

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. 67



श्री केशव
Sri Kesava



In a Castle in West Germany. And Around the World. . .

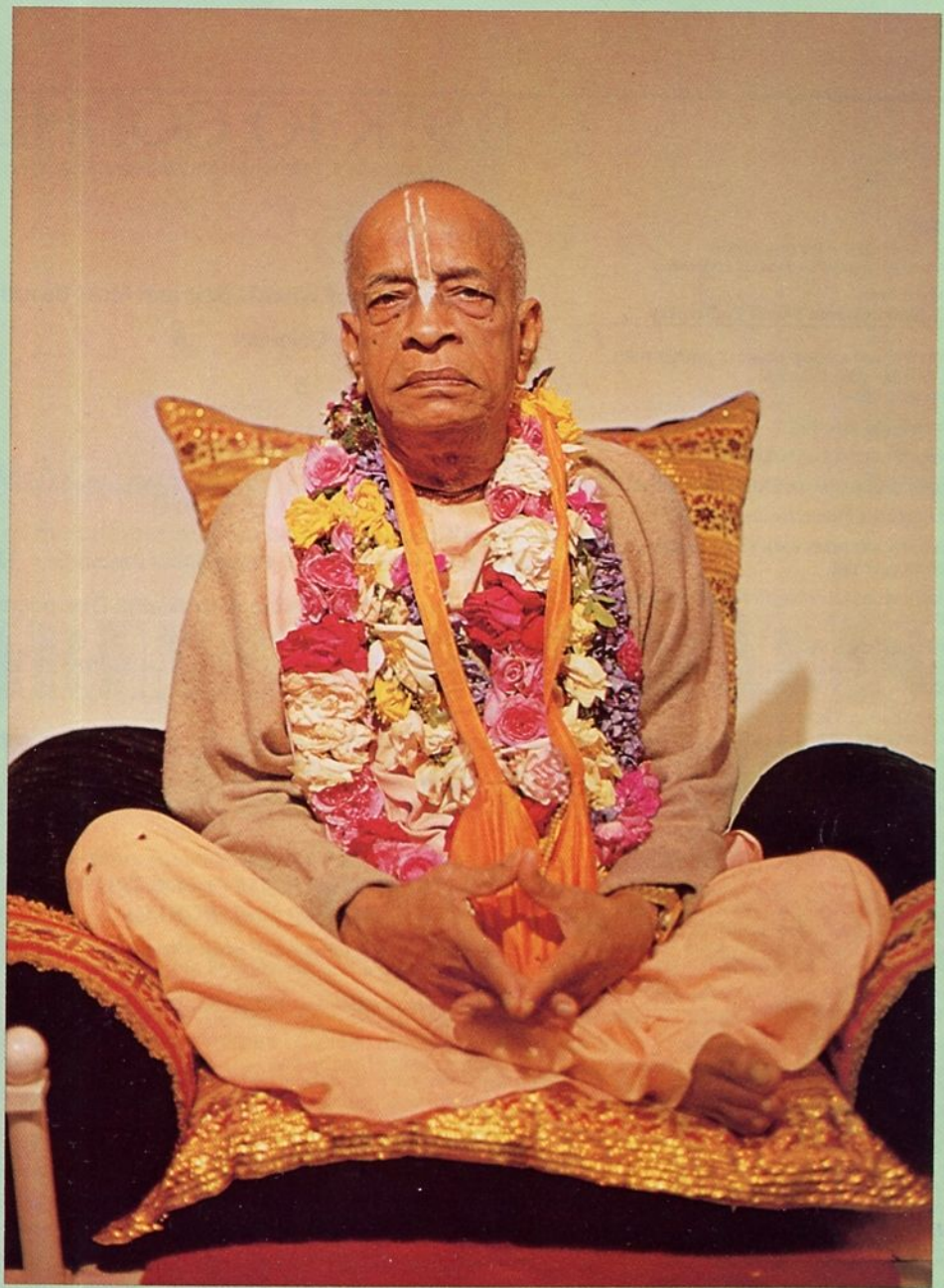
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

This castle is our Society's headquarters for West Germany. Built in 1890 for a German royal family, it's called Schloss Rettershof ("the castle of the knights"). Now it's one of the more than eighty worldwide centers of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The purpose of the Society is to teach a simple, practical and scientific way that we can reawaken the natural spiritual awareness that's present within us all.

Whether one is American, German or English, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu or Jew, black or white or whatever, everyone is really a spiritual living being. On the spiritual platform, bodily labels don't make any difference. Spiritually, everyone is equal because everyone is a tiny part of the same supreme reality. That supreme reality is the Supreme Personality of Godhead—God, or Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is a universal name for God because *kṛṣṇa* means



ॐ His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda ॐ
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

“all attractive.” After all, who could be more attractive than God? *Rāma* is also a name for God, and it means “the highest eternal pleasure.” *Hare* is a call for God’s blissful spiritual energy. These three names—Hare, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma—are the seeds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, or chant. By chanting these spiritual names of God, one comes directly to the spiritual platform, which is blissful, eternal and full of knowledge.

Almost 100 Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees live at Schloss Rettershof, and they travel in 16 new Volkswagen buses to cities, villages and towns throughout Germany, just to spread the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, tell people about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and distribute books that explain the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy. This is the philosophy that you’ll find in *Back to Godhead*. Read on, and find out more about it.

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in *Back to Godhead* are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce 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 *ri* is pronounced like the *er* in the English word *fiber*. The *c* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch*-heart, *hedgehog* and *red-hot*. The two aspirants *ś* and *ṣ* are like the English *sh*; *s* is like the *s* in *sun*. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

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ON THE COVER

Śrī Keṣava. God is one, but He has many forms. The Lord displays His power and opulence in innumerable forms called Viṣṇu expansions. Śrī Keṣava is one of these Viṣṇu forms. The original Viṣṇu is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

CONTENTS

An Awareness of What Is Best and Most Beautiful 3

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar 6

ISKCON News 8

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭaka

by Śrī Satyavrata Muni

translated by His Holiness Acyutānanda Svāmī 9

The Killing of Kāmsa

by His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī 12

Traveling and Preaching with Rādhā-Dāmodara

by His Holiness Viṣṇujana Svāmī

and His Holiness Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī 19

Primal Origins

by Yogeśvara dāsa 23

Religion: Material and Spiritual 27

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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A discussion between
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
founder and spiritual master
of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,
and Desmond James Bernard O'Grady, poet.

AN AWARENESS OF WHAT IS BEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL

(Editor's note: Desmond O'Grady is a thirty-nine year old Irish poet who has recently published some nine books of poetry, including *Hellas*, *The Dying Gaul* and *The Dark Edge of Europe*. He is represented in a number of anthologies, including *New Modern Poetry*. He has studied at Harvard and includes *Ezra Pound* as one of his most influential teachers. He is well known in Ireland as one of that country's major poets.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder and spiritual master of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, travels around the world, he often meets leading figures in philosophy, politics, science and literature. He always exhorts such influential men to take to the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and employ its realization in their work. This discussion with Mr. O'Grady took place in Rome during May, 1974.)

MR. O'GRADY: Your edition of *Bhagavad-gītā* is very nice.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: It is the fifth edition in two years.

MR. O'GRADY: In which country has the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement been the most successful?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Everywhere. In Africa, America, Canada, Japan, China. But actually it has been most successful in America. Many Americans have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

MR. O'GRADY: What about here in Rome? Have you had problems with the police?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: We have problems everywhere. Police sometimes harass us, but usually they become tired and eventually don't do anything.

[laughter]

MR. O'GRADY: The system give up? That's marvelous. I feel very tired of the system myself. Something is wrong with the present state of affairs. Maybe you can give me some advice on how to beat the system.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: You Irish people! You are never tired of fighting.

MR. O'GRADY: No. [laughter] It's inside us.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Actually, the fighting has been going on constantly.

MR. O'GRADY: Well, what do you suggest we do about it? I mean, is it morally correct for me to be sitting here—

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: As long as we remain illusioned by the bodily conception of life, thinking we are these bodies, one man thinking "I am Irish," another thinking "I am Italian, American, Indian," and so on—as long as this goes on, the fighting will go on. You cannot stop fighting between dogs and cats. Why do they fight? The dog simply thinks, "I am a big dog." And the cat thinks, "I am a big cat." In the same way, if we think, "I am an Irishman" or "I am an Englishman," then we are no better than the cats and dogs. As long

as people remain in a bodily conception of life, there will be fighting.

MR. O'GRADY: What was Mahatma Gandhi fighting in the House of Commons?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: That was another dog-ism. There is no difference. A dog thinks, "I am a dog," because he has the body of a dog. If I am thinking that I am Indian because this body was born on Indian soil, then how am I different from the dog? The bodily conception of life is simply animalism. When we understand that we are not these bodies but are spirit souls, there will be peace. There cannot be any peace otherwise. *Sa eva go-kharah*. The Vedic literatures state that a person in the bodily concept of life is exactly like a cow or an ass. People have to transcend this inferior conception of the self. How is that done?

*mān ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyātān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

"One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman."

[*Bhagavad-gītā*, 14.26]

In our society, there are many Mexicans, Canadians, Indians, Jews and Muslims, but they no longer consider themselves Muslims, Christians, Jews or whatever. They are all servants of Kṛṣṇa. That is Brahman realization.

MR. O'GRADY: That's giving it a name also.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes, a name must be there. But although, for example, your name is different from that of another Irishman, you nonetheless all feel that you are Irish. One's name may be different, but that doesn't matter. The quality should be one. That is required. When we acquire Kṛṣṇa's quality, then, despite different names, there will be peace. That is called *so 'ham*. The names of different people in a nation may be different, but all the people feel the same nationality. Varieties may exist, but if the quality is the same, that is oneness, *brahma-bhūta*.

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

“One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.”
[Bg. 18.54]

This world is miserable for the materially infected person, but for the devotee, the entire world is as good as *Vaikuṅṭha*. For the impersonalist, achieving the Brahman stage, becoming one with the Absolute, is the last word.

MR. O'GRADY: Is the Absolute external or internal?

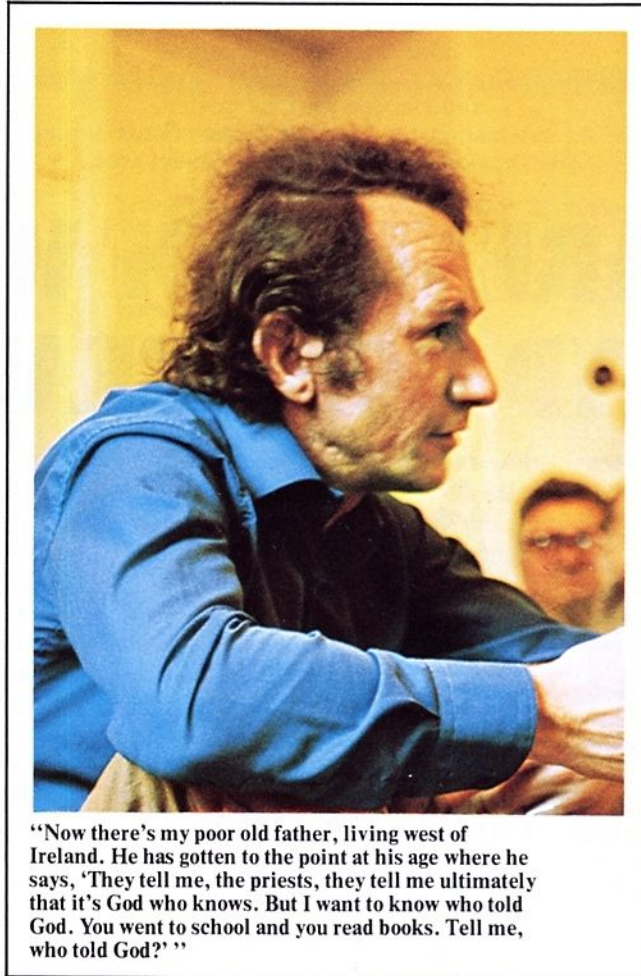
ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: There is no external or internal. The Absolute is without duality.

MR. O'GRADY: OK, but on an individual level—

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: We are not absolute. When we are situated on the absolute platform, we are absolute. However,

now we are in the relative world. The Absolute Truth is here also, but our senses are not sufficiently elevated to understand that Absolute Truth. As long as we are under the control of time, there is no question of becoming absolute.

MR. O'GRADY: So absolute means life beyond time?



“Now there's my poor old father, living west of Ireland. He has gotten to the point at his age where he says, 'They tell me, the priests, they tell me ultimately that it's God who knows. But I want to know who told God. You went to school and you read books. Tell me, who told God?'”

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: That is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*janma karma ca me divyam
evaṁ yo veti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

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

That is absolute—going back home, back to Godhead. As long as one is in

the material world and identifies with this body, he transmigrates from one body to another. That is not absolute. This is clearly stated here. When one goes back to the spiritual world, he attains the absolute position.

MR. O'GRADY: All right, but this is my question: Is it sufficient for us to sit here—you sitting there and we as friends sitting with you engaging in the gentle art of conversation, while across the ocean—

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: The point you have missed is that although you are sitting in one place and I am sitting in a different place, this difference does not affect our actual existence. We are both human beings. The conceptions of Irishman, Englishman, Protestant, Catholic and so on are but different dresses. One has to become free from these designations. When one is thus free, he becomes purified.

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeṣa-
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

When you have purified your senses and engaged those purified senses in the service of the master of the senses, Kṛṣṇa, you have perfected your life. That is nonduality, and that is absolute.

MR. O'GRADY: But the system insists that you think yourself American or Indian or

African or whatever.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes. Materialistic society means duality.

MR. O'GRADY: But that's unavoidable. How can you avoid material existence?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: That is possible in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The lotus lives in the water but never touches the water.

MR. O'GRADY: I don't think you can explain situations in one area with metaphors from another. How can you argue political problems in terms of vague spiritual concepts? Their nature is completely different.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Sometimes a variety

of examples helps us to understand or appreciate the problem better. In this vase there is a variety of flowers, and that variety helps us better appreciate the idea of flowers. From any point of view, Kṛṣṇa can resolve all problems. Why just the problems of Irishmen or Englishmen? All problems. That is called unity in diversity. Our students come from different backgrounds, but because they are all in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they are unified.

MR. O'GRADY: Very good. Yes, I accept that. I would like to know, though, that when you say Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is there any difference between that and Christ consciousness?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: No, there is no difference. Christ came to preach the message of God. If you actually become Christ conscious, you become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

MR. O'GRADY: And does becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious or God conscious mean becoming self-conscious? That is, conscious of who we really are again?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes, God consciousness includes self-consciousness, but self-consciousness is not necessarily God consciousness.

MR. O'GRADY: But it may be?

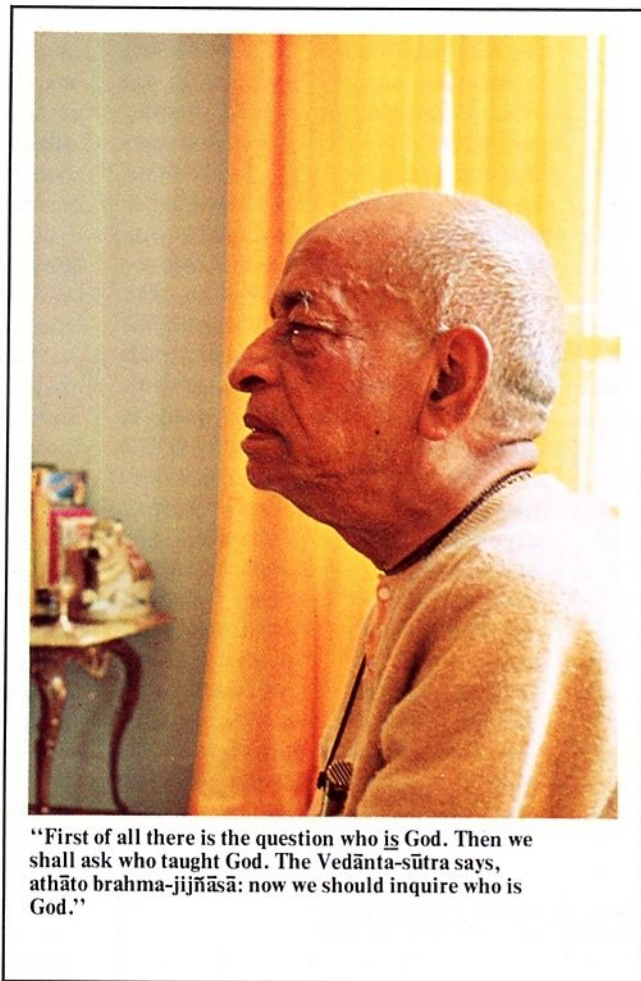
ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: No.

MR. O'GRADY: One may achieve consciousness of the God that is within him.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: That means he is God conscious. You are now in the sunlight, and consciousness of the sun includes your ability to see yourself. In the darkness you cannot see yourself. At night you can't even see your own hands or legs, but if you come before the sun, you see the sun and yourself also. Without sunlight, without God consciousness, self-consciousness is incomplete. However, God consciousness makes self-consciousness very clear.

MR. O'GRADY: We meet a lot of young people in our teaching profession, and we don't try to teach them any kind

of didactic salvation. We do try to direct them toward an awareness of what is best and what is most beautiful and what is most spiritually nourishing in the world about them—that is, insofar as the system allows us. Very frequently the students are not neutral enough to be in a spiritual condition; they are more in an emotional



“First of all there is the question who is God. Then we shall ask who taught God. The Vedānta-sūtra says, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: now we should inquire who is God.”

one. What we are faced with often is the basic question of “Who am I?” or, “What is it all about?”

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes.

MR. O'GRADY: Or they ask, “Why am I here?”

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes, very good.

MR. O'GRADY: We are asked, “Why should I be here? Who are you, teacher, and what gives you the right to tell us what to think or what to be or what not to be? Why should I read Shakespeare? Why should I listen to Mozart? I prefer Bob Dylan.” These kinds of question seem to emanate

from a very disillusioned state of mind, and insecurity, and uncertainty and a lack of credibility in the total structure of things as they are. Frequently we have to answer these questions in a cataclysmic sort of way. Rather than presenting direct answers, we must answer indirectly, taking account of the conditioning that prompted students to ask these questions in the first place. Do you think that we should try to reach them more directly?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: You are talking about the problem of—

MR. O'GRADY: Modern education.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes. So many questions are there, but they are not answered by modern education. “Why have I come here? What is the purpose?” These questions should be answered perfectly. Therefore the *Vedas* enjoin:

*tad vijñānārthaṁ sa
gurum evābhigacchet*

To find answers to all these questions, one must approach a bona fide spiritual master.

MR. O'GRADY: What if you have none? What if we are told that Mr. Nixon is the bona fide spiritual master? What do we do?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: No, No. [laughter] There is a standard for bona fide spiritual masters. You have only heard

one line of the verse. Who is the spiritual master? That is the next line: *śrotriyāṁ brahma-ṇiṣṭham*. The word *śrotriyam* refers to one who has heard from another bona fide source. A spiritual master is he who has taken the message from another qualified spiritual master. This is just like a medical man who has taken the knowledge of medical science from another medical man. Similarly, the bona fide spiritual master must come in a line of successive spiritual masters. The original spiritual master is God.

MR. O'GRADY: Yes. Granted.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: One who has heard from God explains the same message to his disciples. If that disciple doesn't change the message, he is a bona fide spiritual master. That is our process. We take lessons by hearing from Kṛṣṇa, God, and from Him understand who is perfect. Or we hear from His representative, who does not contradict Kṛṣṇa and who has realized His message. It is not that we speak one thing and do all nonsense. One who does so is not a spiritual master.

MR. O'GRADY: Now there's my poor old father, living west of Ireland. A simple old man, 78 years now, your generation. He has gotten to the point at his age where he says, "They tell me, the priests, they tell me ultimately that it's God who knows. But I want to know who told God." Then he comes to me and says, "You went to school and you read books. Tell me, who told God?" So I have no answer. That is the difference between 78 and 39 years.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: No, it is not a difference of age. The difference is knowledge. In the *Brahma-sūtra* the question is raised: Who is God? First of all there is this question.

MR. O'GRADY: Who taught God.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: No. First of all there is the question who *is* God. Then we shall ask who taught God. The *Vedānta-sūtra* says, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: now we should inquire who is God. Unless you know who God is,

how can you raise the question of who instructed God? If you don't know God, the question does not arise who instructed God. Is this not so?

MR. O'GRADY: Yes.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Who God is explained in the *Brahma-sūtra*. *Janmādy asya yataḥ*: God is He from whom everything emanates. That is God—the Supreme Being from whom everything emanates. Now, what is the nature of that Supreme Being? Is He a dead stone or a living entity? That is also explained. *Janmādy asya yato 'nvyād itarataś cārtheṣy abhijñāḥ svarāt*: the Supreme Being is fully cognizant of everything, directly and indirectly. Unless He is fully cognizant of everything, He cannot be God. Then the question that you raised comes, Who taught God? And that is also answered. *Svarāt*: He is fully independent. He does not need to take lessons from anyone. That is God. If one needs to take lessons from others, He is not God. Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā*, and He did not have to learn it from anyone. I had to learn it from my spiritual master, but Kṛṣṇa did not have to learn it from anyone. One who does not need to take lessons from others is God.

MR. O'GRADY: Where does human love come in?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Everything is coming from God. Being part and parcel of God, we manifest partial love because

the original love is there in Him. Nothing can exist if it is not in God; therefore love is there in God.

MR. O'GRADY: And manifestations of love are manifestations of God?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Unless the loving propensity is there in God, how can we manifest it? A son born of a particular father has the symptoms of the father. Because the loving propensity is in God, we have that same propensity.

MR. O'GRADY: Maybe love is generated in you by the need.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: No, there is no question of "maybe." We are defining God in absolute terms. *Janmādy asya yataḥ*: God is He from whom everything has emanated. The fighting propensity is also there in God, but His fighting and His loving are absolute. In the material world we experience that fighting is just the opposite of loving, but in God the fighting propensity and the loving propensity are one and the same. That is the meaning of absolute. We learn from the Vedic scriptures that when the so-called enemies of God are killed by God, they attain liberation.

MR. O'GRADY: Is it possible to arrive at this understanding of God alone?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: No. Therefore we have cited this verse: *tad vijñānārthaḥ sa gurum evābhigacchet*. The word *abhigacchet* means "must." It is not possible alone. In Sanskrit grammar this is called the *vidhi-liṅ* form of a verb, and this form is used when there is no choice. The word *abhigacchet* means that one must approach a *guru*. That is the Vedic version. Therefore in *Bhagavad-gītā* you will find that Arjuna was talking to Kṛṣṇa, but when he saw that things were not being resolved, he surrendered himself to Kṛṣṇa and accepted Him as his *guru*.

*kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ
prechāmi tvāḥ dharma-saḥmūḍha-cetāḥ
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaḥ brūhi tan me
śiṣyas te 'haḥ śādhi māḥ tvāḥ prapannam*

"Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me clearly what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me." (Bg. 2.7) So here

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar

Here are the upcoming holidays and festivals for Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees. Devotees of the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meanings of these festivals and how they are celebrated.

October 25	October 26	October 27	October 31
Śrī Rāmacandra-vijayotsava (the victory celebration of Lord Rāmacandra). Appearance day of Śrī Madhvācārya.	Ekādaśī (Pāśāṅkuṣī-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).	Disappearance day of Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhāta Gosvāmī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.	Śārādīya-rāsa-yātrā (<i>rāsa-llā</i>) of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Disappearance of Śrī Mūrāri Gupta. Beginning of Ūrja-vrata, or Kārtika-vrata.
November 1	November 4	November 8	November 10
Kṛṣṇa conscious month of Dāmodara begins (it continues through November 29).	Disappearance day of Śrī Nārottama dāsa Ṭhākura.	Appearance day of Śrī Vīracandra Prabhu.	Ekādaśī (Śrī Ramā-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans).
November 15	November 22	November 25	
Śrī Govardhana-pūjā (anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lifting the Govardhana Hill). Annakūṭa-mahotsava. Appearance day of Śrī Rāsikānanda Prabhu. Disappearance day of Śrī Vāsudeva Ghosh Ṭhākura.	Disappearance day of Śrī Gadādhara dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Dhanāñjaya Pandita and Śrī Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhu.	Ekādaśī (Utthāna-ekādaśī) (fasting from grains and beans). Disappearance of Śrī Gaurakīṣora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.	

we can see that Arjuna is confused about his duty.

MR. O'GRADY: Is this duty to the self, to others, or to the state?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: A soldier's duty is to fight with the enemy. Arjuna was a soldier, and Kṛṣṇa advised him, "The opposite party is your enemy, and you are a soldier. Why are you trying to be nonviolent? This is not good." Then Arjuna said, "Actually, I am confused. In this confusion I cannot make the right decision. I therefore accept You as my spiritual master. Please give me the proper lesson." In a chaotic condition, in a confused state of life, one should approach another, who is in full knowledge of the matter. You go to a lawyer to solve legal problems, and you go to a physician to solve medical problems. Everyone in the material world is confused about spiritual identity. It is therefore our duty to approach a bona fide spiritual master who can give us real knowledge.

MR. O'GRADY: I am very confused.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: So you must approach a spiritual master.

MR. O'GRADY: And he makes a decision on how to help me stop this confusion?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes, the spiritual master is one who solves all confusion. If the spiritual master cannot save his disciple from confusion, he is not a spiritual master. That is the test.

*saṁsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka-
trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam
prāptasya kalyāṇa-guṇārṇavasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

This whole confused world is just like a blazing forest fire. In a forest fire all the animals are confused. They do not know where to go to save their lives. In the blazing fire of the material world, everyone is confused. How can that blazing forest fire be extinguished? It is not possible to utilize your man-made fire brigade, nor is it possible to simply pour buckets of water. The solution comes when rain from the clouds falls on the forest fire. Only then can the fire be extinguished. That ability is not in your hands, but is in the mercy of God. So, human society is in a confused state, and it cannot find a solution. The spiritual master is one who has received the mercy of God, and he

can deliver the solution to the confused man. One who has received the mercy of God can become a spiritual master and deliver that mercy to others.

MR. O'GRADY: The problem is to find this spiritual master.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: That is not a problem. The problem is whether you are sincere. You have problems, but God is within your heart. *Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām*. God is not far away. If you are sincere, God sends you a spiritual master. Therefore God is also called *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within the heart. God helps from within and from without. Everything is thus described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. This material body is like a machine, but within the heart is the soul, and with the soul is the Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa, who gives directions. The Lord says, "You wanted to do this; now here is the chance. Go and do it." If you are sincere, you say, "Now, God, I want You." Then He will give you directions. "Yes, now you come and get Me like this." This is His kindness. However, if we want something else, that is all right. We can have it. God is very kind. When I want something, He is in my heart directing me and telling me how to have it. So why should He not give directions on how to have a spiritual master? First of all we must again be eager to revive our God consciousness. Then God will give us a spiritual master.

MR. O'GRADY: Thank you very much.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Thank you very much. My request to you is this. You are a poet. Just describe God. You are expert in describing, and therefore I ask you to kindly describe God in your occupation. Then your life will be successful. And if one hears you, his life will also be successful. That is the injunction:

*idaṁ hi puṁsas tapasaḥ śrutasya vā
sviṣṭasya sūktasya ca buddhi-dattayoḥ
avicyuto 'rthaḥ kavibhir nirūpito
yad-uttamaśloka-guṇānuvarṇanam
[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 1.5.22]*

There are many leaders in society who are poets, scientists, religionists, philosophers, politicians and so on. Those who are so expert are given this injunction: your duty is to perfect your

occupation by describing the glories of the Supreme Being.

MR. O'GRADY: My experience is that for some extraordinary reason, one is chosen to do a particular thing.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: That reason is given here. *Avicyutaḥ*. The infallible choice is this: "Let them describe the glories of the Lord."

MR. O'GRADY: But you were saying that the spiritual master is chosen. The spiritual master, the poet, the priest is chosen by God. This person is chosen to write poems or paint pictures or make music.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: So when you compose music, compose music about God. That is your perfection.

MR. O'GRADY: When one works for God in his line, then his line becomes his perfection?

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: Yes.

MR. O'GRADY: Thank you very much. 🌸

Hare Kṛṣṇa Song

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
All the way is Hare Kṛṣṇa.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
Let me know Thy love for me.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
I will live my life for Thee.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
Lord and master of my soul.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
Love and praise Thee over all.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
To Thy name I'll sing and dance.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
All the time in Thy presence.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
All the ways be Hare Kṛṣṇa!*

—C.B.

Rome, May 22, 1974

A brief look at the worldwide activities of the



International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Nine New Books Make Spiritual Classics Available

The *Bhaktivedanta Book Trust* has just published nine new Kṛṣṇa conscious books by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. They are all translations, with purports, of Sanskrit and Bengali scriptures never before available in English. Each book is hardbound, with about 400 pages of text, plus original full-color paintings to illustrate each volume.

Six of the books complete the Third and Fourth Cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the scripture that Śrīla Prabhupāda has made his life's work. To present all twelve cantos, Śrīla Prabhupāda calculates, will take sixty volumes. Seven volumes have previously been published. The *Bhāgavatam* is considered the postgraduate study of all spiritual knowledge.

The other three new books form the first section (*Ādi-līlā*) of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. This book describes the pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared as a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa to teach the highest form of love of Godhead. Work is underway on the middle and final sections of this great book—at least another six volumes.

The Book Trust has also issued new editions of two other important books by Śrīla Prabhupāda—*Śrī Īsopaniṣad* and *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. Improvements include new paintings, carefully polished Sanskrit editing, and large new indexes.

Scholars in Love with Bhaktivedanta Books

After a few years of what could be described as only casual flirtation, scholars and librarians are starting to fall in love with Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. The libraries of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Swarthmore and dozens of other major universities have placed standing orders for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—for all the volumes published and all those yet to come. "This *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* translation is very good," wrote the librarian at the Cleveland Public Library in placing a standing order for the prestigious John G. White Collection. "Please check and see what books of yours we do not have and send me those that are missing."

Professors are becoming enthusiastic. "This *Nectar of Devotion* is the greatest book ever published on *bhakti*!" declared Dr. Carl Waugh, Professor of Indian Religion at Cleveland State University. And Dr. H.B. Kulkarni of Utah State University found Prabhupāda's books "of incalculable value to anyone who is curious about India's spiritual and cultural heritage." He added: "The author of these books displays on every page an astounding scholarship, and also an understanding and ease of exposition which are the rarest gifts."

Scholars especially praise Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Dr. Samuel D. Atikins of Princeton called it "a beautifully designed script of the stanzas, beautifully presented with accredited transliterations and a practical working vocabulary, followed by an outstanding exegesis . . . A beautifully done book." Professor Shaligram Shukla of Georgetown offered this review: "It is a deeply felt, powerfully conceived and beautifully explained work.

I don't know whether to praise more the translation of *Bhagavad-gītā*, its daring method of explanation, or the endless fertility of its ideas. . . . I have never seen any other work on *Gītā* with such an important and authoritative voice and style. It is a work of undoubted integrity. I strongly recommend this book."

Newsweek Impressed by ISKCON School

Newsweek, the popular American news magazine, in a welcome reversal of its attitude toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness (see "Ten Thousand Wives," BTG 65), has published a very favorable article about ISKCON's Gurukula school in Dallas, Texas. The school, it reported, is a "most convincing sign that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is here to stay."

Vedic Culture and Agriculture

New Vr̥ndāvana, ISKCON's 1,000-acre farm in West Virginia, has proved so successful that Śrīla Prabhupāda has asked his disciples to begin many other such farm communities. The Society, therefore, has purchased farmland in Pennsylvania, upstate New York, Louisiana—and in the holy city of Māyāpur, India.

There are many reasons for establishing such Kṛṣṇa conscious farms. First, many people find an urban setting most uncongenial for spiritual advancement; they prefer to serve Kṛṣṇa in the simple, peaceful atmosphere of the country. Everyone likes to work in a different way, and the farms give the Society a broader ability to engage everyone in the work most suitable for him.

Second, such Kṛṣṇa conscious communities give an ideal example of how one can live very simply, depending on the natural gifts Kṛṣṇa has provided rather than the artificial products of supermarkets and factories. In other words, they provide a model for simple living and high thinking.

Perhaps even more important, however, is that these communities can give ISKCON a kind of independence from the shaky financial structures of America and the other nations of the world. According to the Vedic scriptures, real wealth lies in land, cows and natural resources, not in paper money. After all, land and cows provide food and a place to live, and so they have real value. But paper bills are just promises. Their value changes with inflation, and they may at any time become utterly worthless. According to the Vedic scriptures, therefore, our modern world economy, based on a false standard, is headed for almost certain collapse. But by raising its own food on its own land, ISKCON will be able to independently provide for the basic needs of its members and thus carry on its mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, regardless of the economic ups and downs of a materialistic society. We might add here that modern economists would greatly benefit from studying the scientific financial knowledge presented in the Vedic scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Vedic knowledge is many-sided. The Vedic scriptures deal not only with religion but also with politics, economics, sociology, art, psychology and all other subjects necessary for a progressive human culture.

ŚRĪ DĀMODARĀṢṬAKA

(Eight verses in Praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa in His form as Dāmodara)

by Śrī Satyavrata Muni
translated by His Holiness Acyutānanda Svāmī

When Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appears on earth, He performs extraordinary pastimes as a transcendental cowherd boy. As a child, Lord Kṛṣṇa lived with His pure devotees in the village of Vṛndāvana, or Gokula. In the spiritual world (Vaikuṅṭha) the Lord, in His form called Nārāyaṇa, is worshiped with great awe and reverence, but the devotees in Vṛndāvana have such great love for the Lord that they even forget that He is the Lord. Because of their intense love for Him, they think of Him as their friend, son or lover. And the Lord, to please His devotees, responds in the roles in which the devotees think of Him.

As a transcendental pastime, Lord Kṛṣṇa used to steal butter from the *gopīs*, the ladies of Vṛndāvana. Once, however, His mother caught Him, bound His waist with a rope, and tied Him to a grinding mortar to punish Him. The Lord is therefore also known as Dāmodara (*dāma* means “rope,” and *udara* means “waist”).

In Lord Kṛṣṇa’s courtyard were two trees, who were actually sons of the demigod Kuvera but had been cursed to stand as trees. By His mercy, Lord Kṛṣṇa crawled between these trees, dragging the heavy mortar behind Him, and pulled the trees down, thus liberating Kuvera’s two sons. The details of these pastimes are described in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s book entitled *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*.

The eight-verse prayer on the following page is chanted daily by devotees during the Kṛṣṇa conscious month of Dāmodara. This year, the month of Dāmodara begins on Nov. 1 and continues through Nov. 29.



*namāmiśvaraṁ sac-cid-ānanda-rūpaṁ
lasat-kuṇḍalaṁ gokule bhrājamānaṁ
yaśodā-bhiyolūkkhalād dhāvamānaṁ
parāṁṣṭam atyantato drutya gopyā*

To the supreme controller, who possesses an eternal form of blissful knowledge, whose glistening earrings swing to and fro, who manifested Himself in Gokula, who stole the butter that the *gopīs* kept hanging from the rafters of their storerooms and who then quickly jumped up and ran in retreat in fear of mother Yaśodā but was ultimately caught—to that Supreme Lord, Śrī Dāmodara, I offer my humble obeisances.

*rudantaṁ muhur netra-yugmaṁ mṛjantaṁ
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātaṅka-netraṁ
muhuḥ śvāsa-kampa-trekhāṅka-kaṇṭha-
sthita-graiva-dāmodaraṁ bhakti-baddham*

Upon seeing His mother's whipping stick, He cried and rubbed His eyes again and again with His two lotus hands. His eyes were fearful and His breathing was quick, and as mother Yaśodā bound His belly with ropes, He shivered in fright and His pearl necklace shook. To this Supreme Lord, Śrī Dāmodara, who is bound with His devotee's love, I offer my humble obeisances.

*itīdrk sva-lilābhir ānanda-kuṇḍe
sva-ghoṣaṁ nimajjantaṁ ākhyāpayantaṁ
tadīyeṣita-jñeṣu bhaktair jitatvaṁ
punaḥ prematas taṁ śatāvṛtti vande*

Those superexcellent pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa's babyhood drowned the inhabitants of Gokula in pools of ecstasy. To the devotees who are attracted only to His majestic aspect of Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha, the Lord herein reveals: "I am conquered and overwhelmed by pure loving devotion." To the Supreme Lord, Dāmodara, my obeisances hundreds and hundreds of times.

*varaṁ deva mokṣaṁ na mokṣāvadhīṁ vā
na cānyaṁ vṛṇe 'haṁ vareśād apīha
idaṁ te vapur nātha gopāla-bālaṁ
sadā me manasy āvirāstāṁ kim anyaiḥ*

O Lord, although You are able to give all kinds of benedictions, I do not pray to You for liberation, nor eternal life in Vaikuṅṭha, nor any other boon. My only prayer is that Your childhood pastimes may constantly appear in my mind. O Lord, I do not even want to know Your *feature of Paramātmā* [Supersoul]. I simply wish that Your childhood pastimes may ever be enacted in my heart.

*idaṁ te mukhāmbhojam atyanta-nīlair
vṛtaṁ kuntalaiḥ snigdha-raktaś ca gopyā
muhuś cumbitaṁ bimba-raktā-dharaṁ me
manasy āvirāstāṁ alaṁ lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*

O Lord, the cheeks of Your blackish lotus face, which is encircled by locks of curling hair, have become reddened like *bimba* fruit by mother Yaśodā's kisses. What more can I describe than this? Millions of opulences are of no use to me, but may this vision constantly remain in my mind.

*namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo
prasīda prabho duḥkha-jālābdhi-magnam
kṛpā-dṛṣṭi-vṛṣṭyātīdinaṁ batānu-
gṛhāṇeṣa mām ajñam edhy akṣi-dṛṣyaḥ*

O unlimited Viṣṇu! O master! O Lord! Be pleased upon me! I am drowning in an ocean of sorrow and am almost like a dead man. Please shower the rain of mercy on me; uplift me and protect me with Your nectarean vision.

*kuverātmajau baddha-mūrtyaiva yadvat
tvayā mocitau bhakti-bhājau kṛtau ca
tathā prema-bhaktiṁ svakāṁ me prayaccha
na mokṣe graho me 'sti dāmodareha*

O Lord Dāmodara, in Your form as a baby mother Yaśodā bound You to a grinding stone with a rope for tying cows. You then freed the sons of Kuvera, Maṇigrīva and Nalakūvara, who were cursed to stand as trees, and You gave them the chance to become Your devotees. Please bless me in this same way. I have no desire for liberation into Your effulgence.

*namas te 'stu dāmnē sphurad-dīpti-dhāmnē
tvadīyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmnē
namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai
namo 'nanta-līlāya devāya tubhyam*

O Lord, the entire universe was created by Lord Brahmā, who was born from Your abdomen, which was bound with a rope by mother Yaśodā. To this rope I offer my humble obeisances. I offer my obeisances to Your most beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and to Your unlimited pastimes.

THE KILLING OF KAṂSA

by His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ states that Lord Kṛṣṇa descends to this world to vanquish miscreants and rescue His devotees. Once when the world was overburdened with demonic forces, the demigods prayed for the appearance of the Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa accepted the prayer, and He decided to appear as the son of two pure devotees, Vasudeva and his wife, Devakī. Years before Kṛṣṇa's actual advent, on the day Devakī and Vasudeva were married, Kaṁsa, the brother of the bride, was driving the couple to Vasudeva's home. In the middle of the joyous procession, a voice suddenly rang out from the sky. "Kaṁsa," the voice said, "you are such a fool! You are driving the chariot of your sister, but you do not know that the eighth child of your sister will kill you!"

Kaṁsa then at once took hold of Devakī and drew his sword to kill her. This shows the essence of Kaṁsa's demonic mentality: anyone or anything that threatened his bodily enjoyment must be destroyed. Vasudeva at once intervened and pleaded with Kaṁsa not to kill Devakī. Vasudeva spoke in a very enlightened way. Death, he told Kaṁsa, is inevitable, so why should we be afraid of it? After the end of this body, we get another body to fulfill our desires. Death is only a change of bodies. The real self is eternal, so we should try to find our real life beyond the body.

Unfortunately, Kaṁsa, being an atheist, could not listen to good instruction. Although each of us has but little control over the forces of nature, foolish people try to become lords of all they survey. They live only for the pleasure of the body, taking the body to be the self, and disregarding the soul. In ignorance, they say there is no soul.

This philosophy is now very popular, but it has existed since time immemorial. Thousands of years ago, in Vedic times, it was propounded by a philosopher named Cārvāka, who taught that one should simply enjoy sensual pleasures, like eating, as much as he can. One should not hesitate to commit any irresponsible act to reach his goal, and one should not worry about the next life because at death everything will be finished. When modern so-called leaders take up this philosophy, people in general follow, and society becomes hellish. Not considering the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or His supreme proprietorship, men take to animal slaughter, abortion, intoxication—anything. We are seeing only the beginning of this in current times. When Kṛṣṇa conscious persons like Vasudeva try to give enlightenment, many so-called educated men take them lightly and say that the existence of God and the eternity of the soul are myths. And when governments also fail to



Illustration: Yadurāñ-devī dāsi

meet their responsibility to further God consciousness, social degradation is assured.

To dissuade Kaṁsa from murdering Devakī, Vasudeva promised that he and Devakī would bring Kaṁsa each of their children as they were born so that he could do what he liked with them. Kaṁsa relented, and when Vasudeva brought Kaṁsa their first-born child one year later, he became a little compassionate and spared the baby.

Later, however, Kaṁsa became alarmed when he heard from the sage Nārada that Kṛṣṇa was soon to appear. Nārada told Kaṁsa that in his past life he had been a demon named Kālanemi, who had been killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. On hearing this, Kaṁsa foolishly became determined to kill the Lord. "Any child might be Kṛṣṇa," he concluded. He at once ordered the imprisonment of Vasudeva and Devakī and killed their child. Kaṁsa committed many other atrocities, all so that he might live and rule at any cost. He made alliances with many demonic kings and imprisoned anyone who opposed him, including his own father, Ugrasena. In this way he expanded his kingdom, just as modern politicians do, until he became the strongest emperor of his time. He broke the solidarity of the Yadu dynasty, which included all of Kṛṣṇa's relatives, and forced them to hide in caves. Year after year Devakī gave birth to a child, and Kaṁsa murdered every one—six in all—fearing each to be the child who would kill him.

When Kṛṣṇa Himself became the eighth child, He cheated Kaṁsa. He appeared before Vasudeva and Devakī as the Supreme Lord and then transformed Himself into a normal child. Kṛṣṇa ordered Vasudeva to exchange Him with a female child just born to mother Yaśodā in nearby Gokula. Although Vasudeva was shackled and Kaṁsa's

His Holiness Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī has served as President of ISKCON's Boston Temple, as Editor of Back to Godhead and, most recently, as personal secretary to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. He is now traveling in the United States, distributing Kṛṣṇa conscious literature to libraries and college professors.

prison well guarded, by Kṛṣṇa's mystic potency Vasudeva was able to escape from the prison, make the exchange, and return unnoticed to his cell.

Kaṁsa heard the cries of the newborn child as his death knell, and he rushed in to kill him. But the baby flew up into the air and assumed the form of the demigoddess Māyā. "You rascal," she said to Kaṁsa. "The child who will kill you has already been born elsewhere. You cannot kill Him."

Threatened in this way, Kaṁsa and his demoniac associates began an all-out purge, ordering the murder of all male children born within the previous ten days. Kaṁsa also harassed all saintly persons and *brāhmaṇas*. He knew that the devotees are the heart and soul of his enemy, Lord Kṛṣṇa, so he tried to attack Him by persecuting His closest servitors and putting a stop to all religious activities.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, however, was not at all fearful. He simply enjoyed His childhood pastimes in Vṛndāvana, giving pleasure to His friends, His mother and father, and the cowherd men and women. Kaṁsa, however, tried repeatedly to disrupt Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. First he sent a witch named Pūtanā, who had already killed many babies by her black arts. She tried to kill Kṛṣṇa when He was only a few months old. She smeared poison on her breast, appeared in Vṛndāvana as a beautiful young woman, and took permission from mother Yaśodā to give Kṛṣṇa her breast to suck. Baby Kṛṣṇa, however, not only sucked her breast milk, but sucked out her life as well.

After Pūtanā, Kaṁsa sent many demons, among them Tṛṇāvarta and Aghāsura. Tṛṇāvarta appeared in the shape of a whirlwind and tried to kidnap Kṛṣṇa and destroy Him high in the sky. Aghāsura, the brother of Pūtanā, came before Kṛṣṇa and His friends as a giant serpent. But Kṛṣṇa nonchalantly killed these ferocious demons one after another. Kṛṣṇa's father, Nanda, and other elders of the village were concerned about the constant attacks upon Kṛṣṇa, so they moved their entire village community to a

When Lord Kṛṣṇa killed Pūtanā, her body again became that of a giant demoness.

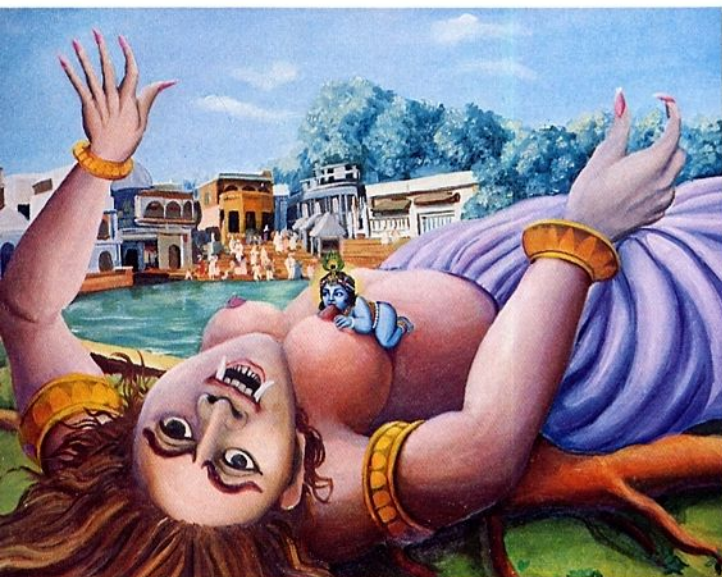


Illustration: Muralidhara dāsa



The entire community moved, looking for safety.

more suitable place, where they hoped to be free from attack. But more demons came: a giant horse, an enormous bull, a pack of asses, and many others. Child Kṛṣṇa killed them all, assisted by His brother, Balarāma.

When Kṛṣṇa was sixteen years old, Kaṁsa discovered for certain that Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana was Devakī's eighth child. Nārada told Kaṁsa of Kṛṣṇa's true identity and related how He had killed all the demons without difficulty. In desperation, Kaṁsa formed his final plot: he arranged for a big wrestling match at Mathurā and sent Akrūra, Kṛṣṇa's uncle, to Vṛndāvana to invite Kṛṣṇa and all His relatives and neighbors to attend the gala affair.

Akrūra was actually a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa. So when he arrived in Vṛndāvana, he confided to Kṛṣṇa that the wrestling match was an elaborate plan to kill Him and His brother. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma mildly laughed at this. They invited all the townsmen to go to Mathurā, and They themselves set out with Akrūra.

Kṛṣṇa's arrival in Mathurā was supposed to be His entrance into an ominous trap, but Kṛṣṇa very blissfully and lightheartedly entered the city. And when the news spread that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had come, all the residents of Mathurā spontaneously turned out to see Him. The real festival in Mathurā became the festival of seeing Kṛṣṇa. All the young girls were very eager to see Kṛṣṇa, but out of modesty they went to the roofs of the houses to catch a glimpse of Him. The people had heard about Kṛṣṇa and His activities, but only now did they have the chance to see Him. They became ecstatic and rushed from whatever they were doing to see Kṛṣṇa passing through the streets. People talked back and forth about how beautiful Kṛṣṇa was, and they praised the great fortune of the *gopīs* and other devotees of Vṛndāvana who were able to see Kṛṣṇa every day.

There are two kinds of human beings—devotees and demons—and in Mathurā Kṛṣṇa encountered both. While

Illustration: Muralidhara dāsa

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were walking through the streets of Mathurā. They met a washerman carrying various garments. Kṛṣṇa asked the washerman for some clothing and promised to award him all good fortune. This is the basis of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: the devotee offers whatever he has to the Lord, and the Lord, although not in need, accepts the offering to help awaken the devotee's original relationship of service to Him. Unfortunately, this washerman thought himself a servant not of Kṛṣṇa but of Kāṁsa. Not only did he refuse to give Kṛṣṇa clothing, but he called Him impudent. "Don't ask for things that are the King's property," he said, "or You will be punished." Kṛṣṇa became very angry with this servant of Kāṁsa and killed him, using only His hand as a weapon.



Illustration: Devahiti dāś

The florist offered an exquisite garland to the Lord.

A little later Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma met a florist who was exactly the opposite of the washerman. He was very submissive and simply prayed to be eternally engaged in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. The florist gave Kṛṣṇa a very beautiful garland at his home, and thus his desire was fulfilled.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma also met a young hunchback woman carrying sandalwood paste. Her duty had been to bring sandalwood to King Kāṁsa daily, but when she saw the personal beauty of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, she voluntarily offered the sandalwood paste to Them. In return, Kṛṣṇa transformed her from a hunchback into a beautiful young woman by touching her with His hand. One may take these extraordinary encounters to be fictitious or imaginary, but they

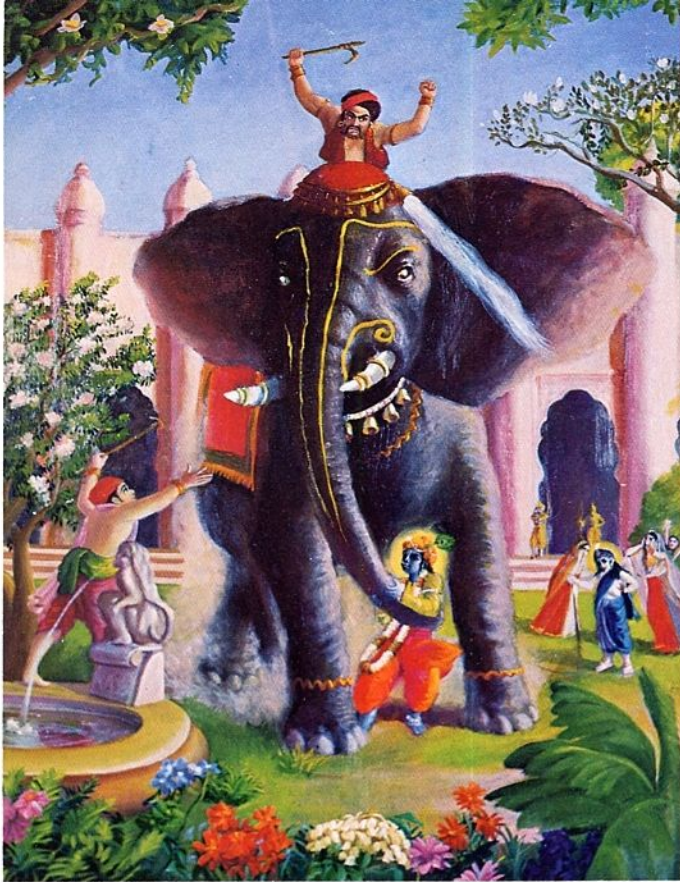
are the actual historic activities the Personality of Godhead performed while present on earth some 5,000 years ago. The great authorities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness who are passing down the narrations of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* do not doubt these facts. Mundane scholars and people in general may doubt them, but they cannot understand the science of God as presented in Vedic literature. One who is not rendering service to the Personality of Godhead through a bona fide spiritual master can only whimsically speculate about what God can or cannot do.

As Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma approached the sacrificial arena in Mathurā, They saw a big display where a giant bow was being guarded by state soldiers. Kṛṣṇa walked right past the guards, picked up the bow and broke it. The sound of the bow's cracking reverberated throughout the land and sky and even reached the palace of Kāṁsa. The guards rushed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, but the two brothers immediately killed them and left the arena.

Thereafter, Kṛṣṇa continued to visit various places in Mathurā, and the citizens turned out to see Him, astonished at His extraordinary beauty and opulence. In *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The two brothers strolled carefree in the street, not caring for the law and order of Kāṁsa." In this way They hinted at the severe danger awaiting Kāṁsa.

When Kāṁsa heard the bow break and heard how the guards had been killed, he partially realized the power of the Supreme Lord. He understood that the eighth child of Devakī had come to kill him. That night he could not rest at all, for both awake and dreaming he had inauspicious visions. He looked in the mirror but could not see his head. He saw stars in the sky double. He saw holes in his shadow, heard a buzzing sound in his ears, and had ghastly dreams of ghosts, poison and murder. Thus he understood that his death was sure. But when morning finally came, he busily arranged for the wrestling match. In his last hours, with death so near, rather than pray to the Supreme Lord for mercy, Kāṁsa anxiously planned how to avert what he knew was certain.

All those who share Kāṁsa's demoniac mentality are like that. They can see that material nature will eventually kill them, just as it has killed everyone else in history. Yet they act as if they will never die. A great devotee once called this the most wonderful phenomenon: people see the hand of death take away all their predecessors, but they think that they themselves will not die. The Kāṁsas of this world are always busy planning how to enjoy this life, even up till the second they are snatched away by death. So many modern cities have been built all over the world, but no one who lives in them has any guarantee that he won't be kicked out today or tomorrow by death. Ignoring the next life only insures that we will have to take another birth to suffer miseries again and again. Kāṁsa was like a man trying to raise his temperature when he already has a high fever; when the fever reaches 107 degrees, a man dies. Kāṁsa could not see that all his plans to survive would be vanquished, nor did he care to hear about the next life. Like a typical politician, on the morning of his death Kāṁsa busied himself making plans for this temporary world.



The caretaker provoked the elephant to try to kill Lord Kṛṣṇa.

After bathing and performing other morning duties, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma heard drums playing at the wrestling arena, and They prepared to go see the fun. But when They arrived at the gateway of the arena, a big elephant with a rider blocked Their path. This was another of Kaṁsa's schemes. Kṛṣṇa told the elephant's caretaker to immediately clear the path, but the man became angry and provoked the elephant to charge Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa moved around the elephant, dragged it by its tail, tripped it and finally killed both the elephant and its rider.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then proceeded into the arena, where everyone at once became attracted to Them. The audience was completely attentive to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The residents of Vṛndāvana were all reciting Their pastimes, and others, seeing Them for the first time, began to praise Their qualities.

Suddenly, a musical fanfare announced the start of the wrestling match. The famous champion wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika approached Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and Cāṇūra said, "We have heard all about You. The King desires to see You display Your wrestling abilities." Kṛṣṇa replied that although He and Balarāma liked to play and sometimes They wrestled with Their cowherd friends, They were not professional wrestlers. Kṛṣṇa said plainly that a match of professional wrestlers against young boys would not be equal, and this would disturb the audience. But the wrestlers insisted that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were not ordinary boys, and so the match began.

Many members of the audience called out their disapproval, for Kṛṣṇa and His brother appeared to be delicate

boys of tender age, whereas the wrestlers were mountainous strongmen, trained in the art of crushing opponents. In *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Śrīla Prabhupāda specifically describes what the members of the audience said. "But my dear friends," someone spoke out, "just look at the face of Kṛṣṇa. There are drops of perspiration on His face from chasing His enemy, and His face appears like a lotus flower with drops of water. And do you see how the face of Lord Balarāma has turned especially beautiful? There is a reddish hue on His white face because He is engaged in a strong wrestling match with Muṣṭika." Another spectator exclaimed, "Even in front of the King this wrestling match is going on between incompatible sides." Thus the members of the audience were very attracted to Kṛṣṇa, but at the same time they saw great danger and felt anxiety for Him. Even Kṛṣṇa's very intimate devotees, such as His mother and father, were also very anxious because they too did not know the unlimited strength of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is actually all-powerful, and there is nothing to fear when He is fighting a conditioned living being of the material world. Kṛṣṇa is declared throughout the *Vedas* to be the Absolute Truth, the source from whom everything comes and upon whom everything rests. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that He alone existed before creation, He is now the only ultimate reality, and after annihilation only He will remain. But by Kṛṣṇa's internal spiritual energy, called *yoga-māyā*, He acts in different relationships with His servitors according to how they approach Him.

Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all personal feelings, so we should not be surprised that He reveals Himself differently in various relationships. To the mass of people at the wrestling arena He appeared as the most beautiful personality, but to the wrestlers He appeared like a thunderbolt. The *kṣatriyas* (warriors) saw Him as the strongest ruler, while the females saw Him as the most attractive male. The cowherd men from Vṛndāvana saw Him as their own kinsman, while the *yogīs* saw Him as the Supersoul in everyone's heart. Kaṁsa also saw Kṛṣṇa uniquely—as Death Personified.

Kaṁsa was always fearful that Kṛṣṇa would someday kill him. Thus he spent his whole life absorbed in thoughts of how to kill Kṛṣṇa. Because he was always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, Kaṁsa was Kṛṣṇa conscious. But because he thought of Kṛṣṇa unfavorably, he is not considered a devotee of the Lord. He was not practicing *bhakti* (devotional service). To be always thinking, like Kaṁsa, of how to avoid submitting to the Lord's supreme will is the principal engagement of a whole class of men, including modern educators, scientists, politicians and philosophers. By hearing about Kaṁsa, we can clearly understand why such a mentality is self-defeating.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma engaged the wrestlers in the standard wrestling holds and maneuvers for some time, but when the anxious protests of the audience grew too great, Kṛṣṇa simply spun one wrestler in the air, Balarāma hit the other, and the famous wrestlers were dead. Other wrestlers came forward, but the two brothers killed them imme-



Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma fought with Kaṁsa's wrestlers.

diately, and the remaining wrestlers ran from the arena. Musicians spontaneously beat their drums, and the crowd cheered the victory of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Kaṁsa was enraged. He announced that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma should be driven from the city of Mathurā, Their riches plundered, and Kṛṣṇa's father killed. Kṛṣṇa could not tolerate such talk. He jumped over the high wall protecting King Kaṁsa and stood before him face to face. Kaṁsa tried defending himself with a sword, but Kṛṣṇa grabbed him and dragged him down from the throne. After throwing him on the ground, Kṛṣṇa killed Kaṁsa by punching him with His fist. Kṛṣṇa then dragged Kaṁsa around the arena the way a lion drags an elephant after killing it, just to assure His parents, relatives and all pious people that Kaṁsa was actually dead.

One may wonder why this narration contains so much violence and killing, since the Supreme Personality of Godhead is said to be all-merciful. But there is no question of wrongdoing in Kṛṣṇa's actions. Because Kṛṣṇa is absolute, whatever Kṛṣṇa does is absolutely good. Fighting and killing is required for a *kṣatriya* (warrior) when there is a need to punish miscreants who threaten the peaceful citizens of society. When such criminals need to be rebuffed, nonviolence is cowardice, as Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa are naturally nonviolent toward all living entities, even animals, but if the demoniac make a violent disturbance, the devotees are prepared to counter such violence in the service of the Supreme Lord.

Also, when Kṛṣṇa personally kills someone, He gives that person the benediction of liberation. Astoundingly, Kaṁsa was immediately awarded *sārūpya-mukti* upon being killed by Kṛṣṇa. This means that he went to the spiritual planets, where he was able to live in eternity, bliss and knowledge with a form almost exactly resembling the Supreme Lord's in opulence and beauty. Such liberation is very difficult to achieve, even after hundreds of lifetimes spent searching for the Absolute Truth. *Yogīs* and ascetics achieve release from all material desires only after prolonged, severe austerities. But even they do not reach the Vaikuṅṭha planets; they merge into the impersonal

brahmajyoti, the effulgence of the Lord. Kaṁsa, however, had a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. He thought of Kṛṣṇa day and night: "When will He come? What is He doing now? When will He kill me?" So Kaṁsa was given a place more exalted than all the impersonal mystic *yogīs* of the *haṭha-yoga* school or the philosophers who speculate about the impersonal Absolute Truth. This gives a hint of the great power of *bhakti*. If an avowed enemy of Kṛṣṇa is given such a high place, we can barely even imagine the sweet favor the Lord awards to those who relate to Him in a positive, loving way, always rendering service to Him and chanting His glories.

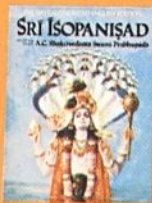
Finally, one might ask why Kṛṣṇa should personally fight with a demon like Kaṁsa. Kṛṣṇa, being the source of all emanations and qualities, has His own transcendental desires. Therefore He also has a fighting propensity, which He exhibits in His playful wrestling with the cowherd boys of Vṛndāvana. Authorities in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness inform us that Kṛṣṇa's choice to fight with Kaṁsa indicates that Kaṁsa is actually a liberated devotee of Kṛṣṇa's who was sent to the material world to provide the Lord a suitable opponent. Kaṁsa could not actually threaten Kṛṣṇa; Kṛṣṇa arranged the fight for His personal pleasure. This understanding brings us to a level of consciousness beyond violence or nonviolence, morality or immorality.

Kṛṣṇa displays His eternal pastimes with His devotees just to attract us to return to His loving service. We are all eternal parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa, but we are now suffering the miseries of repeated birth and death in the material world, in forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa. We should not struggle to rival Kṛṣṇa; rather, we should understand that the only business of our life is to serve the Lord. We each have a natural aptitude for the service of Kṛṣṇa, and that should be developed, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master. The first engagement is to hear the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Our present age is very fallen, full of materialistic and impersonal concepts of reality, but the truth is available in the vast treasurehouse of Vedic literature. The sincere seeker will find that truth very easily, if he begins with a submissive ear. ❀

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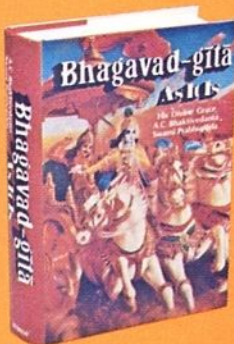
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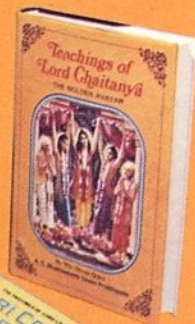
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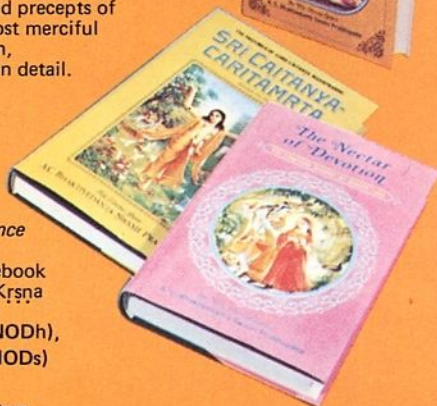
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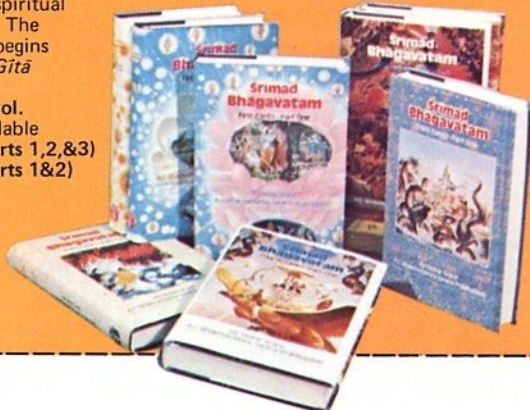


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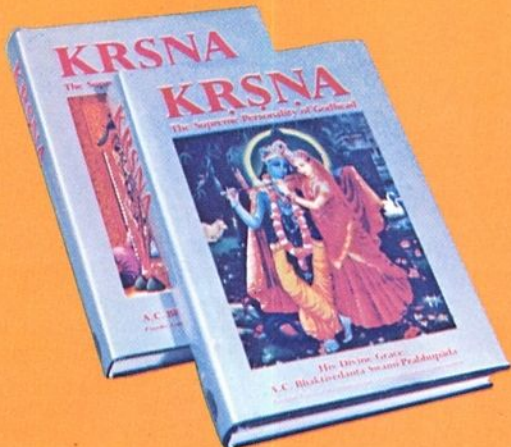
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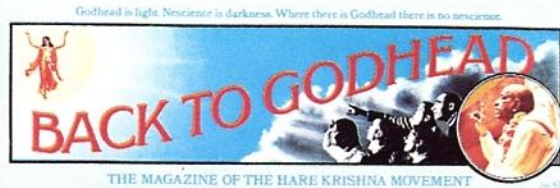
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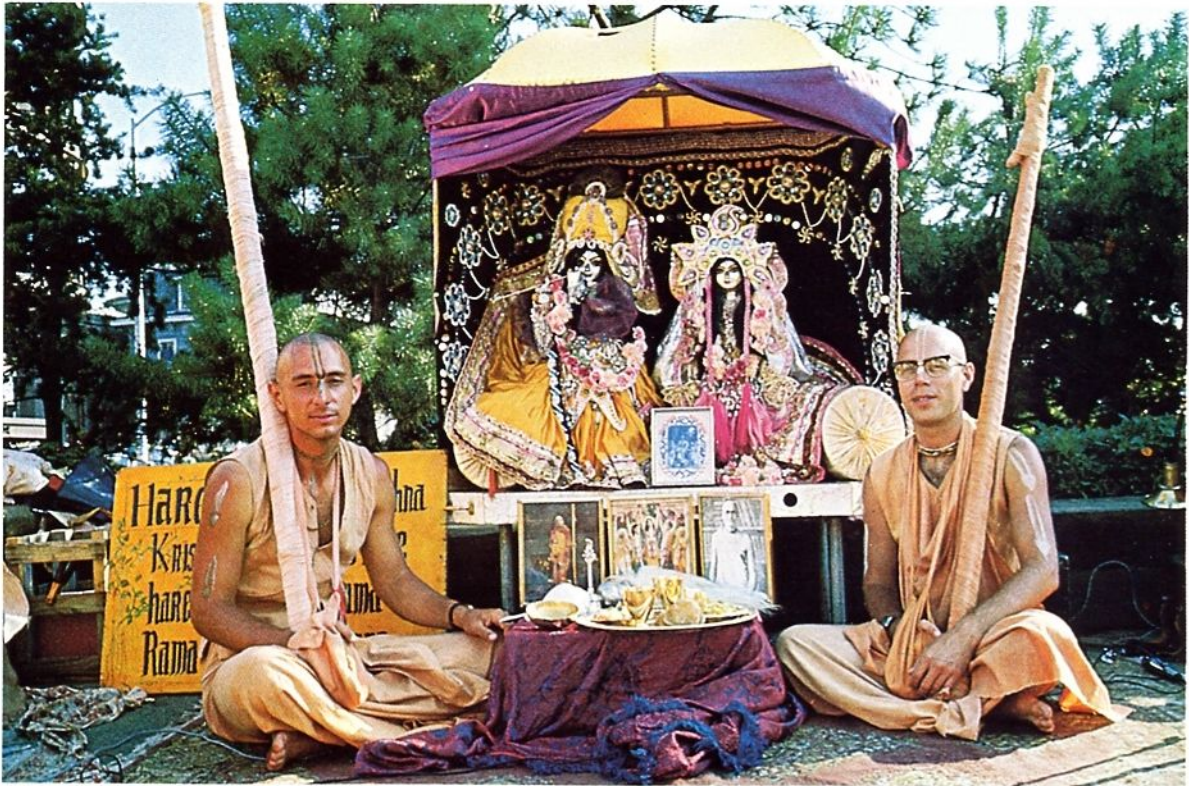
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TRAVELING AND PREACHING WITH RĀDHĀ-DĀMODARA

by His Holiness Viṣṇujana Svāmī and His Holiness Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī

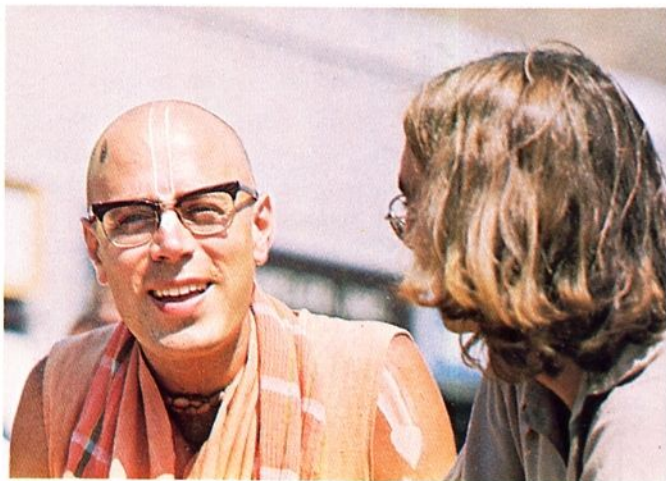
LET US OFFER OUR PROSTRATED OBEISANCES unto the lotus feet of our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, whose words and loving merciful actions have inspired us, and thousands like us, to spread this divine movement, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, throughout the world, in every town and village.

There are unlimited ways to serve Kṛṣṇa, but all of them contribute to the chanting of His glories. From the very beginning, after we joined the Kṛṣṇa conscious-

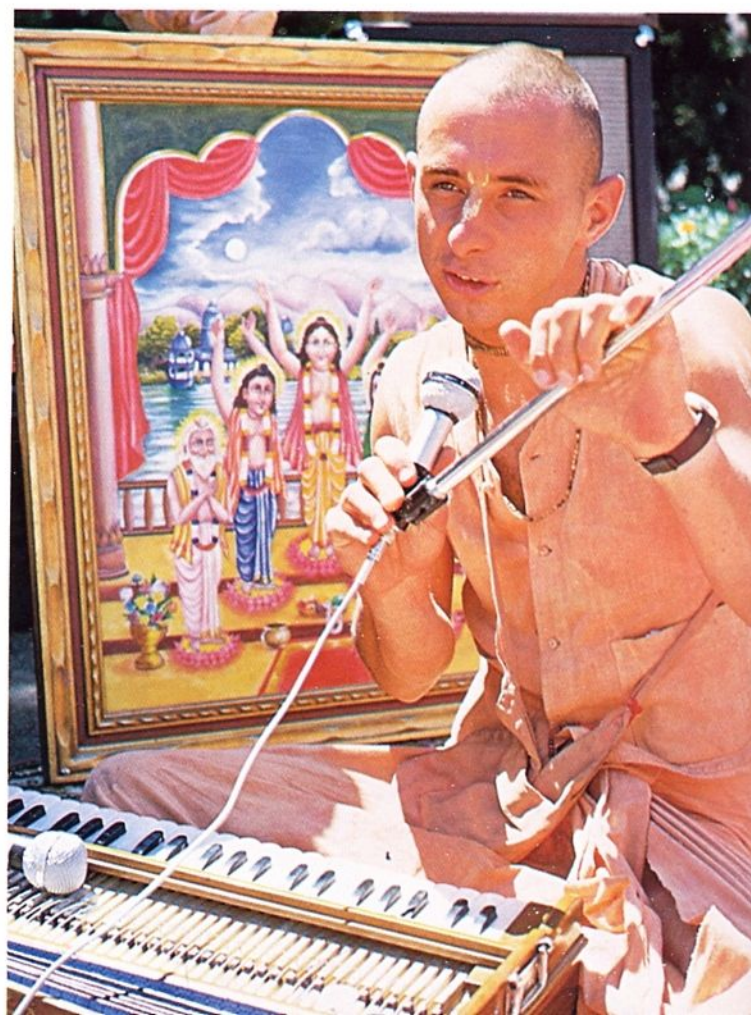
ness movement in 1968, we were attracted to traveling and preaching, and by Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace we were allowed to assist in opening temples in cities all along the West Coast of the United States. We have both taken the vow of the renounced order of life, called *sannyāsa*, firmly committing ourselves to live as traveling celibate preachers. We have both traveled extensively, preaching, chanting and distributing *prasāda* (delicious spiritual food), and have opened Kṛṣṇa consciousness centers in the United States, Europe and India.

Photo: Bhārgava dāsa





Top: The Rādhā-Dāmodara Deities. The Supreme Lord appears in the form of the Deity so that we in the material world can have the chance to see Him directly. The Deity is not an idol. When the form of the Lord, as described in revealed scriptures, is copied in the material elements, the Lord Himself personally appears. An advanced transcendentalist sees no difference between the Lord and the form of the Deity. Above: Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī answers a young man's questions about spiritual life. Right: Viṣṇujana Svāmī, at an outdoor gathering, explains the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The painting behind him depicts Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associate preachers.



Since June of 1973, we have taken the Supreme Lord Himself (in His Deity form called Rādhā-Dāmodara) all over the United States. Along with ten other devotees, we bring the Lord to colleges, fairs and any large festive gathering. There we set up tents and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by ancient instruments, distributing *prasāda*, preaching individually to interested people, and distributing books by our spiritual master. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of a devotee, first expounded this glorious program for self-realization: dancing and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa to the accompaniment of *mṛdaṅga* (drum) and *karatālas* (cymbals), feasting on delicious food first offered to the Lord, and hearing the philosophy of God realization.

Formerly, in the ancient Vedic culture, a *sannyāsī* was required to go alone into the forest and perform severe austerities. In this age, however, Lord Caitanya has directed that a *sannyāsī* simply stop mundane social intercourse and devote his life exclusively to the service of the Lord. Lord Caitanya Himself traveled widely throughout India, enlightening even tigers and bears. We cannot inspire animals to chant, but we can give human beings the chance to perfect their lives through this simple yet deep and sublime process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

For ten monks, serving the Supreme Lord as He tours the continent is full of unlimited bliss. We perform ceremonies of worship six times a day, even while moving sixty miles an hour over the continental divide. In a compact kitchen that turns out *prasāda* for hundreds, we cook all varieties of delicious vegetarian food for the Lord. We study daily the sacred teachings of *bhakti-yoga* given to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and we are always prepared for the order of our spiritual master, who can send us anywhere to glorify the Supreme Lord and defeat atheistic propaganda.

Everywhere we hold our sacred Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals, people become convinced of the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life. They become inspired to join us in this divine mission of traveling and preaching, and so in only a few months we have started the same program with a second bus. And soon, by Kṛṣṇa's desire, we hope to see hundreds of buses bringing these blissful festivals to every town and village. 🙏

His Holiness Viṣṇujana Svāmī joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in San Francisco in 1968. He accepted the renounced order in 1970, and since then he has been traveling, holding festivals and opening Kṛṣṇa conscious centers throughout the United States.

His Holiness Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, one of ISKCON's Governing Body Commissioners, also joined Kṛṣṇa consciousness in 1968. He accepted sannyāsa in 1972 in Jaipur, India. He served as President of ISKCON's Los Angeles center and was then sent overseas to help initiate ISKCON's preaching programs in Europe. For the last five years he has been Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary for India. He has recently returned to the United States for increased preaching.



Photo: Muralīvadana dāsa

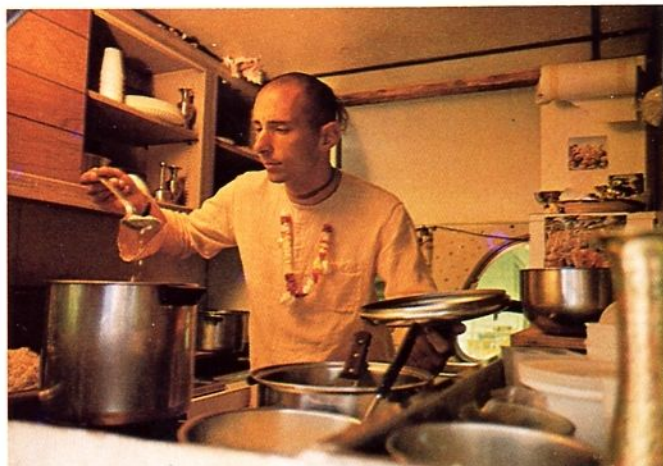


Photo: Bhārgava dāsa



Photo: Vipra dāsa

Top: A Kṛṣṇa conscious traveling festival in San Diego, California. Middle: Viṣṇujana Svāmī cooking for Kṛṣṇa in the kitchen of the traveling party's bus. The customized Greyhound bus has everything needed for a mobile Kṛṣṇa conscious temple. Bottom: Books are the basis and preaching is the essence of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.



PRIMAL ORIGINS

by Yogeśvara dāsa

Before accepting the renounced order of life in 1959, our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was chief supervisor in the laboratory of Dr. Jagadis Chandra Bose, renowned Indian botanist and chemist, whose most memorable experiments were in the field of consciousness-perception in plants and other nonmoving entities. Dr. Bose was an innovator in the true sense of the term. He attempted successfully to show contemporary men of science the need for a spiritual perspective in their work—an open-mindedness that would allow them to examine more objectively the conclusions of the Vedic scriptures—and simultaneously he resolved the ambivalent attitude toward Western science held by many of his Hindu associates. Dr. Bose summarized his most recurrent experimental theme in these concluding remarks of his lecture-demonstration at the Royal Institute in 1901:

"I have shown you this evening the autographic records of the stress and strain in both the living and the nonliving. How similar are the two sets of writing, so similar indeed that you cannot tell them the one from the other! They show you the waxing and waning pulsations of life—and the climax due to stimulants, the gradual decline in fatigue, the rapid setting in of death rigor from the toxic effect of poison. It was when I came on this mute witness of life and saw an all-pervading unity that binds together all things—it was then that for the first time I understood that message proclaimed on the banks of the Ganges thirty centuries ago: 'Those who behold the One in all the changing manifoldness of the universe, unto them belongs the

*eternal truth, unto none else, unto none else.'"*¹

This must have been hard to swallow for some of Bose's Western listeners, steeped in an Aristotelean scientific culture. The intellects of modern science prefer on the whole to see such conclusions relegated to convenient departments of parapsychology and religious studies, thus freeing themselves from the responsibility of conscientiously seeking to resolve the dichotomy between science and religion. This situation has arisen not because all scientists are necessarily anti-religion, but rather because religion for so long has not shown her scientific side—the substantive, researchable quality that would make her more attractive to the rationalist.

A quality of honest men is that they admit ignorance of things beyond their knowledge, and further that they accept an idea when convinced of it by proper reason and argument. The Vedic conception of the forthright man of science is one of an individual bent on extending the perimeters of empirical knowledge to bring about a fusion with transcendental truth. Real science, according to the Vedic conception, is not unspiritual, but, rather, unrestricted, truly experimental—even to the extent of experimenting with the chanting of ancient *mantras*, for example, or attempting the various *yoga* systems as means for self-purification. And real religion, say the *Vedas*, rests not on blind following or mere sentiment, but rather on a scientific analysis of matter, spirit and the control of both.

This is not a new viewpoint. The

Yogeśvara dāsa is a 24-year-old American now living at the ISKCON center in Paris, France. He has studied at the University of Wisconsin and the Sorbonne. He and his wife play important roles in preparing Kṛṣṇa conscious books and magazines for publication in French and other European languages.

greatest scientific thinkers in history have all been spiritual men who have tried to unify the apparent divergencies between science and religion. All have pointed to the same ultimate truth in science and religion, but only from different points of vision.

*"Subjects of philosophy and theology are like the peaks of large and towering and inaccessible mountains standing in the midst of our planet inviting attention and investigation. Thinkers and men of deep speculation take their observations through the instruments of reason and consciousness. But they take different points when they carry on their work. These points are positions chalked out by the circumstances of their social and philosophical world. Plato looked at the peak of the spiritual question from the West, and Vyāsa made the observation from the East; so Confucius did it from further East, and Schlegel, Spinoza, Kant and Goethe from further West. These observations were made at different times and by different means; but the conclusion is all the same inasmuch as the object was one and the same."*²

Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as a practical program for implementing the conclusions of spiritual science, may offer some valuable insights into primal origins, or the beginnings of the creation, which might not otherwise be available to sincere men of science. This information is drawn from authentic Vedic texts, and, as we shall see, it finds convincing supportive evidence in modern logic and scientific discovery.

Scientific opinions about the origins of creation have been summarized into two very famous theories, called Big

Bang and Steady State. The Big Bang theory hypothesizes that originally there existed an enormous manifestation of matter that by its own gravitational force “turned in” on itself, creating a density so great that it ultimately exploded, sending gas, dust and radiation flying millions of miles into space. Little by little, over an unimaginably long time, these substances began synthesizing into solid elements, which in turn became planets and other celestial bodies. The Steady State theory, however, suggests that the process of creation is going on perpetually, from a source in the universe that constantly produces material elements. These elements spread out and form the planets, stars and other celestial manifestations. Thus the process of creation is constantly going on.

The Original Cause

Of the two theories, Vedic references tend toward the Big Bang theory, which suggests that at a certain time well in the future the process will reverse itself, and all the planetary systems, galactic clusters and so on will begin to decompose as the universe again turns in on itself. At that time all forms within the universe will cease to exist, having returned to their original state, and the program will begin anew.

“At the end of the millennium [the Lord says], every material manifestation enters into My nature, and at the beginning of another millennium, by My potency, I again create.” (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.7)

“This material nature is working under My direction, and it is producing all moving and unmoving beings. By its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.” (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.10)

The major distinction between scientific theories and Vedic statements is that scientific theories are obliged to stop at the point of primal origins (where did the primeval “lump” or source of the steady state come from?), whereas the *Vedas* continue their explanation back to the *ādi-puruṣa*, or the primal cause of all causes.

According to Vedic statements, no creation exists without a clearly defined purpose, though that purpose may remain hidden from our eyes for some time. Contrary schools of thought, however, such as the Existential and Absurdist schools, propose that the creation is purposeless, meaningless, and that life is an absurdity, a dreamlike state that ends with death. Followers of these rather depressing ideologies generally lead unhappy lives, for they find no meaning for living yet are unable to explain why they prefer to live rather than die.

Neither the meritorious men of science nor the devoted followers of the *Vedas* agree with the idea of purposelessness. In fact, neither in the macrocosm of the universe nor in the microcosm of the tiniest atomic particle do we find such aimlessness or disorder. Order pervades every inch of space and time, and the history of man reads like a captain’s log book—with page after page of notes, charts and graphs, all attempting to define and order the world around us.

The creation took place, according to the *Vedas*, by the will of the Supreme Lord. To accommodate the desires of living beings who sought to live outside His jurisdiction, the Lord created the material world, just as a government constructs a prison for citizens who want to live outside the laws of the state. The rebellious souls who prefer the pseudo independence of material life get various bodies in this world according to how lusty they are to enjoy the resources of material nature (animals occupy a position lower than human beings, yet higher than plants and trees). The forgetful living beings, ignorant of their original spiritual nature, try to enjoy to the best of their tiny ability, but in this way they implicate themselves further and further in the entanglements of material life.

“The bewildered spirit soul, under the influence of the three modes of material nature, thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by nature.” (Bg. 3.27)
 “The living entity in material nature follows the ways of life, enjoying the three modes of material na-

ture. Thus he meets with good and evil amongst various species.” (Bg. 13.22)

The *Vedas* describe the human form of life as the loophole through which to escape from the world of birth and death. After a natural evolution through 8,400,000 species, the living being achieves a human form, in which he can revive his dormant self-consciousness and return home, back to Godhead.

The Touch of a Living Being

Now, some people consider themselves too rational to accept unseen laws of reincarnation or the existence of a Supreme Being. They express their objections by posing rhetorical questions like, “If God created everything, then who created God?” But even if we think that someone else created God, this still implies the existence of an ultimate cause. So actually no one objects to the idea of some ultimate cause—neither the proponents of the empiric school nor the students of spiritual science. Admitting an ultimate cause, therefore, we must ask this basic question of creation: was that original cause conscious or inert?

When I was small, I remember now, there was a game I would play for fun with friends. I would set up a line of dominoes, so long that it extended into the next room. Then when a friend would come in, I would push the first domino and watch my friend’s surprised face as the line of dominoes fell, as if by magic, across the room. Because my friend could not see who moved them, he would be amazed by the feat. Similarly, we wonder at the workings of nature, who bears rich harvests year after year, as if by magic, and turns the color of leaves on the autumn trees with masterful discretion. We gape childlike at the vastness of space and its perfect order, self-sufficient planets and orchestral movements. On a human level, the beauty of a painting reflects the creativity of its painter, the harmonies of a piano concerto that of its author, and the qualities of a son those of his father. Throughout the history of the world, there has never been creation without the touch of a living being.

That same principle holds true, according to the *Vedas*, on a universal scale.

Evidence of the Unseen

As for the objection to unseen movers, a second example will explain this principle to the skeptic: The electron has never actually been seen, though its discovery has launched a whole new field of investigation—subatomic physics—which deals with particles so small that they are virtually invisible and can be tracked only by a trail of bubbles they leave behind them as they travel through some medium, such as liquid oxygen. These electrons are like the jet planes we know have just passed overhead because we can see their white tails of smoke. So, the entire cosmic manifestation displays the creative potency of the Supreme, though He Himself remains invisible to our gross vision. And as the electron makes no extraneous effort to create its tail, so the Supreme exerts very little energy to create this material world. We can hardly imagine, therefore, how great is the total creative power of the Supreme Absolute Truth.

The objection raised by the rationalists is more semantic than sincere: if everything has a cause, then what caused God? The difficulty we have in accepting something or someone without a cause is due to our conditioned life, for nothing within our experience has ever been causeless. “Cause and effect” is a familiar, practical law that allows us to deal with everyday affairs without having to abandon any of our common values. But causelessness implies supremacy, absoluteness, a God to whom we will have to surrender—and because God has a very bad reputation in the material world, that idea repels us, frightens us. We have no knowledge of God, except what the village elders have told us about a wrathful, chastising Deity, and the whole concept of “surrender” appears aboriginal, uncivilized.

“If God does exist,” the modern pioneering man tells himself, “then I will have to accept a subordinate position”—something he finds hard to do. So modern educators teach quite the

contrary—that our young should learn to think for themselves, to become independent. (“We don’t actually know any better than you,” the teacher says. “Try to find the solution by yourself.”) This they call the spirit of self-sufficiency or “the human potential.” But the result of such indoctrination has been that many educated men automatically throw up a wall of self-defense when a discussion veers toward love of God. Marxist theory epitomizes this spirit of self-sufficiency by stressing the “infinite creative power of the people,” man’s ability to resolve his problems and create for himself a perfect society, a classless society, in which research will be unimpaired by political oppression, in which men in every sphere of activity will feel satisfied and productive—in other words, a kingdom of God without God.

Our purpose here is not to show all the defects in this kind of reasoning. Writers of much greater merit have successfully done so already. Rather, this article is an attempt to present basic scientific information that will help sincere inquirers understand Kṛṣṇa to be the cause of the universe—and help them understand Kṛṣṇa’s causeless nature.

The Ultimate Goal of Research

According to the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Kṛṣṇa’s body is not made of atoms and molecules. And *Śrī Īṣopaniṣad* adds that His body contains no veins or other mechanical arrangements for maintaining itself. Kṛṣṇa the person and Kṛṣṇa’s body are nondifferent. Therefore both Kṛṣṇa and His body are eternal, without beginning or end, unlike our material bodies, which perish with the passage of time and molecular deterioration.

The spiritual world is nondual. Nondual does not mean, as some Vedantists say, that we are the same as God. “Nondual” refers to the fact that in the spiritual world there is no qualitative difference between Kṛṣṇa and His form, Kṛṣṇa and His name, Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa and His abode. All are of the same eternal, blissful nature. In that eternal, blissful spiritual world, Kṛṣṇa is engaged in playing lovingly

with His devotees in varieties of relationships and affairs. Renowned scholars and speculative philosophers often interpret Kṛṣṇa’s personal life and loves as mythological, in the same way that the wranglers in the scientific arena interpret God as a creation of the mind of man. Actually Kṛṣṇa is not man-made, nor are His activities mythological. Love of Kṛṣṇa constitutes the ultimate goal of research and the perfection of all knowledge. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

“After many births of speculative research, the truly intelligent man surrenders unto Me, Kṛṣṇa, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.” (Bg. 7.19)

The Spirit of Investigation

Many theories about the origins of creation strongly resemble the explanations of Vedic literature. Space theorists such as Albert Einstein and the German writer Willie Ley have described the universe as expanding in three dimensions. This is corroborated by the Vedic writings. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that the material universes exit from the immense body of Mahā-Viṣṇu, the creative Personality of Godhead, in the form of particles, three times the size of an atom, that gradually expand. Now, according to Vedic scientific calculation, the universe we live in has attained a diameter of 4,500,000 miles, past which the sevenfold coverings of the universe begin. These coverings are earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind and intelligence. The first layer extends 8,000,000 miles, and each successive layer extends for ten times the thickness of the preceding layer. The study of these material elements is called Sāṅkhya. It was first described by the great incarnation Kapiladeva. His advent and instructions on the cosmic manifestation, its spiritual counterpart and the supreme control of both are all described in the Third Canto of the *Bhāgavatam*.

Beyond the sevenfold coverings of the material universe is the spiritual sky, which is unknown to the empiric researcher. Its residents enjoy eternal

life, full of bliss and knowledge (*sac-cid-ānanda*), unimpaired by the miseries of life in the material world. This material world is described as a perverted reflection of that spiritual realm. Everything found here exists in its original pure state in the *paravyoma*, or spiritual sky. Here, for example, a flower lives and then dies. There, it only lives. Death is unknown. As varieties of life exist here, so great varieties of life also exist in the spiritual world. But there the cows, the swans, the trees—all living beings—are of the same eternal, spiritual nature as Kṛṣṇa Himself. This material universe displays a graduation of planetary systems; and so also in the spiritual sky there are diverse planets, each inhabited by self-realized souls who have no thought other than to serve the Lord of their hearts, Kṛṣṇa. The *Rg Veda* describes Vṛndāvana, the planet of Kṛṣṇa, as the highest abode of all (*Rg Veda*, 1.154.6). Devotees of Kṛṣṇa who have purified themselves of all material desire, false pride and envy return to that supreme abode after leaving their present bodies.

A careful study of Vedic scriptures reveals that nowhere has science or research been forbidden or condemned. Rather, the same spirit of investigation has been encouraged everywhere, throughout the *Vedas*. *Bhagavad-gītā* directs that one should approach a spiritual master with questions (*paripraśna*). And, again, the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says “Apply your reason and logic.”

It is sad to see how this spirit of true scientific investigation has been stifled, especially in contemporary educational institutions. Spiritual study should not be avoided. ISKCON proposes that all universities develop within the structure of their already existing curricula a department of spiritual sciences to deal directly with the question of God’s existence, the nature of universal law, and the practical application of spiritual knowledge. Accredited instructors from among the ranks of Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees are prepared to assist in organizing such departmental studies, and for this they require no salary. Our purpose is not self-interested. According to the circumstances either tradi-

tional or “free university” classes may be given, and courses may deal with any revealed scriptures, not only the *Vedas*.

The Excellence of the Vedas

The *Vedas*, however, are outstanding. They contain information on everything from medicine and farming to a detailed explanation of time sequences on upper and lower planets, from techniques of *yoga* and meditation to household hints and recipes for tasty vegetarian dishes—from detailed explanations of governmental organization to masterful directions on constructing and decorating a temple or residential building. The verses in each of the hundreds of Vedic texts conform to strict rules of poetry and meter. The *Vedas* contain drama, history and complex philosophy, as well as simple lessons of etiquette. Military protocol, use of musical instruments, biographies of great saints and sages of the past—these are but a few of the subjects covered by the *Vedas*. By following Vedic directions, all the great spiritual leaders in the history of India have achieved perfection (Bg. 4.2). How, then, could we say that the *Vedas*, compiled by the incarnation Vyāsadeva, are works of a mortal being? Scriptures are not products of the material world, where passion and ignorance predominate. No person under the influence of passion and ignorance could possibly produce an authentic scripture. For over 5,000 years the Vedic teachings have been studied and admired by the world’s most profound scholars. No mundane writing can possibly approach the level of an authentic revealed scripture.

The original speaker of the *Vedas* is Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa), as stated in the *Mahābhārata* (*Śānti-parva*, *Mokṣa-dharma*, chapter 349, verse 68). Vyāsadeva and those who follow in succession from him are the propagators of the *Vedas*. So the principal difference between the empiric researcher and the spiritual experimentalist is that the mundane researcher refuses to accept information coming from a realm beyond his sensual perception—despite constant reminders

that his senses can fail him—whereas the spiritualist has adopted a submissive attitude. The spiritualist, therefore, by approaching the proper authority, can acquire knowledge that could not otherwise be obtained.

“Cavil as Much as You Like”

The conclusions of the two schools are the same: that there exist living beings and a manifested world; that both of them are controlled; that since nothing within our experience exists without some cause, there must also be a cause for the cosmic manifestation; that man is struggling on account of ignorance; and, finally, that human life is meant for realizing our actual position and resolving the frustration imposed by our ignorance.

Scientists like Bose have served to help dissuade thoughtful men from accepting the idea of man’s ability to solve all his problems independently. Although this idea may superficially appear palatable, in fact the same problems confront modern, technologically advanced Everyman that have always confronted him: birth, old age, disease, death. And no progressive planning commission or well-meaning manifesto will ever do away with these ubiquitous companions to life in the material world. Nor should useless arguments taint our spirit of investigation. After all, who can deny the infinitude of even this material creation, which is described as only one-fourth of the entire creation of God? The *Bhīṣma-parva* section of the *Mahābhārata* says, *acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāḥ tārkeṇa yojayet*: “Things of an inconceivable nature certainly cannot be grasped by argument.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura concludes, “Cavil as much as you like”—ultimately one must surrender to Kṛṣṇa. 🙏

1 Quoted in Rabindranath Tagore, “*Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose*,” *Vasudhara*, 2 (1958), pp. 107-9.

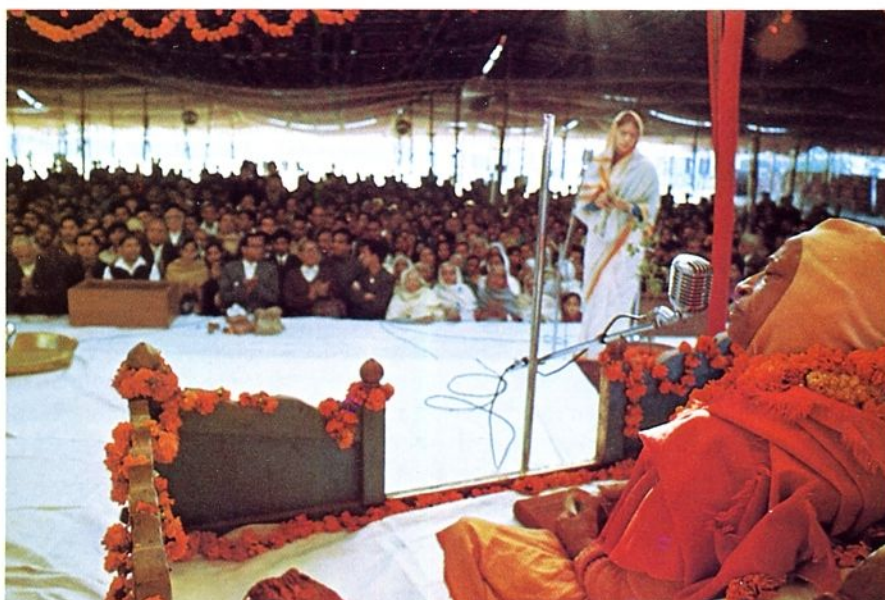
2 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *The Bhāgavata: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics and Its Theology*, pp. 15-16.

In 1971 Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured at a series of Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals held in a huge pandal, or exhibition tent, in downtown Delhi, India. This is one lecture from that series.

RELIGION

Material and Spiritual

By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



According to our Vedic system, there are two kinds of religion. First we must try to understand what religion is. Religion refers to our constitutional position. Religion is different from faith. A faith can be changed. One may be a Christian or a Mohammedan or Hindu, but according to the Vedic system, religion cannot be changed. Religion is *dharma*, the constitutional position of the living entity. It is to the living entity what sweetness is to sugar or heat is to fire. Everything has some essential characteristic, and the essential characteristic of the living entity is his eternal religion, *sanātana-dharma*.

As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Sixth Canto, *dharmam tu sākṣād-*

bhagavat-praṇītam: the principles of religion are directly enunciated by the Lord. In the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa uses the word *dharma* in this way:

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānaḥ sṛjāmy aham*

“Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself.” (Bg. 4.7)

In the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*

*ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

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

If the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears on this planet to establish *dharma* (*dharmā-saṁsthāpanārthāya*), then why does He say abandon all *dharma* (*sarva-dharmān parityajya*)? This means that but for surrender unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, whatever is going under the name of *dharma* is not actually *dharma*. *Dharma* does not mean going to the church for some ulterior motive, for some money or sense gratification. Generally people cultivate *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*—religion, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. But one should not take to religion simply to make more money. That is not pure devotion. Pure devotion is described in this way:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11)*

In this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī clearly states that if one wants to execute unalloyed devotional service, he must be freed from all kinds of material contamination. One should not have any ulterior motive in approaching God but should approach God only out of love. This is the teaching of Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

*āstīṣya vā pāda-ratāṁh pīnaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatāṁh karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāto
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ*

“I do not know anyone except Kṛṣṇa as my Lord, and He will always remain as such, even if He handles me roughly by His embrace or makes me broken-hearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, but He is always my worshipable Lord, unconditionally.” (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 8)

This is the attitude of a pure devotee. His exchange with God is not like the exchange between one merchant and another. He does not want anything of God except God's pure devotional service. The *jñānīs* are desirous of liberation. They want to merge with the Supreme, and to this end they undergo austerities. They are serious, but they desire to become one with God. The *yogīs* also undergo severe penances in the mystic *yoga* system, but they desire mystic powers. The *karmīs* are also full of desires for sense gratification. Everyone has some demand, therefore, but the *bhakta*, the devotee, is different. There is no desire for the *bhakta* other than serving Kṛṣṇa. As stated by Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

*na dhanāṁ na janāṁ na sundarīṁ
kavitāṁ vā jagad-īśa kāmāye
mama janmani janmanīśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi*

“O almighty Lord! I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor have I any desire to enjoy beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. What I want only is that I may have Your causeless devotional service in my life—birth after birth.” (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 4)

Thus Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejects even liberation. This is the state called *akāma*. This means devoid of desire for material things. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* there is a verse that reads: *kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niṣkāma, ataeva 'śānta'* / *bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali 'aśānta'*. There are many planets for those who worship the demigods, and in the higher planetary system the program for sensual enjoyment is much better than on other planets. Just as on this planet the American standard of living is far greater than that of other

countries, in other planets the standard of living is far greater than on this earth. The inhabitants live many thousands of years. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated that Brahmā's duration of life is very long indeed.

*sahasra-yuga-paryantam
ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ
rātriṁ yuga-sahasrāntāṁ
te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ*

“By human calculation, a thousand ages taken together is the duration of Brahmā's one day. And such also is the duration of his night.” (Bg. 8.17)

Although this may be the case, Kṛṣṇa states:

*ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ
punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya
punar janma na vidyate*

“From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.” (Bg. 8.16)

So even if one goes to the higher planets like Brahmāloka, he will have to come back again. However, Kṛṣṇa says that if one comes to Him, back to Godhead, then he does not have to return to the material world. The living entities within the material world are always full of anxiety and fear because their position is nonpermanent. A devotee, however, is not afraid of this material world. He simply wants one thing—wherever he is he wants to be able to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. That is the aim of the devotee.

Just as there are two natures—material and spiritual nature—so there are two kinds of *dharma*, or religion: material *dharma* and spiritual *dharma*. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant for development of spiritual *dharma*. Material *dharma* consists of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation, but spiritual *dharma* is *jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā nārtho yaś ceha karmabhiḥ*. This means that one should try to understand Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth. This *dharma* is eternal *dharma* because Kṛṣṇa is eternal and we are also eternal. In the

Eleventh and Fifteenth Chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa is described as *sanātana*, eternal, and in the Eighth Chapter His spiritual world is also described as *sanātana*. *Sanātana-dharma* refers to the eternal engagement of the living entity in the service of the Supreme Eternal. *Nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām*: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Eternal, the Supreme Living Being, the Supreme Lord, and the Supreme *Dharma*. Our troubles in this material world result from our attempt to become one with the Supreme. To gain relief from this suffering, we are instructed in this way:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ saraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpēbhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

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

We need only understand this last teaching of Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is called *saraṇāgati*, surrender. That is the ultimate goal of *bhakti*. Those who are engaged in mental speculation will take a long time to come to this point. The real *mahātmās*, great souls, fully engage in devotional service.

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha
daivīṁ prakṛtiṁ āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso
jñātvā bhūtādīm avyayam*

“O son of Pṛthvī, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible.” (Bg. 9.13)

We accept the ultimate *dharma* as surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. This surrendering process is meant not for less intelligent people, but for the most intelligent because Kṛṣṇa says that after many births one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Him, knowing Him to be the cause of all causes and all that is. (Bg. 7.19). If this is the ultimate goal of life, then why not surrender immediately? Why should we wait any longer? This is the process of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. 🌸



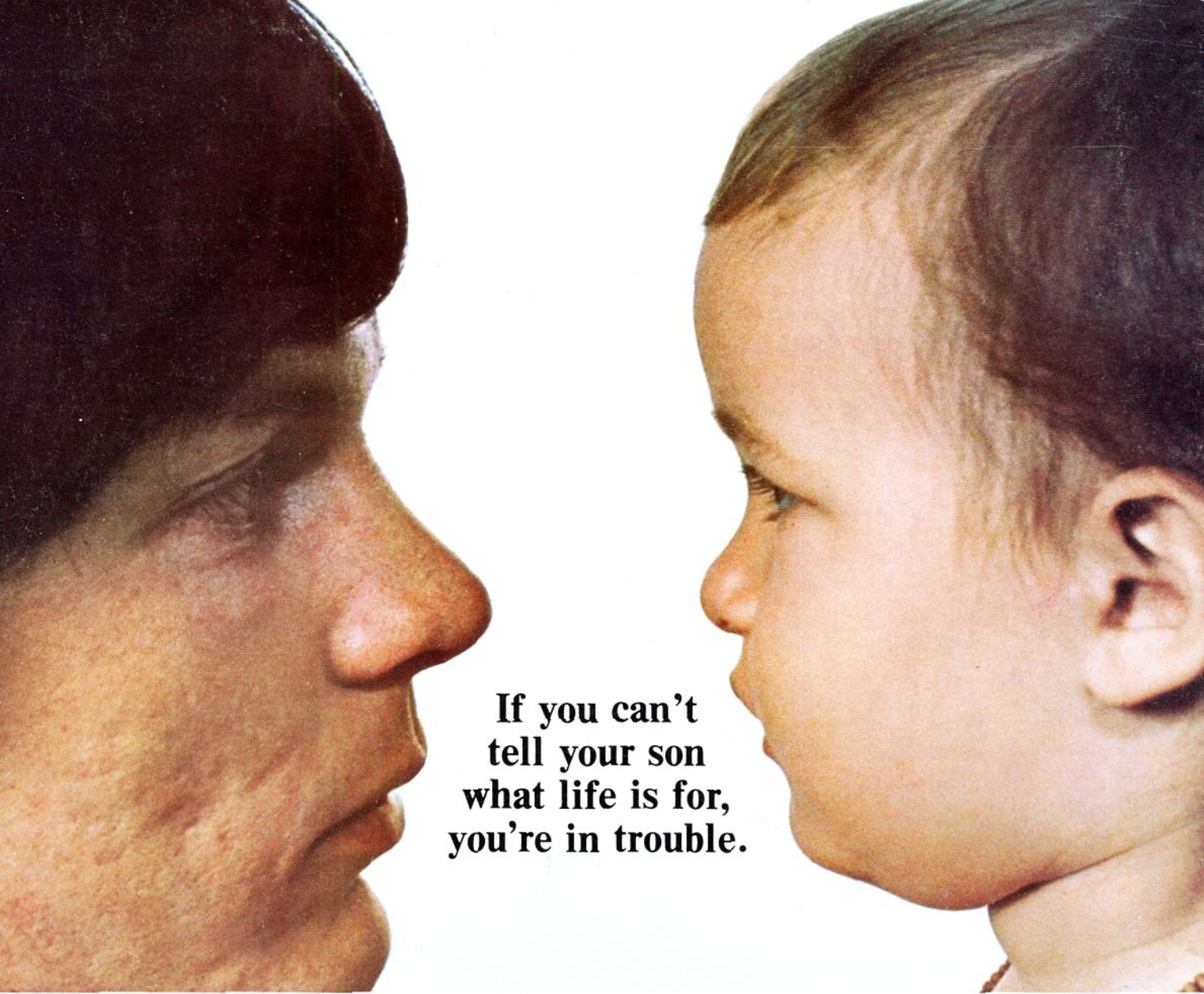
“In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time.”—*Bhagavad-gītā*

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**If you can't
tell your son
what life is for,
you're in trouble.**

The time's going to come—maybe sooner than you think—when he's going to want to know what life's all about, what life's for. And when he turns to you for answers, what will you do? Will you try to get by with some old clichés? Will you tell him it's not an easy question and then change the subject? Or will you really *know*?

In the Vedic writings it is said that one should not become a teacher, a leader, a spiritual master—or a parent—unless he can save those who depend on him from being entangled in material life. Despite all else one may do, if one fails in this, he is a failure in his duty. Therefore it is every parent's responsibility to know for sure what life's really all about—and to be able to enlighten his children.

“In this world there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time.” —*Bhagavad-gītā*, 4.38

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