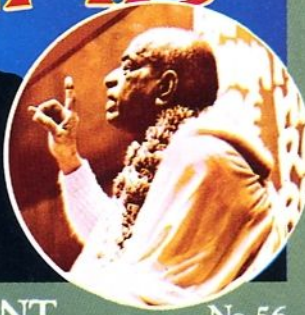


GODHEAD IS LIGHT. NESCIENCE IS DARKNESS. WHERE THERE IS GODHEAD THERE IS NO NESCIENCE



# BACK TO GODHEAD

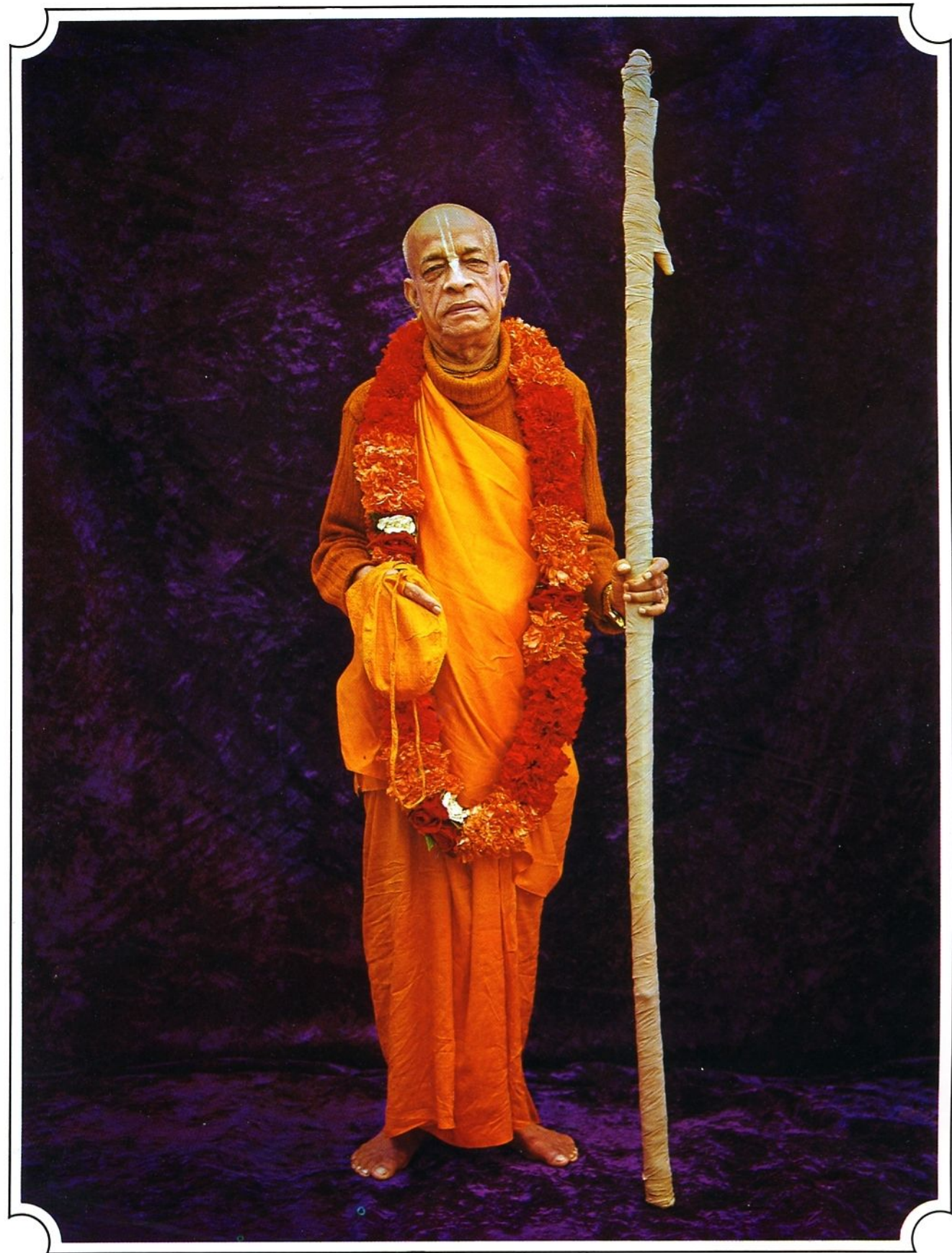


THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

No.56

BTG  
HALFTONE  
REFERENCE





*His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*  
FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE / HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE



Kṛṣṇa consciousness means clear consciousness. Material existence is symptomized by hazy consciousness, in which one identifies himself with his material body and thus with a particular race, religion or nationality.

To make progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one must first put aside these bodily designations and understand his real self. It is the natural position of every living entity to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, or God, the Supreme Person and supreme cause of all causes. Forgetfulness of one's eternal relation-

ship with Kṛṣṇa is the beginning of hazy consciousness.

The chanting of the holy names of God *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare!* *Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare* counteracts this haziness by invoking one's dormant love for Kṛṣṇa. Reviving this original clear consciousness is a great science that can lead one to a pure life of eternal blissful knowledge. *Back to Godhead* is an instrument to spread understanding of this sublime science.



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(under the direction of His Divine Grace  
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)  
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Published monthly \$5.50 per year (\$7.00 outside USA), by  
the Bhaktivedānta Book Trust, 3764 Watsaka Avenue, Los  
Angeles, California 90034

Editorial Offices: 38 Tiffany Place,  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231



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## CONTENTS

Transcendental Broadcast . . . . .	3
Kṛṣṇa's Subduing the Serpent Kālīya . . . . .	8
Beyond the Formless Philosophies . . . . .	13
The Ecstasy of Mādhavendra Purī . . . . .	20
Bringing the Holy Name to Germany . . . . .	27

## 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 *ī* 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.

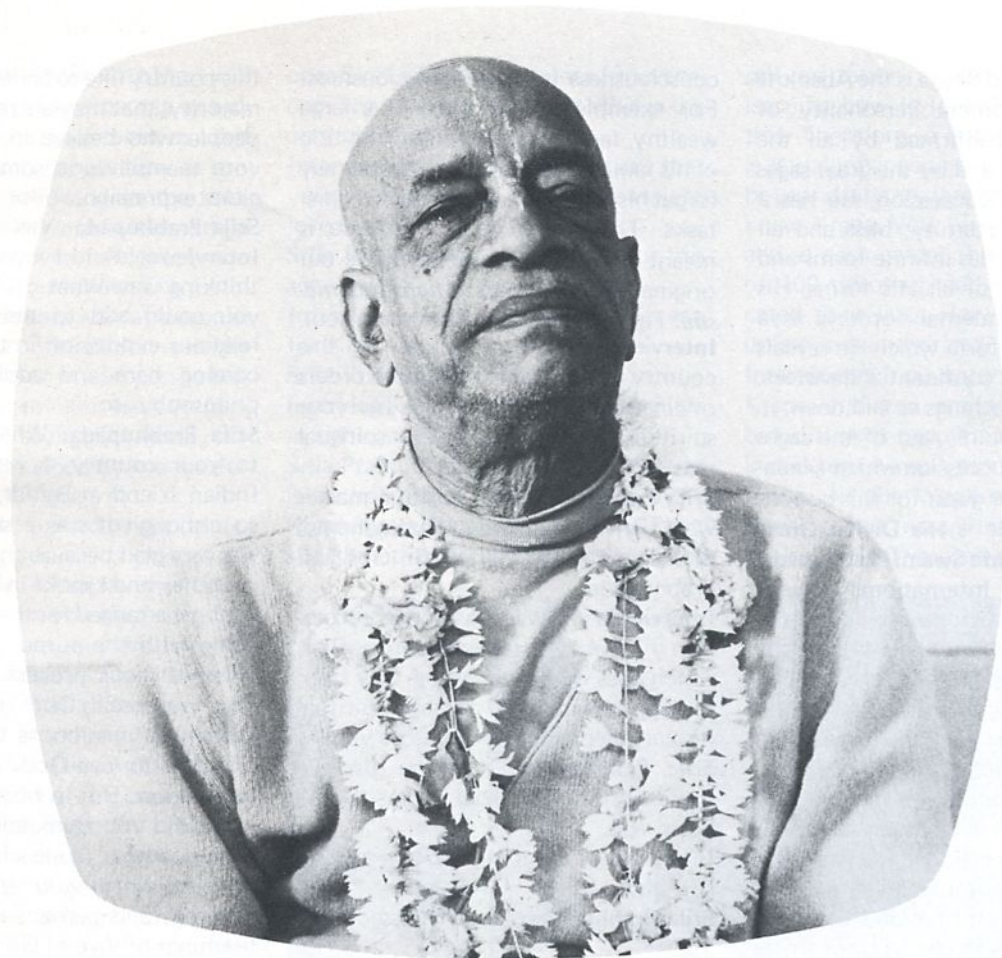
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## ON THE COVER

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, dancing on the hoods of the demoniac serpent Kālīya (see pg. 8).

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# TRANSCENDENTAL BROADCAST

## *a television interview with* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Newton Minnow, former director of the FCC, described the world of TV viewing as a "vast wasteland." But when a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa (God) appears on television, the whole performance becomes surcharged with bliss. When television, with its complex technological set-up for reproducing a picture in thousands of TV sets, is used by a pure devotee for the purpose of glorification of the Supreme Lord, it becomes spiritualized. Whoever sees and hears a pure devotee talking about the nature of God and the eternal soul becomes liberated from all misery.

On July 29, 1971, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the author of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, arrived in Gainesville, Florida to speak at a large student gathering at the University of Florida. Taking advantage of his presence in Gainesville, which His Divine Grace described as "a remote corner of the world, thousands of miles from

the birthplace of Lord Caitanya" (the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared 500 years ago in India to teach the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra), the local TV station arranged for this interview.

Lord Caitanya predicted that His philosophy of the Absolute Truth would spread to every town and village in the world. As clearly taught in the Vedic scripture *Bhagavad-gītā*, it will reveal to us that our real self is not the body but an individual spiritual soul and that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Spirit, the Soul of all souls. The nature of the spirit soul is eternally fresh. It cannot be destroyed, broken or contaminated. Because he is a pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda can speak from the transcendental platform of Absolute Truth.

We have prepared the text of this interview so that the serious reader may repeatedly read it and study the spirit soul in action. As we have stated, this was not an ordinary television performance. A serious man wants to know the Absolute Truth in order to solve the problems in his life. Thus *Bhagavad-gītā* advises him, "Just approach a spiritual master." Who will not be eager to listen, for his own benefit, when God reveals Himself through the words of a pure devotee?

**Interviewer:** Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As confirmed by all the Vedic scriptures and by the great sages of the disciplic succession, He has a body made of eternity, bliss and all knowledge. God has infinite forms and expansions, but of all His forms, His original transcendental form is as a cowherd boy, a form which He reveals only to His most confidential devotees. Such are the teachings as laid down in the Vedic literature. And of the sages in the disciplic succession which I mentioned, one is our guest for this conversation today. He is **His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**, founder of the **International Society for Krishna Consciousness**. He is the foremost teacher in the West of the philosophy, which, moreover, he teaches not only by word but by example. He came to this country in 1965 on the order of his spiritual master. As a Kṛṣṇa disciple, he is presently the most prominent human exponent of a line of succession going back 500 years to the appearance in India of Lord Caitanya, and beyond that to a time 5,000 years ago when Lord Kṛṣṇa was on this planet and His words were recorded. Welcome, sir. What is Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Kṛṣṇa consciousness is our original consciousness because every living being is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has many expansions. They are called personal expansions and separated expansions. We living entities are His separated expansions. Although we are very intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa, somehow or other we are now separated because of our contact with material nature. We have practically forgotten that we are part of Kṛṣṇa. Actually, that is a fact. We are spoiled, just like a rich man's son who somehow or other forgets his father, and loiters in the street as a poor man. Actually, that is not his position. He has simply forgotten. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to invoke in all people the original consciousness that we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Why should we remain in this material world and suffer the threefold miseries? We want to revive that original consciousness. The original

consciousness is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For example, a man born of a large wealthy family should enjoy the title of his family, but unfortunately he may forget his own home and accept menial tasks. The whole Vedic literature is meant for this purpose: to revive our original consciousness. *Ahaṁ brahmā-smi:* I am not this body, I am spirit soul. **Interviewer:** You came, sir, to this country in 1965, as I said, on the orders or instructions given you by your spiritual master. Who was your spiritual master?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** My spiritual master was Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.

**Interviewer:** Now in this line of succession that we were talking about earlier, which goes way back, all the way back to Kṛṣṇa Himself—was your spiritual master the previous one before you?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, the disciplic succession began from Kṛṣṇa 5,000 years ago.

**Interviewer:** Is your spiritual master still alive?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No. He passed on in 1936.

**Interviewer:** So you are at this particular time, then, the head spiritual master in the world of this movement? Would that be correct?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** I have many other Godbrothers, but I was particularly ordered to do this from the very beginning. I am trying to please my spiritual master, that's all.

**Interviewer:** You were sent to this country, to the United States of America. This is your territory—is that correct?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** My territory? What he said was, "You go and speak this philosophy to the English-speaking public."

**Interviewer:** To the English-speaking world.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, especially to the Western world. That is what he told me.

**Interviewer:** Then you came, sir, to this country about five or six years ago. You came to this part of the world. As such, you did not come to a part of the world where religion was lacking. In the United States of America we have many religions, and I think people in

this country like to believe, in the great majority, that they are religious people, people who believe in God, who devote themselves to some form of religious expression.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And I wonder what your thinking was. What do you think that you could add to the already living religious expression in this country by coming here and adding your own philosophy to it?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** When I first came to your country, I was guest of an Indian friend at Butler, Pennsylvania, so although it was a small county, I was very glad because there were many churches, and I spoke in many of them. My host arranged for that. But I did not come with the purpose to defeat any other religious process. That was not my purpose. Our mission, Lord Caitanya's mission, is to teach everyone how to love God. That is all.

**Interviewer:** But in what way, sir, may I ask, did you think and do you think right now that the teaching of the love of God which you are preaching is different and perhaps better than the teachings of love of God which already were being conducted in this country and have been conducted in the rest of the world for centuries?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** This teaching is the most authorized. That is a fact. We are following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya. He is accepted by us, according to the authority of Vedic religion, to be personally Kṛṣṇa Himself.

**Interviewer:** Which Lord is that?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Lord Caitanya.

**Interviewer:** He is the one who came 500 years ago?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** To India?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and He teaches how to love Kṛṣṇa. Therefore His process is most authorized. For example, you are the expert in this establishment. If someone is doing something under your guidance and you personally teach him, "Do it like this," that is very authorized. So when Lord Caitanya taught God consciousness, God Himself was teaching. Similarly, in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa is accepted as God, and He speaks about Himself. In His final instructions

He said, "Just surrender unto Me. I will take charge of you." But people misunderstood. So Kṛṣṇa again came, as Lord Caitanya, to teach people how to surrender. We are following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, and the method is so sublime that even foreigners, who never knew Kṛṣṇa, surrender. The method is so potent. So that was my purpose. We don't say that this religion is better than that religion, or my process is better. We want to see by the result. In Sanskrit there is a saying, *phalena paricīyate*: a thing is judged by the result.

**Interviewer:** A thing is—?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Judged by the result.

**Interviewer:** Oh, yes.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** I can say my method is very nice, or you can say your method is very nice, but we have to judge by the result. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that that process of religion is very good by following which one becomes a lover of God.

**Interviewer:** Yes, but of course you know your religion is not the only one which teaches this particular precept.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** I have already explained that it is not the only one. There may be many, but this is actually effective.

**Interviewer:** If I understand your philosophy and your history correctly, this particular philosophy and this particular belief originated in the Eastern part of the world, in India. Right? Is it successful there? Do you have a large following?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. Recently I was in India. I held two meetings daily for ten days, and from twenty to thirty thousand people attended each day. India's position is that the people there are naturally Kṛṣṇa conscious, but at the present moment the so-called leaders want to replace this Kṛṣṇa consciousness with material consciousness.

**Interviewer:** Is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness belief or philosophy compatible with the Hindu religion?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It is compatible with any religion because God is one. It is a science of God. If two plus two comes to four, it is understood by everyone. It is not that it is to be understood by the Christian and not by the Hindu. Two plus two equals four is a fact for every-

one. Similarly, God is a fact for everyone. Now how to love God—this is the only process.

**Interviewer:** Do you claim, then, that your way of loving God is *the* way to love God?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes, at least for this age.

**Interviewer:** For this age? You mean for Kali-yuga?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** For the times that we live in right now?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Because the method is authorized. Kṛṣṇa prescribes this—Kṛṣṇa Himself and Lord Caitanya. They say that this is the only method for

self-realization or God realization or learning how to love God. Kṛṣṇa says this. Therefore, it is authorized, and it is actually happening. Otherwise, these boys and girls are foreigners; they never knew Kṛṣṇa. Now I have sixty centers, and at each center there is an average of 100 devotees, and they have dedicated their lives. How is it happening unless it is authorized?

**Interviewer:** You say they never knew Kṛṣṇa, and you are of course right, but different people name their Gods in different ways. You name your God Kṛṣṇa. In the Western world many, many people name their God Jesus, Jesus Christ. There are other people in



Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees on New York City's Fifth Avenue  
"We are requesting that you chant God's holy name."

different parts of the world who have different names for the Gods which they. . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** We say that if you have a name which is actually referring to God, that will also do. We are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. According to Vedic literature, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He has many thousands and millions of names. This is the original name. Lord Caitanya does not say that you have to chant Kṛṣṇa, but if you have a name for God, you can chant that. We are not asking that you chant Kṛṣṇa. If you actually have a name for God, then you can chant that. We are requesting that you chant God's holy name.

**Interviewer:** Now you came here in the middle of the 1960's, less than a decade ago. What was it—this is what I am trying to find out from you—what was the motivating force behind your coming to the United States?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That I have already explained. Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted this propaganda to be made and accepted all over the world. So my Guru Mahārāja said, "You go and try to do this." So I came with this purpose, and it is happening.

**Interviewer:** There must have been an element, though, of dissatisfaction on your part with the way Godhead was being professed in this part of the world before you came. Otherwise, there would have been no sense in your being here.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** It is not just this part. Practically every part of the world has very little interest in God. They have more interest in dog.

**Interviewer:** You are in general, then, trying to increase the interest in God. Is that correct?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** That is the only interest we must have in human life.

**Interviewer:** And you are not particularly interested in what particular name this God has.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, our mission is to give people a chance to become God conscious, and the process in this age is the chanting of the holy name of God. If you have any name of God

which is actually a name of God, then you will be successful by chanting that name.

**Interviewer:** The chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, seems to play a very important role in the profession of your religious belief. In fact, I think I will ask you and some of your followers who are sitting here with us tonight to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa a little bit later. That would probably be the proper ending for this particular program. However, I am still wondering about some of the aspects. In reading a little bit about your beliefs and your writings and your magazine. . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** If I may correct you here, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a question of my beliefs.

**Interviewer:** Well, as you interpret it in your writings. Let me put it that way. It seems to me, sir, that there is a very high emphasis placed on the relationship between the individual and God.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. That is found everywhere.

**Interviewer:** Yes, but you place more emphasis on that relationship than on the relationship between one individual and another individual. Am I right in that?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** We have to establish, first of all, our lost relationship with God. Then we can understand the relationship between one individual and another. If the central point is missing, then there is practically no relation. You are an American, and another is an American, and both of you feel American nationality because the center is America. So unless you understand God, you cannot understand who I am, nor can I understand who you are. So first of all we have to re-establish our lost relationship with God. Then we can establish talk of universal brotherhood. Otherwise, there will be discrimination. In your country, or any country, a citizen means a man born in that land. Is it not? But people do not take the animals as citizens. Why don't animals have a right to be considered citizens? Because there is imperfect knowledge; there is no God consciousness. Therefore, people think that only humans born in this land are citizens, not others.

**Interviewer:** That is not necessarily based on the religious principles, of course.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, that is a philosophical principle.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Religion without philosophy is sentiment.

**Interviewer:** Don't you think that there are very good reasons for the existence of these rules and regulations in this respect?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. Rules and regulations must be established on philosophy. Otherwise it is sentiment. Defective. Religion without philosophy is sentiment. And philosophy without religion is mental speculation. They should be combined—philosophy and religion. Then it is perfect.

**Interviewer:** I think that in this part of the world, in the Western world, at least as much as I am aware of it, we place a good deal of emphasis on religion in the ways it gets one man to deal with another man—the ethic of religion. Now, in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** We are not concerned with how one man deals with another man.

**Interviewer:** Isn't that part of your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, this is not important because we know that as soon as one understands how to deal with God, he will automatically deal very nicely with others.

**Interviewer:** But, let's take the Christian religion for an example. You know the ten commandments? There is a heavy emphasis in the ten commandments on the relationships between one human being and another: "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal." You know, that sort of thing.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** But I say that Jesus Christ never said and never meant that "Thou shalt not kill" refers only to human beings. Where is that evident? Jesus Christ never said that "Thou shalt not kill" refers only to human beings. Thou shalt not kill any animal.

**Interviewer:** Any life.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Any life. That is religion.

**Interviewer:** It has never been interpreted that way.



**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** You have interpreted it differently, but he said, "Thou shalt not kill." He never said, "Thou shalt not kill amongst human beings." Why do you interpret it in that way?

**Interviewer:** How would I recognize a true follower of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement by his behavior? What would his traits be? What would his outward expressions be?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** He'd be a very perfect gentleman, that's all. You could not find any fault in him. That is perfect Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, I prohibit my disciples to eat meat.

**Interviewer:** To eat meat?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Yes. And therefore I prohibit illicit sex life. Therefore I prohibit intoxication. They do not even smoke, what to speak of other intoxication. And therefore I prohibit indulgence in gambling. If they can observe just these four rules and regulations, they will become perfect men. It is simple.

**Interviewer:** Or women, I presume.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** All manner of men.

**Interviewer:** Or women. . .

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Anyone.

**Interviewer:** There's a place for women in the religion, too, I presume.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Women and men have the same rights. Boys and girls are getting married, and they are following the same principles. So these are the four pillars of perfect life. Illicit sex life, meat eating, intoxication and gambling are the four pillars of sinful life. The prohibitions restricting them are the pillars of perfect life.

**Interviewer:** Now I would like to ask you one more question, and then I would like to ask you to end the program by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. One more question, though. In the six years you have been in this country, in the United States, have you been encouraged or discouraged?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** I am encouraged.

**Interviewer:** Encouraged. Why?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Because there are so many devotees coming daily.

**Interviewer:** Why do you say so many? We have maybe two dozen people sitting here, but of course there are 205 or 210 million Americans.

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** When you sell dia-

monds, you cannot expect that everyone will purchase them. There must be the right customer for a diamond. You cannot expect diamonds to be widely sold amongst the mass of people. You cannot expect that.

**Interviewer:** Do you in general approve of or do you have major complaints about the American society that you now live in?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** I have no complaint. These boys and girls are very nice. I am, rather, encouraged that these boys and girls are so inquisitive about Kṛṣṇa. This is the best field anywhere. I can understand that these boys and girls are hankering after something nice. They

are frustrated. So now, since they have the best thing, they are coming.

**Interviewer:** I would like to thank you very sincerely for giving us a very brief insight into the teachings and the beliefs of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. May I ask you to ask your followers who are present here with us tonight to join you in the chanting of the *mantra* for just a minute to close out the program please?

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh yes, we can chant.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. ☩

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# Kṛṣṇa's Subduing the Serpent Kāliya

by SATSVARŪPA dāsa GOSVĀMĪ

**T**he narrative of Kṛṣṇa and Kāliya, as described in the Kṛṣṇa Book, Volume One, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, vividly illustrates that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the complete Absolute Truth. The *Kṛṣṇa Book* is a summary study of the Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in which the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are fully described. Many people disbelieve that these narrations of Kṛṣṇa are revelations of transcendental knowledge. They say that the activities of Kṛṣṇa are stories about a mythical figure or ordinary historical person. A mistaken description of Kṛṣṇa in terms of this idea recently published in *Time* magazine stated that the devotees of Kṛṣṇa worship Him as one of many gods and hope eventually to go beyond Kṛṣṇa, and all other gods, to realize the Absolute Truth as the impersonal Absolute, or Brahman. This mistaken conclusion, however, has nothing to do with the Vedic literatures or the great philosophers and spiritual masters of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The scripture *Vedānta-sūtra* explains that the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is *janmādy asya yataḥ*, the source of everything.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa Himself states, "Everything emanates from Me" (Bg. 10.8) and "I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman" (Bg. 14.27). The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that the Supreme Person is the highest aspect of the Absolute Truth and that the impersonal infinite is subordinate to Him, as sunshine is subordinate to the sun. The Supreme Person is greater than the all-pervading, impersonal aspect of spiritual truth. Another authoritative Vedic literature, the *Brahma-samhitā*, describes Kṛṣṇa to be the supreme controller whose transcendental body is eternal, full of bliss and knowledge. Everything is sustained by His inconceivable energies. Therefore, the highest truth is the Supreme Person.

But when this inconceivable, all-per-

vading Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa, by His mercy appears in human society to attract the fallen souls, fools deride Him. Kṛṣṇa Himself states in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Fools deride Me when I appear in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be." (Bg. 9.11) Sometimes people give lip service to the idea that God is inconceivable and capable of anything and everything, but when He actually appears before them and shows just a small fragment of His infinite energy, they reject His activities and say that it is impossible for God to appear as a person. But we must ask such skeptics why, if God is all-powerful, it is not possible for Him to appear here and engage in transcendental pastimes with His own devotees. What is to prevent Kṛṣṇa from coming? We may disbelieve in Him, but we cannot stop Him.

Spiritual authorities all conclude that God is a person, and because His personality is infinite, for Him anything is possible. He is not void or zero. Even ordinary living entities have personalities and activities, so how can God, who is the source of everything, be without form or personality? One should understand that His form is not material or limited like ours, and therefore when He appears in human society in His original form of Kṛṣṇa, one should worship Him, not reject Him like the fools who say that Kṛṣṇa is less than the impersonal Brahman. Of course, this is a simple matter of knowing the spiritual facts. Only one who is ignorant of the spiritual science will deride Kṛṣṇa, not understanding that He is the Supreme Person. One should not, therefore, hear about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa from skeptics but from the lips of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, for in that way one can derive the highest benefit. The *Kṛṣṇa Book* is unique because it is a presentation of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa by a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Here is a sample from the *Kṛṣṇa Book*

that shows the actual transcendental atmosphere of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes: "When Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Their friends entered the village of Vṛndāvana, They played Their flutes, and the boys praised Their uncommon activities in the forest. Kṛṣṇa's head was decorated with a peacock feather. Both He and Balarāma played Their flutes, and the young *gopīs* (cowherd girls) were joyous to see Kṛṣṇa returning home. All the *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana remained very morose on account of Kṛṣṇa's absence. All day they were thinking of Kṛṣṇa in the forest or of Him herding cows in the pasture. When they saw Kṛṣṇa returning, all of their anxieties were immediately relieved, and they began to look at His face the way drones hover over the honey of a lotus flower. When Kṛṣṇa entered the village, the young *gopīs* smiled and laughed."

In this way, Kṛṣṇa, the inconceivable cause of all causes, plays in Vṛndāvana as a cowherd boy for the pleasure of His pure devotees, the cowherd men and *gopīs*. These are the actual activities of the spiritual world, and the perfection of appreciating these pastimes is far beyond that of meditating on a void or impersonal Absolute. When we appreciate Kṛṣṇa in this mood, we will best understand the significance of this narrative of Kṛṣṇa and the Kāliya snake.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa used to go with His boy friends and His brother, Balarāma, to the bank of the Yamunā to tend the cows. One summer, when all the boys and cows were in the field, they became very thirsty and began to drink the water of the Yamunā. The river, however, had been poisoned by the venom of the great serpent Kāliya, and the boys and cows who drank from it suddenly fell down, apparently dead, on the ground.

Kṛṣṇa, the life of all that lives, simply cast His merciful glance over all the boys and cows, and they at once regained consciousness and began to look at each other with great astonishment. They could understand that by



Lord Kṛṣṇa restored the lives of the boys simply by His glance. For the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nothing is difficult or impossible.

drinking the water of the Yamunā they had died and that the merciful glance of Kṛṣṇa had restored their lives.

It is mentioned in the *Kṛṣṇa Book* that when this incident was originally related by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, his disciple, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, was eager to hear about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. A pure devotee knows that nothing is

difficult for Kṛṣṇa, including even reviving the dead to life. Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable nature is infinite, beyond our ever understanding it completely. But the symptom of one who is advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is that he becomes more and more absorbed in relishing the Lord's pastimes and always wishes to hear further.

The boys had died because the Yamunā had been thoroughly poisoned by the black serpent Kāliya. The grass near the river bank had all dried up, and the river was so contaminated that it emanated a poisonous vapor twenty-four hours a day. If a bird even passed over the river, it would immediately fall dead into the water.

Kṛṣṇa's mission in this material world is to vanquish all undesirable elements; therefore, He climbed up a tree on the bank of the Yamunā, tightened His belt and jumped into the poisonous river. When Kṛṣṇa jumped into the water, the river overflowed its banks as if something very large had fallen into it. Hearing the great noise made by Kṛṣṇa in the water, the serpent Kāliya understood that someone was attacking his home. Coming before Kṛṣṇa, he saw Him to be delicate and beautiful, His bodily hue resembling a fresh raincloud. Kṛṣṇa was smiling and playing in the river with great strength because He is the source of all strength. But Kāliya felt anger within his heart, and thus he grabbed Kṛṣṇa with his coils.

Seeing Kṛṣṇa in the coils of the serpent, Kṛṣṇa's friends the cowherd boys and the other residents of Vṛndāvana were stunned with fear. Kṛṣṇa was their whole life. When they saw Him apparently overpowered by the coils of the serpent, they lost all composure and fell to the ground. Kṛṣṇa's personal associates and family members are understood to have been the most exalted persons in the universe. Having given up all material desires and gone beyond all speculation or impersonal understanding of the Absolute Truth, they became so qualified by dint of their previous pious activities that they were even allowed to play with Kṛṣṇa. They regarded Him not as the Almighty Godhead but as the dearest friend in existence. They thought of Kṛṣṇa as their master, friend, son or lover.

Ordinary persons do not even think of God, not to speak of lamenting for the Supreme Personality of Godhead when He appears to be in distress. Mostly we lament over our own bodily or mental distress or some distress that affects our friends and relatives. In other words, our feelings are based not on pure love but on sense gratification. Making the mistake of thinking that the body is the self, we are happy when we are able to please the bodily senses, and we become unhappy when there is some disruption to that sense pleasure. But there is no real satisfaction in sense gratification because it is always ham-

pered by the miseries of birth, old age, disease and death.

The associates of Kṛṣṇa, however, always focused all their emotions on Kṛṣṇa, and therefore they were eternally liberated. There was no question of their ever forgetting Him; rather, they forgot all selfish material desires. And one who always remembers Kṛṣṇa in this way is qualified to transfer at the time of death to the spiritual world in an eternal, blissful form, never to return for another birth in the material world.

In the beginning of his discussion with Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa's disciple Arjuna lamented over the impending death of his bodily relatives. This is an example of material lamentation. But Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna that his lamentation was not worthy of a wise man, for a wise man laments neither for the living nor the dead. A pure devotee's anxiety caused by thinking that Kṛṣṇa is in distress is not, however, like the material lamentation of a man in ignorance. The devotee's emotion is transcendental and purifying because it is in relationship with Kṛṣṇa. There is no question of danger or distress for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Godhead. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's appearing to be in difficulty with Kāliya was a pretense, but His devotees' anxiety for Him was a transcendental emotion.

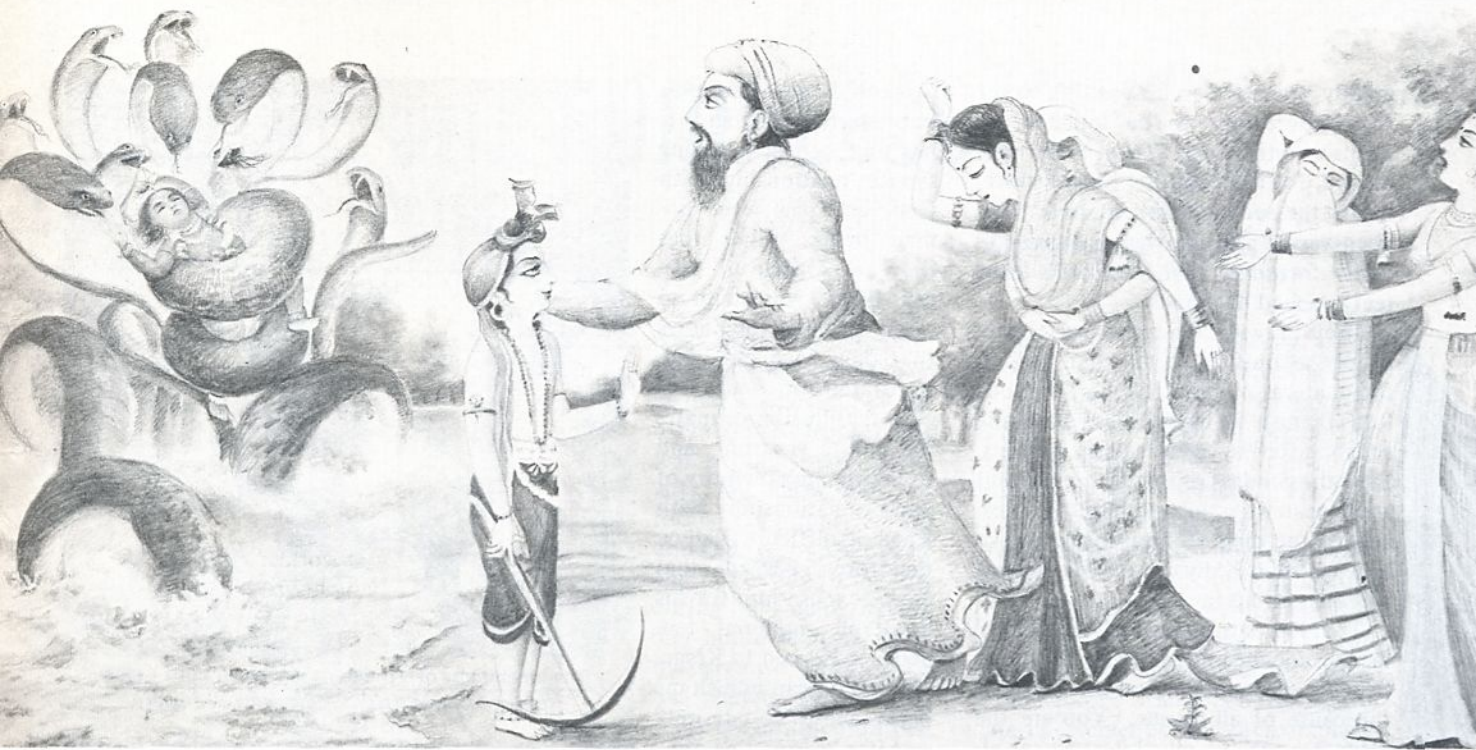
Not only Kṛṣṇa's friends but also the cows and calves were overwhelmed with grief as they saw Kṛṣṇa gripped tightly in the clutches of the serpent. Unable to help, they could only cry in great anxiety. Meanwhile, nature manifested ill omens. The earth trembled, and meteors fell from the sky. When Kṛṣṇa's mother and father, Yaśodā and Nanda, were informed that Kṛṣṇa had gone to the pasturing grounds without His older brother, Balarāma, they were filled with anxiety because they were unaware of Kṛṣṇa's supreme potency. They ran to the Yamunā, fearful that Kṛṣṇa might be vanquished by Kāliya. In a short time all the residents of Vṛndāvana—children, young men, old men, women, animals and all living entities—had gathered on the bank of the Yamunā. All of the residents of Vṛndāvana were pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa who did not

know anything but Him. They knew that He was their only means of sustenance. Seeing Kṛṣṇa caught in the coils of the snake, they felt lost. When mother Yaśodā arrived at the bank of the Yamunā, she immediately tried to plunge into the river, but she was stopped by the residents of Vṛndāvana. Only Kṛṣṇa's brother, Balarāma, who was the master of knowledge, knew what was actually happening. He did not grieve but simply stood there smiling. He knew how powerful His younger brother Kṛṣṇa was; there was no cause for anxiety over Kṛṣṇa's fighting with an ordinary serpent of the material world.

For two hours, Kṛṣṇa remained like an ordinary child gripped in the coils of the serpent. One may ask why Kṛṣṇa allowed His dearest associates to be put into such anxiety for such a long time. This question can only be answered in terms of the intimate transcendental relationship between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. An atheist cannot expect to poke his nose into the sublime exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees and understand them. Only a devotee who is simply absorbed in love for Kṛṣṇa and does not seek any reward can fully understand these pastimes. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Only by devotional service am I to be known." (Bg. 18.55)

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa can appreciate that Kṛṣṇa performed these pastimes with the Kāliya snake to give impetus to intensified feelings of love for Him. Seeing Kṛṣṇa in trouble, the devotees in Vṛndāvana became absorbed in remembering Kṛṣṇa, His smiling face, His loving words and His dealings with the various demons He had vanquished. The devotees on the bank of the Yamunā, therefore, demonstrated the highest stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—the ecstasy of love in a feeling of separation. Kṛṣṇa did not want to disturb their mood of concern and anxiety for Him by immediately showing them that there was no need for distress. Therefore He remained wrapped in the serpent's coils.

Lord Kṛṣṇa reciprocates and intensifies the love of His devotees. When Kṛṣṇa first appeared as a small baby, He allowed His father, Vasudeva, to



The Kāliya serpent grabbed Lord Kṛṣṇa with his coils. The anxiety of the Lord's devotees is a transcendental emotion.

carry Him across the River Yamunā as His protector. Because Vasudeva was absorbed in the mood of protecting Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa allowed Himself to be in need of protection. Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the cowherd girls, at the height of their loving affairs He disappeared from the *rāsa* dance, causing them to become mad with lamentation. They wandered throughout Vṛndāvana Forest searching for Him, feeling intense love in separation from Kṛṣṇa. And when Kṛṣṇa was sixteen years old, He left Vṛndāvana altogether, and thus all the residents of Vṛndāvana, including the *gopīs*, mother Yasodā and His father Nanda, remained in grief over His absence for the rest of their lives. But by always talking about Kṛṣṇa, chanting His holy name and remembering Kṛṣṇa, they were able to feel the same love as when He was present in Vṛndāvana. Because Kṛṣṇa is absolute, remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is the same as direct association with Him. Therefore Lord Caitanya prayed, "I do not know anyone but Kṛṣṇa as my Lord, and He shall always remain as such, even if He handles me roughly in His embrace or makes me broken-hearted by not being present before me."

When Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that all the inhabitants of Gokula, having no other

recourse than Him, were practically dead with grief, He made an immediate move to free Himself. Kṛṣṇa expanded His body within the coils of the Kāliya snake, and because of the strain, the snake's coils slackened, and he was forced to release Kṛṣṇa. He became very angry, expanding his hoods and exhaling poisonous fumes from his nostrils. Kṛṣṇa pounced upon him, and the two began moving in a circle. The snake tried to bite Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa pressed the serpent down and then jumped up on top of his hoods. Then Kṛṣṇa, the original master artist of all fine arts, such as dancing, began to dance upon the hoods of the serpent while the hoods moved to and fro. At that time the Lord's lotus feet became tinged with red from the rays of the jewels on the snake's hoods. As Kṛṣṇa danced on the hoods of the snake, the residents of the upper planets rejoiced and began to celebrate with showers of flowers, beating of drums and singing of songs.

The sublime climax of Kṛṣṇa's fight with the Kāliya snake has been depicted by devotee artists [see this month's front cover]. Completely self-assured and transcendental to all danger, Kṛṣṇa is seen vanquishing the hundred-headed serpent by gracefully dancing upon his hoods in the midst of the turbulent River Yamunā. By smashing the ser-

pent's heads with His lotus feet, Kṛṣṇa at the same time bestowed the highest benediction upon Kāliya, for by touching the snake with His holy lotus feet, the shelter of all the worlds, which are sought after by His pure devotees, Kṛṣṇa released Kāliya from his sins. The snake became gradually reduced in strength and began to throw up poisonous materials. It appeared as if the Supreme Personality of Godhead were being worshiped and the poison were flower offerings. Then Kāliya, now vomiting blood instead of poison, appearing to be almost dead, finally began to realize that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

At that time, the wives of the serpent, known as the Nāgapatnīs, appeared before Kṛṣṇa with folded palms and prayed to the Lord to forgive their husband. Recognizing the actual position of Kṛṣṇa, they addressed Him as the Absolute Truth and expressed the understanding that there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa's mercy and punishment. They could understand that the apparent punishment inflicted upon their husband Kāliya was actually a benediction because his sins were eradicated by the kicks of Kṛṣṇa's dancing feet on his heads. They declared that Kāliya must have performed

greatly pious acts in his past life to get the opportunity to be touched by Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. They were perplexed, for although the Kāliya snake, having the body of a serpent, must have been very sinful, he was so extraordinarily fortunate that the Lord's lotus feet touched his hoods.

They prayed, "O dear Lord, we are simply astonished to see that he is so fortunate as to have the dust of Your lotus feet on his head. This is a fortune sought after by great saintly persons. Even the goddess of fortune underwent great austerities just to have the blessing of the dust of Your lotus feet, so how is it that Kāliya is so easily getting this dust on his head?"

The Nāgapatnīs appeared well versed in the conclusion of Vedic literature because they understood that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes. "You are the ultimate goal of all philosophical efforts," they declared, "and You are actually described by all philosophies and by different kinds of doctrines. Let us offer our respectful obeisances unto You because You are the origin of all scriptures and the source of all knowledge. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You can bestow upon us the supreme knowledge. You are also the supreme enjoyer."

Fully acquainted with the Vedic literature, the Nāgapatnīs knew that Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal in the search for the Absolute Truth. They were also chaste wives who could not live without their husband, and so they prayed unto the Supreme Lord to spare Kāliya. "Our dear Lord," they said, "every living creature is Your offspring, and You maintain everyone. This serpent is also Your offspring, and You can excuse him although he has offended You, undoubtedly without knowing Your potency." They concluded, "Every living entity can be relieved from all kinds of despair if he agrees to abide by Your orders."

Thereafter Kāliya himself, having come to his senses because of the kicks of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, also offered prayers. He expressed that it was very difficult for him to give up his envious instincts, for they were natural to his snakelike body. Although the

real self is not the body but spirit soul and it has an eternal loving service relationship with God, or Kṛṣṇa, even human beings think that they are American, African, black, white and so on in terms of the bodies that they have obtained. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the illusion of material nature is strong, and to revive one's memory of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa is difficult. Kāliya, therefore, begged that Kṛṣṇa excuse him for his inevitable material tendencies. He said to Kṛṣṇa, "Now You can punish me or save me as You desire."

After hearing this, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was acting as a small human child, ordered the serpent, "You must immediately leave this place and go to the ocean. Leave without delay. You can take with you all your offspring, wives and everything that you possess. Don't pollute the water of the Yamunā. Let it be drunk by My cows and cowherd boys without hindrance." The Lord then declared that the order given to the snake should be recited and heard by everyone so that no one need fear Kāliya any longer.

Kṛṣṇa was very pleased with Kāliya and His wives. After hearing His order, the wives worshiped the Lord with offerings of garments, garlands, jewels, sandalwood, lotus flowers and palatable foods. Then, obeying the orders of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they all left the waters of the Yamunā. When Kṛṣṇa finally came out of the river, He was seen by all His friends and relatives on the bank of the Yamunā. He was decorated with jewels, and all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana felt as if they had recovered their lives on seeing Kṛṣṇa again. They each in turn pressed Kṛṣṇa to their chests and felt great relief. They were so happy that they felt they had achieved the ultimate goal of life.

According to the Vedic literature, the anxiety of our life in the material

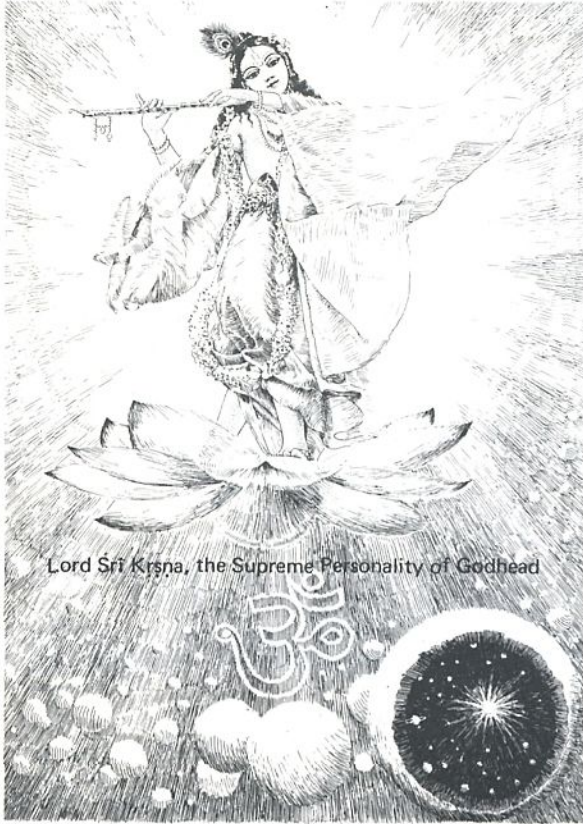


The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana embraced Lord Kṛṣṇa. Hearing of these pastimes alleviates all anxiety.

world can be alleviated simply by hearing these pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa from the lips of a pure devotee. The effect of hearing about Kṛṣṇa is that one becomes absorbed in the eternal, blissful world and forgets his illusory engagements in this world of death, disease and old age. Many such pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are in the *Kṛṣṇa Book*, which describes the activities of Kṛṣṇa's childhood, boyhood and youth in Vṛndāvana. Later, near the end of His pastimes in this world, Kṛṣṇa, as a prince on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, spoke the superb transcendental philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Lord Caitanya, the ideal preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, has said, *yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa' upadeśa*: "Whomever you meet, speak to him about Kṛṣṇa or tell him about the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa." To follow this order is to bestow the highest mercy on others, and at the same time, whoever speaks of such pastimes of Kṛṣṇa will also derive the highest pleasure. Many people in this age are too dull to give a patient hearing to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but whoever can hear about Kṛṣṇa is pious, and whoever can seriously understand and relish the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa is the most fortunate person on earth. Such a person is eternally liberated from all distresses, and he becomes eligible to enter the kingdom of God. ❧

# BEYOND THE FORMLESS PHILOSOPHIES

by Jayādvaīta dāsa (ISKCON New York)



Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Filling our eyes and minds, extending throughout the universe, form, in this material world, is everywhere. Even when invisible, all things have form. We cannot imagine a formless mountain, a formless child, a formless snowflake or even a formless atom because by nature a thing and its form are inseparable. But because matter always exists within a form, we sometimes wrongly assume that spirit itself must be formless. To attain perfection in spiritual life, one must overcome this misconception and realize the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa.

By mental speculation one concludes that because material forms are temporary, spirit, to be eternal, must be formless. This reasoning, however, is illogical, like the conditioned thinking of a cow in a barn. If a barn catches fire, the

cows there will naturally be frightened, and it may be that whenever they see red in the future, they will fear another blaze. Similarly, we know that the forms of matter are doomed. Not to speak of our own bodily forms, enduring for a mere fifty or one hundred years, even the greatest forms, like the planets of our universe, are destined for dissolution. In the material world, form deteriorates and disappears, nothing escaping impermanence. But unfortunately, by the imperfect process of mental speculation, we assume that because the forms we know are material and temporary, this fleeting nature must apply to all form. This mode of thinking, which may be described charitably as im-

perfect and more accurately as immature or even childish, is accepted by three classes of thinkers: atheists, voidists, and impersonalists.

## Materialism

Of these three, the atheists are the least intelligent. Arbitrarily, without substantial reasons, they hastily run to the indefensible conclusion that there cannot be anything beyond the endless combinations and permutations of the material energy. Scoffing at all conceptions of spiritual form, spiritual personality and even impersonal spiritual existence, they obstinately maintain that there is nothing beyond the elements of matter. This is because of their material consciousness. Their vision and intellect being dull, all they can see is dull matter. Beyond matter,

the spiritual energy certainly exists, but because the atheist absorbs himself in the actions and reactions of matter, he is unable to perceive it. Spiritual energy, however, can be understood by any intelligent person by its symptom—consciousness.

With their limited knowledge, atheists can offer no suitable explanation for the existence of consciousness. They sometimes try to explain that consciousness somehow or other springs spontaneously from a combination of material elements, but their explanation of how this occurs is inadequate.

In ancient times, of course, the doctrine of spontaneous generation, which maintains that a mere combination of material elements can produce living beings, was generally accepted. The ancient Greeks, for example, thought that living beings could be generated from mud and slime under the influence of heat. Even such a great philosopher as Aristotle believed that worms, larvae and fireflies developed from morning dew, decaying slime, mucus and so on, and that eels, crabs, fish, bedbugs, flies, moths, frogs, salamanders and mice originated in the same spontaneous manner. Variations of this thinking continued throughout the Middle Ages and even until modern times. Descartes and Newton accepted the theory of spontaneous generation without qualification, as did the prominent physician William Harvey (the discoverer of blood circulation) and most other leaders of the scientific community. After the invention of the microscope led to the discovery of microorganisms, many European scientists considered the existence of these tiny creatures to be further evidence of spontaneous generation, and it was generally accepted that living entities such as bacteria could be spontaneously produced from material elements until this was completely disproved in 1862 by a brilliant series of experiments per-

formed before the French Academy by Louis Pasteur.

Yet although in modern times we chuckle at the idea that matter could spontaneously give birth to fish, eels, salamanders or bacteria, modern biological science, in a feeble attempt to show the material origin of consciousness, has put forward the theory that living entities such as viruses could be cooked up in nature or in a laboratory by a mixture of amino acids and other such chemicals. From the viewpoint of logic and evidence, of course, such theories are all hazy, insubstantial and unscientific, and from the viewpoint of ordinary common sense they are simply foolish. If living entities can be produced in a laboratory from a combination of elements, why don't the material scientists stop boasting over their theories and produce practical results? Why don't they brew up more scientists on their own level to assist in their research? Or why don't they create even an ant? The fact is, of course, that try as they may to derive life from matter, they cannot create even an ant or a tiny germ.

When challenged with this inability, the foolish scientists heroically answer that they are "on the brink of discovery" or "just on the verge" of being able to create life, but it seems this is their permanent position. They always say, "We're trying," but these are the words of failures. Even the most dismal failure can claim to be "trying," but this is merely euphemistic talk meant to cover his defeat. The correct explanation for this failure is given in *Bhagavad-gītā*: "Consciousness can neither be created nor destroyed." Consciousness is not a material element or compound one can formulate in a laboratory. It is a spiritual element, and its qualities are completely different from those of matter. But because they cannot see it with their puny instruments, materialistic scientists arrogantly persist in denying the existence of the spiritual or conscious element, and yet they boastfully advertise their monopoly on biology—the so-called science of life—although they have no good idea what life is or where it comes from. Such material scientists would make more



Lord Buddha, sustainer of Kṛṣṇa consciousness  
He concocted voidism as a pretext for nonviolence.

progress if they studied the scientific explanations of the forms and properties of consciousness put forward in Vedic literatures such as *Bhagavad-gītā*; yet despite the inadequacies and contradictions of their own theories, neither these nor other such atheists have the intelligence and humility to do so. In this way they limit their progress within the finite jurisdiction of the material energy and disqualify themselves from understanding the existence of transcendental form.

### Voidism

Similarly disqualified are the voidists, of whom the followers of Buddhism are the most prominent. Although Buddhism, like ordinary atheism, denies the existence of a Supreme Person, it is to the credit of Buddhist philosophy that it recognizes the fu-

tility of material activities aimed at enjoyment in the temporary world of matter. According to the philosophy of Lord Buddha, the existence of the world and its individual living beings arises from a combination of material elements, and if one can realize the illusory nature of his own identity and the existence of the world, he can attain voidness, the ultimate reality, and thus achieve *nirvāṇa*, or freedom from all material miseries.

The flaw in this philosophy is obvious: if everything is ultimately void, what is the source of our so-called illusory consciousness and the illusory material world? Even an illusion must have a source, but the Buddhist philosophers cannot explain how the countless varieties of illusion could spring from a source that is void. It might be said that this illusion arises from consciousness and that consciousness arises



from matter, but, like the theories of the atheistic scientists, this would not explain how gross and lifeless material elements could generate living consciousness. Still, even if one were so rash as to accept that consciousness somehow spontaneously appeared from a combination of material elements, the voidist philosophy could not explain the source of these material elements. If everything is void, where has the matter come from? The Buddhist philosophy is void of an answer.

Considering the extensive inadequacies and inconsistencies of voidist philosophy, it is doubtful that voidism could have won widespread acceptance and respectability had it not been for the personal influence of Lord Buddha himself. Voidist philosophy existed, of course, before Buddha's time, but by virtue of his personal life and teachings it gained such popular appeal that by the time of Emperor Aśoka (273-232 B.C.) it was widely spread throughout India, Ceylon, Nepal and other neighboring Asian countries.

Curiously enough, how this came to be so was explained 2,500 years before the time of Lord Buddha in the Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is respected by scholars as the mature explanation of the Vedānta philosophy. In the *Bhāgavatam*, in a list of incarnations of the Personality of Godhead, a description of Lord Buddha appears. In the First Canto, Third Chapter, the *Bhāgavatam* states:

*tataḥ kalau sampravṛtte  
sammohāya sura-dviṣām  
buddho nāmnāñjana-sutaḥ  
kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati*

“In the beginning of the age of Kali, the Personality of Godhead will appear in the province of Gayā as Lord Buddha, the son of Añjana, to bewilder the demons who are always envious of the devotees of the Lord.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 1.3.24)

This verse indicates that Lord Buddha may properly be considered an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and it is significant to note that he is specifically mentioned by name and that his parentage, his mission and the province in which

he would appear are also specifically mentioned. This is the perfect nature of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Unlike the theoretical assertions of speculative scientists and philosophers, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is free from the defects of irrelevancy, error, cheating and imperfection. As a revealed scripture received through an authoritative chain of disciplic succession, the *Bhāgavatam* is able to transmit pure knowledge in an unadulterated form, and therefore it is quite possible for it to predict, with detailed accuracy, events that will occur in future history. The word *bhaviṣyati* (“will appear”) is significant, for it confirms that the event was to take place in the future.

Lord Buddha indeed appeared as the son of Añjana in the province of Gayā, 2,500 years after the *Bhāgavatam*'s prediction, and his appearance is worthy of careful scrutiny. If Lord Buddha was an incarnation of the Personality of Godhead who came to bewilder the atheists, why did he deny the very existence of Godhead and instead proclaim an atheistic doctrine of voidism? The explanation for this apparent contradiction is to be found in the verses of Jayadeva Gosvāmī, a great spiritual master in the disciplic line. In a prayer praising ten prominent incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Jayadeva sings:

*nindasi yajña-vidher ahaha śruti-jātaṁ  
sadayā-hṛdaya darśita-paśu-ghātaṁ  
keśava dhṛta-buddha-śarīra  
jaya jagadīśa hare*

“O my Lord, O Personality of Godhead, all glories unto You! You compassionately appeared in the form of Lord Buddha to condemn the animal sacrifices recommended in the Vedic literatures.”

At the time when Lord Buddha appeared, the people of India were mostly followers of the Vedic literatures, but unfortunately they had deviated from the central purpose of the *Vedas*. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: the purpose of all Vedic literatures is to lead one gradually to realization of Kṛṣṇa. Materialistic scholars, however, not knowing the real purpose of the

*Vedas*, mistakenly become preoccupied with the Vedic rituals and ceremonies and therefore mislead people in general, encouraging them in sacrifices aimed at material enjoyment instead of spiritual realization.

Among the sacrifices prescribed in the *Vedas* are animal sacrifices. In the course of Vedic rituals, an old bull would be killed upon the altar of sacrifice, and by the power of Vedic *mantras* it would then be given new life. The purpose of the sacrifice was not to kill the animal but to show the wonderful power of properly chanted Vedic *mantras*. The scriptures forbid such sacrifices in the present age of Kali, which has been current for the last five thousand years, because there are no qualified priests who can properly chant the *mantras*. At the time of Lord Buddha, however, the people in general, misled by an unscrupulous priestly class, were sacrificing animals without discrimination on the plea of Vedic rituals and then indulging in eating the flesh. The real goal of the *Vedas* was forgotten, and under the banner of Vedic religion, slaughterhouses appeared everywhere, catering to the unrestricted taste buds of the degraded and atheistic public.

Lord Buddha came to stop this hypocrisy, and therefore he superficially rejected the authority of the *Vedas* and established his own independent cult of *ahimsā*, or nonviolence. As long as one indulges in the killing of innocent animals, he cannot progress in spiritual realization. Therefore, to save the misled people from the vice of animal killing and save the poor animals from slaughter, Lord Buddha, in his compassion, knowing that the corrupted priestly class would try to defend animal slaughter with the Vedic rituals, repudiated the *Vedas* entirely and declared his own doctrine of non-violence.

The Supreme Lord is supreme in everything, and therefore He is also the supreme cheater. By His own transcendental plan He appeared as Lord Buddha, rejected the *Vedas*, concocted the theory of voidism as a pretext for nonviolence, and instilled within his followers devotion to him. Thus although he outwardly rejected the

*Vedas* and preached an atheistic doctrine, he is an incarnation of the Personality of Godhead Himself, the original propounder of the Vedic knowledge, and therefore cannot possibly be an atheist. By appearing in this disguise, however, he made the unfaithful atheists faithful to him. Thus he turned them toward the real goal of life.

The voidist philosophy of Lord Buddha actually has no validity, but it was introduced by the Personality of Godhead as an emergency measure. Those who sincerely devote themselves to Lord Buddha and strictly follow his principles of nonviolence will gradually get the opportunity for elevation in transcendental understanding. However, the modern pseudo-Buddhists who indulge in meat eating, illicit sex and other forms of gross sense gratification and yet hope to attain liberation from all miseries by repeating a *mantra* or meditating on voidness are only fooling themselves and others, and they are certainly wasting their time. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (16.19), they are destined to take birth among the lower species of life after their current lifetime of pseudo-mysticism.

For those whose real intent is to enjoy a life of sensory happiness in the material world, the philosophy of voidness is merely a convenient rationalization for undisciplined indulgence in materialistic activities. For them there is no question of genuine spiritual progress. But even those who sincerely attempt to attain freedom from material activities by achieving a state of voidness will ultimately find this impossible. There is no void anywhere within the creation. Therefore, the path of voidism is a spiritual dead end. Once having determined to give up material enjoyment, the frustrated voidist must ultimately turn to personalism to attain actual spiritual freedom. At that time he will have to abandon in its entirety the misconception of voidness. Thus voidism is merely a stumbling block on the path of spiritual realization because it hinders one from understanding the eternal existence of transcendental form. An intelligent person must therefore always reject it.

## Impersonalism

The most prominent of the formless philosophies is that of impersonalism. Indeed, the influence of impersonalism in one form or another is so great that it may be said to contaminate all conditioned souls. In other words, impersonalism is an integral part of material consciousness.

Although the history of impersonalism is as old as that of the material world, the impersonalist philosophy has most ably been expressed and supported by Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, the influential spiritual teacher who appeared in India in the 11th Century. Briefly summarized, the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya maintains that the material world is an illusion, whereas only Brahman, the Supreme Absolute, exists in truth. According to Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, the Supreme Absolute Truth is formless, impersonal oneness, and the individual identity of the living being is an illusion; thus when one achieves the highest spiritual realization, he relinquishes his individual existence and merges with the supreme impersonal spirit.

In establishing his philosophical doctrine of impersonalism, Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya accepts the Vedic literatures as authoritative, and this acceptance indicates the underlying purpose of his teachings. When the Personality of Godhead appeared as Lord Buddha, he superficially rejected the *Vedas* to lead people in general to the religious principles of nonviolence. After the spread of Lord Buddha's teachings, Śaṅkarācārya sought to defeat the voidist teachings of Lord Buddha and reestablish the authority of the Vedic literature. Therefore, as Lord Buddha deliberately rejected the *Vedas* and introduced voidism to win adherents to his principles of nonviolence, similarly, to reestablish the authority of the *Vedas*, Śaṅkarācārya deliberately taught his then-Buddhist followers the misleading philosophy of impersonalism. This is confirmed in both the *Padma* and *Śiva Purāṇas*. Although superficially they may appear to be otherwise, both Lord Buddha and Śaṅkarācārya were among the greatest of theists, for by their teachings they paved the way for the

path of pure devotional service to be established later by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through *saṅkīrtana*, or the chanting of the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The impersonal philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya is akin to Buddhism, for both philosophies deny the Personality of Godhead. However, whereas Buddha maintained that beyond illusion there is only void, Śaṅkarācārya accepted the Vedic principle that beyond matter there is an eternal spiritual existence. Śaṅkarācārya, however, insisted that this spiritual existence is impersonal, although this is against the conclusion of all Vedic literatures. Thus Śaṅkarācārya both accepted and rejected the *Vedas* simultaneously. Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya was a brilliant logician, grammarian and scholar, and thus by skillfully misinterpreting the Vedic verses in his own way, he successfully reestablished the authoritative status of the Vedic literature while simultaneously repudiating its ultimate conclusions.

As clearly stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the purpose of all the *Vedas* is to understand Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Bg. 15.15). This is further confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the most authorized of the *Vedānta-sūtra* commentaries: "In the revealed scriptures, the ultimate object of knowledge is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead." (*Bhāg.* 1.2.28) All the Vedic literatures point to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, as the fountainhead of all existences. The impersonal philosophy is defective in the same way as voidism because it cannot explain how the many varieties of existence could spring from a source in which variety does not exist. The material cosmos is full of infinitely varied creations, and to maintain that they have all emanated from formless oneness is simply illogical. The original source must be a reservoir of transcendental varieties.

Impersonalist philosophers claim that the varieties of this material world are all false or illusory and that only the Supreme Absolute exists in reality. But if the Absolute is real, how can this world, being an emanation from the Absolute, be false? If the Absolute Truth is real, all emanations from the

Absolute Truth must also be real. For example, if a tree has many fruits, can anyone sensibly say that the tree is real but the fruits are false? No. If the tree is real, the fruit must also be real. Therefore, this material world is not merely an illusion. It exists in fact. The illusion is that we accept this world to be a permanent home although in fact it is merely temporary.

It is said, "All that glitters is not gold." Sometimes a seashell underwater appears to be gold though actually it is not. If one thinks an oyster shell to be gold, this is an illusion. But this does not mean that the oyster shell itself is an illusion nor that there is no such thing as real gold. The gold exists, and the oyster shell exists, but mistaking one for the other is illusion. Similarly, the conditioned souls are attracted to the glitter of temporary material enjoyment, as if it were permanent, due to illusion. In the material world, nothing is permanently enjoyable. Therefore anyone who tries to be permanently happy here is a fool and a rascal acting in gross illusion. This does not mean, however, that there is no such thing as real enjoyment. Real enjoyment is elsewhere, in the spiritual world.

It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* that beyond this world in which we now live is an eternal spiritual world that is free from the miseries of birth, death, disease and old age. The limited and temporary varieties of this world are but a dim reflection of the unlimited, eternal varieties of that spiritual realm. That world is *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa*; in other words, everything there is eternal, fully conscious and full of transcendental bliss. There is nothing like dead matter in the spiritual world. Everything there is a living principle.

Life in the material world is like diseased life. In a diseased condition, all of one's activities are full of misery, and one cannot enjoy real pleasure as he does when healthy. Similarly, embodied life in the material world may be said to be a diseased state, and the symptoms of this material disease are birth, death, illness and old age. The impersonalist philosopher intelligently desires freedom from this miserable diseased condition, but unfortunately

he does not know the proper cure, and therefore he desperately resorts to the drastic prescription of spiritual suicide.

There is a story that a young boy was once afflicted by a dangerously high fever, and his mother called in a doctor who immediately gave him a lethal injection of poison. The mother was struck with grief that her son was no longer breathing and his heart no longer beating, but the doctor was satisfied. "After all," he pointed out, "his fever is now gone." Thus the foolish doctor considered himself successful in treating the disease, although the patient had lost his life. Similarly, because the impersonalist does not know the proper means for restoring the afflicted conditioned soul to healthy life, he prescribes the cure that he merge with the Supreme and thus extinguish his individual existence. This is nothing more than spiritual suicide. It is true that this method can free the conditioned soul from all material distress, but it also robs him of the opportunity to enjoy eternal pleasure on the spiritual platform. A conditioned soul cannot become a liberated soul by extinguishing his individuality any more than a diseased man can become a healthy man by committing suicide.

Therefore, an intelligent person should never adopt the spiritually suicidal course of impersonalism. Rather, one should follow the process recommended by the Vedic literature for developing transcendental healthy life. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *mama-ivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*: the spirit soul is eternally a tiny part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Gītā* confirms that the spirit soul is unchanging in its nature. Therefore, just as we are all persons in our present conditioned life in this world, we will remain eternally persons in the future, even after liberation. The essential difference, however, is that now we have forgotten our relationship with the Personality of Godhead and adopted false relationships pertaining to the temporary material body, and in our liberated state we revive our eternal loving relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Real liberation, therefore, is to give up the false con-

ception that our short life in this one body is all in all and is meant only for eating, drinking, merrymaking and enjoyment, and to realize that we are all eternally servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Just as we are all persons, Kṛṣṇa is also a person, but He is the Supreme Person. As stated in the *Upaniṣads*, *nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām*. There are innumerable eternal living entities, and they are all persons, but their origin is the one Supreme Person upon whom they eternally depend for their existence. When the *Upaniṣads* state that the Supreme Lord is formless, this indicates that He does not have a material form like ours, but the Vedic literatures never reject His super-excellent eternal form of knowledge and bliss. His form is made of spirit, not matter, and therefore His qualities, name and activities are spiritual and unlimited, not material and temporary.

The attempt to impose formlessness on the Supreme Absolute Truth is an unjustifiable and offensive attempt to bring Him down to our own mundane level. The impersonalists say, "If God had a form, He would have to be material," but they are in no position to dictate what the Absolute Truth can or cannot do. He is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as *sva-rāṭ*, or fully independent, and therefore He is free from all mundane laws and can do whatever He pleases, regardless of the restrictions and limitations that mundane philosophers might like to impose upon Him. He is perfectly free to celebrate His eternal lordship in a transcendental form full of knowledge and bliss and to invite His sincere devotees to participate in His transcendental pastimes of love in eternal bodies similar to His.

This, in fact, is the reality of the spiritual world. The Supreme Personality of Godhead eternally exists in an all-attractive non-material form, and in the spiritual world created of His own transcendental energy, He enjoys reciprocating the loving sentiments of His eternal devotees in unlimited pleasure pastimes. The phrase "love of God" can have no meaning without personal existence. In a loving relationship, there must be a lover, a beloved and the reciprocation of their mutual affec-

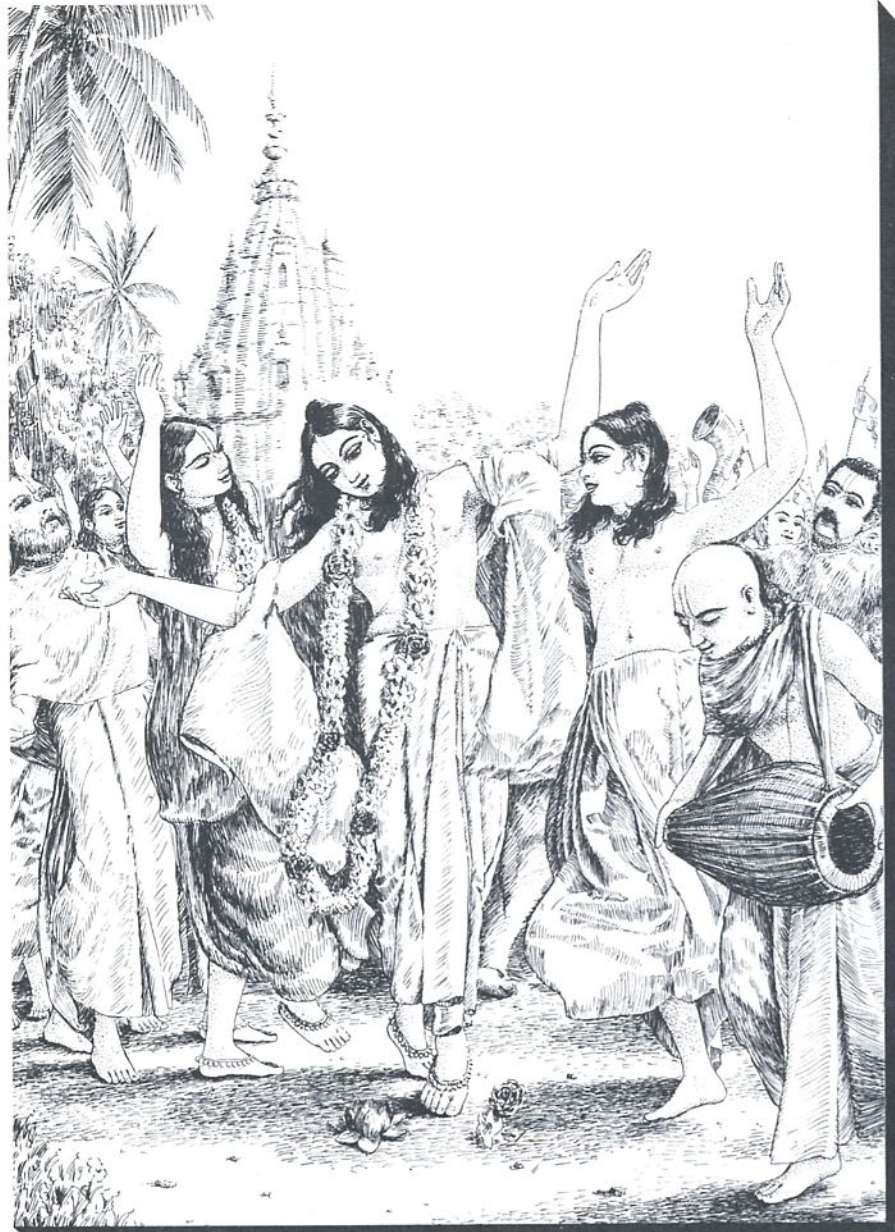
tion. There is no question of loving anything impersonal or void.

### Spiritual Personalism

The Supreme Absolute Truth is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and loving devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhibited in pure love is achieved through the congregational chanting of the holy name, which is the essence of all bliss. The name "Kṛṣṇa" is referred to as holy because there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa's name and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. This is confirmed throughout the Vedic literature. By chanting the holy name Kṛṣṇa one directly associates with Kṛṣṇa, and by this supreme association one achieves the supreme perfection. As stated in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, when one chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, is dancing on his tongue with His supreme pleasure potency. Thus by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa one can immediately feel transcendental pleasure coming directly from the spiritual platform.

Bathing in an ocean of ever-increasing transcendental pleasure by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, one feels refreshed, and his mind is cleansed of all material misconceptions and anxieties which obscure his true vision. One who is serious and sincere in his search for the Absolute Truth will automatically find a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of the Supreme Lord, and by continued chanting of the holy name of the Lord under the direction of the bona fide spiritual master, one becomes increasingly enlightened in spiritual knowledge and thus realizes his pure and natural identity as an eternal servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Regularly chanting and hearing the name and glories of the Lord and rendering service unto a spiritual master who is a pure devotee of the Lord destroy all inauspicious material contamination within the heart of the spiritual candidate and thus establish his loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead as an irrevocable



Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu (center), father of the *saṅkīrtana* movement, celebrating the chanting of the holy name.

fact. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55), only by such transcendental loving service can one understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He is, and when fully conscious of the Supreme Lord in such devotion, one can enter the kingdom of God.

This practical program of devotional progress centered around the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is the authorized Vedic way to attain liberation and perfectional spiritual understanding. It has been especially recom-

mended by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the universal method of God realization in the present age. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the great teacher of devotional service who appeared in Māyāpura, India, in the year 1486 and propagated *saṅkīrtana*, or the congregational chanting of the holy name. Although the appearance and activities of Lord Caitanya are a matter of historical record, He is not one of the conditioned souls of mundane history. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*

(*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata*), the Supreme Lord descends to this world in every age to help the conditioned living beings come back home, back to Godhead. Lord Caitanya's enlightened biographers have cited numerous authoritative references from Vedic literatures such as the *Mahābhārata*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Purāṇas*, and *Upaniṣads* directly indicating that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, far from being a mundane personality, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, playing the role of His own devotee. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* informs us:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam  
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pāṣadam  
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair  
yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In the age of Kali, intelligent persons worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly chants the name of Kṛṣṇa. Although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, His bodily complexion is not blackish but golden. He is accompanied by His many associates and servitors.” (*Bhāg.* 11.5.32) This quotation directly indicates Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who personally inaugurated the Hare Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana* movement of chanting the names of the Supreme Lord and dancing in ecstasy. He and His personal associates spread this sublime process of chanting and dancing throughout the Indian subcontinent, and now this same process is spreading throughout the world by dint of the efforts of His sincere servitors.

Thus the same *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that forecast the appearance of Lord Buddha has also specifically predicted the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whose mission, parentage and bodily features are also described in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, *Caitanya Upaniṣad*, *Ananta-saṁhitā* and other scriptures. It is therefore the duty of every intelligent person to follow the path of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by chanting the transcendental names of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

One need not accept this method on

the basis of sentimentality or blind faith. Great scholars in the line of disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya have elaborately and convincingly explained His sublime contribution of devotional service in terms of authoritative evidence and reasoning. It is therefore stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: “If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply them to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you do so, you will find it to be strikingly wonderful.”

The conceptions of impersonalism and voidism are manifestations of the darkest materialistic ignorance. As in the darkness of night one is unable to distinguish individual objects of vision, so in the darkness of impersonalism and voidism one is unable to distinguish either his own true identity or that of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This darkness, however, can at once be dispelled by the effulgence of the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

*Māyā*, or illusion, is always compared to darkness, and Kṛṣṇa is like the self-effulgent sun. Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa there can be no *māyā*. It is the grace of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu that He makes the association of Kṛṣṇa easily available to all living entities in the form of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Chanting this *mahā-mantra* can free one from all false conceptions, and thus one can enter the eternal reality of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* therefore states: “Let us worship Lord Śrī Caitanya. Through His mercy, even a child can cross the ocean of nescience, which abounds with the crocodiles of various erroneous doctrines, to arrive at the true conclusion.”

One may accept Lord Caitanya to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead or merely a great saintly teacher, but the Vedic literature emphatically declares to human society that if one at all desires spiritual success in the modern age of quarrel and disagreement (Kali-yuga), he must adopt the method taught by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

*harer nāma harer nāma  
harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva  
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“Chant the holy name! Chant the holy name! Chant the holy name! In this Kali-yuga there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way at all.” (*Bṛhad-nārādīya Purāṇa*)

Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, the present-day Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is propagating the supreme science of love of Godhead, teaching who God is and how to love Him. Other religious and philosophical systems teach how to negate God, become God, forget God or derive some benefit from God as in an ordinary business relationship, but the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is teaching how to love God. While others deal with God as a “concept” and speculate about whether He factually exists, we appreciate Him as Kṛṣṇa, the most attractive of all persons and the reservoir of transcendental qualities and pastimes, and we relish His personal association by chanting His names, speaking and hearing about His glories and serving Him in love.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathāiva bhajāmy aham*: “As one worships Me or surrenders unto Me, I reveal Myself accordingly.” (Bg. 4.11) Therefore, for those who wish to think of Kṛṣṇa as the subject of a myth, legend, allegory or theory, His existence will remain mythological, legendary, allegorical or theoretical. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa will permit those who wish to think of Him as impersonal, void or dead to do so. But those who wish to surrender to Kṛṣṇa in love will be able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face. To them He will reveal His beautiful threefold-bending form of Śyāmasundara, the all-attractive supreme enjoyer who eternally plays on His flute and revels in pastimes of love. Because their eyes are smeared with the ointment of pure love of Godhead, He will always be visible to them in their heart of hearts as Govinda, the reservoir of pleasure in His supreme transcendental form. ❧

# The Ecstasy of Mādhavendra Purī

HOW KṚṢṆA BECAME "THE MILK THIEF" FOR THE SAKE OF HIS BELOVED DEVOTEE

by His Divine Grace **A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda**

(Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, increasingly celebrated throughout the world as an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared 500 years ago in India to teach the best means for God-realization in the present age—the chanting of the names of God: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Although Caitanya is the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, He appeared in the form of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Caitanya's followers in disciplic

succession have presented many authorized books discussing His philosophy and pastimes. The incident of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearing before the devotee Mādhavendra Purī in the form of a most worshipable stone Deity (*arcā-mūrti*) was first told to Lord Caitanya by His spiritual master, and as described here, Lord Caitanya later related it to His followers. The practice of worshiping the Supreme in a Deity form made of stone, wood or metal strictly follows the Vedic scriptural injunctions; one should not, therefore, consider this to be

idol worship. Since we cannot see Kṛṣṇa in the material world in His original form, by His mercy He becomes visible to us in the form of a Deity, such as the Deities Gopāla, Gopīnāthajī and Jagannātha. One should not think Kṛṣṇa to be stone or wood; Kṛṣṇa is always Kṛṣṇa, the eternal form of bliss and knowledge, but He appears as stone or metal because we cannot see His original spiritual form. By serving the Deity, one associates with Kṛṣṇa personally. A devotee should not think, "Here is stone Kṛṣṇa," for although because Kṛṣṇa is everything



He is also stone, Kṛṣṇa in the Deity form is not the kind of stone that cannot act; rather, He can act as the Supreme Lord, even in His stone form. In the temples of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, under the direction of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda, the worship of the Deities by dressing, feeding and caring for Them is an important part of devotional service. Our spiritual master has said in this regard, "As you give more service to Kṛṣṇa, He will even speak to you." This actually happened to Mādhavendra Purī, as described in the following narration. The story begins in the house of Lord Caitanya's close associate Advaita Ācārya, where Lord Caitanya briefly stopped on His journey to Purī, the holy city of Lord Jagannātha. This is an excerpt from an unpublished book by His Divine Grace entitled *Lord Caitanya—His Sannyāsa and Saṅkīrtana Movement*.

As long as Lord Caitanya lived in the house of Śrīla Advaita Prabhu, the duty of cooking was entrusted to Śacīmātā, Lord Caitanya's mother, for at this last opportunity she herself wanted to feed Lord Caitanya and His devotees to her heart's content. Every day the Lord wanted to take leave of His friends and start out for Purī, but every day the devotees requested Him to remain for two or three days more, and the kind Lord could not refuse the request. Thus the functions of honoring *mahā-prasāda*, holding discourses on spiritual subjects and performing congregational chanting of the holy name Hari, accompanied by music and dance, smoothly continued at Advaita's home. Lord Caitanya pleased His mother by accepting, with His numerous devotees, the foodstuffs that she cooked.

One day the Lord requested all His devotees who had assembled there to disperse to their respective homes. He advised them to continue the performance of *saṅkīrtana* in each and every house. They would again see the Lord in time when they visited Nīlādri (Purī). Sometimes the Lord might also return to Navadvīpa to bathe in the Ganges. Advaitācārya, however, requested the Lord to take with Him four of His associates, namely, Nityānanda Gosvāmī, Paṇḍita Jagadānanda, Dāmodara Paṇḍita and Mukundadatta. The Lord then took leave of His mother by

touching her feet and circumambulating her holy person.

The Lord started for Purī, and cries of lamentation were heard from the house of Advaita Prabhu. Crying at separation from Him, the Ācārya began to follow the Lord, but the Lord requested him to go back and console His mother and the other devotees. Saying this, the Lord embraced him and went on calmly.

Accompanied by His four above-mentioned associates, the Lord proceeded towards Purī via Chatrabhoja. This route stretches from Śāntipura along the bank of the Ganges to Atisan, Panhatie (Sodepura-agarpara) and Barahanagar (a suburb of Calcutta). In those days the waters of the Ganges flowed by the town of Kali-ghāṭa. The Ganges now flowing by Bhuwanipore and Kali-ghāṭ is therefore known as Ādigaṅgā (the original Ganges). This course of the Ganges flowed down via Diamond Harbor by the police station known as Mathurāpura. Passing via this Chatrabhoja, the Lord gradually reached the border of Orissa through Briddha-mantreswar.

On His onward march toward Purī through the villages of Bengal and Orissa, the Lord Himself sometimes used to beg alms from the villagers. Customs officers on His way did not disturb Him, and thus He at last reached Remuna, a village about eight miles west of Balasore. Here the temple and Deity of Kṣīracora Gopinātha are situated. The Deity Gopinātha is notorious as a thief because He once stole condensed milk for the sake of His beloved devotee. In the transcendental relationship between the Absolute Godhead and His devotees, both the devotees and God Himself take the risk of serving each other at all costs. In transcendence, therefore, notoriousness has the same absolute connotation as eminence.

The story behind Gopinātha's being notorious as Kṣīracora ("the milk thief") was long before narrated to Lord Caitanya by His spiritual master, Īśvara Purī, and the Lord wanted to repeat the story to His followers.

Although Lord Caitanya was the Supreme Godhead, He accepted Īśvara Purī as His spiritual master, and by this act He taught us to accept a *guru*, or

spiritual master, in the line of spiritual disciplic succession. Lord Caitanya introduced Himself as belonging to the Brahma-Madhva-sampradāya, or the chain of disciplic succession that descends from Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the following manner. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, transmitted transcendental knowledge to Brahmā, from Brahmā it came down to Nārada, and from Nārada to Vyāsadeva, who is said to have initiated Madhvācārya. From Madhvācārya the disciplic succession descended as follows: (1) Nṛhari, (2) Mādhava, (3) Akṣobhya, (4) Jayatīrtha, (5) Jñānasindhu, (6) Dayanidhi, (7) Vidyānidhi, (8) Rajendra, (9) Jayadharmā, (10) Puruṣottama, (11) Brahmaṇyātīrtha, (12) Vyāsātīrtha, (13) Lakṣmīpati, (14) Mādhavendra Purī, (15) Īśvara Purī and (16) Lord Caitanya.

Introducing the story of Gopinātha's stealing some condensed milk for Mādhavendra Purī, Lord Caitanya related that Mādhavendra Purī always remained in trance and chose to wander alone, unaccompanied by his disciples. When Mādhavendra Purī was in Vṛndāvana, he was once sitting under a tree near Govardhana Hill. He did not have any food, but a young cowherd boy appeared before him with a pot of milk and offered it to him. The cowherd boy inquired why he did not ask for alms, and he also asked what he did in his meditation.

The *svāmī*, Mādhavendra Purī, was very pleased to see the beauty of the cowherd boy, and he forgot all about his hunger and thirst. He asked the boy where he lived and how he knew that he was hungry. The boy replied that he was a resident of Govardhana Hill and that no one in his jurisdiction remained hungry. Some of the village women had seen the *svāmī* sitting underneath a tree without food and had conveyed the news to him. Saying this, the boy left without further delay on the plea that he had to milk his cows.

Purī Svāmī drank the milk left by the cowherd boy and waited in vain for him to return to take back his pot. He sat down under the same tree the whole night, chanting the holy name of Hari (Kṛṣṇa), and at the end of the night, when he lightly slept, he dreamt that the same boy had come again and taken

him by his hand to a place congested with creepers and plants.

The boy explained that he had lived in that hedge for a very long time and was suffering through the winter, summer and rainy seasons without an adequate shelter. He was just waiting for Mādhavendra Purī's arrival, for he intended to expose himself to the eyes of people in general by accepting his loving service.

The *arcā* form of the Absolute Personality of Godhead is identical with Him. The Absolute Godhead is not different from His name, fame, form, pastimes, qualities and entourage. He descends to favor His bona fide devotees and appreciate their transcendental loving service. The name, form, and so on, of the Absolute Godhead, being absolute themselves, cannot be experienced by the material instruments of sense perception, but by the unbounded mercy of the Absolute the transcendental loving service of His devotees makes it possible for one to see Him as He is.

The transcendental cowherd boy agreed to come within the view of the general public in His *arcā-mūrti* because He was pleased with the loving devotion of Mādhavendra Purī. The *arcā-mūrti* of Godhead is not, therefore, an idol fashioned by an iconographer. The *arcā-mūrti* is potent and has all the transcendental qualities of the Absolute Godhead, but one can perceive them only through loving service. A material example may help one understand this. The post office authorities establish a mailbox near one's home, and all letters posted in it reach their respective destinations without difficulty. An imitation mailbox designed to compete with the genuine one will not serve the same purpose; the letters posted in the imitation box will never reach their destinations. The difference between the two boxes is that one is authorized whereas the other is a mere facsimile.

Just as a genuine mailbox is different from an imitation one, so the *arcā-mūrti* revealed to the general public by a devotee of the caliber of Mādhavendra Purī is different from the idols of iconographers. The icons of the idolators are like the statues installed

in parks and squares for the appreciation of the public. These statues serve no other purpose than to provide sitting places for crows; they cannot do anything, no matter how extensive one's prayers or admiration.

Therefore, the *arcā-mūrti* of Gopāla who out of His own mercy directed Mādhavendra Purī to bring Him out into the open must not be mistaken to be an idol, but He must be accepted as the Absolute Godhead Himself.

The next morning, therefore, Purī Svāmī approached the villagers of Govardhana and asked them to help him extricate the *arcā-mūrti* of Gopāla who was in the dense forest. The villagers gladly followed him and cleared the way for him to enter the place he pointed out. When the tangle of plants and creepers was removed, the weighty figure of Godhead was found. Some of the strongest among the men put their shoulders together and carried the Deity to the top of the hill of Govardhana, where the Deity was set on a big throne of stone and supported by another big stone from behind.

All the villagers were somehow informed of the Deity's presence, and they came there in large numbers, the *brāhmaṇas* bringing with them new earthen pots full of strained water from Govinda-kuṇḍa (a sacred pond). The water pots were one hundred in number. A festival then ensued, as bands performed and the village women sang songs. Some of the village folk began dancing, and the villagers duly brought forward milk, curd and clarified butter that they had collected for the Deity. Sweetmeats and other foodstuffs of various descriptions, along with numerous presents such as flowers, *tulasī* plants, new clothing and so on, came in abundance.

Mādhavendra Purī personally performed the preliminary function of *abhi-ṣeka* (a ceremony to sanctify the Deity) by washing His entire body with the water brought in the earthen pots and smearing His body with fragrant oil. After the ablution of the Deity, he properly dressed the Lord's body and decorated Him with flowers mixed with the paste of sandalwood. *Ārātrika* was then offered to the Deity to welcome and worship Him, and all the

foodstuffs brought by the villagers, as well as more food especially prepared for Him, were presented before Gopāla.

Ten *brāhmaṇa* cooks were engaged to cook rice and dahl, five *brāhmaṇas* to prepare vegetables and five to seven *brāhmaṇas* to bake bread. All the cooked foods were finished by the addition of abundant clarified butter. Then the rice was stacked on the floor upon a new cloth spread out for this purpose, and the bread was exhibited before the Deity in the manner of small hills. The vegetable curries, cakes and other preparations were all brought forward in suitable pots, and fragrant, cold drinking water was also offered in many new earthen pots. In this way the Annakūṭa ceremony\* was again revived by Purī Mahārāja, and Gopāla, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, who had been hungry for a long time before Mādhavendra Purī's arrival, ate all these transcendental cooked foodstuffs to His heart's content. Although Gopāla ate all the food, leaving not a bit of it, He again restored it all by a transcendental touch of His hand. Only Purī Mahārāja perceived this spiritual process, for Gopāla was unable to conceal His inconceivable acts from an associate like Mādhavendra Purī.

We have already discussed some logical conclusions about the *arcā-mūrti* at some length, and now we may also discuss to some extent the offering of foodstuffs to the Deity. The *arcā-mūrti* accepts only foodstuffs offered by bona fide devotees. The Absolute Godhead is always perfectly full in all respects, but He condescends to accept an offering of flowers, leaves, fruit or water if it is offered in transcendental loving service. If one is not hungry he is reluctant to accept even the most delicious and palatable dishes because in the absence of hunger nothing is pleasing to the taste. But if one is actually hungry he may accept food which is not even palatable. God, however, being full in Himself, is both hungry and satisfied simultaneously. Although He is always satisfied, He becomes hungry when one offers food

\*Annakūṭa, or Govardhana-pūjā, was a celebration in which the residents of Vṛndāvana offered a huge feast to Lord Kṛṣṇa. (For further details see "The Lifter of Govardhana Hill" in Back to Godhead No. 55)





Led by Mādhavendra Purī, the villagers welcomed and worshiped the Deity.

Pleased by devotion, the transcendental cowherd boy agreed to become visible to the public.

to Him with a fully devotional attitude of transcendental loving service. He then accepts the food for the sake of His servitor and again replaces it with His transcendental potency to influence the revival of the spiritual senses of everyone who partakes of the remnants of such *prasāda* (spiritualized food). Therefore, there is a gulf of difference between distribution of ordinary foodstuffs and distribution of spiritualized *prasāda*. By accepting and distributing the former, both the giver and the taker become subject to the laws of *karma*, whereas by accepting and distributing the latter, both the giver and taker transcend the laws of *karma*. To offer cooked or uncooked foodstuffs to the Deity is to perform *yajña* (sacrifice) as ordained in the *sāstras* (scriptures), but to cook or collect foodstuffs for one's own self is to put oneself under the severe laws of nature. By performing *yajñas* we can have foodstuffs in abundance from the storehouse of nature, but campaigns encouraging farmers to

grow more food for our own use simply enrage nature, who then restricts the supply. Such campaigns for self-satisfaction are sure to aggravate scarcity in the world, in spite of all scientific assurances to the contrary. Since the leaders of materialistic nations do not know this secret law of nature, when their materialistic endeavors are baffled at the cost of the lives of many innocent followers, these leaders, not knowing the defects in their foolish acts, escape by saying that nature is unkind.

Following the Vedic process, therefore, the foodstuffs were all offered to the Deity, and by the order of Purī Mahārāja the *prasāda* was lavishly distributed to all the villagers, including old men, women and children. First it was offered to the *brāhmaṇas* and their wives, and then to all others, one after another. The men who came from other villages to see the function were also sumptuously fed, and everyone was astonished to see the influence of Purī Gosvāmī. Purī Mahārāja then

turned all the *brāhmaṇas* into Vaiṣṇavas (devotees) and entrusted them with various duties in the service of the Lord, for it is the function of a bona fide spiritual master not only to engage himself in the Lord's service but also to engage all others who accept him as their spiritual master.

The entire country was informed of the appearance of Gopāla, and thus men from all the neighboring villages came to visit Him. All the different groups of villagers asked to perform the Annakūṭa ceremony in turn, and thus day after day the villagers brought rice, dahl, wheat products, vegetables, clarified butter, milk, sweetmeats, flowers and various other offerings for the Deity. The *brāhmaṇas* again and again cooked and offered foodstuffs to Gopāla and distributed *prasāda* to all.

Gopāla Himself, being the Personality of Godhead, is the natural center of gravity for all people—namely, *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals), *kṣatriyas* (administrators), *vaiśyas* (agriculturalists) and *sūdras* (laborers). According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *brāhmaṇas* constitute the face of the Deity, the *kṣatriyas* His arms, the *vaiśyas* His thighs and the *sūdras* His legs. None is less dignified in terms of the transcen-

dental service he offers as a limb of the transcendental body of Gopāla. When, however, the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and other occupational communities forget their relationship with the loving service of Gopāla, they become degraded. By forgetting the service of Gopāla one forgets his constitutional position and is thus deluded by *māyā* (the illusory energy). Covered by such *māyā*, one tries to enjoy material nature on one's own account, which one cannot do, instead of serving Gopāla by the grace of spiritual nature. This causes a struggle for false supremacy among the various classes or castes, bringing about the destruction of everything that they try to enjoy.

The true realization of a peaceful society is possible through cooperation of all classes or castes, centered around the transcendental service of Gopāla. The villagers of Govardhana and other neighboring towns, acting under the guidance of Mādhavendra Purī with Gopāla as the Lord of all, offer an ideal example of how to live in a spiritual society that can bring about real peace and prosperity. In such a society there is direct communion with God, for its members realize that everything is for God and that God is for everyone, irrespective of caste, creed or color. In such a perfect society, Gopāla is the center of all.

The holy place of Gopāla thus became well known to everyone, and whoever came there offered as much as he could afford. Rich men offered costly clothing and many valuable gold and silver ornaments, and one rich *kṣatriya* who came there built a big temple for Gopāla. Some of the villagers constructed boundary walls, and others erected a cooking house. Each one of the inhabitants of Vraja gave one cow to Gopāla, and in that way about 10,000 cows were collected for His service. The four occupational orders of society thus contributed their skills for the service of Gopāla. Two renounced *brāhmaṇas* who came from Bengal were carefully provided for at the temple. These two *brāhmaṇas*, who became disciples of Mādhavendra Purī, were entrusted with the daily worship of the Deity.

Two years passed peacefully in this

way, but one night Purī Mahārāja again dreamed that Gopāla was speaking to him. Gopāla said to Mādhavendra Purī that His body was suffering from heat that would not subside. He could be relieved only if the paste of sandalwood grown in Malaya could be applied all over His body. Gopāla thus ordered Purī Mahārāja to go to Nīlācala (Purī), where Malayan sandalwood was available. He ordered Purī Mahārāja to take responsibility for this personally, since it was not possible for others to execute the task. Mādhavendra Purī was greatly pleased to receive this order from Gopāla, and thus he arranged to start for the East. He thereafter left for Bengal, where he met Advaitācārya at Śāntipura and there initiated him.

On his way to Purī he came to Remuna, where he worshiped the Deity Gopināthajī. He asked the attendant *brāhmaṇa* priests what foodstuffs were offered to the Deity, and he was greatly pleased to see the opulent arrangements there. He asked about the foodstuffs because he thought that he might make the same offering to his Gopāla at Govardhana, and the *brāhmaṇas* informed him of a kind of condensed milk named *amṭakeli* that was daily offered to the Deity in the evening. The milk was offered in twelve earthen pots, and its taste was unknown in the world.

Purī Gosvāmī desired to have a taste of that condensed milk so that he could prepare a similar offering for his Gopāla. But he at once became ashamed, remembering Viṣṇu, for he thought it an offense to desire to taste food that was yet to be offered to the Deity. Thus after attending the *ārātrika* of the Deity, he left the temple without anyone's knowledge.

Purī Mahārāja never asked anyone for food, and if no one offered him any, he always fasted. This was his vow. Yet he never felt hungry or exhausted, for he always fully tasted nectar by remembering his Lord. Coming out of the temple, he sat down underneath a tree in the village marketplace, and in the meantime the Deity at the temple was duly put to bed.

After finishing their respective duties, the servitor priests also went to bed, but in a dream one of them

saw Gopinātha come before him and ask him to wake up. The Deity ordered the priest to open the door of the temple and search for a pot of condensed milk that He had hidden under His clothing. Gopināthajī asked the priest to find this pot of condensed milk, for He had kept it aside for Mādhavendra Purī, who was sitting in the marketplace underneath a tree.

The priest at once woke up, arose from his bed and, thinking of his dream, bathed, opened the temple door and entered the temple. He then saw the pot of condensed milk exactly in the place pointed out by Gopināthajī in his dream. He therefore took it and went to the marketplace, where he then called out, "Mādhavendra Purī! Mādhavendra Purī! You are the most fortunate. Gopināthajī has stolen this pot of condensed milk for you! Please come and take it."

At this, Purī Mahārāja came before the priest and introduced himself. The priest then gave him the pot, after telling the circumstances under which Gopināthajī had stolen it and kept it for him. Purī Mahārāja at once fell into a trance, and the priest, observing his transcendental condition, was struck with wonder, for he was convinced that Godhead was elated with Mādhavendra Purī.

After this incident, Purī Mahārāja at once decided to leave Remuna, thinking of how people would crowd around him when they came to know of the story in the morning, for he was very much reluctant to be flattered by others for his reputation as a perfect devotee. We know that all conditioned souls are envious of one another. Anyone who becomes famous for an act of goodness is sure to be envied by his fellow men. Indeed, a really reputable man is more likely to be mistreated than praised, although our envious human society sometimes justly approves of one who out of sheer humility does not desire to be recognized. Devotees or Vaiṣṇavas like Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī are never anxious for direct recognition by people in general nor even for such indirect recognition. They are not even anxious to be recognized by God Himself. Purī Mahārāja therefore tried to escape from such recognition, although



*The Deity had kept the milk for Mādhavendra Purī.*

in fact he was actually credited with the highest recognition because he justly deserved it. Others should not, however, falsely imitate his humble behavior to try to get indirect recognition from others.

Before departing Remuna, Mādhavendra Purī made his respectful obeisances to Gopināthajī. Then he left for Purī and in course of time arrived there by foot. He saw the Deity of Jagannāthajī, and in his ecstasy he danced, laughed and sang, and he actually fell down in transcendental happiness at seeing Jagannāthajī. People all over Purī came to know about the arrival of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, and they came to see him with all veneration. The nature of fame is such that it cannot be

The servitor priests of Jagannāthajī were all very glad to learn this news of Gopāla's wanting the sandalwood, and they tried their best to collect it for Him. Those among them who were in touch with the authorities of the city influenced the king's officers to help in this matter, and thus the required sandalwood, with an equal quantity of camphor, was collected for Gopāla. They arranged for a *brāhmaṇa* manservant to accompany Mādhavendra Purī to carry this sandalwood and camphor, and they also secured the necessary permits from

the king's court to free him from delays by customs officials and similar impediments.

Mādhavendra Purī then started for Govardhana, and on his way he once again reached Remuna, the town of Gopināthajī, who had stolen the condensed milk for him. He offered his respectful obeisances at the feet of Gopināthajī and danced before the Deity in his characteristic trancelike state.

The priests of Gopināthajī were very glad to see Mādhavendra Purī among them, and they gave him more *prasāda* of condensed milk. He slept there that night, and while he was dreaming, Gopāla informed him that He had already accepted the sandalwood and camphor collected for Him. Mādhavendra Purī should therefore rub the sandalwood and camphor into a paste and smear it on the body of Gopināthajī, who was nondifferent from Him (Gopāla). When this was done, His (Gopāla's) fever would automatically go away. Gopāla assured Purī Mahārāja that he need not hesitate; he could perform this act with firm faith.

When Mādhavendra Purī woke up, he informed the priests of his dream, and they were all very glad that the cooling paste of sandalwood that Purī Mahārāja had brought would be smeared on the body of Gopināthajī in that hot summer season. Purī Mahārāja engaged the men who had come with him from Purī, along with two other local assistants, to grind the sandalwood into a paste, which was smeared daily on the body of Gopināthajī. Mādhavendra Purī remained at Remuna until the sandalwood was all used.

Lord Caitanya narrated this lengthy story of Mādhavendra Purī before His companions in order to teach us that factual service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is performed in the mode of transcendental separation. He gave the example of the transcendental activities of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī because he is the original authority in the line of spiritual preceptorial succession. Those who devote themselves to the transcendental loving service of Godhead must

learn from the activities of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī. He renounced the world so completely that he would not even accept a companion lest he be engaged in worldly topics, and yet he traveled thousands of miles from Govardhana to collect sandalwood to carry out the order of Gopāla.

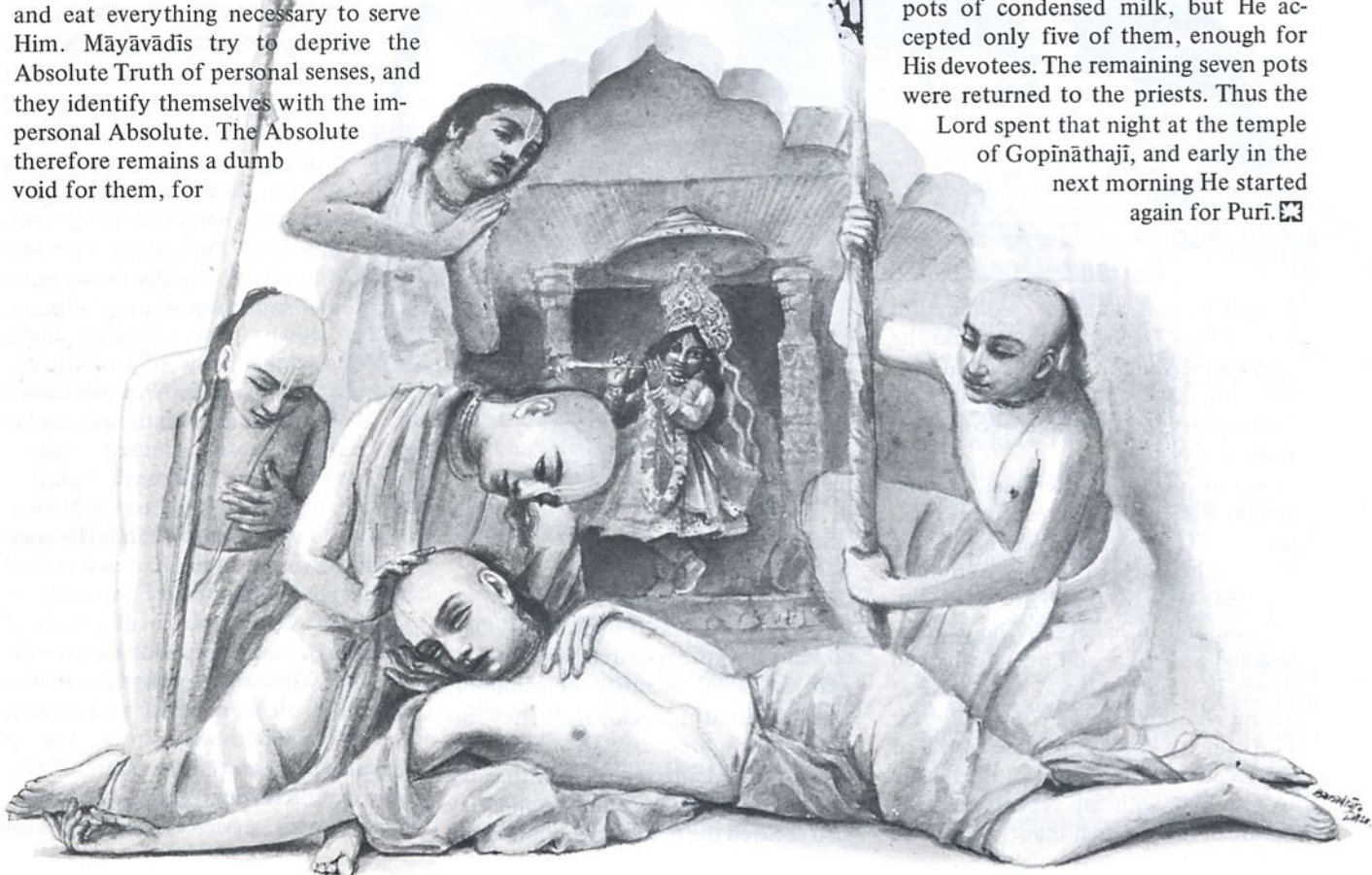
Śrī Mādhavendra Purī set this example to establish the truth that taking leave of worldly activities is the negative side of *sannyāsa* (renunciation), but the positive side is engaging oneself fully in the service of the Absolute Whole. Śrīla Mādhavendra took a vow not to ask for even a morsel of food for his own self, but nevertheless he accepted the responsibility for carrying sandalwood of a considerable weight from a far distant place in the days when such transportation was nearly impossible. He had not even a penny, and yet he was enthusiastic to take on this hard task only for the sake of Gopāla. This is an example of real *sannyāsa*. A *sannyāsī* should not do anything or eat anything for his own sense gratification, but he must do everything for the satisfaction of the senses of Godhead and eat everything necessary to serve Him. Māyāvādīs try to deprive the Absolute Truth of personal senses, and they identify themselves with the impersonal Absolute. The Absolute therefore remains a dumb void for them, for

He has no desire to accept service from such Māyāvādīs. Actually the Māyāvādīs gratify their own senses by maneuvering in worldly activities in the name of a senseless God, and thus they perpetually remain within the orbit of the material world, for they are entrapped by the last snare of *māyā*, which is known as liberation. A Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī*, however, is actually liberated from the very beginning of his loving transcendental service to the Absolute because he always carries out the orders of the sentient Absolute. Although such activities appear to be ordinary worldly functions, they are in fact beyond the bondage of *māyā* because they are directed by Godhead Himself. A Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* is not ostentatious, and therefore he does not need to change his garments simply to show that he is in the renounced order of life, but he remains a factual *sannyāsī* because he strictly follows the principles of *Vedānta*. A Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* is not concerned with any amount of worldly recognition, but, like Śrīla Mādhavendra, he can risk everything for the service of Godhead.

Lord Caitanya then repeated a verse spoken by Mādhavendra Purī at the time of his departure from this world: "O my Lord, my heart is mortified for want of Your presence. Tell me, my Lord, how I can see You? Be kind upon me, considering me the poorest of all Your devotees."

Repeating this verse, Lord Caitanya became unconscious, and He fell to the floor in a trance. Lord Nityānanda picked Him up and placed Him on His lap. The Lord then woke up, crying in separation from His beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and He began to chant repeatedly, "O my Lord, O my Lord!" Thus the door of Lord Caitanya's love of Kṛṣṇa was opened, and all the priests of Gopināthajī were fortunate enough to view this transcendental ecstasy of Lord Caitanya. Many people then assembled there, and in order to avoid a commotion in their midst, the Lord restrained Himself. Just at that moment the *ārātrika* of Gopināthajī ensued, and when the Deity was put to bed, the *prasāda* of condensed milk was offered to Lord Caitanya. The Lord was pleased at the sight of the pots of condensed milk, but He accepted only five of them, enough for His devotees. The remaining seven pots were returned to the priests. Thus the

Lord spent that night at the temple of Gopināthajī, and early in the next morning He started again for Purī. ❧



# ZURÜCK ZUR GOTTHEIT BRINGING THE HOLY NAME TO GERMANY

By Hamsadūta dāsa

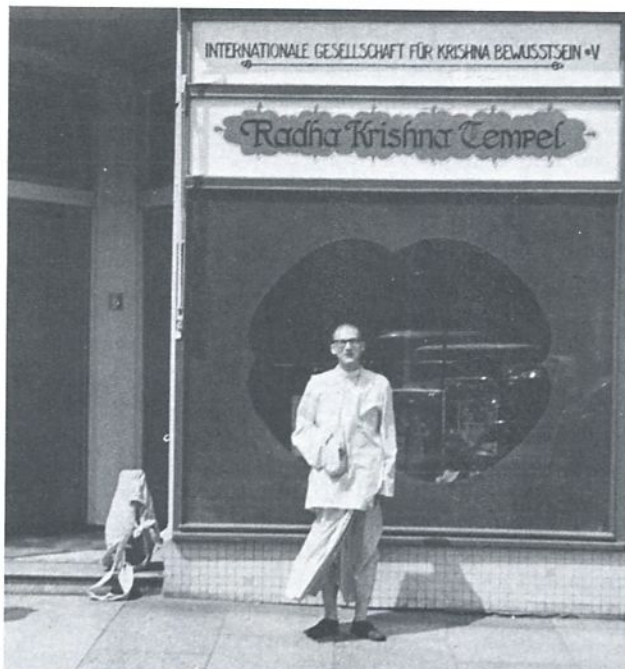
(ISKCON Heidelberg)

In August of 1968, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda introduced Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the European continent. At that time Śrīla Prabhupāda was visiting the Montreal, Canada, branch of his newly founded ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness). The leading devotee of the Montreal Center, Śivānanda dāsa brahmacārī, approached Śrīla Prabhupāda and informed him that he had saved a thousand dollars that he had intended to use for his enrollment at London University. As a surrendered soul, Śivānanda offered to engage this money directly in the service of his spiritual master. He submitted to Śrīla Prabhupāda that he no longer felt that the best use of the money was to finance his education at the university, but he suggested that he might be allowed to go to Europe to open the way there for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thankful for the proposal, blessed Śivānanda Prabhu, assuring him that his plans were actually the desires of Lord Caitanya. (Five hundred years ago, Lord Caitanya, the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who delivered the Hare Kṛṣṇa chanting, declared that this message and the chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa would spread all over the world.) Having been given a direct order by the spiritual master, Śivānanda felt happy and eager to discharge his new duty. A real disciple of a bona fide spiritual

master always looks for an opportunity to render service at the lotus feet of the spiritual master, and upon receiving an order from the spiritual master, a disciple should take it as his life and soul.

There is a parallel to this incident in the life of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda. He himself was a young man when he met his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja, in 1922 in Calcutta, India. At that time our spiritual master, then known as Abhay



Śivānanda dāsa standing before ISKCON's first German temple.

Charan De, was active in Gandhi's movement of non-violence and noncooperation to make India an independent nation. At their first meeting, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta asked Abhay Charan De to take up this mission of Lord Caitanya's and distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking world. Our spiritual master, who was then twenty-six years old, was very much impressed by His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, but he replied that since India was still a dependent nation, no one would accept instruction from India. The first step, he said, was to work politically for India's freedom. Bhaktisiddhānta replied, "Never mind; if you simply try your best, that will be the perfection of your life. You will benefit, and others who hear you will also benefit." The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement now spreading around the world is in no way a sectarian movement dependent on any ethnic culture. It is transcendental to Indian, American, Russian, Hindu or Christian. This is the spirit in which Lord Caitanya preached, and Bhaktisiddhānta conveyed this to our spiritual master. Thus in 1922 he planted within the heart of our spiritual master the seed that was later to fructify in the Western world and become the dynamic Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

In 1968, therefore, His Divine Grace was encouraging one of his disciples, Śivānanda Prabhu, to travel to

Europe. Śivānanda had joined the Montreal temple in the summer of 1967. When the first devotees arrived in Montreal in the winter of 1967, Śivānanda happened to meet them, and he helped them carry their luggage to the rented bowling alley on the corner of Park Avenue and Pine Street that was to become their temple. He had just happened to be walking on the street one snowy evening as the devotees arrived in Montreal. They attracted him as they tried to find the address to the new temple. At that time, Śivānanda had no idea that he was going to become the President for the Montreal center and the pioneer of the European movement for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śivānanda was born Samuel Greer in Vermont, USA. After finishing his education, culminating in the study of botany at the University of Vermont and Berkeley University, Samuel Greer was considering his career and his military obligations, and he was therefore very thoughtful about his future. He was beginning to ask questions like "Who am I?" "Where do I come from?" "Where am I going?" "Why am I suffering?" "Why do I have to die?" and "What is God?" These questions mark the beginning of human life. The *Vedas* say that until a person asks these basic questions, he is not considered to meet the standard of human consciousness.

Not long after helping the devotees find their temple, Sam attended their classes in hope of finding the answers to his questions. Samuel, of course, was very intelligent, and he asked many questions regarding the spiritual science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He used to stay with the devotees at the temple, engage himself in devotional service and hear the lectures from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—and then he would go away for days. While away, he would consider what he had heard and seen in the temple and discuss it with his friends. One day Sam resolved to take to the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life as a preacher. He shaved his head and since that time has never swayed from his resolution and determination to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He soon became an initiated disciple of His Divine Grace, and preaching the science of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and

*Bhagavad-gītā*, he transformed himself into a Kṛṣṇa devotee. Upon initiation he was given the name Śivānanda, but he had not actually met his spiritual master at that time. Hearing from his elder Godbrothers in the temple, who had trained him according to the system of disciplic succession, had convinced him about the authority and authenticity of the message of Lord Caitanya, and Śrīla Prabhupāda initiated him by mail.

Śivānanda had not been in the temple more than a year when Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Montreal. After a short meeting, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested Śivānanda to go to Europe to try to open a center there. Naturally every disciple likes to stay



with his spiritual master and directly associate with him and serve him, but Śivānanda had advanced to the point where he did not hesitate to leave the physical presence of his spiritual master to go to a distant place to push on his movement. In fact, he very enthusiastically took the opportunity to serve His Divine Grace at all risk.

The primary concern of those who are advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to preach for the welfare of others. There is one class of transcendentalists who go to the forest to sit alone for

meditation. They are mostly concerned about their own salvation. Pure devotees of the Lord, however, not only think of their own salvation but always absorb themselves in thinking of how they can bring spiritual understanding to those who have no spiritual life. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says, "O Arjuna, I consider one who preaches about this divine discourse between you and Me to be the most dear servant in this world. Never will there be one more dear to Me than he." Prahāda Mahārāja, a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa,



Enthusiastic spirit, concern for others  
*Above, left:* Śivānanda chanting in front of Hamburg's city hall. *Above:* German boys join Śivānanda in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa (1968). *Left and right:* Gaining momentum, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement spreads in Hamburg and Berlin (1973).

said to the Lord, "I do not want to leave behind me in the material world all these living entities who have no alternative than to surrender unto You."

It was in that pure spirit, on the order of a pure devotee, that Śivānanda left Montreal to open a center of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Europe. We were all excited by Śivānanda's daring spirit. I remember that just before he boarded the bus for the airport, he asked me, "What shall I do when I get there? How shall I begin?"

I replied, "As soon as you get off the plane, sit down where there are some people and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, accompanying yourself with hand cymbals. When a crowd has gathered, explain something about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and ask people to give a small contribution to help spread your mission. This is sure to be successful." Śivānanda and I laughed, knowing the simplicity of our life as taught to us by our spiritual father, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śivānanda agreed, "Yes! I'll do it if you think I should."

I reassured him, "What else do we have to do but chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?"



"Yes, our business is to chant," said Śivānanda. "Chant and explain everything we have heard about Kṛṣṇa consciousness from our spiritual master. Other than that, we have no engagement, so if I simply do that, everything will be all right."

The first letter from Śivānanda arrived on August 25, 1968. Śivānanda was rejected by the immigration au-

thorities in London, and he had to go to Amsterdam. His letter to Prabhupāda was very enthusiastic, and he enclosed a news clipping in Dutch from an Amsterdam paper in which the reporter had mentioned the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and the name of His Divine Grace. There was also a picture of Śivānanda surrounded by a big crowd of Hollanders. Upon examining this

letter and the news article, Śrīla Prabhupāda immediately dictated a letter to Śivānanda Prabhu. The letter read as follows:

*My dear son Brahmācārī Śivānanda,  
Please accept my blessings. I am so glad to receive your letter dated August 21, 1968, and I declare that it is because Kṛṣṇa desired you to go to Amsterdam that you were not admitted into England. I have also seen the description of your activities in Amsterdam, but I could not understand the language. But one thing I observed in that article was my name—Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta. This indicates that your tour in Europe is going to be very successful. I hope you will receive this letter and be courageous and always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. You will be successful, in the same way that I was. I came to New York in the same helpless way, and gradually many students like you came to help me. So don't be disappointed; try your best, and Kṛṣṇa will help you.*

*I understand that one Finnish boy has joined you, and so many others will come and join you because the whole world is in need of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. My Guru Mahārāja used to say, "There is no scarcity of anything in this world except Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Keep your present attitude intact. Have good faith in your spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, and everything will be all right. You already have the secret*

*of success—sincerity. Pull on with that mentality, and Kṛṣṇa will give you all help. You write to say, "I really miss Prabhupāda and my Godbrothers' association so much." But I may remind you that I am always with you. Wherever I am, you and your Godbrothers are there. Please remember always the humble teachings that you have received from me, and that will keep you always associated with me and with your Godbrothers also.*

*I hope this letter finds you in good health and good Kṛṣṇa consciousness.*

*Your ever well-wisher,  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami*

We all felt very blissful about the wonderful news: "Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in Europe." At that time Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement had only four established centers—one in New York (started in 1966), one in San Francisco, California (started in 1968), one in Montreal, Canada (started in 1967), and one in Boston (started in 1967). Prabhupāda declared that now our movement was truly international, for these European activities were a further





fulfillment of Lord Caitanya's prediction, "In every town and village all over the world, My name will be known." Being captured by the profound simplicity and purity of Prabhupāda's words and deeds, we were happy to accept him as our father in all matters. We knew Prabhupāda as our savior, who knew everything that was to be known, because he was coming in line from Kṛṣṇa.

A week later, Śivānanda wrote that he thought it would be better to go to Germany because Germany is the leading nation in Europe and the German people are very intelligent and especially fond of philosophy. Prabhupāda replied, "Yes, the German people are very intelligent. You may therefore go to Berlin, which has been the most important city of that country for a very long time."

A student in Kṛṣṇa consciousness never does anything on his own; he is always aware of his eternal dependence on his spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. It was very appropriate that Śivānanda ask his spiritual master about his best course of action so he could be certain his action was authorized as favorable service to Kṛṣṇa. Those who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious do not recognize their dependence upon the Supreme God and His representative, the spiritual master. They do everything whimsically; even though they may be leaders of empires, they act under the dictation of their senses. Sometimes such men are inspired, but because of their attachment to women, they act just to satisfy their uncontrollable sexual appetites, not considering the consequences. At other times, being attached to fame and fortune, they commit all varieties of abominable actions, blinded by their false prestige and lust for material enjoyment. Devotees of the Lord, however, never allow themselves to be directed by anyone other than their spiritual master, whom they accept as the direct representative of the Supreme Lord.

An actual devotee is an emissary of the Supreme Lord, and he is always peaceful and fearless because he knows that Kṛṣṇa is guiding and protecting him at every moment. A devotee of Kṛṣṇa is always humble and meek. He

never makes a false show of strength, but depends upon Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa can work in any way He desires by empowering His devotee. The devotee never desires to be powerful, rich or famous, but because he engages in the service of the supremely rich, powerful and famous Personality of Godhead, automatically these material opulences are also at his disposal. The devotee never takes advantage of these opulences for his own sake, but he uses everything for the service of the Lord. A devotee does not strive to become very much qualified, but because of his surrender, Kṛṣṇa qualifies him in every way. Some of the qualifications of a

Śivānanda went to Berlin. In a humble spirit, he began to hold regular *kīrtana* (chanting) and classes on *Bhagavad-gītā* in a small shop that he described in his letters very enthusiastically. It was not until some time later, when another devotee from California came to see Śivānanda in Berlin, that we learned that the temple in which Śivānanda was conducting Kṛṣṇa consciousness was without heat and water and that the back wall was completely missing, having been bombed out in the last world war. Śivānanda, however, did not find any inconvenience; rather, he thought himself fortunate and accepted everything as Kṛṣṇa's mercy. For Śivānanda



Depending upon Kṛṣṇa: Śrīla Prabhupāda and disciples walking on Hamburg's waterfront (1969). Śivānanda is on the left, in front.

devotee are as follows: he is kind to everyone, he does not quarrel with anyone, he is fixed in the Absolute Truth, he is equal to everyone, he is charitable, clean, simple and peaceful, he has no material desires, he is self-controlled, respectful, humble, poetic and compassionate, and he does not eat more than required. The Vedic scriptures say that pure devotees are decorated by all these qualities, whereas those who are not devotees of the Lord have no good qualifications and are not to be trusted.

On the order of his spiritual master,

the bombed-out storefront was a temple, but to those lacking in spiritual vision it was an unwanted store without heat and hot water, too close to the dreaded Berlin Wall and therefore not fit for habitation.

Śivānanda sometimes tried to go to East Berlin to introduce the people there to the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, but the guards at "Checkpoint Charlie," exasperated at the open and simple behavior of Prabhupāda's ambassador from America, turned him away abruptly. Still, Kṛṣṇa has arranged for our Berlin temple to be exactly opposite

the Berlin Wall at the U Bahn Station Wollankstrasse. There is no doubt that those on the other side must be regularly hearing, morning and evening, the sweet sounds of those surrendered souls who chant the holy *kīrtana* of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is completely spiritual; therefore nothing material can check the process of devotional service. From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we learn of Prahlāda Mahārāja, a devotee of the Lord although only five years old, and his father, Hiranyakaśipu, a most powerful king and atheist. The father tried in many ways to check the devotional behavior of his boy Prahlāda. He gave him poison, threw him from a high mountain, boiled him in oil, put him in a pit of snakes and tried to have an elephant trample him, but still the boy could not be killed. He never stopped the remembrance and chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. At last the father's rage reached a climax, and he demanded of his son Prahlāda, "Where is your God?"

Prahlāda replied, "My God is everywhere."

"Is He here in this pillar?" Hiranyakaśipu asked, pointing to a pillar of the palace.

When Prahlāda replied yes, the demon struck the stone pillar with his sword, and at that instant the Lord Himself appeared from within the pillar and tore apart the demon Hiranyakaśipu. Thus there may be a pillar or a wall, but Kṛṣṇa cannot be kept out of any place. The Lord is all-pervading and transcendental. Those apparently being deprived of the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness will also soon have the opportunity to hear about Kṛṣṇa.

After he had stayed some time in Berlin, more devotees came from the United States to help Śivānanda in his mission to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa in Germany. A permanent temple was established in Hamburg, and the boys would be seen every day in the streets of Hamburg—sometimes on the Rathaus Platz, sometimes on the Moncheburg Strasse, and so on. Reporters often interviewed them and every now and then they appeared on different television stations. Lecturing at universities, they attracted some

German boys to their regular *kīrtanas* and *Bhagavad-gītā* classes at the temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda then sent another disciple to Germany to translate his books into German, and shortly thereafter *Back to Godhead* appeared in the German language. *Back to Godhead* is the only magazine in the Western world to distribute the authorized teachings of the Vedic literature. Originally started in English by His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1944 in India, it is now published in English, German, Japanese, Hindi, French, Dutch, Spanish and Swahili, and over one million copies are distributed monthly. Our spiritual master calls the press that prints *Back to Godhead* the "big *mṛdaṅga*." The drum used to keep the rhythm for *saṅkīrtana* is called a *mṛdaṅga*. This drum can be heard for several blocks when played loudly, but a press, when printing *Back to Godhead* or other transcendental literatures, is heard around the world. Therefore it is the big drum, or big *mṛdaṅga*. These most important activities for the devotee—holding *saṅkīrtana* (chanting of the holy names of God on the street) and translating or publishing literatures about the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—formed the main activities of the devotees in the Hamburg temple.

In August of 1969, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Hamburg on the request of Śivānanda. Śrīla Prabhupāda asked the devotees to open a bigger temple to accommodate the many guests, and within a short time the temple moved to a better location. Later the Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa were installed there, and They are being worshiped today in the present location of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in Hamburg.

Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed in Hamburg for about two months, lecturing in English while his German disciple Maṅḍalībhadrā translated his words. Prabhupāda met with important Sanskrit professors, and he would be seen early in the morning taking his daily walk on Landugs brucke, the waterfront of Hamburg. Once, while taking a walk with some of his students, he stopped and stood, watching a tugboat pull a large ocean vessel backwards into the harbor. Suddenly he turned and

said, "Just see! A man under the spell of *māyā* [illusion] is just like this big ocean liner. The tugboat is small, but because the big ocean liner has its ship's motor shut off, it is possible for the little tugboat to drag the big ship helplessly to dock. Similarly, the soul without Kṛṣṇa is being pulled by *māyā*, down to hell."

Once Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that the *Mahābhārata*, the great history of the planet earth, states that the great *kṣatriya* warriors of India fled to Europe during the time of Paraśurāma, an incarnation of Godhead. Therefore, he said, we still notice today that the Germans are the best Sanskrit scholars in the world; they even excel the Indian Sanskrit scholars. He told us that his spiritual master's first foreign disciple was a German professor, now known as Sadādānanda Svāmī, who is still preaching in Sweden.

While Prabhupāda was in Germany, he initiated several German boys into Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Society now has four centers in Germany—one in Hamburg, one in Heidelberg, one in Munich and one in Berlin—and maintains five Volkswagen buses in which devotees travel to surrounding cities to distribute books and magazines. This process is very exciting and spiritually rewarding for both the devotees and those who come in contact with them. The spiritual master has described that the devotees, with their saffron robes and shaved heads, appear like angels from the spiritual world, and so whoever receives them favorably can also take part in the benediction of *saṅkīrtana*. For this age of darkness, all spiritual authorities recommend the *saṅkīrtana* movement, and we invite everyone, young and old, to join us in this movement in whatever capacity he can.

There are many ISKCON devotees like Śivānanda dedicating their lives to making the glories of Kṛṣṇa known in every town and village. We invite all young, adventurous persons to seriously consider joining this mission to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world for the benefit of all people of the world. Human life is meant for this purpose: to go back home, back to Godhead. ❏

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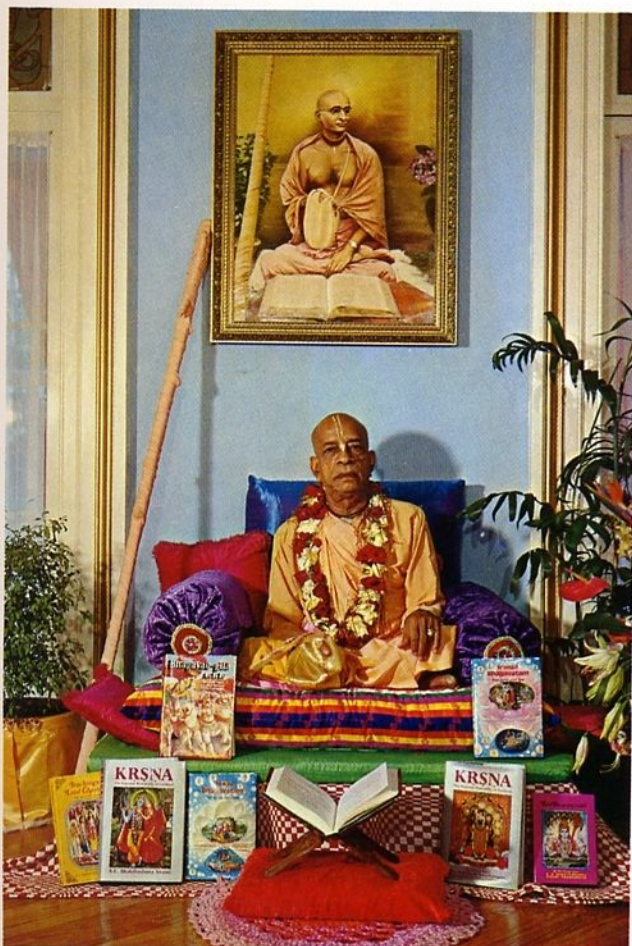
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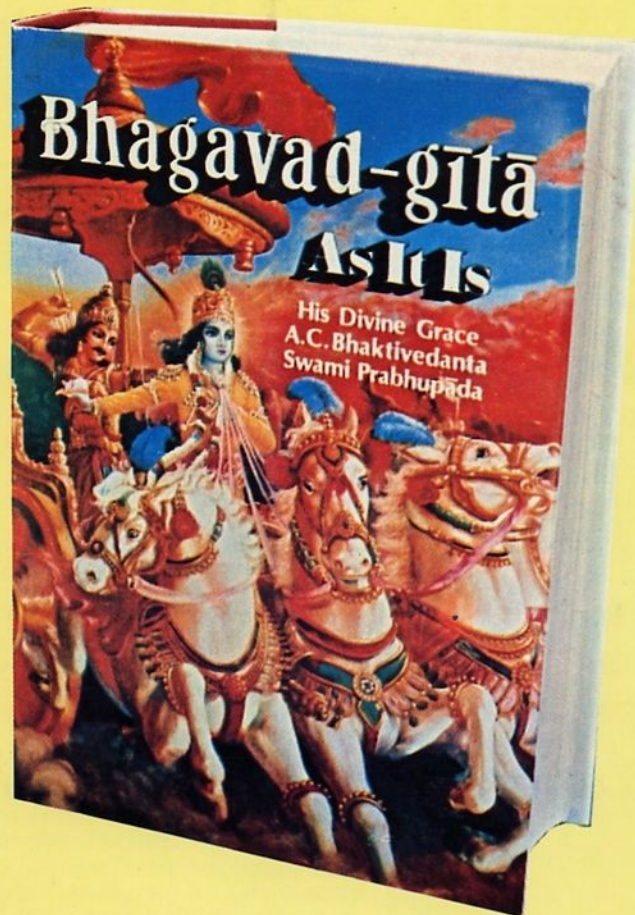


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# ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA

“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

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Collier-Macmillan