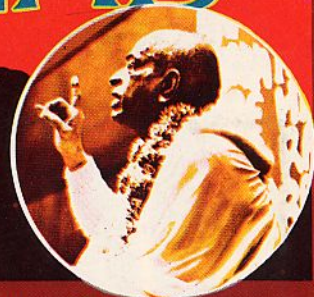


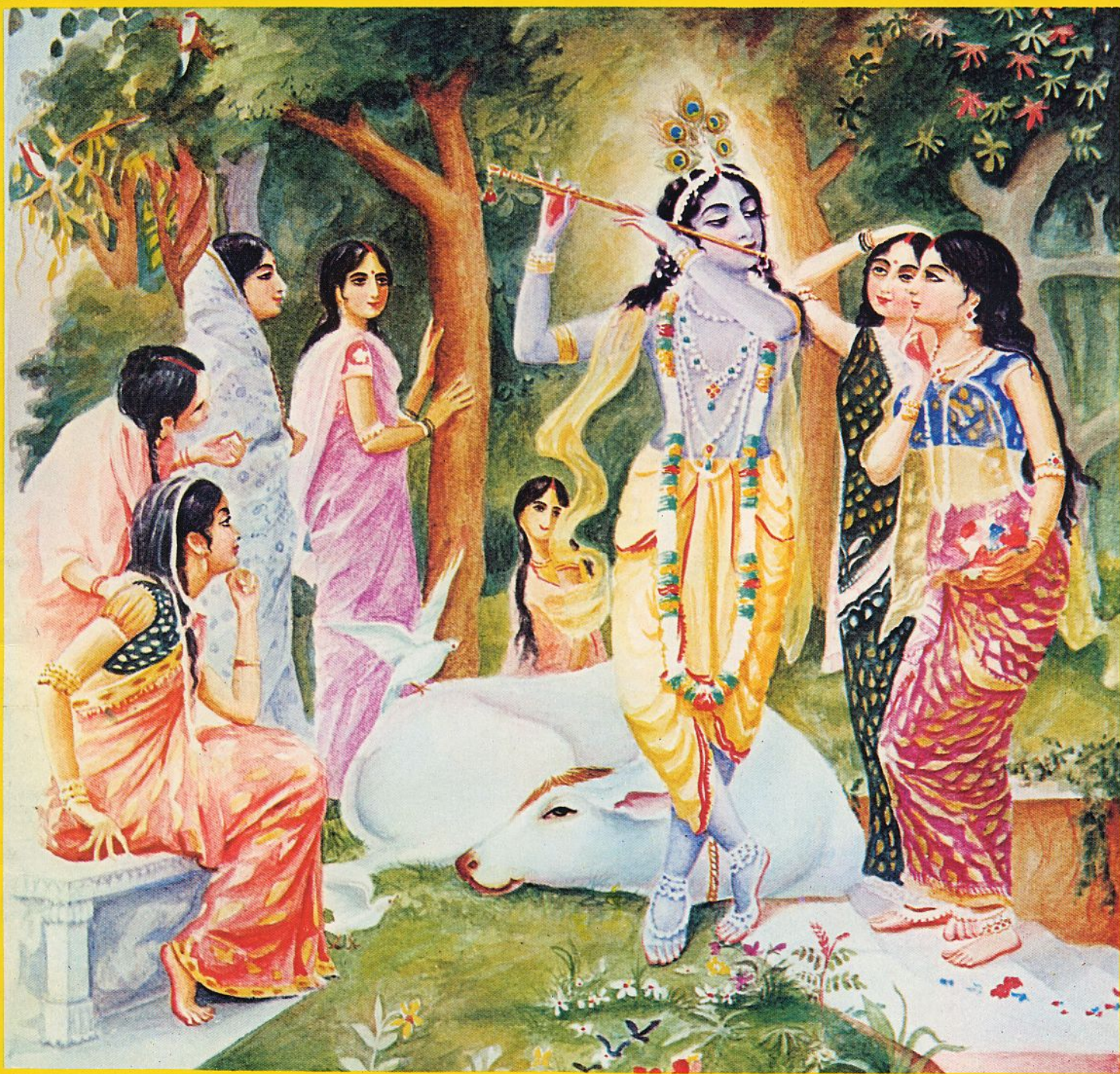
GODHEAD IS LIGHT. NESCIENCE IS DARKNESS WHERE THERE IS GODHEAD THERE IS NO NESCIENCE.



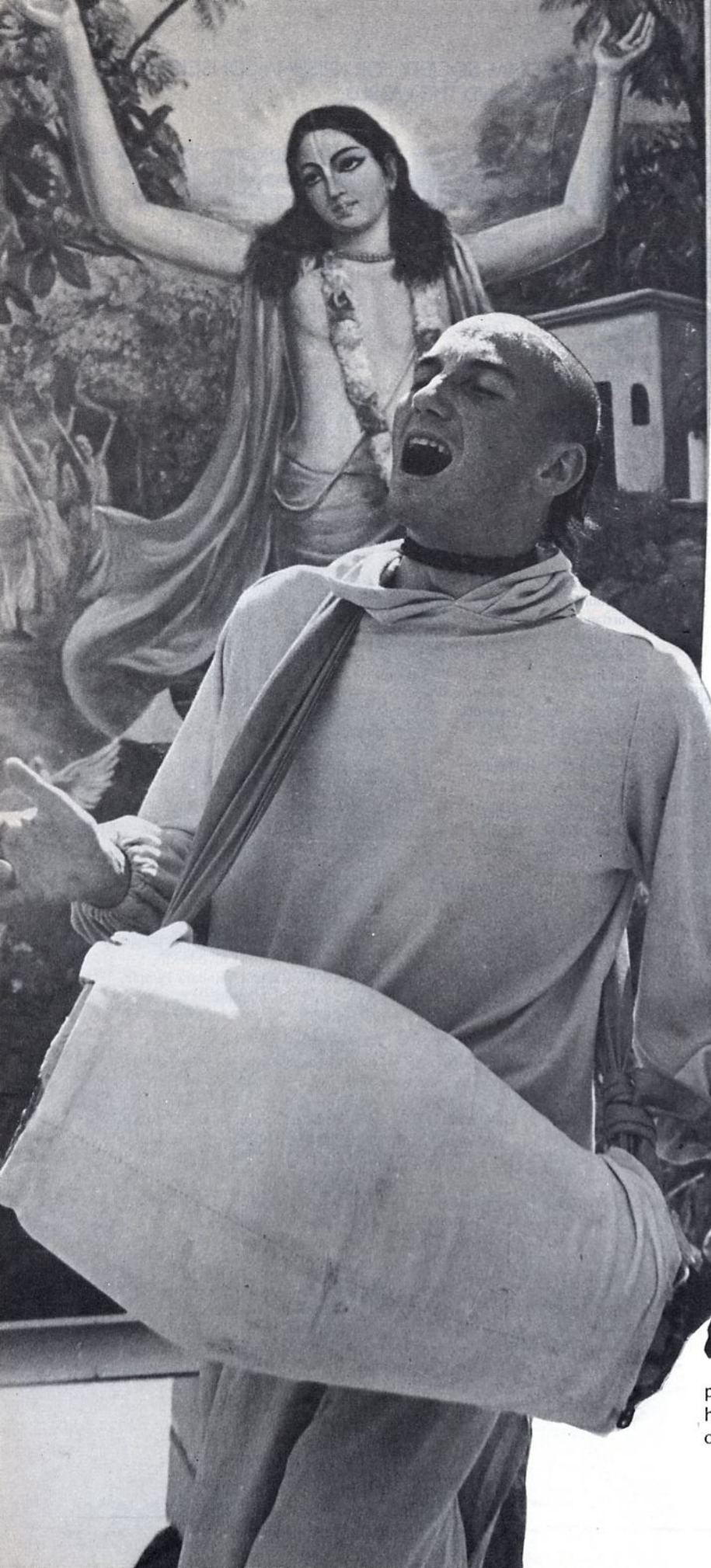
BACK TO GODHEAD



THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT No. 51







**Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare**

**Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare**

The Supreme Lord, the Absolute Truth, is all-spiritual, and therefore His name, fame, qualities and pastimes are all nondifferent from Him. The holy name of the Lord is the Lord Himself, and this can be understood by spiritual realization. By chanting the holy names of the Lord, which are innumerable, one can actually personally associate with the Lord, and by such constant spiritual association with the all-spiritual Lord, one can become spiritually self-realized. The chanting of the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is especially suitable for the souls of this fallen age, when life is short and people are slow to understand the importance of spiritual realization, prone to be misguided by false leadership, unfortunate in every respect, and continuously afflicted by material problems and anxieties. One can be freed from all such troubles simply by chanting and glorifying the holy name, fame, qualities and pastimes of the Lord.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has been started by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to introduce this universal process. The holy names of the Lord are as powerful as the Lord Himself, and there are no hard and fast rules for chanting these holy names. At any time, at any stage of life and in any part of the world, anyone can freely chant the holy name of the Lord and thus make progress on the path back home, back to Godhead.



Founder
(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
His Divine Grace
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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system accepted by scholars throughout the world which indicates the exact pronunciation of each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*, the long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *a* in *evade*. Long *ī* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *rī* is pronounced like the *re* in the English word *fibre*. The *c* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*, and the aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch-heart*, *hedge-hog*, *red-hot*, etc. The two spirants *ś* and *ṣ* are pronounced like the English *sh*; *s* is pronounced as in *sun*. Thus *Kṛṣṇa* is pronounced KRISHNA, *Caitanya* is pronounced CHAITANYA, etc.

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The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is presenting a scientific program for the respiritualization of all of human society. Although man has made rapid material progress, there is a need for a spiritual method by which all men can become one in peace, friendship and prosperity through a common cause. The greatest cause for all men is devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this is being introduced all over the world by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a simple, practical and universal way that can be accepted by men of any race, religion or nationality. For information on how you can become a registered member of this important spiritual movement, please write to the Society's secretary at 3764 Watseka Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

ON THE COVER

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, attracts the minds of the *gopīs*, the goddesses of fortune in the spiritual world, by playing His transcendental flute.

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THE HUMAN STRUGGLE

Food, Shelter, Sex, and Snoring

*dharmasya hy āpavargyasya
nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate
nārthasya dharmaikāntasya
kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ*

“All occupational engagements [*dharma*] are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service [*dharma*] should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.2.9)

In spite of working so hard, there is frustration. No one is satisfied, I am not satisfied, nor is the person for whom I work so hard satisfied. *Pa, pha, ba, bha, ma*. *Bha* means always fearful. We are always wondering what danger is coming next. *Ma* means death, *mṛtyu*. This is material life: You work very hard, so hard that foam will come from your mouth, and still you feel frustration and are always fearful. In this way you live, and then one day comes and you die.

This is called *pa-varga*. *Dharmasya hy āpavargyasya*. *Pavarga*: *a* means “just the opposite.” By taking to *dharma*, or religious principles, one can nullify the principles of material life. No one wants to work very hard, but everyone has to because in the material world a person cannot even get food without working hard.

A small ant only needs one grain of food a day, yet he still has to work, going hither and thither trying to find his food. Similarly, the elephant needs a hundred kilos of food at a time, and he also has to work. Material life is like that; no one can live idly. *Nahi suptasya simhasya praviśyanti mukhe mṛgāḥ*. (*Hitopadeśa*) The lion is a very powerful animal, and he is called the king of the forest, or the king of the animals. When he sleeps, no animal will come near him. Although a king, no

**HIS DIVINE GRACE
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA
SWAMI PRABHUPADA**

animal says, "Please, Mr. Lion, please open your mouth and I shall enter." Mr. Lion has to work very hard, and although he is very powerful, he doesn't always get food. Similarly, when a tiger is in the jungle, every animal knows it and avoids the tiger, so they don't always get food either.

Mohammedans are especially proud to become like a *sher*. *Sher* means lion or tiger, and it is said that if one can become like a *sher*, he will be considered very powerful. Even in England the British lion symbolizes power, but at the end of the Second World War, the British lion was badly bandaged. Now in Trafalgar Square there are only large stone lions. In this world these symbols of power are all false. There was Napoleon, the French lion, and there was the British lion, and there was the Roman lion. In this way and that the people are simply wasting their time. *Śrama eva hi kevalam*. (*Bhāg.* 1.2.8) They are all rascals because they do not know the value of life. Nor do they know what is to be done. Even religion is taken for some material gain. However, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said that religion is not for material gain, for religion is meant for *āpavargyasya*. One has to get liberated from these four principles of material life: hard labor, which causes one to foam at the mouth, frustration, fear and death.

MATCHBOXES

Such is material life, but people are so foolish that they think that these principles represent advancement. Is this advancement? By working very hard a person may get a very nice large house and a car, and in this way one may think that his life is successful, but after fifty years, the house is only good for demolition. One matchbox goes up, and another comes down. This is constantly going on. *Punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*. "All right, you require a house, and now you have a nice one. Why are you demolishing it again?" "It's a new fashion," is the reply. This, then, is contemporary civilization. Houses are constructed with hard labor, and again they are demolished with hard labor, and once again they are constructed with more hard labor. And people have become such rascals that they do not think, "What am I gaining by this hard labor?" Real religion shows one how to get out of this cycle of hard labor.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is said: *nāyaṁ deho deha-bhājāṁ nṛloke kastān kāmān arhate viḍ-bhujāṁ ye*. The word *kāmān* indicates the fact that we require some necessities of life, for in this material body we require to eat, sleep, have sex and defend ourselves. So we do this, for there is no prohibition; we eat, sleep, have sex and defend, and do them all as easily as possible. But we do not have to labor very hard for these and make it difficult. We have to eat, and that's all right; we can eat. The birds and bees are also eating without hard labor, and why have we manufactured such a nonsensical civilization that we have to work so hard simply for a piece of bread? And why must we work in order to be able to sleep peacefully? There is so much hard labor for these things that now people have become disgusted and have given them up. Thus the hippies say, "We don't want to

work." But after a while, when they find it very difficult to live without work, they again come to work. *Punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*. People work, then they leave work, saying, "We shall not work," and again they take up work and work very hard, then again they give it up. This is called *punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*: chewing the chewed. We give up work, but we return to work because there is no other way to live. This is the problem. *Na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*. Foolish people do not know what the aim of life is. Everyone says that he is interested in his own welfare, or self-interest, but no one knows what real self-interest is. Therefore people are mistaken and are simply frustrated by working hard. They work so hard that foam comes from their mouths. All this is going on.

Dharma indicates the end of such a civilization of rascals. That is real *dharma*. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear." (*Bg.* 18.66)

"Just come to this side," Kṛṣṇa says. "Simply surrender, you rascal, and just give up all these so-called religions. They are not giving you any relief, and you are simply wasting your time." *Śrama eva hi kevalam*. By so-called religions, no one really develops an understanding of what God actually is. People are going to temples and churches and mosques, but they do not know what God really is. If we ask anyone, any religious man, "Do you know what God is?" he will say, "Oh, He is sublime. . . He is this, and He is that. . ." All we get is a vague idea. However, one who is devoted to Kṛṣṇa knows definitely that here is God—Kṛṣṇa. Here is His eternal consort—Rādhārāṇī. Here He is, enjoying in this way. Thus the *Vedas* give definite information about God and His activities.

*cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vṛkṣa-
lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam
lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyamānaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, who is tending the cows and fulfilling all desires in abodes built with spiritual gems, surrounded by millions of wish-fulfilling trees, always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds and thousands of Lakṣmīs, goddesses of fortune." (*Bs.* 5.29)

KṚṢṆA'S ABODE

In this way we know that God has His own abode, which is made of touchstone, and we learn of the houses there and the wish-fulfilling trees (*kalpa-vṛkṣa*). Not only is there one, but there are millions of such wish-fulfilling trees. *Surabhīr abhipālayantam*: Kṛṣṇa is engaged in tending *surabhī* cows. One can take as much milk as many times as he likes from

a *surabhi* cow. *Lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevya-mānaṁ*. *Lakṣmī* is the goddess of fortune. We all want the favor of the goddess of fortune, but in the spiritual sky the Lord is served by millions of goddesses of fortune. Nor is it that God is asking their favor. We may ask a favor of the goddess of fortune, "Dear Mother, goddess of fortune, please give me some money." Even though Kṛṣṇa does not care, the goddesses are rendering service to Him with great veneration (*sambhrama*).

In this way the *Vedas* give information: "Here is God." *Govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*. "I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord." This is real religion. Real religion means knowing God, knowing where God is and what He is doing. Thus we must receive all information from Vedic literature.

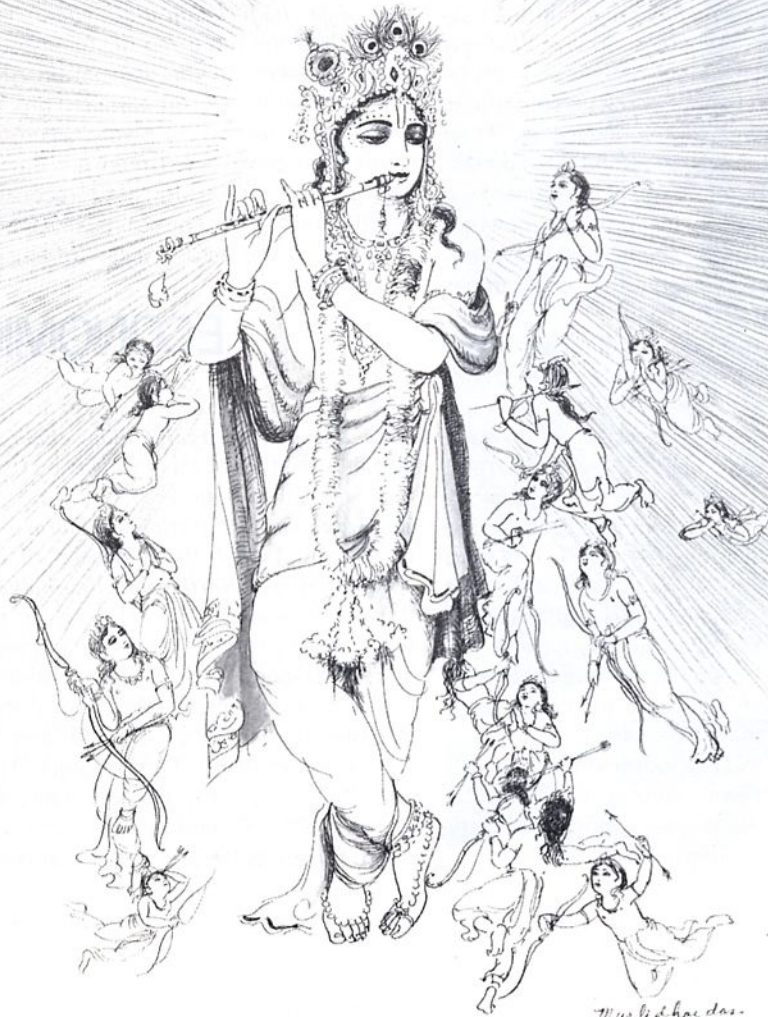
*veṅuṁ kvaṇantam aravinda-dalāyatākṣaṁ
barhāvataṁsam asitāmbuda-sundarāṅgam
kandarpa-koṭi-kamanīya-viśeṣa-śobhaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, who has blossoming eyes like lotus petals, whose head is decked with peacock feathers, whose body is the figure of beauty tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and whose unique loveliness charms millions of Cupids." (Bs. 5.30)

In this way we learn that God is engaged in playing His flute, and that His eyes look just like the petals of a lotus flower, and that He is so beautiful that He can defeat millions upon millions of Cupids. Thus He is called Madana-mohana. He is so attractive that even Madana (Cupid) is attracted to Him. Cupid attracts everyone, but He attracts Cupid. That is the meaning of Madana-mohana. And Rādhārāṇī is Madana-mohana-mohinī, for She attracts Madana-mohana. Here, then, is God—what do people know of Him?

DAY AND NIGHT

Dharmasya hy āpavargyasya nārtho'rthāya. Generally people go to church, mosque and temple just to beg bread. "Oh, God, give us our daily bread." Thus everyone goes, Hindus, Moslems, Christians, etc.—they all go to church or mosque or temple just to beg some material profit. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says: *dharmasya hy āpavargyasya nārtho'rthā-yopakalpatē*. That which is not meant for any material gain is real religion. *Na arthāya*. *Artha* means material gains, and *paramārtha* means spiritual gains. *Nārthāya*. "If I don't get money," everyone says, "how shall I live?" Of course we should get money, but that money should not be our whole aim and objective of life. *Yāvad artha-prayojanam*. We can





"No time, sir." The freedom every man strives so hard to achieve cannot be had by trying to conquer material nature.

receive as much money as we require to maintain the body; that is not forbidden. But why do we labor so hard all day and night? In New York, London or any other modern city we find so many buses running at all hours. It is a nice arrangement, but often there are no passengers. Nonetheless these buses are made to work hard, to come here and go there quickly. *Divā cārthehayā rājan kuṭumbabhareṇa vā*. This materialistic way of life means sleeping at night and snoring (zzzzz), and getting a woman and having sex. And that is all. *Nidrayā hriyate naktam vyavāyena ca vā vayaḥ*. There is either sex or snoring. And *divā cārthehayā rājan*: in the daytime one simply has to wonder, "Where is money? Where is money? Where is money?" Then we get money and run to the store. *Kuṭumbabhareṇa vā*. Then we purchase something, and when we purchase something, our money goes. Then night comes, and again it is time for sex. If we ask a person who is thus engaged where his time is for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he says, "No time, sir." This is civilization, a civilization of rascals. It is simply a waste of time: *śrama eva hi kevalam*.

Although the human life is so valuable that one can get out of the *pavarga* of hard labor, foaming at the mouth, fear and death, no one cares about it. This is because extrication from such life is so difficult for most people. They think, "Oh, let us die. What is that? After death there is nothing." So-called great philosophers and professors adhere to such a view, and all this is going on in the name of civilization and advancement of education. The politicians and religious leaders have no knowledge, and yet they are leading the public. They are all rascals and fools. A rascal is one who has no knowledge. One who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can challenge all such rascals, be they so-called great philosophers, professors or whatever. What knowledge do they have? Their knowledge is simply animal knowledge, for animals work very hard simply to gratify their senses. Real civilization, however, means stopping such animalistic life.

Of course, everyone wants to stop working hard. We all have the tendency to want to get away. As soon as materialists get a free moment, they immediately want to leave the city and go to some nice peaceful bungalow in the country.

Everyone wants this, but to get such so-called peace one has to work very hard. Why don't we therefore make life simple? We can live anywhere and live by nature's way. There are trees and meadows, and we can live there, keep some cows and get milk, produce some grains and fruits and be happy. In this way our whole economic question can be solved. Why do we have to bother so much with factories and great workshops and large ships and vans going here and there. These are all simply complications. Everything is trying to move so fast. *Karma-bandha*: that is the entanglement of *karma*. *Sat-saṅga chāḍi' kainu asate vilāsa*. The word *sat-saṅga* indicates that one has given up the association of the Supreme and has taken to the association of material life, thereby becoming entangled in *karma*. Thus the process of destruction and construction begins again. But we no sooner get something constructed than it is damaged or destroyed, and we get the opportunity to reconstruct again, and again it will be finished. The real business of human life is learning how to end this hard struggle for existence.

ECONOMICS

Our real business is to listen to Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa says: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*. "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me." In this way all our problems will be solved. *Dharmasya hy āpavargasya nārtho'rthāya*. *Dharmasya* does not mean material gain, but if there is need of material gain, there is accommodation. *Nārthasya dharmaikāntasya*. *Dharma-eka*: those who are actually religious do not look on money as sense gratification. The more money materialists get, the more they spend for sense gratification. One may live humbly with a small income of \$500, but if that is not sufficient, he struggles harder to get \$1,000, and he immediately takes another apartment which is larger. Then he is not satisfied with that apartment, and eventually he has to work harder to make \$2,000, and with that he gets another apartment which is even better, but soon that is not sufficient either. A

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme shelter of the soul.

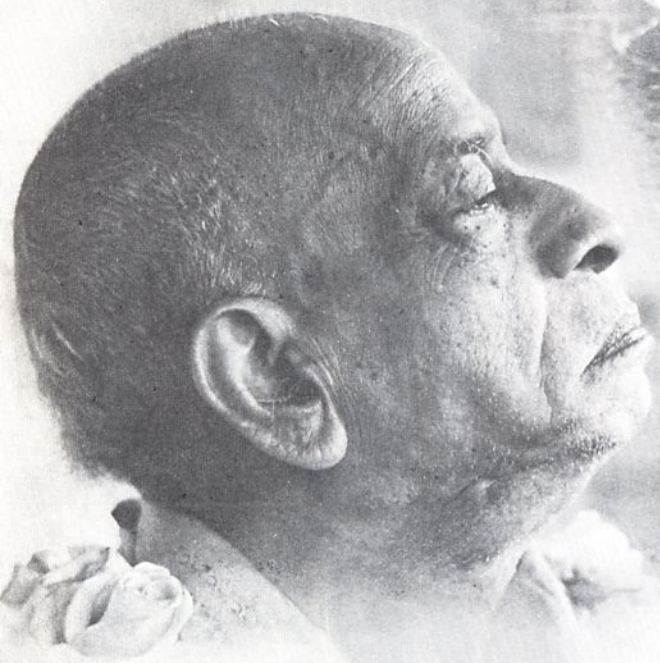
car is needed, and as soon as one car is bought, another is needed. In this way the more money we get, the more we increase our program for sense gratification. Of course money is *required*, but we should *not increase our artificial wants*. We should always keep in aim our view that the purpose in life is to get out of the clutches of material nature. The modern theory of economics increases artificial desires. The bank will say, "Take money from me and purchase a car." And the car manufacturer will show us a new car every year. In this way we become entangled, and the more we earn, the more debts we pay. All this is going on.

We increase our wants, and we become embarrassed when we have to get the money. We struggle hard to get the money and thus increase our sense gratification. *Nārthasya dharmaikāntasya*. But for those who are actually religious, more money or income (*artha*) does not mean sense gratification. The religious man thinks, "Oh, I have more money. Now let me spend it for Kṛṣṇa." That is *dharmā*. Here is a movement to promote Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and those who have money can help push this movement forward. Unfortunately, the wealthy spend their money just to purchase a dozen motor cars. *Nārthasya dharmaikāntasya kāmo lābhīya hi smṛtaḥ*. *Kama* means sense gratification. That is how most people waste their money and their lives—increasing sense gratification.

We have already discussed that pure devotional service of the Lord is automatically followed by perfect knowledge and detachment from material existence. Yet there are those who consider that all occupational engagements, including those of religion, are meant for material gain. Such people come to the temple or church and give some contribution, but their aim is that by contributing one dollar they will get a hundred dollars in return. In other words, church is an easy way of earning money. The majority of people do not come to understand what Kṛṣṇa, God, actually is. Whenever they put money in the collection box, they think, "This will increase." Of course it will increase because Kṛṣṇa supplies all things, but that should not be the motive of one's worship. We should not make business with Kṛṣṇa. We should try to serve Kṛṣṇa and sacrifice everything. Then our life will be successful.

If we want to make business, Kṛṣṇa will also give us business. *Ye yathā mām*. If we want money from Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa will give us money. But what will we do with that money? Because we do not know how to spend it, we will simply engage it for sense gratification. In this way we become implicated again. Therefore Kṛṣṇa renders His devotee a special favor. When one is trying to become Kṛṣṇa conscious but at the same time wants to have some material enjoyment, Kṛṣṇa takes away whatever material enjoyment is there. Kṛṣṇa knows that this is the best course to take with a man who is sincere but who, due to his bad habits, wants some material enjoyment. Kṛṣṇa takes all material enjoyment away and makes the man completely free. When one is thus freed and helpless, he takes shelter of Kṛṣṇa. That is Kṛṣṇa's special favor. END





NECTAR FOR THE SWANLIKE MEN

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THE FIRST INITIATION

Śrīla Prabhupāda Opens the Door

from the book,
THE HARE KṚṢṆA EXPLOSION,
a reminiscence of the early
days of the Hare KṚṣṇa Movement.
by

HAYAGRĪVA DĀSA
(ISKCON New Vr̥ndāvana)



Photo by Arthur Tcholakian

On September 8, 1966, we celebrated Lord Kṛṣṇa's birthday (*Janmāṣṭamī*) on New York's Lower East Side by fasting all day and chanting until midnight. About twelve of us bought beads for chanting, a hundred and eight red, round beads the size of marbles. Śrīla Prabhupāda told us that they represented the hundred and eight *gopīs* (cowherd girls) who sported with Lord Kṛṣṇa. I distinctly remember on a beautifully clear September day standing in the patio behind the 26 Second Avenue storefront temple stringing beads and chanting. "Wait till you string them," my old friend Walley had told me. Then he added: "You'll get high." And I did. I tied one end of the string to the windowbars and slid

each shining bead up the string and then knotted it. Everyone was talking then about initiation.

"Exactly what is it?" I asked Walley, who seemed to know more about what was going on than I did.

"It's just a formality," he said matter-of-factly. "You accept Svāmījī as your spiritual master." (His Divine Grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was then only known to us as "the Svāmī" or "Svāmījī.")

"What does that entail?" I asked.

"Nobody's very sure," he said. "But everybody's taking it. In India it's standard practice. Don't you think you want to take him as a spiritual master?"

I stopped stringing my beads and wondered. We had only been attend-

ing Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures on *Gītā* for a little more than a month, and although I was still too immersed in the hip New York zeitgeist to know why, just on the basis of hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, I felt that I wanted Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The all-inclusive, unifying philosophy of the *Gītā* attracted me, and certainly Kṛṣṇa was a very seductive personality who brought out the *gopī* in everybody. I wanted to participate in the bliss that Śrīla Prabhupāda emanated every moment that I saw him, but I was confused by the idea of an "initiation."

"I don't know," I said at length. "He would seem to be a good spiritual master—whatever that is. I mean—I like him and his teachings a lot, so I guess in a way he's already my spiritual master. I just don't understand how it would change the situation."

"Neither do I," Walley said. "I guess it doesn't. It's just a formality."

Thus, completely unaware of the significance of the ceremony, we made preparations to take the vows that would, as time passed, come to mean so much to us and which indeed were to become the most important single factor in our lives. We bought long cotton cloth which we dyed saffron for robes. A couple of people shaved their heads, but most of us didn't, as it wasn't required. We felt that that was really going overboard.

That Janmāṣṭamī night, Śrīla Prabhupāda told us stories about Lord Kṛṣṇa's advent and then spoke of the necessity of purification for spiritual advancement.

"It is not enough merely to chant holy words," he said. "One must be pure inside and out. Chanting in purity brings spiritual advancement. Man becomes impure because he wants to enjoy material pleasure, but the impure can become pure by following Kṛṣṇa, for all works are transcendental when they are done for Kṛṣṇa. Beginners in Kṛṣṇa consciousness have a tendency to relax their efforts in a short time, but to advance spiritually we must resist this temptation and continually increase our efforts and devotion. We should continue to purify ourselves both in action and thought. For this reason it is beneficial to associate with others who are also working in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And therefore we are forming this Society. It is difficult for a beginner to keep his mind on Kṛṣṇa if he associates with skeptics. To improve spiritually you must rise above even the mode of goodness. Pure goodness is not possible in this material world, but one who lives in the world of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not affected by any material contamination."

Considering our associates at the time, "skeptics" was a very bland euphemism. Śrīla Prabhupāda could have more precisely used the word "demons," but he was far too kind to offend us. He then informed us that there were certain rules and conditions to be followed in the chanting of the *mantras* and that in the discipline there were four basic restrictions: no meat-eating, intoxication, illicit sex and gambling. Gambling and meat-eating seemed simple enough to shuck, but I feared that the other two would require some work. I finally resolved not to worry about it, concluding that chanting and hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda talk about *Bhagavad-gītā* were most important. If I kept chanting, I thought, my sins would decay in time.

Your *karma*, sinful activities, are like a revolving fan," Śrīla Prabhupāda explained. "By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa you pull out the plug. The fan may still revolve for a while after the plug is pulled, but since it is getting no more juice, it will soon stop."

hope after all. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda dropped a bomb no one was expecting. At the morning lecture, someone asked him about the significance of initiation, and he answered, "Initiation means you accept a spiritual master and agree to worship him as God."

There was a stunned, thoughtful silence. Śrīla Prabhupāda sat very still, his head high in the air, awaiting further questions. When there were none, he got up and walked out. After he was gone, I turned to Walley. Everyone suddenly started talking at once. Walley shook his head.

"My mind's just been blown," he said.

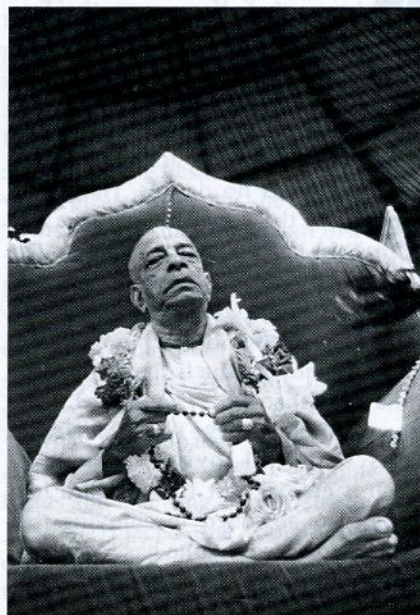
"Everybody's mind," I said. For over six weeks we had been listening to Śrīla Prabhupāda stress that whenever anyone claimed to be God he was to be considered to be "dog." After much confused debate, Walley and I went upstairs to Śrīla Prabhupāda's apartment and asked what he meant.

"Does that mean you're supposed to recognize the spiritual master as God?" I asked.

"That means he is due all the respect of God, being God's representative," he said calmly and simply.

"Then he's not God."

"No," he said. "God is God. The spiritual master is His representative. As such, he is as good as God because he can deliver God to the sincere disciple. Is that clear?"



It was clear, and we hurriedly went to tell the others. Thus from the beginning Śrīla Prabhupāda made a special point to distinguish himself from the *māyāvādīs*, or impersonalists, who identify themselves with God by merging and denying personality. For Śrīla Prabhupāda, individuality was eternal; God, the spiritual master and the disciple were all individual persons, and this individuality was retained even after the highest liberation. "Otherwise," Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled, "there is no question of relationship, of reciprocation in love."

None of us had ever before chanted as many rounds of Hare Kṛṣṇa as we did on Kṛṣṇa's birthday, nor had any of us fasted so long (a whole day!). Understandably we all felt like the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya. Just a few minutes before midnight, Charles and Stanley, who had been helping Śrīla Prabhupāda in the kitchen, brought down the *prasādam* (food offered to Kṛṣṇa), and we all ate heartily. No one worried about not understanding the philosophy or committing countless offenses. All we knew was that when we went to see Śrīla Prabhupāda we had fun. He was a sage, grandfather, spiritual master and favorite uncle all rolled into one, and although by solar calculations he was over seventy, he was younger than any of us. As he sat and ate with us, chatted and laughed, we little knew how much we or thousands of others would come to love him as the only truly loveable person in our lives, as our only link to Kṛṣṇa in a dark and guideless universe.

The next afternoon, following Śrīla Prabhupāda's directions, we prepared for our initiation by getting soil, sticks, flowers, clarified butter, sesame seeds and barley, varied dyes and bananas—all, we were told, for the ceremony. There were, auspiciously enough, twelve of us to receive initiation as Śrīla Prabhupāda's first disciples in the West.

Some of us wore robes that night for the first time. Śrīla Prabhupāda showed us how to wrap them around and tie them. My material was unusually long, and I had some difficulty keeping the *dhoti* from falling down. Śrīla Prabhupāda pulled the knot in-

credibly tight, and I sucked in air. He was like the captain of a ship making sure all lifelines were secure, determined not to lose a man in the ocean of *māyā*. He expressed approval of the saffron turtleneck sweatshirts we bought on Orchard Street to match the robes, and after we were all dressed he led us into his altar room and showed us how to put on *tilaka*. We took great care in trying to mix the fuller's earth in our palm with water, just as he showed us, and then putting it on our foreheads with a little mirror. It was difficult to make the perfect V as Śrīla Prabhupāda did, and we wound up with smeared variations. Seeing my difficulty, Śrīla Prabhupāda swiftly ran his finger down my forehead. I looked in the mirror and saw a perfectly formed *tilaka*. "My Guru Mahārāja would never use a mirror," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. "And his *tilaka* was always perfect. He would never see a disciple unless the disciple was wearing *tilaka*." We looked at one another and nodded reverently. It all seemed mysterious to us and incredibly involved, but somehow Śrīla Prabhupāda made it seem perfectly natural and proper.

No one knew anything about the ritual except that there was to be a fire sacrifice. An ancient Vedic fire sacrifice on Second Avenue! This in itself was enough to captivate us. A small mound of earth was arranged in the center of the room and beside it were placed sticks for the fire, bananas, ghee, sesame seeds, barley grain and colored dyes. Śrīla Prabhupāda sat on the floor in front of the mound and indicated that we should sit on the other side. His apartment was small—only two rooms—and the twelve of us filled all the space, sitting crosslegged, knee to knee, on the floor. Some guests, whom we had asked, were in the other room looking curiously through the opened door and partition. We chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa softly so as not to disturb the neighbors—it was around eight in the evening—and then Śrīla Prabhupāda lit incense and began to recite the Sanskrit *mantras* prescribed for the initiation ceremony. He then indicated that we were all to chant *japa*, Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, on our beads, and we began at

once, making the small room buzz like a beehive while Śrīla Prabhupāda took a spoon in his left hand and put water thrice in his right hand from a silver goblet. He then sipped the water, placed one more spoonful in his right hand and flicked it on the floor and then passed the goblet and spoon around for us to follow suit. We tried to follow carefully, but some of us placed the water in the wrong hand or sipped it at the wrong time, and he patiently corrected us. After we got the knack of it, he began chanting: *om apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā/ yaḥ smaret puṇḍarīkākṣam savāhyābhyanantaraḥ śuciḥ/śrī viṣṇu śrī viṣṇu śrī viṣṇu*. We tried our best to pronounce the words after him, not knowing what they meant. Later we learned the translation: "Unpurified or purified, or even having passed through all situations, one who remembers the lotus-eyed Supreme Personality of Godhead is cleansed without and within." After the Sanskrit was repeated thrice, Śrīla Prabhupāda raised his hand to indicate silence. Then he began to speak, telling us that we should never worry amidst adversities, for we should always be mindful of the fact that Lord Kṛṣṇa is always driving our chariot.

Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna sat in the same chariot," he said. "But Arjuna knew that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme. We are also in the same chariot with Kṛṣṇa, and we too should know that He is the Supreme. Even in the midst of the material world Kṛṣṇa is not attached. He does not act out of need because He has no desires. He is the *Paramātmā*, the Supersoul, and we are *jīvātmā*, the individual fragmental souls. In the *Upaniṣads* these are compared to two birds sitting in the same tree, which is the tree of the body. One bird, *jīvātmā*, is enjoying the fruits of the tree while the other bird, *Paramātmā*, just sits and watches. These two birds have a transcendental loving relationship which is eternal, but the one bird has become so absorbed in enjoying the fruits of this tree that he has forgotten this relationship. Thus we should give up all material desires and return to

Kṛṣṇa, and we should also be mindful that whatever we do, we do with His permission. If we want to turn away from Him, He allows us; and if we want to suffer, He lets us. Now we must realize that we are suffering, and we must ask why. When we begin to question our suffering, then it is time to approach a spiritual master who is conversant with the transcendental nature and is fully engaged in spiritual matters twenty-four hours a day. This spiritual master will teach you that you are actually qualitatively one with Kṛṣṇa. When *jīvātmā* knows that he is not this body, he becomes like *Paramātmā*. *Jīvātmā* is wonderful, but not quite equal to God. The quality is the same, but the quantity is different. As the body is maintained by the individual soul, the entire universe is maintained by God or the Supersoul. I am not the Supreme; I merely illumine this body. But the Supreme illumines the entire universe."

His talk continued for about thirty minutes. Our legs ached, and we soon found ourselves trying to modify our cross-legged positions, but at no time could we take our eyes off him. We tried to catch every word, as though they were jewels coming from his lotus lips. Finally he emphasized the importance of our following the four regulative principles: refraining from illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling, the four trademarks of this age of Kali, an age of quarrel and ignorance. Then, one by one, we handed him our beads, and he began to count on them. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The drone of the twelve voices, led by the spiritual master, filled the tiny room. There were twelve sets of beads, and the chanting alone lasted over an hour. I forget who was the first to receive his beads after they had been chanted on by Śrīla Prabhupāda. I remember that Walley went before me. Śrīla Prabhupāda told him that his name was to be Umāpati. He returned to his seat, looked at me and smiled broadly. "It was wonderful," Umāpati told me afterwards. "Receiving the beads was so wonderful." Then Śrīla Prabhupāda gestured to me, and I went forward

and handed him the large red beads. While he was chanting on them, someone tied two strands of small wooden *kunti* beads around my neck. These were considered “dog collars,” indicating us to be Kṛṣṇa’s property. After chanting the hundred and eight Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantras*, Śrīla Prabhupāda again motioned me to come forward. He then extended the beautiful red beads toward me. “You start here,” he said, “and around like this to here. Don’t cross over. Then back around like this, sixteen times daily, and your name is Hayagrīva.” I took the beads, held them to my heart and bowed to the floor before him. “*Nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine,*” I recited. “I offer my obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.” While I was bowed, it seemed as though everything was getting lighter and brighter. Years later I learned that the *guru*, the spiritual master, takes on the *karma* or sinful reactions of his disciples with the initiation. In actuality I was much lighter; my soul was lifted of its heavy burden of lifetimes of abominable activity. “The word *guru* means heavy,” Śrīla Prabhupāda once told me, giving no further explanation, leaving it to me to understand why. And of course everything seemed to go white; our universe was brightened by the torchlight of knowledge which opened our eyes which had for so long been blinded by the darkness of ignorance. As the prisoners emerged from Socrates’ allegorical cave, they were temporarily blinded by the brightness of the real world, which they had never seen or imagined. We too were cave-dwellers in the earth’s darkness, and Śrīla Prabhupāda came down and led us out.

After all twelve sets of beads were chanted, Śrīla Prabhupāda began sprinkling the different colored dyes up and down and sideways on the mound of earth before him, and we all strained to watch every mysterious move he made. He picked up the twigs and wood splinters, dipped them in

clarified butter, then lit them with a candle, and so proceeded to build a small fire on the mound. The sesame seeds, barley and clarified butter were then mixed in a bowl, and the bowl was passed around for the new disciples to take handfuls. Śrīla Prabhupāda then began to recite Sanskrit prayers, and we tried to repeat the words after him. “*Vande’haṁ śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca.*” “I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master and unto the feet of all Vaiṣṇavas.” The prayers continued as the major teachers in the disciplic line were named. Each prayer was ended by three *svāhā*’s, and as we chanted *svāhā*, we threw the sesame seeds and barley onto the fire. Śrīla Prabhupāda kept pouring butter, sesame seed and barley on the fire and piling up wood until the mound was blazing. It seemed the prayers would never end. As the fire got larger, the room got hotter. Finally the prayers stopped. Bananas were distributed amongst us, and Śrīla Prabhupāda indicated that we were to place these on the fire. We did this, and the bananas began to smoulder, and the smoke thickened. Some of us ran coughing into the other room. The guests were retreating to the hallway. Śrīla Prabhupāda simply poured the remaining butter and seeds onto the fire. I began to worry that someone in the apartment building would call the fire engines or the police, and I imagined the police and firemen walking in and seeing us in strange robes with *tilaka* and beads and smiling Śrīla Prabhupāda, unaffected amidst all the smoke, sitting beside the fire, beaming with pleasure at his new devotees. “This kind of smoke does not disturb,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said as Jānakī and Mukunda started opening windows. “Other smoke disturbs, but this kind of smoke does not.” That was understandable; he was burning up all our sins.

Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled broadly and stood up. He began clapping his hands and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa loudly. Then he placed one foot before the other and began to dance beside the fire. We also danced and chanted, and the smoke abated. Śrīla Prabhupāda

finally stopped chanting, mixed some ashes with the remnants of butter and placed a little on our foreheads. I asked him the meaning of the spiritual names.

“‘Hayagrīva’ is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who comes in the Satya-yuga, the Golden Age,” he said. “*Haya* means horse, and *grīva* means head. In this incarnation Kṛṣṇa has the head of a horse and the body like a bird with wings.” It seemed that Hayagrīva, like the Greek Pegasus, was the incarnation of poetic inspiration; later I learned that when He breathed, the Vedic hymns issued from His nostrils. “Not that you are Hayagrīva,” Śrīla Prabhupāda quickly warned. “But Hayagrīva *dāsa*. *Dāsa* means servant, servant of Hayagrīva. We are all servants of God. And *brahmacārī* means student living in celibacy.” In this way Śrīla Prabhupāda explained all the names—Stradiśa, Rāyarāma, Ravīndrasvarūpa, Satyavrata, Mukunda, Jānakī, Umāpati, Acyutānanda and a couple of others lost to my memory.

In retrospect, recalling that evening of only six Septembers ago, I can picture few details as clearly as taking my beads and bowing down before Śrīla Prabhupāda. All but that one act seems cloudy. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in Kali-yuga men have short memories. But even the shortest memory could never forget experiencing such contact with one on this earth so beloved of Kṛṣṇa. As I now consider that evening, I am left with the indelible impression of a vastly superior being presiding over a kind of kindergarten. Like a sly old master, he had, in a sense, tricked us into the classroom by convincing us that we naturally wanted to love Kṛṣṇa and that only he could show us how. That evening he was truly a master, the greatest of spiritual masters, opening hitherto hidden and sealed doors and ushering us into realms filled with light. END

The Transcendental Pastimes of KṚṢṆA

THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, personally appeared in India 5,000 years ago. As the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening, so Kṛṣṇa, who is God Himself, appears from time to time to display His wonderful transcendental activities, which are unequalled by anyone, anywhere, at any time. As our story begins, Kṛṣṇa is in Vṛndāvana, His boyhood home. He and His elder brother, Balarāma, are leaving for the city of Mathurā with Their uncle Akrūra to attend a great ceremony, along with Their father, Nanda Mahārāja, and the cowherd men of Vṛndāvana.

MY DEAR FATHER, PLEASE COME WITH US TO MATHURĀ TO ATTEND THIS GREAT CEREMONY; AND BRING ALL THE COWHERD MEN AND BOYS WITH YOU.

COWHERDS! PREPARE GIFTS OF MILK, YOGURT AND BUTTER TO BRING TO MATHURĀ. EVERYONE BE READY TO LEAVE BY SUNRISE TOMORROW.



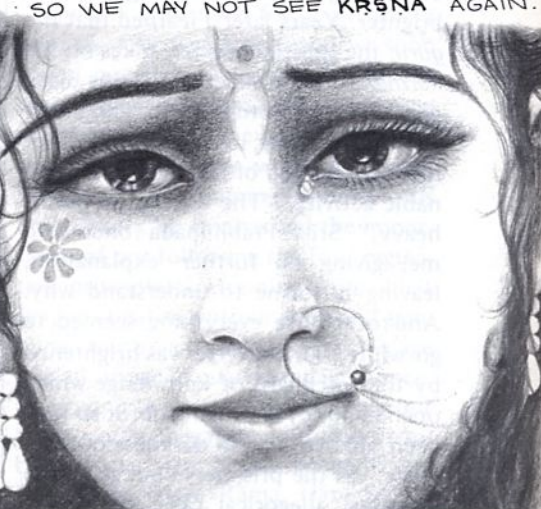
BUT THE GOPI'S, KṚṢṆA'S BEAUTIFUL COWHERD GIRL FRIENDS, WERE OVERWHELMED WITH ANXIETY WHEN THEY SAW THAT KṚṢṆA WAS LEAVING.

IN THE BEGINNING WE APPRECIATED YOUR GIVING US THESE EYES TO SEE THE BEAUTIFUL FACE OF KṚṢṆA; BUT NOW, LIKE A FOOLISH CREATURE, YOU ARE TRYING TO TAKE OUT OUR EYES SO WE MAY NOT SEE KṚṢṆA AGAIN.

O PROVIDENCE! YOU ARE SO CRUEL, YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO SHOW MERCY TO OTHERS. BY YOUR PLAN FRIENDS MEET, BUT WITHOUT FULFILLING THEIR DESIRES YOU SEPARATE THEM.

IT IS VERY ABOMINABLE THAT YOU ARRANGE TO SHOW US BEAUTIFUL KṚṢṆA, WHOSE BLuish CURLING HAIR BEAUTIFIES HIS BROAD FOREHEAD AND SHARP NOSE, WHO IS ALWAYS SMILING TO MINIMIZE ALL CONTENTION IN THIS MATERIAL WORLD, AND THEN SEPARATE HIM FROM US.

O PROVIDENCE! YOU ARE SO CRUEL, BUT MOST ASTONISHINGLY, YOU APPEAR NOW AS "AKRURA" WHICH MEANS "NOT CRUEL"

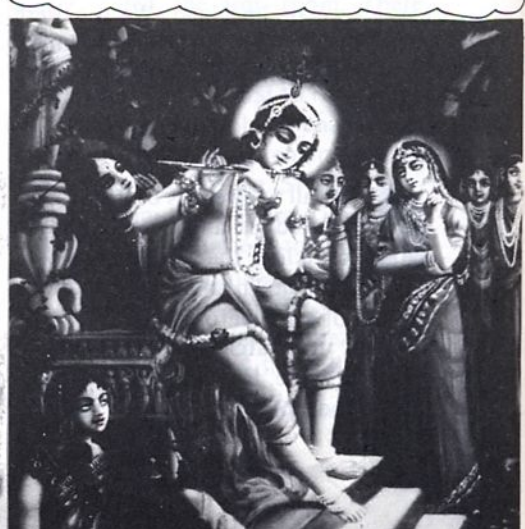
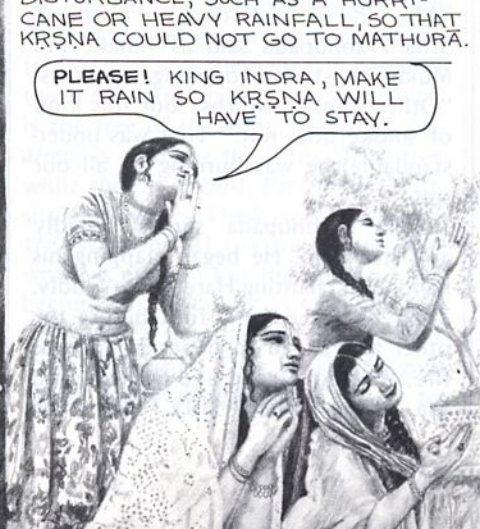


THE GOPI'S CRIED ALL NIGHT BEFORE THE DEPARTURE OF KṚṢṆA

THEY EVEN PRAYED TO THE DEMI-GODS TO CREATE SOME NATURAL DISTURBANCE, SUCH AS A HURRICANE OR HEAVY RAINFALL, SO THAT KṚṢṆA COULD NOT GO TO MATHURĀ.

THEY BEGAN TO REMEMBER THEIR LOVING PASTIMES WITH KṚṢṆA.

PLEASE! KING INDRA, MAKE IT RAIN SO KṚṢṆA WILL HAVE TO STAY.



THEY HAD SPENT A VERY LONG NIGHT - WHICH SEEMED LIKE ONLY A MOMENT - ENGAGED IN THE RASA DANCE WITH KRŠNA.

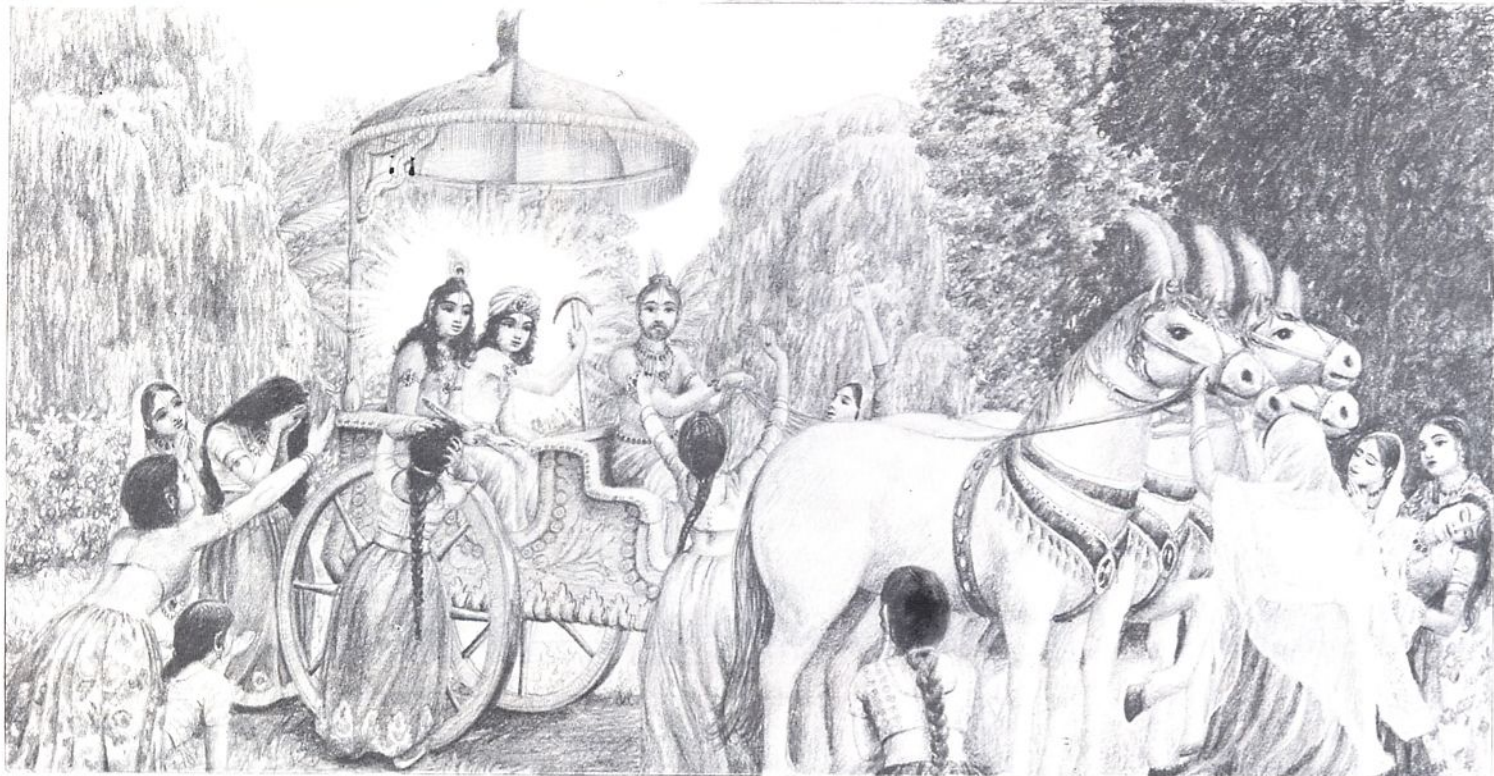


THINKING THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LIVE FOR EVEN A MOMENT IF KRŠNA LEFT, THE GOPĪS BEGAN TO PLOT HOW TO STOP HIM FROM LEAVING.

WE CAN'T LET KRŠNA GO, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO?

I KNOW! WE'LL STAND IN HIS WAY AND BLOCK THE PATH OF HIS CHARIOT.

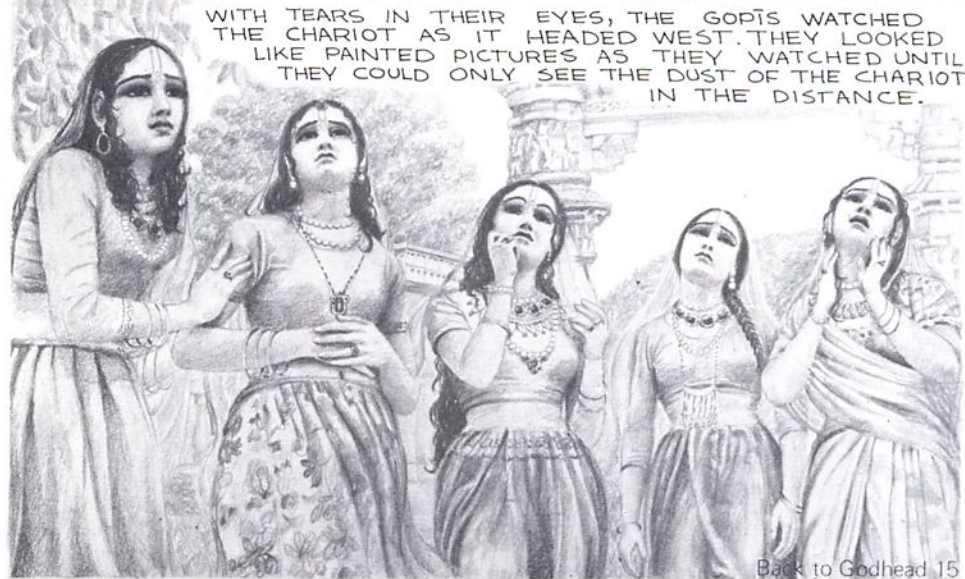
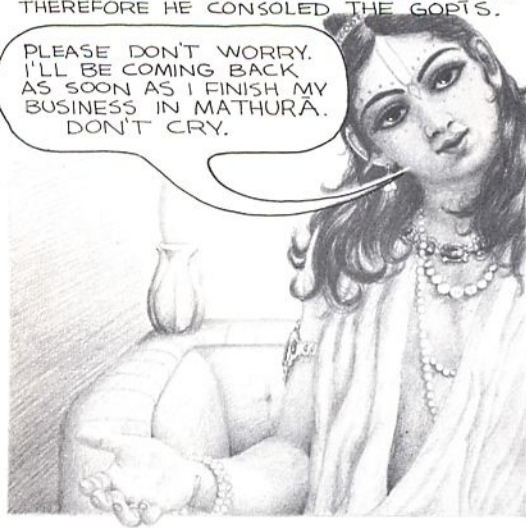
THEN HE'LL HAVE TO STAY!



KRŠNA WAS VERY MUCH AFFECTED BY SEEING THE PLIGHT OF THE GOPĪS, BUT HIS DUTY WAS TO GO TO MATHURĀ. THEREFORE HE CONSOLED THE GOPĪS.

WITH TEARS IN THEIR EYES, THE GOPĪS WATCHED THE CHARIOT AS IT HEADED WEST. THEY LOOKED LIKE PAINTED PICTURES AS THEY WATCHED UNTIL THEY COULD ONLY SEE THE DUST OF THE CHARIOT IN THE DISTANCE.

PLEASE DON'T WORRY. I'LL BE COMING BACK AS SOON AS I FINISH MY BUSINESS IN MATHURĀ. DON'T CRY.



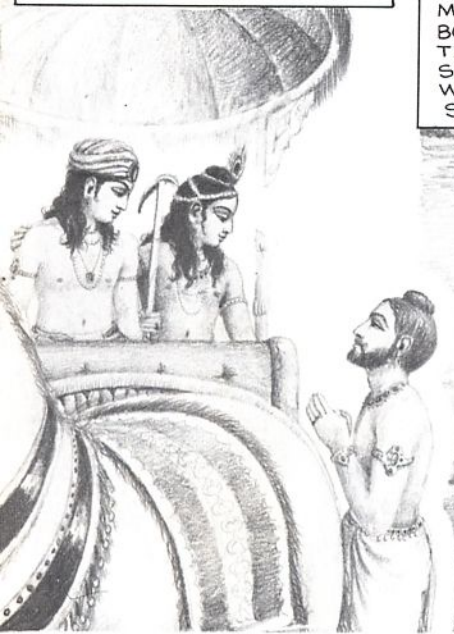
AKRŪRA, ACCOMPANIED BY LORD KRṢṂA AND BALARĀMA, DROVE WITH GREAT SPEED TOWARDS MATHURĀ, AND REACHING THE BANK OF THE YAMUNĀ RIVER, THEY STOPPED.



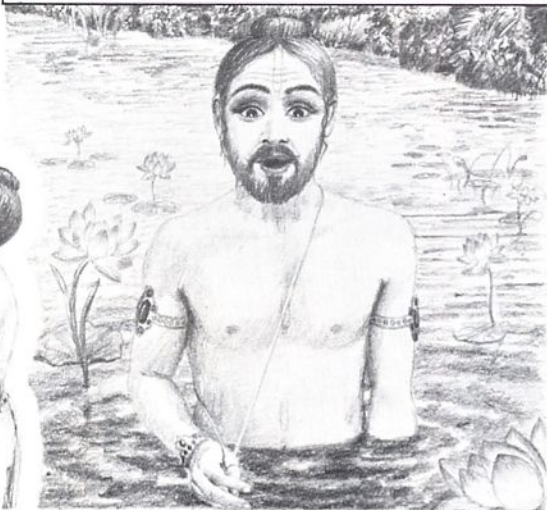
BOTH KRṢṂA AND BALARĀMA TOOK THEIR BATHS AND THEN SAT DOWN ON THE CHARIOT.



AKRŪRA THEN ASKED THEIR PERMISSION TO TAKE HIS BATH.



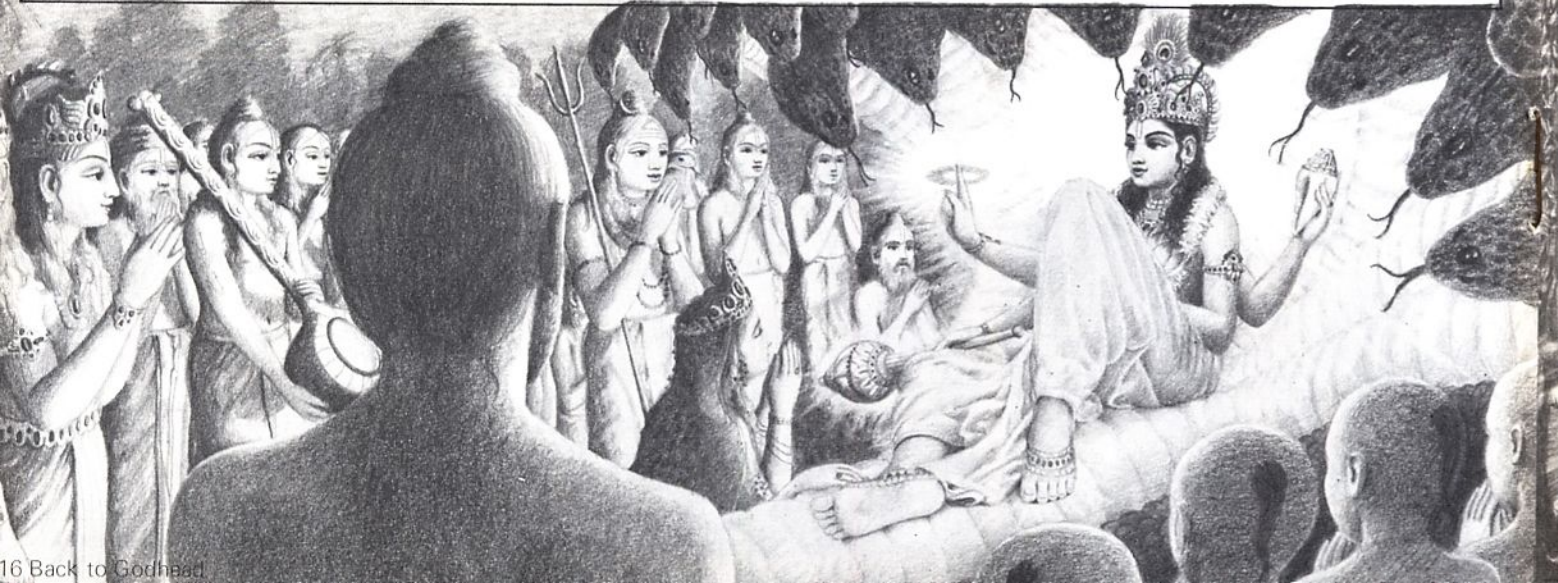
AKRŪRA WADED INTO THE RIVER UP TO HIS WAIST AND BEGAN TO SAY HIS EVENING PRAYER, THE GAYATRĪ MANTRA, WHEN SUDDENLY HE SAW BOTH KRṢṂA AND BALARĀMA WITHIN THE WATER. HE WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THEM THERE BECAUSE HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THEY WERE STILL SITTING ON THE CHARIOT.



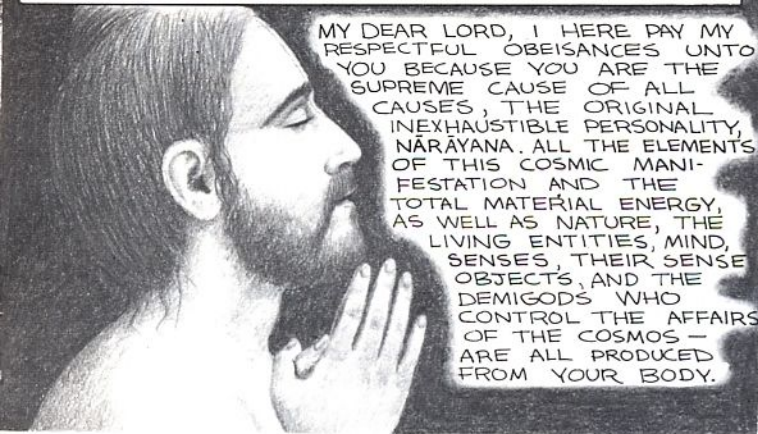
CONFUSED, HE IMMEDIATELY CAME OUT OF THE WATER TO SEE WHERE THE BOYS WERE, AND HE WAS AMAZED TO SEE THEM STILL ON THE CHARIOT.



HE THEN BEGAN TO WONDER IF HE HAD SEEN THEM IN THE WATER, SO HE WENT BACK TO THE RIVER. THIS TIME HE SAW NOT ONLY BALARĀMA AND KRṢṂA BUT ALSO ALL THE DEMIGODS AND GREAT MYSTICS. THEY WERE ALL STANDING BEFORE THE LORD, WHO WAS LYING DOWN. HE ALSO SAW THE THOUSAND-HOODED ŚEṢĀ SERPENT, HIS NECKS AS WHITE AS SNOW, ON THE CURVED LAP OF THE ŚEṢĀ SERPENT, AKRŪRA SAW KRṢṂA SITTING VERY SOBERLY, WITH FOUR HANDS, HIS EYES LIKE THE REDDISH PETALS OF THE LOTUS FLOWER.

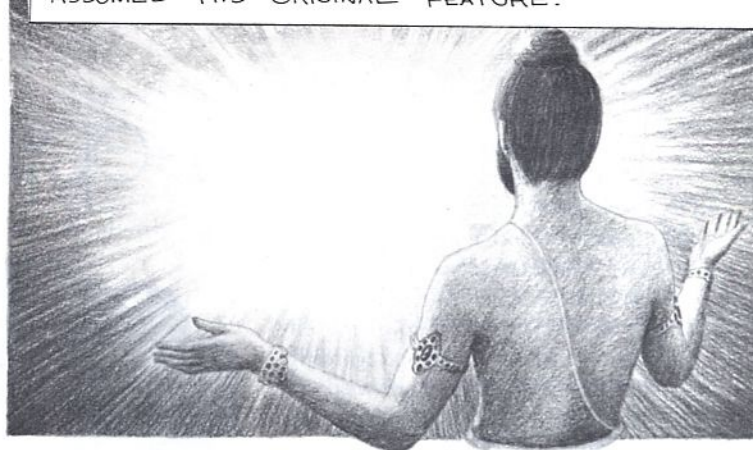


AKRŪRA BECAME OVERWHELMED WITH GREAT DEVOTION, AND ALL OVER HIS BODY THERE WAS TRANSCENDENTAL SHIVERING. FOR A MOMENT HE WAS BEWILDERED, BUT THEN HE BEGAN TO PRAY....

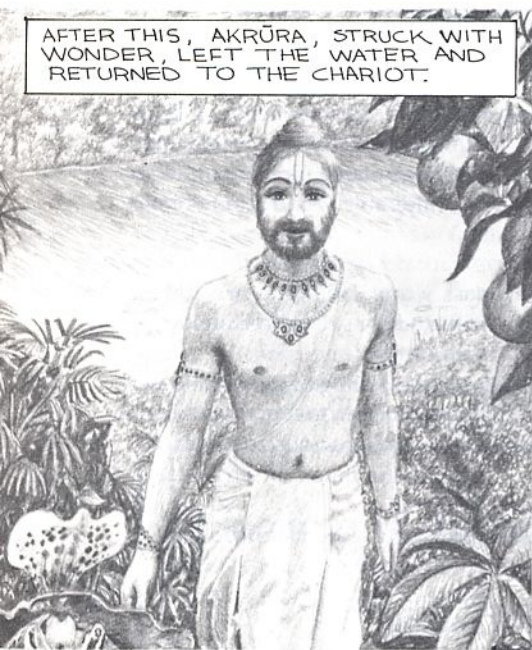


MY DEAR LORD, I HERE PAY MY RESPECTFUL OBEISANCES UNTO YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE THE SUPREME CAUSE OF ALL CAUSES, THE ORIGINAL INEXHAUSTIBLE PERSONALITY, NĀRĀYANA. ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THIS COSMIC MANIFESTATION AND THE TOTAL MATERIAL ENERGY, AS WELL AS NATURE, THE LIVING ENTITIES, MIND, SENSES, THEIR SENSE OBJECTS, AND THE DEMIGODS WHO CONTROL THE AFFAIRS OF THE COSMOS — ARE ALL PRODUCED FROM YOUR BODY.

WHILE AKRŪRA WAS OFFERING HIS PRAYERS TO THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD, THE LORD DISAPPEARED FROM THE WATER, EXACTLY AS A DRAMATIC ACTOR CHANGES HIS DRESS AND ASSUMES HIS ORIGINAL FEATURE.



AFTER THIS, AKRŪRA, STRUCK WITH WONDER, LEFT THE WATER AND RETURNED TO THE CHARIOT.

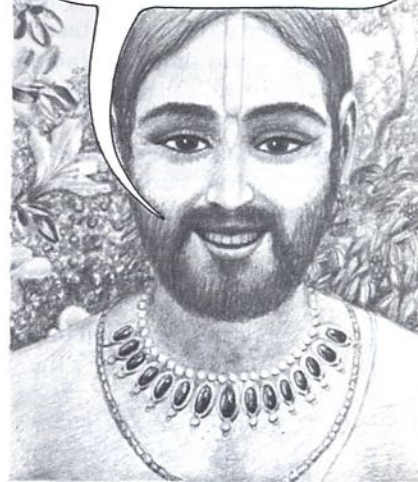


WHEN HE RETURNED, KRṢṂA SPOKE TO HIM.

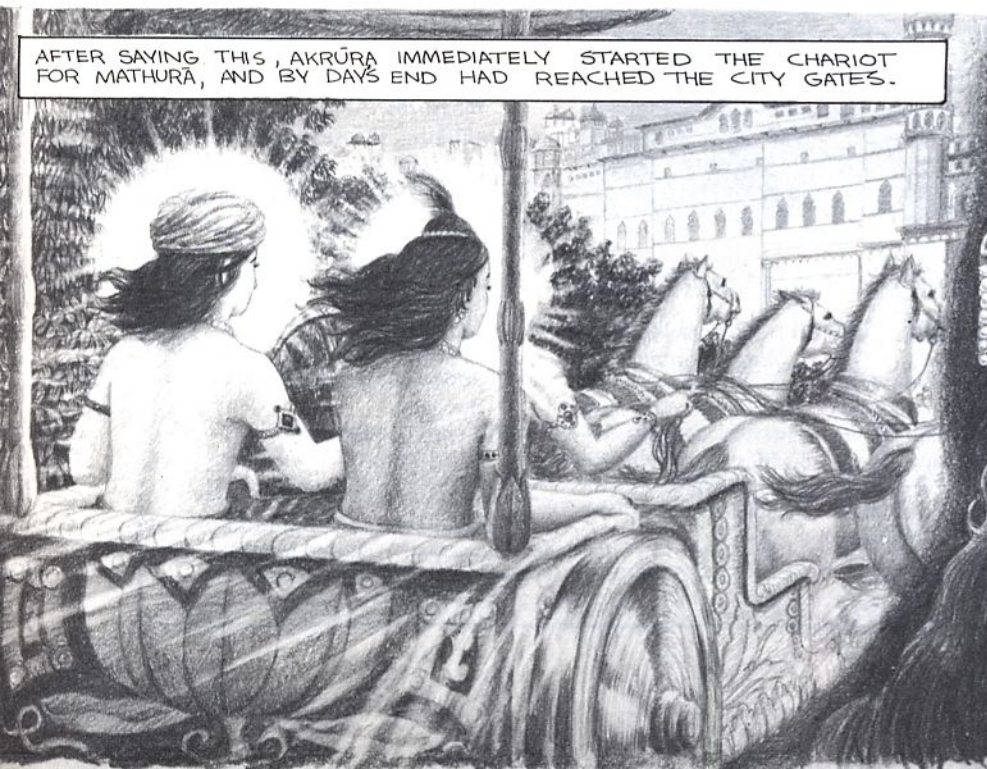
HAVE YOU SEEN SOMETHING WONDERFUL IN WATER, OR IN SPACE?



MY DEAR LORD, ALL THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING IN THIS WORLD COME FROM YOU. SO WHEN I HAVE SEEN YOU, WHAT WONDERFUL THINGS HAVE I NOT SEEN?



AFTER SAYING THIS, AKRŪRA IMMEDIATELY STARTED THE CHARIOT FOR MATHURĀ, AND BY DAYS END HAD REACHED THE CITY GATES.



MEANWHILE, WITHIN THE CITY GATES, IN HIS ROYAL CHAMBERS, THE EVIL-MINDED RULER OF MATHURĀ, KING KĀMSA, WAS CONSTANTLY THINKING OF HIS PLANS TO KILL KRṢṂA AND BALARĀMA.... TO BE CONTINUED



O Gopīnātha, Lord of the *gopīs*, please hear my prayer. I am a materialistic rascal, always full of lust. I have no good qualifications.

O Gopīnātha! You are my only resort. As Your eternal servant, I take shelter of Your lotus feet.

O Gopīnātha! How can I uplift myself? I don't know anything regarding devotional service. I am weak-minded and have fallen into a pit of illusion.

O Gopīnātha! Everything here is but Your illusory energy. I have no power or pure knowledge, and I am bound by a material body.

O Gopīnātha! I desire to remain always at Your lotus feet. Please take this sinner, weeping and weeping, and show me Your mercy.

O Gopīnātha! You can do anything. You have purified the most wicked by Your power, but who is more wicked than me?

O Gopīnātha! You are the vessel of kindness. You enter into this mundane world and display Your sublime pastimes for the sake of the fallen souls.

O Gopīnātha! I am the sinner of sinners. Yet I sit waiting for You to take me, for many demons have attained Your lotus feet.

O Gopīnātha! Destroy the miseries of this world! I am strung on a necklace of births and deaths and cannot bear the kicking of *māyā*.

O Gopīnātha! I am a servant of lust, entangled in the net of material desire which has sprung up in my heart.

O Gopīnātha! When will I wake up and cast this enemy of lust far from me? Then only will You be revealed to me in my heart.

O Gopīnātha! I am Your own. By leaving Your lotus feet, forgetting Your treasures, I have served only *māyā*.

Gopīnātha!



by
**Śrīla Bhaktivinoda
 Ṭhākura** translated from
 Bengali by Acyutānanda Svāmī

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is one of the most important spiritual masters in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness line of disciplic succession. His devotional songs and poems express the perfectional emotions of a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa (Gopīnātha).

O Gopīnātha! You know everything. Take me to Your lotus feet and punish Your servant.

O Gopīnātha! Is it to Your liking to reject me and not show me Your kindness?

O Gopīnātha! I am the greatest fool. I don't at all know what is good for me. I cannot understand anything. This is my fate.

O Gopīnātha! You are the greatest intellect. Not considering that I am Your servant, judge me without bias.

O Gopīnātha! I have no means of benefiting myself. By Your mercy and kindness, please pick me up from this miserable world and take me to You.

O Gopīnātha! I have fallen into this dark world. Bound by wealth, wife and sons, I am feeling the pain of lust.

O Gopīnātha! I am going mad! Never caring for spiritual practices, I am always unconscious and deeply sunk in the muck of sense gratification.

O Gopīnātha! I surrender unto You. All my endeavors are a useless waste of time. Now I surrender unto You.

O Gopīnātha! How shall I reach the goal? My mind is overwhelmed by the powerful senses. I cannot shake off attachment to worldly pleasures.

O Gopīnātha! Please reside in my heart. Destroy these dangerous obstacles, correct my mind and guide me to Your own true path.

O Gopīnātha! Please let Your glance fall on me. I am helpless, but You are Hṛṣīkeṣa, the Lord of the senses. Please control my senses and pull me out of this world of dangers.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prays:
 O Gopīnātha! My voice is faltering. I must throw off these shackles and catch hold of Your mercy.

Letters

The editors of *Back to Godhead* welcome correspondence pertaining to the subject matter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All letters will be personally replied, and correspondence of special interest will be published regularly.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept the most humble obeisances of this very fallen soul who is seeking shelter at your lotus feet. If you can recall, I met you with Śrīmān Bhagavān dāsa Adhikārī in New York recently when you left for London. Every moment of those precious few moments that I had with you is inscribed in my mind, and that will be my life breath throughout the rest of my life. Undoubtedly it was the most important event in my life so far because you have given me new vision, new concepts of life which are all on the absolute platform. As a matter of fact, you have given me a new birth, and I have now become a true *dvija* [twice-born person]. Yes, when I saw you with these eyes and talked to you with this tongue, that was the perfec-

tion of these eyes and this tongue. At that time, I was overtaken by the most auspicious moment; I was in a different world and could not tell you everything that was in my heart. I felt so small against you—like a three-month-old baby extending her hand to a smiling, all-loving grandmother. This was one of the rare moments when one feels small but happier, more secure and more blissful—like Arjuna when he sees Kṛṣṇa's universal form and says:

*namo namas te 'stu sahasra-kṛtvah
punaś ca bhūyo 'pi namo namas te
namaḥ purastād atha pṛṣṭhatas te
namo 'stu te sarvata eva sarva*

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto You a thousand times, and again and yet again! Obeisances from the front, from behind and from all sides." (Bg. 11.39-40) I felt exactly the same.

I started for Detroit immediately after I saw you, and all the time I was thinking that Kṛṣṇa was so unjustly kind to me that even though I was so wretched and fallen He directed me towards your disciples first, then to you through your books, and finally to you personally. Now, since I know what it means to have a human form of life and I know the real purpose of this rare human form, I feel like I was a beggar on the street and all of a sudden the all-merciful Lord made me a billionaire overnight. When I told you about my desire to start a center in my home town, Surat, some time in the future, you were so kind that you asked me to do something more than that—to try to build a temple. I have now only one ambition in my life, and I pray to Kṛṣṇa to stick to it. I wrote to my parents about my meeting with you in

"Hearing is the beginning of understanding."

—HIS DIVINE GRACE
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

The most potent method for self-realization in this age is to hear the transcendental sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa's name and glories from the lips of a pure devotee. The

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Arrival of the Pure Devotee. C-60 stereo cassette (LA72-1): \$3.00

Reviving our Eternal Consciousness. C-60 stereo cassette (LA72-2): \$3.00

New York, and they are extremely happy. I have also asked them to chant and read *Bhāgavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* regularly. It won't take them long to get used to it.

I was born in Surat to a very devotionally inclined mother. As a child, I was exceptionally faithful, offering *ārātrikas* every morning just after taking bath and singing nice Sanskrit verses and offering nice prayers to the Lord. Since I was born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, everything was auspicious around the house. There was a big *pārijāta* tree and a big *tulasī* plant. The whole street used to gather at our house to collect the fragrant *pārijāta* flowers which were scattered all over the ground. My mother, though very intelligent, never went to school to learn the whole philosophy in detail. Still, she knew what she was doing, and I was following her. I remember that whenever I did something nonsensical as a child she used to tell me that this human birth, and that too as a *brāhmaṇa*, is so rare that if I didn't behave well I would glide down to degraded conditions. At that time I was too young to understand it properly, and her knowledge was also limited. As I grew older, I was given the sacred thread in a very pompous ceremony. My lower middle class father spent two thousand rupees for that.

When all these things come to my eyes, they make me feel good today, but at the same time I feel shameful because very shortly after that I got trapped into the clutches of *māyā*. I was given the *brāhmaṇa* thread, but I did not realize its potency and the potency of the *Gāyatrī mantra* because they were not given by a bona fide *ācārya* [spiritual master]. When I went to college away from home, I forgot all that I was doing at home. Everyone in the college was a lot worse than me, and I started thinking that real advancement was to wear nice clothes, to go to movies every weekend, read nonsensical literature and talk about politics and movie stars. I wanted that, and Kṛṣṇa gave it to me. I always thought I was very intelligent because I could speak nicely on these matters. I aspired for physical luxuries like a car, money, a nice house, etc. In short,

I was exposed to all the evils of Western civilization, and I adopted them wholeheartedly. All this time, even though grossly immersed in a materialistic way of thinking, I was missing something (which I later realized when I got that "something"). A lot of times I did ask, "Who am I?" and "What am I doing all these things for?" But there was no Prabhupāda to answer at that time, and again I would get lost in the same pattern. Then, with the same crazy ideas, I came to this country and got a master's degree in civil engineering and got a job, and I had the things I wanted to have. But I was not a bit happier, and before seven months, before I could get entangled in the American way of life, I met the devotees at the temple. My first visit to the temple and reading the preface of *Bhāgavad-gītā As It Is* were enough to bring me on the right track. I started chanting, and my life started changing. Ever since then, I have been advancing. I am still a long way from deserving your mercy or Kṛṣṇa's mercy, but I am getting it anyway. For me, this is so incredible that I just can't express my gratitude to you. I wrote this long story to give you a realistic picture of what is happening in the present India. The land where the Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared and displayed His pastimes is being completely ruined. The people are still innocent, but they are being misled, as you say. I am sure that when they recognize you and ISKCON, it won't take them long to tell the difference between the milk and the water.

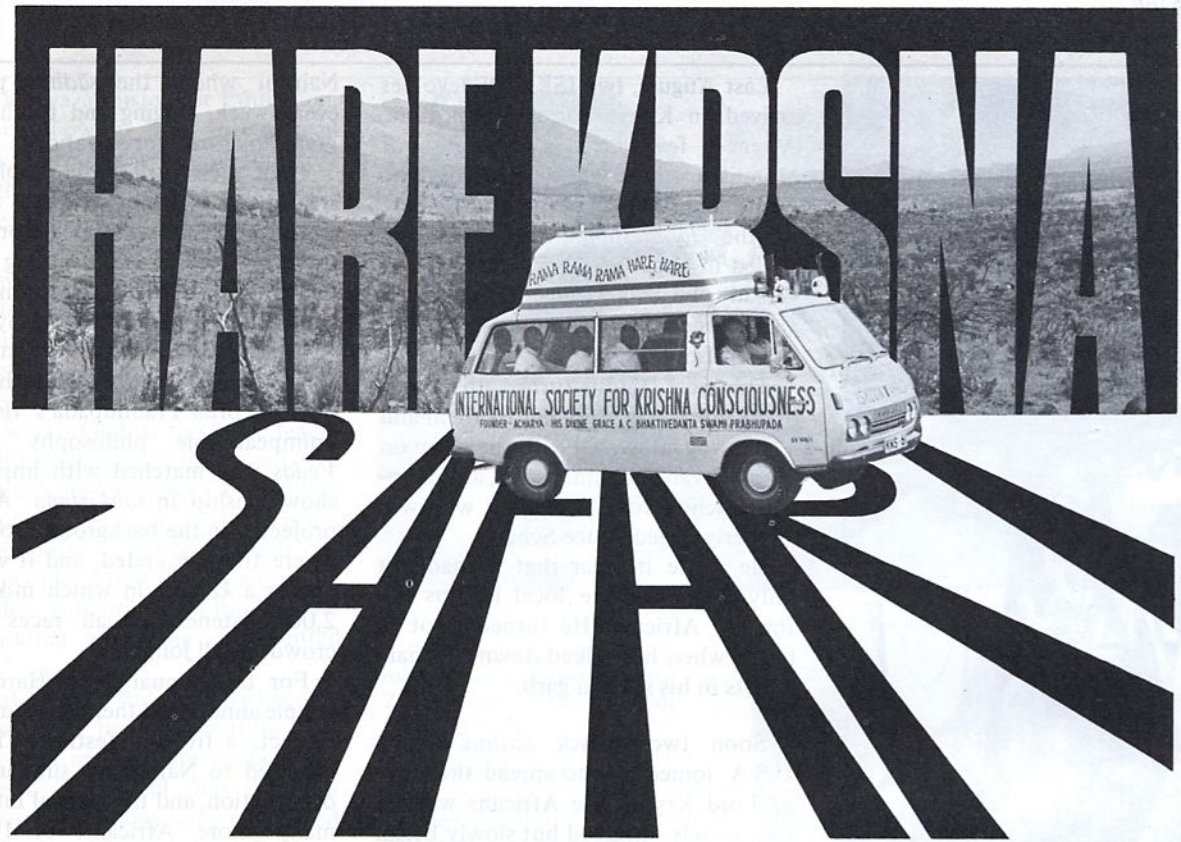
It is so unfortunate that in most parts of India we know very little about Lord Caitanya. All I knew was that He was a very great devotee; I knew very little about His pastimes and *saṅkīrtana* movement. Now, when I realize the truth, I understand that in this "Kali-yuga" [Age of Quarrel], when all other yogic processes but *bhakti-yoga* are simply invalid, no one can put a step forward on the path of self-realization without understanding Lord Caitanya. Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that He personally appeared to teach us how to love Him and how to go back to Him to live an eternal and blissful life. Certainly,

Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa's mercy incarnation. O Prabhupāda, who says that Caitanya is not present now? He is living within you. I had read about great devotees and Vaiṣṇavas before, but you are the most merciful of all Vaiṣṇavas. No one in history has elevated such fallen and wretched people as you have. You have not just made "*brāhmaṇas*" out of "*sūdras*," because in India *sūdras* did not eat cows but were just born in low families. But you have practically made Vaiṣṇavas out of "dogs." I say this because I was one of them. There is a lot of talk about mystic *yogīs*, but no one ever has been a more powerful mystic than you because you have penetrated through the hearts of people and changed their consciousness entirely. I was listening to one of your tapes the other day and heard you say that a great Vaiṣṇava poet wrote, "O Vaiṣṇava, let me be a dog at your doorstep." You are not just a Vaiṣṇava, nor am I that poet. I don't know what I deserve to be at your lotus feet—a fragrant flower or probably a dust atom. Whatever, now I am a surrendered soul unto you because I am convinced that through you and only through you can I understand a little about Kṛṣṇa and develop a little love for my Lord. O Prabhupāda, please come to my dreams some time with Lord Caitanya and His *saṅkīrtana* party. Please glance at this fallen soul through your transcendental mercy.

I do not deserve any reply from you. However, if somehow or other, I can know that you read my feelings, I will be most gratified and encouraged. You are the deliverer of Kṛṣṇa. You can give me the vision to have a quick single glance of my Lord. That will be enough for this lifetime.

Eternally at your lotus feet,
Janakkumar R. Joshi
ISKCON Los Angeles

Editor's note: In reply to this letter, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed to accept Janakkumar Joshi as a disciple, and he was later initiated into Kṛṣṇa consciousness during a week-long festival in New Vrndavana, ISKCON's transcendental village community.



Kul Bhushan - *Daily Nation*, Nairobi, Kenya



The Saṅkīrtana Safari is on. Chanting and dancing to the hypnotic beats of "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare," a few American *sādhus* are daily seen on the main streets of Nairobi and other towns in Kenya, East Africa. Playing drums and cymbals, these "white *sādhus*" with clean shaven heads and saffron robes distribute leaflets printed in English and the local lingua franca, Swahili.

Their worldwide organization, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has already established its first centre for Africa at Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Within six months of their

arrival, the Hare Kṛṣṇa people have bought their own gaily decorated truck which is a traffic stopper wherever it goes, purchased their own temple to accommodate the devotees, organized a five-day festival in the biggest sports stadium of Nairobi and now are promoting their ideas from a pavilion at the First All-Africa Trade Fair.

And what's far more significant, ISKCON has already won its first African devotee, who was recently initiated as a *brahmacārī* by the founder-*ācārya* of the movement, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. About a dozen other Africans have also joined the movement.



Mohamed Amin

Last August, two ISKCON devotees arrived in Kenya for the first time. After a few days in the port of Mombasa, they were invited at the Kṛṣṇa temple in Nairobi to participate in the *Janmāṣṭamī* function. They pulled in huge crowds when the word spread the Americans had become *svāmīs* and were promoting the awareness of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The local Hindus turned up in hundreds every day to listen to them and went away impressed with the grasp on *Gītā* of Svāmī Brahmānanda, an American teacher from New York who was formerly called Bruce Scharf.

He made it clear that he had not only come for the local Hindus but for the Africans. He turned a lot of heads when he walked down the main streets in his saffron garb.

Soon two "black *sādhus*" from U.S.A. joined him to spread the word of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Africans were at first merely intrigued but slowly began to take interest in what the *sādhus* sang and danced about. The words were easy, the tune was basic, and they began to hum "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa."

Soon the chanting was heard for the first time in African residential areas of

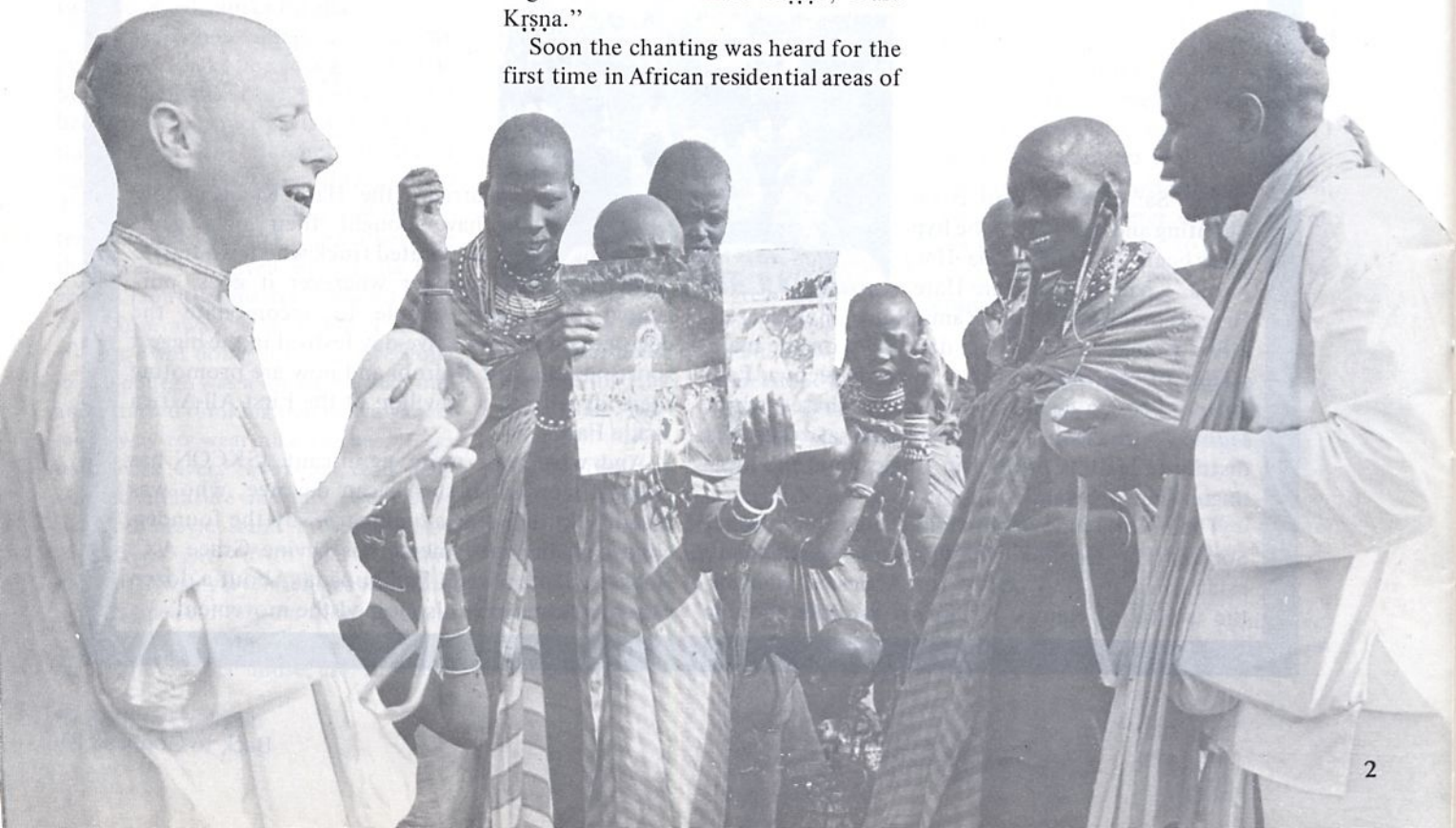
Nairobi where the *sādhus* paraded every week, singing and teaching the great "mantra" for salvation.

Then their *guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, arrived in Nairobi. At the airport, almost everybody stopped work when they saw white *sādhus* lying at the feet of their *guru* to greet him. It was a unique "happening" for Kenya.

A Hare Kṛṣṇa presentation at the University of Nairobi was the highlight of Śrīla Prabhupāda's visit. The unimpeachable philosophy of the *Vedas* was matched with impeccable showmanship in *saṅkīrtana*. A movie projected in the background took over where the talk ended, and it went on during a *kīrtana* in which more than 2,000 listeners of all races in the crowded hall joined in.

For this January, the Hare Kṛṣṇa people announced their most ambitious project: a five-day festival. The *guru* returned to Nairobi to similar scenes of adulation, and the festival interested many more Africans. A 108-page magazine, "Back to Godhead," was published in English and Swahili.

Kul Bhushan





THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT IN KENYA

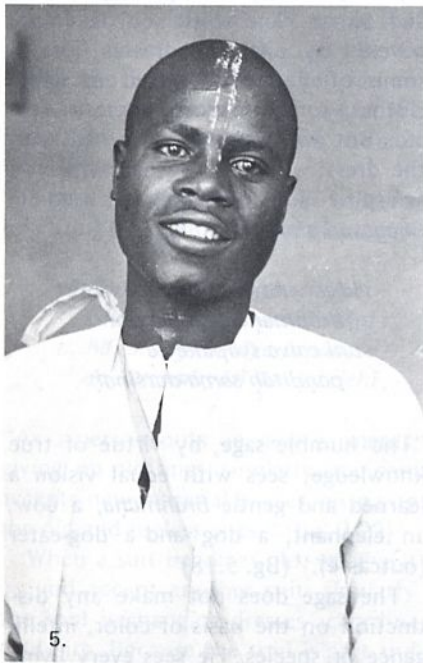


The Kenya Minister for Education, Mr. Taita Towett, in a speech read for him, said, "Many people today, as always throughout the ages, are asking the question, 'What is the ultimate end of life?' Your movement offers one answer to this question, based on the ancient Vedic scriptures.

"Your movement, like all the great religions of mankind, teaches that all men are brothers, because we have one Father, who is God. If this basic teaching is followed, then religion can be a strong unifying influence. As Minister for Education, I can say that this is the attitude which we wish to teach our young people. They should all regard each other as brothers. In this way we are building a strong and united Kenya."

About 80 local Indians have become life members by contributing Shs. 1,111/-, and many more support the movement. They feel that this is a sorely needed ideology to be publicized amongst the Africans to tell them about their religion and way of life and to break down barriers of religion and race.

Roll on, the Saṅkīrtana Safari.



5.

Nationphoto



3.

1. Chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in downtown Nairobi.
2. Members of Kenya's Masai tribe in the Ngong Hills receiving the message of Kṛṣṇa with great interest.
3. An American Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee distributing prasādam, spiritual food.
4. Children chanting in the Ngong Hills.
5. Roberts Cyril Lwangu Prabhu, first African disciple of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Asked by a reporter why he joined, he replied: "To serve God. I saw these people preaching, heard them, got to know them and decided to become one of them!"
6. Masai tribe enjoying kīrtana, congregational chanting of the holy name.



4.

Kul Bhushan



Kul Bhushan

BUILD YOUR NATIONS ON THE SPIRITUAL PLATFORM

AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

D. L. Patel



HIS DIVINE GRACE
A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI
PRABHUPĀDA



Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for kindly coming here to participate in this meeting for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to bring human society to the point where everyone's life can become successful. The subject today is the real meaning of human life. We are trying to instruct the entire world about this meaning.

Human life is attained after many, many millions of years of evolution. We should remember that there are 8,400,000 species of life according to *Padma Purāṇa*. Life began with the aquatics, for we can understand from Vedic literature that at the beginning of creation the entire planet was merged in water. This material world is composed of five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. Besides these there are three subtle elements—mind, intelligence and ego. Behind these curtains is the spirit soul, which is covered by these eight elements. This information is given in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Human beings are not the only living entities to have a spirit soul. We are all spirit souls—beasts, birds, reptiles, insects, trees, plants, aquatics and so on. The spirit soul is simply covered by different dresses, just as some of you are dressed in white clothes, some in green, some in red, etc. But we are not concerned with the dress; we are concerned with you as spirit soul. Thus it is said in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śvapāke ca
paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

“The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater (outcaste).” (Bg. 5.18)

The sage does not make any distinction on the basis of color, intelligence or species. He sees every living

entity as a small particle of spirit soul. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated:

*keśāgra-sata-bhāgasya
śatānśaḥ sādṛśātmakaḥ
jīvaḥ sūkṣma-svarūpa 'yaṁ
saṅkhyātīto hi cit-kaṇaḥ*

“There are innumerable particles of spiritual atoms, which are measured as one ten-thousandth of the upper portion of a hair.” Because we have no instrument to measure the dimensions of the spirit soul, the small particle of spirit soul is measured in this way. In other words, the soul is so small that it is smaller than an atom. That small particle is within you, within me, within the elephant, within gigantic animals, in all men, in the ant, the tree, everywhere. However, scientific knowledge cannot estimate the dimensions of the soul, nor can a doctor locate the soul within the body. Consequently material scientists conclude that there is no soul, but that is not a fact. There is a soul. The presence of the soul makes a difference between a living body and a dead body. As soon as the soul departs from the body, the body dies. It has no value. However great a scientist or a philosopher one may be, he must admit that as soon as the soul departs from the body, the body dies. It then has no value and has to be thrown away. We should try to understand this; the soul is valuable, not the body.

The fact that the soul is transmigrating is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya
navāni gṛhṇāti naro 'parāṇi
tathā sarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny
anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī*

“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)

When a suit becomes old, we give it up and accept another suit; similarly the soul is changing dresses according to desire. Because the soul is part and

parcel of God, it has godly qualities. God is the supreme will, the supreme power, the supreme independent one, and we, being part and parcel of Him, have all these qualities in minute quantity. We have willing, thinking, feeling and desiring. In the *Vedas* it is stated that God is the supreme living force amongst all living forces (*cetanaś cetanānām*). He is also supplying the necessities of all living entities.

We living entities are innumerable; there is no limit to our number. God, however, is one. He is also living as we are, but we are minute particles of that living force. For example, a particle of gold is the same in quality as a gold mine. If we chemically analyze the ingredients in a small drop of water, we will find all of the ingredients that are to be found in the vast ocean. In a similar way, we are one with God, being His part and parcel. This godly particle, the soul or the living force, is transmigrating from aquatics to trees and plants and then from trees and plants

to insect life, then to reptile life, then to the bodies of birds and beasts. Darwin's theory of evolution is but a partial explanation of the transmigration of the soul. Darwin has simply taken information from Vedic literature, but he has no conception of the soul. The difference is that the soul is transmigrating from aquatic life to plants and trees, then to insect life, then to bird life, then animal life, then human life, and within human life he moves from uncivilized life to civilized life, etc. The civilized life of a human being represents the culmination of evolution. Here is a junction: from this point we can again slide down into the cyclic process of evolution, or we can elevate ourselves to a godly life. The choice is up to us. This is indicated in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

This human form of life actually means developed consciousness; therefore we should not waste our lives like cats, dogs and hogs. That is the injunction. Although this body is perishable







like a dog's or cat's body, it is different in that one can attain the highest perfection in this life. We are part and parcel of God, but somehow or other we have fallen into this material existence; now we have to evolve in such a way that we can go back home, back to Godhead. That is the highest perfection.

There is actually another world, a spiritual world. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo
'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu
naśyatsu na vinaśyati*

“Yet there is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.” (Bg. 8.20)

In this material nature, everything is created, it stays for some time, produces some by-products, dwindles and finally vanishes. Our bodies are created at a certain moment by sexual intercourse. The semina of the father emulsifies and takes a pea form, and the living entity, or soul, takes shelter in that form, and because it takes shelter, it develops hands, legs, eyes, etc. This development is complete in the seventh month, and in the ninth month the human being comes out of the womb. It is because the soul is present that the child develops. If the soul is not present, there is no development, and the child is born dead. We can take this dead body and preserve it in chemicals, but it will not develop. Development means change of body. All of us have had baby bodies, but those bodies are no longer existing. The body of a baby develops into the body of a child, and that body develops into the body of a boy, and that body develops into a youth's body, which eventually turns into an old man's body. Finally the body completely vanishes. The whole cosmic manifestation, the gigantic form of this material world, is also working

according to this same process. It is created at a certain point, it develops, it is maintained, and at a certain stage it is dissolved. That is the nature of the material world. It is manifest at a certain interval, and again it vanishes (*bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate*).

The word *bhāva* means nature. There is another nature which never dissolves, which is eternal. As *jīvas*, spirit souls, we are also eternal. This is verified in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

“For the soul there is neither birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.” (Bg. 2.20)

Just as God has no birth or death, we spirit souls can have neither birth nor death, but because we think, “I am this body,” we consider that we are born and that we die. Such thinking is called *māyā*, or illusion, and as soon as we get out of this illusion of identifying the soul with the body, we attain the stage called *brahma-bhūta*. When one realizes *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*, “I am not this body; I am spirit soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Brahman,” he attains what is called Brahman realization. As soon as Brahman realization is attained, one becomes happy.

Is this not a fact? If you understand clearly that you have no birth and death, that you are eternal, will you not become happy? Yes, certainly. Thus when one is Brahman realized, spiritually realized, he has no more to do with hankering or lamentation. The whole world is simply hankering and lamenting. You African people are now hankering to be like Europeans and Americans, but the Europeans have lost their empire, and now they are lamenting. So in this way one party is hankering and another is lamenting.

Similarly, this material life is simply a combination of hankering and lamenting. We are hankering for those things which we do not possess, and we are lamenting for those things which we have lost. That is our material business. If we realize, however, that we are part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*Paraṁ Brahman*) and that we are Brahman, then we will transcend this hankering and lamenting.

The so-called universal brotherhood or unity that the United Nations is trying to achieve is only possible when you come to the spiritual platform, or Brahman realization. Brahman realization is the aim of human life. One should not work like cats, dogs and hogs. The hog is always very busy day and night trying to find stool, and when he finds it, he eats it and becomes sexually agitated and has sex without discrimination. A hog will have sex with his mother or sister or anyone else, and this is a hog's life. However, the scriptures indicate that the human form of life is not meant for working hard for sense gratification like cats, dogs and hogs. It is meant for realizing, “I do not belong to this material world. I am spirit soul and am eternal, but somehow or other I have fallen into this conditional life of birth, old age, disease and death.” This human form of life is meant for making a solution to these four material miseries—birth, old age, disease and death. That is the aim of human life. Just try to understand that human life is not meant for working very hard like hogs and then having some sense gratification and then all of a sudden dying.

People who do not believe in the soul are in a most unfortunate condition. They do not know where they came from nor where they are going. Knowledge of the soul is the most important knowledge, but it is not discussed in any university. But what is the constitution of this body? What is the distinction between a dead body and a living body? Why is the body living? What is the condition of the



body, and what is its value? No one is presently studying these questions, but by this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we are trying to educate people so that they can understand that they are not these bodies but are spirit souls. The business of human life is different from the business of cats and dogs. That is our message.

As far as the soul is concerned, the evolutionary process is going on, and we are struggling for existence, struggling to come to the point of eternal life. That eternal life is possible. If you try your best in this human form of life, in your next life you can get a spiritual body. Your spiritual body is already within you, and it will develop as soon as you become free from the contamination of this material existence. That is the aim of human life. People do not know what actual self-interest is; it is to realize oneself, to realize, "I am part and parcel of God, and I have to return to the kingdom of God to join with God."

Just as we have a social life here, God has a social life in the spiritual kingdom. You can join Him there. It is not that after finishing this body you become void. No. That is a wrong conception. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra:

*na tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ
na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ
sarve vayam ataḥ param*

"Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." (Bg. 2.12)

The process for attaining eternal life is very easy, and yet at the same time very difficult. It is difficult because people in the beginning do not believe in the existence of transmigration of the soul. However, if we simply take knowledge from the authorities, the process becomes very simple. Our process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to take knowledge from Kṛṣṇa, the most per-

fect being, and not from an ordinary being conditioned by the laws of material nature. Knowledge taken from a conditioned being is sure to be defective.

What are the defects of the conditioned soul? He is sure to commit mistakes, sure to be illusioned, sure to cheat others, and sure to have imper-

fect senses. We cannot attain knowledge perfectly because we want to cheat others and our senses are imperfect. Although our senses are imperfect, we are very proud of our eyes and we want to see everything. Therefore someone says, "Can you show me God?" Actually the answer is yes. Why can't you see God at every moment?





Kṛṣṇa says, *raso'ham apsu kaunteya*: "I am the taste of water." Everyone drinks water, and the taste is there—so if we think of this taste as God, we begin the process of God realization. Kṛṣṇa also says, *prabhāsmi śāsī-sūryayoḥ*: "I am the sunshine, and I am the moonshine." We all see the sunshine and moonshine every day,



Nationfoto

and if we think of how it is the sun and moon are emanating light, we will ultimately reach God. There are so many similar instances. If you want to be God conscious and realize God yourself, it is not very difficult. You have simply to follow the prescribed methods. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*: *tato māṁ tattvato jñātvā* (Bg. 18.55). We must simply try to understand God in truth and try to understand His appearance, disappearance and functions. When we understand Him in truth, we immediately enter the kingdom of God. After quitting this body, the person who understands God, or Kṛṣṇa, does not come back again to accept another material body. Kṛṣṇa says, *mām eti*: "He comes to Me." That is our aim.

Therefore we should not waste our time living like cats and dogs. We should live comfortably, but at the same time we should be Kṛṣṇa conscious, or God conscious. That will help us become happy. Without understanding God and without becoming God conscious, there is no possibility of peace and happiness. The way of peace and happiness is outlined in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

If you really want to understand God, He is very easy to understand. God is the proprietor of everything. *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. Unfortunately we are thinking, "I am the proprietor." In your country, for instance, the British have sometimes claimed to be proprietors, and now you are claiming to be the proprietors—so who knows what will happen in the future? Actually no one knows who the real proprietor is. The land is there, and it is the property of God, but we are simply thinking, "I am this proprietor. I own this, and I own that." Actually America existed before the Europeans came, but now the Americans are thinking, "We are the proprietors." Similarly, before them the red Indians were thinking, "We are the proprietors." The fact is that no man is an actual proprietor; the proprietor is God.

*Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyām jagat
tena tyaktena bhujñīthā
mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*

"Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong." (Īśo. 1)

This realization is wanting. Kṛṣṇa claims proprietorship over all forms—including American forms, African forms, cat forms, dog forms, tree forms, etc.—for in actuality He is the proprietor and the Supreme Father. If we simply realize this, we attain God realization. Actually if we realize God as prescribed in the authorized books and Vedic literatures, we will find that there will no longer be quarrels between this party and that party. Everything will be peaceful.

Everyone has the right to use God's property, just as a son has the right to live at the cost of his father. It is even stated in the scriptures that even a small animal in the home must be given some food. That is spiritual communism. No one should remain hungry, not even a serpent. We are always afraid of serpents, but if we find a serpent to be living in our house, it is our duty to see that the serpent is also fed. This is the conception of God consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness: *samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu* (Bg. 18.54). One who is transcendently realized is equally disposed to every living entity. Thus *Bhagavad-gītā* points out that when one sees everyone equally, as part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, one actually begins his devotional life. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying in an authoritative way to make everyone understand what he is and what the aim of life is. This process of purification of the heart is very easily accomplished. One simply has to chant this *mahāmantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare



Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. It can actually be seen that in this movement there are boys and girls from different countries and

different religions, but no one is concerned with any particular section, country or religious body. We are simply concerned about knowing our-

selves and our relationship with God.

God is the supreme proprietor, and we are all His sons or servitors. Therefore let us engage ourselves in the service of the Lord, as recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā*. As soon as we understand that God is the proprietor of everything, then all the troubles of the world will immediately be solved. This may take some time. It is not expected that everyone will understand this high philosophy, but if the intelligent people in every country try to understand it, that will be sufficient. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated:

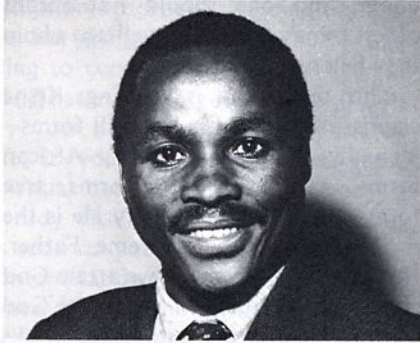
*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas
tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute
lokas tad anuvartate*

“Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.” (Bg. 3.21)

We therefore invite the most intelligent men in the world to understand this Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy and try to distribute it all over the world. We have now come to these African countries, and I invite all intelligent Africans to come and understand this philosophy and distribute it. You are trying to develop yourselves, so please develop spiritually, for spiritual development is sound development. Don't imitate the Americans and Europeans who are living like cats and dogs. Such civilizations built on the consciousness of sense gratification cannot stand. The atomic bomb is already there, and as soon as the next war breaks out, all their skyscrapers and everything else will be finished. Try to understand this from the real viewpoint of human life, the spiritual viewpoint. This is what this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is about. We therefore request you to try to understand this philosophy. Thank you very much.

END

In January ISKCON staged the World Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement Festival at Nairobi City Stadium. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, presided over five days of *kīrtanas*, lectures, cinema shows, *prasādam* feasting and initiation ceremonies. The festival was highlighted one evening by a speech read by Mr. Y. Komora, Kenya's Director of Education, for Hon. Taita Arap Towett, the Minister of Education. This is the text of that speech.



Kenya Information Services

Honorable President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you today as you celebrate the World Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement Festival here at the City Stadium, and I wish to thank the President of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Kenya Branch, Mr. Brahmananda Svāmī, for inviting me to be with you here today.

Kenya, as you know, is a country which welcomes visitors. Our Constitution guarantees to every religion complete freedom of worship and preaching insofar as this is compatible with public order.

The people of Kenya enjoy complete freedom to practice the faith of their choice and are willing to listen intelligently to anyone who has something to say on this subject. In the traditional African way of life, religion played an essential part. In modern Kenya too religion still plays a big part in the lives of our people.

I am informed that the International Society for Krishna Consciousness was formed in 1966. The founder was His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who is still your respected leader and teacher. I understand that although the movement for Kṛṣṇa consciousness is relatively young, it is based on a philosophy which goes back very far—5,000 years, in fact. I am referring to the ancient text known as the *Bhagavad-gītā*. This famous text, it seems, is the “Bible” of your movement. Your learned founder has made this great book available to readers in an English translation with an erudite commentary.

Your revered founder, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, has written, “*Bhagavad-gītā* is the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It teaches what is your relationship with God, what is your eternal duty to God, and what is the ultimate end of life.” Many people today, as always throughout the ages, are asking the question, “What is the ultimate end of life?” Your movement offers one answer to this question, based on the ancient Vedic scriptures. In the modern world the same answer does not satisfy everybody. People are searching, and they go on searching until they find an answer which satisfies them.

There are many religions and philosophies to choose from. Here in Kenya, our people are free to choose the religion or the philosophy which they find most satisfying.

Whatever religion our “wananchi” [citizens] adopt, our Government insists that they show tolerance and respect for others. No matter how strongly a person believes and no matter how convinced he may be that he has found the right answer, he must remember that others believe just as strongly and are just as convinced that they also have the right answer, which is not the same as his. Everyone must learn not to despise someone who believes differently from himself. Indeed he must always respect the belief of other people.

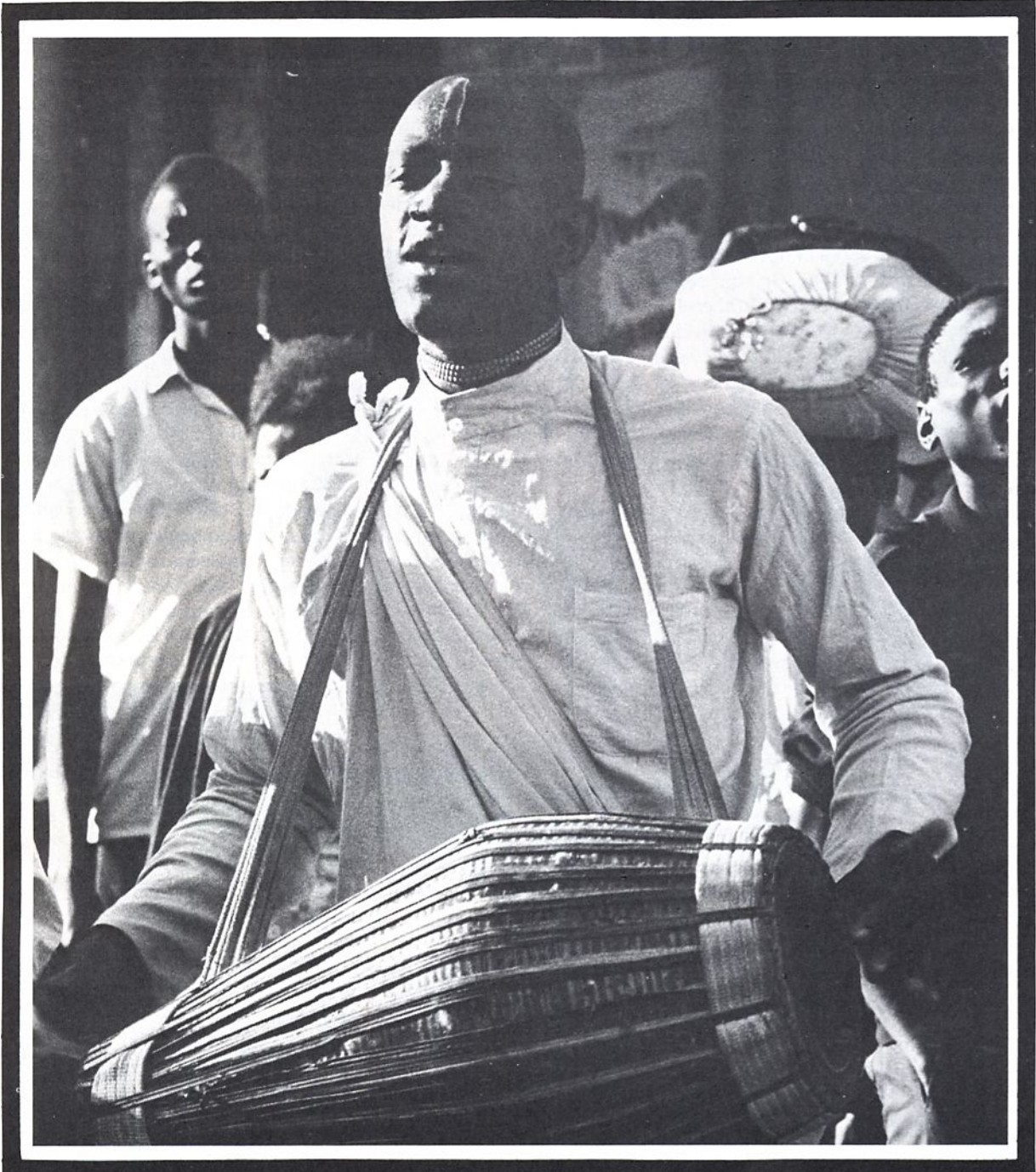
Your movement, like all the great religions of mankind, teaches that all men are brothers because we have one Father, who is God. If this basic teaching is followed, then religion can be a strong unifying influence. As Minister for Education, I can say that this is the attitude which we wish to teach our young people. They should all regard each other as brothers. In this way we are building a strong and united Kenya. On the other hand, we are opposed to anyone who tries to sow discord and division among our people. The motto of our country, given to us by our beloved President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, is “Harambee,” which means “Let us all work together for the good of all.” Hence, we welcome anyone who is willing to work with us in the spirit of Harambee.

I shall conclude by wishing you all a happy Festival and realization of all your ideals.



DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN SPIRIT

The success of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in gaining acceptance by the people of the newly emerging African nations is significant from many viewpoints. First, it offers positive evidence of the true universality of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa,





the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.4) that He is the seed-giving father of all living entities. It is not that Kṛṣṇa is only the Hindu God. Kṛṣṇa cannot be limited by geographical or sectarian boundaries. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is dormant within the hearts of all living entities, and when one hears the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* this consciousness is revived. Therefore whether one is African, Indian or European, Christian, Hindu or Jewish, white, black or yellow—regardless of any and all temporary bodily designations—anyone can take advantage of the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and make positive progress toward spiritual perfection.

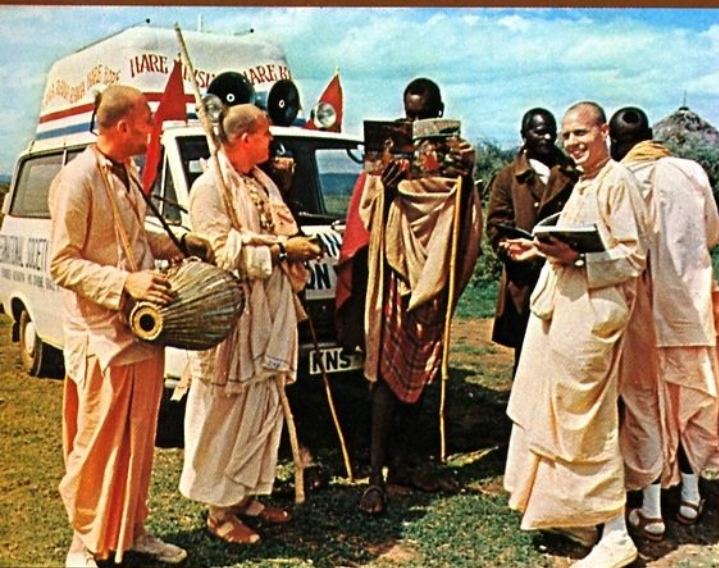
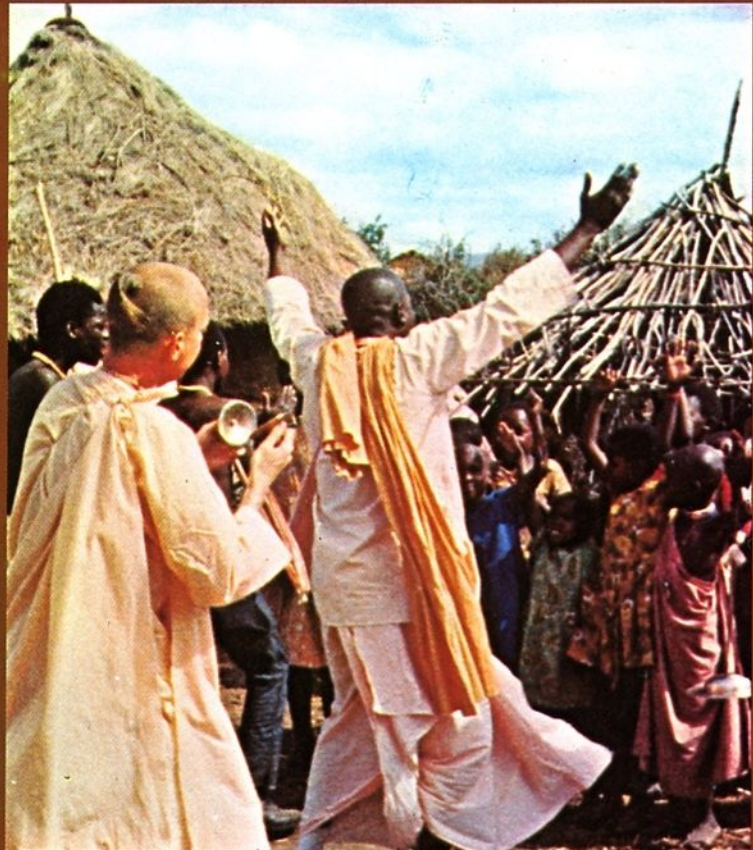
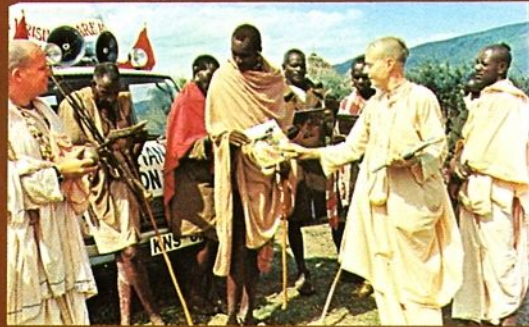
The activities of ISKCON Nairobi have also demonstrated the effective part that Indian people can play in facilitating the worldwide spread of scientific knowledge of God. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu declared that anyone who is so fortunate as to take birth in India, the land of religion in which both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāmacandra previously appeared, is dutybound to spread knowledge of Kṛṣṇa for the benefit of others. Unfortunately, Indian people have neglected this important responsibility, and therefore the entire world is suffering from violence and tension due to lack of proper spiritual understanding. In Nairobi, however, cooperation of the Indian community with members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has made it possible for the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to win widespread acceptance in Nairobi and other parts of Africa within only a short period of time.

It is also important to note that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement can help Africa develop in an atmosphere of peaceful cooperation and harmony, beyond racial or territorial conflicts caused by lack of true spiritual understanding. Only if Kṛṣṇa is recognized as the father of all living entities can there exist a society of peace and brotherhood. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*: A Kṛṣṇa conscious person sees all living entities as equals by virtue of his spiritual education. He can understand that the body is but a temporary external covering for the spirit soul. Therefore a spiritually enlightened person is transcendental to enmity and conflict based on temporary racial, national, tribal or other bodily designations. One who cannot see beyond the body must necessarily think in bodily terms and be influenced by bodily prejudices. However, one who is trained to recognize Kṛṣṇa as the father of all living entities automatically acknowledges the true spiritual brotherhood of everyone. Without such Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all talk of brotherhood is simply conditional and theoretical, or, in other words, utopian. But simply by acknowledging Kṛṣṇa as the supreme Father, brotherhood is automatically achieved. It is this simple and natural method of universal brotherhood which is being offered to the African people by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. This is expressed very aptly by Harikṛpā dāsa brahmacārī in the African edition of *Back to Godhead*:

“I am Negro by birth. My forefathers came from this African continent. They were taken away as slaves, abused, degraded, and forced to work like animals. As their descendant, I am returning to this African continent with a message that can bring unity and prosperity to all people. We have come to offer a true, bona fide way to experience perfection in life, both spiritually and materially, and there is no charge to learn this. We simply want to offer a way to become free from all fear, anxiety and strife which exists between the people of the world. We want to show a way to become free from hate, anger and greed. A Kṛṣṇa conscious society surpasses all societies because it is a God-centered society.”

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is offering the newly developing African nations an alternative to the bleak industrial civilization which has arisen in the technologically more advanced American and European countries. As stated by Brahmānanda Swami, President of ISKCON Nairobi, who is now traveling extensively to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout Kenya, Tanzania, and other African countries, “The Africans have not yet been fatally poisoned by the materialism of modern civilization. Their culture is based on agricultural village life and retains the values of simple living. But the mad desire for material advancement is rapidly infecting African cities with factories, workshops, office buildings, traffic jams, night-clubs and brothels. The African countries are still in the developing stage, but in what direction will they develop? If they imitate the materialism of America and Europe, their young people will also turn out as confused and frustrated hippies.” Progress based on technological advancement alone is superficial. Such technological progress must be accompanied by a deeper knowledge of the principles of spiritual culture. By spreading the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and the knowledge of the Vedic literature in Africa, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is offering Africa an opportunity to create a society based on simultaneous economic, technological and spiritual advancement. Only on the basis of such a balanced program of material and spiritual progress can the African people—and the people of all the world—develop a successful society for life in peace and prosperity. END

Inside back cover: Devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement with Masai tribesmen in the Ngong Hills. The purpose of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Safari is explained by Brahmānanda Svāmī: “‘Safari’ is Swahili for ‘hunt.’ Our hunt is for the innocent, to enlighten them with the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa first gives Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā*—that we are not the material body but pure spirit soul, part and parcel of the Lord.” (photos by Kul Bhushan)



“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.”

—Bhagavad-gītā 9.2



BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AS IT IS
 His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta
 Swami Prabhupāda