contact with them, while the water of the Ganges can do so only after prolonged use. (Bhāg. 1.1.15)

If we desire to attain this purified consciousness, we must understand our spiritual nature. This is not possible if we associate with people who are simply interested in sense gratification. If we always associate with people who are thinking, "I am this body, and my main business of life is sense gratification," then we will also come to think in the same way: "I am this body, and my main occupation is sense gratification. I have nothing to do in this life but enjoy myself." Association is so strong in affecting one's consciousness that even if one does not engage in the exact activities that someone else does, just by associating with him one acquires his mode of consciousness. For example, one may know people who try to elevate their consciousness through chemicals. He himself may not use them, but if he has close association with people who do, then it is certain that his consciousness will be affected and that he will begin to think and act like them. The idea, then, is to always remain in a purified state of consciousness through close spiritual association. That very association has been made easily accessible in this age through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. These holy names of the Lord have been praised by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu as follows:

O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction upon the

living beings, and therefore You have hundreds and millions of names like Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, etc. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies, and there are no hard and fast rules for chanting these holy names. O my Lord, You have so kindly made approach to You easy by Your holy name, but unfortunate as I am, I have no attraction for them.

(*Śikṣāṣṭakam*, 1)

Kṛṣṇa has so mercifully given us His holy name to take shelter of, and when a conditioned soul hears the chanting from the lips of the Lord's pure devotee he can be inspired to render devotional service to the Lord and thereby free himself from all material misery.

FOR ALL HUMANITY

This vibration is not just meant for boys with shaved heads and girls who wear saris. It is meant for all humanity. Everyone is looking for an object which will make him eternally happy, eternally satisfied. But that object can nowhere be found in the temporary material world. To satisfy ourselves, therefore, we must go beyond the limiting range of material phenomena and try to connect with the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the eternal reservoir of bliss and knowledge. That connection is made by chanting the *mahāmantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa. One must become convinced that there is no happiness anywhere in the material world. A person may say that he is happy, but what has he actually accomplished? We must say, "My dear sir, now you say that you have been very successful in life. You've raised a nice family, you've had a nice job, you've had nice sex life, you've had nice food on your plate and a nice roof over your head, and you've also done some charity work. Now just tell us who you are and where you are going at the time of your death." A person in material consciousness cannot answer this question. Because he has not cultured spiritual knowledge, such a person is forced by the laws of nature to fall back into the samsaric existence of birth and death.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant for culturing spiritual knowledge in order to become qualified for release from the bondage of the material world—to go

back to Godhead, back home, back to the spiritual realm. *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* states:

One should know perfectly well about the Personality of Godhead and His transcendental name, as well as the temporary material creation with its temporary demigods, men and animals. When one knows these he surpasses death, and the ephemeral cosmic creation with it, and in the eternal kingdom of God he enjoys his eternal life of bliss and knowledge. (*Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, Mantra 14)

One may be content to think, "What am I going to eat now? Where am I going to sleep? How will I defend myself in case of difficulty?" But what a waste of consciousness that is. Our materialistic society has simply increased the quality of our eating, sleeping, mating and defending. Thus it has increased the fire of our material consciousness, which always burns with the desire to enjoy illusion. *Nāyaṁ deho deha-bhājām nṛloke*. "In this human form of life, the body is not meant for sense gratification like the animals." All animals also eat, sleep, mate and defend, and to use our human intellect simply to increase the quality of these functions is no credit to human consciousness. Human life is meant for controlling sense gratification in order to move on to spiritual realization.

When there are ample earthly flats to lie on, then what is the necessity of cots and beds? When one can use his own arms, what is the necessity of a pillow? When one can use the palms of his hands, then what is the necessity of varieties of utensils? When there is ample covering, or the skins of trees, then what is the necessity of clothing? (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 2.3.4)

So the more we increase the degree of our sense gratification, the less we advance in spiritual progress. This does not mean that in snowy winter weather one should wear leaves. Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, a great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, once said, "Man's glory is in common sense." So the idea is to keep material sense gratification to the minimum and be satisfied with only the bare necessities for bodily maintenance.

Life's desires must not be directed towards sense gratification. One should

desire only for a healthy life or for self-preservation because the life of a human being is meant for inquiry into the Absolute Truth, and nothing more should be desired from one's occupational service. (Bhāg. 1.2.10)

If one's mind is surcharged with material considerations regarding eating, sleeping, mating and defending—the animal propensities—then certainly one does not need the human form of life, which is meant for higher level activities. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, “*sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ*: A person gets his next life according to whatever he is absorbed in thinking.” This lifetime is meant for qualifying ourselves for our next body. If we simply live like animals in suits and ties, then Kṛṣṇa, seated as the Supersoul in everyone's heart, will understand our real desires, and in our next birth we may be born into a lower species of life and there continue our search for happiness in the material world. The worm in the stool is very content. He enjoys himself nicely eating stools. The dogs are happy hoarding their bones. But we are not worms or dogs. We have the human form of life, and we are meant to elevate our consciousness from the bodily concept of life to the ultimate stage of understanding fully the questions of spiritual life: “Who am I? Why am I here? How did I get here? Where am I going at the time of death?”

WHAT IS THIS LIFE

We must ask the materialist, “Do you think that life is simply this spark of one hundred years? If it so happens that I get called in the army and killed, or run over by a car, is everything finished? Is that all there is to life—a little bit of sense pleasure, a few showers, a few meals and some nice clothes? Do you think that that's all there is to life?” No. Life is meant for a complete understanding of our eternal nature and our eternal relationship with God. That is the completeness of human life. His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

The living beings are parts and parcels of the Complete Whole (Kṛṣṇa), and as long as the parts and parcels are detached from the Complete Whole, the illusory representation of completeness is not enough to bring the

desired result. The completeness of human life can only be realized when the human form of life is engaged in the service of the Complete Whole.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda is teaching people the spiritual knowledge of man's eternal relation with the Supreme Lord, and we can see by the results of his Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement that a divine population is in the making. Otherwise how could his disciples so quickly stop their meat-eating, illicit sex life, gambling and intoxication, and be so content simply chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and serving His pure devotee?

To care for one's child by putting nice clothes on his body and giving him nice foodstuffs and a place to sleep is not enough. If that is all that we give our children, they will never know the real aim of life, and they will always be frustrated and misled. We can see this happening in high schools and on college campuses throughout the world. Why are young people rebelling so strongly and turning to violence, intoxicants and uncontrolled sex life? It is due to the frustration caused by material consciousness. Therefore we are taking care in our Kṛṣṇa conscious society to culture love of God. That should be the only occupation of the parent, teacher, politician or anyone else who is in a position to lead or instruct. The responsible members of society must learn how to see everything in its relation with the Supreme Lord through the medium of devotional service, the eternal function of all spirit souls.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a purifying movement meant to bring forth what is already present within us but is covered over by lust.

As the fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, or as the embryo is covered by the womb, similarly the living entity is covered by different degrees of lust.

(Bg. 3.38)

Just as a mango becomes sweet upon maturing, so by changing from the immature concept of “I am this body” to the clear consciousness of “I am part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa,” we reconnect ourselves with Kṛṣṇa and display the all-blissful nature of the spirit soul. The conditioned soul attempts pleasure through bodily

connection, but the devotee connects with Kṛṣṇa through devotion and thus experiences divine pleasure.

One can understand the Supreme Personality as He is only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of the Supreme Lord by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God. (Bg. 18.55)

Everyone desires to have their bit of paradise on this temporary planet where everything is destined to be destroyed, but it is only when one recognizes a superior eternal nature or existence that he can experience the state of *ātmārāma*—self-satisfaction. Of those who have attained this *ātmārāma* state by breaking free of material lust, the highest are those who take to the devotional service of the Lord. Such was the case for Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who from the time of his birth was fixed in impersonal Brahman realization (the realization of knowing oneself to be spiritual energy) and was transcendental to all mundane sex desire and lust. He recounted to Mahārāja Parīkṣit:

O saintly King, I was certainly situated perfectly in transcendence, yet I was still attracted by the delineation of the pastimes of the Lord, who is described by enlightened verses. (Bhāg. 1.2.19)

Kṛṣṇa confirms the potency of this knowledge:

One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna. (Bg. 4.9)

His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

There is no difference between the kingdom of God and the devotional service of the Lord. Since both of them are on the absolute plane, to be engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord is to have attained the spiritual kingdom.

(Bg. 2.72, purport)

Therefore the result of this *saṅkīrtana* movement of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is that people are actually exhibiting symptoms of transcending the shackles of material

sense experience and are beginning to manifest love of God. They have smiling faces, they dance and sing in the streets, and sometimes they cry, moved by the beauty of the Lord and His pure devotees. These are bona fide symptoms of spiritual ecstasy, and they are within everyone; it is simply a matter of freeing the spirit soul from the encagement of false ego (bodily sense enjoyment). It is like lifting the shade and allowing the sun to enter.

One cannot have a loving relationship with anything impersonal. It is not possible to be happy in this way, any more than it is possible to find satisfaction by conversing with the air or the floor, because there is no reciprocation. To love, one must have a personal relationship. To know Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, one must reestablish one's personal relationship with Him. One must be devoid of all self-motivation and sense gratification. That is called devotional service, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the purification of human consciousness.

Everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is spiritually pure. Our Kṛṣṇa conscious marriages are an example. It is not that we get married on the basis of romance, dating, or living with someone for a while. It is a symptom of this degraded age that simply because they have lived together, eaten under the same roof and had sex life together, a boy and girl will consider themselves married. This is the consciousness that attracts people today. Even in so-called "legal" marriages, where is the firm conviction that husband and wife together should seek out the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, with the intention to render transcendental loving service to Him and His pure devotees? What other way is there to create a spiritual society where people are not like cats and dogs? A Kṛṣṇa conscious marriage is meant to teach people how to love Kṛṣṇa, how to perfect one's life by serving Him instead of just taking from Him.

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

(Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Mantra 1)

When one recognizes Kṛṣṇa's supremacy, he automatically pleases everyone because Kṛṣṇa is the root of everyone's existence.

It is just a matter of whether or not one wants to agree. But to whom else can we surrender? Certainly it is not enough to place faith in our families. To depend on family life for pleasure is illusory because family members will all succumb to death at some time, and then all that will remain will be sentimental memories. Kṛṣṇa conscious family life is not simply to surrender to that limited consciousness—"Oh, what would I do without you?"—but to surrender to Kṛṣṇa—"Kṛṣṇa, what would I do without You?" That is purified consciousness. It is not, "My dear baby, how nicely I will enjoy you and pamper you," but instead, "How I will try to teach you nicely to serve Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees." That is the platform on which there is no material attachment. Pure love is manifested when one soul enlightens another regarding the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of all pleasure. When Śukadeva Gosvāmī was approached by the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya for advice for the fallen people of this age, he replied:

O sages, I have been justly questioned by you. Your questions are relevant to the public welfare because they are in relation with Kṛṣṇa. Only this type of question can please the self completely. (Bhāg. 1.2.5)

To say that we are unattached does not mean that we display no love, but that we are free from the entanglement of bodily relationships and are attached instead to relating with all living entities as spirit souls. Knowledge that all men are eternal parts and parcels of the Lord is the only plane on which full satisfaction can be found because the eternal function, the eternal engagement, of the spirit soul is the mood of transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

If we do not give people the knowledge that the devotional service of the Lord and His pure devotees is the highest perfectional stage of life, we keep them in bondage to this material existence of eternal birth and death. Because death is against everyone's personal self-interest, and because material activities simply bring one closer to death, the entire population of the world is frustrated and anxious, having missed the center of enjoyment. Therefore the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the prime benediction for all humanity because it teaches people how to live together peacefully and develop love of God. Only by developing love of God can we become free from the clutches of birth and death, and therefore

nothing else is perfection but pure love of Kṛṣṇa and His unalloyed devotees.

The devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are simply trying to spread this sublime message all over the earth. Observe how people everywhere—in America, Japan, Australia, Canada and Europe—are taking to this life style and taking off the shackles of material existence. Not only adults but children also are participating in this movement. Our Kṛṣṇa conscious children live in our farm commune, New Vṛndāvana, in the mountains of West Virginia, where they learn this knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and by the time they are twelve they are out preaching to people in a purified state of understanding. They are not attracted to the material world because they see it for what it is. Because they are given a full opportunity to taste the nectarean pleasure of spiritual life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they are free from bondage to material sense gratification. What is there in the material world that can offer eternal pleasure? Nothing! Real pleasure comes from Kṛṣṇa. That is transcendental knowledge, and that is our birthright as parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa.

We must simply accept what is already ours—spiritual bliss in the service of Kṛṣṇa. By taking to this Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life one can satisfy all one's desires. When one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious he loses all fears and anxieties and becomes fixed in eternal happiness.

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

(Śrī Īsopaniṣad, Mantra 2)

We ask you to try and understand this *saṅkīrtana* movement. It is not necessary that you live in the temple and shave your head, but come and learn. Give up the false spiritual teachers who are saying that you are God, that there is no God, that God is a chemical, or that God is this universal manifestation. Watch this movement—it is so sublime. Why shouldn't everyone dance in the street? Why not get up and raise your arms? Why not dance in ecstasy? To lose all inhibitions does not mean to prance around naked. It means to act in the knowledge that we are the eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. That is the message of this *saṅkīrtana* movement, and that is the message that is overflowing the world with love of God. And, if you want, it can overflow you.

END



In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, declares that He will accept any offering of food provided it is offered in love by His devotees: "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." Once accepted by Kṛṣṇa, such food is called *prasādam* (God's mercy), and whoever eats such holy remnants gains great spiritual benefit.



